

SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

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



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

"Devoted to the Search for Divine Truth"

VOLUME XXXII

JANUARY, 1991

NUMBER 1

THINK ON THESE THINGS

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CAN WE ATTAIN UNITY?

All religious bodies, preachers and teachers claim to be advocates of unity among the believers in God. Many plans and movements have been initiated to achieve unity among these religious groups. Some of their efforts have spawned even more discord and party spirit than the unity they seek. The religious world is dreadfully divided over many issues. Even with the Lord's church there are parties who banish all efforts toward the unity of God's people taught in the New Testament.

"With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:2,3).

The term "denomination" indicates division. It means to name, the act of naming, a designating by name. It means a part of the whole, separated and named to distinguish it from the other parts. A quarter is a denomination of a dollar, so are dimes, nickels and a penny. Denominations refer to different religious bodies, claiming to be different parts of the church Jesus Christ built, all called by different names to distinguish them from one another. As long as these denominations hold their differing doctrines and their names to separate one from the other, Bible unity is impossible.

Some brethren are worried about the world classifying them as a denomination. It is probably because of what they teach and practice. When one holds out the hand of fellowship to some denominational group,

in or out of the church, he is showing some endorsement of denominationalism. The question is: How far is he going, and why does he stop where he does? Some brethren endorse, coddle and protect false teachers and false brethren, and then wonder why unity is not attained. Some will say, "I do not want to drive him further from the church and the Lord." He is already away, and he will never be restored except by the truth, the gospel of Christ (John 8: 32; Rom. 1: 16).

Division is condemned by the Holy Spirit. "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Rom. 16: 17). "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1: 10). By the questions: "Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Cor. 1: 13), the apostle shows the absurdity of division growing out of the doctrine of Christ.

Unity is a part of the doctrine of Christ. He prayed that those who believe on him should be one in the same sense that Christ and the Father are one (John 17: 20, 21). We are to endeavor (struggle, strive) to **KEEP THE UNITY** of the Spirit. To **keep** the unity signifies that we have it in the word of God. We must **try** (test) the spirits to know whether they are of God or man. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4: 1).

In spite of these statements by the Holy Spirit and the efforts of godly men and women, there are some hindrances that stand in the way of true unity. I shall mention only two.

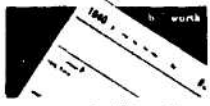
1. Lack of knowledge. Some people will accept unity as a principle endorsed in words of scripture, but because they do not know what the New Testament teaches on the subject, they are involved in division while claiming to accomplish unity among disciples. Ignorance of what unity means leads some to draw conclusions from partial evidence and prejudice, and then demand that all others accept their

conclusions. The idea that there are saved in all churches is not reached by studying the word of God. Ignorance of the nature and mission of the church of our Lord has caused much division, and it is the very foundation upon which denominations are built today.

2. Loyalty to men. Paul warned of false teachers within the church who would lead others away from the truth. "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). Jesus gave a like warning: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matt. 7: 15).

Loyalty is first based upon human wisdom and importance. Just because a certain man has a degree from some college of reputation, or because he is well known throughout the nation, it does not follow that he is right in his preaching. Human wisdom tends to elevate the man and decrease the importance of God's word. Loyalty to men causes many to accept just about any doctrine they preach, whether it is taught in the New Testament or not. This hinders true unity.

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Second Class Postage Paid at Brooks, Kentucky
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USPS—487—440

CONNIE W. ADAMS, Editor

Office of Publication
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Editorial

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THE OPEN SEWER

What would you do if you had an open sewer flowing into your house? It is bad enough to have an overflowing septic tank in the back yard with the terrible odor it produces. Such emergencies prompt us to take swift remedial action. After all, the quality of our lives is at stake. The health hazard to our families must not be tolerated.

But wait a minute! Do you have a television set in your house? Perhaps two or three? Have you paid much attention to what seeps into your house through that influential box? Oh, I know there are some things which are informative and entertaining in a harmless way. But even a recent TV GUIDE carried a lead article raising the question about the outbreak of dirty language, "HAS TV GONE TOO FAR?" Consider the following which this open sewer is dumping into your home:

(1) **Profanity.** This started several years ago with a four letter word now and then. At the time it was shocking to hear those words blaring right out in the dens and livingrooms of our houses, words we would not permit our children to use, nor any of our guests. Little is ever said to honor or glorify God, but plenty is said in taking his name in vain. There are parents who are Christians, including some preachers, who see nothing wrong with renting movies to watch on VCR which are liberally sprinkled with profanity and these are sometimes shown to the whole family as good entertainment for a family night at home with a "good" movie. "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt..." (Col. 4:6).

(2) **Coarse speech.** The recent article in TV Guide spelled out many of the words and phrases being commonly used on prime time shows this year. One six-year-old girl uses a word or phrase which is clearly vulgar in origin and has little girls and boys all over the country repeating this phrase. I have heard it from the children and grandchildren of Christians. I could not print in this paper some of the terms being used over and over in sitcoms on prime time TV. The writers and producers are bolder this year than ever before. Would you allow a friend, fellow-worker, neighbor, or even relative to come into your home and talk that way before your wife and children? "keep thy heart with all diligence" (Prov. 4: 23).

(3) **Gore.** Do you realize how many buckets of blood your children will see shed on TV before they ever leave the nest? Under the guise of "realism" murder and torture scenes are getting gorier and gorier. (If no such word exists, I hereby invent it). Rape, strangling, smothering,

assaulting with blunt objects, mutilations, stabbings and shootings are common fare. Paul said to think on things that are "lovely" (Phil. 4: 8).

(4) **Hedonism.** The gratification of natural desires without any moral "hangups" seeps into our homes day and night. Disrobing, breathless love scenes, adultery in abundance, fornication, homosexuality and incest are frequently brought into our homes through the magic of television. The story line on many shows raises confusion as to right and wrong. Often, what the Bible would clearly condemn, is presented in such a light that good is called evil and evil is called good.

(5) **Humanism.** What values are portrayed are often presented from a humanistic base. What man wants, likes or what appears to serve his own interest has become the standard for behavior. Anyone who insists on adherence to a divine law is presented as a hypocrite or an incompetent. Family roles, as presented in the word of God, are portrayed with role reversals. The Cosby Show is one of the greatest offenders in this regard. It is funny, cleverly done, but the message is loud and clear. "It is not in man that walks to direct his steps" (Jer. 10: 23).

Parents would do well to watch Sesame Street and the cartoons their children are watching. Recently, while a granddaughter was here visiting, we were appalled at the humanistic preaching being done to children in some of the cartoons. Liberal doses of evolution are assaulting their minds almost daily. Biblical family values are consistently being undermined in our own homes, and then we wonder what is happening to the family. That box in the corner might be a part of what is happening to it! Whatever happened to the shows where a family consisted of a husband and wife (not married before) with their own offspring. Now we have single-parent sitcoms galore complete with ex-husbands and ex-wives, his children, her children and their children. Children in a stable family who watch such drivel are likely to get the idea that they are out of touch with life, or that such aberrations in family life ought to be expected. Divorce with all its evil by-products comes to be viewed as the norm, not the exception.

What Can You Do About It?

(1) **Be very selective.** Think ahead about what you will watch. If you are surprised and it heads downhill, cut it off. Do not be a jellyfish in exercising control over it with your family.

(2) **Find useful alternatives.** Teach your children the joy of reading good books. Rediscover it yourself. Play games together. Encourage children to use their imagination in play.

(3) **If you are offended by a program, note the sponsors and write to them.** They are sensitive to consumer good-will. A recent boycott of Burger King for sponsoring programs with an anti-religious bias and those that were excessively violent, brought a promise from that company to cease sponsoring such shows. TV will be out of business without sponsors and sponsors do not want public ill-will. Write the network which carries the sewage. Write the local affiliate.

