

# 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

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### WHEN WAS THE KINGDOM ESTABLISHED ON EARTH?

When was the kingdom of the Old Testament prophets established? Some think that it began in the days of Abraham when God made His promises to him. This is obviously not true because the prophecies concerning the kingdom had not been made and a King had not been designated to receive a kingdom.

Some theologians teach that the kingdom was established during the days that John the Baptist was upon earth. This could not be true because Jesus made the statement that none was greater than John the Baptist, "notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he" (Matt. 11: 11). This is to say that John was not in the kingdom. He lived and died before the kingdom was established.

Besides this, John the Baptist preached, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3: 1, 2). After John was put in prison, he was never released (Matt. 14: 3-12). Jesus came preaching, "the kingdom of God is at hand..." (Mark 1: 14, 15). The kingdom had not come when John was beheaded. John was dead before the church or kingdom was established.

The kingdom or church could not begin before the death, burial, resurrection and Ascension of Jesus Christ. In fact, the death, burial and resurrection must have occurred before Christ could receive a kingdom, according to prophecy. Daniel prophesied of Christ ascending to the Father to receive his kingdom: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came

to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Dan. 7: 13, 14).

The promise was made of Messiah who would save the people.: "But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4: 4, 5). Jesus came at the right time for a definite purpose. The blood of the lamb of God had to be shed in order to make both Jew and Gentile one in Christ (Eph. 2: 13-16). By his blood, Christ reconciled all unto God in ONE body "by the cross." The one body is the church (Eph. 1: 22, 23; Col. 1: 18, 24). Our redemption, the forgiveness of sins, is through his blood (Eph. 1: 7). The church is purchased with his blood (Acts 20: 28). The church could not have been established before Christ gave his blood on the cross.

The kingdom could not have been established before Christ ascended to the Father to receive the kingdom of prophecy. He could not ascend until he was raised from the dead. He gave his life in fulfillment of the eternal purpose of God, and he must be raised from the dead before he could ascend to the Father and receive the power he now has.

Christ told the twelve just before he ascended into heaven that they should tarry in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high (Luke 24: 49; Acts 1: 8, 9). After he said this he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. Daniel saw night visions in which "one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him" (Dan. 7: 13).

The kingdom or church could not be established until the power came. Jesus said unto the people and his disciples, that there were some of them standing there, "Which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power" (Mark 9: 1). If we can know exactly when the power came, we know exactly when the kingdom came. Just before his Ascension, Jesus told his apostles to "tarry ye in the city

of Jerusalem, until ye be endured with power from on high" (Luke 24: 49).

Luke was the inspired writer of both Luke and Acts. He addressed both to "most excellent Theophilus" (Luke 1: 3; Acts 1: 1). Acts begins where Luke leaves off. "The former treatise" Most surely refers to Luke (Acts 1: 1). Christ commands the eleven not to depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father (Acts 1: 4). Verse 6 gives the account of the eleven asking Jesus if he was now ready to "restore again the kingdom to Israel." He replied, in effect, that it was not any of their business what the Father put in His own power. Then he adds, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1: 8).

We have the right PLACE and the right TIME: Jerusalem and Pentecost. That is where the power came and when the power came. That is where and when the kingdom of Christ began upon earth according to prophecy and fulfillment. That is the time when and place where the church had its beginning. Acts 2 is the account of that power beginning its work and in the last verse we read, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2: 47).

There is one undeniable fact that is proved by this: any church that began anytime before or after Pentecost, and at any place other than Jerusalem is not the church the prophets spoke of, and is not the one Christ promised to build in Matthew 16: 18. Since the "church" and "kingdom" are but two terms for the same body of people over whom Christ reigns, the kingdom of Christ began on earth in Jerusalem on the first Pentecost following the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.

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## " QUOTE

**"When regard for truth has been  
broken down or even slightly  
weakened, all things  
will remain doubtful."**

**—St. Augustine**

## UNQUOTE "

# Editorial

Connie W. Adams

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## MAGIC AIDS FORNICATION

"Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. 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: 18-20). This simple approach to sexuality is seldom heard on the modern scene. While the passage is addressed to Christians (for they are bought with the price of the shed blood of Christ), the practice of the principles set forth here would solve many problems in society at large.

If more would understand that human bodies were made by God and intended to become instruments of righteousness in which God is to be glorified, it would change what people decide to do with their bodies. If more would flee fornication, it would cut way down on the divorce epidemic. It would reduce the number of murders, for many lives are taken by betrayed mates. It would slow down teenage pregnancies. It would drastically cut down on the number of abortions, for many of these grow out of fornication. And, it would greatly reduce the problem of Aids and other diseases directly related to ungodly behaviour.

For sometime now, efforts have been made to solve the problem of AIDS. The public has been lectured about loving those with this disease. We are told that they need to be hugged. Some large cities have given out clean needles to dope addicts to help curb this scourge. High school students in New York (and soon other cities plan to do the same) have been given condoms. A recent front-page newspaper article appeared with a picture of two high school students (a fifteen year old boy and his thirteen year old girl friend) holding this birth control device which they had received at school. One teenage boy told me sometime ago that his sex education class at school was mainly a course in how to commit fornication without getting pregnant or contracting a disease.

With all the money spent on AIDS (and I certainly don't begrudge medical attention to anyone who is ill), far more people in this country are fighting cancer, heart disease and other serious ailments from which many people die every year — far more than from the AIDS virus. If you paid attention to the news media, you might get the impression that AIDS is about the only newsworthy malady in our nation.

But none of this has compared to the frenzy generated by the announcement by basketball super-star, Magic Johnson, that he now has the HIV virus and that he was retiring from professional basketball. He has been praised by the media, by entertainers and by politicians as a great hero. How did he get this virus? He admits to sexual encounters with women. Wilt Chamberlain, another basketball great boasted in a recent book about his promiscuity with many women. I am sorry Magic Johnson has the HIV virus. Further, I am sorry for his sinful lifestyle which exposed him to it. Now he is going to "help" young people by telling them how to have "safe sex." His emphasis will be on using protection. In one anemic statement, he acknowledged the criticism he has received for his sinful contact by saying he would say something about the choice of abstinence. Which choice do you think immature and sexually active young people will hear from him. Abstinence, or protection? And does anyone seriously believe that young people who are given birth control equipment will not commit fornication?

It is argued by some that "everyone is doing this" so we might as well protect ourselves. Well, not everyone is committing fornication, thank the Lord, but all too many are. Two people are too many.

What is "safe sex"? Would you listen to divine wisdom? "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power over her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency" (1 Cor. 7: 2-5).

Again, "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor; Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as other Gentiles which know not God" (1 Thes. 4: 3-5).

And again, "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Heb. 13: 4). These passages define the limits of "safe sex." God ordained marriage to be honorable for all people and the marriage bed is "undefiled." Fornication is to be avoided for it is sinful. God will judge those who practice it. Each one is responsible for keeping his "vessel" pure. Husbands and wives have privileges with each others bodies which are not to be denied. Each is to render to the other what is their "due." In marriage it is safe, honorable, designed for pleasure for both husband and wife, and provides a preventive to fornication.

Now, what will become of fornicators, including homosexuals and lesbians? "Whoremongers" shall have their part "in the lake of fire" (Rev. 21: 8), whether we are talking about Magic Johnson, Wilt Chamberlain or Jimmy Swaggart. He told his congregation it was "none of their business" if he consorted with prostitutes. But

according to John, it is indeed God's business. Jesus taught that out of an evil heart proceed fornications, murders, and other evils, and added "All these evil things come from within, and defile the man" (Mk. 7:21-23). Paul listed fornication as a work of the flesh and said "they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19-21). My friends, what fornicators need is not protection but a penitent heart which results in a changed life which respects God's law on sexuality. But then, you would not hear that on the network news, would you?

I am personally outraged that our President has put Magic Johnson on a commission to work with young people and offer them advice. Unless there has been some change from what I have seen out of Magic, his principle advice will be how to commit fornication and not get caught. As long as that prevails then it will be true that Magic aids fornication.

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**A PERSONAL NOTE TO READERS**

It is a joy to be back at my desk putting together an issue of STS. Therapy is still going on with my back, and I still have some restrictions for a few more weeks, but it is a relief to feel that I am back at my post. Words cannot fully express to Donnie V. Rader my heartfelt appreciation for his able and faithful work in editing the paper for the past seven months. His three months for the summer turned into seven and I am much in his debt and so are the readers. Why not take a moment and drop him a note of gratitude.

The fall meetings are now behind us and we are into our winter classes at Manslick Road in Louisville. We appreciate your prayers and other encouragements.

**THE NATURE OF CHRIST (3)**

*Hoyt Houchen*

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**JOHN 1: 1-3, 14**

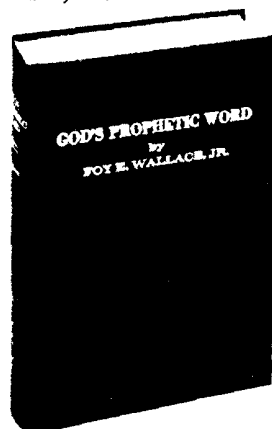
In the prologue (perhaps better stated as the epilogue) of John's gospel, he wrote: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (1: 1). The "Word" is translated from the Greek word *logos*. The "Word" (*logos*) here is "the personal manifestation, not of a part of the divine nature, but of the whole Deity" (W. E. Vine, op. cit. Vol. 4, p. 230). B. F. Westcott says of the "logos" that "no idea of inferiority of nature is suggested by the form of expression, which simply affirms the true deity of the Word. " He further states: "Thus we are led to conceive that the divine nature is essentially in the Son, and at the same time that the Son can be regarded, according to that which is His peculiar characteristic, in relation to God as God. He is the "image of God" and not simply of the Father" (*The Gospel According to John*, p. 3). Christ (the eternal Word, the *logos*) is said to be "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation" (Col. 1: 15). The word "image" (Gr. *eikon*) is defined by Thayer: "an image, figure, likeness: (op. cit. p. 175). Philip requested of Jesus, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. " Jesus replied: "Have I been so long time with you, and doest thou not know me, Philip? he that hath seen me has seen the Father; how sayest thou, Show us the Father?" (Jno. 14: 8, 9). Westcott comments on the expression has seen the Father": "hath seen not God in His absolute being (1: 18), but God in this relation" (Ibid., p. 203). He explains this relation in his comment on John 1: 18. "It is impossible, so far as our experience goes, for man to have direct knowledge of God as God. He can come to know Him only through One who shares both the human and divine natures, and who is in vital fellowship both with God and with man. In Christ this condition is satisfied" (Ibid., p. 14). C. E. W. Dorris also makes the meaning of John 1: 18 clear. "Natural eyes cannot behold God who is a 'Spirit' no more than they can see the soul of man. Man 'cannot see God and live, ' but he can see and understand 'God manifested in the flesh. ' Christ was not an ambassador from God but 'Immanuel, God with us, ' the 'Godhead in bodily form'" (*A Commentary on the Gospel of John*, p. 223).

We now consider John 1: 14, "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us... " The verb "dwelt" is from the Greek word *skeeno*, literally, "tabernacled. " We are not to suppose that because the Word "became" flesh that the Word itself was different from what He was

**GOD'S PROPHETIC WORD**

*By Foy E. Wallace, Jr.*

A compendium on the Abrahamic Promises and the Mosaic, major and minor Davidic Prophecies, consisting of a complete exposure and refutation of the multiple theories of premillennialism, including a review of the claims of British Anglo-Israelism, and the Judaistic system of Seventh Day Adventism.



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before the Incarnation.

How was Christ "made" flesh (KJV), or how did He "become" flesh (ASV)? Jesus was made or became incarnate. Webster defines "incarnate," "invested with a bodily and human nature" (*Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, p. 608). Westcott says, "He was with God; and 'He tabernacled among us: 'the divine existence is brought into a vital and historical connection with human life... The mode of the Lord's existence on earth was truly human, and subject to all the conditions of human existence; but He never ceased to be God... The Lord's human and divine natures were united in one Person" (op. cit. p. 10).

How was Christ made, or how did he become incarnate? He was born of a virgin (Matt. 1: 18-21). To deny the virgin birth of Jesus Christ is to call in question the sacred historians and to doubt the honor and purity of Mary. Someone has said: "He was born from a virgin womb and when He died he was placed in a virgin tomb. " He was God in the flesh (1 Tim. 3: 16, KJV). Whether or not there is sufficient evidence for the King James translation "God," the fact remains that other scriptures sustain the idea. The eternal Word (*logos*) was made, became flesh. He was born of a woman (Gal. 4: 4). He was made like His brethren in all things "That he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God" (Heb. 2: 17). He became "perfect" (Heb. 5: 9). The word "perfect" here does not denote sinlessness. He was already sinless — He lived a sinless life. The word "perfect" in this verse is the first aorist passive participle of *teleioo* and is defined by A. T. Robertson as "the completion of the process of training mentioned by this same verb in 2: 10 'by means of sufferings' (op. cit. Vol. 5, p. 370). Robertson also makes a worthwhile observation on Hebrews 2: 10, "perfect through sufferings. " He says: "If one recoils at the idea of God making Christ perfect, he should bear in mind that it is the humanity of Jesus that is under discussion. The writer does not say that Jesus was sinful (see the opposite in 4: 15), but simply that 'by means of sufferings' God perfected His Son in his human life and death for his task as Redeemer and Saviour" (op. cit. Vol. 5, p. 347). In Hebrews 10: 5, the inspired writer says of Christ, "... but a body didst thou prepare for me. " The context denotes that the body was to be for an offering, an offering for sin. Please notice that "a body didst thou prepare for me. " Who is the ME? The ME existed before the body. The body was prepared for the ME. The virgin Mary became the mother of the human body of Jesus. She is not the mother of God, as the Catholics claim. The ME already existed. The ME, or God, is eternal. H. Leo Boles has well expressed it: "Jesus was as human as his mother Mary, and as divine as his father God" (*Commentary on Matthew*, p. 25).

Existing in the flesh (incarnate) Jesus accomplished all that He came to earth to do. He prayed to the Father, "I glorified thee on earth, having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do" (Jno. 17: 4). There can be no reason for God the Son (Christ) to again take a bodily form and return to earth. He finished the work of redemption, and His kingdom was established on the

first Pentecost after His resurrection from the dead. He presently is at the right hand of His Father where He is "far above all rule and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come" (Eph. 1: 21). He rules in the hearts of, and over the lives of His subjects in His spiritual kingdom. He will reign until the last enemy is destroyed — death (1 Cor. 15: 26). The Bible is silent upon a future bodily reign of Christ.

Our finite minds cannot comprehend how Jesus was both God and man upon the earth. This comes in the realm of the supernatural which we must accept by faith. Neither do we understand, nor are we able to explain, the miracles which Jesus performed; but we believe that He did them (Jno. 20: 30, 31). We accept them by faith (Rom. 10: 17).

### Jesus Was More Than A Man

When Jesus was upon earth He was human yet divine. He became thirsty; yet it was He who said: "if any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink (Jno. 7: 37). He became hungry, but He was able to feed about five thousand men besides women and children with five loaves and two fishes (Matt. 14: 19-21). He became weary, yet He offered Himself to all who were weary and heavy laden (Matt. 11: 28-30).

It is contended by some that Jesus could not have been God on earth because He was tempted in all points as we are (Heb. 4: 15), but God cannot be tempted with evil (Jas. 1: 13). So, the argument is that the devil is the epitome of evil; therefore, since Jesus was tempted with evil, He could not have been God. It is true that the divine nature of Jesus could not be tempted (as God he could not be tempted with evil), but His human nature (like other men) faced temptation and experienced the full force of it. As God, He was sinless; and as a human being he was sinless (1 Pet. 2: 21-23).

When the angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she would give birth to a son, he said of this son, "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High..." (Lk. 1: 32). In this announcement, the angel also referred to the child to be born as "the holy thing" and he would be called "the Son of God" (vs. 35). Could such statements be made of a mere human infant? When Mary visited Elizabeth, she said, to Mary, "and whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come unto me?" (vs. 43). Such could not have been said of just an ordinary child.

Jesus was worshipped while upon the earth. He was worshipped by the wise men who had come from the east. they came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we saw the star in the east, and are come to worship him" (Matt. 2: 1, 2). In verse 9 it is stated that "they fell down and worshipped him. " The word "worship" is translated from the Greek word *proskuneo* and denotes an act of reverence whether paid to creature or to the Creator (see footnote on Matt. 2: 2 in ASV). The word is applied to Jesus "who is to be revered and worshipped as Messianic King and Divine Helper: Mt. 2: 2, 8, 11. — 8: 2; 9: 18; 14: 33, 15: 25; Jno. 9: 38 — Mt. 20: 20" (Amdt and Gingrich, op. cit. p. 724). This word is used in several instances in the New Testament. Jesus

said to Satan in Matthew 4: 10: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. " The Samaritan leper whom Jesus had healed, fell upon his face at his feet, giving him thanks (Lk. 17: 16). But when Cornelius fell down at the feet of Peter and worshipped him, Peter raised him up, saying, "Stand up; I MYSELF ALSO AM A MAN" (Acts 10: 25, 26, Emphasis mine, H. H. ). Never did Jesus ever give this command to anyone who bowed or kneeled at His feet. Neither did He ever command anyone, saying, "Stand up; I also am a man. " Interestingly Peter would not allow Cornelius to fall down at his feet and worship him; but Peter "fell down at Jesus' knees saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O LORD" (Lk. 5: 8, Emphasis mine, H. H. ). Women took hold of the feet of the risen Jesus and worshipped Him (Matt. 28: 9). After the apostle Thomas had probed the wounds of Jesus, he said unto him. "My Lord and my God" (Jno. 20: 28). (More to follow).

**A Review Of Jerry Bassett's  
Rethinking Marriage, Divorce  
& Remarriage (No. 1)**



*Donnie V. Rader*

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**WHAT LAW?**

In the late fall of 1990, Jerry F. Bassett of Eugene, Or published a book (*Rethinking Marriage, Divorce & Remarriage*) which advocates the views that he has been circulating in the Coburg Rd. bulletin and in his exchanges with Weldon Warnock (*Guardian Of Truth*) and Ken Leach (*Sentry*).

The editor of this paper has asked that I write a review of Jerry's material in a series of four or five articles

**What The Book Says**

Brother Bassett's book (consisting of twelve chapters — 149 pages) makes about seven major points:

1. Matt. 5: 32 and Matt. 19: 9 are explanations of the law of Moses (Chapters II, III, IV, V).
2. He affirms that *marriage* and the *bond* are the same. Thus, he concludes that those who are divorced (unscripturally) are unmarried and not bound (VI).
3. The term "adultery" refers to unscriptural divorce and remarriage and not to unlawful sexual activity. Brother Bassett affirms that when a couple "commit adultery" that it refers to their unlawful dissolving of a previous marriage and entering another. He tells us that committing adultery is not continuous action (Chapter VII).
4. I Cor. 7: 15 teaches that the believer (who has been divorced by the unbeliever) is not under the marriage bond and is thus free to remarry (Chapter VIII).
5. God does not require that those who have committed adultery (by unlawful divorce and remarriage) to separate (dissolve the marriage). God does require repentance for adultery. However, the couple repent of the unlawful divorce and remarriage and continue to live together (Chapter IX).
6. The guilty party can remarry (Chapter X).
7. Divorce and remarriage is a matter of individual difference. Thus, it is not a question over which to dissolve fellowship (Chapters XI, XII).

**The Articles In Review**

We plan to examine the above points in a series of five articles:

1. "What Law?"
2. "Marriage, Bond And Adultery. "
3. "1 Cor. 7: 15 — Is The Believer Free To Remarry?"
4. "Must Those Who Have Committed Adultery Separate?"
5. "May The Guilty Party Remarry? Divorce, Remarriage And Fellowship. "

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### Divine Law and Human Responsibility

The above line is the title of Bassett's first chapter which doesn't directly address divorce and remarriage. His point is that God's law for man is twofold: (1) love God and (2) love man. This is couched in man's nature — being in the image of God. The Gentiles and aliens today sin because they violate one of these two principles (Bassett, pp. 4-6). We are told that after the gospel was effective, the Gentiles were convicted of sin by pointing back to the two principles above rather than a violation of the gospel (Bassett, p. 4, 6).

From these principles Jerry concludes: 1. That all men are under Gen. 2: 24. It is a sin for any (including Gentiles and aliens today) to violate it (Bassett, p. 7, 9). 2. The solution for this sin or any other is to obey the gospel (Bassett, pp. 10-12). 3. "Thus, the gospel of Christ, the New Covenant, may warn the world of the consequences of sin, but it is not the means by which those of the world are made sinners" (Bassett, p. 12).

At first, it may not appear that this first chapter has much to do with the divorce and remarriage issue. But, as one wades deeper into the book, he can see where the author is headed. His point is that the Gentiles were not under the gospel. The aliens are not under the gospel. The gospel does not condemn the alien's marriage, but shows him the remedy (repent and be forgiven and continue in that same marriage).

### The Gentiles

Even a casual study will reveal that the Gentiles have been under the law of Christ since its beginning. Thus, we conclude that the same principle is true concerning the alien sinner.

1. *Jesus has universal authority.* He has "power over all flesh" (John 17: 2). He claimed, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth..." (Matt. 28: 18). Jesus will judge the world (which includes the Gentiles and alien sinners (Acts 17: 30-31).

2. *If the Gentiles are amenable to part of the law, then they are amenable to all of the law (as a whole).* Both the Old and New Testaments come as package deals (Gal. 5: 3; Jas. 2: 10). Thus, if the Gentiles and the aliens are subject to the part of the law that deals with faith, repentance, confession and baptism (Rom. 8: 2), then he is subject to the rest of the law of Christ.

3. *How could the Gentiles (and aliens) have been guilty of adultery if they were not under the law of Christ on marriage?* Paul stated that the Corinthians had been guilty of adultery and fornication *prior* to their becoming children of God (1 Cor. 6: 9-11). It will not do to argue as Bassett does that they were under the twofold law (1. Love God; 2. Love man). Neither of those principles within themselves tell us about what is lawful or not with regard to marriage.

4. *God has one body of laws for the Christian and the alien sinner.* There is not one set of laws for the Christian and another for the alien. The set of laws given to one is the same as given to the other.

The *gospel* is for the alien (Mark 16: 15) and the Christian (Rom. 1: 7, 15). The *doctrine* is for the alien (Acts 5: 27) as well as the children of God (2 Jno. 9).

### The "Law In The Heart" — Rom. 2

Jerry argues that the Gentiles were still under the "work of the law written in their hearts" (Rom. 2: 15) some "twenty-five years after the gospel was preached in Jerusalem" (Bassett, p. 6).

First of all, it was the "work of the law" and not the law itself that was written in their hearts (Rom. 2: 15). Secondly, the law was the law that was not given to the Gentiles (vs. 12-15) — the law of Moses. Though the Gentiles did not receive the law itself, they did adopt some of the moral principles that were found therein. Thus, they had the work of the law written in their hearts.

If Paul's description of the Jews being "in the law" is a reference to their state before the law was taken away and the law of Christ became effective (Rom. 2: 12), then his description of the Gentiles being "without the law" and having the "work of the law written in their hearts" must also refer to their state before the law was taken away and the gospel of Christ was effective. If not, why not?

If the Gentiles were still under the "work of the law written in the heart" some "twenty-five years after the gospel was first preached in Jerusalem," then the Jews were still "in the law" at the same time!

### Matt. 5: 32 and Matt. 19: 9

Chapters 2-6 of Bassett's book are devoted to saying that Matt. 5: 32 and Matt. 19: 9 are not presentations of the law of Christ, but explanations of the law of Moses.

Bassett puts the whole Sermon on the Mount within the framework of the law of Moses. He says, "Twentieth Century folk tend to read the words of Jesus recorded at Matthew 5: 13-16 while visualizing him speaking to an audience of Christians... Jesus spoke in the Sermon on the Mount to Jews who still lived under the Law of Moses... Clearly, Jesus was reminding these Jews of what God intended for them to be as God's covenant people within the framework of the Mosaic law... they knew he was teaching them to be obedient to the law under which they yet lived, the Law of Moses" (Bassett, pp. 18, 20).

In contrast, the text says that what Jesus was preaching was the "gospel of the kingdom" (Matt. 4: 23).

Bassett insists that in the Sermon on the Mount and in Matt. 19: 9 Jesus was *not contrasting* the old law with his law (pp. 22-24). In these texts, Jesus was not "introducing new legislation" (Bassett, p. 24). What he was doing, Jerry says, is contrasting the false notions of the Scribes and Pharisees with what the law actually taught (Bassett, p. 23).

Listen to what Bassett says specifically about our texts under consideration.

Matt. 5: 32 — "If we can see this, then the conclusion is unavoidable that Jesus' words at Matthew 5: 32 were his statement as to what the Law of Moses really taught" (p. 30). "... his statement at Matthew 5: 32 was not new legislation peculiar to the gospel. Instead, it was his statement of what Moses had actually said per Deuteronomy 24: 1-4" (p. 33).

Matt. 19: 9 — "Were it not for these facts, virtually no one would have even the least difficulty seeing that

Jesus' conversation with the Pharisees fits the same pattern as his teaching in the Sermon on the Mount" (p. 35). This passage is also an explanation of Deut. 24: 1-4 (p. 53).

1. *To reject Matt. 5: 32 and Matt. 19: 9 as a part of the New Testament, will lead to rejecting much more.* If these passages are not a part of the New Covenant, then neither is the whole book of Matthew. If that is true we must reject the other "gospels" as well.

2. *There are definite contrasts to the law of Moses in Matt. 5 and 19.* In both texts, Jesus puts his teaching in contrast to the law of Moses. In Matt. 5 he would begin by saying "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time..." and then in contrast, he would say, "But I say unto you..." This is done at least six times in the chapter (vs. 21-22; 27-28; 31-32; 33-34; 38-39; 43-44). Yes, it is true that Jesus deals with the misinterpretations of the law in this chapter, however, there are definite contrasts to the law of Moses. In Matt. 19 the Pharisees saw a contrast in what Jesus was saying and in what Moses had said.

3. *A law can be written or stated before it becomes effective.* Mark 16: 16 is one example. If Matt. 5: 32 and 19: 9 are an explanation of the law of Moses because that was the law in effect at the time they were spoken, then I wonder about Matt. 18: 17; Jno 3: 5; Matt. 7: 21; Jno. 14: 6; Luke 22: 30; Matt. 28: 18-19 and many other passages.

4. *Matt. 5 and 19 are not explanations of Deut. 24.* What Jesus taught in Matt. 19: 9 was in harmony with God's law at the beginning (vs. 4-5). He showed, however, that what Moses allowed (tolerated) was contrary to that (v. 8). The disciples' reaction (vs. 10-12) shows that what Jesus taught (v. 9) was more rigid than what Moses tolerated. Thus, they are not the same. Also, in v. 12, Jesus' teaching included a reference to being an eunuch for the *kingdom's* sake. That doesn't sound like an explanation of the old law.

If Deut. 24 meant that God approved of divorce for fornication (which is what Bassett argues), then what was allowed was not for the hardness of the Jew's heart.

In Deut. 24, one could not put away with approval. It was not for fornication, for the fornicator was to be stone (Deut. 22). Furthermore the one who remarried would be defiled. Yet, in Matt. 5 and 19 one could put away his/her mate for fornication with God's approval. The one who put away his/her mate for this cause could remarry. This does not harmonize with Deut. 24.

5. *Bassett manages to make Matt. 5: 32; 19: 9 applicable to us anyway.* He says that since the Jews were covenant people then the same principle applies to covenant people today (Bassett, p. 62). I wonder why that wouldn't work on all that was said to the Jews.

**"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature"  
(Mark 16:15)**

## THE NEW MAN

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### POPPING THE QUESTION

Jack was a retired business man I met on the first tee one afternoon. I had gone alone to the golf course for a little fresh air and sunshine, and Jack, also about to tee off without a partner, asked me if I'd like to play with him. I said yes, silently promising myself to ask him, no later than the third hole, if he would let me come to his home to study the Bible.

His first drive sailed admirably down the middle of the fairway. Mine did not. On the way to look for my ball we exchanged the usual pleasantries, inquiring into one another's work, families, etc. When he offered the standard comment that being a preacher must be "interesting" work, I knew the door would never be more open, so I forged ahead.

"You attend church much?"

"No, not very often."

"Know anything about the 'Church of Christ?'"

"No, not really."

"Well, to tell you the truth, those of us who designate ourselves as churches of Christ occupy somewhat of a unique position in the religious world. I meet a good many people who have a fairly mixed up idea of what we are all about."

"Really?"

"Tell you what. If I promised it wouldn't take more than forty-five minutes, would you let me come to your home some evening and try to make our case from the Bible for what we honestly think is a distinctive viewpoint on what Christianity is supposed to be."

"Oh, I don't know. I'm really not a religious person. No offense, but I guess I probably wouldn't be interested."

"That's okay. I'm not trying to 'hustle' you or anything! But seriously, if you ever want to talk, give me a call. I think there are some interesting things in the Bible that a lot of folks have just never looked at very carefully."

At this point, having found my ball, I scared it with an 8 iron into a greenside bunker and the conversation turned to other, less pleasant, considerations. But I had asked this fellow for a study, and though he had declined I felt good about having asked. There are any number of other approaches that might have been taken, obviously. Some are preferable to the one I happened to use on that occasion. But the important thing is that I got the question asked. And I did it before the third hole!



**Granted** it is not always possible to ask a total stranger so quickly if he would like to study the Bible. Even when it is, it may not be expedient. What wisdom is always urging us to look for is the *optimum* moment to bring up the subject of Bible study with those we meet. We want to broach the matter at the very best time possible: the time at which all things considered, there is the best possible chance of meeting with a positive response. The point I want to make, however, is that the optimum moment often comes *earlier*, rather than later, in our association with people.

Of course, I did not merely "let it go at that" when Jack declined my rather abrupt request. At the end of the round, after having come much better acquainted, I handed Jack my card and tried (now in the context of a rudimentary "relationship" with the fellow) to restate that if he ever wanted to talk about the Bible, I would be happy to get together. I will probably call him at some point in the future and see at least one more time if he wants to study. Who knows what will come of it? What I have done with this man up front does not rule out my developing a friendship with him and being in an even better position to teach him later. But that may not happen. If it does not, I know that I have already asked him the question that needed to be asked. And my conscience feels good about it.

In our various deliberations about personal evangelism, it seems to me that we are losing, rather than gaining, ground with our insistence that we must "build a relationship" with people before we ask them for a home study. Whether we build a relationship with folks or not, sooner or later we are going to have to "pop the question" and simply *ask* them if we can study the Bible with them. And my observation is that the farther we go into a relationship with somebody, generally the **less** likely we are to ask them. The reason is simple: the more involved the relationship, the more reluctant we are to jeopardize it by bringing up the touchy subject of religion. Perhaps my experience is simply unique, but I have found the quicker I get to the point with a new acquaintance, the easier it is.

Admittedly, popping the question is not easy. Ask any young man who has had to get up the courage to ask a young lady to marry him. He dreads the very idea. He gets sweaty palms just thinking when and how he is going to do it. It is entirely possible that he will stumble awkwardly when he finally does get around to it. But make no mistake, get around to it he **will** — because he **loves** her!

Similarly, when we need to ask someone to study God's word, delaying the inevitable (all the while telling ourselves we are "building a relationship") only makes us more miserable. What is more, it risks the possibility of some unexpected misfortune ending that person's opportunity to obey the gospel before we have talked with them about it. Is there not much to be said for going ahead and promptly asking folks if they will study with us? With home studies it may be as James says it is with the Lord's blessings generally: "You do not have because you do **not** ask" (Jas. 4: 2). **But** whether we ask up front

(Continued on bottom of next column)

## SINCERE WORDS

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

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## THE SINFULNESS OF THE "ONE NATION UNDER GOD" CAMPAIGN

The Sycamore church in Cookeville, Tennessee, decided to "meet the challenge" of raising \$17 million to mail out a brochure to every home in the U. S., purchase ads in some leading publications, and conduct a TV program. When it became obvious they weren't going to get \$ 17 million they went back to the drawing board and decided they could do essentially the same thing for only \$10 million. They were about to waste \$7 million of the "brotherhood's" money before they realized this. The thing that kept them from it is that the "brotherhood" didn't send it. Would you consider it a good risk as an investor in a \$17 million project with me if I cut the price nearly in half when I realized I couldn't get the full amount?

The Sycamore church is donating about 2% of the total, so did they meet the challenge or did they meet only 2% of the challenge?

### From The Mail-Outs

Numerous high quality, three-color mail-outs have repeatedly been sent to thousands of churches begging funds. Add to that video tapes, postage, salary and travel expense for the promoters. It would be safe to say that approximately \$1 million was spent on begging. Note what these mail-outs have had to say.

1. THE PLAN — "*Brethren offer \$17 million to evangelize the nation. Elders of the Sycamore Church Of Christ accept oversight of the project.*" That's not quite the way it happened. It did not happen in that order (Brethren offer, Sycamore accepts). The brethren didn't offer \$17 million. They didn't even offer \$10 million so the Sycamore church had to mortgage their building and continue to beg (See *The Update*, July 1991).

If Sycamore "accepted" the oversight, who told them they could have it? Where did those who gave it to them get that right? Who were these people? Who had the

(Continued from previous column)

or wait until we have gotten to know someone better, **ask** we must. Love for a lost soul will move us — somehow, someway — to pop the question. And when we learn to do that simple thing, we may be surprised at how many doors the Lord opens for His word!

right to make plans for "the brotherhood?" In August, 1989 (before the oversight was assumed by Sycamore) there were *"Brainstorming meetings with brethren experienced in evangelistic outreach, seeking advice and counsel."* The only officer in the universal church is Jesus. He did not ordain "brotherhood" elders (1 Pet. 5: 2). Such authority was usurped. They didn't "accept" oversight, they seized it! They assumed more than God assigned. And there was no authority for these "Brainstorming Meetings" (which originated outside any local eldership) to decide anything for the "brotherhood" (actually, a "churchhood").

2. A MESSAGE FROM THE ELDERS — *"Never before (that we know of) has there been a realistic plan for national and world evangelism."* They should read more of the Scriptures than the manual on denominational schemes. Paul said the gospel had been "preached to every creature under heaven" during his lifetime (Col. 1: 23). Is that not realistic enough? How did they do it? Jesus gave the Great Commission to the apostles and told them to teach others "to teach others" (Mt. 28: 19, 20). Paul taught the same (2 Tim. 2: 2). He taught that the local church is "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3: 15). Local churches "sounded forth the word of the Lord" (1 Thess. 1: 7, 8). This was how they did it. No mention is made of a sponsoring church or brotherhood eldership. Even if they had never heard of a "realistic plan" it would not justify an unscriptural project.

3. WHAT CHRISTIANS DESERVE. *"Christians deserve the opportunity to participate in something bigger than a budget, larger than the local work."* What did they do to deserve something the Lord didn't authorize? The Lord didn't give us anything larger than a local work so He must not have thought we deserved it. Surely his wisdom and knowledge are not so limited as not to see that we needed something larger than a local work. Why didn't he set up some centralized mechanism for doing it? Some elders have stepped beyond the role of local elders. They think such limitations are old foggy and they have "improved" upon the Lord's way. But, *"my ways are not your ways, saith Jehovah"* (Isa. 55: 8). Yet all oversight, flock-feeding, worship, discipline, and evangelism was done by each local church (1 Pet. 5: 2; Acts 20: 7; 1 Cor. 11: 17-34; 16: 1, 2; 14: 16, etc.).

4. THE GREAT PRIVILEGE. *"It allows the individual to feel that he is an integral part of the congregation."* You mean he wasn't allowed this before the campaign? That is what is implied. When each member functions in the body as he should (whether he is an "eye," an "ear," a "foot," or a "hand," 1 Cor. 12: 15-25), he is an integral part. He was allowed to do this before the "One Nation Under God" Campaign was ever heard of. It was not a privilege that was not allowed when he was functioning in the local church before this churchhood project came along (something larger than a local church).

5. GRAND CLAIMS. *"Here at the end, is your opportunity to be part of the greatest, most successful evangelistic effort in our brotherhood's history."* This was said even before all the brochures were mailed out and the results were known. Is it greater than what happened in Jerusalem beginning on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2: 5,

9, 41; 4: 4)? Is it more successful than when Paul stated "the gospel... was preached to every creature under heaven" in his lifetime (Col. 1: 23)? Our "Brotherhood's history" goes back to when it began. Promoters are careless to make grand claims (before the facts are known) when they want your money.

6. SOMETHING LARGER AND SOMETHING SMALLER THAN A LOCAL WORK. When elders assume oversight of a multi-church project they take on a dual role. They may still be over their local congregation, but they are something more than local elders when they put themselves in charge of a churchhood (misnamed "Brotherhood") project. They are making decisions over something *other than and more than their local work* (1 Pet. 5: 2).

Also, Bible classes are taking collections and forming their own treasuries and taking action under the oversight of someone in the class. Someone also acts as treasurer. "-----and he 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grade class have set a goal of \$50 to contribute to the 'One Nation Under God' Campaign." (Other similar quotes appear in the mail-outs). Regardless of good intentions, there is no authority for a functioning organization larger or smaller than a local church.

7. AIMED AT THE "UNCHURCHED." The brochure briefly mentions personal problems such as drugs, materialism, divorce, pornography, but says nothing about the sin of denominationalism, a sin which is causing billions of people to be lost eternally. Concerning their TV talk-show we are told that it is *"aimed at 45% of the United States population which believes in God, but is not part of any organized denominational group."*

8. BROTHERHOOD THINKING. *"As a brotherhood, we will give an answer as to why we have neglected the Lord's command to take the Gospel to every creature..."* As an individual I must give account for everything I have done or left undone (2 Cor. 5: 10; Mt. 25). Where does the Bible teach we will be judged *"as a brotherhood?"* No where! If so, a few bad apples in the brotherhood could cause the whole brotherhood to be lost. Our individual salvation would be dependent on what others had left undone. The judgment will be on a personal basis, whether your own name is written in the book of life (Heb. 9: 27; Rev. 20: 13-15).

*"Anxiously, we await news from the brotherhood that the funds are forthcoming."* There are numerous references to the "brotherhood." It seems some "local" elders can think on no other plan. They think "churchhood" when they say brotherhood. A brotherhood is made up of brothers, not churches. And then they refer to churches as "sister" congregations! Boy, try making sense out of that! They have drunk too much from the polluted waters of denominationalism and are engaged in the language of Ashdod.

A churchhood is a "hood" of churches. Christ did not authorize a churchhood. Churches are not tied together but are local, independent and autonomous. The only oversight is local. A brotherhood is a "hood" of brothers. Christ is the only officer in the brotherhood and he gave it no function *as a brotherhood*. It is only mentioned one

time in the New Testament and the extent of brotherhood responsibility is specified. "Love the brotherhood" (1 Pet. 2: 17). That's it! The way some Sponsoring Elders speak and think for the brotherhood you would think it was mentioned on every page of the Bible and in the margin.

9. "WHY YOUR CONGREGATION DESERVES A SPECIAL COLLECTION OPPORTUNITY" FOR THE CAMPAIGN. "They get to participate in something Biblical, like the ancient Christians. "But they were able to do this long before any "Sponsoring Church" project was ever heard from or thought of. Perhaps this has reference to the times when congregations sent relief to Jerusalem (1 Cor. 16: 1, 2). But consider:

a. Jerusalem was a destitute church. Sycamore is not. They contributed over \$200, 000 to the campaign.

b. The Jerusalem church did not launch a 10-year program of being destitute. Sycamore launched a 10- year program of begging the "brotherhood" for their churchhood project.

c. Jerusalem did not launch a massive campaign to solicit funds. Sycamore spent huge sums to beg more money.

d. Jerusalem's want was in benevolence. Sycamore's is not. Sycamore wants, but they are not "in want. "

e. Jerusalem's want was peculiarly theirs. Sycamore's "want" is no more theirs than it is any other congregation's. God has not assigned world obligations to one congregation alone. We all have identical and equal duty according to our ability.

f. Jerusalem's case is in the Bible. Sycamore's is not. So where is the parallel?

**CONCLUSION:** The Sycamore elders have allowed themselves to be influenced by "brotherhood" planners — the "Brainstormers. " They seized the oversight of a churchhood project. In doing so, they took more authority than God gave them and involved the congregation in error. The contributing churches have become partakers of their sin. We must strive lawfully and follow the pattern. The great Commission does not give us a blank check to do anything we want. We cannot "do evil that good may come" (Rom. 3: 8). We plead with the Sycamore elders to give up their project for the sake of the Scriptures and unity or else have the courage to defend it in public debate.

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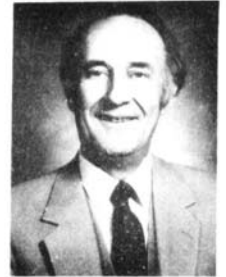
## WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

Send all questions to:

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## HELPING THE NEEDY

**QUESTION:** *Would you explain Acts 6: 1-6 about helping the needy widows? Our preacher says it means to help saints in emergencies (one time and not ongoing). What constitutes a need where the church should take care of it out of the treasury?*

**ANSWER:** The passage, Acts 6: 1-6, is self-explanatory in regard to the obligation of the church's relieving needy widows. Here is an explicit example of the Jerusalem church taking care of its own. We must do no less. Of course, we deduce that these widows had no children to provide for them because the apostle Paul stated, "if any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed" (1 Tim. 5: 16). Sometimes children don't have the resources to help, or they are too scoundrelly to assist, and under such circumstances the church must help.

Certainly, the plight of the widows in Acts 6 was an emergency, but an emergency may result into a persistent thing. Webster defines *emergency* as "an unforeseen combination of circumstances or the resulting state that calls for immediate action. " There could be a widow, or any other saint, who may need permanent help. For instance, if a young woman was widowed with little children, she might need continual aid from the treasury of the church for several months or longer. It would be unconscionable to deny this sister ongoing support with no family to assist.

We are asked what constitutes a need? A need is when a person is in "want of the means of subsistence. " The word *subsistence* suggests "the minimum as of food and shelter) necessary to support life" (Webster). A needy saint is not a brother or sister who no longer can afford an affluent life-style and thereby needs financial support in order to keep his new car, elaborate home and runabout pleasure boat. Those can be sold and he or she can live a less fashionable and luxurious life.

However, I don't see that a person has to become impoverished, totally destitute, and ready for the poor house, before a congregation may provide some relief in a temporary crisis. He may not be able to obtain a loan. His need is real. A situation of this kind has to be evaluated and a prudent judgment made on the facts of the matter.

## More On Helping The Needy

**QUESTION:** A few years ago a destitute sister asked the church for help and the brethren told her "no" because she lived with an unfaithful relative, and they were afraid he might benefit from it. Do you think their fear was justified to deny the sister assistance?

**ANSWER:** According to the querist's description it seems to me the brethren should have been more concerned about the welfare of the woman than whether the relative would benefit from the assistance. I don't know all the circumstances of the case, but if the sister was staying in the home of the unfaithful relative, she would have some obligation for room and board, unless it was gratis. The church would, therefore, not be giving direct benefit to the relative. It would simply be providing for the needs of a worthy saint. Since we are not told what the request was for, we have no way of knowing. It might have been for clothes or medical bills. We assume it was a legitimate request.

Maybe the sister was easily influenced by the relative and the brethren realized the money would most likely fall into his hands. Of course, there would be a way to avoid this by the brethren finding out what she needed and arranging for the purchase of them.

To deny a worthy saint provisions of life because of fear of the possibility that it may indirectly benefit some unbeliever is to close our hearts to compassion. Should we sit back and allow a brother or sister to go hungry because, for example, his/her unbelieving spouse will also eat of the food provided? Little children may at times be involved. The church is taking care of its own under such conditions and the Christian in turn is providing for his/her own responsibilities.

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## AN ABRIDGED RESPONSE TO: "OF WHAT DID JESUS EMPTY HIMSELF?"

*Wayne Greeson*

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In the October 1991 issue of *Searching The Scriptures*, Vol. 32, no. 10, pp. 4-5 (508-509), an article by brother Robert L. McDonald appears entitled, "Of What Did Jesus Empty Himself?" This same article had appeared at least four months earlier in *Preceptor* (June 1991, Vol. 40, no. 6, pp. 2-4 (158-159)). The editor of the *Preceptor*, brother Danny Brown, graciously provided me space to respond and brother McDonald a reply to my response (*Preceptor*, September, 1991, Vol. 40, no. 9, pp. 254-257). Although brother Connie Adams knew of my original response to McDonald's article before it was printed in *Searching The Scriptures*, he chose not to contact me about printing my response, nor remove reference to my name in the article. I knew that brother Adams had published articles on "continuous cleansing" only upon the condition that the names of those quoted were removed and I thought that this was his "editorial policy." So I contacted him and asked why those promoting "continuous cleansing" had not been named in the paper while he left my name in an article that misrepresented me. He told me that on "continuous cleansing" he did not want to get into the "blood bath" going on in Arkansas and lose a couple of his Arkansas writers, but McDonald's article was different.