(4) **Revive family hospitality.** Invite that new couple which just started worshipping where you do.

Pop some popcorn. Make some fudge. Settle down and read a chapter in the Bible and have prayer together. Learn the act of entertaining yourselves.

Folks, we have to do something to stop that open sewer from overflowing in our living rooms. Otherwise, we will become so immune to it that we won't even smell the stink!

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GOD CONDEMNS SIN IN THE FLESH

Divine Message: For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. (Rom. 8: 3-4)

We all accept the affirmation that God condemned sin in the flesh. His condemnation is stated in His law and is clear and objective. I am not certain, however, that we all understand the **ORIGIN** of God's expectation and its real source. "The righteous requirement of the law" did not originate with the law itself... it originated in the character of God. It would certainly be enough for God to say it. God's saying it in His law makes anything righteous. But morality is not first and foremost a **matter of law. It is a matter of character...** the character of God in whose image we are made. It is therefore a righteous requirement of God that our character made in His image be based upon his standard of morality.

Furthermore, Paul set forth the **SOURCE** of one's own personal attitude toward morality. It is determined by that upon which one sets his mind. "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit" (Rom. 8: 5). What one wishes to do, he will do. What he sets his mind to do, he will accomplish. "I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, **so that you do not do the things that you wish** (Gal. 5: 16-17).

In his book, **In the Presence of Mine Enemies**, Howard Rutledge, a U. S. Air Force pilot who was shot down over North Viet Nam during the early stages of the war, tells of his thoughts during several miserable years, hundreds of arduous days, and a seeming eternity

of hours when life seemed so intolerable in the hands of the Viet Cong. He said, "During those longer periods of enforced reflection it became so much easier to separate the important from the trivial, the worthwhile from the waste. For example, in the past, I usually worked or played hard on Sundays and had no time for church. For years Phyllis had encouraged me to join the family at church. She never nagged or scolded—she just kept hoping. But I was too busy, too preoccupied, to spend one or two short hours a week thinking about the really important things. Now the sights and sounds and smells of death were all around me. My hunger for spiritual food soon outdid my hunger for a steak. Now I wanted to know about that part of me that will never die. Now I wanted to talk about God and Christ and the church. But in Heartbreak (the name POWs gave their prison camp) solitary confinement, there was no preacher, no Sunday-school teacher, no Bible, no hymn book, no community of believers to guide and sustain me. **I had completely neglected the spiritual dimension of my life. It took prison to show me how empty life is without God**" (quoted by Gordon MacDonald, **Ordering Your Private World**, p. 115).

Next, Paul informs us that there are deadly serious **CONSEQUENCES** of following the flesh. He says, "For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh **cannot** please God. (Rom. 8: 6-8). "

The world says that our fears of sin and evil are childish, like the child who fears the alligator under the bed who will not hang his arm off the bed because the alligator might bite it off. The child's fears are obviously unfounded. Larry Crabb in his best seller, **Inside Out**, (page 30) responds to the world's claim by saying, "But there really is something wrong in our world. Reality is not what we want it to be. We sense that something is badly twisted in our world because it is." We are not dealing with an imaginary alligator. We are dealing with the reality of prostitution, aids, homosexuality, pornography, murder, theft, embezzlement, lying, cheating, fornication, etc. We had best do all we can to protect ourselves and our families. We had best prepare ourselves and our families to fight real enemies.

Paul said that "the works of the flesh are evident..., and those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5: 19-21). We can only deal with those realities by changing (with God's help) our character. And we do that by recognizing and favoring the reality of spiritual life. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. (Gal. 5: 22-26).

My friends, I am afraid we preachers are not warning people of sin as we should. "Just As I AM," does not mean we can REMAIN "Just As I Have Been. "

Finally the apostle informs us of the wonderful BLESSINGS which result from following the Spirit. "But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness" (Rom. 8: 9-10).

God provides life, real life, to those who follow Him. We must notice, however, that this is not just a matter of DOING good. All of these passages suggest that we must BECOME good... that is, we must become spiritual. I want to improve, not just in what I do, but in what I AM as a person. I know many persons who do wonderful deeds of kindness and illustrate patterns of behavior I would do well to emulate. But the list of persons is much shorter whose character qualities evidence a truly giving, compassionate, noble spirit. I RESPECT those who do good. I truly ADMIRE those who are good throughout.

Do you see what I mean? Let me illustrate. I want to give my wife everything I can that is good for her and I want to treat her with great kindness and respect. But I know that a lot of guys could give her more and probably treat her better from physical points of view. I want her to know that I want to give her something more. I want her to feel that I am giving her all the deep resources of my being, my loving, my caring, my sharing ... everything within me. She is not going to get that from any other man. So, Sweetie, just don't look! God wants that from each of us and it is that, ultimately, that he rewards with such wonderful blessings.

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THE LOVE OF GOD — ROMANS 8 - NO. (2)

THE HOLY SPIRIT — OUR GUIDE — VS. 5-14

"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not in the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if you live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

In these verses we see the love of God manifested toward us through the Holy Spirit who is our spiritual guide. God, in His infinite knowledge, knew how desperately man needs a guide from earth to heaven, and in His infinite love has provided such for both saint and sinner. We have already learned from the first four verses of this chapter that the **freedom** enjoyed by those "in Christ" depends upon their walking "not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." In verses five through fourteen, Paul shows what it is to "walk after the flesh" and to "walk after the Spirit."

Wisdom demands that, first of all, we give some thought to our need for such a guide. **Subjectivism** seems to be the rule of the day. The prefix "sub" in "subjectivism" (as elsewhere) involves the idea of that which is "within" or "under," e. g., a submarine — that which is "within" or "under" water. Hence, by **subjectivism**, I mean the disposition to be guided by that from "within." All men need to realize that, of themselves, they do not know the way to heaven — it simply is not in man: "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not man that walketh to direct

his steps" (Jer. 10: 23). All men need to realize that they need guidance that is from without, over, above, and superior to anything they possess. Therefore, his guide must be objective — not subjective. That guidance comes to us from the Holy Spirit through the word He has "revealed to the holy apostles and prophets" (Eph. 3: 5). In our text Paul urges us to follow this guide.

Led By The Spirit

Paul makes it plain that those who "walk after the flesh... mind the things of the flesh," and those who "walk after the Spirit..." mind "the things of the Spirit" (vs. 4, 5). When children mind their parents, they obey their parents. When one minds the things of the Spirit, he does what the Spirit says. To act otherwise is to walk after the flesh — it is "to be carnally minded" (v. 6). Man's spirit is governed by one of two forces — the flesh or the Spirit. To which he yields accounts for his actions. Such tells the story of whether he is carnally minded or spiritually minded. The former involves yielding to the desires, appetites, and impulses of the flesh—all the propensities thereof. The latter involves listening to the Holy Spirit as He speaks through His inspired word and being led thereby (Eph. 3: 5; 6: 17; Heb. 4: 12; Rev. 2: 7, 11, 17, 29; 3: 6, 13, 22). Walking after the Spirit is pleasing unto God, but walking after the flesh—being carnally minded—is enmity against God. The two are incompatible—wholly irreconcilable! This is what Paul meant when he said "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (v. 7). In other words, man cannot be carnally minded and spiritually minded at the same time. He must choose between the two. Jesus put it this way: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt. 6: 24).

Power of Choice

Unfortunately, some have understood verse seven to teach a cardinal tenet of Calvinism, namely, Hereditary Total Depravity. This doctrine affirms that man is born into this world having inherited Adam's sin so that he is wholly incapacitated to do any thing good until and unless he is operated on directly and mysteriously from on high. Such operation is usually attributed to the Holy Spirit and is often called an "experience of grace." According to this theory, prior to this operation man has no power of choice — no freedom of will.