So I asked brother Adams for an opportunity to respond in *Searching The Scriptures*, as I had in the *Preceptor*, so that readers who do not get *Preceptor* could read both sides of the discussion. Brother Adams did not agree to publish my original full response (and brother McDonald's reply), but he did say he would "think about" printing a shorter response. (For those who will not have the opportunity to read the full response and reply in *Searching The Scriptures*, contact me and I will send you a copy.)

Brother McDonald's article suggests that I wrote that Christ emptied himself of his deity and that I denied the deity of Christ. In support of this allegation, brother McDonald takes brief quotes from an article I wrote entitled "Did He 'Empty Himself Or Not?'" (*Faith and Facts*, Oct. 1990, Vol. 18, no. 4, p. 76-94 (376-394)). I never have said nor written that Christ emptied himself of his deity, nor have I written denying the deity of Christ. What did I write concerning the deity of Christ?

The "Second" member of the Godhead, identified by the apostle John as "Word," was with God, and the Word was God" (Jn. 1: 1). The Word has always been and always will be the person of God, for he cannot deny himself (2 Tim. 2: 13). When "the Word became

flesh and dwelt among us" (Jn. 1; 14) he did not cease to be the very person of God. I do not know how to say this any plainer. For anyone to accuse me of denying that Jesus was God in the flesh would be a deliberate misrepresentation. (Wayne Greeson, "Did He 'Empty Himself Or Not?", pp. 77-76).

My position on the deity of Christ could not be any plainer. If brother McDonald still has problems with this statement, I want to personally invite him to attend a debate I have scheduled with a Oneness Pentecostal preacher for December 1991, in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, in which I will be affirming the deity of Christ under the proposition that there are three persons in the Godhead. Will brother McDonald come and stand with me and defend the truth of the scriptures? I made this offer and asked this question in the *Preceptor* and brother McDonald has yet to respond.

In brother McDonald's article as it appeared in the *Preceptor*, I was misquoted. Brother Adams informed me that brother McDonald had corrected his inaccurate quotes for *Searching The Scriptures*. While brother McDonald's quotations have gotten closer to the original, he still managed to miss quoting from my article faithfully and accurately. Why did he omit the quotation marks from the Bible language and the Bible references from my quotes? Brother McDonald quotes twice from my article and both times fails to put in quotation marks the apostle Paul's language or supply the Bible references **as I did in the original**. Paul wrote concerning Christ that "he emptied himself in Philippians 2: 7, not Wayne Greeson. I wrote, "when the Word became flesh" (Jn. 1: 14), "he emptied himself (Phil. 2: 7) of certain of the attributes of powers of God for "in all things he had to be made like his brethren" (Heb. 2: 17), and he "was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4: 15). (Wayne Greeson, "Did He 'Empty Himself Or Not?", pp. 78-79).

I am sure most readers will be glad to know that actually brother McDonald and I are very close in agreement on this subject. The only objection brother McDonald has to what I wrote is my choice of the word "attribute." On the one hand he vigorously denies that Christ "emptied himself of any of the attributes of God, while on the other hand, he affirms that Christ "divested Himself of the **form of God**" (emphasis in the original) and "He did not jealously **seek to retain His equality with God** but was willing **to divest Himself** so as to appear to sinful man" (emphasis added).

An "attribute" of God is "something attributed as belonging; a quality, character, characteristic, or property" of God (*Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language*, p. 96). The "form of God" and "equality with God" are both clearly attributed of God. These are qualities or characteristics that belong to God. Brother McDonald strongly argues that Christ "divested

Himself of these two attributes of Deity, while taking me to task for saying Christ "emptied himself of certain attributes of God!

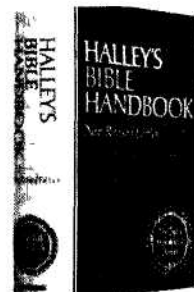
Isn't it time for this preacher's wrangle over words, this "blood bath" in which venomous name-calling has replaced sincere Bible study to end? I hope that my brother in Christ will stand with me upon the revealed truth of God's Word. Together we must preach the good news to lost souls of the love of God that was so great "he emptied himself to become flesh, and then "he humbled himself to die a cruel death. And he did all this for you and me. (**Editor's note:** We are glad to let brother Greeson speak for himself since his name was mentioned in brother McDonald's article. We still are persuaded that brother McDonald correctly dealt with the text of Phil. 2: 5-8 which is critical in this present controversy. As to the closing statement in brother Greeson's article, I say a hearty "Amen." Now if he can get that message across to the editor and a few of his fellow-writers for FAITH AND FACTS we may be able to make some progress in that direction. I certainly hope that anonymous "Louisvillian" reads these words and takes them to heart. )

### Halley's Bible Handbook

H. H. Halley

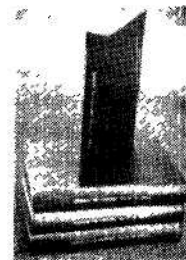
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## SIMPLICITY IN CHRIST

*P. J. Casebolt*

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### "PREACH THE WORD"

The charge to "Preach the word" is made "before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, " and in view of the coming judgment. And, the word is to be preached to offset the digressive tendencies of those who "will not endure sound doctrine" (2 Tim. 4: 1-4).

But if some "turn away their ears from the truth" even when the word is preached, how much more when those claiming to be evangelists fail to preach that word?

#### The Condition

For a quarter of a century, the preacher had preached mainly topical sermons, and the congregation had tolerated those dry, boring sermons. The preacher resorted to personal opinion-giving and "cute" stories, and members of the congregation usually closed their Bibles after the Scripture lesson was read from the pulpit.

The preacher used familiar phrasings and thought-concepts, and scouted around in a tired brain for some new brainstorm or some clever innovation "to keep the people awake for another service. " Like other preachers, he panicked when Sunday drew near, because he had no message burning on the stove. He had run out of sermon themes.

Then came the temptation to substitute entertainment to replace the sermons, and fill up the worship time with rites in order to use up the time allotted for the message. But these continued diets of "the preacher's wise opinions" were not sufficient for the congregation's spiritual growth, and neither were the "constant 'specials'—visiting musical groups, gospel films and the like. " The preacher was "caught up in other things" community meetings driving about town on errands, talking on the phone, arranging the weekly newsletter and bulletin. "

#### The Cure

After a quarter of a century of famine, for both the preacher and his audience, a cure was finally found: expository preaching from the Bible.

#### The Result

Now, the members "keep their Bibles open throughout the entire message. " The preacher himself has discovered the adventures of exploring the inspired text. "The Bible has been elevated to a lofty place within the worship itself, " and criticism must be directed toward the Bible instead of the preacher.

The preacher now feels that "he is dealing with eternal material which begs for the telling. "

### The Surprise

The foregoing example could fit any number of preachers and congregations among churches of Christ. Actually, the information came from a sectarian publication called **Pulpit Helps** (April, 1991). The article was written by J. Grant Swank, Jr., and was a reprint from **Preaching** (July/ August, 1990).

#### Topical Or Expository?

Actually, the Bible is filled with both topical and expository preaching, in both Old and New Testaments. The same sermon can consist of both types of preaching, e. g., The resurrection (1 Cor. 15). "The Mystery of Godliness" is as good a topical sermon as a preacher can find, and if he can't divide his topic into six separate but related points, he is in the wrong business.

Some preachers may be more suited to one method of teaching than they are to another, but a well-rounded diet of spiritual food is an absolute necessity, both for the preacher and the congregation. Even private studies can be fruitful by using both the topical and expository methods of teaching.

And if you teach the Bible, there are times when you can't help but do a little, or a good bit of both.

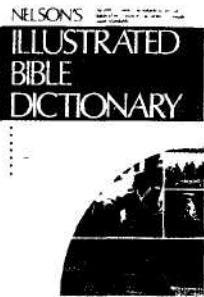
#### A Sad Commentary

It is a sad commentary on some papers and bulletins published by members of the church of Christ, when you can get more Bible from some sectarian publications than you can from those written by the brethren.

And, with some of our pulpits characterized by the very conditions set forth in the beginning of this article, it wouldn't take much Bible preaching by a Methodist or a Baptist to outdo some preachers in the church of Christ.

Some sectarian congregations have to take whatever preacher their "conference" sends them, do without, or leave their particular denomination. Or a denominational preacher may have to leave his denomination in order to "preach the word. " But given the Bible doctrine of congregational autonomy, no church of Christ should have to endure a preacher who will not "preach the word. "

And given the charge before God, the Lord Jesus Christ, and in view of the coming judgment to "preach the word, " no preacher should want to do otherwise.



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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*

**PATRICK ANDREWS**, 1780 Mooreland Rd., Clarksville, TN 37040 — After four and a half years with the South Clarksville church, 111 be moving to work with the Chena Small Tracts church in Fairbanks, Alaska. During our stay at Clarksville, we baptized more than two dozen, many were restored and we withdrew from over half a dozen. We also appointed three mature, qualified men to serve as elders. I can only say good things about this church. The church at Fairbanks is small with about 25 in attendance. The closest sound church is 450 miles south, over the mountains, in Anchorage. We will be isolated from other brethren by at least a day by car. The cost of living in Alaska is 34% higher than in the lower 48 states. The church in Fairbanks will supply me with housing but I must raise the rest. My wife and seven children are willing and eager to help me. They will sell off what they own except what will fit in three small trunks, and go live 130 miles from the Artie Circle. If you can help us it would be appreciated.

**CLARENCE R. JOHNSON**, 819 E. Commerce, Mexia, TX 76667 — After seven and a half years in Exton, Pennsylvania, I am moving to begin work with the Shiloh church in Mexia, Texas. Much progress has been made by the Exton church during our time together. We turned back all outside support, built a new worship auditorium, and more than doubled our average attendance. Twenty-nine have been baptized and three former members have gone to preach the gospel in other areas (Dale Garrison, Leo Rodrigue and Edward Smith). On November 3, elders were appointed to oversee the Exton work. They are Jerry Carson, (215) 793-2441; and Phil Smith, (717) 768-3714.

**ED WARREN NEEDHAM**, 1325 Overlook Terrace, Titusville, FL 32796 — I worked with the church in Dunedin, FL since March 1, 1982. I had made an agreement to work with the church in St. Cloud, FL, but while making preparation to move was visited again with heart blockage. I entered Tampa General Hospital on December 11, 1990 for open heart surgery. After surgery and on Dec. 17, I experienced severe pain in my eyes and ended up with a blood clot lodging in my brain, causing a stroke, I am blinded in my right eye and lost the ability to read for a few months. My eyesight has not come back but I am able to read some, but at a low level. I had to cancel the move to the work at St. Cloud. We are moving back to Titusville where our only daughter lives and where we have a house from our former work there.

**WALLACE H. LITTLE**, 357 Honey Cove, Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32548 — We at Northside just closed our fall meeting on the theme of Bible Authority. Sam C. Hastings, Bobby Witherington, Sam Binkley, Don Meredith, Frank Timmennan and Aubrey Belue spoke. We had visitors from faithful churches, liberals and local walk-ins. Some new families came. They were "looking for the right church." The lessons strengthened all and opened the eyes of several who had not heard these things. I am to be in the Philippines from December 14-February 15. God willing, I will take benevolence to needy saints there, victims of the disastrous flood on the island of Leyte. Pray for them and me.

**EUGENE BRITNELL**, P. O. Box 505, Athens, AL 35611—Near the first of the year, we moved from Russellville to Athens. We have built a house here and are near our sons and their families. After 37 years in Arkansas, we had enjoyed three and a half years with the Eastside church in Russellville where Johnny Richardson is now preaching. We are enjoying Athens and the area. I am preaching full-time for the Hays Mill church meeting five miles north of Athens. It is a pleasant and peaceful work. I also teach Bible daily in Athens Bible School. After 36 years, the SOWER continues to have a good circulation and influence. If you do not receive it, write for a sample copy. Brethren, let us endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit' and 'work while it is day.'

### OBITUARIES

**RAY E. CORNS** of Gibsonburg, Ohio passed away within the last few weeks. He had preached for many years in northeastern and north-western Ohio and supported himself the last several years of his preaching work by working for the railroad. I have stayed in his home in meetings two or three times. He did much good work and will be missed. Ray was a joy to know. He always sent me a letter each year to tell me when "Baptist Hog Day" would be in West Virginia, a practice dating back to the area where he grew up. He was a good friend and helped to introduce this paper to many people, paying for a number of subscriptions as long as he was able. Our sympathy to his lovely wife, Marge.

**DON DUKE** of Baytown, Texas also recently left this world for a better place. He served for many years as an elder with the good Pruett and Lobit church in Baytown, Texas. His life was a blessing to all who knew him. Our best wishes are extended to sister Duke and the children.

### WARNING

**STEVE HUDGINS**, 2922 S. E. 7th St., Ocala, FL 32671 — Brethren who support men in the Philippines need to be aware of unscrupulous characters who may be able to tap into your checking account in your local bank without your knowledge. It seem there are some expert forgers who can see a signature and reproduce it so the individual who signed the check could not tell it from his own. This happened to the church here in Ocala. This church is very small but we have been helping support brethren as we were able and from time to time have helped in various emergencies. Recently our bank received a request for a wire transfer of 70% of our bank account to be sent to the savings account of a woman we have never heard of and a request for a statement of the balance of our account to the hospital where our treasurer was supposedly a patient and this to take care of his hospital bills. The letter was signed with a perfect signature of this brother who has never been out of the USA. The bank upon comparing the signature with the signature card at the bank immediately wired the money without calling us. They did notify us after the fact. We were able to get a stop payment before the check cleared. I don't think this woman has any connection with the church but she must have seen a check we sent and forged this name or had it done. I have notified the hospital figuring she may be an employee.

Several steps may be taken to avoid such a thing happening to anyone else. (1) Make certain the signature card at the bank lists the telephone number of those authorized to sign checks. (2) make sure the bank is informed to make no wire transfers without calling or talking directly to the one whose signature appears on such a request. (3) Send money with a bank check or some other way than with a personal signature. Should such a thing happen, call the corresponding bank immediately as well as notifying the local bank. It is unfortunate that something like this happened and we don't intend to allow this to keep us from helping those we feel need and deserve help.

### SPANISH WORK IN MIAMI, FLORIDA

**TERRY PARTAIN**, 6060 18th Ave., N., St. Petersburg, FL 33710 — As of the beginning of 1992, I have switched my energies to full-time Spanish work. The faithful Hispanic brethren in Miami have welcomed me with their typical warmth and charm. They will be my collaborators, tutors and family in this work. As a child, I heard my father preaching the gospel to small Hispanic churches. I still remember the song we sang, the sights, the sounds, and the smells that were part of my childhood. During the twenty years that I have preached in English, my heart has never been very far from the Spanish work. In the late 70's I worked in the Miami area surrounded by Cubans and discovered a growing interest in my heart. I have never been able to forget the vastness of that barely touched field.

The complexion of the Hispanic community has changed dramatically since 1979. Wave upon wave of immigrants have come from Cuba, Nicaragua, El Salvador as well as Columbia, Venezuela and most of the countries of South America. The Anglo community has dropped by one-fourth but the Latin Community has increased by two-thirds so that now they are half of the population numbering about one million in Dade County alone. "Balseros" are floating ashore daily... 1300 last year. Whole communities are 70 to 90 % Hispanic.

These people often have relatives in Central and South America with which they are in close contact. Miami is the hub of the wheel of the Americas extending to New York and Chicago northward, and to Chile and Argentina southward. Like Ephesus in Asia in the New Testament, this is a strategic place from which to spread the Word to all of Latin America. A young Guatemalan told me on my last visit to Miami that the gospel had changed his way of thinking and that when he goes to visit his family, he is going as a brother in Christ.

This is a fertile field. Walk down the streets and you can hear radios tuned to religious programs. There are four Spanish stations that carry such programs and their rates are cheap by American standards (\$125/hour). They read. They are not uneducated. Gospel teaching in the mass media has a better reception among the Hispanics, I believe, than among the Anglo population.

I am interested also in written materials which will have a life of their own. What is available is doing a tremendous job. But more is needed. Also, I want to help train others to fight the good fight. In recent years many churches have been established or pulled out of liberalism and they cry for help. They need visits, gospel meetings, exhortations to be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the faith. I want to help. Who will help me? Let me discuss this work with you. I am entering this work for the long term. My phone number is (813) 347-7572.

**ROBERTO V. SPENCER**, P. O. Box 98187, Lubbock, TX 79499 — In May three people were baptized who had studied for about 10 years with the Jehovah's Witnesses. We have other studies going on with J. W.'s and they are very angry. In September I preached a meeting in Chihuahua City, Mexico where Jose Lopez preaches. In November I was also in a meeting in Camargo, Chi., Mexico where Francisco Rivera preaches. This last year I lost \$400 a month support and am having some difficulty replacing it.

#### READER TO BE 100

On January 26, L. P. Cheek will be 100. He has lived most of his life in San Antonio and in central Kentucky. He still lives alone without a radio or T. V. but spends his time in his garden or reading his Bible. He has been a subscriber to STS for many years. He has read his Bible through 300 times. The editor would appreciate if some of you would send him a card or a note and I am sure it would thrill him. Send it to L. P. Creek, 91 Nails Lane, Radcliff, KY 40160, or Monie Mathews, 1921 Taffeta Dr., Valley Station, KY 40272.

#### FROM AROUND THE WORLD

**SOUTH AFRICA — DAN HUDDLESTON** has been invited down to Capetown for a five night meeting to respond to an attack from liberals. One of their preachers wrote a booklet entitled "Anti-ism, An Error in Elementary Hermeneutics" and has circulated it all over South Africa. Henrick Joubert has already written a reply to it and Dan will deal with it in this meeting. He also reports that a young brother from where Ray Votaw preaches was killed by a stray bullet meant for a criminal in a police shoot-out. Brother Huddleston has lost \$1000 a month of his support and has been selling personal items and household things to keep going. He is a good man, worthy of help and is doing a good work. His address is: P. O. Box 16072, Strubenvale 1570 R. O. & S. Africa.

**VENEZUELA** — Ruben C. Amador reports two baptized in a recent gospel meeting in Caracas. He says the work is growing and looking better in that country. He was to be in Costa Rica for preaching in December. He works with the Judiway St. church in Houston where Jamie Sloan of Klein wood was recently a guest speaker.

**SOUTH AFRICA** — Paul K. Williams reports two baptized in a tent meeting in Esikhawini where a small congregation meets normally in a school classroom. Gene and Betty Tope are now back in South Africa

and David and Joanne Beckley have returned to the States after 15 and 1/2 years in South Africa. Ray Votaw reports that the Beckleys had to return on credit because they did not receive enough help beforehand. Brother Votaw says "The Beckleys have had a tremendous impact for good in this multi-racial country with all races and cultures. They are truly worthy of your assistance. They will be sorely missed by so many — including yours truly. Please consider their needs. "

**PHILIPPINES** — a FAX from Jeff Kingry received on December 2, says that BERT ENOSTACION, able preacher not only in the Philippines but who did such good work in Hong Kong with the Kingrys, Smalls and Smelsers, was hit by a jeepney on the street and badly injured. He suffered internal injuries, many lacerations and his tongue was severed and had to be re-attached. He has been moved from a hospital to a care unit nearer his home where his wife can help nurse him. This family has lost substantial support and is in serious financial hardship. He had to stop the good paper he was publishing, called "Speaking the Truth" for lack of funds. You may reach him or his wife at: P. O. Box 9, San Fernando 2500, La Union, Philippines.

**ALBERTO VIVERO AND JESUS BEJAGON** both have reported from the island of Leyte where over 7, 000 died and many were left homeless from the sudden floods which swept down on Ormoc City forcing a wall of mud from surrounding hills which swept houses and people out into the sea, that there was no loss of life among brethren in the four congregations in that immediate area, but that a number of brethren lost their houses and all they had. NORMAN FULTZ, 13018 N. Oakland Ave., Kansas City, MO 64166 (along with KEITH BURNET of Russellville, KY) preached in Leyte in the spring of 1991 and are familiar with the brethren there.

**REYNALDO E. CORSINO** reports from the Cagayan Valley area that 13 were recently baptized there. Also in Lasam 8 were baptized.

**MARCELINO G. ORTEGA, ABAS SALLAPADAN**, 2818 Abra, Philippines — "Through the help of Bert Enostacion and Eusebio Cabannag in studying with me issues about institutionalism, on October 20, 1991 renounced my association with the institutional brethren. I had been a self-supporting full-time preacher for six years before some of our rice-fields were destroyed in a destructive typhoon in 1989. "

**RODY GUMPAD**, P. O. Box 8, Tugeuegarao, Cagayan 3500. Philippines — "The doctors tell us that our son's cancer is now under control but he will require additional chemotherapy for sometime. In October four were baptized including a Pentecostal preacher and his wife. I began teaching him in 1984. He is a well-known glossolalia speaker, the great leader of his group, he learned he was wrong and obeyed the gospel. He is now preaching the truth and baptized already five of his former colleagues at I lagan, Isabela. "

#### PREACHERS NEEDED

**EXTON, PA** — The church here, which serves the western greater Philadelphia area, needs a fulltime preacher. The congregation is 15 years old with an average attendance of 80. Elders were recently appointed. We are self-supporting. Those interested should contact Jerry Carson (215) 793-2441.

**JAMESTOWN, KY** — We need a fulltime preacher and can furnish full support, depending on the needs. We do not have a house. Interested parties may contact Bill O'Neal (502) 866-3863, or write to: 153 Oak St., Russell Springs. KY 42642.

**CHESTER, VA** — The Rivermont church in Chester, VA needs an experienced fulltime evangelist. We are located on Route 10 two miles west of Hope well and 5 1/2 miles east of I-95, Exit 6E. If interested, please write to: Rivermont Church of Christ, 2316 E. Hundred Road, Chester, VA 23832, or contact Ed Sulc (804) 458-1606.

**GREEN WAY, WISCONSIN** — The church which meets at 1621 Hillcrest Dr, Green Bay, WI 45313 needs a fulltime preacher. Average attendance is about 30. Partial support is available. Contact Wilmer Kirsten (715) 758-8615.





### DEBATE RESPONSE

Brother JOHN WELCH, editor of FAITH AND FACTS, has responded in his paper to my proposal to debate the Deity of Christ (See October, 1991 STS), by saying that he does not think I am representative enough of the issues which he wants to link to the question of the Deity of Jesus. He issued a challenge for a debate and named Louisville as a place where such discussion would be in order. I have a letter from the elders of the Expressway church in Louisville offering to endorse me on the propositions submitted and offering their building for a discussion here on the condition that brother Welch either obtain like endorsement from a congregation in this area or agree to an exchange discussion, with one in Louisville and one in Indianapolis. He is not interested in this. Doy Moyer of the South End congregation offered over a year ago to engage him in discussion and Gene Frost also of Louisville has offered to have a written exchange. Instead brother Welch has suggested that three preachers who do not live in Louisville should be brought into the picture. This is strange reasoning. Brethren who seriously disagree with him on the Deity of Jesus (I am one of these) cannot discuss the issue with him unless we agree to debate on continuous cleansing and whether or not man has to sin. It is either agree to discuss all of those subjects or else we are not representative enough to merit his time and trouble.

Meanwhile, some irresponsible brother, who writes under the cloak of anonymity and signs himself "Louisvillian" continues to attempt to spread ill-will, make false charges, engage in speculation and innuendo about churches and preachers in the Louisville area

and the editor of FAITH AND FACTS has no better judgment than to print these unsubstantiated charges. For example, he said that several churches in the Louisville area were looking for preachers and that they would not consider one unless he agreed with Gene Frost. The only churches in Louisville within the last few months to employ new preachers were Expressway, Shivery and Kenwood and the charge is absolutely false. But this cowardly brother hides behind anonymity so he can say whatever he wishes and nobody can deal with him. Whoever Louisvillian is, and I am confident that I know who he is, he needs to repent for his unfounded and malicious attacks on gospel preachers and churches in this area. When his name comes to light (and it will in time), the congregation where he is a member ought to take disciplinary action on him unless he repents. And the same goes for those who are funneling rumors to Louisvillian.

\*\*\*\*\*

### MOTTO FOR SOME FOLKS

Those given to the views being expressed by some on marriage, divorce and remarriage might well say that they wish to "have their Kate and Edith too." (Thanks to David Baker).

\*\*\*\*\*

### HOWS THAT?

Bill McQuiston told me of a new convert's report on a congregation which had withdrawn from a brother. Said he, "they dismembered him."

### IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	447
RESTORATIONS	84
(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)	

# 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 XXXIII

February 1992

Number 2

THINK ON  
THESE THINGS

*H. E. Phillips*

P.O. Box 1631  
Lutz, FL 33549



## Born Again Into The Kingdom

The church is the people who are "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2: 9). The kingdom includes only those who are "delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Col. 1: 13). One enters the kingdom by the birth of water and of the Spirit and not by a physical birth (John 3: 5).

Among religious people it is almost universally accepted that one must be "born again" in order to enter the kingdom of heaven. It is the means by which one gets into the kingdom of God. Nicodemus came to Jesus by night and acknowledged him to be a great teacher from God. Jesus came directly to the point by saying unto him, "... Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3: 3). That is explicit! He further said, "... Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (vs. 5). This language is plain and to the point. The word "Except" is used in both verses and it allows no alternative if one enters into the kingdom of God. He MUST be "born again" or "born of water and the Spirit" in order to SEE or ENTER into the kingdom of God.

The context of John 3: 3-13 shows that Jesus was speaking of entering the kingdom of God upon this earth, and Nicodemus so understood that. He did not

understand the nature of the birth of water and the Spirit, but he understood that Jesus was talking about entering the kingdom here upon earth while man lives. Jesus distinguished this from a physical birth and that is what confused Nicodemus.

One must be born again to enter the kingdom. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3: 5). "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet. 1: 23).

The inspired John said that Jesus came to his own and they received him not, but as many as received him, to them he gave power to become the sons of God ... "Which were born, but of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1: 12-13). Jesus spoke of ONE birth, not two. One birth of water and the Spirit, not a physical birth.

Other expressions in the New Testament help us understand the significance of the birth of water and the Spirit into the kingdom of God. The germ of life is in the seed. Jesus said, "... the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6: 63). Peter said, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever" (1 Pet. 1: 23). The seed is the word of God (Luke 8: 11). "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures" (James 1: 18). Paul said to the Corinthians, "... I have begotten you through the gospel" (1 Cor. 4: 15).

There are parallel passages to John 3: 3-5 which make the meaning clear. Christ loved the church and gave himself for it, "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word" (Eph. 5: 26). That statement is equal to "birth of water and of the Spirit." In the New Testament there is no cleansing or sanctifying by washing of water except by baptism of a penitent believer.

Another is Titus 3: 5, "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." The washing of regeneration is

the washing of rebirth. The renewing of the Holy Spirit is the effect of the work of the Spirit through the word. "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind..." (Rom. 12: 2). The renewing of the mind comes from the teaching of the Spirit by the word.

Stating it plainly: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16: 16). The word is the work of the Spirit which produces faith (Rom. 10: 17), and baptism is the only washing of water authorized in the New Testament for cleansing anyone. "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22: 16).

The new birth which inducts one into the kingdom of God is exactly the same as that which brings one to be added to the church. It all occurs in the same way and brings the individual to the same place in relation to Christ and the remission of sins (Acts 2: 38, 47; 16: 31-34; Rom. 6: 3-6; Col. 2: 12, 13). These conditions reconcile one to God through Christ in one body (Eph. 2: 15, 16). We get into one body by baptism as directed by one Spirit (1 Cor. 12: 13). Since there is only one Spirit, one baptism and one body (Eph. 4: 3, 4), the only way to get into that one body is by baptism as directed by that one Spirit through the word of God. That equals "he that believeth and is baptized" (Mark 16: 16), and "born again of water and of the Spirit" (John 3: 5).

# Searching The Scriptures

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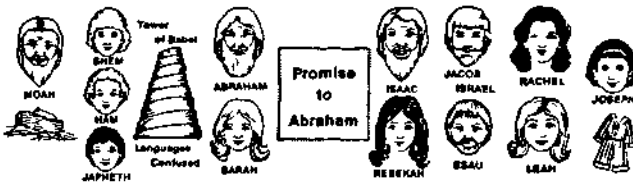
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## " QUOTE

**"People, like nails, are no longer useful when they lose direction and begin to bend."**

## UNQUOTE "

## Editorial

Connie W. Adams

P.O. Box 69  
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### Rules, Patterns And Women's Role In The Church

For sometime now the institutional brethren have been facing increasing difficulty among themselves over woman's role in the church. There have been instances in which women have spoken to mixed audiences of men and women. Randy Mayeaux of Dallas, Texas was present, on one such occasion and reported that the woman who spoke was "dynamite." He thought it was great. More and more articles are appearing in journals advocating an enlarged role for women in the churches including, leading public prayers, making announcements, serving at the Lord's Table, and teaching where men are present.

The November-December, 1991 issue of IMAGE contains an article from Edyth Lane of Wynne, Arkansas in which she argues for such an enlarged role, though her article stopped short of directly advocating that women fill the pulpit. Several things in her article identify the mind-set out of which this contention grows. She said:

"Many Christians have been unsettled by recent questions about male and female roles. Some define these roles by appealing to instructions in Scripture that were addressed to first century people who lived in a society very different from our own. Then they have used these definitions to set down rules and patterns for this present age. I think it is time to take a look at the nature of Christianity and try to come to a more reasonable approach."

Later she wrote:

"If we are obliged to fill differing roles, it is a result of adapting to the world we live in, not because God demands it."

Again:

"We have come down to the 1990s with a lot of cultural and ecclesiastical baggage. There are some long-standing traditions in churches of Christ, some relating to participation in Sunday-school teaching, presiding over and serving communion, public prayers, and making announcements. Unwritten law says that only males are allowed to participate in these activities; but we must all agree that these restrictions really are traditional, for we do not get these rituals from Scripture."

She closed by saying:

"I hope this situation will change. I believe it can change only when we become really spiritual, when we

learn true humility and mutual love and respect in seeking to serve Christ out of a pure heart. May God grant it to be so, and soon. In our rapidly changing world, it will be a matter of necessity."

Several things emerge from these excerpts, which seem to summarize the gist of her article. First, she decries the idea of a pattern drawn from Scripture. The assumption is that the Scriptures which address this subject do not establish a rule, or pattern but must be understood in the light of cultural circumstances. This is another case of arguing that the church must continually change with the times and that the word of God does not constitute a binding pattern for action.

While it is true that Christians have to adjust to the circumstances which surround them, it is not true that the issue of the role of men and women in congregations is to be determined on that basis. Paul admonished "Let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing" (Phil. 3: 16). Paul's prohibition against the wives of the prophets speaking in the assembly was consistent also with what the law had said. "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law" (1 Cor. 14: 34). Therefore, the principle upon which Paul worked here was of wider scope than a mere cultural environment. The teaching of Paul under the gospel was rooted in the same fundamental principle as that which pertained under the law. Paul went back to the beginning when he dealt with this relationship in 1 Tim. 2: 11-15. He said "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity with sobriety."

In 1 Cor. 11: 3 Paul argued from an unchanging order of things when he said "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God." There is a chain of authority here which must always be kept intact. It is from this same base that the instruction flows that the wife is to be "subject to her husband" for her husband is the "head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church" (Eph. 5: 23).

None of this instruction gives any man the right to be smug, arrogant, self-righteous or insensitive to the dignity and feelings of women. They have too often been made the object of sarcastic barbs thinly disguised as humor. I have seen some of the sisters cringe at thoughtless things said in classes and sermons. Such ought not to be. But that does not change the fact that God, in His word, made no provision for women to exercise leadership roles in the church. Godly women have never had any problem about this because they respect the authority of the Scriptures. With them, this is not a matter of "cultural baggage," mere tradition to be altered by changing times.

The Feminist Movement has attempted to create a greater awareness of injustices toward women and set

in motion the means to rectify these injustices. But it has also developed a strident spirit and placed a chip on the shoulder of many women, including some Christians, which tempts some to disregard what the Bible teaches about the roles of both men and women.

Personally, it is gratifying to me to find more and more articles written by more conservative-minded writers among the institutional brethren stressing the need for respecting the pattern and crying out against the "liberals" among them. They almost sound like "antis" and some of them have even been called by that odious name! But let none of us become too smug. There are straws in the wind which indicate that we shall not be immune to this problem. One of the surest ways to get flogged by an increasing number of sisters (and not a few brethren) is to teach exactly what the Bible says on this subject and then warn against any departure from it. I know of some churches considered rather conservative which have had problems in this area already and the end is not yet. For that reason we are thinking of preparing a special edition of this paper for July which will address a woman's role in the church.

I am bothered considerably by the assertion of the Arkansas sister who said the situation, which she attributes to cultural baggage and tradition, can only change "when we become really spiritual, when we learn true humility and mutual love and respect in seeking to serve Christ out of a pure heart." If words mean anything, those who insist on the Scriptural limitations upon women are not "really spiritual," do not have "true humility" and lack "mutual love." And this loving conclusion is intended to melt our hearts to penitence so we will discard this unnecessary baggage and tradition and open the way for female leadership roles in the church. Oh yes, and don't forget, this change is essential in order to "serve Christ out of a pure heart." I suggest that it is entirely possible to be "really spiritual," possess "true humility," manifest "mutual love" and serve Christ "out of a pure heart" while walking by the same rule and respecting what the Bible says about the roles of women in the churches.

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**Other Observations**

It is prophesied of Jesus in Isaiah 9: 6: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulders: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Such designations and praise were never given to a mere man. This verse has reference to the Immanuel, "God is with us" (Isa. 7: 14). In clear language, the inspired prophet identifies Jesus and describes what He is. He is "Mighty God" thus "the child to be born is identified with the Godhead, both in deity and power. He is equal with God... The title Everlasting Father or 'Eternal Father' clearly places the child outside the pale of created beings; as God, He is eternal" (Homer Hailey, **A Commentary on Isaiah**, p. 1034).

A mere man could not perform miracles, but Jesus did (Jno. 20: 30, 31). Some contend that since Jesus gave up His divine power, the Holy Spirit enabled Him to work miracles. They refer to Matthew 12: 28 as a proof text. Jesus said to the Pharisees, "But if I by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you." In the first place, it is assumed that Jesus was referring to the Holy Spirit in His statement. The footnote of the ASV on this verse offers the alternate "in" the Spirit of God. But let us notice the parallel passage, Luke 11: 20, "But if I by the finger of God cast out demons ... " In the book of Exodus is recorded the account of the ten plagues which were inflicted upon the Egyptians. The magicians of Egypt could duplicate the first two, but they were unable to accomplish the third (the lice). Then they said: "This is the finger of God" (Ex. 8: 19). What did they mean? They were simply saying, "this is the power of God." In Matthew 12: 27, 28, Jesus was contrasting God's power with that of Beelzebub (prince of demons, see vs. 24). It is a mere assumption, and out of harmony with what the Bible teaches about the nature of Christ, to suppose that He gave up His divine power and could only perform miracles because the Holy Spirit enabled Him to do so. The power of Jesus was inherent, not derived (Jno. 5; 21, 26; 10: 17, 18). As to the miracles of Jesus: "They differ from the miracles of prophets and apostles in that, instead of being answers to prayer, granted by a Higher Power, they manifestly flow from the majestic Life resident in the Worker" (H. P. Liddon, **The Divinity of Our Lord**, p. 158). Jesus was Himself God and His divine power distinguished Him from an ordinary man.

When Jesus was in Capernaum and it was told that he was in the house, four men carrying a man sick of the palsy, broke up the roof and let down the bed where the man lay. Mark 2: 5 reads, "And Jesus seeing their faith saith unto the sick of palsy, Son, thy sins are forgiven thee. " But some of the scribes sitting there were reasoning in their hearts and asked, "Why doth this man thus speak? he blasphemeth: who can forgive sins but one, even God?" (vs. 7). Jesus said in verses 10, 11: "But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath authority on earth to forgive sins (he saith to the sick of the palsy), I say unto thee, Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thy house. " The scribes were right in that only God can forgive sins, but they failed to recognize Jesus as God. They would not admit that the miracles of Christ attested to His divinity. Please note that only God can forgive sins. Jesus forgave sins; therefore, He was GOD. It was the scribes, not Jesus who were guilty of blasphemy because they did not accept Him as being God and even spoke against Him.

Jesus said in John 5: 21, "For as the Father raiseth the dead and giveth them life, even so the Son also giveth life to whom he will. " Here Jesus attests that He possesses the same power through the Father. He raised those dead in sin to life (Jno. 5: 25) and He raised Lazarus from the dead (Jno. 11: 43, 44), the widow's son (Lk. 7: 14, 15) and the daughter of Jairus (Mk. 5: 41, 42). A man (only a man and no more) could not have such power, the power to give either spiritual life or physical life. Jesus was a man, but He was also more than a man. He was GOD.

Jesus declared in John 10: 30, "I and the Father are one. " Jesus and God the Father are separate entities, but they are one, as in indicated in verses 28 and 29. For example, both can give eternal life. They are one in purpose, both possessing the divine nature. The God-head is composed of three distinct personalities: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, but one God.

To Martha, Jesus said in John 11: 25, "I am the resurrection, and the life... " Here again we see that Jesus had the power to produce eternal life for those who would believe in Him.

Jesus could read the minds of others (Jno. 2: 25). This is not true of just a man, and only a man.

Jesus declared His deity in John 5: 58, "Before Abraham was born, I am. " William Hendricksen observes the error of the Jews as he comments: "They saw only the historical **manifestation**, not the eternal **Person**; only the human, not the divine. Jesus, therefore, reaffirms his eternal, timeless, absolute essence" (**The Gospel of John**, ch. 8, p. 66). Because Jesus declared Himself to be deity is the reason the Jews took up stones to cast at Him (vs. 59). They would not have done so had Jesus claimed to be no more than just a man. They accused Him of blasphemy because they did not believe He was divine. Prior to verse 58 Jesus had said to them, "except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (vs. 24). Literally, Jesus was saying, "except ye believe that I am" (the word "he" is in italics). B. F. Westcott says of the expression, "that I am, " "not simply 'that I am the Messiah, ' such as your imagination has drawn for you;

but far more than this, **that I am**, that in me is the spring of life and light and strength; that I present to you the invisible majesty of God; that I unite in virtue of my essential Being the seen and the unseen, the finite and the infinite" (op. cit. p. 131). Both passages affirm that Christ was God.

Never has it been said to a mere man, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. " But Peter said this to Jesus. God spoke from heaven at the baptism of His Son (Matt. 3: 17) and at the transfiguration of His Son (Matt. 17: 5), in both instances declaring: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. " At the transformation scene the expression "Hear ye him" is added. H. Leo Boles observes that "the term 'Son' is applied to the Messiah (Psalm 2: 7; Isa. 42: 1), not merely in reference to his official character, but more especially to his divine nature" (op. cit. p. 93).

No mere man taught as Jesus did (Matt. 7: 28, 29; Jno. 7: 46).

Let us not be deceived into believing that Jesus was only a man (just a man) while He was here on earth. He was God manifested in the flesh. "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name" (Jno. 20: 30, 31).

One who was only a man and nothing more than a man could not atone for sin. Jesus not only did this, but He was the mediator between God and man. He was the only one who could fill this role. He represented God to man and He represented man to God. Indeed, He was God-Man. He was the incarnation of God. We must remember also that our Lord was man as well as God. As man, He was touched with the feelings of our infirmities ... one that hath been in all points tempted as we are" (Heb. 4: 15). What a glorious example for us to follow (1 Pet. 2: 21-23)!

One has said: "The divinity of Christ is in solution in the Bible as salt is in sea water. " On the memorial of William Ewart Gladstone in Howarden Church, England, is the following inscription taken from his own words:

"All I think, all I write, All I am, is based on the divinity of Christ, the central hope of our poor wayward world. "

I pray that these articles have made some contribution to the important study of the nature of Christ.

#### Some Suggested Reading

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- Kellems, Jesse. **The Deity of Jesus**. Joplin: College Press, reprint, n. d.
- Liddon, H. P. **The Divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ**. Minneapolis: Klock and Klock, reprint, n. d.
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- Vos, Geerhardus. **The Self Disclosure of Jesus**.

(Continued on bottom of next page)

**A Review Of Jerry Bassett's  
Rethinking Marriage, Divorce  
& Remarriage (No. 2)**

*Donnie V. Rader*

P.O. Box 9  
Lexington, Alabama 35648



## Marriage, The Bond And Adultery

One of the problems in the divorce and remarriage discussions is the use of terms associated with the topic. If one uses the term "marriage" or "adultery" to mean one thing while another uses it in an entirely different way, obviously, the two have different starting points and will reach diverse conclusions. This same principle is true with other terms like divorce, bond or fornication.

### Marriage And The Bond

I am convinced that a clear concept of the distinction of the marriage and the bond erases many of the problems and questions raised in a discussion of divorce and remarriage.

Brother Bassett confuses the two by presenting *marriage* and the *bond* as one and the same thing (Bassett, pp. 59-60). He must make them the same to fit his doctrine, for he argues that if the couple are no longer *married*, they are no longer *bound* (Bassett, p. 60).

1. **There is a difference in the marriage and the bond.** This is obvious from the fact that the woman in Rom. 7: 2-3 is *bound* to her first husband even though she is *married* to another man.

2. **Defining marriage and the bond.** *Marriage* is a relationship entered into by agreement and ratified by compliance with civil law. The *bond* is a covenant with God that joins one to his mate. The "law of her husband" (Rom. 7: 2) refers to the bond or the "law which binds the wife to her husband" (G. Kittel, *Theological Dictionary Of The New Testament*, Vol. IV, P. 1070).

3. **It is possible to be bound to one and married to another.** That is certainly the case in Rom. 7: 2-3. The woman in the text was "bound by the law to her husband" even though she was "married to another man." This is what makes the second marriage adulterous.

(Continued from previous page)

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**The Lord of Glory.** Grand Rapids: Guardian Press, reprint.

## Adultery

1. **Defining adultery.** Bassett tells us that when a couple "commit adultery" (as in Matt. 5: 32; 19: 9), it refers to the act of *divorce* and *remarriage* and not to unlawful sexual activity.

"Notice that Jesus used two verbs, 'divorces' and 'marries,' and said the result of these two ACTIONS is the commission of adultery... The very fact that the adultery Jesus talked about was the result of the two-fold action of divorcing and marrying argues that he was not talking about adultery in the sense of sexual activity later on in the marriage itself" (Bassett, pp. 68-69).

We are told that even if "adultery" refers to the sexual activity, the sexual activity in the second marriage could not be adultery because adultery (as defined by Webster) refers to sexual activity with someone other than one's wife or husband (Bassett, p. 71). "Further, when one divorces and marries another, he is married to that person" (Bassett, p. 71). Jerry ridicules the idea of an "adulterous marriage." He claims that this is a contradiction of terms. If it is adultery, it is not a marriage. If it is a marriage, it is not adultery (Bassett, pp. 71-72).

First, Bassett has again confused the marriage and the bond. Rom. 7: 2-3 demonstrates that they are not the same. This text shows that what makes the second marriage adulterous is when one is still bound to a previous mate. It so happens that in this text the woman was *married* to another man. Yet, she was called an *adulteress*. A thing that brother Bassett says cannot be.

With this, Matt. 19: 9 will agree. A man who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery. If Bassett is right, how could he commit adultery? He is no longer married to the first woman. He is married to the second. So, if he is married, how can he commit adultery?

Secondly, to define adultery as being the two acts of divorce and remarriage will not work. In John 8: 4 the Jews brought a woman to Jesus saying, "Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act." "I wonder, did they catch her in the act of divorcing her husband and marrying another? Or did they catch her in the very act of sexual intercourse?"

Furthermore, Jesus warned about the man who would look upon a woman to lust after her, saying he has committed *adultery* already with her in his heart (Matt. 5: 28). Was this man fantasizing about divorcing and remarrying "with her" or committing a sexual act? In Matt. 5: 32, the one who *is* put away (thus not guilty of unlawful divorce) commits adultery when she remarries.

The Old Testament usage of the term "adultery" harmonizes with those cited above from the New. Consider Ezek. 16: 15, 16, 25, 26, 32; Jer. 3: 8-9; Prov. 6: 20-35.

By the way, speaking of adultery, Jerry informs us that the woman of Matt. 5: 32a doesn't really commit adultery. It is just that "her husband made it appear so by his action in divorcing her" (Bassett, p. 34). Thus, she is just stigmatized.

2. **Continuous adultery?** Based upon the definition that Bassett has given for adultery, he argues that it is not a continuous act (i. e. living in adultery), but it refers to the one-time act of divorce and the one-time act of remarriage (Bassett, pp. 68-70).

The conclusion that Bassett and others who argue as he does are trying to reach is obvious. "Indeed, they must repent of their sin in divorcing and remarrying. However, there is nothing in the words of Jesus to be served by then dissolving another marriage. Rather, let them demonstrate their repentance by faithfully maintaining their marriage" (Bassett, p. 78).

First, Col. 3: 5-7 clearly shows that one can "live in adultery." Verse 5 enumerates some sins which must be put to death. Among them is the sin of *fornication*. Then, verse 7 says that the Colossians had one time "lived in them." They had lived in fornication; the very thing that Bassett says cannot be done.

Rom. 7: 2-3 shows that a woman who marries another man would be called an adulteress as *long as her first husband lives*. Indeed, people can and do live in adultery!

Secondly, the word translated "committeth adultery" in Matt. 19: 9 is in the present tense in the Greek. Bassett says, "Generally speaking, the present tense does indicate continuous action" (p. 69). He then cites about four references where this is not the case. However, concerning the text under dispute, Leonard Latkovsky, Professor of Classical Languages, Belarmine College, Louisville, KY comments, "And the present tense form of the Greek form *moichatai* = commits adultery means 'continuous action at any time,' i. e. as long as the condition of the second marriage continues to exist" (written statement to Gene Frost). I do not base my conclusion on the tense of the Greek alone. But, what Mr. Latkovsky says harmonizes with Col. 3: 5-7 and Rom. 7: 2-3.

In the next article we will look at 1 Cor. 7: 15.

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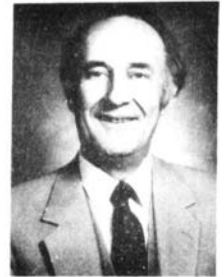
## WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

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## Was Wine Always Fermented?

**QUESTION:** Does "wine" mean "wine" or other kind of juice? I believe you should look up "juice" to see what juice means. And, what are wine bottles? Why could they not use old wine bottles when they made new wine?

**ANSWER:** Yes, *wine* means "wine" but wine was not always fermented in the Bible. The context determines whether it is fermented or unfermented. For example, Isaiah calls the juice of the grape "wine" while it is still in the cluster. Hear him: "Thus saith the Lord, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it" (Isa. 65: 8). Solomon wrote, "So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine" (Prov. 3: 10). Here the juice is spoken of as "wine" when it is squeezed out by the presses. Obviously, in the preceding texts, the wine is unfermented.

"Wine" is used biblically in a generic sense without the word denoting whether it is sweet or alcoholic. The word "cider" is a good illustration. It is generic and can mean that the substance is either sweet or hard. If we say, "He got drunk on cider," the conclusion would be that it was hard or fermented. Cider is the juice of fruit (as apples) and wine is the juice of fruits (as grapes), and many times fermented. In our current vernacular, wine means "fermented juice," but this is not always true in the Bible, as already shown. As to "juice" that the querist asks me to look up, it is "the liquid part of a fruit or vegetable" (Webster), so juice can fit the definition of wine as heretofore described.

In reference to wine bottles, Jesus said, "Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles and both are preserved" (Matt. 9: 17). Notice that Jesus said it was wine before it was put into the bottles, even before fermentation started to take place.

Today, "bottles" refer to glass or plastic containers which the common people did not use in the time of Christ. The word translated "bottles" is *askos*, which means a "leather bag, esp. wine-skin" (Arndt-Gingrich, p. 116). A wineskin was a goatskin that was removed from the animal without slitting the skin. After it was tanned and the hair cut close to the skin, it was turned



inside out. The neck opening was used as the mouth of the container and the other openings at the feet and tail were closed with cords.

Ralph Earle wrote, "When grape juice ('new wine') is placed in a wineskin, it soon begins to ferment. But the new leather wineskin will stretch as the volume of the fermenting increases. If, on the other hand, fresh grape juice is put into a used wineskin which has already stretched, the fermentation will cause the skin to burst, and both wine and wineskin will be lost" (*Word Meanings of the New Testament*, p. 33).


Sometimes Jesus' turning the water into wine at Cana (John 2; 1-11) is used as justification for drinking alcoholic beverages. But that had to be sweet wine, unfermented juice. Would the Lord tell us that wine is a mocker (Prov. 20: 1), to look not upon the wine when it is red, which biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder (Prov. 23: 31-32), and then provide that kind of wine at a wedding feast? Would he furnish strong drink when he said, "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink" (Hab. 2: 15)? Absolutely not! Those who like to "take a little nip" can find no solace in the teachings of Jesus.

**SINCERE WORDS**

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

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## To The Editor Of The Gospel Advocate — An Open Letter To Furman Kearley

Dear Brother Kearley,

I was perplexed at your November, 1991 editorial in which you praised and thanked the 4000 congregations which participated in the "One Nation Under God" Campaign.

First, you said it was a success because it has stirred our minds to remember the Great Commission. I suppose one could say the same about the Boston/Crossroads Movement, the Missionary Society, and the Billy Graham Campaigns. But we don't need these or the "O. N. U. G. " Campaign to be reminded of our duty.

Second, you said the campaign did more to unite the "fiercely independent" churches of Christ throughout the nation. "I believe the Bible teaches congregational autonomy and that each is to be independent from the other." The Sycamore church and the contributing congregations are practicing the opposite of what you

say you believe. When the contributing congregations joined the campaign, they delegated a portion of the oversight of their work and resources to the Sycamore elders. God has limited the oversight of elders to "the flock which is among you" (1 Pet. 5; 2; Acts 20: 28). What ever pertains to the local flock (its work, resources, worship, edification, discipline), is what they oversee.

What would have been readily recognized as a society had the overseers of the campaign identified themselves separate from the church was obscured by the fact that they assumed the title of "elders" in both roles. To call themselves elders in **both** the role of overseeing a local church and overseeing a multi-church or churchhood project is deceptive, whether intentional or not. They were already overseeing the local work at Sycamore. But when they took control of a National Campaign through which all other churches function, they assumed a dual role and become **more than** local elders. To refer to themselves as "elders" in a role God never gave elders (overseeing a churchhood function) is a misnomer. When the scope of their oversight became larger than a local church they overstepped God's boundaries for oversight. They corrupted the organization of the church and have developed a "brotherhood" (churchhood) oversight. This is the point at which they sinned, and so did the contributing churches. Regardless of anyone's sincerity, we can only know them by their fruit.

Third, you said the benefit of the campaign was related to unity and brotherhood. "**Tragically, a sense of fragmentation has been running throughout our brotherhood for a number of years.**" Yet you said the 4000 contributing churches comprised only 33% of all congregations. So which is the fragment, your 33%, or the 67% that did not participate in this corruption of the organization of the church?

Continuing your quote: "**Some have been moving toward liberalism, while others have moved toward... legalism. The focus of too many has been upon agitation, argumentation, and hostility.**" Brother Kearley, were you agitating, argumentative, hostile, and being legalistic when you opposed the Boston/Crossroads Movement in the pages of the **Gospel Advocate**? What is legalism except insisting that we do all things according to the pattern?

Fourth, you called the campaign a "positive effort." Is it positive to violate the limitations God has placed on the scope of elders? No, a person is being positive when he is moving along the lines of scriptural authority, not when he disregards God's will and involves a sizable segment of God's people in error.

**The Herald of Truth** has split the brotherhood twice. The "O. N. U. G. " Campaign not only maintains a division over the sponsoring church but has divided some institutional brethren who have spoken and written against it. Is this positive? Is this expedient?

Fifth, you said "**visible results demonstrate success.**" But they don't demonstrate that the "Sponsor-ing Church" concept is scriptural. Again, one could say the same about the Boston/Crossroads Movement, the Missionary Society, and the Billy Graham campaigns.

You told us that more than 250 baptisms have been reported. Since \$10, 000, 000 was the amount needed, that figures to approximate \$40, 000 per baptism. We can do better than this in gospel meetings for a lot less than \$40, 000! Many of the responses may have obeyed anyway as a result of some of the local churches conducting their gospel meetings in conjunction with the campaign. I suspect 4000 congregations could each conduct a gospel meeting and have as many baptisms without having to corrupt the organization of the church. Further, \$10, 000, 000 will support 357 American preachers for a WHOLE YEAR (at an average of \$28, 000 annually). Surely each of them could convert one person in a year's time! That's more than 250 even if they convert a minimum of one per year. The "O. N. U. G." Campaign was not expedient even from a financial point of view.

Brother F. B. Shepherd said, "**There is absolutely no precept or example in the Holy Scripture for the existence of any organization, federation, or society which embraces more or less than one local congregation through which to perform the work of the Lord in the furtherance of the gospel**" (GOSPEL ADVOCATE, 2/25/32).

Foy E. Wallace, Jr. said, "**For one church to help another church bear its own burdens, therefore, has scriptural precedent. But for one church to solicit funds from other churches for general dis-tribution in other fields or places, thus becoming the treasury for other churches, is quite a differ-ent question. Such procedure makes a sort of society out of the elders of a local church, and for such there is not scriptural precedent or example**" (GOSPEL ADVOCATE, 5/14/31).

F. B. Syrgley said, "**The agency system of collect-ing funds from many churches, even if it is done under some eldership, is without authority, ties churches together and has a tendency to destroy the initiative and independence of the local church... The greatest objection to the whole scheme is that it is not in the New Testament**" (GOSPEL ADVOCATE, 11/1/34).

Numerous and similar quotes can be produced from H. Leo Boles and several others, all from the pages of the ADVOCATE. It was known as the "Old Reliable." But what must be said of the **Advocate**, brother Kearley, now that you are teaching that all congregations may do evangelistic work under the oversight of one centralized eldership? Does this not make them a "churchhood" eldership? You say churches of Christ are "fiercely inde-pendent" and you believe they should be. But there is a vast difference between what you preach and in what you praise and practice. It is similar to the Southern Baptists who claim to be fiercely independent while promoting the Southern Baptist Convention. You be-moan that some have been moving toward liberalism. Brother Kearley, "thou art the man." For the sake of truth above all else,

Dick Blackford

Commending you to

## THE WORD OF HIS GRACE

*Marshall E. Patton*

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### The Love Of God — Romans 8 (No. 7) God For Us — More Than Conquerors — Vs. 31-39

"What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh interces-sion for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

The final lesson in this series brings us to what may well be called the golden text of the whole chapter. Indeed these verses are climactic. After setting forth **the love of God** as manifested in the various things identified in this chapter, and after recapitulating the whole scheme of redemption (vs. 28-30), Paul steps out upon the stage before all mankind and challenges the whole world to fault the love of God or the security such love has provided for the faithful. God has left no stone unturned. Come what may, His love has provided us with a sufficiency that enables us to be "more than conquerors"!

#### God For Us

When Paul raises the question, "What shall we then say to these things?," he has in view the "all things" (v. 28) as well as the whole scheme of redemption recapitulated (vs. 29-30). In view of the love of God and its sufficiency so clearly made manifest, what in all the world, in heaven above, or hell below, can possibly militate against the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose? No enemy can possibly militate against the fulfill-

ment of God's eternal purpose? No enemy can possibly set at naught God's eternal purpose, design, and ultimate glorification of His saints. With God on our side, victory is assured! God who went so far as to sacrifice His own Son has not and will not leave one thing undone in our behalf.

It should be remembered just here, however, that nothing that God has ever done, is doing, or will do infringes upon the volition of man. Man's power to choose right or wrong, accept or reject what God has provided, is ever present, and, therefore, in the final analysis man must bear the blame for any failure. For this very reason man must give an account of himself unto God (Rom. 2: 6-11; 2 Cor. 5: 10).

Paul raises other questions, the answers to which continue to emphasize the all-sufficiency of God's love in making possible our eternal salvation. "Who can lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" Again, "Who is he that condemneth?" The Judaizing teachers made accusations against and condemned Gentile Christians because they failed to keep the covenant of circumcision and other ordinances of the law of Moses. Since such ordinances were no part of the New Covenant, made effective by the sacrifice of Christ, such accusations and condemnations went for naught. When God justifies, that justification stands in spite of all the accusations of men to the contrary. Christ who sacrificed His life, who ever makes intercession for us, and by whose authority all things must be done (Col. 3: 17) supersedes any and all men who would accuse and condemn. This affords all Christians comfort and consolation in the face of all foes.

### **The Love of Christ**

The answer to Paul's final question is the ultimate in assurance. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?"

Before looking carefully at Paul's answer, a point of controversy needs attention. Does the "love of Christ" refer to His love for us, or does it refer to our love for Him? The difficulty lies in the fact that the expression "love of Christ," of its self, can be understood either way. However, I am persuaded that in light of its context and in the light of all else revealed, it must be understood to refer to **the love of Christ for us**. Here Paul personifies those things that try the faith of men and shows that there is no enemy that can break the bond of Christ's love for us. While our love may fail, His never does.

Practically all Calvinist hold that the expression refers to our love for Christ, and based upon that concept they seek to strengthen a fundamental tenet of their doctrine, namely, the eternal security of saints, or which is the same, the impossibility of apostasy. That Calvinism is in error in this matter is evident from the factual experience of those whose love does fail (Cf. Matt. 24: 12), the warnings against the danger of falling from grace (Heb. 3: 12; 1 Cor. 10: 12), the examples of those who did fall (Acts 1: 25; 1 Cor. 10: 8; Gal. 5: 4), and in view of man's accountability (Rom. 2: 6; 2 Cor. 5: 10).

However, not all who say the "Love of Christ" refers to our love for Him are Calvinists, nor do they use these verses so as to infringe upon man's volition. From their

viewpoint, the general idea is that **if** one's love is strong enough, none of the things mentioned will turn that love from Christ.

In reply, I would say that Paul did not mention any "if." He boldly affirmed unconditionally the "love of Christ." It is always present—now and forevermore, come what may! Furthermore, it seems to me to be altogether incongruous for Paul to spend practically the whole chapter on the love of God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit for us, and then come to the climax of that theme and suddenly change to the love of the Christian for Christ. Besides this, the things mentioned by Paul as being unable to separate one from the "love of Christ" are the very experiences that often, yea, many times over, do cause Christians to fail in their love for Christ. In the midst of such they frequently become weary, discouraged, yield to despair, and separate themselves from Christ, concluding that God has forsaken or forgotten them. Jesus said, ""And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold" (Matt. 24: 12). Even Paul quotes from Psalm 44: 22, "For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter," which is in the context of people thinking that God had forsaken them because of their misfortunes. Paul's point is that such people were wrong and so are we, if and when we think God has turned His back on us during such trying experiences. His love is always there! We may forsake Him, but He never will forsake us (Heb. 13: 5).

### **More Than Conquerors**

In the last verse of this chapter Paul burst forth in the song of victory: "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us..." Thus, Paul continues his theme of Christ's love for us. This love has made possible our triumph over all foes. Notice the victory comes through Christ. Apart from Him there is no hope. No wonder Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4: 13).

Paul's deep convictions are expressed further as he enumerates those things which are often hostile to the Children of God, but which can never break the bond of heaven's love for us. How apropos the song:

"The cross that He gave may be heavy,  
But it ne'er out-weighs His grace;  
The storms that I feared may surround me,  
But it ne'er excludes His face.  
The cross is not greater than His grace,  
The storm cannot hide His blessed face;  
I am satisfied to know That with Jesus here below,  
I can conquer every foe."

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## Using the SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

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### Review Of A CRI Statement

A reader of STS has written regarding a radio program called "The Bible Answer Man," sponsored by the "Christian Research Institute" of San Juan Capistrano, California. She relates: "on almost every show someone calls in with questions about the Church of Christ... The position of the Christian Research Institute is that the Church of Christ is heretical... CRI position on baptism is that it is not necessary and certainly not required for salvation."

She has forwarded a statement that this organization sends out on the "Church of Christ." It is this reader's desire that some sort of debate or exchange with this organization be attempted. Brother Adams has asked me to review their statement. We will see that the CRI gets a copy of this review. If they are disposed to defend the truth and integrity of their statement in a public forum, this writer or a host of others, will gladly accommodate them. If readers would care to obtain a copy of the 7 page statement, CRT's address is P. O. Box 500, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92693-0600.

There is much in their thesis with which we would take no objection. The brief history of the Restoration movement is generally accurate. They claim, however, that "These churches stem from the "Restoration" movement... begun by (among others) Thomas and Alexander Campbell..." I would not expect them to accept **a priori** our insistence on this matter. But for the record, let it be stated that we do not consider the Campbells, or any mere man, the originators of our faith. We look upon these men as talented teachers of the Scriptures. We applaud their efforts to be done with unauthorized denominational organizations and unscriptural practices and to simply speak as the oracles of God. As A. C. Grider used to say, "Show me something that I believe or practice that originated with Campbell and I'll give it up."

The statement says, **"Basic to 'Restoration' theology is the call to return to 'New Testament Christianity', the beliefs and practices of the first century Christian church as documented in the New Testament. Only by rejecting everything not specifically found in the New Testament, it was reasoned, could true Christian unity be achieved."**

I doubt that any representative man from any of the various branches and sub-branches of the "Restoration movement," that are enumerated in the statement, would maintain that everything must be **specifically**

found in the New Testament. The Scriptures give authority for many things in a general rather than a specific manner.

The essay goes on to say that the Campbells, Barton Stone and other such leaders of the "Restoration" taught **"that it was best to preach and teach about God and Christ without reference to words like 'Trinity'."** It is somewhat reluctantly admitted that the Campbells were **"roughly trinitarian,"** whatever that is supposed to mean, but it is asserted that **"Stone, however, flatly rejected the doctrine of the Trinity, and denied that Jesus was God."** Then, **"In the DOC (Disciples of Christ, K. G.) and a small number of the COC (Churches of Christ, K. G.) and NACC churches (North American Christian Convention), there is still a tendency to avoid references to the Trinity, although most churches in the latter two branches today accept the Trinity in substance if not in word"**

It seems that Mr. Robert Bowman, Jr., who prepared this statement is making an effort to be fair while attempting to cast some shadow of doubt regarding what we of the churches of Christ believe about the nature of Jesus. The point that he apparently misses is the desire among us to call Bible things by Bible names. Personally, I have no strong objection to the term "Trinity," for I believe it describes a biblical concept of God. But I prefer the Scriptural term, "Godhead."

The assertion that Stone denied the deity of our Lord is news to me. I am not a Restoration historian, but in the nominal reading I have done in that field I have not come across such. Neither have I found any documentation for it. But if true, then I believe he was wrong. My faith in Jesus as "my Lord and my God" (John 20: 28) would not be shaken in the least by such a revelation.

A bit further we read, **"... the members of the Restoration churches are a prime target of the Jehovah's Witnesses because of their weakness on the Trinity."** Such is an outrageous and ludicrous statement. Probably more debates have been held by preachers of the church of Christ with oneness Pentecostals on this subject than any other religious group. As many or more sermons have been preached by us who simply prefer to be called gospel preachers against this heresy of the Jehovah's Witnesses and in declaration of the deity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as any religious group anywhere.

We are then advised that, **"on the basis that they are not mentioned in the New Testament, most of the COC reject the use of musical instruments in church services."** Such is an oversimplification. The fact is that we oppose such because there is absolutely no indication in the N. T. that they are sanctioned by the Lord. The basis of our objection is quite fundamental: Shall we limit our religious service and our worship to that which the Lord has clearly revealed to us?; or shall we do what we want to do?

The statement affirms in response to our opposition: **"... at best it is fallacious (since it is based merely on the silence of the New Testament) and at worst actually contrary to the New Testament. The apostle Paul specifically approved the use of**

'Psalms' in church worship (1 Cor. 14: 26; cf. Eph. 5: 19; Col. 3: 16); and the word "psalm" in Greek generally means either instrumental music or singing accompanied by musical instruments. Admittedly, it can refer to non-instrumental singing as well, but there is no reason to restrict its meaning to exclude all use of instruments. "

I am not familiar with the practices of this CRI group, but I suspect that we would share opposition to any number of things "based merely on the silence of the New Testament. " I doubt that they would endorse pizza and coke as elements in the Communion, though, opposition would have to be based on "merely the silence of the New Testament. "

Those who argue for instrumental music on the basis of the Greek word for "psalm" or the verb "psallo" misuse the Greek lexicons without fail. This is no exception. The only source given is "Delling, Gerhard, hymnos, hymneo, psallo, psalmos, in **Theological Dictionary of the New Testament**, Vol. VIII, ed. Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids, MI William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972, pp. 489-503. The meaning of the word 'psalm' in classical, common, and biblical Greek. "

I have perused this source carefully and find no basis for the claim that the word implies the use of instrumental music in the New Testament. In fact, it states regarding **psallo** in Eph. 5: 19: "The literal sense by or with the playing of strings, ' still found in the LXX is now employed figuratively" (p. 499). In a footnote on the same page we read: "he ref. to stringed instruments in heavenly worship at Rev. 5: 8; 15: 2 need not mean that such instruments might sometimes accompany the singing at primitive Chr. worship. "

It is indeed strange that if these words necessarily imply the use of musical instruments, the translators do not know it, for there is not a standard translation of the N. T. that so renders them; the lexicographers do not know it, for they consistently render the words as used in the New Testament to mean "to sing"; and the early Christians did not know it, for by common consent of church historians, such instruments were not used in church worship until at least the 7th century, being first introduced by Pope Vitalian I.

Other subjects touched upon briefly in the statement are water baptism, charismatic gifts; and eternal security. Of the first, strong objection is taken to our understanding that baptism is a condition of salvation. Those interested are asked to write for material on the subject. We would simply encourage those interested in the truth to read Mark 16: 15, 16; Acts 2: 37, 38; 22: 16; Rom. 6: 3, 4; Gal. 3: 26, 27; 1 Peter 3: 20, 21.

Of charismatic gifts and eternal security, the CRI statement avers that these are not **'matters essential to the Christian faith. However, we strongly oppose the extreme condemnation of the charismatic movement and of the doctrine of eternal security by some in the COC. "** We believe the Bible speaks plainly regarding these issues and that our condemnation of the doctrines are based upon the oracles of God. Further discussion of these questions would be welcomed.

## MUSINGS

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### "Make The Message Plain"

"... And the common people heard him gladly" (Mark 12: 37).

In the above passage we learn that the common or ordinary people heard Jesus gladly. This is not to say that those who were not ordinary never heard Him for in the preceding verses of the same chapter a certain scribe answered Jesus so discreetly that Jesus told him he was "not far from the kingdom of God. " But in the main it was the common people who paid the most attention to what Jesus was saying. If they heard him "gladly" it is inferred that they must have understood what Jesus was teaching.

There is a song that includes the line "make the message clear and plain. " Nothing is more scriptural than making the message of Truth clear and plain. I do wish some of my brethren who preach and teach would learn this. Either the lessons are so shallow there is no spiritual food in them or they blast us to the moon and put us in orbit as we leave the building or lay down some periodical with our minds literally reeling as we wonder what in the world the man was saying.

Some preachers would do well to get more education so as to be able to speak the English language (or whatever the spoken language may be). Some use such bad grammar that a hearer of even ordinary education is made to wince. On the other hand some who do have a good education are also unable to make the message clear and plain. Really, brethren, is there not a happy medium somewhere in all this?

Brethren who say "so and so is a good man but he preaches over my head" ought not to be simply dismissed by telling them to "climb up. " Maybe there are not enough rungs on his intellectual ladder to do so. Maybe we should bring the message down to the understanding level of the common man as Jesus did. If this is done, you have not hindered the man of greater ability or intellect. He can surely understand simple, down-to-earth preaching. But if we are treated to a discourse of unfamiliar words and high sounding phrases, then usually the biggest segment of the audience will not profit thereby. I say this because the most of the audiences are made up of ordinary people. Such preaching and teaching is useless if not so presented that **all** can understand.

Brethren, let us "make the message clear and plain!"

## A BURNING FIRE

(Jer. 20:9)

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### The Participation Principle

There is a maxim that circulates through secular organizations that 90% of the work is usually performed by 10% of the people. Personal observation has confirmed that this is generally true not only among the secular organizations of the world but also among most local churches as well. Most duties, ranging from the spiritual work of teaching to making the physical preparations necessary for the worship and work of the local congregation, rest upon the shoulders of a small minority. This is not good and wherever these conditions exist corrective changes are needed.

A Christian cannot grow spiritually where there is no development or exercise of his abilities. Therefore every congregation should have a program in place where each member's abilities are developed and used. It falls the responsibility of the leadership of the local church (evangelists, pastors, and teachers) to equip "the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4: 11-12).

A local church cannot grow, it cannot even function properly, without every member of the body carrying his or her share of the work load. As we sometimes truthfully sing of the kingdom. "There is room, There's a place, There is work that we all can do. " The leaders in any given local church cannot and should not be expected to perform all of the individual duties necessary to carrying out that church's overall program of work. The apostles and the Jerusalem church illustrate this in Acts 6: 2-4. The text says, "And the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, 'It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables. But select from among you, brethren, seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task. But we will devote ourselves to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. "

This model church and its leaders observed priorities in their work. They demonstrate for us that, while no good work should be neglected, there are things that are to be deemed more urgent and important than others. Thus we see the apostles delegating work to others; work which these men were able to do. The lesson for us should be clear. While there are buildings that need cleaning and lawns that need mowing, surely elders and teachers should not have to spend valuable time doing janitorial and gardening services

while souls go untaught. Getting others involved was the only way the Jerusalem church could accomplish the amount of work that faced them; work that had to be done. Let me suggest some single things that I believe will help us in getting people involved today.

The work that needs to be done within the local church should be identified clearly and job descriptions specified. The church needs a list of all the work to be done: mowing the yard, cleaning the building, preparation for the Lord's Supper, teaching Bible classes (in home as well as in regular Bible class hours), keeping the track rack, taping of sermons and making copies available to those who request them, and many more. Further, they need to know exactly what each job requires and what is expected of someone who volunteers for a specific duty.

Training sessions need to be held regularly in those areas where they are needed. Bible class teachers need all the help they can get in learning to teach more effectively. The talents of men wishing to take a public part in worship can and needs to be developed in men's training classes. Even those doing tape work need to know how the recorders and duplicators operate as well as when and from where to order blank tapes. They may seem trivial to some but there are people who would love to be involved but don't know what to do and are too shy to step forward and ask.

Finally, people need to be encouraged to take part. Some elders seem hesitant to delegate work to others. In such case, growth both as individuals and in the local church is obstructed and such leaders are defeating their very purpose for existence. People need to be challenged to participate rather than be spectators, to grow rather than stagnate. Where there is no delegation of responsibility most of the work that a local church could accomplish, particularly in the area of evangelism, is left undone. However, when everyone is encouraged to participate and do their part then preachers are left to preach, teachers can teach, elders can oversee the souls of all and men will be brought closer to the Lord. This is true spiritual growth. In addition, evangelist efforts will increase with responses to those efforts resulting in numerical growth. All of this because people are motivated and mobilized to be a part of the work of God.

The challenge is always before us to reach a world lost in sin with the story of Jesus' love. How can we do this effectively, how can we do it at all, without using every ounce of talent which can be found in the body of Christ? To the end that we might all be more active in the work of the Lord, let us remember the words of the beloved apostle Paul to the Corinthians. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15: 58).

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## SIMPLICITY IN CHRIST

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### Time, Division, And Judgment

Solomon said, "Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing: and a Wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment. Because to every purpose there is time and judgment, therefore the misery of man is great upon him" (Eccl. 8: 5, 6).

If this is good advice for those who would escape the wrath of an earthly king (vv. 2-4), how much more for those who would escape the wrath of the King of kings (Rev. 6: 17; 19: 16)?

Brethren, the wrath of God is reserved for somebody because of division in the body of Christ, and time is going to be an important factor in this judgment. The wise among us will discern "both time and judgment."

Many mysteries of life are solved by the time element. Guilt or innocence with respect to a crime is determined by when the crime was committed, and where affected parties were at that time.

A miracle of Jesus was confirmed because the healing took place "at the seventh hour" (Jno. 4: 52, 53).

When Peter and the other apostles were accused of being drunken, Peter neutralized that charge by saying, "For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day" (Acts 2: 15). The same logic may not apply to the drinking habits of today's society, but it did back then.

When Paul was accused of sedition and other crimes, he countered those charges by pointing out "that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship" (Acts 24: 11).

The time element helps to establish the part which the Holy Spirit played in the circumstances surrounding the conversion of Cornelius. And, it helped to substantiate Peter's explanation of these events to his Jewish brethren. Luke said that the Holy Spirit fell on those who heard the word "while Peter yet spake" (Acts 10: 44), and Peter later confirmed that the Holy Ghost fell on those Gentiles "as I began to speak" (Acts 11: 15).

This proved to Peter's Jewish brethren, and should prove to us, that the baptism of the Holy Spirit on this occasion was not commanded as a condition of salvation, but rather was given by God to prove that the Gentiles were subject to the same conditions of salvation as were the Jews.

When Hezekiah invited Israel to unite with Judah in the observance of the passover feast, he reminded Israel

that they were the ones who were guilty of trespassing against God's commandments. Unity among God's people was desirable, but the time element would con-vict Israel as transgressors, and no amount of dialogue or compromise would change that fact (2 Chron. 30: 6-12).

We have no trouble establishing the origins of Catholicism and Protestantism with respect to the departure from the faith spoken of by the apostle Paul (2 Thes. 2: 1-12; 1 Tim. 4: 1-6).

Brethren used to have no trouble proving that those identified with the Christian Church (Or Disciples of Christ), were the ones who caused division among the Lord's people over such issues as missionary societies (1849), mechanical instruments of music in worship (1859), and kindred practices which followed thereafter.

And, when we determine what has divided us in this century, and **when** it was introduced and began to be generally imposed as a wedge of division, we can determine the part division plays in time and judgment.

When the messengers invited the digressives of Israel to come to the passover feast, some 'laughed them to scorn, and mocked them.' Yet, some humbled themselves, and accepted the invitation (2 Chron. 30: 10, 11). Judah was also guilty in dereliction of duty, and Rehoboam was guilty of poor judgment when the kingdom originally divided, but such did not justify Jeroboam and those who followed him into digression and division.

King Jesus will sort out all the matters of time and judgment, and the part which division has played in the scheme of things, and will do so in righteousness.

Like we tell the alien sinner, "... behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6: 2).

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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*

### CORRECTION

In the October issue of STS I wrote an editorial on the "One Nation Under God Campaign." In it I said "Over 2,000 churches of Christ (and a few denominational churches) have sent money to the Sycamore church." I based this statement on a newspaper article that quoted Daniel Whitworth who was chairman of the Shoals area campaign (Florence, AL *Times Daily*, Jan. 5, 1991). When questioned about the accuracy of my statement I called the campaign headquarters in Cookeville and spoke with brother Whitworth himself. Both stated that the reporter had misquoted Whitworth. Both denied that any denominational churches had contributed to the campaign. —Donnie V. Rader

**LARRY A. BUNCH**, P. O. Box 461, Dawson, TX 76639-0461 — The work in Dawson is doing well. When we began in September, 1989 there were two men besides myself. Now, we have five. I baptized one 80 year old man who had put off obeying all his life. We have a weekly column in the Hubbard paper (Dawson section) and publish a weekly newsletter. We are planning a gospel meeting in February, 1992 with a black preacher (we have one black lady meeting with us). I have lost \$450 a month support and my present amount is far below what is needed.

**RON HALBROOK**, 654 Gray St., West Columbia, TX 77486 — On October 30 I had surgery to remove a non-malignant growth on one of my vocal cords. This was done by a new technique called micro-micro surgery which does not leave scar tissue as older methods have done. I was able to preach the first time after surgery on December 8. It was short, slow and subdued in delivery and I am trying to be patient with therapy. All of this has reminded me of what a great privilege it is to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ (Eph. 3: 8)! Cards and calls have come from around the country. I wish to thank all by saying "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you" (Phil. 1: 3)!

### GARRETT-THRASHER DEBATES

Two four night public debates on the subject of "free will" are scheduled for 1992 between Thomas N. Thrasher of Decatur, Alabama and Stephan M. Garrett of Wingate, North Carolina. The first debate is June 1-2, 4-5 in the building of the Winchester Road church of Christ, Huntsville, Alabama. The second is August 3-4, 6-7 at Nancy's Creek Primitive Baptist Church, Atlanta, Georgia. Sessions begin at 7:00 p. m.

The propositions to be discussed are: (1) "The Scriptures teach that God had determined freely and unchangeably, all things that come to pass." Garrett affirms, Thrasher denies. This will be the subject June 1-2 and August 6-7. (2) "The Scriptures teach that God has given man the power of free choice or will with regard to his salvation." Thrasher affirms, Garrett denies. This will be discussed on June 4-5 and August 3-4.

Although this will be the first debate between these men, Mr. Thrasher has debated Mr. Garrett's father three times since 1970 on different propositions. Both men anticipate a gentlemanly discussion of these vital issues. If you desire additional information, write Thomas N. Thrasher, P. O. Box 1941, Decatur, AL 35602 or phone 205-353-3085.

### ASA MONROE PLYLER (1902-1991)

On November 12, 1991 the spirit of AM. Plyler left the body in a peaceful way. After 89 years he fulfilled the appointment of Hebrews 9: 27.

Dad had preached the gospel in central and north Alabama for 71 years. Though he lived near Jasper on the farm, he traveled over several counties preaching for the most part to the small churches in rural areas. His early travel in preaching was by walking, horseback or train. However, in time he used and wore out the Model T and Model A Ford and several other cars in the work.

Good health and a clear mind continued until within two months of his death. At the hospital in Birmingham it was determined that he had a brain tumor. Though surgery was a possibility, Dad judged it unwise and chose not to have it.

Brother Sewell Hall spoke at the funeral services and pointed out that we had gathered to celebrate the passing of this one. Brother Hall preached the word - challenging the audience to follow Jesus as Dad had tried to do. The body was returned to the earth in the family cemetery on the farm adjoining the Valley View Church, where he worshipped when he was not away preaching. We are grateful to the many who encouraged and comforted him in the last days of his life. Leo B. Plyler 2245 Forestdale Blvd. Birmingham, AL 35214

### NEW CONGREGATION REPORTED

We have been informed that a new congregation is now meeting at Dunbar, West Virginia on the west side of Charleston. Take the Dunbar-Rexalana exit and turn left immediately after crossing the railroad tracks.

### PREACHER NEEDED

**PRINCETON, WEST VIRGINIA** — We are desperately in need of a sound preacher in this small community. We have 12 Christians meeting. Our meeting place is free of debt. We can provide \$700 a month support plus moving expenses. We know of other congregations that might help support a preacher here. Contact Len Matlock (304-425-4627) or write to us at: 1013 Old Athens Road, Princeton, WV 24747.



**CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA** — The church here needs a preacher the latter part of February, 1992. The church has a nice three-bedroom, two-bath house located next to the building. The church is able to furnish the house, utilities and \$1800 per month. Interested preachers may contact Rudy Cribb (704-537-6592; Don Honbarrier (704-825-5929) or Jim White (803-547-4291).

**METAIRIE, LOUISIANA**— The church meeting at 2000 Lake Villa Dr. 70005 is looking for a preacher. We are self-supporting. You may call or write: Jim Mayfield (504-454-1606) or Lynn Sanders (504-409-5894).

**FRANK CHUMLEY**, 5327 South Tryon St., Charlotte, NC 28217 — I will be moving from the Charlotte, NC area the later part of February to work with the Lyons Chapel church in Tompkinsville, Kentucky. My address will be: 2401 Center Point Road, Tompkinsville, KY 42167.

### FROM AROUND THE WORLD

**INDIA** —**JOHN HUMPHRIES**, 8705 Wooded Glen Rd., Louisville, KY 40220 — Dwight Edwards and I returned safely from our six weeks effort of preaching the gospel in India. We had Bible class for 30 preachers in Shanthi Nagar near Hyderabad for about a week. The classes were conducted during the day and we had preaching each night for the public. During the classes, Dwight and T. George Fred (Indian preacher) went to some of the churches in various districts while Wilfred and I went to Colombo, Sri Lanka for gospel work. Thus, we had two teams to cover more territory in the time we had.

For the remainder of the time, we went to as many churches as we could to teach and preach the gospel. We believe the brethren were encouraged. 84 were baptized into Christ during these visits with the churches. 38, 300 Telugu tracts were printed. These were tracts that Bill Beasley, others and I had written and had translated into the Telugu language. 817 Telugu Bibles were purchased and given to needy saints out in the village churches. Several Indian gospel preachers had also written gospel songs for worship and so we printed over 400 Telugu song books for the brethren. We appreciate the support of those who have made it possible to do this work and ask for continued help to go again and continue the work we began 16 years ago. This effort is important and, as we hope you can see, fruitful.

**CHINA** — Jeff Kingry's last report indicates that eight more have been baptized in Shenyang, China and four more in Hong Kong.

**SPAIN** — Efrain F. Perez reports another baptized at Badalona congregation (Barcelona area) and also a restoration of an erring brother. The church at Tenerife in the Canary Islands now has its own building. They now have 19 members. A brother who lives eight hours from Barcelona plans to marry one of the young women from the congregation there (he is a Christian) and they plan to begin a congregation meeting in their house in Cartagena-Murcia.

**IRELAND** — Two more have been baptized in Dublin. Steve Kearney baptized them in the Irish Sea. Said he "When I got into the water to baptize him, the water was so cold I thought my legs had died. Of course, that is minor when one considers that two more souls have been added to the kingdom of God." Efforts to teach from house to house continue.

**HUNGARY** — **RICHARD COPELAND** and **JEFF ARCHER** and their families are working together in Budapest. They report Hungarian visitors at every service, with 12 one Sunday. Stable financial support is being supplied by the 77th St. Church in Birmingham, AL and the church in Temple Terrace, Florida. Their greatest success in obtaining studies has come through advertising in the newspaper. At present they have many studies under way with others waiting. Brother Copeland says "Budapest is a very worldly city. Alcohol and pornography are everywhere. Divorce and family strife are just as prevalent as in the U. S. That makes it ripe for the gospel — and for all religious perversions of the gospel. 'Everybody' is evangelizing here (or as one contact put it, 'proselytizing' here)."

**BALTICS** — Steve Wallace and Derek Chambers recently visited Lithuania and Latvia to teach the gospel. The greatest interest was shown in Vilnius where they spent five days. They were graciously received by a family they had not known before and allowed to teach in their house. They set up a table on the street in Vilnius where about 1, 000 people stopped to look at literature and talk. They handed out over 300 lessons in English, German and Lithuanian. While there are many who speak English, Russian is widely used. Steve and Derek hope to be able to do more teaching here later. Their work in Germany is demanding but in addition to that, they have been able to open doors in many other places.

**SOUTH AFRICA** — George Harris reports from Cape that two more have been baptized there. They enrolled 12 more in the Bible correspondence course. They are getting more and more requests from blacks requesting Bible courses, but there is a need for more in the language they use.

**COSTA RICA** — **RUBEN AMADOR** was in Costa Rica in Central America in December. There are five preachers working in the capital city of San Jose. There are two sound churches in San Jose, both small. A congregation meets in San Carlos (near the border with Nicaragua) and another in Sixaola (near the border with Panama).

**CUBA** — In January, Ruben Amador and Antonio Lira (from Venezuela) were to make a preaching trip to Havana, Cuba. We anxiously await information about the results of this trip.

**ARGENTINA** — Carlos A. Capelli reports on his work in Buenos Aires and other places in Argentina. Spiritual progress is reported at Puente Alto where three brethren take turns preaching and teaching. The church at La Cruz is slowly building a meetinghouse. Growth and spiritual progress can be seen. He also visited with brethren in Limache where two brethren help with the preaching. At Madrid Street church attendance ran 60-80 during a meeting, with good support from brethren in the Santiago area. At Jose C. Paz congregation three were baptized recently. There is now a radio program out of Mercedes. The church in Mendoza is now in their new meeting house. They are now known as the Moreno Street church.

**PHILIPPINES** — Robert R. Gamiao reports growth in two congregations where he labors in the Cagayan Valley in northern Luzon. 18 were baptized in 1991. Recently in Tuguegarao a prominent denominational preacher and his wife were baptized. He is Mariano Vergela.

Dominador J. Neniell of Magpet, Cotabato reports two baptized there.

Roby L. Gumpad reports from Isabela Province that recent baptisms include two Seventh Day Adventists, a couple from a Pentecostal church and two couples who were Roman Catholic.

**MEXICO** — Steven Sarff sends word that a new congregation was to be started in January in Delicias, Chih. with 15-20 members. A meeting is planned at the end of each month for the next 12 months. Any faithful brother who can speak Spanish and would like to help in this effort is invited to contact Francisco Rivera/Privada del Ave. 11 PTE #509/Dehcias, Chih. / 33000 MEXICO.



### EDITOR'S MEETING SCHEDULE — 1992

February — Bergen, Norway (16-21)

March — West Ave., San Antonio, Texas (1-6)  
E. 10th St., Columbus, Indiana (16-22) Middlebourne,  
West Virginia (23-29)

April — Westside, Warner Robins, Georgia (5-10)  
 Northeast, Clearwater, Florida (19-24)

May — Brookmead, Johnson City, Tennessee (4-10)  
 Conyers, Georgia (18-24)

June — Hardinsburg, Kentucky (May 30-June 5)  
 Miller Ave. Lectures, San Jose, California (3rd  
 week)

Lakeport, California (June 28-July 1)

July — 2nd and Walnut, Paragould, Arkansas (18-24)

August — Imhoff Ave., Port Arthur, Texas (3-9)

September — Covington, Georgia (7-  
 13) Danville, Indiana (20-25)

October — Antioch (Dickson County), Tennessee (4-9)  
 Olney, Illinois (18-23)

November — Helton Dr., Florence, Alabama (1-6)  
 White River, Greenwood, Indiana (15-20)

We hope to greet a number of our readers during the year in the course of these meetings.

**ADDITION TO INDEX**

The printer inadvertently omitted the index material for the column written by H. E. Phillips. The index is incomplete without this. Our apologies to the readers and to brother Phillips. Please clip this out and paste it in the December, 1991 issue.

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(Taken from bulletins and papers  
 received by the editor)

# 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 XXXIII

March 1992

Number 3

## 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*

P.O. Box 83  
Tuckerman, Arkansas 72473



## "The Appearance of Evil" 1 Thessalonians 5: 22

"Abstain from every form of evil. " "Hold yourself aloof from every form of evil. " "Shun every form of evil. " "Continue to abstain from every sort of evil. " "Steer clear of evil in any form. "

These five translations of 1 Thessalonians 5: 22 are from *the American Standard Version, The Epistles of Paul by W. J. Coneybear, The Twentieth Century New Testament, Williams Translation, and J. B. Phillips Translation*. This passage is made clearer by observing and comparing other renderings. They all bear the same message. This, of course, it not to say that the King James Version is inaccurate in rendering the passage, "Abstain from all appearance of evil. " However, some erroneous conclusions have been drawn from the word "appearance" not intended by the Holy Spirit. Some interpret appearance to mean "the outward aspect of anything. " But a thing is not evil just because someone thought it looked that way. The passage means whenever evil (the real thing) appears, abstain from it.

Add to these five translations of 1 Thess. 5: 22 Thayer's definition of *eidos* ("appearance"): "from every kind of evil and wrong" (p. 172), and *Nestle's Interlinear*: "from every form of evil, abstain. " This shows the verse is not talking about what may "look like" evil or what someone may associated with evil.

That becomes subjective, for what some may associate with evil may not "look like" evil to others. It is in the eye of the beholder. For example, some suspicious minds accused Jesus of being a glutton and a winebibber because he ate with publicans and sinners (Mt. 9). "Guilt by association. " He also spent some time with a woman who had had five husbands (Jn. 4). It astonished his disciples and to some it may have had the outlook of evil. Was Jesus wrong or were the suspicious minds in error? If we are not careful we may put ourselves in the position of reading other people's minds and of falsely accusing them.

To some Pentecostal groups it appears ("looks like") evil when you wear jewelry, makeup, etc. In years past about the only place where billiards was played was in beer joints. Unable to see that it was the drinking that was wrong, not the billiards, some erroneously concluded that it was wrong to play pool even when drinking was not present because it had the "appearance" of evil and was therefore questionable. The same happened with dice, cards, and moving pictures on a screen. Though no drinking or gambling was involved, those who used dice and cards or watched a picture move across a screen, were pronounced "guilty by association. " If I came to your home and saw you playing a board game with dice or a game of Rook (cards), I would have no right to accuse you of violating 1 Thes. 5: 22.

Certainly, a Christian should not try to see how close to evil he can get, or seek to make it look like he is doing wrong. Nothing in this article should be misconstrued as a defense of any sin named herein. But this passage is not saying every time one is found in circumstances another might question that he has actually sinned.

In some states the grocery stores sell beer and lewd magazines. If a Christian is seen in one of these stores, has he sinned by "the appearance of evil?" No, but he may have violated someone's misconception of 1 Thes. 5: 22.

While aboard a plane, the man sitting next to me ordered a cocktail and so did the people behind me. Rather than come under the scrutiny of a suspicious person who thought I violated 1 Thes. 5: 22, I reluc-

tantly decided not to jump out.