From a historical point of view, this doctrine had its origin in the latter part of the fourth and the forepart of the fifth centuries with Augustine, a prominent theologian being the prime promoter. It is interesting to observe that among the "church fathers," who wrote before 325 A. D., that unanimity prevailed on this matter of man's free will. While an exception now and then might be found in the field of religion, the "church fathers" referred to them as heretics.

Opposing Augustine's view was one named Pelagius of Britain who was a strong believer in man's free will. His concept is succinctly expressed by himself in the following words: "If a man should, he can." However, his influence was over shadowed by the more prominent theologian, Augustine. As a consequence

much of the religious world became saturated with his concept which was later popularized even more as a cardinal tenet of Calvinism. This doctrine not only robs man of his power of choice, but also takes from him his **accountability** — all of which contravenes the following very plain passage of Scripture: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5: 10). It should also be noticed that throughout the whole context of verse seven of our text that it is clearly implied that man is responsible for whether he follows after the flesh or after the Spirit. In the final analysis, it is up to him—not God. Paul is our example: "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1 Cor. 9: 27).

In the last verses of our text, Paul talks about our being in the Spirit, God dwelling in us, and our having the Spirit of Christ—all of which is tantamount to our being led by the Holy Spirit. He then brings our text to a close by giving us **assurance** that "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (v. 14).

Let us thank God for His great love in providing us with this spiritual guide which man so desperately needs in his journey from time to eternity.

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CONDITIONS OF HONORABLE MARRIAGE

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As seen earlier in this study, marriage is precious in the sight of the Lord and must be held in honor among all. Marriage per se—that is, whatever men want to call marriage—is not here endorsed by God in Heb. 13: 4. The apostle did not write an unqualified statement, designed to cover every relationship that people want to institute. The hortatory statement encourages honorable conduct on the part of all who contemplate and enter marriage; it implies conditions upon which marriage can be had in honor.

Permanence

The very best preparation that can be made by people eligible before God to marry is to determine to stay married. God's will is that people marry for life. God hates putting away (Mai. 2: 16). He further decrees that no one separate (sunder) what God has joined together. (Matt. 19: 6). In that God joins people in marriage, it must follow that only He can set the conditions upon which he joins and severs them. Laws of civil government have no effect on joining and severing by the Lord. This is not encouragement to any to disregard civil law conforming to God's will, but to remember the superiority of divine law. Only God's law says what people's actions should be when civil law fails to reflect God's will.

Keeping the covenant in marrying another is a matter of simple honor—honoring one's word pledged to another. Before marrying and after marrying, it would behoove all married people to remember the seriousness of marriage and of keeping one's word. The principle of honesty, even to the hurt of oneself, must be appreciated (Psm. 15: 4).

Eligibility

The teaching of the New Testament shows that not all are eligible before God to marry (Matt. 5: 32; 19: 9; Rom. 7: 1-4). In the view of civil governments, any divorced person (with divorce decree) may marry again; but God, who instituted and controls marriage according to His will, does not so view the matter. His Word authorizes only three classes of people to marry: (1) people never married (Gen. 2: 22-25), (2) people whose spouses have died (Rom. 7: 2-3), and (3) those who have had fornication committed against them (Matt. 19: 9). These alone have God's authorization to marry: apart from divine authority to such effect, no one would either have right to marry or know of such right. Eligibility is never determined on the basis of civil law, for civil law does not reflect the divine will. Civil law is an expedient useful to people in the forming and terminating of marriages, but

its use does not necessarily force God to recognize all actions recognized by governments of men.

Submission

Even marriages begun with God's approval by people eligible before Him and determined to remain married to each other sometimes end because one or both parties fail to maintain the spirit of submission to the other. Paul's teaching respecting wives and husbands is included in a section dealing with submission (Eph. 5: 21-33). Paul developed and applied the attitude of submission to the behavior of the wife, who should love, respect, and submit to her husband, and to the husband, who ought to love, cherish, and nourish his wife as Christ did the church. In both instances, there is submission to the other manifested in the actions enjoined. Even the husband must submit to his wife in his deferring to her needs, requests, and wishes, and he will do if he loves her according to the love of Christ for the church.

It is tragic to have people prepare to marry, begin their marriages according to God's will, and even continue them for a time in an honorable state, and then later suffer a dishonorable end through divorce. Divorce always says that someone sinned; sometimes it says that both parties sinned. The only honorable end to a marriage is death. In summary, all marriages fail because of selfish people. Selfish people are unwilling to make sacrifices necessary for marriages to survive. Are you willing to sacrifice for your partner? Have you contributed to the unnecessary end of your marriage? Are you trying to maintain your marriage in an honorable state? Hebrews 13: 4 exhorts you to do so.

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and preach the gospel
to every creature"
(Mark 16:15)**

WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

Send all questions to:

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GOING ON TO PERFECTION

QUESTION: What does the statement in Heb. 6: 1, "leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection," mean? Also, comment on "not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, etc. in vv. 1-2.

ANSWER: "Leaving" means to "forsake, to put away, let alone, disregard, put off." It indicates total detachment. The phrase about the "first principles of the doctrine of Christ" does not mean the principles of the gospel of Christ, such as the resurrection of Jesus, faith, repentance and baptism as taught in the gospel. We are not to abandon or detach ourselves from them.

The "principles of the doctrine of Christ" are the teachings about Christ in the Old Testament, namely, the shadows, types, symbols and prophecies. They must leave the pictures of Christ and go on to Christ Himself in order to be perfect. They must abandon Judaism and proceed to perfection in the gospel.

The recipients of the Hebrew letter needed to be taught again "The first principles of the oracles of God" (Heb. 5: 12). They needed someone to show them again the pictures of the Old Testament of its ordinances, ceremonies, and sacrifices. Babies need pictures in order to comprehend. They also must learn the alpha-bet. These types and figures (pictures and alphabet) foreshadowed Christ, but they could not recognize Him unless they understood the word-pictures. Hence, they must have someone to teach them again the "first principles," that is, the meaning of the Old Testament figures and symbols. The book of Hebrews endeavors to lead them on to perfection.

Next the writer presents six foundational elements not to be laid again — repentance from dead works, faith toward God, etc. It is my persuasion that these are fundamentals of Judaism rather than Christianity. Some of them are relevant to Christianity, but none are exclusively Christian.

Repentance from dead works. In addition to this passage, "dead works" are mentioned in Heb. 9: 14. These were the sins that remained on the conscience after the Levitical ceremonies were unable to cleanse through animal blood (Heb. 10: 2). They are "dead works" because they belong to the realm of spiritual death as the result of sin. Those under the Old Covenant needed to repent of these sins.

Faith toward God. The Jews believed in God (Jn. 14: 1). But they also needed to believe in Christ (Jn. 14: 1) in order to become Christians. Faith toward our **Lord** was preached by Paul to Jews and Gentiles (Acts 20: 21). "Faith toward God" was characteristic of the old Mosaic system, and, hence, a foundational element of Judaism.

Doctrine of baptisms. These "baptisms" are Jewish washings or cleansing rites. Hebrews 9: 10 has "washings" rather than "baptisms," but both are from the same Greek word—*baptismos*. According to Trench, this word means, "ceremonial washing or lustration... while by *baptisma* we understand baptism in our Christian sense of the word."

Laying on of hands. Fundamental to the Jewish religion was the imposition of hands, repeatedly prescribed in the Levitical ritual. Priests (Lev. 4: 4), elders (v. 15), rulers (v. 24) and every common person (Lev. 1: 4; 3: 2, 8, 13; 4: 29, 33) were to lay hands on their sacrifices.