Another example: a Christian may be present where cursing, lasciviousness, cheating and gambling are taking place, without sinning. There are two places I have in mind where these often occur — at school and at work! Because one is present where these occur, is he guilty of "the appearance of evil?" If 1 Thes. 5: 22 is teaching that we sin every time we are found in association with that which could be sinful, then the only possible solution would be as Paul states, "for then must ye needs go out of the world" (1 Cor. 5: 10).

It is possible that one may sin through impure thoughts when he sees others involved in sin. He may also sin when he sees murder, stealing, materialism, or lasciviousness on TV in his own home. Does one sin when he sees sin re-enacted on television? He may or he may not. He may have placed himself in a dangerous situation — dangerous to his spiritual well-being. It may cost him dearly. He needs to beware of self-deception. He needs to ask: "What is my motive for watching this program?" He may have sinned terribly. All I am saying is that I cannot read his mind (1 Cor. 2: 11). I must avoid the temptation to become a mote hunter or to always put the worst interpretation on another's action or circumstances. We must "do good to all men, especially those of the household of faith" (Gal. 6: 10). Being charitable and using the Golden Rule applies here too (1 Cor. 13; Lk. 6: 31).

I have often heard this verse misquoted to the effect that we should "Abstain from the very appearance of evil." The word "very" is added to make it sound like it is wrong because it "looks like" evil to someone. "Very" is not in the text nor in any of over 30 translations I have checked. It is an addition which contributes to misunderstanding the verse.

The misinterpretation of 1 Thes. 5: 22 has caused no small amount of problems for brethren and congregations. This misinterpretation encourages mote hunting. Accusations are often made on suspicion and one may become guilty of speaking evil against a brother (Js. 4; 11) when, in fact, he may have done no evil. Dissension and division are often the result.

Let us "judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (Jn. 7: 24). *Vine's Expository Dictionary* points out that this is the only time the word appearance is used to mean "the outward aspect." It is from *opsis*, not *eidosis*. Jesus plainly commanded us not to judge this way. He did not contradict Paul. He contradicted the misconception some have of 1 Thes. 5: 22. Christians should be cautious of dangerous situations. Likewise, we should be concerned about one another. But let us not misinterpret 1 Thes. 5: 22 or John 7: 24. The consequences are disastrous. Adapted from 1972.

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## Searching The Scriptures

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## " QUOTE

**"Only the dead have seen  
the end of conflict."**

— President George Bush  
(State of the Union Address)

## UNQUOTE "

## Editorial

Connie W. Adams

P.O. Box 69  
Brooks, Kentucky 40109



### Justified

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5: 1-2).

#### The Meaning of Justification

Justification means that the sinner is vindicated before God. He is acquitted of his sin. He is declared righteous. This does not mean that he has not sinned, "for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3: 23). The guilty sinner stands before God without excuse. He is unable of himself to provide acquittal. He cannot make himself righteous nor justify himself. That is the right of God. It is sin which has separated man from God (Isa. 59: 1-2). Man is the offender and God the offended party. In order to have "peace with God" the offender must be acquitted, justified, declared righteous.

#### The Source of Justification

But how can this be? Is the sinner powerful or wise enough to devise a means of justification? "Oh Lord I know that the way of man is not in himself (Jer. 10: 23). Only God can justify. The Jew could not be justified by the works of the Lord for Paul said "But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident; for, The Just shall live by faith" (Gal. 3: 11). Neither Jew nor Gentile could be justified by works of human merit. It is "not of works lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2: 9); and "not by works of righteousness which we have done" (Titus 3: 5). So, then justification does not originate in man. It must come from God. According to Paul, it is God who purposed to offer acquittal to those helpless and hopeless without his grace. He called and justified those called that they might be glorified with him. Indeed, "It is God that justifieth" (Rom. 8: 30-33). It is offered as a favor which the sinner did not deserve and could not provide. It is therefore of grace. "For by grace are ye saved through faith" (Eph. 2: 8). Man's dilemma was God's opportunity.

"Amazing grace, how sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me  
I once was lost, but now am found  
Was blind but now I see. "

Having described the frightful condition of those who were "dead in trespasses and sins, " and having set forth the ultimate fate of those suited only to receive divine

wrath, Paul opens the window of hope to the hopeless when he said "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus (Eph. 2: 4-7). Astounding! There we are guilty, having offended our own Creator. What have we to offer? What can we think of to do? What wise plan of our own will prompt God to forgive us and restore the fellowship now shattered because of our sin? There is nothing we can do to place God in our debt. We owe him everything but he owes us nothing. Ah, but our God is "rich in mercy, " his love is "great" and his "kindness" is extended out of grace. What a God! He is able and willing to justify us, count us righteous and treat us as if we had never sinned. It boggles the mind to try and take it all in.

#### The Means of Justification

Having seen that justification can only come from God it is necessary to determine whether or not this acquittal is offered unconditionally or conditionally. It springs from the grace of God flowing out of the well-spring of his rich mercy and great love. Will the grace of God save every sinner, or will it save some sinners? If every sinner is to be saved unconditionally, then we are at a loss to explain many plain passages in the word of God. Jesus said that at the judgment (and why would there need to be a judgment if justification is unconditional?) some would "go away into everlasting fire" (Mt. 25: 46). Paul said the Lord would come "in flaming fire" and "take vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" and said they would be "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord" (2 Thes. 1: 6-9). So then, not everyone will be justified.

Paul explained it for us in Romans 1: 16-17. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. " It is by means of the gospel that God offers his favor to the sinner. "Whereunto he called you by our gospel" (2 Thes. 2: 14). Remember, he justified those whom he called (Rom. 8: 30) but here it is clear that he calls by the gospel. This good news is the power he exerts to apprise the sinner that his grace is offered. It is by means of the gospel that God reveals his righteousness (justification, ASV) or acquittal (as Moses E. Lard has it). The gospel tells us how God offers his favor to us.

But upon what ground does God offer to forgive the transgressor? In every dispensation blood atonement has been required. The patriarchs and the Jews under the law of Moses were required to offer blood sacrifice for "without the shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9: 22). But the law was only a "shadow of good things to come" and it "was not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins" (Heb. 10: 1-4). Those sacrifices only typified the ultimate sacrifice for sin

when the Son of God shed his blood. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many" (Heb. 9: 28). "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb. 9: 14). When Jesus took the cup, the night of his betrayal, he said "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Mt. 26: 28). "And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross" (Eph. 2: 16). Here both Jews and Gentiles have "access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Eph. 3: 18). Paul sums it up for us when he said "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be the propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3: 24-26). The cross was the price which had to be paid in order to make the grace of God accessible to us.


**Man's Part**

The sinner must act out of faith to obey the will of God if he is to be justified. "Therefore being justified by faith..." (Rom. 5: 1). God justifies, that is his part. But it is by faith and that is the sinner's part. He must believe God. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation unto "every one that believeth." "By grace are ye saved through faith" (Eph. 2: 8). God extends the favor and man responds in faith. The question which must be resolved is whether saving faith is a living or dead faith. "Faith without works is dead" (Jas. 2: 26). It was because Abraham believe God that he obeyed the instruction of the Lord. The worthies of old who were all said to be justified by faith in God, acted in demonstration of that faith (Heb. 11). "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5: 6). Christ is the "author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5: 9).

God requires the sinner in faith to repent of his sins. "God commands all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17: 30). Jesus said "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved and he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mk. 16: 16). Neither faith, repentance nor baptism nullify salvation by the grace of God. All of these are demanded of everyone. God offers his grace and man responds in faith because Christ shed his blood as a perfect sacrifice for sin. Justice has been met. The alienated sinner now has peace with God. He is justified. To quote a good friend and eloquent preacher, "I scarce can take it in!"

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A Review Of Jerry Bassett's  
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## 1 Cor. 7: 15 — Is the Believer Free To Remarry?

Much of the discussion on the alien's amenability to the law of Christ on marriage, divorce and remarriage has centered around 1 Cor. 7: 10-16.

Brother Bassett gives considerable attention to this text in his book. He makes three points about this context: (1) Paul gives different instructions to the Christian married to the unbeliever from the ones given to two Christians who are married. (2) The term "bondage" (v. 15) refers to the marriage bond. (3) The Christian (believer) whose unbelieving mate leaves is free to remarry.

We will examine these three points in this article.

### Differing Instructions For Those Married To Unbelievers?

Jerry Bassett claims that the instructions of 1 Cor. 7: 10-11 were addressed to two believers who are married and that the instructions of verses 12-16 are addressed to a believer married to an unbeliever. He tells us that what the Lord said to the believer married to an unbeliever differed from the instructions given to the believer married to a believer. He writes, "Clearly, then, Paul claimed that what he wrote to believers married to unbelievers was something other than what the Lord had spoken. It was therefore also something other than what he wrote to believers married to believers at 1 Corinthians 7: 10-11" (p. 81).

We are told that when Paul addresses the Christian married to the unbeliever he is speaking to "an entirely different group" (p. 81) Thus, the Christian in a mixed marriage and unbelievers are not included in the instructions of verses 10-11.

To illustrate his point, Jerry uses a coach's instructions to his football team. His team consists of veteran players and a few rookies. The coach says, "All you returning veterans go down to the other end of the field and warm up." Then he says, "The rest of you stay here with me." Bassett concludes, "Who could fail to see that the coach was speaking to two different groups of players, and that he had something different in mind for each group?" (pp. 81-82).

In 1 Cor. 7: 10-11 Paul addresses the *married*. He had addressed the *unmarried* in verses 8-9. Bassett assumes that these verses are limited to **Christians** who are

married. There is no reason to think that it only applies to Christians. There is no justification for making "married" mean *some* of the married.

It is true that in 1 Cor. 7: 10-11 Paul refers to the teaching that the Lord did during his personal ministry (probably Matt. 19: 9 and parallel texts).

In verses 12-16 Paul addresses some specific questions that the Lord did not directly address while he was on earth. For example, he did not directly deal with the question of a believer being married to an unbeliever. Should they sever that relationship? Is it a legitimate marriage? These and other questions Paul says "I, not the Lord" will address (v. 12). This does not mean the instructions of the Lord (vs. 10-11) do not apply to the Christian married to an unbeliever or to two unbelievers who are married. *This text does not say that those in mixed marriages and unbelievers are not under Christ's law on marriage!*

If "I, not the Lord" (v. 12) means that Jesus said nothing which applied to mixed marriages, then, "not I, but the Lord" (v. 10) must mean that Paul said nothing which applied to two married Christians.

No one denies that Paul addresses some specifics about mixed marriages that Jesus did not address in his ministry. What I do deny is that the statements in verses 12-16 imply that the instructions of verses 10-11 do not apply to those in mixed marriages and aliens.

Bassett tells us that the instructions to the Christian married to the unbeliever are *different* from the instructions given to two Christians. However, as I read verses 10-16, the instructions look the same to me. In verse 10-11 those addressed (which Bassett assumes are only Christians) are told "not to depart" and "not to divorce." Those addressed in verses 12-16 are told, "Let him not divorce her" (v. 12) and "let her not divorce him" (v. 13).

His football illustration does not fit with the text. We have just shown that verses 12-13 give the same instructions as verses 10-11. The coach gave one command to the veteran players and another to the rookies. To better fit his doctrine, he needs an illustration that has the coach giving one set of rules for his veteran players (that does not apply to the rookies) and another set for the rookies. I'm not much of a sportsman, yet I would pay to see a game played by a team like that.

More in harmony with the text would be this illustration. The team captain comes to the practice field and says, "To the players, not I, but the coach says to warm up. To the rookie players, I and not the coach say you warm up by doing set ups, push ups and running in place." Does that mean that the instructions to warm up only apply to veteran players? Not at all. All the captain did was address some specifics to the rookies that the coach did not address in his instructions. Yet all players would know that they needed to warm up.

### Does "bondage" (v. 15) Refer To The Marriage Bond?

Bassett argues that "not under bondage" (v. 15) refers to the marriage bond. He gives three reasons for saying that. 1. When the unbeliever departs (divorces the believer) they are not married. He thinks the marriage and the bond are the same. Thus, the believer could not

be bound (p. 86). 2. If the unbeliever stayed (instead of departing) the believer would be bound (p. 87). 3. The word translated "bondage" (*douloo*) applies to marriage just as *deo* (word for "bound" in Rom. 7: 2 and 1 Cor. 7: 39) in a figurative sense.

Let's examine these three reasons. (1) Bassett assumes they are not bound for he assumes that the bond and the marriage are the same. We have already shown (article no. 2) that Rom. 7: 2-3 shows that a woman is bound to her first husband while she is married to another man. Thus, the bond and marriage are distinct.

(2) Again, it is an assumption that the believer married to an unbeliever would be bound if the unbeliever decided to stay. The perfect tense suggests that he *has never been under bondage*. Nestle's Interlinear translates it "has not been enslaved."

(3) Bassett says that if *deo* can be used of marriage, so can *douloo*. For if either refers to marriage, it will be figurative. It may be true that *douloo* could be used that way. However, the fact is that the Bible didn't use it that way. *Deo* refers to a binding by law and *douloo* refers to being a slave or bondage. To say the least, that is how they are used in the texts where they are found.

Various lexicons tell us that *douloo* denotes enslavement (Thayer, p. 158; Bauer, p. 206; Kubo, p. 153; Liddell and Scott, p. 179). The point is that the believer is not enslaved to the unbeliever to save the marriage at the expense of his/her faith.

Is The Believer Free To Remarry?

Bassett's answer to this question is "Apparently, he is" (p. 93). However, there is nothing said about remarriage in the text. We have shown that the text does not say that the believer is no longer bound to his mate (Rom. 7: 2-3).

There is as much about the believer's right to remarry in 1 Cor. 7: 15 as there is about instrumental music in Eph. 5: 19.

It is interesting that brethren look at 1 Cor. 7 and conclude that Matt. 19: 9 is binding on *Christians* to whom the Lord *did not* speak, and not binding on *Jews* to whom the Lord *did* speak.

The next installment in this review will be "Must Those Who Have Committed Adultery Separate?"

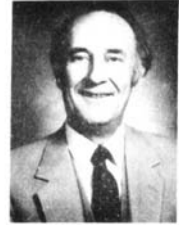
## WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

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## What Power Did The Apostles Receive?

**QUESTION:** *In Matt. 10 Jesus called his disciples and gave them power over unclean spirits and the power to heal sickness and disease. In John 20: 22 Jesus commissioned the apostles. He gave them the Holy Spirit, and authorized them to forgive sin.*

*According to Acts 2, "they" were baptized by the Holy Spirit and "they" spoke with other tongues. Frankly, I am puzzled. What power did the apostles receive on the day of Pentecost?*

**ANSWER:** Jesus said to His apostles in Acts 1: 8, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." The promise of the power was fulfilled in Acts 2: 1-4 when the apostles were endowed with power from the Holy Spirit. (They received that which was poured out of or from the Holy Spirit, Acts 2: 17).

The power the apostles received on Pentecost is explained by J. W. McGarvey in his comments on Acts 1: 8 as: "The power promised, and their work as witnesses, are so connected together as to indicate that the power to be effective witnesses is meant. This, as we learn from the testimony which they afterward gave, was not merely to tell what they had seen and heard, which they could have done by their unaided powers; but it included ability to recall all that he had said to them in his years of ministry; and to testify as to his exaltation in heaven, his will concerning all spiritual affairs on earth, and his future dealings with both men and angels" (*New Commentary on Acts*, Vol. 1, p. 6). Actually, everything the apostles needed to enable them to function as apostles is included in the word "power." Jesus describes it as being "endued (clothed) with power" (Lk. 24: 49).

When Jesus called His disciples in Matt. 10, verse 1 states He gave them power (authority, ASV) over unclean spirits, to cast them out and to heal all manner of sickness and diseases. Luke 9: 1 says Jesus gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases. The miraculous functions were temporary, con-

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current with their mission to the Jews only (Matt. 10: 5-6). These miracles served to confirm their message. Jesus also empowered the seventy to heal the sick and to cast out demons (Lk. 10: 1-20).

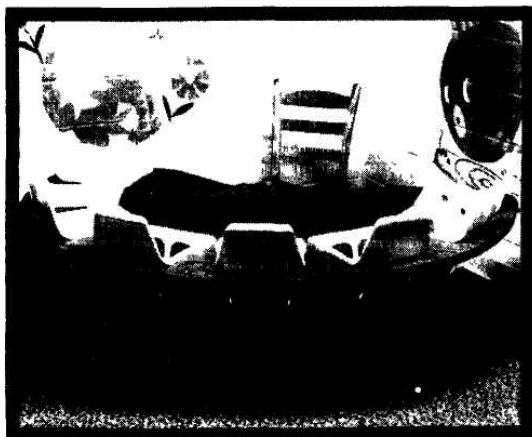
John 20: 22 is in anticipation of Pentecost. It reads, "And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." The breathing transferred nothing from Jesus to the apostles but only symbolically foreshadowed the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit upon them at Pentecost.

Receiving the Spirit in John 20: 22 was to be in conjunction with the remitting and retaining of sins in verse 23. The Spirit would teach them all things (Jn. 14: 26), guide them into all truth (Jn. 16: 13) and convict the world of sin (Jn. 16: 8). The apostles would bind and loose (Matt. 16: 19) heaven's will through the revelation of the Holy Spirit. The conditions of forgiveness are proclaimed after the Holy Spirit, i. e., His power, is received by the apostles in Acts 2. Here, and subsequent thereto, sins were remitted and retained by whether the gospel was obeyed or not. John 20: 22 seems to be, therefore, another promise of the reception of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

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### "Miss Nollie"

"When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also" (1 Tim. 1: 5).

There is a song called, **Give Me The Roses While I Live**. While it is always good to have many nice things to say when a loved one has passed on, it is also good to express some appreciation while they are still alive. That is my purpose in this brief article of a tribute to my mother, Nollie Matilda (Stotesberry) Adams. At this writing she lives at the old home place near Hopewell, Virginia in Chesterfield County and she is 87 years old. She and my father's sister, Beulah D. Adams, live a good life helping each other to keep things going. They attend the Rivermont church of Christ which my family and others were instrumental in starting in the late fifties. Let me nutshell my mother's life and traits for you:

Eastern North Carolina roots... born in poverty... knew hardship, deprivation and cold, bleak sorrow... orphaned as a small girl... family held together by "Grand-mammy" (Mama's mother)... worked in the fields chopping and picking cotton... learned to survive and to be resourceful... deeply religious with very strong convictions... a capacity to endure almost impossible circumstances... moved to Virginia... married Joyner Wilson Adams in December, 1923 (a marriage that lasted 63 years)... Together they instilled in their daughter and two sons the principles of Truth that would serve them well for a lifetime... faith, courage, integrity, honesty, a feeling for the underdog... an uncompromising spirit... These they possessed to an unusually high degree... blessed with a keen wit and a sense of humor that won't stop... an unswerving loyalty for God and family... a determination in matters of faith and practice that will not countenance surrender to that which is wrong.

Her neighbors call her "Mrs. Adams." The older brethren call her "Nollie." With deep respect and affection all the younger people call her either "sister Adams" or "Miss Nollie." The little children come to her at church services to hug and kiss her. She and "Buby" (Aunt Beulah) still prepare meals for the visiting preachers and still have folks in at regular intervals. My father died in December, 1986 but they have continued on in faith.

Blessed with an enormous amount of good common sense, many still seek "Miss Nollie's counsel and advice. To her children she is "Mama. " To her grandchildren she is "Memaw. " To all of us she is a grand lady. Her children rise up and call her blessed.

Please don't fuss at me, Mama. I just had to say these things now rather than later. But I have not even touched the hem of the garment.

We all love you Mama!

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*P. J. Casebolt*

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**Paperback Preaching**

Under ordinary circumstances it should not be necessary for us to define our term. Neither should it be necessary to go into detail as to what we are **not** discussing. But when you are dealing with a subject that is apt to be controversial, it is wise to follow the advise of Paul and "cut off occasion from them which desire occasion" (2 Cor. 11: 12).

For example, in controversies of the past, the issue was not orphans, needy children, cooperation, edification, preaching the gospel, or entertainment. The issue was (and still is): can the church establish and work through human institutions, sponsoring-church arrangements, or support and provide recreation and entertainment?

The Reader's Digest Illustrated Encyclopedic Dictionary defines **paperback** as "A book or edition having a flexible paper binding and selling relatively cheaply. " And while this dictionary is of the hardback variety, the definition would be no less authentic were it contained in a paperback issue.

A wide variety of subjects are discussed in paperback books and there is nothing inherently wrong with paperbacks. A few years back I published a book of poetry and opted for the paperback model because the hardback copy would have cost two or three times more than the paperback.

When I speak of paperback preaching, I refer to sectarian influence and characteristics which have their origin in human wisdom and philosophy, and disseminated by means of paperbacks.

Sometimes a position is so nebulous that it is difficult to define it or pin it down. And this very fact makes a doctrine or position suspect because it is directly contrary to the characteristics of truth and plain Bible teaching (2 Cor. 3: 12).

A few years back the Crossroads movement banded about the "total commitment" phrase, and the later Bostonian movement spoke of "discipling. " While there is nothing wrong with making a total commitment to the Lord or making disciples, the Crossroads and Boston application had its origin in sectarianism, and those sectarian authors and sources were clearly identified.

Today, we are hearing a lot about "motivation" and some of the methods and tactics being employed are close enough to sectarian paperback sources that you can hear "the bleating of the sheep... and the lowing of the oxen"

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(1 Sam. 15: 14).

Preachers have different personalities, abilities (natural or acquired), and methods of presentation. We are not opposed to preachers who endeavor to improve their knowledge of the Bible or the presentation of those truths. But we are opposed to the idea or practice of allowing human wisdom, philosophy, and sectarian gimmicks to be the motivating power instead of the gospel of Christ (1 Cor. 1: 21-26; Col. 2: 4, 8, 18).

What was it that caused those on Pentecost to be "pricked in their heart" (Acts 2: 37)? What "motivated" Stephen's murderers when "they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth: (Acts 7: 54)? What was it that "motivated" Felix to tremble (Acts 24: 25), Festus to accuse Paul of being "mad" (Acts 26: 24), and Festus to accuse Paul of being "mad" (Acts 26: 24), and Agrippa to be "almost persuaded" (v. 28)?

We can tell you without any doubt whatever that the motivating power was the gospel of Christ, and not the paperback philosophies of the Epicureans and the Stoics.

And if a preacher has an inferiority complex because of this personal appearance, personality, lack of ability or formal education and training, he needs to depend even **more** on the power of the gospel and less on the paperback philosophies of men.

## Taking Up The Mantle

*Steve Cundiff*

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When a congregation of God's people experience the loss of a great leader many emotions beset them. Confusion, sadness, and distress are all natural reactions to the death of one with whom you have shared both good and bad times.

In thinking about great leaders that I have known personally who have passed on to their reward and in view of great men in the Bible who worked everyday of their lives in service to Jehovah God I am reminded of the story of Elijah and Elisha.

There are four lessons to learn from II Kings 2: 1-15. First, Elijah accepted what was ahead of him. As chapter two opens Elijah was aware of his approaching death. Yet, he did not display any unwillingness to depart this life, nor did he fear the unseen world that was ahead of him. Elijah willingly accepted what was about to happen for he knew that God's divine purposes would be continued by someone else. Elijah knew that he was ready to go. And so, he was content to let God's will be done. Not a single word of objection is heard from the great prophet Elijah as he approaches his death.

The second lesson to be learned is, Elijah was absorbed with spiritual things. During the Elijah's life he was not afraid to confront error. When the religious people began teaching error one could count on Elijah standing up and being counted on the Lord's side (e. g. when Elijah confronted the worshippers of Baal on Mt. Carmel to prove that Jehovah was God; 1 Kings 18). Elijah confronted kings when they began losing God as their focal point (2 Chron. 21). Elijah performed many miracles and helped many people during his life of devotion to God. Yet, as death approached, Elijah did not stop doing good. His final journey to his homeland was full of service to others as well as meditation upon God. Elijah's future reward was ahead of him. The things of this world no longer concerned him. The unseen world, the coming change, the things of heaven, occupied his efforts and his thoughts. Elijah was on his final journey home and as the end drew closer his mind was still fixed on the things of God.

The third lesson to be learned is, Elijah had regard for and was devoted to his follower, Elisha. When a person is facing the prospect of death it is not uncommon for him to be occupied with himself and consequently to lose sight of others around him. However, this was not the case with Elijah. He did not want to be a burden to

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Elisha. So, Elijah tried to encourage him to go back home. Elisha refused. As the two men traveled down the road to Elijah's homeland Elisha must have learned many things by observing how Elijah stood fast in the face of death without fear. Elijah probably wondered how God's will would be accomplished after he was gone. So, the time Elijah spent with Elisha was very crucial.

The fourth lesson to be learned is that Elisha took up the mantle. Elisha was more than a servant to Elijah. They were friends. After Elijah had passed on Elisha became the full-fledged successor of his master. Elisha proceeded with the same type of work that Elijah had done. A work that was focused upon honoring God (helping the needy, performing miracles, giving advice to the needy, giving advice to the king, acting as a spokesman for God). Elisha knew what had to be done. The responsibility of a prophet was tremendous, but Elisha assumed that responsibility and met the challenges that were before him and took up the mantle.

What are we to do? When a congregation loses someone of quiet dignity, thoughtful wisdom, a man whose loyalty was to God, a dedicated servant of family and church, he will be missed.

The time is upon each member to step forward and take up the mantle that has fallen. Be the kind of person he was, strive to give all that you can, do the things that he did, be the quality leader he was, do as much for the Lord's work as he did.

When a great leader passes from this world we are reminded that we must "take up the mantle" that has fallen and continue God's work as Elisha did.



## Oblivion ... Is There Nothing More?

*Tony Mauck*

1040 Meadowland  
Beaumont, Texas 77706

An aging movie actress spoke philosophically of her declining years, "I look forward to oblivion. I'm what is known as gradually disintegrating. I don't fear the next world, or anything. I don't fear hell, and I don't look forward to haven... I find all life thrilling. I like to write, I like to paint, I like to play tennis, I like to swim. I don't like depressing stories about the inevitability of someone going down the drain. Getting old? I think it's unhealthy. Why should anyone want to see that. They're all going to get old, they're all going to fade away."

Upon hearing these comments, one is left to wonder if there is nothing more to look forward to than "oblivion." As each of us gets older or "gradually disintegrates," will there be nothing more than writing, paint-

ing, swimming, playing tennis or being totally consumed in whatever it is we enjoy doing? You would think that most who face the proximity of death would be more concerned about what lies beyond.

While a youth, feelings of seeming immortality grip us. Life is ahead of us. We have the world by the tail. We're invincible. But like it or not, the "evil days come" and often more rapidly than we had expected (cf. Ecclesiastes 12: 1-8). Wrinkles appear. Muscles and joints weaken. Bones creak. Vision falters. Gray hair conquers. Youthful vigor fades. "... then the dust will return to the earth as it was." "Surely every man at his best is a mere breath. Surely every man walks about as a phantom" (Psalm 39: 4-5). "You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away" (James 4: 14).

And then... oblivion? Secularism provides no answers. The evolutionist can look forward to nothing more, nor the atheist. At least, "new age" thinking provides some hope for a future of some sort, howbeit an unappealing and false hope. Are there any answers to be uncovered for the conclusion of our existence upon earth? Only in the word of God do we find the answers to life's most important questions. Questions dealing with man's origin, purpose in life, his suffering and state after death are resolved here and here alone.

While the "next world" may seem to be unimportant to the person full of youth, it should be of great concern to all since all will ultimately encounter it. For the Christian, getting old is not a curse, because only they have a reason to be confident about what lies beyond. With each passing day, Christians can say with assurance, "for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed" (Romans 13: 11). By God's grace, they have been promised "an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Peter 1: 4). Christians know, regard-less of how enjoyable life has been, the best is yet to come. "In Thy (God's) presence is fullness of joy; In Thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore" (Psalm 16: 11).

Without hope... what a sad, miserable way to grow old! When death comes knocking at your door (and it will, maybe even before you grow old), will you be prepared for what comes next? Listen to the words of the Son of God, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where thieves do not break in and steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6: 19-21). Hope in this world, its luxuries and its pleasures, is sure to disappoint.

Looking forward to oblivion? Not me? Looking forward to reincarnation? Not me! Looking forward to a paradise on earth (as some religious groups erroneously teach)? Not me! Looking forward to heaven? Absolutely! Only in the presence of God and in His service can the thirst of man be quenched (Psalm 42: 1-2; 63: 1; Ecclesiastes 3: 11; Matthew 5: 6; John 10: 10). "... and His bond-servants shall serve Him" (Revelation 21: 3). That beats oblivion any day!

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## TV or Not TV?

*Paul K. Williams*

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In bro. Connie Adams's excellent editorial, "The Open Sewer," (STS, Jan. 1991) he compared today's TV entertainment to an open sewer in our living rooms. It is an apt comparison and not at all exaggerated. He observed that TV is saturated with (1) profanity, (2) coarse speech, (3) gore, (4) hedonism, and (5) humanism. He mentioned that even Sesame Street and children's cartoons are filled with humanism and evolution.

But the solution to the problem which Bro. Adams did not dare to suggest is really the only solution. We must get the sewer out of our living rooms! In my judgment, TV is beyond control. It is impossible to keep those five things from being present if we have a TV set in our home. American-saturated TV in South Africa is bad enough; US television is even worse. The "best" of programs are apt to have sexually suggestive scenes, humanistic solutions of problems, and the clear toleration of fornication. It is impossible to be selective enough to keep those things out while the TV set is in your home!

"Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is to good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things. The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you" (Phil. 4: 8-9). Can you say that today your mind is on those things because of the three hours of television you watched last night? Bro. Adams talked about our children. I am talking about us parents. Our minds are affected by what we watch just as our children are. If we are going to be kept pure, if we are going to keep our minds on those things which are honorable, right, lovely and of good repute, we must not let our minds be led by the open sewer of television. Trying to get good things out of TV is like trying to find good food in a garbage can; it is possible, but you get awfully smelly doing it!

Our five sons were reared in a mostly TV-less environment and I don't think they missed anything worthwhile. Our two oldest sons have banished TV from their homes, and their children seem not to be suffering. Helen and I manage to get along quite well without TV. It really can be done. It might be harder than giving up smoking, but after you have broken the TV habit you will be glad you did.

Is giving up TV too difficult for you to contemplate? Jesus said, "If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that

one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to go into hell" (Matt. 5: 30). God needs to see a bunch of Christians walking around with bloody

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## "The Queen Also Sitting By Him"

*J. Edward Nowlin*

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The above states a simple fact, but did you ever wonder why Nehemiah threw in that bit of information when telling of the occasion when he went into the presence of Artaxerxes with a sad countenance because of the news he had received of the condition of things in his beloved Jerusalem? When the king noticed his sadness, Nehemiah was "sore afraid" and prayed to God (Neh. 1: 1-4); yet he noted (v. 6) that the queen was sitting by the king!

Who was this queen? It must have been Esther! What other queen would a Jewish prophet have noticed under the circumstances? No doubt he knew of the choosing of Esther as queen thirteen years before and of the tense circumstances under which she had approached the king on behalf of her Jewish countrymen (Est. 5) after Mordecai had urged her to act on behalf of the Jews, saying "... who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

Hence, because of Esther's intercession for her own countrymen, the Jews (including Nehemiah) had been saved from death in the plot of Haman against them. This fact, alone would have been sufficient reason for him to take note of her presence at his tense moment before the king.

Don't let the fact that the king of Esther's day is called "Ahasuerus" and the king in Nehemiah's day is called "Artaxerxes," confuse your mind. Before this other kings had been called by these names. Cyrus established the Medo-Persian Empire with the capture of Babylon in 538 BC. That year he fulfilled a prophecy of Isaiah (44: 28), that he should order the rebuilding of Jerusalem. He sent Sheshbazzar (Jewish name was Zerubbabel) to lead the return of the Jews to Jerusalem. Cyrus was succeeded as king by his son Cambyses II, who was called Ahasuerus (Ez. 4: 6). To him the enemies of the Jews brought accusations against the Jews in Jerusalem with no success. Cambyses was followed by the usurper, Gomates (also called Pseudo-Smerdis) because he replaced Cambyses' brother, Smerdis. During his 6 mo. reign, the Jews' enemies wrote a letter to him as Artaxerxes (Ez. 4: 7-16), and succeeded in getting him to stop the work of the Jews in building their Temple (v. 24). That work was not resumed until the reign of Darius (521-486 BC). Darius was succeeded by his son, Xerxes (486-465). Some think he was the husband of Esther,

and date the Book of Esther at 480 B. C. This could not be for several reasons.

#### The Proof:

"Then the people of the land tried to discourage the people of Judah... and hired counselors against them to frustrate their purpose (in building the Temple—JEN) all the days of **Cyrus**, king of Persia, even until the reign of **Darius**, king of Persia: (Ez. 4: 4, 5) **The only kings of Persia between Cyrus and Darius were Cambyses II (529-522) and the usurper, Gomates, or Pseudo-Smerdis (7 months in 522).** The first one is called Ahasuerus in verse 6, and the second is called Artaxerxes in verse 7 of Ez. 4. Cambyses ignored them, but Gomates acted for them and ordered construction of the Temple stopped (Ez. 4: 24) After Gomates was assassinated by Darius and six other princes who used various means of finding out who he was and after Darius became king, the prophets Haggai and Zechariah spoke out and Zerubbabel began work on the Temple. Tattenai, the Governor, and the people beyond the river (Euphrates) accosted them and wrote a letter to Darius reporting their activity (Ez. 5). Then Darius ordered that a search be made in the archives of the state, and at Achmetha (Ecbatana, ancient capital of Media) there was found the decree which had been issued by Cyrus in 538 BC. (2 Chr. 36: 22, 23; Ez. 1: 1-4). Then Darius issued orders that legalized the work on the Temple (Ez. 6: 1-12). The work had been stopped in 522 and Darius came to power in 521, so the delay in the building had lasted only about a year. The Temple was finished in the 6th year of Darius, 516 BC. (Ez. 6: 15). He reigned 521-486 BC.

The decrees which made possible the rebuilding of the Temple, city and walls are summarized in Ez. 6: 14, and include the decree made by Artaxerxes authorizing Ezra to go to Jerusalem (Ez. 7: 11-26) in the 7th year of his reign and the permission given to Nehemiah in the 20th year of his reign (Neh. 2: 1-8). Hence, it is clear that the Ahasuerus to whom the Samaritans wrote was **the Ahasuerus who reigned before the Temple was finished**; namely, Cambyses II, son of Cyrus, who reigned 529-522 Be (Ez. 4: 6). The Temple was finished in 516 BC.

Charles Pfeiffer in **Between The Testaments**, Baker Book House 1963, p. 42, ignored the fact that the people of the land wrote to Ahasuerus **before the Temple was finished** and concluded that the Ahasuerus of Esther was Xerxes, the son and successor of Darius I because he was called Ahasuerus. Also **Davis Dictionary of the Bible**, Baker Bk. House, 1980, p. 20 makes the same mistake. In fairness, however, both of them admit that the older interpreters thought the Ahasuerus in Ez. 4: 6 was Cambyses, the son of Byrus.

#### Just What Did The Old Interpreters Say?

According to most ancient authorities Esther's husband, Ahasuerus, was Artaxerxes, the son of Xerxes, who reigned 40 years (465-425 BC). Note the following:

The **Septuagint** Version of the Old Testament, made about 250 B. C. in Alexandria by translating the Hebrew O. T. into the Greek language, calls him Artaxerxes in Est. 1: 1.

The Apocryphal book, "**Additions To The Book of**

**Esther**" calls him Artaxerxes.

**Flavius** Josephus, Jewish historian, who lived in the first century A. D., says he was Artaxerxes (Ant. XI, 6: 1).

Prideaux's **O. T. and N. T. Connected**, written in 1717-1718, says he was Artaxerxes (Vol. 1, Bk. 4, p. 221).

Clarke's **Commentary**, finished in 1817 says he was Artaxerxes (Notes on Esther 1: 1). The Ahasuerus of the Romans, the Artaxerxes of the Greeks and the Ardsheer of the Persians are the same. "

#### Identifying Esther's Husband

Following is a chronological count-down from the **first year** of the reigns of Xerxes and Artaxerxes to the **seventh year** of the same at which time Esther married Ahasuerus, as Artaxerxes is called in the Book of Esther:

Xerxes	Artaxerxes
(486-465 BC)	(465-425 BC)

Xerxes' wife was Amerstris

Penquin Classics:

**Herodotus, The Histories,**

Book VII, p. 479ff). Not Vashti.

Xerxes enthroned 486 BC Artaxerxes enthroned

Began reign building an army 465

BC

to put down a rebellion in

Egypt. Sent army to Egypt in

**first year** of reign. See **ibid.** **3rd yr.** of reign, 462

VII, pp. 442, 443.

Spent 4 years after Egypt

feast at Susa in the

(486-481) amassing troops for Shushan palace —

Est. invasion of Greece, **ibid.** p. 452 1: 3, 4

Toward close of **5th year**

(481 BC) began march toward

Sardis. **ibid.** 452 Wintered in

Sardis (481-480) **ibid.** 458 In

Spring of **6th year** invaded

Greece, 480 BC and his Navy

defeated at the Battle of

Salamis. **ibid.** pp. 547-556, or

any Encyclopedia.

In his **7th year** his army

defeated at Plataea (479 BC). **In Artaxerxes' 7th**

**year** (458 BC) the 5th

**ibid.** pp. 597-603, or any

month Ezra was sent to

Encyclopedia. Jerusalem—Ez. 7: 8

XERXES WAS IN GREECE The same yr., 10th

mo. THE 7TH YEAR OF HIS **he married Esther—**

REIGN! Est. 2: 16.

#### A Study In Character

A contrast of the men—Xerxes and Artaxerxes should shed some light on the subject.

Xerxes, the son of Darius Hystaspes by Atossa, the daughter of Cyrus, was a man of war and a scheming tyrant who was unmerciful to his enemies. Ascending the Persian throne at age 25, he put down a rebellion in Egypt. Next he attempted to conquer Greece, a venture in which his father had failed. Xerxes reportedly attached Greece with a two-million man army and over a thousand ships. Pontoon bridges were built across the Hellespont and Xerxes is said to have taken his golden bedstead along! After the Greeks destroyed his fleet and army, he fled back to Sardis where he tried unsuccessfully to take his brother, Masistes' wife. Amestris, Xerxes' wife learned of her husband's waywardness and took her spite

out on Masistes' wife by having her nose, ears, lips, tongue and breasts cut off and fed to the dogs! After the death of this poor mutilated woman and the murder of Masistes, who had refused to give up his wife, Xerxes returned to Susa and was murdered in his bedroom by his uncle by name of Artabanas. Thus the evil deeds of this profligate king brought him down to the grave. Herodotus, a Greek historian of that day tells all this and much more about this blood-thirsty, immoral king. (See Penguin Classics, **Herodotus The Histories**, Bk. 9, pp. 619-621).

Over against this, Artaxerxes "Longimanus" (meaning "long handed" was a benevolent king. "Longimanus" evidently had nothing to do with the size of his hands, but with the size of his kingdom and extent of his power. He ruled over 120 provinces from India to Ethiopia. Though he was misled by Haman in a plot to destroy the Jews, he had a Jew, Mordecai, in high position in the palace. He called off the destruction of the Jews after Esther made her plea for them and Haman was ingloriously hanged. Also, the king gave Ezra permission to lead a group of Jews to Jerusalem in 458 BC and allowed his cup-bearer, Nehemiah, to go in 444 to rebuild the walls. After 12 years (according to his agreement with the king), Nehemiah returned to Susa and "after certain days ... obtained leave from the king" and went to Jerusalem again and served as Governor. Seven years later, Artaxerxes died. Thus passed a 40-year reign in which a great king seems to have been influenced for good toward the people of God by a daughter of Israel, who after 13 years of marriage to a king was still "sitting by him."

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## James Edward Nowlin Has Finished The Course

*Gary M. Ogden*

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On January 22, 1992 funeral services were conducted in Perry, Florida for J. Ed Nowlin, who passed from this life January 19, 1992 after a noble battle against cancer. Kent Heaton, Danny Roberts, and Charles Murray assisted this writer in paying tribute to a grand soldier of the cross. The following is the address I made on that occasion.

Today we are reminded, soberly reminded, how fragile life is. Bro. Nowlin seemed ageless, invincible, but death has once again invaded our quiet existence and taken captive a strong vibrant soldier of Christ. His leaving will leave a void that will be hard to fill.

James Edward Nowlin, known by most as "Ed," was

born on October 28, 1909 in Chattanooga, TN. He was reborn in 1929, at the age of twenty, when he responded to the gospel of Christ during a meeting held by Clarence Cook at East Chattanooga. As a new Christian, he could be seen carrying his Bible to work at the grocery store and would read it during break time. He sought to share the truth with others with whom he came in contact.

Some of his first preaching was done in Sale Creek, TN and in 1931 he rode his motorcycle to that village to fill the pulpit. It was there that he met Miss Ola Crawley, the youngest of nine children. One of her brothers is the venerable Bruce Crawley, now of Athens, AL. Ed was immediately and totally smitten by her loveliness and charm and it appears that he never did quite regain his equilibrium. All the way home, he talked to that motorcycle about his intention of one day marrying Miss Ola.

Ed finished high school early and then attended David Lipscomb College when it was a two-year school. In 1934, he began preaching in Athens, TN, and on August 4, 1935, he fulfilled the promise he had made to the motorcycle and married the lovely Ola Crawley. "Till death do as part" was not said in haste or in jest, and they kept that solemn oath to each other for 56 1/2 years. We salute their commitment to each other and to the Lord before whom they had made that pledge. May the day come again that their example will be followed and marriage for life will be the rule and not the exception.

In 1937, the Nowlins moved to Sparta, TN and worked in the vineyard for four years. From there they moved to a "mission field" in Johnson City, TN. For awhile, the new work met in a school house. He labored in that city for eight years.

At the age of 40, he moved to Maryville, TN and worked with that church until 1951.

In 1951, the Nowlins moved to Atlanta, GA and began working with the West End church. He was there for eight years, and it was during this time that the institutional issues were being hotly contested. Bro. Nowlin lost a pulpit because he founded his preaching upon the ancient principles of New Testament authority. But when one door slammed, another door opened across town and he found open arms in the brethren at Glenwood Hills in Decatur, GA. He labored faithfully and effectively there for thirteen years until 1971. During that time he received a degree in History from Georgia State and taught school part-time.

Ed and Ola moved to Perry, FL in 1971 and he preached there for a number of years before retiring from the pulpit. He was appointed an elder of the church and served in that capacity for 17 years until his death.

Bro. Nowlin did a considerable amount of writing. *Searching the Scriptures* recently published an article on the Virgin Birth of Christ. He published several Bible work books, including O. T. Studies, Marriage and the Home, and 400 Silent Years (The Period Between the Testaments). He also published a 26 lesson Correspondence Course.

Throughout a half-century of preaching, Ed Nowlin conducted many funerals, including those for my wife's maternal and paternal grandparents. He has been a source of comfort to many and we feel a debt of gratitude as we make this feeble attempt to comfort his family in

their loss.

Precious memories, how they linger! I recall a firm hand shake that was indicative of his physical strength and of his delight to see you. For a man in his eighties, he had uncommon strength which he exerted, not for violence, but for the gentle care of his beloved Ola.

I remember a wide grin and a boyish laugh. He was a brilliant man, but he had the heart of a child. It was an endearing virtue.

Living simply was a virtue and not a burden.

Ed Nowlin was one of the most studious, serious students of the Bible that I have known. He was meticulous in his handling of the Word and he encouraged that in others. I remember an occasion, in my early years of preaching when he gently corrected a statement I had made in a sermon. I had said that old Adam didn't have a thing to do in the garden, but he found time to introduce sin into the world. After the service, bro. Nowlin quietly took me aside and pointed out that God has given Adam the responsibility "to dress and keep" the garden of Eden (Genesis 2: 15). I thanked him for the correction, said so in the following service and have not made that particular mistake again! Other preachers can tell similar stories. If he got his pen and pad out and started writing during your sermon, you could expect a gentle reminder of what the good Book says.

Ed Nowlin's preaching style was not flamboyant—just simple, straight-forward preaching. He loved the Truth, the Lord, the Lord's people, and the lost. He was faithful in service, a faithful steward of God. As was said of Barnabas, "he was a good man." Good men have their faults, but the God they serve is longsuffering and forgiving. Bro. Nowlin was not perfect, but he was blameless. He is a worthy example.

When the aged, imprisoned apostle wrote the second letter to Timothy, he was aware that the "time of my departure is come" (4: 6). He faced the prospect of death with courage and hope. Near the end, it was evident that bro. Nowlin knew that all hope of recovery was gone and spoke freely of his impending departure. His courageous outlook toward death buoyed the spirits of those who were being left behind. He was able to accept the reality of death for the same reason that Paul could, he had fought the good fight, finished the course, kept the faith (2 Timothy 4: 7, 8). Sixty-two years of faithful service to Christ helped Ed Nowlin look death squarely in the face with hope.

We will miss this grand gentleman and soldier greatly, but we rejoice that he can rest from his labors and the anguish of a diseased body. Today we view his future and ours with hope as we look forward to our gathering home, beyond the sunset, with him and all the saints.

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**Do you pray to God everyday?**  
**(Daniel 6: 10, 13)**

## Sick & Tired?

*Norman E. Sewell*

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How often have we felt tired and frustrated, as though things just never work out right for us? What's that old song from Hew Haw, "If it weren't for back luck, I'd have no luck at all?" Perhaps all of us feel this way sometimes, and certainly Christians are no exception. Then comes the confusion over the 28th verse of Romans chapter 8 which reads, "And we know all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Does this verse promise us that things will always go well for us in this life, and that there will be no pain or heartache or trouble? It really doesn't say that, but many have misunderstood it to mean just that. When you study that verse in its context it becomes clear that Paul was dealing with the blessings to be found in Christ, and how God cares for His people, and that He was not promising heaven here on earth.

The 8th chapter of Romans begins by saying, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Here is the relationship, "in Christ." And in the next three verses Paul shows that what the law could not do God did in Christ, making us free from the law of sin and death. In the next several verses Paul explains that we must meet the condition of walking after the Spirit and not after the flesh, and that this is done by setting our mind on the things of the Spirit (the revealed word of God — 1 Cor. 2: 10-11; Eph. 3: 3-5) and not on the things of the earth. In the 14th verse Paul affirms that those who are thus led by the Spirit are the sons of God; that the Spirit bears witness with our spirits to this fact, and that as children we must expect to suffer with Christ in order to inherit. But that suffering is nothing compared to the glory that is to be revealed (v. 18). In the next few verses Paul shows that all of the creation suffers in this life, but that when we who are the children of God don't even know what we should pray for the Spirit helps "with groanings which cannot be uttered" (v. 26). It is then because of this relationship that we have with the Christ, and God's blessing of us through His Spirit that He can say to us, "and we know that all things works together for good to them that love God" (v. 28). And finally Paul ends the chapter by showing "if God be for us, who can be against us?" (v. 31).

The fact that all things WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD does not mean that all things ARE good. Earlier



in the Roman letter Paul wrote: "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us" (Romans 5: 3-5). Even James says, "My brethren, count it all joy when he fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (James 1: 3-4). There is something to be learned, and something to be gained even by trouble and hard times and yes, even by temptation. This doesn't make these things any more enjoyable, but they work together for good to produce in us steadfastness and a stronger faith. James wrote: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tired, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him" (James 1: 12). The ones "that love him" here in verse 12 are the same ones described in Romans 8: 28 for whom "all things work together for good."

How do I know if I love God? Jesus said it well in John 14: "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me" (John 14: 23-24). If you love God it will be shown in your obedience to whatever God has asked of you in His word. So it is to those who obey God that this promise is made, that all things work together for good.

As long as we live in this world we will have pain. There will still sometimes be periods of frustration and disgust with ourselves as we struggle with properly applying God's word in our own lives. But once we begin to get this all in perspective, remembering that whatever we may suffer here is nothing compared to eternal life, then we begin to more quickly resolve the frustration and get on with living. Paul told the Corinthians, "for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4: 17-18). Its only when we let our sights drop down so that we are focused on the problems of this life and failing to look at the goal, the big picture, that we allow frustration and distress to over run our lives. Keep **your** eyes on the goal, and remember that whatever may come in this life that for those who love God and obey Him "all things work together for good."

## Do A Friend A Favor

Do you have a friend or relative who could benefit from reading *Searching the Scriptures*? Why not buy a subscription for someone?

## 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*

**B. G. ECHOLS, 7 Ridgewood Ave., Glen Ridge, New Jersey 07028**—Six were baptized at the church in East Orange, N. J. during the last half of 1991. Three others were identified with us. Several home studies continue which we pray will lead to additional converts. We completed three new classrooms for our study programs.

### CLASS ON TEACHING

**JAMES L. SLOAN, P. O. Box 73024, Houston, TX 77090**—The Kleinwood church in Houston, Texas has planned special classes on training teachers and improving Bible classes for the week of July 27-31. Some of the confirmed speakers are: Mark and Alicia Kercheville, Betty Haynes, Martin Broadwell, Crystal Hunter, Glenda Schales. There will be both morning and evening sessions. There will be separate classes for men and women, with women teaching only women. We are hoping to improve our teaching program, and invite as many visitors as we have room for. You can reserve a spot by writing us at: 11811 Misty Valley Dr., Houston, TX 77066. If you would like to stay in the home of one of our families please contact Robert & Martha Banning, 3902 Marywood, Spring, TX 77388 (phone 713-353-2309).

**W. C. (BILLY) ASHWORTH, 2148 Nashville Hwy., Columbia,**

**TN 38401 -941ft**—1991 was the first year I have not done located work since 1953. It required quite an adjustment but that has been made. But I have been active in preaching and teaching the gospel. We are members of the Colleevue church here where I teach an adult Bible class every Wednesday night and have preached on occasion when Jim Deason, the regular preacher, has been away. About 40% of the members are under the age of twenty. It is a joy to be a part of the spiritual and numerical growth here. I have preached many Sundays by appointment. My health is excellent. I am available to preach in meetings as well as on Lord's days when I can be of assistance.

I have the following subjects which would be suitable for week-long or week-end meetings: Why I Believe That God Is; The Man Called Jesus (Christ in prophecy, virgin birth, early life, baptism, temptations, earthly ministry, trials, crucifixion, resurrection, authority, the judge of all, and his plan of salvation. Other subjects include: The Holy Spirit, Proper Rules for Bible Study, Secular Humanism, Homosexuality/Lesbianism, The Family as God Ordained It, and Prayer (one of my favorites). You can reach me at the above address or call 615-388-8355.

**PATRICK L. KELLY, P. O. Box 822, Portland, Maine 04104**—In 1991 six were baptized here. Two of these fell away. We have seen

growth in other members Support continues to be a struggle The brethren here are doing all they can The cost of living is high here but the economy is poor

**JIM ZACHARY, P. O. Box 1466, Mountain View, AR 72560**—In 1991 I preached gospel meetings at North Desoto church in Shreveport, LA where John Lasater preaches, Ben, AR where Clell Cook and Kenny Brackett preach, Briscoe, AR where Jackie Price Preaches, Batesville, AR where John Ledgerwood labors and Rogersville, TN where Marshall Stubblefield preaches There are good brethren in all these places and these men are strong and faithful The work at Eastside continues to go well Our Sunday morning radio broadcast can be heard throughout Arkansas and southern Missouri It is at 8 45 Sunday mornings on KWOZ 103 3 FM Visit us when in the Ozarks

**MIKE MILES, 1200 Handel Dr., Virginia Beach, VA 23464**—In the past 17 months we have baptized 30 here and have grown from 75 to more than 100 The number is down some now We have moved to a new location and some who opposed this decided not to come with us We have moved from the old location at 1415 Oceana Blvd to a rental property in Chesapeake, VA at 802-B Live Oak Dr We are averaging 85 and, have excellent prospects for growth We are now known as the Tidewater Church of Christ We are just two miles off I-64 off the Battlefield Blvd exit We can now draw from Chesapeake, Virginia Beach, Portsmouth, Norfolk and Suffolk More than 1 5 million live in this geographical area and we are right in the middle of it If you know of military people being transferred here or others please ask them to contact us You may call me at 804-427-9677, or Dave Haga 804-463-3379, or Robert Johnston 804-427-5669

#### FROM AROUND THE WORLD

**OPEN DOOR IN LITHUANIA**—During the last week of November, 1991, Steve Wallace and Derek Chambers visited two of the Baltic states, Lithuania and Latvia, to teach the gospel They found an extremely good response in Vilnius, Lithuania As a result, Steve Wallace will be returning to Vilnius with Harry Osborne in late April this year intending to work through early June, the Lord willing Their purpose will be to establish a local church there Since brother Wallace lives in Ramstein, Germany, he will be able to follow up in the work done They need to locate tracts in the two predominant languages spoken in Vilnius, Lithuanian and Russian, which will be reproduced and handed out for study If you know of such material, please contact Harry Osborne, 1606 Crown Dr, Alvin, TX 77511, phone 713-331-9305 or 331-4953 If you know of a local church or individual that would agree to help reproduce such material, please let them know Please keep this effort in your prayers that the word of God will have free course and that souls might be saved (Report sent by Harry Osborne)

**SOUTH AFRICA**—Paul Williams reports 26 baptized during 1991 by members at Eshowe His last two reports mention three more in Eshowe in January, 1992 Gene Tope was in an 11 day meeting there in December in which three obeyed the gospel Brother Williams also reports a good brother being gunned down in Soweto while on duty in his police work He also reported that some other brethren are in danger from the unrest in Esikhawim where a number of people have been killed and where houses were burned Pray for our brethren there and for all the people

**GLENCOE, ONTARIO, CANADA**—According to a bulletin from Brian V Sullivan at Wellandport, ONT, three were baptized during a gospel meeting at Glencoe in which David Spiece preached

**PHILIPPINES—JULIE D. A. NOTARTE** reports several efforts with fellow-preachers Rosendo Lamodin, Godofredo Catamora, Romeo Areglo and Rosendo Lamodin in which a total of seven were baptized

#### PREACHERS NEEDED

**MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI**—The church meeting at 2914 Seventh Street needs a preacher We have had two men during the last twenty-six years They were Horace Huggins and Milton Harris We have 65-70 in attendance, own the building where we have met for forty years and own a house for the preacher next door to the building We need

a man by June, 1992 or sooner if possible Brethren who know us well include Bill Cavendar, Granville Tyler, Barney Keith, David Thom-ley, James R. Cope, Ed Bragwell, Marshall Patton, Lynn Huggins, Sewell Hall and many others Contact Michael Gay (601-485-5229), Lewis Robbins (601-483-3003), or Ronnie Beech (601-693 4860)

#### DEATH AMONG US

##### FORD CARPENTER (1917-1991)

With sadness we report the death of another faithful proclaimer of the gospel Ford Carpenter passed to his eternal reward on November 14, 1991 He had been suffering from cancer until finally his heart also gave out early on the morning of his death To know Ford was to respect him and he shall be sorely missed, especially in Southern California

He was born in Ardmore, Oklahoma on May 21, 1917 and married Lessie Mae in December, 1937 In July, they moved to Ontario, CA For several years Ford was song leader for the Ontario congregation He taught singing for congregations through the years After moving to South Gate, CA he attended training classes conducted by L. L. Stout When they moved back to Ontario, Ford preached his first sermon

He then moved to Amarillo, TX to work with Hoyt Houchen for over two years Moving back to southern CA he began work with the Spring and Delta church in Long Beach where he labored on two occasions He also preached at Napa, Fontana, Culver City Canoga Park, Montclair and for the past six years in Apple Valley All in Southern CA except for Napa in northern CA

The funeral was conducted by this writer with the help of David Posey, on Nov. 18, 1991 at the Ontario, CA church building Over 300 were in attendance We became close friends over the years and spent many hours discussing the many problems facing the Lord's people and in him I found one that was greatly concerned about much liberalism that seemed to us to be gaming a foothold, even among conservative brethren

Ford leaves behind his wife, Lessie Mae, a daughter, Carol Elmore and a son, Ken There are several grandchildren and great grandchildren They will all miss him as we all shall He never hesitated to speak out, either in defense of truth or in condemnation of error We can ill afford to lose such men The cross of Christ has one less soldier to bear the message of salvation to lost men But there will be many who, as a result of his preaching and teaching, will carry on the Lord's work

—Bill Mosely, Folsom, CA

##### ERVIN RICH

Ervin Rich, deacon at Sun Valley church in Birmingham, AL died December 27, 1991 at age 67 The funeral was conducted by Lloyd Barker and Richard Weaver Lynn Headrick conducted the graveside service, assisted by Kyle Pope A native of Tompkinsville, KY, he served in World War II receiving the Purple Heart, after discharge he moved to Birmingham and worked for the L and N Railroad as an engineer until retirement five years ago. On the side he also worked with Sun Valley Home Builders, Inc. He built the buildings at Pinson (which he helped start), Gardendale and North Gardendale where he preached the first sermon in the new building He also remodeled the Trussville building and built the preacher's homes for Huffman, Pinson and Sun Valley

He was known and loved among brethren in this area He helped others to begin the Sun Valley work They met at first in a temporary place behind his house and had 90 present at the first service They moved into a new building in 1971 where they now have 180-200 on Sunday mornings Over the years he and his wife personally helped support a number of preachers in addition to their liberal contributions to churches They were given to hospitality and entertained many in their home He preached at Wheeler's Grove in Cullman County for awhile and filled in at numerous places He made two preaching trips to Jamaica with Lloyd Barker and David Tant, going at his own expense He was truly addicted to the ministry of the saints We will always remember "our beloved brother" Ervin Rich By his gifts "he being dead yet speaketh" (Heb 11: 4) —Richard Weaver, Fultondale, AL

(EDITOR'S NOTE I knew both these brethren and esteemed them highly in the Lord Both of them were personal encouragements to me when I preached in the areas where they lived Also, note the article

elsewhere in this issue by Gary Ogden about the death of J. Ed Nowlin of Perry, Florida. He was also a friend. I had intended writing a piece about him until I received this one from brother Ogden who said it better than I could have. My brethren, the ranks are thinning. We must do all we can to encourage younger men to enter the work and to follow the worthy example of such men as these whose deaths we are saddened to report. Our sympathies are extended to the families of these three noble servants of God. You know, the prospect of heaven grows brighter every day. )



#### LAY-OUT WORK

Donnie V. Rader will be handling the lay-out work for STS. He has been doing this part of our work ever since June when he began what was meant to be a three months stint to give the editor some relief. That turned into a much longer time. My Doctor has released me now to go on about my work as before with the warning that I must use some "common sense" about my back (When I told my wife that, she said, "We may be in trouble there"), but it will still be a great relief to me not to have to do this lay-out work. Donnie does it well, far better than I could hope to do it. Once again I thank him for his kindness and willingness to help in the operation of the paper. I will continue my work as editor, all but the paste-ups.

\*\*\*\*\*

#### TO NORWAY AGAIN

By the time you receive this issue of STS, the editor and wife should have returned from a gospel meeting with the small congregation in Bergen, Norway where Tom Bunting, Terrell Bunting and their families are laboring for the Lord. They asked us to come and the good church at Manslick Road in Louisville has made it possible for us to squeeze that into the schedule for the year. This required cutting one month off the winter classes I teach annually here. They supported us in the effort. We will carry a brief notice about the work there and the meeting later.

\*\*\*\*\*

#### COLOR, COLOR, COLOR

For a long time, friends of the paper advised that we ought to add some color to the cover of the paper to make it more attractive to the eye. We have done that. Trouble is, so a number of art design people have told us, we added TOO MUCH color. Some readers have complained that the dark blue print over the lighter blue background was hard for them to read. So we have decided to back off on color and use it for the masthead and trim on front and back page and keep the copy black on white as we had it for many years. I THINK we now have it the way we want it. Thanks for your patience and comments.

#### IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

<b>BAPTISMS</b>	155
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(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)	

# 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 XXXIII

April 1992

Number 4

## THINK ON THESE THINGS

*H. C. Phillips*

P.O. Box 1631  
Lutz, FL 33549



### Forsaking The Right Way

In every local church there are those who wait to see which way the popular position will go on every debatable issue and, without principle or conviction, they align themselves with the majority side. They willingly switch sides when they find that they unwittingly selected the unpopular position. There is nothing wrong with changing when one learns he is wrong; in fact, it is the only honorable and honest thing to do. But to forsake one's principles just to be on the popular side of a question is hardly the honorable thing to do.

The word of God speaks plainly on the matter of forsaking one's place with Christ to become aligned with Satan, the enemy of Christ, whatever the reason may be. I am speaking of those in the church who turn from the Lord to serve Satan. When Joshua was about ready to lead the people of Israel into the promised land, he told them that they had to choose between serving Jehovah and the idols around them. They answered: "God forbid that we should forsake the Lord, to serve other gods" (Joshua 24: 16). These people elected to serve the Lord, but their recorded history proves beyond question that this was a promise of the mouth and not a determination of the heart.

In addition, Joshua told the Israelites, "If ye forsake the Lord, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good" (Joshua 24: 20). Any among the

Israelites who turned to forsake the Lord would receive severe punishment from the Lord.

Peter writes of the false prophets and those that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness. "But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities... Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness" (2 Pet. 2: 10, 14, 15). These had "forsaken the right way," which indicates that they once were in the right way. They had changed their ways to oppose the truth. They had forsaken the principles that motivated them to serve the Lord.

Paul spoke of one who once stood with him in the gospel, but who later forsook him. "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia" (2 Tim. 4: 10). When Paul wrote to Philemon, Demas was one of his "fellow labourers" (verse 24). Demas had forsaken Paul because he had forsaken the way of truth which Paul preached. He did this because he loved the present world instead of the kingdom of Christ.

James says, "know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4: 4). There is no question about where one stands when he loves this present evil world. He is the enemy of God. Paul teaches that we are to walk by the same rule and mind the same thing and to be "... followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: " (Phil 3: 16-18).

All these passages point to three facts: 1) To turn from the Lord is to become His enemy; 2) To forsake the Lord brings the "wages of unrighteousness"; 3) One forsakes the Lord by turning from the "right way" - the way of truth - and becoming a servant of unrighteousness.



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## Searching The Scriptures

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## " QUOTE

**"You can't act like a skunk  
without someone's getting  
wind of it."**

**—Lorene Workman**

## UNQUOTE "

## Editorial

Connie W. Adams

P.O. Box 69  
Brooks, Kentucky 40109



### Preaching In Norway

It was with mixed emotions that we returned to Bergen, Norway in February for a gospel meeting. The brethren there are trying to have some men to come for meetings who have previously worked in that country. I hope others will be able to arrange to go should they be invited. Going to Bergen with mixed emotions was not new for me. In 1957 I took my six-months-pregnant wife with me to begin the work in the land of the midnight sun. We knew nobody there. We did not know the language. We had nowhere to live except for a week's reservation in a hotel. We did not know how we were going to make contacts with people. But somehow, in the Providence of God, that all worked out.

The work was slow and hard. Then as now, the population was over 90% Lutheran, the state church. Then as now, many bristle at the thought that you have come to evangelize in what they consider a "Christian nation" which sends out missionaries to spiritually darkened areas of the world. They do not consider themselves in that category. Baptizing babies, confirming sixteen year olds, Christmas and Easter observances, weddings, funerals and a place to be buried, is the major religious life of the vast majority of people in that land. They are comfortable with it and do not particularly want to be bothered.

Among the dissenters from the state church, the majority are charismatics. These are as difficult to reach as they are here or in other places. Subjective religionists don't care a hoot about what the Bible says, not if they have to question what they think they have "felt." Some of these will come to hear you once or twice, long enough to see if you agree with what they already think. The Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses are very active there but their persistent door-knocking has served to aggravate the people.

Added to this situation is the fact that immigration laws have changed and it is very difficult, if not impossible, to gain entry to the country to stay for a long term to preach. People can yet enter on an American passport and stay for six weeks as a tourist.

In such soil the old Jerusalem gospel has not flourished as it has in other places. But over the years there have been some found with good and honest hearts. There have been some heartbreaking events which

weakened and all but destroyed what progress had been made. One brother who preached for awhile, left the faith to embrace denominational error. Another native preacher and his wife had serious trouble and they ended up going to the world. Others fell away for various reasons. The church in Bergen lost its meeting place by foreclosure and along with it the furnishings, boxes of tracts, song books, Bibles, Bible class literature and all the files.

In 1980 when Tom and Shirley Bunting and their children came back to Bergen (they had spent two years there in the late 1960's), they had to start all over again. Only this time, it was even harder than it had been for us in 1957, for they had to overcome ill-will which some former members had generated and the shame of the unbusiness-like manner in which the property was lost.

The Buntings have stayed. Their son, Terrell and his wife Karen are there in Bergen with the intention of spending their lives there. They encountered difficulty getting in to stay. If they leave, it will be mighty hard to get anyone else there to replace them.

#### The Church in Bergen

We found a small group of 8 members. They had worked hard to prepare for the meeting. They could have done more advertising in the newspaper if they only had the funds. They did what they were able to do. Many advertisements were hand-delivered. Two brethren came from the small group near Oslo to be with us the first two days of the meeting. Also a sister and her child from Stavager came for four days. We had seven non-members to attend the meeting, three of these attending two times. The singing was ably led by a faithful Norwegian brother. While most attending understood English, some did not and so the sermons were interpreted. Terrell Bunting did this twice and the rest of the time, Bjorn Ringdal interpreted. Bjorn is a student in the university and hopes to one day be able to support himself and preach in Norway. He was baptized at Southside in Pasadena, Texas while an exchange student there. He is a most impressive young man. A young man, who is also still a student, though married and with one child, is also a member. Another member has been in north Norway for a time but hopes to relocate in Bergen.

The congregation has purchased a building which was once a bakery and has made it into a very nice place to meet. It is in an old and very well-known part of the city and easy for locals and visitors alike to find. Their payments are not much more than the rent they had been paying.

We attempted to locate some people we had known many years ago so the brethren there would have these additional contacts with which to work. We succeeded in finding a few people and managed to get four visitors to the meetings from that. We found two women who were young girls when we lived there and who had attended Bible classes. They came twice.

#### Needs

It is urgent that the Buntings continue their work. They have shown exceptional patience. The cost of living in Norway is the highest in western Europe. Housing is

especially expensive. Gasoline is \$4. 50 a gallon. Milk is over \$4. 00 a gallon. Eating out, even at McDonald's or Burger King is very costly. A quarter-pounder, fries and soft drink sells for \$9. 50. Wages are high, though many are unemployed and live off the dole of a socialistic state.

Terrell Bunting and wife have two children and expect their third in the late summer. They are losing \$350 a month support by summer. They can ill-afford this. While we were there, Tom Bunting received a letter telling him that he will lose \$200 a month support in three months. They can't afford that loss either. Tom's wife, Shirley, teaches school now in order to help them stay. Some daylight is being seen in the work. If the Buntings have to come home, who could replace them? Who could even get into the country to stay for longer than 6 weeks? They are working under the conviction that "we shall reap if we faint not. " We are all thrilled about the opening opportunities in eastern Europe and other places. But we must not allow the light to go out in Norway. These few members there need the prayerful encouragement of brethren everywhere. The Bunting's need the patient and understanding support of brethren who do not expect the same kind of results as we have seen in some third world countries and a few other fields. If you can help these good brethren, here are their addresses. If you cannot financially help them, could you find the time to write them an encouraging letter?

Thomas Bunting	Terrell Bunting
Adolf Bergsvei 52-D	Bronndalen 89
5030 Landaas	5071 Loddefjord
Norway	Norway

I would also like to encourage brethren from churches which support these men and who are able to do so, to visit Bergen and worship with these brethren. It would do them a world of good. But it would also do the visitors untold good. It would help them to appreciate what they have at home: commodious meetings houses, well-arranged and taught Bible classes at many age levels, abundance of available literature, several good song leaders, elders and deacons, many Christians from which to draw strength and who are just a phone call away, and many other things besides.

Through it all we have to remember that many souls over the years have heard the truth in Norway. Some did obey it and some died in hope. There are some faithful Christians there now. A diligent search is still being made for good and honest hearts. We just must not forget those who have dedicated their lives to the search.

I keep thinking of all those children who came to Bible classes every Sunday for several years. And I think about two 45-year-old women who were so glad to see us and who told us they had not forgotten all they learned. They were proud of the fact that they could so easily locate scriptures during sermons, for we had drilled them as small children on how to find their way around in the Bible. Surely, brethren it has not all be in vain. Please help the sowers of the seed in Norway.

***Please Renew Promptly***

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Issue***

***July 1992***



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*Rethinking Marriage, Divorce  
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## Must Those Who Have Committed Adultery Separate?

Chapter IX of Jerry Bassett's book is entitled "God's Remedy for the Alien Sinner." The point and conclusion of the chapter is that God does not require separation for those aliens who have divorced and remarried and later decide to obey the gospel.

This principle not only works for the alien sinner but also for the Christian who divorces and remarries contrary to God's law. We are told that when they decide to repent, they do not have to separate.

The question before us is, must those who have committed adultery separate?

### Bassett Answers "No"

Bassett makes three points from which he argues his case. (1) God requires repentance for adultery. (2) Adultery does not refer to sexual activity in the second marriage, but to the unscriptural divorce and remarriage. Listen to Bassett. "... the expression 'adulterous marriage' is simply a contradiction of terms... The people we are discussing are not engaging in sexual intercourse with someone else's spouse, but within their own marriage and therefore each with his own spouse. ... However, while these aliens are not committing adultery through sexual activity with their spouses, they have committed adultery by simply divorcing and remarrying (Matthew 19: 9)."

(3) God requires that the couple repent of the divorce and remarriage, but allows them to continue in the present marriage. Jerry writes, "But does the Bible teach that such people must divorce in order to serve God and go to heaven? No! This idea is not taught in God's book. There is no such command in its sacred pages. Neither is there even one example of either Jesus, or one of his apostles, or any New Testament teacher ever so instructing one who desired to obey the gospel. Nor is there so much as a necessary implication that the Lord expects the remarried alien to sunder his marriage" (Bassett, p. 100).

Repentance does not demand that the second marriage cease according to Bassett. "What does this mean for one who has committed adultery by divorcing his mate and remarrying another? It does not mean that he must do penance, that is, pay the penalty of dissolving his present marriage and live celibate for the remain-

der of his life. It means that he must sorrow for the enormity of his sin of divorcing and remarrying, as well as every other thing of which he is guilty" (Bassett, p. 102).

"... will God release the alien sinner from the sins of his past life and give him total forgiveness of the debt thus incurred allowing him to continue in that marriage which he has at the point he obeys the gospel? Yes!" (Bassett, p. 105).

Brother Bassett claims that any instructions to sever a marriage would not harmonize with the instruction of Paul to not divorce (1 Cor. 7: 10-11, 27).

### The Bible Answers "Yes"

A careful examination of several principles will help us to see that the Bible answer to our questions is yes.

1. *God requires repentance* for the alien sinner (Acts 2: 38; 17: 30-31 and the erring child of God (Acts 8: 22). To this, brother Bassett would agree. We would disagree as to what that repentance demands.

Repentance involves (or at least produces) a change of life: *ceasing the past sin!* W. E. Vine's definition of repentance says it "involves both a turning from sin and a turning to God" (Vol. III, p. 281). A. T. Robertson says it involves a change of attitude and conduct (*Word Pictures In The New Testament*, Vol. I, p. 24). These definitions harmonize with the text, John's preaching demanded "fruits meet for repentance" (Matt. 3: 8). What Matt. 12: 41 calls *repentance*, Jonah 3: 10 describes as *turning from evil*.

The point is that sin must cease. Whether the sin be idolatry or the sin of adultery, it must cease. If the same practice continues, there has been no repentance.

2. *Adultery refers to unlawful sexual activity and not to the unscriptural divorce and remarriage.* We have already discussed this point in detail in our second article. It will be sufficient here to say that John 8 (where the woman was taken in the very act of adultery) suggests that adultery refers to the unlawful sexual activity and not the unscriptural divorce and remarriage. Was the woman taken in the act of sexual intercourse or in the act of divorcing her husband and remarrying another?

To this, Thayer (p. 417) and others would agree. There is no lexicon or passage that will support this arbitrary definition.

If an act is adultery before repentance, the same act is adultery after repentance (and baptism). If it is unlawful for Jack and Jill to be married before they repent, then the same marriage is unlawful after repentance.

3. *Baptism doesn't wash away the sin of adultery without a cessation of sin.* Jerry Bassett has the concept that the sin of adultery is washed away at Baptism and thus the couple can continue in their present marriage without further sin.

It is true that sin is washed away when one is baptized (Acts 2: 38); 22: 16). However, baptism does not change an unlawful act into a lawful one. Whether it be the sin of adultery or the sin of polygamy, the sin must stop before baptism will wash away the guilt. If the adulterer can continue in his marriage following baptism (and be forgiven), then so can the polygamist



continue with his six wives. If not, why not?


4. *The same principle will work for the homosexual and the polygamist.* If the position that Bassett has presented will work for the adulterer, it will work for the polygamist and the homosexual as well. Let's take the polygamist for example. He is an alien sinner. So, I assume that Bassett's chapter on "God's Remedy For The Alien Sinner" applies to him like any other alien sinner. So, he must repent of his adultery. His adultery is not the sexual relations that he has with his six wives. (In fact, since they are his wives, the sexual relations could not be adultery - if we are to believe Bassett). He should repent of having violated God's moral law which would demand one wife. However, he can continue in his marriage to all six. To demand that he must separate would not harmonize with 1 Cor. 7: 10-11, 27.

Before you conclude that brother Bassett would be inconsistent in dealing with the polygamist, you may be interested in how he has answered that question before. In October 1989 a number of brethren met in Salem, OR to discuss the fellowship implications of the divorce and remarriage question. When brother Bassett was asked what he would do with the South African who had a number of wives, he did not say that he would demand by the scripture that he leave his wives. He was more consistent with his position on the alien in adultery than many brethren would have thought (cf. "Polygamy & Repentance, " Harry R. Osborne, *Gospel Truths*, October 1990).

In the last article we will look at the questions of the guilty party remarrying and fellowship.

**WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?**  
 (Rom. 4:3)

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### Deacons and Jerusalem Elders

**QUESTION:** *I have a question about the seven men appointed in Acts 6: 1-6. One brother wrote that "these men were selected to relieve the apostles of secular duties" while another brother wrote that "the duties of deacons are to assist the elders." Would you please harmonize these two statements for us, as I believe both are correct. Also, I would appreciate your comments about the absence of elders at the Jerusalem church for a long period of time, or do you think that they were there, but not indicated until further on in the book of Acts?"*

**ANSWER:** The question the querist proposes about deacons and elders is not a simple one to answer. In regard to Acts 6: 1-6 we observe:

There is no way of knowing for certain that the seven men appointed were deacons in the sense those were in Phil. 1: 1. My persuasion is that they were for the reasons J. W. McGarvey gives in his commentary on Acts. He states, "The title of the office here created is not given, and from this circumstance some scholars have failed to identify it with that of deacon, mentioned in the first chapter of Philippians and the third chapter of First Timothy. But while the name of the office is absent, terms are used which show plainly that the office is the same. If the question had been one about ruling, and the seven had been chosen and appointed to rule, there could certainly be no hesitation about styling them rulers. The case before us is a perfect parallel. The question was about the "daily *diakonian*," and the seven were chosen to *diakonein*; why, then, hesitate to call them *diakonoi*?"

Whether there were elders at that time, the Bible does not say. Churches in Judea had elders (at least some few years later) in Acts 11: 27-30, and Jerusalem being in Judea, the church there evidently had elders also. Elders in the Jerusalem church are mentioned in Acts 15: 2. We read that churches in Lystra, Iconium and Antioch had elders not too long after their establishment (Acts 14: 21-23), and this could have been the case at Jerusalem. However, because the apostles were present at Jerusalem for a period of time after the church began in that city, the Jerusalem church may not

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have had elders as soon as other congregations. The eldership had to be instituted and we do not know the exact time that was done. J. W. McGarvey stated that "the twelve were the only officers in the church" until the appointment of those seven men in Acts 6 (*New Commentary on Acts*, Vol. 1, p. 104). This would mean that the institution of the eldership followed the inauguration of deacons. Of course McGarvey's statement may or may not be true.

Initially, the apostles were directly involved in handling the contributions and distributions for the indigent saints (Acts 4: 34-37). They may have used others in helping them facilitate this task. But as the disciples multiplied, the job became too great, in addition to their preaching, therefore, arrangements were made to select and appoint seven men to be responsible for the service. These men would relieve the apostles of this time-consuming activity so that they could give their time to the preaching of the word. Hence, in Acts 6, those functions of the apostles in Acts 4: 24-27 are taken over by deacons, giving time to the apostles to fulfill the duties to which they were primarily called.

For the deacons at Jerusalem to relieve the apostles, under whom they served, would be similar to deacons assisting elders when, for example, money was sent to the elders of the churches in Judea from Antioch of Syria (Acts 11: 27-30). This is assuming the churches had deacons, but if they were fully organized, as was the church at Philippi (1: 1), then the deacons, functioning in the framework of their role, would have assisted the elders.

My persuasion is that churches should not appoint deacons before having elders. Such a situation may develop into deacons assuming unauthorized oversight. As brother H. E. Phillips said, "Who would direct the deacons in their work?"

## A BURNING FIRE

(Jer. 20:9)

Jim Deason

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Culleoka, Tennessee 38451



### "Seeking Outside Support"

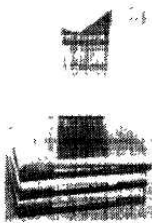
Over the years the Lord has blessed me, as a preacher of the gospel, with the opportunity to worship and work with some churches that could provide me and my family with the security of being able to furnish my full support. But some of the most rewarding work that we have done has been among smaller churches where those resources were not present. In such cases I have always sought and obtained the support needed so that I could devote all my energies to preaching without the burden of a secular job. I know it is scriptural and right to do so because Paul received wages from other churches while laboring in Corinth (2 Cor. 11: 8) and Philippi sent to Paul's need while he labored among the Thessalonians (Phil. 4: 15-16).

The support situation has changed quite a lot over the last few years. Among churches with which I am personally acquainted, although some are growing, money is relatively tight. Perhaps conditions in the various churches just mirror the economy of our times. Churches seem to be focusing their funds on the needs of their own growth and, as long as they are growing, it's hard to argue with their approach. But this has made it more difficult for those who work with small congregations in sometimes difficult areas and who choose to labor without the burden of a secular job to obtain needed "outside" support. It is a time consuming process that can be and often is very difficult, especially for a young man just beginning a life of preaching. Perhaps more thought needs to be given to "making tents" to support our own preaching but that's not within the scope of this article. I want to offer some suggestions that I have found to be helpful in making the process of raising support a little less painful.

**BEGIN SEEKING SUPPORT FROM CHURCHES THAT KNOW YOU.** At least begin in churches where there is someone who knows and can recommend you. Those who know you will generally be the most interested in your work of preaching. They are pleased to see you at work in the kingdom and they will be the most likely to sacrifice, if need be, for you.

**NEXT, SEEK SUPPORT FROM CHURCHES WHO KNOW YOUR CHOSEN FIELD OF LABOR.** There are some churches who have chosen to send men to particular areas in which they have special interest. One church I know, in a state where there are few churches,

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made the decision to support only preachers who worked in that state. Someone in the church with which you have chosen to work will probably be able to identify these churches for you and help in putting you in contact with them.

**DONT OVERLOOK SMALLER CHURCHES THAT HAVE NO "FULL TIME" PREACHER.** One such congregation near me sends out hundreds of dollars in monthly support and I know of several others who do the same. The temptation is to think these churches can't help. The reality is that they are the ones who receive the fewest requests.

**BE SURE TO MAKE PERSONAL, FACE TO FACE, CONTACT WITH THESE CHURCHES IF POSSIBLE.** Writing letters are necessary and with the aid of a computer practically painless. However, letters are no substitute for personal contact. People who consider supporting you need to see you. It's easier for them to make the decision to support you if they converse with you, hear you preach, and learn first hand of your interest and dedication to the work. It has been estimated that if you raise your support through the writing of letters alone you might have to contact as many as eighty churches or more (I think that number is conservative). However, you can probably contact only one-fourth that number if you make personal visits to churches you know.

**AVOID WRITING FORM LETTERS TO CHURCHES YOU DONT KNOW.** Form letters, with the possible exception of monthly reports, need to be avoided at all costs. Be personal. If at all possible, avoid writing letters to churches you don't know anything about. I am presently working with a church that cannot provide my full salary yet, we get three or four form letters a month from people we don't know and who don't know us requesting support. I feel under no obligation to answer this type of letter and I think very few churches do. Writing form letters to churches you don't know is an almost impossible way to raise needed support and is, more often than not, an exercise in futility. It has never been very successful for preachers I know.

**ONCE YOU'VE RAISED YOUR SUPPORT MAKE REGULAR MONTHLY REPORTS TO THOSE SUPPORTING YOU.** Maintaining your support is as important as raising it in the first place. If a church sends you a monthly check they deserve a monthly report of what you are doing. To keep everything honest before all men it is always good to make a full disclosure of your income including, should they request it, the names of other churches supporting you and in what amounts. Report baptisms, restorations, interesting visits and/or classes, and good prospects. A lot could be said about learning to write a good report letter that is honest, not padded, but which presents the positive aspects of your work. Some reports I have read have been filled with so much gloom that surely the churches receiving it would welcome the opportunity to send their support elsewhere (and they likely will)! Brethren are interested in your work and about the only way they have of knowing if their stewardship is being well spent is through the reports you send to them. These reports should indicate

that you are active and, at the same time, encourage them in their own work of supporting the preaching of the gospel.

**IT IS ALSO GOOD, WHEN POSSIBLE, TO MAKE YEARLY PERSONAL VISITS.** Sometimes this is not practical because of the distances involved but, when possible, personal reports say much more than even monthly letters. Its vitally important to both the preacher and the church to know one another. Remember, keeping support is as important as getting it. You keep support by regular contact with the churches supporting you.

Financial conditions in our country and around the world are hard. When churches have money to use on evangelism in other places they still face difficult decisions. Wanting to be good stewards, they must make decisions on who to support where and how much. Often, especially among large churches, there are several requests from worthy men and only limited funding. Not all can be supported. They will generally choose the man they know the best, who is active and faithfully reports his work, and who is in an area where opportunities are numerous and the possibility of reaching the lost (and churches becoming self-sustaining) is good. In my judgement this is as it should be.

Opportunities to preach the gospel in this country and around the world are increasing. The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. " There is still the need to "beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest" (Matt. 9: 37-38). I pray for the day when every faithful and able worker will have adequate support to meet his needs. But, even so, don't let the difficulty in raising support detour your decision to enter a field of labor where you know your efforts are needed. It may take some time and a lot of diligent effort but, in most cases, you can find the support. The Lord is with

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## "Endure Hardness"

"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. 2: 3).

While this exhortation is not reserved exclusively for preachers, it was directed to one, and preachers today need to be willing and able to preach under hard conditions.

Some preachers still do the work of an evangelist under difficult circumstances. Some brethren make sure of that. And, other preachers have chosen to labor in sections of the Lord's vineyard where the work is difficult and presents a daily challenge to their faith.

But some of us preachers must have everything just Goldilocks-right before we can prepare or preach a sermon— not too Papa Bear-hot or hard, and not to Mama bear-cold or soft—but "just right. "

We have grown accustomed to comfortable studies equipped with the latest state-of-the-art aids and amenities. We must have a complete library consisting of all the various reference works and several sets of commentaries (so we can find at least one which reinforces our position).

The study must be temperature controlled for all seasons, complete with executive desk, chair, and enough other furnishings to start a small office-supply business. And we must have uninterrupted hours so we can concentrate on (excuse me, I mean in), our lavish environment.

Once we have "worked up" our sermon outline, we need a comfortable building, pulpit, chalkboard, projector, or some other visual aid in order to deliver our sermon. And we don't want any constructive criticism from the elders or destructive criticism from the brethren. After all the hardship we endured in order to prepare the sermon, the least folks can do is agree with it, and praise us for our extraordinary talents and accomplishments.

Along about here, as in all articles or sermons of this nature, it is time to insert a disclaimer, waiver, or whatever else you want to call it.

I was not born in the "objective mood and kickative case, " and if I were, I've learned a few other moods and cases as I faced the vicissitudes of life. Like Paul, though maybe not to the same degree, I have been abased and I have abounded; I have been both full and hungry; I have had an abundance of this world's goods, and I have

suffered need (Phil. 4: 12).

In meetings and in some local work, I have been so cold or hot that it was difficult to concentrate. I have preached in buildings which were so cold that the brethren rearranged the short pews around the pot-bellied coal stove. In one congregation the janitor always got up right in the middle of my sermon to shake down the ashes and dump more coal into the stove. On the other hand, I have preached both in this country and in the Philippines when it was so hot I couldn't stand a coat or tie, and perspiration saturated nearly every stitch of clothes I had on.

But I have also had nice desks, a place to study, and comfortable buildings in which to preach. I have preached when brethren and non-members wholeheartedly commended the preaching of the gospel, and I have seen people so angry that I thought I was going to have to fight for my physical safety or suffer bodily harm. Don't ask me what I would have done, for I don't know. I'm just glad I didn't have to find out.

When we think of God's servants, the prophets, we remember them in a romantic way—their profound and inspired declarations, their miracles, their triumphs and victories, and their promise of eternal life.

But we sometimes forget that these prophets had to endure famines and pestilences; they journeyed through the countryside in sackcloth or "naked"; they faced the wrath of kings, false prophets, wild beasts, and robbers; they had to lie in uncomfortable positions in order to illustrate a prophecy, or marry a harlot; they not only had to endure the grief of a deceased loved one, but continue prophesying through that grief; and some were threatened, imprisoned, and slain by their own brethren.

And let us never forget that our Lord suffered more than all the rest, and that not for his own sins but for ours.

Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address was not written in a comfortable study or on embossed stationery, nor does it meet the requirements of literary excellence, but its message has outlived the more ponderous and pompous proclamations of more socially correct orators and writers.

And some of the best sermon outlines we have ever used were conceived miles from the comfortable surroundings of a well-equipped office or study, and written down on the back of an envelope or on a brown paper bag. And the quotations were not from some secular or sectarian source, but from the Bible itself.

Let me emphasize again the fact that preachers are not the only ones who are to "endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. " And even among preachers, hardness may come in some form other than an uncomfortable study, building, or from disgruntled people who cannot endure sound doctrine.

We may have to suffer financial adversity, physical afflictions like Paul's "thorn in the flesh, " or continue to preach the gospel when others would just as soon we would quit.

During the Gulf War some military personnel were introduced to the hard part of "soldiering. " Some had joined the military for educational or monetary opportu-

nities. Some women joined, never thinking that they may have to leave their husbands and children to serve in the sands of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, or Iraq.

Whenever we enlist under the banner of Truth, and begin following the Captain of our salvation, we may have to endure some hardness before we share in the final victory.

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### Flee Fornication



*Norman E. Sewell*

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I feel confident that many articles will be written for bulletins and other publications dealing with the tragedy of "Magic" Johnson testing HIV positive. Certainly he was one of the great stars of the NBA and a hero to a great many people, young and old. Many have praised him for his calm and his courage in announcing to the world that he now carries the AIDS virus, and perhaps this will indeed be helpful to all those women he has been with over the years. If there is one lesson we need to make sure that we learn and that our young people learn from this it is that what caused Magic Johnson to be HIV positive was sin. We need to state clearly that fornication is sin, and that God intended from the beginning that all sexual relations be within the marriage relationship.

Please don't think that I'm especially picking on Magic Johnson. I too appreciate his skills in basketball, but I don't admire his lifestyle. Now that Johnson carries the AIDS virus, we find him and many others preaching "SAFE SEX" in every available media. They preach it on television and the radio; they preach it in the newspapers and magazines. And the message they preach is not one of "flee fornication" as Paul wrote in First Corinthians chapter 6, verse 18. Instead they preach only that you must protect yourself by using a condom so that you too won't be affected by AIDS. AIDS is an awful disease, and hopefully there will be a time when more and better treatments will be available, perhaps even a cure. But the whole world has completely missed the point when we preach only "safe sex" and not "flee fornication." As our children and grandchildren see men like this; as they watch almost any program on television and see people jumping into bed together very casually, what will they think? Will they grow up recognizing clearly that God has some rules about sex that the world does not recognize? Unless we do a lot of perhaps unpleasant but very clear teaching from the word of God the next generations will know little of what God wants and will know only the message of humanism that says to do whatever feels good to you.

This problem is much bigger than whether or not our children and grandchildren are exposed to AIDS. Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor

extortioners, will inherit the kingdom of God" (NKJV, 1 Cor. 6: 9-10). In other words, you can't practice these things and still go to heaven! This is the message that needs to be preached, that all sex outside of marriage is sin, and that those who practice such and continue to do so will be lost. It won't be a very popular message because it is completely different from what the world wants, but it is the truth of God.

We need to teach our young people that sex as God intended it is not dirty or ugly. It satisfies a very basic urge that God made within man from the beginning. But it is to be satisfied in marriage. When the Jews asked Jesus about divorcing for any reason He responded by saying, "Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matthew 19: 4-6). I know the world thinks this is an outdated standard, but this is the way it is supposed to be; one man and one woman becoming "one flesh" in the marriage relationship. But fornication changes that for Paul wrote: "What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh?" (1 Cor. 6: 16). How can a man be "one flesh" with his wife and at the same time be "one flesh" with his neighbor's wife or some woman at work, etc. ? Then in the 7th chapter of First Corinthians, in answering a question the Corinthians asked about marriage

Paul wrote: "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband" (v. 2). It is in the marriage relationship that we satisfy the sexual longings that we have without committing sin. Marriage is not always easy. It is never easy for two people to give up their own independence and pledge that they will live together and work together and love together for the rest of their lives. But it can be a wonderful thing, especially if we are "heirs together of the grace of life" (1 Peter 3: 7) planning not only on spending a lifetime together, but expecting also to be together with all the redeemed in heaven for all of eternity.