The laying on of hands was important in the consecration of priests (Exod. 29: 10, 15, 19; Lev. 8: 14, 18, 22, 27, 28). This practice, being a part of the Old Covenant, was annulled at the cross and was not to be laid again, but rather forsaken.

Resurrection of the dead. This fact is taught in the Old Testament (Job 19: 25-27; Dan. 12: 2; Psa. 17: 15). It was commonly believed by all Jews (Acts 24: 14-15; 26: 6-8), except the Sadducees (Acts 23: 6-8). Jesus enlarged upon this doctrine and brought life and immortality to light (2 Tim. 1: 10).

Eternal judgment. The final judgment was known back in the Old Testament era (Jude 14-15; Mai. 3: 16; Dan. 12: 1-2). Adam Clarke commented, "The doctrines also of the *resurrection of the dead* and of *eternal judgment* were both Jewish, but were only partially revealed and then referred to the gospel."

When the author of Hebrews says we are to "leave" or "abandon" these things, it is not the understanding of them that is to be disregarded, but rather an attachment to the Mosaic economy as an ongoing religion.

Many hold the view that "the principles of the doctrine of Christ" in Heb. 6: 1-2 are the basics of the gospel and that the six elements enumerated are New Testament fundamentals rather than Mosaic. They could be right, but it seems to me the context, as well as some of the six elements, favor the preceding position that is espoused.

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"PLAY IT SAFE"

Job was blameless, upright, fearing God, and turning away from evil. God classed him with Noah and Daniel as models of righteousness (Eze. 14: 14). James calls attention to his exemplary patience (Jas. 5: 11). Surely there is much we can learn from this great patriarch. Focus with me on one principle by which he lived.

Job had seven sons. "And his sons used to go and hold a feast in the house of each one on his day, and they would send and invite their three sisters to eat with them. And it came about, when the days of feasting had completed their cycle, that Job would send and consecrate them, rising up early in the morning and offering burnt offerings according to the number of them all; for Job said, 'Perhaps my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.' Thus Job did continually" (Job 1: 4, 5).

The regularity of these feasts is uncertain. Some think "on his day" implies that the sons took turns every day hosting these feasts, thus making this a weekly cycle. Since "his day" in chapter three refers to Job's birthday, others think these were birthday celebrations. Be that as it may, when the feasting was over, Job, in keeping with the priestly function of a father under the patriarchal era, offered burnt offerings on behalf of his sons. He did not know that they had done wrong, but sacrificed "just in case." And here is our principle: Job played it safe where God is concerned.

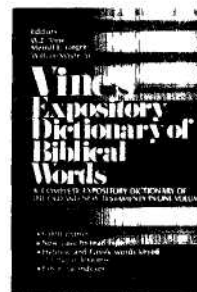
Displeasing God is too great a matter to take chances with. The stakes are eternal. God has plainly revealed what he expects of us. Yet in our applications of His will to our lives, we sometimes prefer going out on a limb to playing it safe.

Some want to do things that do not have God's expressed approval. They reason, "God did not say not to." No, but He did not say to, either, which means you are risking His displeasure by going ahead. The very purpose of revelation is so that we can know the mind of God instead of acting by supposition (1 Cor. 2: 9-13). That revelation warns us against going beyond what is written (1 Cor. 4: 6). Still, many are willing to take chances with God's word. Some insist on substituting for what God has specified. Others categorize their pet projects as good works, with which they cannot imagine God will be displeased. I fear that some brethren are basing their views on divorce and remarriage on speculative inferences instead of plain statements of Scripture. Job teaches us better. His example says play it safe where God is concerned.

Playing it safe prohibits us from seeing how close to sin we can get without crossing over. All of us must draw the line between right and wrong. God sometimes tells us exactly where to mark it. On other matters He gives us principles which we must apply. In such cases it is a good idea to draw your line with a margin for safety. That means we will reject, not accept, marginal language, clothing whose modesty is doubtful, and questionable forms of recreation. If in doubt, don't do it. Play it safe. Instead of seeing how close to sin you can get, "abhor what is evil; cling to what is good" (Rom. 12: 9b).

Now reverse that application. Christians who are always concerned about minimum requirements — "How many services must I attend?" "How much do I have to give?" — have surely not yet discovered the joy of serving the Lord. Nor have they learned Job's principle of playing it safe. Only the most ardent risk-taker would want to stand in judgment having aimed no higher than the least he could get by with.

No one needs to learn Job's principle of playing it safe any more than the individual who is putting off obeying the gospel. Perhaps you, like Felix, are looking for that "convenient season." Friend, it will not come. There is no easy time to repent. Meanwhile, you are taking a great chance in assuming you will have future opportunities. Life is "a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away" (Jas. 4: 14). You do not know the time of the Lord's coming. Besides, there is the danger that as you grow older the hardness which prevents you from obeying now will stiffen, causing you to lose all interest (Ecc. 12: 1). Now is the day of salvation.



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(2 Cor. 5:9)

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SMOKING

Is there anything wrong with smoking? While most would agree that it is a bad thing, can we really say it is a sin? It is not uncommon to see women, as well as men, smoking. In fact, there are a number of men and women who claim to be Christians who smoke.

In the last few years, the American people have developed a greater health consciousness. Consequently, many have quit smoking. Restrictions have been established for smoking in public.

Our real concern in this article is to see that smoking is a sin.

It is Harmful to the Body

1. Smoking harms the body. Quotes could be compounded that establish that smoking harms the body. However, just a few will suffice here.

The British Royal College Of Physicians stated, "cigarette smoking is now as important a cause of death as the great past epidemics of typhoid, cholera and tuberculosis."

The Harvard Medical School Health Letter (Vol. III, No. 6, April 1978) speaking of lung cancer said, "The good news is that we know the cause of at least 80% of the cases of this leading cancer killer — cigarettes."

The American Lung Association said, "Cigarette smoking is a major cause of emphysema, chronic bronchitis, lung cancer, heart disease... Just one cigarette speeds up your heart beat, increases your blood pressure, upsets the flow of blood and air in your lungs, causes a drop in the skin temperature of your fingers and toes.

2. It is a sin to deliberately harm the body. Smoking is wrong for the same reason "doing" drugs is wrong — it damages the body.

While in a context of speaking of the sin of fornication, Paul addressed the problem of the abuse of the body and whether it is our body to do with what we want anyway. "What? know ye know 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 your spirit, which are God's (1 Cor. 6: 19-20).

It is Addictive and Enslaves The User

1. Smoking is addictive. The smokers themselves supply the evidence of this point. When a smoker says, "I've tried, but I can't quit." he is admitting that he is addicted. Sometimes one does not realize how addicted he is until he quits. When one can't go thirty minutes

without a cigarette, he no doubt is hooked on smoking.

2. Addiction is a sin. Smoking is not wrong because it is habit. There are many habits that we have developed that are not sin. Even bad habits are not necessarily sin. Smoking is wrong because it is addicting.

Paul wrote, "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any" (1 Cor. 6: 12). Weymouth's translation says, "... to nothing will I become enslaved."

Addiction violates the principle of **temperance** (self-control). It is a command of God to develop temperance and continue to grow in it (2 Pet. 1: 5-10). When a man (or woman) can't sever himself from his cigarette, he does not have the self-control God requires.

It Affects Other People

Smoking not only affects the one who is smoking, but it is also irritating and harmful to those who are around. Reports now suggest that the smoke coming off the burning end of the cigarette is just as harmful (if not more so) than the smoke inhaled by the smoker.

The family of the person who smokes has to constantly breathe his smoke. Little children raised in this cloud of smoke have to inhale poisoned air.

There are others affected as well. The smell of cigarette smoke gets into the clothes, hair, car and house of those with whom we come in contact.