One more thought perhaps needs to be expressed here. When Paul wrote to the Corinthians and warned them against fornication he also wrote: "And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God" (NKJV, 1 Cor. 6: 11). Those who have practiced fornication and adultery do not have to go on doing so. You can be forgiven and have the hope of eternal life. If you have already contracted the AIDS virus, being obedient to Jesus through the gospel will not take away AIDS, but it will make possible the salvation of your soul, eternally. Why not determine to turn away from fornication and all your sins right now and turn to the only one who can save you? Why not obey Jesus in all He asks of you? This is more important than anything else you will ever do? And be sure to preach "flee fornication, " not "safe sex. "

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## Why Do You Serve God?

*David West*

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Do you desire the GIFTS or the GIVER? What circumstances in life could destroy your faith? Loss of wealth? Death of loved ones? Poor health? In His wise providence, Jehovah has preserved the account of a man who wrestled successfully with these issues. His name is Job. His story is in the book that bears his name.

What do you know about Job? Most people know he had boils and was patient. But, there is far more to his story. Many believe that Job was written to explain why we suffer. But, Job will disappoint those who study him with this objective. Yes, suffering is a prominent theme in the book. But, it is not the central issue.

Job is about faith. It is the story of a man chosen to experience a devastating trial of his faith. Briefly, in chapters 1-2, heaven's curtain is raised to give us a glimpse behind the scenes. We, as readers, are entrusted with information hidden from the actors. They must play their roles in this drama without insight that could radically affect the nature of their responses. Yet, it is important that they be deprived of it.

Job is the greatest man of his time. Wealthy and influential, he is also godly and righteous. Jehovah is proud of his servant and brags on him to Satan. "Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil" (Job 1: 8).

Satan's slanderous response contends that the only reason Job (or anyone else for that matter) serves Jehovah is because they are bribed to do so by gifts (1: 9-10). Take away the gifts and he will curse the Giver (1: 11). God's reputation hangs in the balance. Is He worthy simply because of who He is? Or must He pay us to serve Him?

God accepts this blasphemous challenge. He honors Job by selecting him as His personal representative in this test case. Job's response will either vindicate God or add credence to Satan's insult. For the test to be valid, Job cannot be told of the contest or his role in it.

Satan is given permission to strip Job of his possessions, but not to touch him. One day, servant after servant comes into the presence of Job delivering, with lightning speed and sledgehammer blows, the tragic news of the loss of all his possessions and, worst of all, his ten children. Bankrupt and childless all in the same day, Job falls on his face in grief, not to curse, but to worship. "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return there. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord (1: 20-21). Job didn't curse or charge God with wrongdoing. Jehovah's reputation remained intact.

As we are allowed another peek behind heaven's curtain, we find Jehovah again bragging on Job to Satan. "Have you considered My servant Job? For there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man fearing God and turning away from evil. And he still holds fast his integrity, although you incited Me against him, to ruin him without cause" (2: 3).

Satan is still unconvinced. The first test wasn't tough enough. If only he could attack Job's body, he could prove his charge. That would make Job quit. The enemy is granted permission to take Job's health, but not his life.

Job quickly finds his body racked with excruciating pain. Boils cover him from head to foot. He rejects his wife's urgings to give up on God and be through with Him. He tells her that such talk is foolish. "Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity" (2: 10). Rather than pushing God away, Job clings tighter.

When news of Job's tragic circumstances reaches his friends (Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar, and Elihu), they come to comfort him. Their comfort soon degenerates into bitter debate and insult. They contend that God follows strict rules in governing this world. They say that God rewards good behavior and punishes wicked. They are convinced (as are so many of us today) that a man's standing with God can be discerned by observing his physical circumstances. Judging from Job's current plight, it was obvious to them that he was a vile sinner. If he would only confess his sin, God could again bless him.

The central part of the book (chapters 4-34) contains three rounds of debate between Job and three of his friends. It ends in an exasperating stalemate (32: 1). Each, in turn, accuses him of terrible sins. Job steadfastly maintains his innocence. He knows he has done nothing to deserve what he is experiencing.

The fourth friend, Elihu, finally breaks his silence (chapters 32-37) leveling angry accusations at everyone (32: 2-3). He accuses the friends of continuing to condemn Job when they cannot answer his objections. Later, God will say that these men have not spoken the truth about Him as Job has (42: 7-8). (Yet, men today continue to use their arguments in discussions about suffering, as though this is what the Bible teaches about why men suffer!)

Elihu says that Job is so determined to exonerate himself that he is willing to accuse God of wrongdoing (34: 5, 6; 35: 1-3). He contends that there are other purposes for suffering besides punishment of the wicked. Though he comes closer to telling the truth than the others, I do not believe that even he discovered the real lesson God wants us to learn.

The stumblingblock impending the arguments of each of these men was their lack of ALL the facts. They are unaware of the contest. Here is a drama within a drama. Job thinks God is on trial. (Can He justify Himself in the eyes of Job? Can He give good and sufficient reasons for how He is dealing with Job? Can Job continue to believe in God's goodness?)

But, we know there is something bigger going on. When Job shouts, "Why me? What have I done?", we want to shout back, "Nothing! This isn't punishment."

We know that it is really Job who is on trial. The issue is not "why does God allow me to suffer?", but, "what will Job do when he loses every reason to believe in God's goodness?"

Job desperately wants answers to his questions (as do we when faced with suffering). Oh, for his day in court. He would ask hard questions and demand that God answer and explain. We often believe that if God would just appear and tell us "why" we are suffering, we could endure it.

Eventually Jehovah does appear, but not to answer Job's questions. Instead, by means of a science quiz (chapters 38-39), Job becomes convinced that his knowledge of the physical universe is so inadequate that he is certainly in no position to sit in judgment on God or to fairly evaluate how well He is running the moral universe. (If God were to appear to us in the midst of our sufferings, might He not do the same with us?)

The lesson Job needed to learn (as do we) was that man just doesn't have ALL the facts. We are in no position to put God on trial. Job agrees to shut-up. "Behold, I am insignificant; what can I reply to Thee? I lay my hand on my mouth. Once I have spoken, and I will not answer; even twice, and I will add no more" (40: 3-5).

However, God isn't interested in Job's SILENCE. He wants his TRUST. In chapters 40-41, He tells Job of Behemoth (hippopotamus?) and Leviathan (crocodile?). If Job would not dare challenge these (who are mere creatures), why will he challenge their Maker? God controls the universe and is doing a good job of running it despite what we may sometimes think.

Job is never given an explanation for his suffering. He is never told why these things happened. Yet, he goes away satisfied. He decides that he will continue to serve God despite his circumstances. He will continue to trust Him even when there seems to be no reason to (and perhaps even good reasons not to).

He thus, disproves Satan's slanderous charge, and brings well-deserved glory to the name of the Lord. "I know that Thou canst do all things, and that no purpose of Thine can be thwarted. Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge? Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. Hear, now, and I will speak; I will ask you, and you instruct Me. I heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; But now my eye sees Thee; Therefore, I retract, and I repent in dust and ashes" (42: 2-6).

God is more concerned with Job's trust than his pleasure. We are not here on earth to have fun. We are here to learn to trust God and desire Him above all else (Ps. 73: 25-28). Whenever tragedy comes into our lives, our reaction reveals our motive in serving God. It either shows that our real interest is in Him or that our real interest is in what He gives us.

Is He worthy of our praise and worship even without His gifts? The issue here is bigger than the nature of "suffering." It is the issue of "faith." Your reaction to adversity reveals whether you agree with Job or with Satan. "I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised ... " (Ps. 18: 3). Why do you serve God?

## Romans Chapter Seven

*Voyd N. Ballard*

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Contrary to the idea of some, the seventh chapter of the Roman letter is not describing the child of God. Some try to make the latter part of this chapter describe some kind of a "warfare" in the Christian between the spirit and the flesh. They often quote verse 25 as their proof. However this verse says nothing about such a warfare. Paul speaks of service, and not of fighting. And there is no such thing as serving God with the mind while the body serves sin. No man can serve two masters at the same time. What is said in the latter part of this chapter could not possibly be said of Paul as a Christian and an Apostle of Jesus Christ, nor of any Christian for that matter. Paul is not describing his own state as a Christian, but rather that of the unregenerated person. He uses the present tense to describe his condition before he became a Christian. As a Christian and an Apostle Paul certainly was not:

**A SLAVE TO SIN. "CARNAL, SOLD UNDER SIN. " Verse 14**

**PRACTICING SIN. Verse 15**

**A CHRISTIAN WITH SIN DWELLING IN HIM. Verse 17**

**PRACTICING EVIL. Verse 19**

**A WRETCHED MAN UNDER SENTENCE OF DEATH. Verse 24**

None of these things could be said of Paul as a Christian. Of himself as a Christian he said: "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and righteously and unblamably we behaved ourselves toward you that believe" (1 Thess. 2: 10).

The entire Roman letter was written to show that the gospel is God's power unto salvation wherein is revealed "the righteousness of God" which is simply God's plan of righteousness; that is His plan of salvation for lost man. In the first five chapters he has fully developed and abundantly proven this proposition, showing that grace now "reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 5: 21). In other words the grace of God now reigns through the gospel; that wherever sin abounds, grace abounds so much more under the gospel of Christ. That being the case, some might conclude that the Christian should continue in sin so that grace might abound all the more, but Paul says not so. In chapter six he shows that such a conclusion is false because the child of God is no longer a slave of sin, but is now a "servant of righteousness" (Verse 18). As servants of righteousness we cannot continue in sin nor live in sin, and that being the case we cannot be described as sinners. "What shall we say then? Shall we



continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. We who died in sin, how shall we any longer live therein? (Verses 1 & 2).

The sixth chapter of the Roman letter was written to show that the child of God is dead to sin. That through his obedience to the gospel he has been made free from sin and has become a servant of righteousness. "**Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness. But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin ye became the servants of righteousness**" (Verse 16-18). When one hears the gospel and believes it, he is lead to repent of his sins. In repentance he dies to the **love and practice of sin**. Then in baptism he dies to the **guilt and state of sin**. He then is no longer a sinner; but a servant of righteousness. As such he:

**IS WALKING IN NEWNESS OF LIFE.** Verse 4  
**HIS OLD SINFUL MAN IS CRUCIFIED AND DESTROYED,** Verse 6  
**IS DEAD TO SIN AND MUST NOT SERVE SIN.** Verse 6  
**BEING DEAD TO SIN IS FREED FROM SIN.** Verse 7  
**HE DOES NOT LET SIN REIGN OR DWELL IN HIM.** Verse 12  
**IS A SERVANT OF GOD, NOT OF THE DEVIL.** Verse 22

The person described above is a child of God. The person described in chapter seven is just the opposite; Therefore the description of the person in chapter seven cannot possibly be that of the Christian. The following from Macknight in his Commentary on the Roman Letter is worth serious consideration:

"Because the apostle in this passage uses the first person, I am sold, etc., Augustine in the latter part of his life, and most of the commentators after his time, with many of the moderns, especially the Calvinists, contend that in this, and in what follows, to the end of the chapter, the apostle describes his own state at the time he wrote the epistle, consequently the state of every regenerated person. But most of the ancient Greek commentators, all the Arminians, and some Calvinists, held that though the apostle speaks in the first person, he by no means describes his own state, but the state of an unregenerated sinner awakened, by the operation of law, to a sense of his sin and misery. And this opinion they support by observing that in his writings the apostle often personates others (See Rom. 13: 11, 13). Wherefore to determine the question, the readers must consider to which of the two characters the things written in this chapter best agree; and, in particular, whether the apostle would say of himself, or other regenerated persons, that 'they are carnal, and sold under sin.'"

**Do you study your Bible  
with an open mind (Acts 17:11-12)?**

## Religion Minus Righteousness Equals Error

*Tony Mauck*

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Beaumont, Texas 77706

He was a womanizer, guzzler and gambler turned revival preacher. He was a smooth talker who could sway his audience despite using offensive language. His motives were misguided. His motivation was his desire for a woman preacher, Sharon Falconer. His name was Elmer Gantry. "Elmer Gantry" was a highly controversial movie made in the early 1960's about corruption in religion. A look behind the scenes of the revival tent revealed Mr. Gantry's blackmail, corrupt speech, occasional drinking and unspeakable seduction of Miss Falconer.

How could such a man pass for a preacher? He had gained knowledge of the Scriptures in Seminary years earlier. He did not begin preaching immediately after Seminary for a reason. Elmer's antics, a tryst with a deacon's daughter, had caused him to be ousted before graduating. Ironically, this deacon's daughter turned prostitute almost ruins Mr. Gantry's influence out of spite.

Several contemporary lessons can be ascertained from such a tale. A religion where truth is absent is foreign to God's approval. As the title of this article suggests, religion minus righteousness equals error. This equation is no less true than  $2 + 2 = 4!$  To have warm feelings about God and His word are no substitute for the practice of truth both individually and corporately. To be able to move an audience, command respect as a teacher and/or be fervent in religious activity do not insure God's acceptance.

To the religious majority of our day, religion is something which transpires at specially selected times, at certain church-sponsored events. Religion is viewed as nothing more than another compartment in our lives. Religion has little bearing on "non-religious" activities. However, a religion divorced from purity, personal righteousness is not Jesus' religion. The only religion God accepts is one which affects one's manner of life (see Galatians 2: 20). Impenitent liars, gossipers, adulterers, drunkards, thieves and lovers of money cannot please God no matter how much religion they practice or how intense they are about it. The practice of true religion in the sight of God renders "every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10: 5), and compels every person to "keep oneself unstained by the world" (James 1: 27).

In addition, a religion is vain which casts aside *His* terms of pardon and rejects God's pattern for the work and worship of the church. Today, God's terms of admis-

sion into Christ's kingdom (faith, repentance, confession and baptism) are often set aside for a more palatable set of man-made instructions ("just accept Jesus into your heart"). As far as God is concerned, only *the truth* is good enough to save (see John 8: 31, 32)!

Furthermore, in "Elmer Gantry," Miss Falconer to-tally disregarded the teaching of 1 Timothy 2: 11-12, "Let a woman quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet." This disrespect for God's word has flourished in recent days. Women preachers are being sanctioned in many denominations.

The charge is made that Paul's words are outdated and should be relegated to first century custom. He is even accused of being a chauvinist. Yet, Paul bases his statements on the very beginning of time. "For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being quite deceived, fell into transgression" (1 Timothy 2: 13, 14). This does not mean women are second class citizens in God's kingdom (see Galatians 3: 28). It does not argue that women are less talented or intelligent than men (see Romans 16: 1, 2). It only speaks of distinct roles God has for men and women in His kingdom (see 1 Corinthians 11: 3). If we reject God's instruction here, what will keep us from rejecting other instructions which do not suit our fancy?

Paul's warning to Titus regarding false teachers is still quite applicable today, They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient... But as for you, speak the things which are

fitting for sound doctrine" (Titus 2: 1). Peter's words to Cornelius are just as relevant, "... in every nation the man who fears Him (God) and does what is right, is welcome to Him" (Acts 10: 35). All the religiosity in this world cannot replace a love for and practice of truth! A friend recommended that I analyze "Elmer Gantry" and I'm glad, because it reminded me of this quite significant spiritual truth.

**"Go into all the world  
and preach the gospel  
to every creature"  
(Mark 16:15)**

**Do A Friend A Favor**  
Do you have a friend or relative who could benefit from reading *Searching the Scriptures*? Why not buy a subscription for someone?

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## THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

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

### DEBATE WITH ROMAN CATHOLICS

**GREG LITMER** of Louisville, Kentucky met Karl Keating, founder of Catholic Answers of San Diego, California in a debate April 3 in Lincoln, Nebraska. This was conducted at Pius X High School gymnasium. Video and audio tapes are available. Mr. Keating affirmed that the Roman Catholic Church is the church Jesus established. Greg Litmer denied this. From 1984 to 1986, Greg Litmer edited a paper entitled "CATHOLICISM EXAMINED." Greg was formerly a Roman Catholic. He now preaches for the Expressway church in Louisville, Kentucky.

The church in Lincoln has about 30 in attendance and meets in a child care center at 31st and "C Streets in Lincoln. For information about tapes, write to: 31st and "C Church of Christ, P. O. Box 30344, Lincoln, NE 68503, or call Lynn Huggins (402) 421-3328; or Larry Rouse (402) 421-2890.

### HOLT-BASSETT DEBATE TAPES

The debate between Jack Holt and Jerry Bassett on marriage, divorce and remarriage which took place in February at West Ave. in San Antonio, Texas, is available on four-two hours VHS video tapes for \$30. These are professionally done. Those interested may contact Rick Hubart, 3012 Foxfire Cir., Indianapolis, IN 46214. Phone (317) 328-1776.

### DEBATE WITH BAPTISTS

**JEFF ASHER** met Glen Stacker of the Bible Believers' Baptist Church in debate in Amarillo, Texas on the subjects of salvation by faith only and water baptism as essential to salvation. One night was held in the building of the Baptist Church and the other in the building of the Dumas Drive church of Christ. As a hyper-dispensationalist, Stocker believes water baptism was not for Jews and Gentiles alike. This gave the debate a different twist from some with the Baptists. For information about tapes, call (806)383-4451 or 383-2831. The debate was followed by a gospel meeting with Ron Halbrook at Dumas Dr.

### NEW CONGREGATION

Seven Christians have formed a new congregation in Perryton, Texas, 65 miles north of Pampa and 110 miles northeast of Amarillo in the northern panhandle of Texas. Since February 16 they have been meeting in a rented hall. Preachers in the area are helping to encourage these brethren. If you know of brethren in the area who are driving long distances to worship with sound brethren, others who have fallen away, or some who meet with unsound brethren and are willing to study or take a stand, please let these brethren know about them. You may contact: Keeneth Cameron, 1514 Texas St., Perryton, TX 79070 (806) 435-2032, or David Sims, 1526 Cedar, Perryton, TX 59070 (806) 435-9815.

**TO PRAGUE, CZECHOSLOVAKIA**

**STEVEN D. BAXLEY, 1212 Brandon CT., Irving, TX 75060** — In January I made a trip to Prague to see about the work there and found opportunities for the gospel among a people many of whom are ready and waiting for the gospel. 20 Christians are already meeting in Prague (native people), two more in Brno one in Cesky Budejovice. I have been working with Bobby Holmes and the Dallas Ave. congregation in Lancaster, Texas with their elders since last August. I would like to go to Prague around June 1 this year and will need to raise monthly support and one time assistance for travel. I plan to supply regular reports to those who have apart with me in this work. You may contact me at (214) 790-9461 or 647-3782. References are: Bobby Holmes (214) 298-4466; Mark Roberts (409) 727-6497; Al Diestelkamp (011-42-2) 321-9681 (this is in Czechoslovakia); or Jim Smelser (501) 882-3400.

**PAUL BROCK, 9 Sunshine Blvd., Deland, FL 32724** — I keep hearing from those who are misinformed about my health condition. I did retire from local work in 1988. I was not incapacitated but did not feel up to all the work I needed to do. We moved back to Ridge Manor, FL where I had lived while preaching at Trilacoochee from 1975 to 1982. After several months of rest, some fill-ins, some meeting work, I began preaching at Cove Bend near Floral City, FL. At the insistence of one of our daughters, we moved back to Deland. I continued to preach at Cove Bend through July, 1991. We felt that 80 miles each way was a little too much for Mrs. Brock and me to travel. I am now serving as one of the elders at N. Blvd. in Deland, teaching classes and preaching some. I am able to preach in meetings, week-end series and fill-in appointments. This is not a solicitation for work, but if I may be of service under the circumstances described here, I will be glad to assist as I can.

**GORDON SKINNER, P. O. Box 583, Bradnor, OH 43406** — On January 1st we moved to Bradnor to preach the gospel. They have 35 in attendance. Prospects look promising. We are near Bowling Green where there is a state university. We would be glad to contact students or other individuals you may know in this area. Write me at the above address or call (419) 288-3304.

**IN MEMORY OF ELMER LLOYD "BUD" EUBANKS**

Gospel preacher "Bud" Eubanks departed this life on October 21, 1991 at the age of 66. As a faithful gospel preacher he devoted his life to the work of the Lord, serving churches in Kansas, Illinois, Colorado and Missouri. He was a motivating force in establishing the Parkcrest church, which has now become Walnut Lawn in Springfield, MO. He was a loving husband, wonderful father and doting grandfather, being guided in these relations by his devotion to the truth of God and by his faith in Christ.

**FROM AROUND THE WORLD**

**MEXICO**—ENRIQUE CISNEROS REPORTS TWO BAPTIZED in Cananea, Sonora. He said "We feel full of joy and courage in our work. Pray for us and the work in Mexico.

**CUBA** — RUBEN C. AMADOR and ANTONIO LIRA (from Venezuela) went to Havana, Cuba in January to locate brethren. They are not visited much by brethren from other countries, especially the USA, in recent years. "We found them excited and encouraged by our visit. Angel Perez preaches for the church in Havana and met us at the airport. We met also four other Cuban preachers: Roberto Flores, Jose Antonio Fernandez, Reynaldo Vos and Julio Abreu. There are five established congregations which are recognized by the government. Other churches are meeting in homes and we are not recognized by the government. We heard that there are also other isolated groups of brethren. Opportunities to preach were limited since churches are prohibited to use foreign preachers without prior government approval but two of the churches took the risk and asked us to preach. In Havana we had several classes with the church and young people mainly on the institutional issues. We were impressed with their Bible knowledge and willingness to study. What little Spanish Bible literature had reached them was produced by institutional brethren and their publishing houses. The church at Consolacion del Sur has 75 people. Attendance in the other churches range from 20 to 55. As

far as we know, only three preachers receive support from the USA. We were not able to visit the church at Santiago de Cuba on the southern extreme of the island. They were disappointed and we promised to try to visit them on our next trip.

The work in Cuba began in the mid-1930's when Jose Jimenez and Luis Estevez from Tampa, Florida came to Cuba to preach, establishing over 30 congregations. When Fidel Castro came to power in 1959 he took control of the churches as well. During these years the churches lost their properties and furnishings. Most of the churches disappeared. But the faith of the gospel did not die. Many of these Christians, now cut off from the western world, maintained their own faith in the Bible way and kept the few congregations on a Biblical course. These remaining churches have some deep-rooted problems which may take time to resolve. Many Cubans, including our brethren there, lack the basic needs of life. Far greater is their need for teaching, encouragement, and strength. Their cry for spiritual help must not be ignored.

**ITALY** — I know of no field where the native preachers are working harder for the promotion of truth than our brethren in Italy. While progress is slower than they like for it to be, they are growing, both in number and in spirit. They are aggressively pressing the claims of truth and opposing the errors which have for so long blinded the minds of those who live under the shadow of the Vatican. Their preaching and writing is bold.

Among these preachers is FRANCESCO FOSCI who preaches south of Rome at Latina. He was trained, mainly by Rodolfo Berdini, and developed out of the church at Aprilia where his own father served as an elder. He gave up his secular job and launched out to establish the work in Latina. They began with 7 and have now grown to 16. Through no fault of his own, nor those who have found it necessary to stop his support, he is this year losing practically all his support. At the age of 44 it will be difficult for him to return to his secular work, which he left in 1985. Even if he could, the work in Latina will suffer. His family will suffer. The editor of this paper has known brother Fosci since 1976. He needs and deserves the help of faithful brethren who are concerned for the continued progress of the truth in Italy. His address is: Francesco Fosci, V. Leopardi 5, 04011 Aprilia (Lt, Italy. Phone (06) 922124.

**HUNGARY**—Richard Copeland and Jeff Archer have many contacts in Budapest now and a number have visited services there. Some of those they are studying with are opening doors to yet others.

**GERMANY** — Steve Wallace sends an interesting report of his work in Germany and also of other work going on in Europe and in the former Soviet Union. Many doors are opening and more dedicated brethren are entering these fields. His last report also has this note which amazes me. He said "It seems some brethren in the U. S. are hoping to cash in on the new situation here in Europe. There have been at least two business letters sent out to preachers living in Germany offering opportunities to make **big money** working as an agent for a business 'run by Christians.' (Just when I needed something to do with all this spare time I have on my hands!... ) I guess some people must have a rather low estimation of what we are trying to do here. Brethren, stop this foolishness!" Amen, brother Wallace!

**SOUTH AFRICA** — Paul Williams reports seven more baptisms from work done by several of the brethren in his area. He also reports growing unrest in some quarters posing dangers to the citizenry, including many of the brethren. The prayers of brethren are requested.

**PHILIPPINES** — Reynaldo O. Ugale reports 19 baptized in 1991 from work which he and others were able to do. In addition to continued efforts to evangelize, they hope to finish a meeting house in Baculod, Cagayan.

Leonito V. Torreliza of Candon, Ilocos Sur reports 17 baptisms for 1991 and establishment of a congregation at Salcedo, 20 kilometers from Candon in a mountainous region. Keith Burnet and Carl McMurray were able to visit brethren in that area in 1991.

**PREACHER NEEDED**

**GLEN ELLYN, ILLINOIS**—The church here is looking for a strong, experienced preacher. There are 27 members. We are located about 30 miles west of Chicago. Please contact Joseph Novak (708) 529-2149 or Rick Biederstadt (708) 665-7579.

**PREACHER AVAILABLE**

**WENDELL M. POWELL**, 172 Chippendale Dr., Hendersonville, TN 37075. I desire to re-locate sometime this summer of fall. Experience: 20 years full-time and two years part-time. Age: 48. Married with children grown. Write me at the above address or call (615) 822-2594.



**SPECIAL ISSUE OF PRECEPTOR**

The January, 1992 issue of THE PRECEPTOR is a special edition on "Into All the World." It contains interesting articles from many good brethren who know of, or are involved in the work in various nations of the earth. It would be good for Christians everywhere to obtain a copy and read it. It will do you good. You may write: The Preceptor Magazine, P. O. Box 187, Beaumont, TX 77704. Bundles cost \$20 for 25 copies.

**STS SPECIAL OF ROLE OF WOMEN**

DONNIE V. RADER is putting together a special edition of STS for July, 1992 on "Women Professing Godliness" (A Study of the Role of Women). The following articles will appear:

"What Is Going On In The Feminist Movement?" — Lewis Willis  
"The Impact Of The Feminist Movement Upon God's People" — Donald Townsley

"God's Limitations Upon Women" — Art Ogden

"Living in Subjection" — Dick Blackford

"The Woman Whose Price Is Far Above Rubies" — Bill Hall

"A Tribute To The Housewife" — Donnie V. Rader

"What Women Can Do To Promote The Cause of Christ" — Connie W. Adams

"Questions Often Asked About The Role of Women" — H. E. Phillips

100 copies will sell for \$65, 50 copies for \$40, and orders less than that for \$1 each.

**WHAT MAKES A THIEF A THIEF?**

In somber tones and with a straight face, the news reporter gave us the bad news of an increase in thefts of dogs in southern Indiana. It was speculated that these were being stolen for resale and then a law officer told us that it was due the hard times in that area. Many Americans survived the great depression and came away with their principles intact. Honorable people just did not steal! We need to stop this non-sense of blaming "the recession," the President, or Congress, or somebody for every crime committed and start recognizing the simple truth that those who steal do so because they are thieves. It is a sin problem, not an economic problem.

# 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 XXXIII

May 1992

Number 5

THINK ON  
THESE THINGS

*H. E. Phillips*

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Lutz, FL 33549



## How Do Men Forsake The Right Way?

Goals and motives play an enormous role in determining what people will do and how strong their convictions will be. The most important places in life require dedication to principle and faithfulness to duty. Those who desert the principles and duties to which they dedicated themselves, especially when they are associated with others, do the same damage as if they served the enemy of their cause. There are many in the church who have deserted the Lord Jesus Christ and his word.

A compromise of one's conviction will allow sins that destroy the cause for which Christ died. Where did the idea that mild sins or "human weakness" will be tolerated by God? The idea that mild slander, little white lies, little deceitful conversations among members of the church, taking liberty with the authority of Christ came from compromise attitudes. It did not come from sound doctrine. It came by the promotion and approval of preachers, elders, teachers and Christians as they silently consent to the practice of sin by not speaking against it and not using such discipline as is necessary to keep it out of the church. Every teacher or practitioner of "evil communication" out of the mouth is a traitor to the Lord. They have forsaken the principles of truth and have become the enemies of God.

We also have the universal problem of indifference among members of the church. Apathy is the product

of Satan and is opposed to the way of Truth. All apathy produces lukewarmness and finally spiritual death. It is from the lack of real conviction. The Laodiceans were nauseating to the Lord because of the "lukewarmness" toward their responsibilities. They were told to repent. God will not tolerate such attitudes, and the church cannot afford to be guilty of tolerating and endorsing such today. The church at Ephesus was industrious, but they had left their first love. This condition could not continue; they had to repent or have the candlestick removed. It is as true today as it was then. Mechanical exactness in rituals is not obedience to the Lord. One must do exactly what the Lord requires, but it must be done with love and zeal.

Emotional and sentimentalism are supplanting true worship in spirit and truth in many congregations of the Lord's people today. More time and energy is spent in relating an emotional account of human experience than in rebuking sin and admonishing to be faithful to the Lord. If you want to have the anathema of important men upon you, just speak out against the modern philosophy of preaching among the notable in the church today. Go easy, speak softly, do not rebuke or condemn; compliment and flatter the church, do not call names, speak in glowing terms of the accomplishments and greatness of the church; do not expose weakness and lack of faithfulness. This is the modern day philosophy of gospel preaching. One has but to glance at the New Testament to be convinced that this sort of deceptive handling of the word of God breeds religious traitors to the cause of Christ, and never produced faithful workers in the service of God.

Turncoats in the church are on the increase because of apathy and worldly ambitions within the church. We cannot blame the world for the weak spiritual condition of some churches. Such evil was present when in the fullness of time God brought into existence the kingdom spoken of by the prophets. The church IS the "called out" from the world into Christ. We have been delivered from the powers of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of Christ (Col. 1: 13). The real reason why so many turn from the truth is that many "in the church" have never been converted to Christ; they have never been convicted of sin in their own lives; they have never really accepted the authority of Jesus

Christ as taught in the New Testament.

This is no little matter. It has become a real problem. We need to be strong in the Lord and in the word of his power. We must oppose sin in every form and in every place. We must insist upon complete obedience to Jesus Christ. To walk in the truth is to abide in Christ and have the hope of eternal life.

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## **" QUOTE**

**"If you don't like someone, the way he holds his spoon makes you furious; if you like him, he can turn his plate over into your lap and you won't mind."**

**—Irving Becker**

## **UNQUOTE "**

## Editorial

Connie W. Adams

P.O. Box 69  
Brooks, Kentucky 40109



### Haters Of Good

Paul warned of "perilous times" during the "last days" (2 Tim. 3: 1). "The last days" refers to the gospel age and not just the last few days of that age. Throughout the tenure of the last days there would arise times especially difficult for the Lord's people, times which would test their faith and conviction and sorely try their patience. The very time in which Paul wrote that was "perilous" for believers. Many of the characteristics he listed in verse 2-7 were all too obvious even then. Half of the world was enslaved to the other half with every evil attending such a circumstance. Pagan religion distorted the true concept of God and promoted the grossest perversions, all in the name of the "gods." In the midst of it all, the true Christian was an oddity. Peter said "Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you" (1 Pet. 4: 4).

But look at Paul's list of characteristics of those who would make the times difficult for the godly. "For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, HATERS OF GOOD, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; and avoid such men as these. For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Tim. 3: 2-7-NASV).

The context here indicates apostates who have rejected the faith. They manifest the same spirit and behavior as those who never knew the truth. But, tell me, as you read through that sad list, did you recognize anyone you know? Are not these traits present in megadoses in our own time?

Focus with me on the phrase "haters of good." The King James Version reads "despisers of those that are good." The positive form of the word here is used in Titus 1: 8 of elders: "lovers of good." The negative form appears in 2 Tim. 3: 3, "not lovers" or properly "haters" of good.

#### A Hedonistic Society

It is time for Christians in America to awaken to the fact that this is not a decent society anymore. Every sin

in the book has been dubbed "an alternate lifestyle." The political scene reeks of scandal. Negative campaigning is the order of the day. Confidence in elected officials is at an all-time low. Social engineers have recommended every sort of approach except respect for God and his word to control alcoholism and other forms of drug abuse, unwanted pregnancies, and venereal diseases, by pouring gasoline on the fire. Prohibition was bad, so it was argued that the government should issue a license to merchants to sell the stuff. Bars could offer "happy hours" for people on the way home from work during rush traffic. We had to have more sex education (without moralizing) and now students pass around condoms and other forms of birth control devices in classrooms, go on field trips to drug stores to inspect condoms and report back to class on their findings, or schools dispense these devices to high school students. They are told to practice "responsible sex" and then are given devices to help them be "responsible."

Under the guise of clarifying values, students of all ages have their values scrambled so that they cannot tell the difference between right and wrong. The Bible cannot even be read in the classroom and school prayers are out. The only legal reference to the Bible is an effort to ridicule what it says about creation, morals and human responsibility. And should some systems and teachers be so bold as to defy this mandate, there are high powered and well financed legal organizations ready to leap into action, drag the offenders to court and wrap the educational system in a cocoon where they are shielded from the nefarious influence of the word of God. Freedom of religion has come to mean freedom from religion. Good is called evil and evil is called good.

Television and movies have become major purveyors of this hedonistic society. The music industry plays a major role in the corruption of the nation's morals. In the name of "artistic expression" anything goes. Let's grant right up front that there are religious phonies who even use television to rake in millions from sympathizers who have no better judgment than to forward their last dollar to these bandits. But why does every preacher, or religious figure portrayed on the TV screen have to be made out to be some kind of pervert, or sissified incompetent? Are there no good, decent people to be praised? Well, I believe there are. Our work takes us all over the country where we meet people who are truly the salt of the earth.

But a stroll through any shopping mall, or theme park, or just standing in line at a checkup counter to pay for your gasoline, exposes you to a herd of people indelicately dressed, buying beer, or lottery tickets, and assaults your hearing with foul language.

#### What Are We To Do?

We might as well face the fact that we are in the minority. Your voice at the PTO meeting may be indeed a strange sound to many. Standing your ground at work on some matter of principle may expose you to ridicule, or even hinder a promotion. At school, you may become what every teenager dreads — different! At home, you may be the last hope of sanity in a domestic world gone crazy. But you CAN make a difference. You MUST make a difference. If a handful of unknown fishermen, a tax

collector, and a militant member of the Jewish underground movement could be transformed into faithful servants of God whose lives changed the destiny of the world, then surely there is something WE can do in our own time. Faithfully, persistently and militantly they preached and practiced what Jesus taught them. Whatever has been decent in men of every nation since that time is directly traceable to what they did in fulfilling the Lord's mandate to "go into all the world" with the gospel. The gospel is still God power to save. As it saves, it changes not only the lives of those it saves, but the environment around those saved by its power. They are a genuine blessing at work, at home, at school, at play and in the government. I'm not talking about imitation Christians, hypocrites who disgrace the name of Christ, but about the genuine article.

I would also strongly urge my brethren to do everything possible to spread the gospel into the other nations of earth while we have the means to do it. Not only should this be done because it is right, but one of the side effects may be that we will be casting bread upon the water which will return after many days. For you see, we may just need gospel preachers from India, Nigeria, the Philippines or eastern Europe to come to this country someday to try and rescue our Grandchildren from the gods of hedonism.

Let's make sure that we are "lovers of good" and that we give no ground to those who are truly "haters of good."

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A Review Of Jerry Bassett's  
*Rethinking Marriage, Divorce  
& Remarriage* (No 5)

*Donnie V. Rader*

P.O. Box 9  
Lexington, Alabama 35648



## May the Guilty Party Remarry? Divorce, Remarriage and Fellowship

This is the last of the series of articles that review Jerry Bassett's book. The last two sections of his book deal with the guilty party and the fellowship question as it relates to divorce and remarriage.

### The "Guilty" Party

Chapter X of Bassett's book is presented differently than any other chapters. In the other chapters he states his convictions about other aspects of divorce and remarriage. However, in this chapter, he makes it appear that he is undecided. He presents arguments both "for" and "against" the guilty party remarrying. He tells us that "There are strong, logical arguments on both sides of the question... Neither side, however, seems to me to have a clinching argument on this point. From the standpoint of the argumentation based on Jesus' wording, it could be either way" (Bassett, p. 112).

To any perceptive reader it is obvious that he thinks the guilty party (one put away for fornication) can remarry. He tells us that 1 Cor. 7: 27-28 demonstrates "that a divorced person is not prohibited from remarrying just because he has been put away" (Bassett, p. 114). He further wrote, "Shall we tell the one who has been put away on the grounds of his own fornication that without any doubt he has as much right to marry as anyone else? If so, on what statement from God shall this advice be given?"

"Shall we tell this one who has no spouse, having been put away lawfully, that God absolutely forbids him to have one? What declaration from God states this?"

"There is no question that the mercy of God is ample, on the basis of this man's repentance, to release and forgive him to the extent that he could be allowed to enter another marriage covenant" (Bassett, p. 117).

This above quote is interesting in light of the fact that Jerry had stated a few pages earlier that "when the New Testament was revealed, it contained no express provisions for the divorced party in a case based on sexual immorality to remarry" (Bassett, p. 111).

Brother Bassett presents three basic contentions. (1) He argues that there is no prohibition concerning the put away fornicator remarrying (Bassett, pp. 114, 117). This

is not true because Jesus did prohibit the put away one's remarriage. Jesus said, "... and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery" (Matt. 5: 32b). "... and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Matt. 19: 9b). "... and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband commit-teth adultery" (Luke 16: 18b). Notice that there is no exception phrase in the clause we just quoted. The exception in the first clause applies to the one who puts his mate away.

(2) Bassett also argues that the exception phrase applies to both clauses in Matt. 19: 9. He goes on to point out that this does not prove that the put away fornicator has a right to remarry. But, he thinks it proves that the put away fornicator is not forbidden to remarry.

The exception phrase cannot grammatically modify both the first and last clauses of Matt. 19: 9. As it modifies the first clause, it is an *adverbial* phrase (qualifying "shall put away"). This cannot be done grammatically! I wrote to Bruce M. Metzger asking him, "Does the exception clause ('except it be for fornication') modify the phrase 'and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery?'" His answer was "no, it qualifies the preceding clause." Dr. Harry Sturz (another noted Greek scholar) said, "In my opinion, the phrase, 'except it be for fornication,' applies to the first clause but not to the last."

Jerry tries to parallel the phrase "unless they repent" (Rev. 2: 22-23) to the exception phrase of Matt. 19: 9. He says it applies to the clause "I will cast..." (previous to the phrase) and to the clause "I will kill..." (following the phrase). However, the construction is not parallel. The phrase in Rev. 2 could apply to both as an adverbial phrase. But, if we try it in Matt. 19: 9, it is used as an adverbial phrase in the first clause and an adjectival phrase in the second. We encourage brother Bassett to find a passage that is really parallel.

(3) Jerry contends that God's mercy is ample to forgive the fornicator who repents so that he is released and allowed to enter another marriage (Bassett, p. 117). I wonder if God's grace is ample to forgive any divorced or divorcee? If so, (and it is), then any divorced person or divorcee is forgiven, released and allowed to remarry? Would Bassett argue that anyone in a divorce situation can remarry?

*There is no authority for the put away fornicator to remarry.* Brother Bassett himself admits this point (p. 111). To act without authority is a sin (2 Jno. 9). God's silence is not permissive, but prohibitive (Heb. 7: 14). We must abide by the authority of Christ in this area as in the work, worship and organization of the church.

### Fellowship

A side issue that has been raised in the divorce and remarriage controversy is the question of fellowship. Brother Bassett devotes two chapters to this problem.

Four points are made in Jerry's book. (1) In congregational matters we must agree (p. 128), yet in individual matters we may differ. He contends that Romans 14 is a discussion of individual matters.

(2) Bassett clarifies that if one teaches a doctrine that is "indisputably contrary to the doctrine delivered by the

apostles of Christ" the congregation should take action against the individual. Furthermore, if an individual involves himself in that which is "clearly immoral" the church should take action (pp. 130-131).

(3) Jerry raises the question of whether we can differ over matters of doctrinal consequence. His answer to the question is yes (Bassett, p. 134).

(4) He parallels the issue of divorce and remarriage to the war question (pp. 145-148).

*Romans 14 deals with matters of indifference.* Whether one eats meats or does not eat meats made no difference. Neither one would be guilty of sin. No matter which he did, God received him (v. 3). The one who eats does so *to the Lord* (v. 6). The one who does not eat does so *to the Lord* (v. 6). The brethren were told not to judge one another in this matter (v. 13).

This is obviously in contrast to matters that involve sin. Unscriptural divorce and remarriage involves one in the sin of adultery. God does not receive him, but rejects him (Heb. 13: 4). God does not expect us to receive him, but commands that he be disciplined (1 Cor. 5). One who commits adultery cannot do so to the Lord. We are to judge the one who is guilty of adultery (1 Cor. 5).

In all fairness to brother Bassett, he acknowledges that Romans 14 deals with matters that are "doctrinally inconsequential" (Bassett, p 132). However, as his section on fellowship continues, I am left wondering if he doesn't put the varying positions on divorce and remarriage under Rom. 14.

He tells us that there are "matters of doctrinal consequences about which Christians can disagree with one another but continue to work together within a local church" (Bassett, p. 134). He says these matters may even involve questions of spiritual and even moral implications. He draws a parallel between the divorce and remarriage issues and the war question.

Whether one believes that the war question is parallel or not may depend on his view on the war question. Since we still fellowship those who teach and practice differently on the war question (a moral question), Bassett thinks we can do the same on divorce and remarriage. I wonder why we couldn't do the same on the moral questions of homosexuality and polygamy.

Bassett said that one who teaches a doctrine that was indisputably contrary to the doctrine of Christ ought to be dealt with. Furthermore, one whose activities were clearly immoral ought to be disciplined (Bassett, pp. 130-131). Adultery is clearly immoral (Gal. 5; 19-21). Those whose teaching encourages divorce and remarriage contrary to Matt. 19: 9 are indisputably contrary to the doctrine of Christ. So, how can we fellowship the one who teaches error on divorce and remarriage or the one who lives in harmony with his teaching?

We must not forget two basic principles; (1) We cannot fellowship sin or those in sin (Eph. 5: 11; 1 Cor. 5). (2) We cannot fellowship those who teach error (2 Jno. 9: 11; Rev. 2: 18-21).

Knowing that I would be writing a review of his material, brother Bassett asked that I address the question of excluding from fellowship those who agree with Bassett and others on divorce and remarriage

while including some who teach the "mental divorce" view (Jerry Bassett's letter to me, March 11, 1991).

In any issue there must be some tolerance and the spirit of longsuffering (Eph. 4: 1-3). I am not ready to mark off every brother who disagrees with me on the "mental divorce" issue or even whether the alien is amenable to the law of Christ.

However, when either one of these brethren press their positions so that churches are disturbed or people are comforted in adultery, they become the teacher of 2 Jno. 9-11.

Quite frankly, I don't see much difference in the consequences of either position. If either are adhered to, adultery is the result.

Indeed, it is time to rethink marriage, divorce and remarriage.

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## Bassett-Holt Debate On Divorce-Remarriage

*Robert F. Turner*

1608 Sherrard Street  
Burnet, Texas 78611

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The speakers were Jerry F. Bassett, preacher at the Coburg Road church, Eugene, Oregon; and Jack Holt (the younger), preacher at Oaks-West church, Burnet, Texas, but supported by West Avenue church, San Antonio, Texas. They met first at San Antonio, Feb. 10-11, where Bassett affirmed "an alien sinner whose marriage ended by divorce for a cause other than fornication, and who is now married to another person, may be forgiven by obeying the gospel, **and should maintain his second marriage.**" Feb. 13-14, Holt affirmed "may be forgiven ... **provided he is willing to divorce his second wife.**" Then, Mar. 9-10, 12-13, they met in Eugene, Or., on the same propositions but in reverse order. W. L. Wharton was the moderator for Bassett in both places; while Elmer Moore moderated for Holt in Texas, and Robert F. Turner moderated for Holt in Oregon.

In both places the speakers conducted themselves in an excellent way, deferring to one another; and the hearers were polite and refrained from demonstrations. Numerous charts were used, expertly handled, and for the most part the audience could understand the issues being presented. In Texas and in Oregon the attendance was good, and included many preachers and elders of both persuasions. This writer believes the truth was admirably upheld.