I can testify of the aggravation caused by those who smoke. A few years ago I was having some voice problems. So, I thought it would be helpful to attend a seminar on voice care at one of the universities in Louisville. During a break, I stepped out into a small foyer (that was filled with the smoke from one smoker sitting in the corner) to call my wife. I was only in the foyer for two minutes or less. However, before I could get out the smoke had caused me to **lose my voice**. It was ironic that that was the very thing I was trying to learn how to prevent.

Jesus taught us to care more for others than that. He said, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matt. 7-12). Paul said, "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Phil. 2: 4).

If you don't care about your own body, please take others into consideration.

You Can Quit

We have established that smoking is a sin. Since that is true, then we conclude that quitting is not impossible. You can do it. You must first admit that it is wrong. Then, you must determine to quit.

(This author has a tract entitled "Smoking" published by Faith and Facts Press. It is available through Religious Supply Center.)

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THE FIRST AND GREAT COMMANDMENT
"Jesus said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." (Matt. 22: 37-40).

The priority that Jesus gives the first commandment indicates that the mission of Christ and His cause is a spiritual one (Matt. 1: 21; 20: 28; Luke 19: 10). Jesus did not come to start a denomination or a revolution; He did not leave heaven to promote the social status of men. He did not directly intrude into the problems of poverty, government, international affairs, economic questions, or secular education. It is a fact that requires little argumentation that His ministry was primarily concerned with people's spiritual welfare and eternal salvation.

When one fellow called on the Lord to settle a dispute over an inheritance, Jesus said, "Man, who made Me a judge or an arbitrator over you?" He then proceeded to warn against covetousness (Luke 12: 13-15).

The social gospel is based upon a reversal of the two great laws that Jesus referred to in the above text. Men have inverted the order. They have made the body more important than the soul. Having done this, they have exchanged the gospel of Christ for a gospel that has as its goal social improvement rather than salvation. They have promoted a gospel that treats the symptoms of the disease rather than the disease itself. As news analysis, Paul Harvey, has commented, "Jesus never seemed to be concerned about getting people out of the slums. But He walked the squalid streets day by day trying to get the slums out of the people." The fact is, if we can get the slums out of the people, they'll clean up their slums.

The source of the social gospel is that men no longer believe in the authority of the Bible, or in God, or in the soul. They believe that the greatest good they can accomplish is to provide people with a better life now.

Perhaps we need to emphasize that man's first duty is to God, and his second duty is to man. Here are some applications of the principle that I invite the readers to consider.

Some of God's requirements are strictly religious in nature. They pertain solely to the God - man relationship. Such is true of the first four of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20). The commands to have no other gods; to make no graven image; to not take the

name of God in vain; and to keep the Sabbath holy were religious laws. Many other laws in the Old Testament so far as the sacrifices, festivals, foods, and other matters were religious requirements. When the Jew under the law of Moses transgressed such laws, he sinned directly against God. Except for the religious influence he may have had on his family or neighbors, his sin was not against man. He could have been a good person socially; a good parent, neighbor, husband, employer; and broken all those laws.

This principle is true today. There are many requirements in the New Testament which are strictly religious. To believe in God and Christ, to repent, be baptized; to sing praises, take the Lord's supper, contribute to the church's work, assemble; all of these pertain to our vertical relationship with God. Many violate all such laws and are considered good men in the social and moral sense. They may be accommodating neighbors, loving parents, and productive citizens. They are just not interested in religion, or maybe they just have their own ideas about religion.

Other requirements are social or moral in nature. Many of God's commands and doctrines pertain to the horizontal man to man relationship. These, of course, also involve our relationship with God since this is part of His divine will. The last six of the Ten Commandments fall into this category: to honor parents; refrain from murder; adultery; theft; perjury and covetousness; all of these are in the realm of our relationship with our fellowmen.

Such remains true under the new covenant, for these and other moral requirements are legislated therein. When one breaks these laws, he sins not only against God, but against his neighbor. Governments have civil laws that concern these kinds of matters. If one is a transgressor of the social—moral laws, he is not usually considered a good man in the community.

Put the emphasis where the Lord put it. Both of these classes of laws are essential, but let's not lose sight of where Jesus placed the emphasis. He said the first and great commandment is to love God. Men tend to give priority to those laws that are social in nature. If one does not kill, steal, and carouse with other men's wives, he's a fine fellow. But in reality, if he has not submitted to the Lord and the gospel, he has not obeyed the first and great commandment.

It may be that the command to love God is called the first and great commandment because it really includes the second: to love neighbor as self. 1 John 5: 3 teaches us that the love of God is to keep His commandments. This would include both categories of His commandments. We are advised in 1 John 4: 20, 21 that it is not possible to love God if we do not love our brother.

When one is guilty of not helping a brother in need; or of backbiting and whispering about a brother; or of being jealous, envious, or bitter; the real problem is this: Such a one does not love God!

Some applications: We must conclude that one cannot obey the religious requirements, but ignore the moral-social requirements, and be acceptable to God. Jesus described those who were very scrupulous over religious laws, but tried to circumvent their social obli-

gations to their parents, as hypocrites (Mark 7: 6-13).

But, by the same token, if one keeps the moral laws, but ignores the religious responsibilities, he is not right either. The same God that gave the one gave the other. Both are essential. Just being a good moral person is not sufficient to save a person.

A recognition of the order of priorities in our text would solve many problems relative to institutionalism and the work of the church. On the one hand, the church, as well as the individual Christian, has certain benevolent responsibilities. These would fall into the social or moral classification. On the other hand, God has revealed a divine pattern regarding the organization and work of the church. Such is religious in nature. Some have voiced the opinion that we need to get the benevolent work done and not worry about the N. T. pattern. It appears that the emphasis is being misplaced.

Of course the basic error here is the assumption that we must ignore one thing or the other. Some of us wonder why we cannot do God's work in God's way!

Many further applications could be drawn. But the central lesson in all this is that we need to be concerned about keeping all the laws of God, both the religious and the moral.

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P. J. Casebolt

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DOCTRINAL WEATHER PATTERNS

Those whose lives are affected by the weather have learned to recognize the weather patterns in their particular geographic area. And, while the Bible is not a textbook on meteorology, there are some references to weather patterns within its pages. Jesus recognized such patterns with respect to the sky (Mt. 16: 1, 2), and Solomon wrote about patterns for the wind (Eccl. 1: 6).

The apostle Paul says that the organizational structure/mission of the church is designed to protect us against "every wind of doctrine" (Eph. 4: 11-14), and this would certainly include that "wind of doctrine" which tells us there is no church, no organization, no work, and no mission.

But patterns have a way of establishing themselves for good or for bad, in spite of those who claim there are no patterns. Even those who scoff at the idea of Bible patterns find themselves following a pattern in their efforts to minimize the truth and maximize their false winds of doctrine. And, while the Bible gives abundant warnings and descriptions pertaining to those who ini-

tiate or fan the winds of false doctrine, we can also turn to history and our own experiences to verify such patterns.

In the early 1950's, two preachers in the Ohio Valley entered the first stages of this doctrinal weather pattern with regards to the terms "church" and "kingdom." While some Baptists and Jehovah's Witnesses had made such a distinction earlier, and at least one other preacher had held a similar position, the winds of this particular theory had not caused much of a rustle in the church.

Of course, there had been a distinction made between the church and the kingdom by various proponents of the pre-millennial theory, but this new wind was blowing a different tune.

This new twist to the church/kingdom distinction advocacy that the church was established during the personal ministry of Christ, the kingdom came on the Day of Pentecost, and that Jesus returned the second time in A. D. 70 at the destruction of Jerusalem.

The first step in the pattern was to teach this new doctrine privately, because one of the champions of this theory admitted that brethren were not yet well educated enough to be taught publicly. But, when some of us began to warn of this new "wind of doctrine," we were accused of misrepresenting those who were men of considerable influence and reputation among the brethren.

Gradually, as the brethren became more "educated" by private tutoring, the winds became stronger and more public, until the champions of this doctrine caused open schism in the body of Christ, established and nurtured their own congregations, held at least one public debate, and published a book detailing their dangerous and "damnable heresies" (cf. 2 Pet. 2: 1-3).

These doctrinal weather patterns became even more evident in the Ed Fudge/Carl Ketcherside connection of the 1970's, mainly because the scope and influence of the controversy and its participants were greater. Besides the main characters on the stage at this time, there were several younger preachers in the wings, in the front row, or as one portrayed himself, on a journey toward Jesus.

The same doctrinal weather patterns began to emerge. First, there was the private indoctrination, little trial balloons sent up in sermons or articles, or cunningly devised questions which accomplished the same purpose as a statement, yet could not be used as evidence that somebody was teaching something.

Then, as concerned brethren began to raise storm warnings, there were the usual claims and charges of misunderstanding, poorly-worded positions, character assassination, and even crucifixion. One defender of those in or loitering around the Ketcherside camp even admitted that one of the central figures in the controversy was "nebulous" in describing his position, but still accused others of either misunderstanding or misrepresenting his position.

"Herein is a marvelous thing"—some of these brethren had college degrees, and some had done graduate work, but were supposedly incapable of stating their position clearly enough to avoid being misunderstood. Any of us may make an off-hand statement or reference in passing that could stand some further clarification or

editing, but when an otherwise capable writer or speaker addresses a particular subject of his own choosing, and still can't express himself clearly enough to be understood, there is something wrong, and the fault doesn't lie with the hearer or the reader. That person either doesn't want to be understood clearly, or else needs to go back and take a basic course in plain English.

Another "wind of doctrine" is blowing over the brotherhood and it surely sounds like somebody is questioning the deity/divinity of Christ while he was upon earth. Again, there are the plain statements that no one could misunderstand, nebulous statements that could mean anything (or nothing), and inferences and questions that are left for the reader to answer or decide. Then come the denials or claims of misunderstanding and misrepresentation and other pieces of the doctrinal weather pattern.

The philosophy of those who want to advocate some new thing or resurrect some old denominational doctrine seems to be: throw your hat in the door, sample the waters of brotherhood reaction, send up a trial balloon, then advance or retreat depending on the nature of the opposition.

I have purposely omitted names with regard to the church/kingdom controversy of the 1950's, because that particular incident was more localized, and has about run its course as far as influence is concerned (I hope). There was no question about what Carl Ketcherside advocated in the 1970's, though his earlier positions were couched in the same ambiguity as other winds of false doctrine. Some of his converts were not as forthright as their teacher, and still aren't.

But these more recent winds blowing strange things about divorce/remarriage and the deity of Christ have not yet reached their full gale force, and some brethren had better take a second look at where they are in this doctrinal weather pattern before they make shipwreck concerning the faith.

We would not leave the impression that everyone who becomes entangled in such patterns fits the "sleight of men and cunning craftiness" label of Ephesians 4: 14. Sometimes a position forces us to follow a particular pattern which we would not intentionally embrace under more rational circumstances.

And, it is possible to be caught up in an "I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas" situation (1 Cor. 1: 12), "be puffed up for one against another" (1 Cor. 4: 6), or be led away by the dissimulation of those who do fall into such errors (Gal. 2: 13).

At any rate, we need to examine ourselves (2 Cor. 13: 5), and make certain that we are following a pattern that originates from spiritual Mt. Sinai (cf. Heb. 8: 5), and not a pattern which finds its origins in "every wind of doctrine."

SINCERE WORDS

"The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth (Ecc. 12:10)."

Dick Blackford

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WHERE JOHN LENNON MISSED IT

On October 9, Yoko Ono spoke before the United Nations and a recording of John Lennon's IMAGINE was broadcast to 130 countries over 1000 radio stations to over 1 billion people. The Armed Forces network beamed it to 80 more countries. While one may admire Lennon's ability, right-thinking people must disdain his atheistic communism. Tom Brokaw (of NBC) told us that Lennon began his rebellion against authority when he was 10 years old. The peace he longed for will never come through the philosophy he advocated.

"IMAGINE There's No Heaven, It's easy if you try." Lennon wanted us to believe Jesus was lying by promising us heaven. This would mean Jesus was not the son of God. Jesus taught us to live morally and righteously that we might spend eternity in the place he has gone to prepare and where he now reigns (Jn. 14: 1-3).

"No Hell Below Us, Above us only sky." As an act of friendship, Jesus warned us against hell. "And I say unto you my **friends**,... fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Lk. 12: 4, 5; Mt. 10: 28). Not many believe in hell because it hampers their lifestyle. Lennon taught and practiced self-indulgence. Jesus taught self-denial and called us to a higher and nobler life of faith in Jehovah God who holds the future. If Jesus was right about hell then Lennon was no friend to man.

"IMAGINE All The People, Living for today." Charles Smith, former president of the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism (4A Society) said, "happiness here and now should be the motive of our conduct." Neither Smith nor Lennon believed in a hereafter — no heaven or hell. Just do what will make you happy **NOW**. For over two decades a large segment of society has been doing that. And when we look at the AIDS plague, other epidemics of VD, the abortions, unwanted and unloved children, drug addicts, suicides, etc., we are caused to ask, "Are we having fun yet?"

"IMAGINE... No religion too." Eliminating Jesus and his teaching about heaven and hell does not eliminate religion. It exchanges one religion for another. From a religion of self-denial to a religion of self-indulgence. Lennon's religion of self-indulgence makes self into a god. The worship of self is the most corrupt religion a man can have.

"IMAGINE All The People, Living life in peace." If you can imagine this from a life of self-indulgence you have

too big an imagination. Lennon admitted advocating drug use (self-indulgence) in some of his songs. The drug culture has brought us anything but peace. We have seen its blight on America's most precious natural resource — her youth. It has ruined the health of many. It has caused many to turn to a life of crime, prostitution, etc. It has caused some to turn away from life to suicide. Lennon suffered the consequences of his own philosophy. One of his fans, who was a drug user, shot and killed the rock star. And if there is no God, who can say he did wrong?

Christians deplore both the crime and the philosophy that led to it (no God, self-indulgence).

IMAGINE No Possessions... People sharing all the world." Christians of the first century shared their possessions with their brethren by choice, out of love, as Jesus taught (Acts 2: 44, 45; 4: 32; Jn. 13: 34, 35). But Communism tried to force people to work according to their ability and receive according to their needs (no choice, without love). The work ethic was destroyed and many now live in poverty.

It would help if the multi-millionaires like Lennon and many other advocates of this philosophy would lead the way instead of pointing the way. Lennon, Jane Fonda, etc. retained their millions while making a token contribution now and then. Communist leaders lived lives of luxury while the people starved. They want everyone else to give up their possessions but they haven't shown us how it's done.

"You May Say I'm A Dreamer..." Yes, because what Lennon dreamed (communism) became a nightmare that didn't work. Atheistic communism is not the answer to man's plight. The reason we could never have the peace of which Lennon (Lenin?) dreamed is because he

eliminated the Prince of Peace who gave us the highest moral principles ever known to man. It is not because Christianity was tried and found difficult, but because it was found difficult and not tried. The fact that the cooperation of the U. N., all the radio and TV stations and 210 countries could be brought together should tell us that there are many who are still dreaming of communism.

Almost everyone can identify with John Lennon's longing to "live to peace" when "the world will be as one." Can we not see where Lennon and others have gone wrong? It isn't hard to Imagine.