An obvious issue in this subject is "repentance" and what it requires. Holt contended one must cease that error of which he repented; and Bassett agreed, but said the error **was not sexual in its nature** but consisted of

two things: divorce and the making of a second covenant (the marriage ceremony). One could "repent" of these two things, and maintain his marriage with the second wife. Holt contended one committed adultery in the second marriage, and true repentance required that this second relationship cease.

Their difference demanded a definition of "adultery" in Matt. 19: 9 et al.; and Bassett said the word was used figuratively, referring to the "adulteration" of the covenant made in the first marriage ceremony. He contended the verb "marry" had no sexual connotation, as is found in the noun "marriage." Holt cited context (Matt. 19: 10-12) where "not to marry" was related to the making of eunuchs by self containment ("for the kingdom of heaven's sake"). He also cited 1 Cor. 7: 9 "better to **marry** than to burn;" and asked if covenant making alone quenches the "burn"? Then, in Matt. 19: 9; Lk. 16: 18: "whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." This "whoso" could be one who had never before made a marriage "covenant." How could "adulteration of covenant" apply here? Holt showed the adulteration of covenant argument is deeply flawed.

Bassett contended a married couple can not commit adultery with one another; while Holt cited Rom. 7: 2-3 to show the second marriage is adulterous "so long as (the first husband) liveth." Bassett dismissed Rom. 7: as an "analogy," and Holt replied in essence. "So what? Each facet of the analogy is still true." Holt also cited Mk. 6: 17-18 and said the marriage of Herod and Herodias was adulterous; but Bassett said it was only incest. Holt replied that incest involved uncovering "the nakedness of thy brother's wife" (Lev. 18: 16); and effectively used a chart which quoted Rom. 7: with names supplied. "For the woman which hath an husband (**Herodias**) is bound by the law to her husband (**Philip**) so long as he liveth ... So then if, while her husband (**Philip**) liveth, she (**Herodias**) be married to another man (**Herod**), she shall be called an adulteress."

1 Cor. 7: received much attention. Bassett said v. 24 (abide as called) referred to marriage; hence meant the converted alien should not change his marriage state. When Holt asked about polygamy, Bassett used v. 2 to say "context" forbade that. Holt then said the **immediate context** (vs. 18-24, circumcision, slavery) dealt with matters of indifference as respects serving Christ; and further context (Vs. 10-11) forbade divorce and remarriage. Bassett applied these verses only to saints who **initiate** divorce, he said "loosed" of v. 27b meant "divorced," and v. 28 said if such an one marry he has not sinned. Holt said the context (vs. 25-26) deals with never married people. (See "virgins" "so to be," Cf. Rev. 14: 4, rft. ) He also reminded us, to divorce and remarry are the two elements Bassett says makes the sin of adultery. All of us should remember. "Don't Mess With Context!"

Differing concepts regarding Christ's teaching during his personal ministry surfaced repeatedly. Both men recognized that Jesus lived under Judaism and was usually speaking to Jews. But His message was not simply a rehash of the Law of Moses. It was a preparation for things to come. Holt saw the final and complete revelation of God's will in Jesus Christ (Heb. 1: 1-2); "All

truth: set forth by Him and His witnesses (Jn. 16: 12-13; Lk. 24: 45-49), for "all the world." Bassett seemed to think that Jesus' exposition of Moses' Law meant an approval of "moral" conditions under that law for today. Since the Jews asked Christ about Moses' **command** which he **wrote** (Bassett emphasis) relative to divorce, he seemed to think the standard of Deut. 24: 1-f, applied to today. Because God used Esther's place in King Ahasuerus' harem to accomplish some good end, and did not charge her with immorality, Bassett sees God's approval of such "unchanging" moral conduct today.

Holt pointed out that Jesus said those standards were "suffered," because of the hardness of hearts, "but from the beginning it was not so" (Matt. 19: 8). Compare Acts 14: 16; 17: 30; Rom. 2: 4; He recalled that God used wicked nations to accomplish His purposes; even "winked at" idolatry, "but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." The "moral capacity" that is universal in every accountable being made in God's image, has come to be regarded by some as a "moral code" by which divorce and remarriage is regulated. Holt asked if this "code" was objectively or subjectively determined, and I did not hear a clear consistent answer.

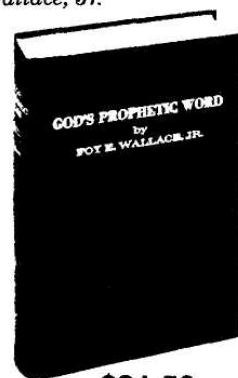
I suppose the reader can tell my conclusion about this debate, but regardless of personal views on the subject, all should thank the participants for shaking complacency and making us think of the various concepts involved. Perhaps of first importance is a basic understanding of divine revelation—on this or any subject. And certainly, in the present moral climate, we must be concerned for preservation of the home—and society. Churches are divided over these matters: by zealots, compromisers, and people who allow emotions and bizarre hypothetical "cases" to take the place of calm sane Bible study. We should neither invent "issues" nor ignore them. But there is scarcely an individual this subject has not or will not touch. If you have not considered its pros and cons, the tapes of this debate will give you food for thought, and I recommend them.

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## A BURNING FIRE

(Jer. 20:9)

*Jim Deason*

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Culleoka, Tennessee 38451



### **Sending Outside Support**

I know what it is like to feel the same gratitude felt by the apostle Paul when he gave thanks for the church at Philippi for sending more than once to meet his needs (Phil. 4: 15-16). At the time of this writing five churches provide my salary on a regular basis. I have also had the experience of working with churches that, like Philippi, had the financial resources to send to evangelists in other places. It is not easy to raise support to go into a difficult area. But neither is it easy to have more requests for help than money to send. The following suggestions are offered with the hope that they can help make the decisions easier for churches as well as the financial arrangements more secure for the evangelist.

**KNOW THE MAN YOU SUPPORT.** It is impossible to emphasize this point enough! You must be confident that he will be faithful and active in preaching the truth, not lazy. He needs to have a measure of good judgment in dealing with people problems. When possible, knowing something of the man's past work is very helpful. If he has a record of splitting churches you need to know!

**KNOW SOMETHING OF THE WORK WHERE HE IS GOING.** This is especially important if you have two or more requests, all from worthy men, with resources to help only one. Sometimes even good men don't use the best judgment in where they locate. Good stewardship demands that the Lord's money be put to the best use possible. The work in some areas has been like a black hole which has devoured the efforts of a lot of good preachers and thousand of dollars of the Lord's money with little or no progress to show for it. Some churches are satisfied to let other churches support their preacher with no seeming concern for the need to become self-sustaining. This is not right! It's understood that the work in some areas is hard, growth is going to be slow, and patience to support such work is needed. But it's also true that some churches have never grown for other reasons (like cantankerous, lazy members). It is bad stewardship to send money to support men in such areas when the fields are white unto the harvest elsewhere.

**ONCE THE DECISION IS MADE, PROVIDE SOME SECURITY FOR THE EVANGELIST BY MAKING A COMMITMENT TO HIS SUPPORT.** It's hard for man to do an effective work when he must wonder from month to month whether or not he is going to receive a check from a given source. Therefore it is good to make

a commitment which, barring unfortunate circumstances, provide a measure of security. The following is a portion of a letter I received from a church which now supports me. I think it is a good model and the elders of this church are to be commended:

"This support will be provided to you for a period of five years in the hope that the work there will become self-supporting in that time. In the event that it should become necessary for us to reduce or terminate this support for financial reasons, we will give you one year advance notice so that you will have adequate time to find replacement support. At the end of the five year period, we will evaluate the need to continue the support.

"Should you decide to stop preaching, the support will be terminated immediately. It will not be passed on to your successor or used to continue the work in that area. Should you decide to go elsewhere to preach, the support will be terminated unless you advise us in advance and obtain our consent to continue the support in the new locale. If it should be reported to us that the truth is no longer being taught, we will inquire to ascertain the facts before taking any action with regard to the support."

I recognize that some churches may not be able to make what amounts to a five or six year commitment to support an evangelist. But the length of time is not nearly so important as the commitment. The foregoing letter provides a sense of security in that it lets me know exactly where I stand with this church that supports me. Some churches have fallen into a "three month" pattern. That is, they will give the evangelist they are supporting only three months notice of discontinuing his support. This may sound generous at first but consider the following scenario which I think is typical. A church decides in its January business meeting to discontinue support to a particular preacher giving him three months notice (they'll support him through March). They write this preacher a letter to inform him of their decision and he receives it a week later (it's the middle of January). This preacher gets busy trying to raise the support he is losing, writes letters to several churches, and these letters are received by the churches in time for the February business meeting. It is not at all unusual, perhaps standard practice in most congregations, to receive a request one month and postpone any decision about it until the next so that the treasurer may be able to look closely at the accounts to determine whether or not they have the funds. By now we have gotten to the March business meeting and the preacher in need has already received his last check from the church discontinuing his support. If this first set of letters does not produce a positive reply to his needs, he will go lacking adequate support to meet the needs of his family in the month of April and perhaps beyond. The point is this: when a preacher is having to seek support from churches that operate out of a business meeting, a three month notice to terminate his support is really not adequate. If the church from whom he is seeking support has elders he may be able to get a quicker reply, but not necessarily. A man who devotes life to the preaching of the gospel deserves at least a small measure of security from his brethren which just a

little consideration in this matter could amply supply.

**KEEP IN REGULAR CONTACT WITH THE MEN YOU SUPPORT.** Bring them in for a weekend meeting to allow them the opportunity to give a detailed, face-to-face report of the work they're doing. Ask members of the congregation to write them an encouraging note. I deeply appreciate the letters I get from members of the churches which support me. They really mean a lot, especially when you are a little discouraged and wondering if anyone cares.

**PLEASE, HAVE YOUR TREASURER BE ON TIME WITH THE CHECKS.** A lot of us preachers have fallen into the habit of eating and don't want to break it (although I should for a while). Seriously, a preachers bills are due just like everyone else and he is depending upon you to have your check to him on time so that he might meet those bills. Years ago I had a check fall about two weeks overdue. I called and the treasurer had gone on vacation so I called back a couple of days later when he returned. He promised to get the check in the mail immediately. Two weeks later, after still not having received the check, I called again and he had decided to wait until the next month and just double the amount to make up for it. I wonder what would happen had he gone up to the pay window where he works and his boss had said, "We're not going to pay you today. We'll wait until next week and double up?" Some people just aren't considerate.

There are many other things that perhaps need to be said but maybe these provide some incentive to more thought and consideration on the subject. There are new fields of labor that are opening up every day that will present to all of us new challenges. I'm confident that, with the Lord's help, we will arise to meet those chal-lenges. We must use our abilities, our time, and our resources to do the most good that we can.



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## Same Song, Same Verse, Over and Over Again

I have before me a copy of **One Body**, Winter, 1991, in which Bob Shaw of Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada, has an article "Instrumental Music: A Matter of Faith or Opinion?"

Brother Connie W. Adams called me and requested that I review this article for **Searching The Scriptures**, which I am glad to do.

Bob Shaw tells the reader in the article that "I spent the first 25 years or so of my life fighting against instrumental music in worship.... but during the last 10 years or so, I've become more and more convinced it is, indeed, a matter of opinion.... I have the right to change my views when I become convinced that I have been in error." No one would object to an individual changing his position from error to truth, but in this case, Shaw has changed from **truth to error**. He wants people to know he has been convinced the instrument is just a matter of opinion. He may be convinced, but he has not been convinced strongly enough to defend his position in public debate.

Some seven or eight times in his article he makes reference to the fact that he does not feel that the Scriptures **clearly** teach the instrument to be sinful. He says, "the Bible does not clearly teach that instrumental music in worship is sinful." Says who? Right now there are people saying that the Bible does not clearly teach that divorce and remarriage, except for fornication, is sinful. Someone could say that the Bible does not clearly teach that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. That does not mean the Bible does not teach such. It just means someone could say such; however, saying such does not make it so. Who is going to determine if the Bible **clearly** teaches the instrument to be sinful in worship? Is Bob Shaw? What would the Bible have to say for him to admit that it **clearly** teaches it to be sinful?

The Holy Spirit **clearly said** on the subject of music to be used in worship of God, "sing." One word says it all. Is that not clear? If Bob Shaw's wife or mother sent him to the store for "milk" would that be clear? Not according to his argument on the instrument.

He tells us "God has not clearly spoken..." on the question of the instrument. Now, God either did or did

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not speak on the subject. If God did not speak, then we do not know His mind. If He did speak, then we either can or cannot understand His revelation. If we can not understand His revelation, then it is not a revelation at all. If I can understand His revelation, then I know what He has revealed! God has spoken (Acts 3: 21; Heb. 1: 1-2). The sum total of all God has said is "sing" (Matt. 26: 30; Mark 14: 26; Acts 16: 25; Rom. 15: 9; 1 Cor. 14: 15; Eph. 5: 19; Col. 3: 16; Heb. 2: 12; James 5: 13). Is "sing" clear? What would have to be added to "sing" in order for God to make it clear? All God said was "sing" and when you start taking away from what God has said you have "sin."

#### Reason For Change

After 25 years, Bob Shaw changed his position due to "An honest, open, heart-searching look at our 'position' and a diligent search of the Scriptures." But he did not give his readers the benefit of his "search of the Scriptures." "What was the result of that? I am interested in what the Scriptures say. Did he find the verse for the instrument? NO! Twenty five years ago the Scriptures said "sing" and they still say "sing" and he will never find anything different. Rather, his defense of the instrument is the same song, same verse, that has been sung over and over again.

(1) He tells us the references to singing is to the individual and not the church. I am well acquainted with that argument, having heard it many times over the years. On benevolence our liberal brethren have said passages addressed to the individual were actually applicable to the church. Now, this liberal just reverses the argument. Let us look at it.

Just for arguments sake, let us grant him his argument. What does that prove? It proves in the worship of God the individual is limited to singing. Bob Shaw still doesn't have the instrument in the verse. One of the things singing does is "teaching and admonishing one another." How could one teach another without being assembled with that one or ones? Shaw saying the assembled church is not involved does not make his statement so.

(2) Shaw tells his reader that if millions will go "to hell for using instrumental music in worship, it will be on the basis of violating a law that cannot even be found in the books!" His saying the law does not exist does not make it so. The law says "sing." His problem is he just will not recognize the law. A drunk that does not recognize the white line in the middle of the road does not do away with the line. A liberal preacher intoxicated on his own human wisdom refusing to recognize the law of God does not mean God's law does not exist.

(3) Shaw says "if this were a matter of vital importance to God" he "would have made it crystal clear." How much clearer would God have to make it for Shaw to understand it? If he cannot, or more appropriately **will not**, understand one word - "sing" - how much more trouble would he have with a whole sentence?

(4) He says we do not read in our assemblies those Psalms that mention instruments. That is not so! If I were Shaw I would be accurate. His lie with honest people will only show him up for what he is - a twister of

Scripture (2 Peter 3: 16-17).

(5) He tells us that those who use instruments have "hermeneutics" that "differ from ours." That is what makes Catholics. People have a different hermeneutic. They think the Pope is the final authority instead of the Bible. The Christian Church people use the hermeneutic of "I want the instrument in worship and am going to have it regardless of what you say" rather than what the New Testament teaches.

(6) He tells us a brother said "the Bible clearly teaches that instrumental music in worship is sinful" and that "really struck home." He says, "Can I just say honestly and sincerely, the Bible **does not** clearly teach that instrumental music in worship is sinful!" (sic). He may not say it, but I will until he gives us the New Testament passage that teaches it.

(7) He affirms "God is going to hand me a harp... in heaven." Does he intend to affirm man's physical body will be in heaven? Will the hand that God puts the harp in be one of flesh and blood? Paul said, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 15: 20). He also has "God handing me a harp just after he has sent millions to" hell for using instruments of music in worship. He can't have it both ways; some in hell for using it in worship and some in heaven. Let him tell us which one he wants, but he can't have it both ways.

(8) Finally, Shaw tells us that the argument that condemns the instrument, condemns other things. So what? If a thing can not be shown to be scriptural, then we ought not to be practicing it. But just because he says other things are condemned does not make it so. We must come to the Bible to prove everything. We cannot say something is just as scriptural as something else. A thing is either authorized or not.

How strongly does Bob Shaw feel about the instrument not being a matter of faith? I will deny the following proposition if he has the courage to affirm it: "The Scriptures teach the use of instruments of music in the worship of God is a matter of opinion and should not be made a test of fellowship."

Now, let us see if he is willing to work toward having such a discussion?


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*Dick Blackford*  
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## A Reader Defends the "One Nation Under God" Campaign

Two articles relating to the "One Nation Under God" Campaign appeared in this column in the January and February issues. One dealt with the sinfulness of local elders overseeing a churchhood project and the other was an open letter to Furman Kearley, who praised the "success" of the campaign in the *Gospel Advocate*. A reader from Kosciusko, Mississippi has sent a brief response.

I read your article in S. T. S. (O. N. U. G. ) Of course I disagree with you. We have to keep in mind God did not bind one way only, on us. We don't have scripture for a church building either, but because we don't have one, it's not wrong. I realize there are two extremes in the church, legalism and liberalism. Both are wrong! We must not loose what God has bound, nor bind what God has loosed. —Jim Mordecai, Kosciusko, Mississippi. Dear Jim,

If God did not bind or limit the authority of elders of the local congregation they oversee, then we should be able to read where he allowed them to oversee the evangelistic work of other congregations as they are doing in the "One Nation Under God" Campaign. I can put my finger on the verses that limit their authority. They are 1 Peter 5: 2, Acts 20: 28, and Acts 14: 23. Elders were to be appointed in every church. This is unnecessary if we can have a centralized eldership that oversees the work of other churches. (The right of elders to oversee any part of the work of other congregations is the right to oversee all of it). But God limited their oversight to the flock "among you, " "over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers" (1 Pet. 5: 2; Acts 20: 27). Sponsoring church elders, in overseeing "brotherhood" projects, go beyond the bounds God set by overseeing more than their local work. The elders at Sycamore have admitted that "O. N. U. G. " is a "brotherhood" project.

Brother Jim, what verse can you put your finger on that allows one church to oversee any part of the evangelistic work of several thousand congregations? Or even two congregations? It isn't in the Bible. I am glad it isn't for it would contradict the above verses.

If you mean by "God did not bind one way only" that the Bible doesn't say "thou shalt not have a Sponsoring

Church over brotherhood projects, " neither does it say "thou shalt not sprinkle for baptism, " "thou shalt not count beads (rosary), " "thou shalt not use hamburger and coke on the Lord's table, " "thou shalt not use instru-mental music in worship, " etc. Surely you see the point. We only have authority to do what is authorized. It is unnecessary to have a "thou shalt not" for every prohibition. It is the obligation of the promoter of a practice to show there is scriptural authority for it (on its behalf). Since no one can show scripture on behalf of hamburgers and coke on the Lord's table then it is forbidden. Since no one can show scripture on behalf of "Sponsoring Church" elders overseeing the work of flocks that are not "among you, " then it is forbidden.

Brother Jim, if God did not bind "one way, " did He bind anything regarding the oversight of elders? If so, what? If you agree he did bind something, you will come up with the same thing I did, that congregations are independent and oversight of elders is to be over no more than the local church "among you. " But if you say there is no limitation, then "anything goes. " (conventions, conferences, associations, synods, dioceses, etc. ). Either there is a pattern, or there is not. If there is, you must conclude it is found in 1 Pet. 5: 2; Acts 20: 28; 14: 23. If you have scriptural authority for such "churchhood" projects as this Campaign, surely you would have given it. That is what I asked for in the articles you responded to. But there is not one verse of scripture in your letter. Why, Jim?

You said, "We don't have scripture for a church building either, but because we don't have one, it's not wrong. " Colossians 3: 17 says everything we do is to be done "in the name" (by the authority) of the Lord Jesus. The word *iniquity* means "without law" (Mt. 7: 21-23). We are to have authority (book, chapter, and verse) on behalf of all our religious practices. If we are doing anything we don't have authority for, we should quit that practice immediately. If you do not have authority for a church building you should cease using one immediately, for you are sinning. I have heard this statement about church buildings a number of times and it reveals the great dearth of teaching among institutional churches on our need for authority and how it is established. How would you regard this parallel to your statement? "We don't have scripture for hamburgers and coke on the Lord's table, but because we don't have one, it's not wrong. " With your statement on church buildings you could not consistently oppose the person who wants to add to the Lord's Supper. We do not have specific authority for a church building, but we do have general authority. Hebrews 10: 25 commands regular assembling. That necessarily implies that a **place** of some kind is required. The kind of place is not specified, therefore a building would meet the requirement. 1 Cor. 11: 20 also requires a "place. "

You said there are two extremes. By "legalism" you imply that I have bound something God did not bind. But I can put my finger on the verses that limit the oversight of elders, thus I have not bound what God has not bound. You cannot put your finger on any verse that allows elders to occupy a dual role of (1) overseeing their local work (1 Pet. 5: 2), (2) overseeing a multi-church project

(scripture?). Number one is in the Bible. Number two (which you defend), is not. You have loosed where God did not loose and are guilty of what you called "liberalism." The Bible doesn't say sing **only**, but it only says sing. It doesn't say bread and fruit of the vine **only**, but it only says bread and fruit of the vine. It doesn't say elders' oversight is limited to "the flock... among you" **only**, but it only says "the flock... among you."

I have publications from institutional brethren where elders of one church are overseeing churches in other states and countries. This is sinful. They do so in rebellion and disregard for the scriptures. I have noticed that institutional brethren will try things outside the U. S. that they seem afraid to try here because some are not ready for that much liberalism — such as, "Church of Christ" hospitals, "Church of Christ" headquarters, etc. The Garden Oaks Church of Christ (a "Sponsoring Church") in Houston, Texas oversees its "Minister of Missions" in Honduras who is the President, Board of Directors of the corporation called "Churches of Christ of the Republic of Honduras. Do you defend this, Jim? If not, what scripture does it violate? How about 1 Pet. 5: 2; Acts 20: 28; 14: 23? If such is right in Honduras, why not in the U. S. A. ? Give them time. When brethren start saying "we don't have to have scripture for everything we do" (as you implied), there is no end to how far they can and will go.

We need men today with backbone to speak forth boldly (Eph. 6: 20) and who will fight to keep the church pure from the wisdom of men. Men who have the courage to expose the error that needs exposing and refuting so badly. Error is having a field day because it is easier to go along with the majority. Jim, I beg you to leave the liberalism you are promoting. If I can help you, please call on me. Brotherly, Dick Blackford

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### Is The Eldership Any More Than A "Deliberative Assembly"?

Deliberative assemblies are those whose primary purpose is to meet and talk and make decisions, mostly about actions to be taken by other people. It is hardly possible for any group, large or small, to act collectively without some such deliberations—despite their obvious drawbacks, we have to have deliberative assemblies. Congress immediately comes to mind, but daily life brings us into contact with many others: the local school board, the board of directors at the bank, etc. True, the members of deliberative assemblies sometimes do more than deliberate, and granted, the decisions sometimes bear on the decision-makers themselves. But still, the main purpose for which a deliberative assembly exists is to have meetings and make decisions. To a farmer or a factory worker, no doubt, "deliberating" sounds like something people would do who were unacquainted with real work. Nevertheless, we do sometimes have to have people whose work consists of little more than talking and deciding things.

But, in spiritual matters, what about the eldership? Do the elders of a local congregation of saints, acting scripturally as the bishops or overseers of that church, constitute a body which is primarily deliberative? That is, is it the main part of their job to have meetings and make decisions about the work of the congregation, decisions which are to be carried out mostly by other members of the church? I think not. And the question is one of more than slight importance.

One does not have to be a grandparent to remember a time when, in very many congregations, any meeting of the elders at all was a rare occurrence, and elders who had regularly scheduled meetings were almost unheard of. That situation has changed for the better, obviously. It is not uncommon for elders now to have a room in the church building more or less set aside as their meeting room. Few except those who deny scriptural teaching about the oversight function of elders would fail to see the good that has come from the practice of elders meeting on some kind of regular basis. But has the pendulum not swung so far in some cases that another problem has arisen? If we have come to think that attending meetings is virtually **all** there is to being an elder, are we in



significantly better shape than when elders did not even see the need to meet? Unless I have seriously misread what the New Testament teaches about it, the eldership is not merely a deliberative assembly — and if we have let it become that, we have narrowed the eldership to something that can do us little of the good the Lord intended.

If elders were never described as anything but "bishops" or "overseers," we might conclude their work was largely administrative. But in both Ac. 20: 28 and 1 Pet. 5: 2 those entrusted with the oversight are charged to "Teed" or "shepherd" the church which is under their superintendency. And Peter is clear that elders do their work under the watchful eye of "the Chief Shepherd" (5: 4). Can there be any doubt that elders are to model their feeding and shepherding work after that of the Lord himself? It was He who said, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep ... I know My sheep, and am known by My own" (Jn. 10: 11, 14). Can we imagine the Lord trying to shepherd His flock merely by having meetings with His apostles? No, it is much easier to picture Him, as the Gospels frequently do, in direct contact with the people — personally teaching, encouraging, exhorting, and uplifting those who needed Him.

Having meetings, per se, is not what the elders' work consists of—it is preparatory to that work. And if elders have a room in which they hold their meetings, that room is not where the elders do their work — it is where the planning for that work goes on. In Heb. 13: 17, the writer said that saints are to obey those who rule over them, "for they watch out for your souls." Paul exhorted the Ephesian elders, "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood" (Ac. 20: 28). These and other passages indicate that the crux of the work of elders is seeing to the spiritual welfare of those entrusted to their shepherd-ship. This involves not only seeing that the flock of God is nourished and protected so that problems do not crop up, but also being vigilant for signs that any problem has cropped up. When any member appears to be in spiritual danger, then elders are to do what they are uniquely qualified and responsible to do to strengthen the weak and restore the erring.

Faithful saints are not kept faithful, weak saints are not stabilized, and erring saints are not rescued without the actual **word of God** being fed to them. And we have erred, I believe, in supposing that it is enough for elders to do this by "hiring it done," i. e. by retaining a gospel preacher to work with the congregation. There is more to watching for souls and tending the flock than support-ing an evangelist. That elders are to keep the flock healthy, strong, and safe by feeding it personally would seem to be obvious from the fact that they are required to be able to do so. What else could be the point of the qualification that an elder should hold fast "the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict" (Tit. 1: 9)? Or the stipulation that an elder be "apt to teach" (1 Tim. 3: 2)? The elder himself is to be

skillful in applying the word of God directly to the various needs that his brethren will have.

The word of God is the nourishment that is needed both to prevent spiritual problems and to deal with them when they do arise. There is simply no substitute for it. The problems that fall within the scope of the elder's work just cannot be dealt with adequately if substantive Bible teaching is not a major part of the strategy. And yet, how often do elders personally initiate on-going "home studies" with members whose spiritual lives are in jeopardy? For that matter, how many elders even take their Bibles with them when they make a one-time visit to a struggling saint? Elders are required to be spiritually mature and adept at applying the Scriptures to real-life needs—and I maintain that a man never comes closer to doing the real work of an elder than when he sits down personally with an individual member of his flock, opens the Bible, and leads his fellow-saint in an edifying study of whatever passages contain the nourishment that is needed in that particular case.

It is sad commentary on how little vision we have of what truly is involved in being an elder that we have so few men supported financially to devote themselves full-time to shepherding the saints. When we think of the work of elders we think simply of occasional elders' meetings to discuss the church's work, and we wonder what a man would do with "all that time" if being an elder were his only occupation. But the eldership is far more than a group that meets and talks and makes decisions. When elders meet, they may well **plan** their work of tending the flock, pray about it, etc. They could not oversee the church very well without some kind of deliberative meetings. But the eldership is not **merely** a "deliberative assembly"—and I have an idea that God is pleased when He sees elders at somebody's kitchen table with an open Bible!

## *Smith — Hicks Debate*


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## Rumor Upon Rumor

Ezekiel said: "... rumor will be upon rumor" (7: 28). He was not prophesying of our day as a glance at the context will demonstrate. But the statement is nevertheless true in our time. So often we see preachers and others jumping on the bandwagon and repeating rumors with-out checking facts. Since I've been guilty of such myself, I do not write these things out of a haughty spirit.

One rumor that just refuses to die is that the president of Proctor & Gamble Co. appeared on the Phil Donahue show proclaiming that he was a satanist and that the company's moon and stars trademark is a satanic/occult symbol. The company has spent a fortune in the past dozen years trying to quell this rumor and explain that no spokesman has appeared on any talk show with such a message and that P&G has nothing to do with satanism.

The trademark has been used since 1850. It started as simple markings on crates of Star Candles, an early P&G product, and evolved to a formal design showing a man-in-the-moon, a popular figure of the 1800's; and thirteen stars representing the original colonies.

The company has established a toll-free number (800) 331-3774 and a special staff to deal with the thousands of calls and letters they receive each month in relation to this rumor. Recently they have filed lawsuits against individuals for circulating this report.

Another rumor is that Madelyn Murray O'Hare, the infamous atheist, has been granted a federal hearing on "FCC Petition #2493 which would ultimately pave the way to stop the reading of the gospel on the airways of America." Allegedly she has 27, 000 signatures to support her and we need one million to oppose her.

This number has not changed since I first say this report some twenty years ago. Just recently, two different individuals with deep concern and urgency, have brought to me the petition to counteract Mrs. O'Hare's alleged movement. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has received millions of letters about this petition and their standard reply is that such a petition does not and has never existed.

Several years ago I reproduced in a church bulletin an article that told of Charles Darwin's death bed confession of Christian faith and repudiation of his anti-biblical positions. I received a letter from an irate atheist

who happened to be on the mailing list. He informed me that the so-called "Lady Hope story" had been in circulation for decades and researchers had uniformly de-nounced it as an unfounded rumor. He wanted to know what kind of ignoramus would publish such garbage. Well, I wasn't sure just what kind I was, but after going to some trouble trying to find verification for the story I admitted my blunder and apologized for circulating the rumor.

Recently I have seen "the missing day" story again. This time it appeared in the paper sent out by the faith (fake) healer, Robert Tilton. According to this widely circulated rumor, supposedly confirmed by "a group of experts at NASA," some astronomers at the observatory in Green Belt, Maryland were "rewinding history" by using "the advanced technology of computer animation." They were attempting to plot the positions of the stars and planets in the past centuries.

Everything moved as expected "past the days of George Washington, Henry VIII and Alexander the Great. However, as the computerized model approached the era of Moses, all functions suddenly came to a halt." The mechanism announced that something was wrong. There was a discrepancy. "A day was missing in time and space."

Fortunately one of the scientists recalled a story he had heard as a child in Sunday School. Some ridiculous tale of how Joshua had asked the Lord to make the sun stand still "about a whole day" (Jos. 10: 12-14). Well, the computer showed the elapsed time of Joshua's day to be 23 hours and 20 minutes. But the computer showed that 40 minutes were still missing.

Again the Sunday School-trained scientist came to the rescue and informed his colleagues of the biblical account of the sun moving backwards in the time of Hezekiah and Isaiah (II Kings 20: 9-11). "By all astronomical standards." we are told, "ten degrees is 40 minutes." So Joshua's 23 hours and 20 minutes plus Hezekiah's ten degrees added up to the exact 24 hours the computer was missing. They had discovered the missing day.

I have seen this rumor in several publications. I have heard preachers tell it as an established fact. I suppose that it has been well over twenty years since I first heard this story. I'll admit that the fellow who wrote the article for Tilton's paper was the first one that I know of who claims to have been there when it happened! But the rumor has been around for years.

I do not know much about computers, but I know you can't get out the them what has not been programmed into them. The very best that such a model could accomplish would be to reveal where the stars and planets should have been based upon the data we have available. Without objective evidence of where they in fact were, there is just no way that such a discrepancy could be noted by the computer.

Such ridiculous tales destroy our credibility before the world. Before we repeat rumors, or sign petitions, or write letters to government officials or companies, let's check out the facts and make sure that we know what we are talking about.

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## THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

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**ROBERT A. BOLTON, 504 Goodwin Dr., Richardson, TX 75081**—I take this means to thank all, many of whom we did not know, who offered assistance, help and encouragement to me and my wife after we were mugged and robbed in Florida at our motel at the close of the Florida College lectures. The love expressed to us in so many ways, including financial assistance, was much a manifestation of practical New Testament Christianity in action that the manager of the motel, where the incident occurred, was deeply impressed with what being a Christian is all about. So many phone calls and inquiries concerning our welfare have come from all over the country that we continue to be overwhelmed.

As to our situation, at knife point we had taken from us some \$1, 770 in cash and possessions, all of which will be replaced by insurance, except for sentimental value. My wife, Billie, is suffering from a broken left foot which she received in her struggle with one of the robbers, and will probably be in much pain for several weeks to come. We thank God that we were not seriously injured or killed and we are doing well. To our knowledge, as of this date, the two men accosted us have never been arrested. Again, thanks to all for your prayers and expressions of concern.

### EVANGELISTIC EFFORT IN MINNEAPOLIS

**RICK LANNING**—July 19-31 are the set dates for our planned efforts to "seek and save the lost" of Minneapolis. There is but one sound church in this city of 1, 500, 000. We hope to find many contacts through an intensive door-knocking effort over this two week period. The second week will include a nightly gospel meeting with Sewell Hall. In past efforts of this kind in other cities nearby brethren from many parts of the country have sacrificially come to help us. We are again asking anyone interested in helping us save souls, whether for only a few days or two weeks, to please contact either Wilson Copeland (612-424-4097) or Rick Lanning (612-425-2385). We will gladly offer lodging for all, along with a good feeling of having worked together for the Lord.

### SERIES ON CALVINISM

**DENVER NIEMEIER**, Jamestown, Indiana—A five-lesson study on the Calvinistic TULIP will be presented June 15-19 at Jamestown, Indiana. Jamestown is one mile south of Interstate 74 some 20 miles west of Indianapolis. The building is at the corner of Mill and Darlington Sts. (next to the water tower). On Monday Mike Willis will speak on Total Depravity; Tuesday Bob Dickey will speak on Unconditional Election; Wednesday Boyd Sellers speaks on Limited Atonement; Thursday, Morris Hafley will speak on Irresistible Grace and on Friday J. R. Bronger will speak on Perseverance of the Saints.

**PATRICK L. KELLY, P. O. Box 822, Portland, Maine 04104**—We recently baptized one here. Several studies are underway. One steady visitor is Japanese. One unfaithful member is showing renewed interest.

### NEW CONGREGATION

A new congregation is now meeting in Prescott, Arizona in the Odd Fellows Lodge building at Sunset and Whipple Streets. When in this area call 778-7695 (Leroy Tope) for more information.

**JOE D. WINLAND, Route 1, Box 148, Ridgeway, VA 24128**—March 29th completed 6 months with the Ridgeway church where we have been working to improve our singing. During this time we have had two 30 minute classes each week with all who would attend. Fifteen men are now able to direct singing using correct patterns for all time signatures. I have also been in similar efforts recently in West Carrollton, Ohio, St. Paul, MN, and Newton, NC. I will not undertake an effort of this kind for less than 4 months and prefer 6 months. If you believe a similar effort would be helpful in your situation, let me hear from you. Phone (703) 956-5357.

**CLIFFORD SHEFFIELD, P. O. Box 295, Terrell, TX 75160**—Eight families were baptized here in 1991 with others in gospel meetings where I preached. My son, Raymond, a senior at Washington University in St. Louis, MO, had surgery several months ago to remove some tumors from his chest. There is also an abnormal growth at the base of his brain on the pituitary gland. Though my wife's insurance will pay 80% of the hospital bills, the remaining 20% has already built up a large bill. For references and further information feel free to contact Robert Gabhart in Ft. Worth, TX at (817) 232-2518 or Robert A. Bolton in Richardson, TX at (214) 234-0296.

### FROM AROUND THE WORLD

**ARGENTINA**—Carlos Capelli reports from Buenos Aires that one was baptized in a meeting in Mercedes — San Luis. The preacher there is Jorge David Rodriguez, a teenager. At Jose C. Paz congregation several have visited from the radio program which the station manager had commended as having a large audience. One was baptized at Jose C. Paz. On April 4 he leaves for preaching in Columbia and Ecuador.

**RUSSIA — THOMAS G. O'NEAL** is trying to get THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH by Roy E. Cogdill translated and printed in Russian. Two individuals, one an American and the other a Russian, are now working on the translation. This book is already in a dozen languages and the American Braille Society has put it into braille. It has been through over twenty editions in the last fifty years and is still in great demand for Bible classes. Many preachers have found it to be an excellent book of sermons. Tom has recently been in contact with Phil Morgan of Paris, Kentucky and Greg Gwin of Knoxville, Tennessee both of whom spent three weeks in Russia last summer, and also with Lena Zakheim whom they baptized while there. Greg Gwin has plans to return for work in Russia.

The cost of translating and printing 5, 000 copies of THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH will run about \$1. 60 per copy. These books will be given to Russian people just as we would give a tract, Tom says. Those who might be interested in this project should contact Thomas G. O'Neal, P. O. Box 723, Bessemer, AL 35021. Phone (205) 425-4320.

**IRELAND**—Tracts and correspondence courses are urgently requested by a small, struggling congregation in Ireland for a forthcoming gospel effort. If any have such materials you could send, please contact: JOHN McCOURT, Church of Christ, 74 Earlswood Road, Belfast, Northern Ireland BT4 3DZ, or phone 0232 651337. An additional letter from brother Me Court reports a midnight baptism

in "an icy cold ocean." I quote the following appeal from him:

"We are a small congregation struggling to teach ourselves more clearly the Lord's way. We urgently require a preacher to help us. Anyone willing to come would need to find his own financial support and be very patient with us as we struggle with the legacy of liberalism which we inherited. We have our own meeting place which we are in the process of comprehensively renovating." (Editor's note: Here is an open door. Who can go and help? Who will help those who will go?)

**PHILIPPINES — ROBERT GAMIAO** reports 14 baptisms at Santo church, Rizal. A new work has been established at Rome Enrile, Bagayan with attendance of 18.

**JOY NOTARTE** reports on the recent visit of Wallace Little and Jim Puterbaugh. They conducted classes at Davao City, Samal Island, Bansalam, Dungan Pekong, Maymana and Bajada. The preaching at Bansalam was attended by brethren from 15 congregations. Julie and Joy Notarte (these are MEN, brethren) translated for them in that area. Three were baptized in Davao after the preaching there. They also accompanied them to the Visayas. In Ormoc City they saw the terrible damages from the recent flood and also met affected brethren. In January a new work began in Senuda, Bukidnon, 3-4 hours travel from Davao City, and about one hour walk from the highway.

**RODY L. PORTALES** reports five baptisms in February. He says that the forthcoming presidential election on May 11 is producing dangerous situations in some areas with eight aspirants fighting with "words and destroying one another and using goons and guns to get the throne of the Presidency." Rebel groups are going about urging people to boycott the elections.

**ROMANIA — DAVIL TEEL** is now in Bucharest. In the month of February 34 classes were conducted with 21 students. An open Bible study was held in a hall in the center of town with five previous contacts and four new ones. One has been baptized and two others appear to be about ready. Wendall Watts will be coming home in April. He hopes to be able to return later. Teel says "There is elbow room aplenty, so come and join us! We need your heart and your hands."

**HUNGARY—RICHARD COPELAND** reports from Budapest that the work is taking longer to take root than hoped. Many efforts are under way to reach people with the gospel. "Jeff and I are in the process of getting a correspondence course translated into Hungarian."

**SOUTH AFRICA — PAUL WILLIAMS** reports "Between Feb. 17 and Mar. 17, 17 persons were baptized as a result of the efforts of members of the Eshowe church. Many of these were students of the correspondence course who answered "Yes" to the final question in lesson 6 — 'Do you want us to assist you in being scripturally baptized?' David and Funda have been making preaching trips to find these students."

#### PREACHERS NEEDED

**ANTHONY, FLORIDA** — This is a rural area ten miles north of Ocala. Fulltime preacher desired. Have new building with 30 members. Can supply about \$1500 a month plus a lot for mobile home or house to be built on our property. Prefer a mature man with children at home or retired. Contact Morgan Johnson (904) 368-5792 or Chuck Gates (904) 622-5812.

**BRADENTON, FLORIDA** — The Bradenton church, P. O. Box 10932, Zip 34282, needs a gospel preacher. Average attendance is about 40. At present we can supply \$800-\$1000 a month in support and will gladly assist in efforts to obtain additional support with a goal of being self-supporting as soon as possible. The Bradenton church (formerly West Bradenton) is the oldest congregation in Manatee County and has a rich history. About 18 months ago we sold our building which had become too old and costly to maintain. We are presently meeting in a Day's Inn but we are looking for a suitable structure or land to purchase. Since September, 1991, Dale Wilson has been driving 90 miles from Ft. Myers on Sundays and Wed. nights to preach and teach. Those interested may contact Ramon Bradley

(813) 755-8676; Dan Taylor (813) 7892-4345; Jim Trammell (813) 355-0474; or Dale Wilson (813) 275-6245.

**PEORIA, ILLINOIS** — The Paris Avenue church needs a fulltime preacher. Sunday A. M. attendance averages about 90. We are self-supporting and help support two men overseas and two in other areas of the U. S. If interested, please contact Jim Green (309) 822-0291; Harold Otwell (#09) 383-4470; or Austin Farr (309) 691-9685.

#### PREACHERS AVAILABLE

**EDWARD W. PAGAN, Rt. 2 Sulphur Well Rd., Nicholasville, KY 40356** — I am looking to relocate. I am 32 years old and have about 10 years of preaching experience. If you are interested in knowing more about me, you can write to the above address or call (606) 885-1423. Reference will be provided.

**KEN FRIEL (Phone 901-738-2258)** — Robert H. Bunting of Bartlett, TN sends the following:

"Let me introduce Ken Friel. Ken has had quite a journey to the truth. He has preached for the conservative Christian Church, but left them when he saw their error. Ken next found himself associated with the institutional Churches of Christ and attended the Memphis School of Preaching. Ken saw the errors of liberalism, renounced the errors and left the School of Preaching. He has a strong desire to be right with God, and I appreciate his courage.

"If you are looking for a preacher, Ken might be your man. He is 35 years old, and married. He and Sally are interested in working with a good church. He knows what it is to sacrifice for truth, and for difficult area will not frighten him. To the best of my knowledge, he is godly in life and sincere in his convictions. If you feel Ken may be able to help you, have him come and talk to you." (You may reach him at the above phone number.)



#### JULY SPECIAL ISSUE

A number of readers have already expressed their delight over the forth-coming July special edition on "Women Professing Godliness" (A Study of the Role of Women). We have already received a number of advance orders. This is a live subject (red hot might be more apt) among the institutional folks. Journals published by some of them bristle with controversy on the subject. We also need to be aware of the sources of tension among ourselves over this issue and focus our minds on what the word of God teaches. 100 copies will cost \$65/ 50 copies will sell for \$40. Order from STS, P. O. Box 69, Brooks, KY 40109.

#### MEETING SCHEDULE CHANGES

The editor will not speak on the Miller Avenue lectures in San Jose, California as reported in the February issue. My California schedule for June has been revised as follows: June 19-21 Modesto, CA; June 22-24, Folsom, CA; June 28-July 1, Lakeport, CA. Also we listed a meeting for Nov. 15-20 for White River near Greenwood, Indiana. That congregation has now disbanded. Instead we will be with the church in Canal Winchester, Ohio (near Columbus) that same date.

#### DAVID JOY

We were just in a meeting at Middlebourne, West Virginia where our good friends Paul and Gennie Casebolt work for the Lord. While there we were glad to see our good brother, David Joy (son-in-law of the Casebolts) who lives in Paden City, WV. Seven years ago, David had a heart transplant. Since then he has continued to teach school, preach at first Fly and now Mellot Ridge in Ohio and conduct several

gospel meetings. His health at present is precarious and he is on a waiting list for a second transplant. He attended two nights of the meeting and visited with us afterwards for awhile both times. His mind is continually on the things of the kingdom. His spirit is radiant. He is not a complainer. David and Patti's older son, Jeremy, is 17 now and preaches somewhere nearly every Sunday and has been doing so for two years. While we were there we learned that the younger son obeyed the gospel at Paden City on Sunday, March 29. This is a remarkable family in many ways. While his teaching work has provided him with good insurance, the medical bills have been astronomical and much has had to be paid which insurance has not covered. David did not mention any of this to me but I learned that they could use some help to catch up on some medical expenses. Also, a note of encouragement would mean much to a noble family. The David Joys, 313 S. 4th Ave., Paden City, WV 26159.

#### ENCOURAGING YOUNG PEOPLE

This editor might never have thought of preaching had it not been for that time we kept the preacher at our house during a 10 day meeting. Bonds Stocks came down from Washington, D. C. to conduct a meeting with the church in Hopewell, Virginia where we attended. In a business meeting after services a week before the meeting, there was a general reluctance to volunteer to keep the preacher. I think there was some intimidation over the fact that before he began preaching, brother Stocks had worked on the staff of a senator from Mississippi, and, after all, who were we to house one who had mingled with senators! My father volunteered, much to the chagrin of my mother. We did not, at that time, have indoor plumbing, not even running water in the house. But, stay with us, he did. What a rich experience for all of us. He was a good sport about our conveniences, or lack of them, had more funny things to tell than I had ever heard and was a thorough delight.