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THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

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

GEORGIA DEAN COPE

GEORGIA DEAN COPE, beloved wife of James R. Cope, completed her earthly journey on December 3. Funeral services were conducted on December 6 at Hutchinson Auditorium on the campus of Florida College with Bob Owen, Colly Caldwell and Earl Kimbrough conducting services. She was a gracious lady who loved the Lord, her husband and children and the people of God. She was a personal blessing to the life of this editor. The Copes have unselfishly given of themselves all their lives to help other people. Young people they influenced for good are now scattered over the globe. Our hearts go out to brother Cope in his loss, and yet we rejoice for her that she is at rest from the illness she suffered. You may reach James R. Cope at 301 Greencastle, Temple Terrace, FL 33617.

WILLIAM C. SEXTON, 4400 N. W. Gleason, Kansas City, MO 64151—October 14, 1990 was an historic day for the Roan Ridge

congregation in Kansas City. Three men (Ray Harris, Bill Sexton and Kenneth Young) were appointed to serve as elders of the congregation. April 16 was a critical day in my life. I had open heart surgery, had 4 by-passes and spent 21 days in the hospital. I am now doing fine. Thanks for all the prayers, cards, letters and phone calls brethren. In a few weeks I was back in the pulpit and able to resume my usual work. The bill exceeded \$70, 000. In the last three years my insurance company has paid out about \$170, 000 on hospital and doctor bills. I would suggest to any preacher who is tempted to get along without hospitalization that you think again.

I'm in my 6th year with Roan Ridge. Bill Crews was here in a good meeting in June. When in Kansas City, worship with us.

EDGAR J. DYE, 800 Green Oak Lane, Pine Bluff, AR 71602—Contrary to persistent public rumor I have NOT retired, am NOT retired and DO NOT—repeat, DO NOT—plan to retire. I have changed my primary place of labor, **but have NOT** retired. After a

total of 18 years labor with the brethren in Pine Bluff, 4 years with the 6th Ave. church and 14 years with the W. 28th Ave. church, I am now laboring with the church at Grady, Arkansas about 20 miles southeast of Pine Bluff on Highway 65 South. I will continue to live in Pine Bluff at the above address while working full time with the brethren in Grady.

JACK GILLILAND, San Bernardino, CA—We moved from Taft, Texas to begin work December 1 with the Mt. View church in San Bernardino, CA.

NORMAN E. Webb, 3402 Reign St., Melbourne, FL 32934—The Eau Gallie congregation in Melbourne has recently completed a new auditorium that will seat about 225. This has been planned several years and we are thankful to see it realized. I have been working with the church here for 2 years. We have been blessed with 20 baptisms and several have placed membership with us. Attendance is about 100. The Melbourne/Palm Bay area is growing rapidly. We invite anyone visiting this area to meet with us.

WILLIAM O'NEAL, Route 7, Box 26, Russell Springs, KY 42642—Dorval McClister will begin work with the church at Jamestown, Kentucky on January 1, 1991. He has been with the Burbank, Illinois congregation for the past 21 years. Since he was born and reared in Adair County, KY, it is like coming home to him and his wife, Jean. Everyone in the Jamestown congregation is so happy about his accepting work here.

BOB L. ROSS (Baptist), P. O. Box 66, Pasadena, TX 77501— I note the passing of A. C. GRIDER in the October issue (page 232). I first met Bro. Grider in Annandale, Virginia in 1973 where I was in a debate with Floyd Chappelle. As I had no one to serve as a moderator, I proposed that Bro. Grider, who was to serve for Floyd, was also acceptable to me and could serve as the mutual moderator, which he did. I called only one point of order during the debate, regarding a chart which was "new material" in a last speech of the evening, and Bro. Grider upheld my point, even though we were divided over the issues in debate. I developed an immediate fondness for him, and it seemed to me that he took a liking to me. Since our first meeting, we have had a few letters between us, and I have always enjoyed his correspondence. He once invited me to come and debate with him for a month! Despite our differences, I could not help but like him, and I am sure he will be missed by all who knew him.

JIM DEASON, Rt. 1, Box 153, Culleoka, TN 38451—In October I was in a meeting at Carriage Dr. in Beckley, WV where Weldon Warnock is doing a fine work. One was baptized. Then, I went to Pound, VA for my sixth meeting there where Leonard Salyers has done such good work for some 13 years. One was baptized here. Health problems have slowed him down some the last two years, but the fruit of his labor can be seen everywhere.

ROBERT BOLTON, 504 Goodwin Dr., Richardson, TX 75081—After working with the College Park church for almost 17 years, by mutual agreement with the elders, I am restructuring my work as a gospel preacher. As many of you know, for several years I have been attempting to persuade the brethren to get another preacher. As a result, it has been decided to engage some mature man to take up the work of a local preacher here. I will continue to be fully supported and financially underwritten by College Park, but will be relieved of the burdens of local work. Thus, I will be free to increase my schedule of gospel meetings, especially with smaller churches that might be financially restricted. Also, I will be available for Sunday appointment preaching in the immediate area of North Central Texas. Brethren, I do not desire to retire, but simply to rearrange my work in the kingdom of God. My hope is that I will be able to conduct ten to twelve meetings a year as well as do a good deal of appointment preaching where needed. Should any congregation, anywhere, desire my service in such an endeavor, I would be most delighted to hear from them as soon as possible, that I might complete my schedule for the next three years. I may be contacted at the above address or phone (214) 234-0296.

W. BRADENTON CHURCH RE-LOCATES

The church which has met at West Bradenton, Florida since 1911, has sold the property at 161910th Ave. W. On September 2, 1990 we began meeting in a meeting room at DAYS INN MOTEL, 15061st St. W. (Hwy. 41) in Bradenton. Services are at 9 and 10 A. M. and 5 P. M. on Sundays and 7: 30 on Wednesdays. All correspondence should be addressed to: Bradenton Church of Christ, P. O. Box 10932, Bradenton, FL 34282. Phone (813) 746-0305. We plan to re-locate at another site as soon as possible.

A. A. GRANKE, JR., 1 Cherokee St., Sumter, SC 29150—As soon as support can be arranged, my wife, Cindy, and I plan to move to Millsboro, Delaware where I will do the work of an evangelist. Millsboro is situated near the center of Delmarva peninsula, between the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean. To our knowledge the saints there comprise the only faithful church on the entire 190-mile long peninsula. The nearest sound churches are more than 100 miles away in Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington, D. C. areas. The church began in 1987 with the family of Tim and Connie Fannin. Four adults they have taught have recently obeyed the gospel and they are studying with others. I am 46 years old and have been preaching since 1970. Personal evangelism is the kind of work to which I am best suited. I was born and reared in Delaware and I know the people of that area. I will be glad to put churches which are interested in helping support me in contact with congregations which have supported my work in South Carolina and with other references. My phone number is (803) 773-0828.

FRED A. SHEWMAKER, 1101 S. W. Dorchester St., Fort St. Lucie, FL 34983—Since our last report on the work in Fort Pierce, Florida, there have been several significant developments. We have converted a garage into three nice class rooms. We remodeled the assembly area, installed a baptistery, tore out the restrooms and built new, larger ones. In January the church assumed support which two other churches had supplied for the preacher, and plan in Jan, 1991 to assume that supplied by two other congregations and a part of that supplied by the remaining supporting church. We have had 11 baptisms, one restored and 10 have been identified with us. We now publish a bulletin, "The Fortifier." Grover Stevens and Eugene Ford were here in meeting in 1990. Hoyt H. Houchen will be here Feb. 10-15, 1991 for a gospel meeting. If you are thinking of moving to Florida, or visiting this state, we invite you to consider the Treasure Coast and the Fort Pierce Church.

GLENDON MCCLURE, P. O. Box 1413, Antioch, CA 94509—Bobby Witherington, now of Panama City, Florida was recently with us in a gospel meeting. We continue to struggle because our number is small, but we press on. We wish to issue a plea to "come over to" Antioch, CA and help us. We would like to interest Christians to come here who love, live and teach the truth; those who oppose worldly living and false doctrine, including false teaching on divorce and remarriage. We need people who are grounded and settled, who will not forsake the assembling and who can be depended on. We need people who love the lost. If you are that kind of Christian, then "COME OVER AND HELP US."

PREACHER NEEDED

CAMERON, OHIO—The church here is seeking a full time preacher. Cameron is located about 15 miles from New Martinsville, West Virginia and about the same distance from Woodsfield, Ohio. The average attendance is about 40 people. Outside support will be required. We can offer \$600 per month support. Contact: Bill Gorrell, P. O. Box 67, Woodsfield, OH 43793 or call (614) 472-5141.

ROCK SPRINGS, WYOMING—The church which meets at 90 Second St., Rock Springs, WY 82901, is in need of a fulltime preacher of the gospel. There are about 50 in attendance on Sunday mornings. The editor of STS preached there recently and was impressed with the potential for good. Rock Springs is a town of about 12, 000 located on

I-80 in the southern part of Wyoming. Some outside support would be needed. Those interested may contact Al Hasley, 525 Wilkes Dr., Green River, WY 82935. Phone (307) 875-6669.

FROM AROUND THE WORLD

NORWAY—The church in Bergen has bought a building in which to meet. They will have the first floor of a building at Steinkjellergate 9. This is located one block from the famous "Bryggen" (harbor front). It is near several of the large hotels. Though the structure is 150 years old, it has recently undergone complete renovation. They could use some help from individuals in the purchasing of some equipment (tables, lighting, chairs for assembly area and classrooms, table for the Lord's Supper). They will be able to meet the payments from their own contributions. Write to: Terrell Bunting, Bronndalen 89, 5071 Loddefjord, Norway.

AROUND EUROPE—**STEVE WALLACE** of Ramstein, Germany reports on recent trips to various places to preach and encourage the brethren. He has made two trips to Budapest, one alone and one with Denny Diehl of Elgin, IL. Two were baptized and many Bibles and pieces of literature were handed out. Lynn Trapp from Crane, Texas spent about 3 weeks in Budapest in July. During that time he baptized 15 people. Derek Chambers and Harry Rice plan to go there in October. Denny Diehl and Steve Wallace also stopped in Prague, Czechoslovakia to gather information for brethren planning to move there. They handed out literature. The Czechs swarmed around the table until every piece of literature was gone. John Iguma, one of the original converts in Budapest, has now moved to Vienna, Austria and has already baptized 3 there. Derek and Harry also plan to visit there. Tom Earp, Jeff Young and Bill Bynum are now in Prague. As soon as they can find housing, their families will join them.

INDIA REPORT

JOHN HUMPHRIES, 8705 Wooded Glen Road, Louisville, KY 40220—Jerry Parks and I completed safely around trip to India for the purpose of preaching and teaching the gospel of Christ. We were gone about six weeks in September and October. We had Bible classes for preachers and any others who wanted to attend at several locations in various districts in the state of Andhra Pradesh, South India. We presented various lessons on authority, the church and its work, apostasy and history of the church, the plan of salvation, etc. We had prepared workbooks that we handed out to the brethren who attended the classes. We also did a lot of preaching in many villages meeting with many of the churches to encourage the members.

As you may remember, this past summer Andhra Pradesh had a severe storm that destroyed many villages and killed several thousand people. It was what we would call a hurricane with 150 mile per hour winds. This storm hit the Krishna Delta where many of our brethren live. They were devastated. Homes were blown away. Crops and animals were destroyed. Many of them lost everything. A number of them were killed. After the storm, because of the water problems and dead animals, various diseases spread. Malaria, cholera, typhoid and other medical problems caused heavy loss of life.

The response of brethren here was heart-warming. Several thousand dollars in help to the needy saints was sent and also carried by us to the suffering brethren in India. Money was given for food, clothing, shelter and medicine. We have pictures of many of the places and brethren who were helped. We were able to purchase Bibles for many who lost theirs.

We also had 8 tracts, written by several of us who go to India, printed in the Telegu language. We printed 10,000 copies of each tract. The Taylorsville Road church (Louisville, KY) made most of that possible. Also, some song books in Telegu were printed. Pekin and Silver St. in New Albany (Indiana) had sent money to pay for tracts and song books.

Jerry and I watered where Indian preachers had planted. We baptized 54. These has been taught by Indian brethren and were ready to respond to the gospel.

India is in great difficulty right now as a nation. There is religious conflict over a "sacred" temple site presently occupied by a Moslem Mosque. The Hindus want the property back in order to build a temple there and the Moslems are threatening "Holy war" if the Hindus try

to build there. It has resulted in much bloodshed over the past year and a half and no end is in sight. Conflict over jobs based on quotas instead of merit has led to riots and bloodshed. Hyderabad (where we were) was shut down for days at a time. Buses did not run, stores did not open, and schools closed down because of the violence.

I will not go into other problems, but just wanted all to realize that we were not making a pleasure trip. I had a close call one night when preaching in a suburb of Secunderabad. Some Hindus were objecting to the Christians meeting there and came with knives and clubs to stop the meeting. Several brethren were beaten and the brethren rushed me away from the place (Acts 17: 13, 14).

Though Jerry and I split up to cover more places, we still were not able to visit all the brethren. I have been going to India for the past 14 years and see many new churches as a result of the gospel work. I am planning to return to India next fall.

ITALY—Francesco Fosci of Latina reports three baptisms there in October. He also has started a new radio program on Sunday mornings.

Sandro Corazza of Rome is losing a sizable amount of support which places him and the work at Via Sannio in a precarious situation. Several years ago this brother gave up a good job, took his retirement funds and purchased a small print shop to use in preparing and printing material in Italian to help further the work. He is now 66 years old and past the time when he could find other employment. His wife has had serious physical problems.

Also, Stefano Corazza, who works with Roberto Tondelli in establishing a new work in another section of Rome, has lost a large amount of support. All of the men there face difficulties because of the fluctuations in the value of the dollar in the foreign exchange.

SPAIN—Efrain Perez has just started the second year of a preacher training program at the Badalona congregation (Barcelona). Attendance recently has averaged 42 with a high of 55 in services. Two more have been baptized and one restored.

VENEZUELA AND COLUMBIA, SOUTH AMERICA—Carlos Capelli of Buenos Aires, Argentina reports on a preaching trip to Venezuela and Columbia during which four were baptized and one restored. He says the brethren in Venezuela need Bible literature in Spanish. Ruben C. Amador of Houston, Texas was with the churches at Jose C. Paz and Boulogne in Argentina for gospel meetings in October. Much good was done.

Ruben C. Amador makes this comment about false reports on the work in Venezuela. "Since beginning our work in Venezuela through the invitation of the sound church in Barinas, distorted reports have come from the liberal camp. A much circulated paper, THE LATIN AMERICAN CRIER, published monthly by the Western Christian Foundation, Inc. in Wichita Falls, Texas, contains a monthly report written by Bob Brown, missionary in Venezuela. Every other report contains false information about the sound work of good faithful brethren. These reports demonstrate a lack of love for truth and fairness. Contrary to these reports, the work in Barinas continues and is by far the strongest church in all Venezuela."

SOUTH AFRICA—Paul Williams' last two reports mention nine baptisms, four confessions of wrong and two withdrawals. Paul is losing \$550 a month support.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: It is sad to learn that several good men in foreign fields are losing significant amounts of support at a time when so much good is being done and so many doors are being opened. There are often good reasons why some congregations have to reduce their help at certain times but we pray that others will see the need and take up the slack. The fields are white unto harvest. CWA)

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	S21
RESTORATIONS	114

(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)