One day he invited me to ride over to town with him to check something about his car. On the way, he said to me "What are you going to do when you grow up?" I replied that my brother and I planned to go to Nashville, Tennessee and play on the Grand Ole Opry. He said, "Well, that sounds like fun, but you know we sure do need a lot more preachers of the gospel." I reacted with "Oh, I could never do that." He said "I'll just bet you could." And he sounded like he really believed it. It fell silent.

Before we got home he said "You know, I have been doing a lot of study on the errors of the Catholic Church. If you would like to, I'll let you copy those notes while I am here." I was overcome. When we got back to the house, I rushed in and rounded up several sheets of paper and spent a good bit of time at the kitchen table laboriously copying notes from the work of Brother Stocks. I still have them.

That was the seed which sprouted and was watered by my Grandmother and later my parents which started me on the road to preaching the gospel. Gospel preachers, take notice of the children. Take a few minutes to chat with them. Ask about their future plans. Encourage them in the direction of kingdom service. I doubt that Bonds Stocks had any idea how big a fire he built in a 12-year-old boy's heart that sultry summer afternoon in Virginia. But then, maybe he did!

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS  
RESTORATIONS

(Taken from bulletins and papers  
received by the editor)

316  
79

# 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 XXXIII

June 1992

Number 6

THINK ON  
THESE THINGS

*H. E. Phillips*

P.O. Box 1631  
Lutz, FL 33549



## The Heart and Lip Service

The piercing question of Paul in Galatians 4: 16 is in order: "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" Why do we foolishly and carelessly allow ourselves to be carried away from the truth in our daily lives? Why do we talk about doing better, and promise both ourselves and the brethren that we will repent of indifference and get to work in the kingdom of Christ, but never make the change? Why do we hear more and more brethren express alarm because they are not able to pray and to study the word of God as they once did?

The answers to these questions may be found in our own hearts where our real goals and desires reside. An individual needs to be urged to do more serious soul searching with special emphasis on his spiritual and moral concepts. We need to really "Examine your-selves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (1 Cor. 13: 5).

Jesus told the Pharisees of their hypocrisy and referred to the prophecy of Esaias, which he applied to them in Matthew 15: 8, 9: "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15: 8, 9). Of course, they were offended after they heard this (vs. 12), but Jesus

said to his disciples: "Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (verse 14).

One could say, "Look what we are doing, we draw nigh unto God with our singing, praying and preaching the word, and in addition, we praise and honor God with our lips and promise to serve Him. What more could one ask?" Every word of this could have been said by those hypocritical Pharisees to whom Christ spoke. The problem was not that they did not give vocal; praise and lip service, but the real and only problem was that the heart was far away, and in fact not involved at all in their professed praise to God.

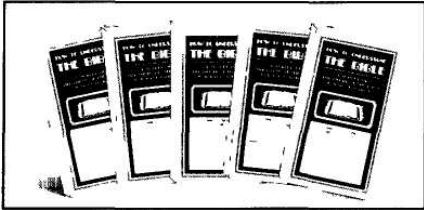
I could follow the typical line of many prayers which we hear today: "Father, we thank thee for this wonderful opportunity to meet here and worship thee in spirit and truth, " when in fact I could care less whether I am present upon the occasion or not. And the "wonderful opportunity to meet here" is really a painful burden I wish I could avoid, and I do doge the "opportunity" every time I can. I could also sing loud the words of the song: "My Jesus, if ever I loved thee, tis now, " and not give a single thought to Jesus, love, or time. This lip praise and verbal honor is the cold, lifeless, formalism that now enshrouds churches all across the land. Because the lifeless body does nothing more than lip praise and promise, the commandments of men are brought into play to try to pump some life or activity into an otherwise cold, dead body of people.

Back to some of the questions at the beginning of this article which we should be asking ourselves. We must realize that without heart action, the lip and hand service is nothing. While all responsible people have the capacity to see, hear, and understand with their hearts, by comparison, not many of them use the heart in praising God. The heart becomes dull of hearing, gross and calloused so that what is seen and heard does not effect any change in the thinking, believing, and obeying from the heart.

The heart hardened by the practice of sin explains why the preaching of the gospel in the most persuasive manner produces little more than blank stares, vague promises, and a few attempts at lip service. We must bring heart worship to God if we expect it to be accepted.

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## "QUOTE

**"Too often we enjoy the comfort of opinion without the discomfort of thought.**

**—John F. Kennedy**

## UNQUOTE"

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## Editorial

Connie W. Adams

P.O. Box 89  
Brooks, Kentucky 40109



### At The Beginning

When Peter recounted the events at the house of Cornelius before his Jewish brethren, he said "And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, as on us at the beginning" (Acts 11: 15). This caused Peter to remember the words of Jesus who taught the apostles that John baptized with water "but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (v. 16). Since there was the same outpouring of the Spirit when the gospel began with the Gentiles that had occurred at the beginning of the gospel with the Jews, Peter concluded that he should not withstand God and the Jewish brethren concluded "Then hath God granted to the Gentiles repentance unto life" (vv. 17-18).

Pentecost, when the Spirit fell upon the apostles, empowering them to speak with other tongues and proclaim the gospel of salvation, was indeed the beginning. The events of that day of Pentecost reported in Acts 2 were the hub of the Bible. Prior to that day, all sacred history pointed to it. When it was done, the sacred writers and inspired preachers would always look back to it as "the beginning."

#### God's Eternal Purpose

The momentous events of that day brought to reality the plan of God which he purposed in his mind before the world began (Eph. 3: 9-11). This was the plan God had chosen and predetermined "according to the good pleasure of his will" (Eph. 1: 4-5). What occurred was neither accidental nor incidental. The whole course of human history moved steadily toward that day.

#### Patriarchs and Prophets

What God purposed in his own mind for the salvation of the human family was announced first to the patriarchs. The seed of woman would come to bruise Satan's head (Gen. 3: 15). The seed of Abraham would come to "bless all nations" (Gen. 12: 1-3). The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be" (Gen. 49: 10).

What was announced dimly to the patriarchs was enlarged upon by the prophets. Nathan announced to David who was disappointed that he would not be permitted to build the temple, "I will set up thy seed after thee... and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever" (2 Sam. 7: 12-13). David spoke of

the "day of his power" when his seed would sit at the right hand of God and rule in the midst of his enemies, where he would be priest while he ruled (Psa. 110: 1-4). Isaiah foresaw the establishment of God's government unto which all nations would flow, "For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isa. 2: 2-3). Daniel prophesied of four great kingdoms, the fourth being the Roman Empire and declared "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed" (Dan. 2: 44). He further foretold the ascension of Christ when he saw visions in the night, "And behold one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given unto him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Dan. 7: 13-14).

When Peter began to speak on that Pentecost day, he said "This is that spoken of by the prophet Joel" (Acts 2: 16) and followed by identifying the events of the day with what David had spoken prophetically (vv. 25-31).

#### The Preparatory Work of John

John the baptizer was the voice of one crying in the wilderness "Prepare ye the way of the Lord" (Mt. 3: 1-3). John was not "that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light" (Jno. 1: 8). John promised "He shall baptize with the Holy Spirit" (Mt. 3: 11).

#### The Preliminary Work of Christ

"After that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mk. 1: 14-15). He promised that his kingdom would come in the lifetime of some who heard his voice and that it would come "with power" (Mk. 9: 1). He said just before ascending that "ye shall receive power after the Holy Spirit has come upon you" (Acts 1: 8).

#### The Beginning

When that first Pentecost after Jesus arose from the dead and ascended to his Father did, indeed, come, the stage was set for the divine plan of the ages to be set in motion. Jerusalem was the right place. The anticipated power of the Holy Spirit came upon these apostles "as a rushing mighty wind" (Acts 2: 2). They were "all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance" (v. 4). As Peter lifted up his voice, along with the eleven others, there was the beginning of the work of that gospel which Jesus said they should preach in all the world. They were not to begin this work until the "promise of the Father" came upon them as they "tarried at Jerusalem" (Lk. 24: 47-49).

Here was the beginning of the work of human redemption which would bruise Satan's head, bless all nations through the seed of Abraham, set in motion the "day of his power" establish the kingdom, and set the captives free as they turned to that truth which alone can make men free.

Pentecost, then, was the beginning of the gospel age,



the inauguration of the new covenant (Heb. 8: 8) now that the testator had died (Heb. 9: 15-17). Here was the beginning of the church. From this day forward "the Lord added to the church daily those that were being saved" (Acts 2: 47). Any church which began at any other time, place or under other circumstances than these, cannot claim to be the Lord's. Here was the beginning of gospel preaching. Here was the announcement of the resurrection, coronation, and blessed reign of him who is at the right hand of God, exalted (Acts 2: 33) and who now is declared to be "both Lord and Christ" (v. 36). Here for the first time, heart-stricken sinners were told to "repent and be baptized... for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (v. 38). Assurance was given that this promise was not only to them and to their children, but those afar off (Gentiles).

Gentiles — Why that's where we came in, wasn't it? When Peter defended his work among the Gentiles at the house of Cornelius, he said "the Holy Spirit fell on them, as on us AT THE BEGINNING." So, you see, without understanding the significance of what took place on that Pentecost day, we are at a loss to understand the rest of the Bible. The patriarchy, the law, the prophets, John, the preaching and miracles of Christ — all these pointed to Pentecost. The conversions in the book of Acts, the instructions in the epistles and the reassurances of the book of Revelation cannot fully be appreciated without understanding what took place "at the beginning."

It is precisely at this point that the whole denominational world stumbles. Without a clear understanding of this, one cannot rightly divide the covenants. They do not know when one law ended and another began. They do not know nor preach what the apostles preached on Pentecost and from that day forward. Theirs is "another gospel." They understand neither the universal nor the local body of the saved. Unless gospel preachers periodically call their hearers back to what happened "at the beginning" we shall lose our sense of identity and destiny. Have you heard much preaching lately on what happened "at the beginning"?

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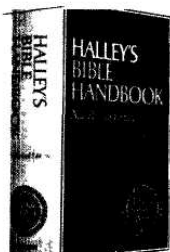
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## A Nation Flounders

The irony is overwhelming and it is cause for sorrow to watch a nation as it struggles and flounders to solve the AIDS crisis without teaching morality. The country has been blindfolded, bound, gagged, and had its hands tied by censoring itself against teaching morality. This has been done by those who have no morals and want a new world order. It is done under the guise that the nation would be violating its own constitution which says "government shall make no laws respecting an establishment of religion." It does no good to point out that the framers of the Constitution were seeking to avoid establishing an official state church (as had been the case in England). These perverse ones act as though the Constitution requires hostility toward belief in a Creator, the Bible and its standard of morality. But they are liars.

There is a difference between freedom and a "free-for-all." Freedoms have their limitations. A "free-for-all" does not. The late Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote, "freedom of speech does not grant one the right to holler 'Fire!' in a crowded theater" (1919). Governments have the right to make laws which are in the best interest of its citizens, and often have.

As the problem of AIDS increases, especially among the young, more and more are abandoning the call for "safe sex" and are calling for abstinence. It is too late for thousands, but on what basis? **On the harm that is caused to others in society.** That puts us back to advocating morality, the very thing the humanists can't stand.

Where are the advocates of "free love" who were so vocal in the 60's, 70's, and 80's? Those who interpreted freedom to mean a "free-for-all" in every sort of indulgence? Those who defended obscenity, pornography and what goes on between "consenting adults?" These were the humanists who argued "no restrictions" and gained the upper hand in the media, entertainment, and positions of authority. They were the ones who mocked the Bible and morality and censored them from the school-room while replacing them with the animalistic doctrine of organic evolution, sex education (minus morality), and values "clarification."

The nation's problems have grown in proportion to

the success of the humanists and their front organizations. Their defense of immorality and success in getting laws against sodomy and adultery struck down was on the basis that what goes on between consenting adults is a "victimless crime." What they said was "personal and private between consenting adults" has become extremely public and a social scourge to the life and soul of man. Many of these were highly educated but not perceptive at all about the future. They lived for the "here and now." Wisdom had departed from the "wise." How wrong they were! They now struggle to patch up the mess their philosophy has made without teaching morality! They are walking an impossible tight rope. It is a mixed up world.

The advocates of filth have tried to present themselves as "angels of light" (2 Cor. 11: 13-15) by avoiding the uncomplimentary and unfavorable name, "atheists." These pseudo-intellectuals present themselves with such dignified terms as the **American Civil Liberties Union, People for the American Way, Humanists, Feminists**, etc. What little good these organizations have done is greatly overshadowed by the harm they have caused with their anti-God, anti-family doctrine. There is no denying their success. They have infiltrated religion as we see major denominations unable to decide whether homosexuality is a sin. They have infiltrated the media and we are bombarded with TV programs filled with adultery, lesbianism, incest, obscenities, etc. The music industry is overrun with raw sex.

### Rape and Pornography

Sex crimes are on the increase. Yesterday's newspaper reported that rape was up 59% in 1991 (over 1990). This can be traced to the philosophies of humanists who defend pornography. To say it politely, the humanists are naive not to note that most rapists have been con-noisseurs of porno, all the way from Ted Bundy to Jeffery Dahmer. What enters the eye and ear has a way of lodging in the brain. It eventually manifests itself in what we say and do. The wise man said it like this: "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23: 7). They could have known if they had only listened.

### Rape and Evolution

The reason humanists want man classified as an animal is because they know animals are amoral (not governed by moral standards). If he is merely an animal, why should we be shocked when he behaves like one? If the rapist is a product of evolution, a chance arrangement of molecules, how can he be blamed? He is simply following his evolutionary inclination of the "survival of the fittest."

### Rape and Feminism

The popular doctrine of feminism is interwoven with humanism. Take it from one rabid feminist. "Feminism is the best form of humanism that I know" (actress Jodie Foster, AP, 2/12/92). Feminists are part of the problem of rape. With their heads in the sand they argue that lust for sex has nothing to do with it, for it is an act of violence. In many cases it is both. To agree that it is a sexual act would violate their unisex philosophy and unwillingness to admit there are real and basic differences between

men and woman. Those differences will remain till the end of time.

Rape is always wrong and never justified. The rapist should be punished to the full extent of the law. Where feminists are wrong is in failing to admit a basic difference. Men are more easily and quickly stimulated by sight than are women. This is why nearly all pornography is purchased by men. It is why most rapists are men. It is why harlots dress a certain way to attract men (Prov. 7: 10). It is why Jesus said "everyone that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Mt. 5: 28).

A woman may be raped who is totally innocent and contributed nothing to the process. A man may have his passions inflamed through pornography and he vents his lust by raping the next woman in sight, though she may be decently attired.

On the other hand, the man who rapes a woman who tempted, teased, tormented and tantalized him by lascivious behavior and clothing, is still guilty of rape, but she is not guiltless. Whether the law ever recognizes it or not, she was a stumblingblock. No rapist is justified — not one. But her behavior may be an important part of the extenuating circumstances. If feminists really are sincere in wanting to understand why rape has taken such a dramatic increase, they need to look at the total picture. As long as they deny that there are major differences between the sexes the rape rate will continue to increase and they will continue to be shocked and bewildered. Instead of making war on the Bible, they should be making war against evolution, pornography, fashion designers, and feminism. Humanists want to deny the consequences of humanism, but it lies squarely at their feet.

Males are responsible for exercising self-control. There are situations which test and try them and make it difficult to maintain that control. This is why they should stay away from pornography, nightclubs (where lasciviousness is rampant), public gatherings that are notorious for near nudity (such as mixed swimming). They must control the music they listen to and what they watch on television. This is not too high a price to pay when one considers the salvation of his soul.

#### What Can The Christian Do?

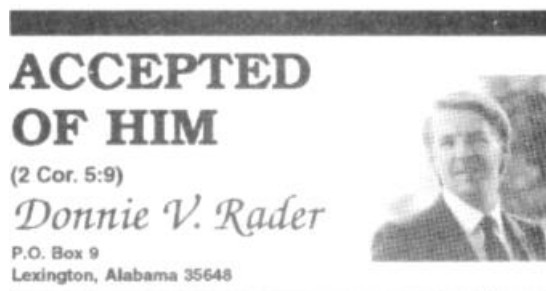
**PRAY.** Pray for strength against temptation. There is some truth in the maxim that "the Lord helps those who help themselves." He wants us to pray for strength against sexual temptation, but He also expects us to avoid pornography.

**PRAY FOR RULERS.** What was once the "cream of the crop" has become the "scum of the slop." Homosexuals, adulterers, thieves, and liars have gotten elected to high office. Some of them sit on extremely important committees that shape the direction of the nation in the area of morals. God still rules in the kingdom of men. Ask Him to give us good men of high morals and worthy of honor.

**PRAY FOR BOLDNESS.** Speak out! There is a dearth of backbone among some officials who lack courage to stand for principles rather than policy and politics. When Christians by peaceful and lawful means

Speak out, they are "points of light." This concept credited to our president actually comes from the Bible (Phil. 2: 15, 16; Mt. 5: 14-16). I fear we have become weakened and intimidated. The "fight" has been taken out of us. Here is an area where we cannot afford to "go with the flow." We must not blend with society. I have always thought of myself as an optimist, but unless Christians and congregations become more militant we are in for some hard times ahead. We must fight fair (strive lawfully), but we must fight (I Tim. 6: 12).

We have the answer to some of the world's most serious problems. If we don't speak out, who will? If we don't do it now, when will we?



## No Repentance — No Regret

There is a time and place for repentance and regret. Repentance is a change of mind. It involves sorrow for sin. Regret entails a feeling of sorrow or disappointment or grief. We may regret that we have done something. Yet, on the other hand we may regret not doing some things.

Every person has done and will do things for which he later repented. When we realized that we had sinned we turned to God in repentance. We all have done things that we also regretted — even things that did not involve sin.

On the other side of the coin there are many things that are proper and right for which there will be no repentance and no regret. In fact, we are glad we did those things. If there were to be any regrets at all it would be in not doing those things that we should be doing. Or, we may regret that we didn't do those things sooner.

Let's consider some things that I never will repent of or regret. Don't misunderstand, if someone can show that any of these are wrong, I most certainly would repent.

### I'll Never Regret That I Obeyed The Gospel In My Youth

Our youth is a time that we should be serving the Lord (Ecc. 12: 1). It is not a time that we must sow our wild oats. I obeyed the gospel when I was fourteen. I never have, and I don't think I ever will regret that I did. I have never looked back and wished that I had waited a few years.

I don't regret it because that is when I became a Christian, a follower of Christ (Acts 11: 26). That is when I obtained the remission of sins (Acts 3: 19). That is when

I obtained the hope of going to heaven when I die (Rev. 22: 14). Obeying in my youth gave me more years to grow and mature as a child of God.

Many, on the other hand, have looked back and regretted that they didn't obey the gospel sooner. I have witnessed some who were middle-aged and older who finally submitted in obedience. On several of those occasions the remark was made, "I only wish I had done this years ago."

### **I'll Never Regret Maintaining Moral Purity**

God demands moral purity. The command is to abstain from or flee sexual immorality (1 Thess. 4: 3; 1 Cor. 6: 18). God expects that of all. It was not intended for this to be a characteristic of only a few strange people.

I have never known of any one who entered marriage and looked back and regretted that they didn't experiment with fornication. Have you ever known of anyone who repented that they maintained their virginity until marriage?

I have never known of anyone who regretted that they didn't have any extra-marital affair. Have you ever witnessed repentance and confession of marital faithfulness?

The reason we have not known of this is that true joy in this intimate relationship comes only within marriage (Prov. 5: 15-17; Heb. 13: 4; 1 Cor. 7: 2-4).

In contrast many live to regret and even repent of not maintaining this purity. They live with the shame, disgrace, dishonor and a cloud brought on by their sin (Prov. 6: 27, 33). Fornication leaves scars that may never be removed. Countless times we have heard the statement, "I wish we had waited" or "It wasn't worth the price I had to pay."

### **Ill Never Regret Spending Time With My Children**

There are a number of Bible principles that suggest that time must be spent with our children, not only teaching them, but just bonding and playing with them (Eph. 6: 4; Col. 3: 21). We must use our time properly and carefully (Eph. 5: 16). Timothy's mother and grand-mother spent a lot of time with Timothy (2 Tim. 3: 15).

The time we spend with our children will never be a waste of time. It might involve playing ring-around-the-roses, building a sand castle, throwing a ball, watching television, playing with dolls or trucks, taking them to a movie, to a ball game or treat them to a cook-out in the park. Yes, there are 101 other important things that must be done. But, those things will have to wait because the children will not. One day we will wake up to an empty house with no little one to feed and get off to school - no one who needs help with homework - no one who begs for a snack - no one who makes a mess in their room - no one whose clothes need washing—no one who keeps you up at night with a fever—no one begging you to play with them. Then it will be a little late to try to spend a little time with them.

This time we spend with them now, while they are still at home, is helping mold them into what they ought to be. I have never regretted that I have spent time with my children. No matter what was left undone because of it, I have never looked back and wished I had spent less

time.

There are many parents who have looked back only to regret that they didn't spend more time. When their children are grown, it is too late. They now realize the children were more important than a career. The sad part is they can't go back and do this job over.

### **Ill Never Regret That I Spend Time In Daily Prayer And Bible Study**

God's people pray often (1 Thess. 5: 17; Psa. 55: 16-17; Dan. 6: 10). They also study from the word frequently (Acts 17: 11). To do both takes time.

No matter how much time I take every day to pray and study, I have never regretted that I took the time to do so. I have never wished that I had prayed less. I have never felt disappointed that I studied as much as I did.

However, there have been days that I regretted that I didn't pray and study more.

There are many other things that are proper and right that I will never regret doing such as: going to services, using an opportunity to teach others or taking my stand for truth. Just do what the Lord tells you to do and you'll never regret doing it.

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## Using the SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

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### A Time To Laugh

"... there is a time to weep and a time to laugh" (Eccl. 3: 4).

The story is that a brother approached Ed Harrell after one of his inimitable sermons and said, "I don't think the pulpit is any place for humor." Ed smiled and replied, "Well, I do."

Certainly humor may be overdone in the pulpit, as pathos may also be. But it's difficult to discern why some would totally restrain a basic human emotion from being manifested in preaching. A few years ago I was privileged to hear Irvin Lee and Granville Tyler preach back to back in an all-day meeting at Nixon's Chapel, a rural Alabama church. Brother Lee preached for over an hour, which he did not often do. Brother Tyler also preached longer than usual on the special topic he had been assigned. Yet the time passed so quickly as these lessons were delivered with finesse. The reason was easy to ascertain. Both lessons were underscored with homey illustrations and anecdotes, some humorous, some sad, but all to the point. If it is wrong to entertain an audience when you preach, both stood condemned. But they not only entertained, they provided a great deal more edification than I have heard in many a drier attempt.

A publication of the American Medical Association observes: "Scientists have been studying the effect of laughter on human beings and have found, among other things, that laughter has a profound and instantaneous effect on virtually every important organ in the human body. Laughter reduces health-sapping tensions and relaxes the tissues, as well as exercising the most vital organs. It is found that laughter, even when forced, results in a beneficial effect on us both mentally and physically."

Norman Cousins has publicized his laughter therapy in a couple of books. He credits regular laughter with bringing healing to his body which was diagnosed as terminally ill. He says he watched regularly the old comedy movie classics and T. V. sit coms, and laughed uproariously. (Make sure it's the old ones. We'd probably all be terminal cases if we depended on the new ones).

Laughter, of course, like everything, can be abused and misused. To "laugh at the plight of the innocent" (Job. 9: 23), or at the misfortune of others (Psalm 80: 6) is

cruel. To laugh at things holy (Gen. 18: 12-15) is destructive. To laugh and mock at sin (Prov. 14: 9) is foolish. To laugh at someone because of his dress, speech, age, color, mistakes, or any other reason is arrogant.

Though Jesus was called a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief, He also had a sense of humor. Elton Trueblood wrote an intriguing book called **The Humor of Jesus**. While I don't find humor in all the references that Trueblood did, one cannot escape the fact that many of the Lord's illustrations were funny and were intended to be. The thought of one trying to remove a speak from the eye of another while a stick of timber protruded from his own eye; or straining out a gnat and then drinking down a camel, is ludicrous. And doubtlessly it brought belly laughs to those who heard these analogies who were not objects of the attack.

The book of Proverbs teaches us that **"A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance, but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken... All the days of the afflicted are evil, but he who is of a merry heart has a continual feast... A merry heart does good like medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones"** (15: 13, 15; 17: 22).

By the way, have you heard the one about...

## WRITTEN FOR OUR INSTRUCTION

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### Joint Efforts Result in Conversion

Naaman was captain of the Syrian army, a war hero. He was also a leper. His story is told in 2 Kings 5.

In Naaman's day Syria made frequent border raids against Israel. During one of those raids a young maiden was taken captive who later became Naaman's wife's servant. She told her mistress about the prophet Elisha, whom she was sure could cure Naaman's leprosy.

Leprosy was among the most dreaded diseases in Bible times. It begins with brownish-red spots on the skin which turn into hardened modules, and in time became ulcers. As the disease progresses the muscles and nerves are affected, resulting in deformity and paralysis. Naturally, one with leprosy would seize any opportunity to be healed. Naaman was no exception. Laden with extravagant gifts, he proceeded to Elisha's house, thinking the prophet would come out to him and ceremoniously cleanse him. Instead Elijah sent a messenger to him, instructing him to go wash in the Jordan seven times.

Naaman reacted angrily. This procedure was illogical

and humiliating. He might have returned home without complying had not his servants intervened. They wisely pointed out to him that he was prepared to do some great thing to be healed, so why not do something as simple as dipping himself in a river? Naaman reconsidered, obeyed, and his flesh was restored to a childlike purity.

This account illustrates several important lessons and is an oft-used sermon text. I want to make just one point from it: Naaman's cleansing resulted from the combined efforts of several people. The Israelite maiden initiated the process by telling him help was available through Elijah. Then Elijah, through a messenger, told Naaman what God required of him. Finally his own servants played the vital role of encouraging him to obey when he resisted. Each of these contributions was equally essential to Naaman's cleansing. Without any of them he would have gone to his grave a leper.

Those lost in sin need to be washed in Jesus' blood. Every effort at helping them is valuable; none should be demeaned. And there is something you can do. Some are like Elijah, who can effectively explain what God requires. Perhaps more of us are capable of this phase than we realize. But if you cannot be an Elijah you can be an Israelite maiden, telling others that cleansing is available and putting them in contact with an Elijah. Or maybe you are a good Naaman's servant, encouraging others to do what they know is right. Barnabas was a "Son of Encouragement"; we need more like him. Some plant, others water. These efforts come together, and God gives the increase (1 Cor. 3: 6).

Look at this lesson in action. Mary, a sister in the church here at Palmetto, has an uncle who lives in Indiana. He is bedfast, breathing through a trachea tube connected to an oxygen tank. She had been talking to him about the gospel, and he was about to decide to obey. Mary asked me for help. I contacted a preacher in his town. He and another brother visited uncle Carter and did some additional teaching. Mary encouraged him further when he hesitated. And last week he was immersed into Christ in his bathtub. Now he is working on a way to get to the assembly and take his Catholic family with him.

Friend, every effort, whether large or small, counts. Your own conversion was likely the culmination of combined efforts of people who loved your soul. Now do what you can, unto God's glory.

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**"David Did It"**

It is nothing short of disrespect for the dead, as long as David has been in his sepulcher, for folks to continue blaming him for their religious error. And in doing so, they also show disrespect for the New Will and Testament of Christ (Heb. 9: 15-17).

The advocates of instrumental music in the worship of the church have always attempted to implicate David in their false doctrine and practice. "David used instruments, and so can we."

Then, they jump from David and the Old Testament dispensation, all the way over the New Testament dispensation and the church-age into heaven, and attempt to justify their mechanical instruments of music by perverting the symbolic and figurative language of Revelation. And this exercise in religious gymnastics is a tacit admission that they cannot find New Testament authority for using their pianos, guitars, and drums in the worship of the church.

One of the first things brother Homer Hailey emphasized in his classes on Revelation is that you cannot allow symbolic language, whether found in Daniel or Revelation, to interpret plain, literal declarations of revealed truth found elsewhere in the Bible. I think it is high time that brethren begin to make some of these basic applications for establishing Bible authority once again.

The first time I personally heard anyone try to use David as an excuse for "plural marriages" was back in the 1930's, and the occasion was a handwritten debate between two Baptist preachers. And my father was one of the participants in the debate. The preacher who attempted to use David and Bathsheba as justification for divorce/remarriage on grounds other than fornication, clearly held an indefensible position. And that was evident even to those of us who were still very young and had very little knowledge of the Bible.

Incidentally, neither of those Baptist preachers believed in instrumental music, so the one who used Mt. 19: 1-9 as his text for divorce/remarriage did not put himself in an inconsistent position, at least on that subject. (But some years later when I challenged one of those same Baptist preachers for New Testament authority to wear the name "Baptist," he could not find that authority.

**David** — It was David himself who pointed us to Christ's authority when he said, "the Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool" (Ps. 110: 1; Mt. 22: 44).

**Ezekiel** — The prophet Ezekiel told of the time when the earthly throne of David would be superseded by the spiritual reign of Christ on his throne (Ezek. 21: 25-27).

**God** — On the mount of transfiguration, God clearly, once and for all, exalted the authority of Christ over the Mosaic dispensation (Mt. 17: 1-5). And this was in direct agreement with the prophecy of Moses himself (Acts 3: 22, 23).

**Peter** — On the day of Pentecost, the apostle Peter declared that David's sepulcher was still with them and that Christ had been raised up to sit on David's throne (Acts 2: 25-36).

**Paul** — In rebuking the Galatians for their attempts at justification by the law of Moses, Paul said, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace" (Gal. 5: 4).

God "suffered" people in times past to do many things which did not meet with his approval, but he did so "because of the hardness of your hearts" (Mt. 19: 8).

God suffered Israel to have a king, but it was never his will that such earthly kings should exist (Hos. 13: 11). God allowed some of these kings to exist, and even blessed them in some ways, in spite of the fact that many of them still condoned the sins of Jeroboam and his golden calves (cf. 2 Ki. 10: 29).

So the fact that God allowed (or "suffered") David to do a thing was no basis for authority even under the old law, much less under the law of Christ.

We are going to be judged by Christ's word, and that judgment will include both saints and aliens (Jno. 12: 48; Acts 17: 21; 1 Pet. 4: 17, 18). Notice that God will judge the "world" in righteousness, and that includes the alien sinner, judged by the righteousness of God as revealed in the gospel (Rom. 1: 17; 2: 16).

"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17: 30). And notice the "now" as contrasted to times past.

That is why Jesus took time and pains to contrast his teaching with that of Moses on a number of subjects (Mt. 5), including the matter of fornication, divorce, and remarriage (5: 31, 32; 19: 9). But in spite of this, brethren still attempt to circumvent the teaching and authority of Christ by reverting to the Mosaic dispensation and saying "David did it," or going even farther back to the patriarchal dispensation and attempting to justify a doctrine/practice in this dispensation by "universal moral law."

And like the sectarians who concede that they have no New Testament authority when they try the long jump from Moses to heaven, brethren who place so much emphasis on David and "moral law" are conceding that they are not comfortable with their position when confined to the New Testament.

It is one thing to use the examples of the Old Testament as they were intended to be used (Rom. 15: 4; 1 Cor. 10: 11), but quite another when we make the "tail wag the dog" and base our main arguments on David and the

"moral law.:

And if some brethren still deny that they are using David, Moses, or Abraham for authority on the subject of marriage or on any other subject, then I have only one sentence left to write.

It is time they began acting, talking, and writing like they believe what they claim to believe.

## When I Am Weak, Then I Am Strong

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The title of this study comes from a statement of the apostle Paul in his second letter to the Corinthians, and it sounds like one of those statements that can't possibly be true. How can it be that when I am weak, then I am strong? Taken in its context, this statement is not only understandable, but it is also logical and reasonable.

One of the problems most of us have had in our youth is thinking that we know all the answers. There is something about youth that often refuses to acknowledge how little we know, how weak we are, and how much we need the help of others. One of the dangers of this period of our lives is that we may fail to see the danger and be swept away in it. In Paul's first letter to the Corinthians he told of some of the sins of the Jews and told the Corinthian brethren: "Now all these things happened unto them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10: 11-12). It is when I am least aware of the danger, and when I think that I am at my strongest that I am indeed in the greatest danger of all.

In the passage suggested by the title of this study Paul was concerned about some apparently physical problem, something he called "a thorn in the flesh." What ever the problem was it was such that Paul truly wanted relief from it and prayed three times that God would remove it from him (2 Cor. 12: 7-8). But the following verses show that God's way is not always our way. Paul wrote: "And he said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12: 9-10). I don't believe Paul was literally saying that he enjoyed infirmities and reproaches and persecutions or distresses. But he took pleasure in them, because when he acknowledged that he was powerless over these things, and trusted in God to see him through, then he was strong.

The wiser we think we are, and the stronger we feel, the less we feel the need of the gospel, and of God's care day by day. One of the problems Paul described in the first letter to the Corinthians was that so many thought of the gospel as foolishness. With their human wisdom they could not seem to grasp the simplicity of the gospel, or how salvation could be in the shed blood of Jesus, or why God would send Jesus to die in the first place, or even why they needed Him. Paul wrote: "Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: (1 Cor. 1: 25-30). God's way is not the same as that of men, and only when we recognize how weak and frail we are and how much we need Him do we willingly accept His strength, and His way. This is the reason that so few of the Jews accepted Jesus when He came, because they thought of themselves as righteous and good, not weak and sinful and in need of His grace.

**HOW DOES THIS HELP ME?** It helps me to know that God knows of the struggles and trials in my life and that He cares. David wrote: "But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me" (Psa. 40: 17). And earlier David wrote: "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread" (Psalm 37: 25).

It helps me to know that even though God already knows how weak I am, He wants me to cast my cares on Him, He wants me to acknowledge my need of Him and my trust in Him. It helps me to know that He will hear my cry for help. Peter wrote: "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you" (1 Peter 5: 6-7). And John wrote: "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him" (1 John 5: 14-15).

And it helps me to know that no matter how much I may fail, and how often others in this life may fail us, that God will not fail. In the letter to the Hebrews we find this statement: "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb. 13: 5-6).

None of this means that God will remove all our problems any more than He removed Paul's "thorn in the flesh." Nor does it mean that God will overlook my sins. I must still confess my sins (1 John 1: 9), and repent and pray for forgiveness (Acts 8: 22). But it does mean that in

(Continued in next column)

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## The Sponsoring Church

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Some churches of Christ participate in a working relationship known as the sponsoring church arrangement. One might rightfully ask, "What is a sponsoring church?" A sponsoring church is a local church that has decided to take upon itself a work that is much larger than it could afford to do by itself. Then, this self-appointed sponsoring church solicits money from other congregations so that they can accomplish the task which they have embarked upon.

After the work has been decided upon a large amount of money is spent to raise the amount that has been estimated in order to carry out this project. The mail is used along with professional promoters for the purpose of raising money from other churches of Christ in the area or even the nation. These churches are urged to send money to the sponsoring church so that it can carry out this "great" work they have decided to do.

A few examples of this type of arrangement are: 1) the Memorial Drive church of Christ in Houston, Texas who sponsor a work in South Africa, 2) the Forrest Park church of Christ in Valdosta, Georgia who operate a massive project in Central America called the Panama Missions, 3) the Sycamore church of Christ in Cookeville, Tennessee who sponsor the One Nation Under God campaign which is designed to send a brochure into every home in America and eventually throughout the world. These projects undertaken by these self-appointed sponsoring churches are much larger than they could do on their own.

### **Origin — God or Man?**

Where did the sponsoring church originate? Did it have its beginning in the mind of God or the mind of man? Since all truth has been delivered, then if the sponsoring church originated in the mind of God we will be able to turn and put our finger on the passage or passages that teach about this arrangement (John 16: 13; Jude 3). There is NO Bible passage that even hints of such an arrangement. Do not take the word of this writer; search the Scriptures for yourself and see if God's word reveals such an arrangement.

In order to be fair and give those who support sponsoring churches the benefit of the doubt, a call was made to Jeff Smith, a local preacher who supports the sponsoring church arrangement, and he was asked if such an

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spite of our weakness we can indeed be strong when we recognize the source of our blessings and the one who truly cares for all His people.



arrangement could be found in the New Testament. He stated that God's word was silent concerning the sponsoring church. He stated further that no scripture existed that referred to a sponsoring church. In defense of this arrangement he said that the sponsoring church was not forbidden in the New Testament. There were various other attempts made to justify this practice which we will examine, but this shows that those involved in the very act of promoting this know that there is no sponsoring church found in the Scriptures.

The origin of the gospel which the apostle Paul preached was Jesus Christ (Gal. 1: 12). We are commanded to teach the gospel of Christ (Mk. 16: 15). How can we teach the gospel of Christ and teach people to participate in sponsoring church arrangements? We cannot do it by God's authority, because it came from man and not from God.

### Too Big and Too Small

The sponsoring church is bigger than the local church which we can read about in the New Testament and it is smaller than the universal church which we can also read about in the New Testament. Brother Smith was asked if this was an accurate description of a sponsoring church and he agreed. The sponsoring church is an organization that is not found in God's word. This is one of the arguments that some of those in these sponsoring churches used to use against the denominations of men. They should apply this same teaching to their own invention.

Why is it wrong for the Baptist churches to form an association to carry out their work and it is not wrong for the churches of Christ? Changing the name does not change the structure of the organization and the organizational structure cannot be found in the New Testament.

There is a form of cooperation found in the New Testament. Two or more churches sent money to a gospel preacher to support him in the work of preaching the gospel (2 Cor. 11: 8-9). However, the New Testament is silent when it comes to local churches funneling their money through one church to preach the gospel to all the world. One is in the New Testament and the other is not!

Remember brethren, an argument based upon the silence of the scriptures will allow instrumental music, sprinkling for baptism, infant baptism, denominational names and associations, the worship of Mary, and any other practice that man can dream up. Had this argument any validity with God, Nadab and Abihu would certainly have been spared from His wrath (Lev. 10: 1-2). "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15: 4). We had better learn the lessons of the past.

Christianity is a positive religion. We are to do what God teaches, like God teaches and leave off everything else (Matt. 7: 21; Gal. 1: 6-9).

### Is God's Organization Sufficient?

Individual Christians and local churches spread the gospel into all the world during the first century (Col. 1: 6, 23). God's way worked then and it is being worked now by faithful churches of Christ.

Those who promote and support the sponsoring church arrangement claim that this is a more effective and efficient way for doing the Lord's work in the twentieth century. In other words, they are saying that God did not give us the best organization possible for carrying out His will. Who can believe it?

Many examples could be given to show the ineffectiveness and inefficiency of the sponsoring church arrangement. However consider this, God loves all men and wants all to come to repentance (Jn. 3: 16; 2 Pet. 3: 9). Certainly, God is going to provide the very best way to reach mankind with the gospel. God did not provide in any way whatsoever for the sponsoring church; therefore, the sponsoring church is not the best way possible to reach the lost, nor is it the right way to reach the lost.


In our next article we will examine more of the reasons given for supporting the sponsoring church.

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**THE  
NEW MAN**

*Gary Henry*

2690 Streamside Drive  
Columbus, Indiana 47203



## Retiring From The Lord's Work

I think now and then about something that happened several years ago when my good friend Chuck Durham accompanied me on a preaching trip to Dominica, the beautiful little Island in the Caribbean where Ernest Roberts lives and works as an evangelist. An islander with whom we were visiting was asking Chuck about his family back in the States. When he asked what Chuck's father's occupation was, Chuck replied that he was a retired farmer. We noticed a puzzled look on the individual's face, and suddenly realized that, on an island where those who eke out an agricultural livelihood simply work until they die, the expression "retired farmer" must have seemed a contradiction in terms. To the man with whom we were talking, this crazy idea of a farmer just arbitrarily ceasing to work, although still physically and mentally **capable** of working, probably confirmed what he had always been led to believe about Americans: that we are an effete, self-indulgent bunch of people.

It is easy for us to forget that the concept of "retirement" from one's life's work is for the most part a peculiarity of industrialized nations and is not at all the norm in the wider world. With this notion, as with many others, it is hard to keep in mind that ideas that are second-nature to us are not necessarily a part of the way

most of the people in the world think even today, not to mention most people throughout history. What we assume is the "norm" may be nothing more than a curious little exception in terms of the total history of mankind—and a **worrisome** exception at that, in the opinion of those whose customs **are** the norm.

What is worse, we tend to take aspects of our American culture and lifestyle and read these back into the New Testament. When we make judgments about how we ought to engage in the Lord's work, we often exercise our judgment in ways that nobody would ever do if he were not looking at the New Testament through the tinted lenses of the American way of life. Our assumptions about what is wise and good and expedient would often look ridiculous from the vantage point of the vast majority of mankind. To take but a simple example, an American's assumptions about how long a sermon should last would be humorous to many of the Lord's people in the rest of the world. We wrongfully assume that "the way it is" for us is the way it **has** to be, the way it **ought** to be, etc. **In** reality, though, our customs are nothing more than that: customs. Some of these may happen to be good—but others may not be so good.

To me, it seems as clear as can be that our view of what is "reasonable" in regard to serving the Lord over a lifetime is influenced by our peculiar American customs regarding retirement from our secular vocations. In societies where there is no such thing as retirement from one's work, the thought of "retiring" from the **Lord's** work would hardly enter anyone's mind. But most of us have been conditioned since childhood to think that the way life ought to unfold is something like this: one works as hard as he can early in life so that when he gets to his sixties, if not before, he can cease what he has been doing for a living and basically do what he wants to for the rest of his life. As suggested above, the concept of doing that may sound soft to people in less affluent societies, but there is nothing inherently wrong with the custom. There is, however, **much** wrong with the idea that we can at some point arbitrarily lay aside our responsibilities in the **Lord's** work and basically do what we want to for the rest of our lives.

Now obviously, the strength and vigor of youth passes away long before most of us die. The time comes when we simply cannot, either physically or mentally, do in the Lord's work what we once could. Not only that, it is also true that as we mature the nature of what we can do **best** in the Lord's work changes. The contribution we are able to make as senior citizens in the kingdom is not the **same** contribution we were able to make in youth. (Frankly it is often a much more **important** kind of service that age and wisdom allow us to offer). I am not suggesting here that anyone should make a fool of himself trying to continue doing what he is no longer capable of doing, nor am I denying that the nature of our work in the Lord changes over time. I **am** suggesting that there is nothing scriptural about the concept of arbitrarily ceasing to do **any** significant work in the Lord's service, as if having "done our part" it is now someone else's turn to work while we "enjoy" the years we have left to us.

But I have seen it happen time and again. Just when folks are able to be of the very best service, they quit. Seasoned men and women—able to lend much-needed maturity to our evangelism, edification, and benevolence—decide that their retirement plans do not allow room for much responsibility in the Lord. Elders leave their post of duty and move off to the Sunshine State. Married couples, often part of the irreplaceable backbone of their congregations, retire and move "back home" to some situation where they are not needed nearly so badly. People who complain throughout their "working" lives about having too little time for the Lord's work, suddenly find that the pleasures of travel, etc. leave little time for spiritual work during their retirement years. Grandmothers (who can literally "love it into them") decide they will no longer teach God's word to children's classes. On and on the story goes, making it appear (at least in some cases) that we did not truly enjoy working in the Lord's service anyway. Is it possible that we were only putting in time until we could satisfy ourselves that we had done enough, at which point we immediately moved on to what we had really been wanting to do all along?

I know that as the years wear on we get tired. The Lord's work is hard work, and the years take their toll. But keeping on working, even when we are tired, is plainly a part of what it is going to take to get to heaven. Paul urged, "And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in **due season** we should reap **if** we do not lose heart" (Gal. 6: 9). And the Lord Himself said to the brethren in Smyrna, "Be faithful **until death**, and **I** will give you a crown of life" (Rev. 2: 10). It makes little difference whether the text should read "**until**" or "**unto**" death. The person who would go so far as to die **for** the Lord is not going to retire **from** the Lord's work until he does die, whenever that is.

Would it not do us all great good to read the Hebrew letter thoughtfully from time to time? There the writer said, "And we desire that each one of you show the same **diligence** to the full assurance of hope until the **end**, that you do not become **sluggish**, but imitate those who through faith and **patience** inherit the promises: (Heb. 6; 11, 12). And there we are warned, "Since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us **fear** lest any of you seem to have come **short** of it" (Heb. 4: 1). Whether that fellow in Dominica could envision any such thing as a retired farmer, the notion of a retired servant of the Lord ought to be unimaginable to any of us.

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## **Benevolence, Evangelism, and Cooperation**

*Shane Scott*

P.O. Box 669  
Mt. Sterling, Kentucky 40353

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The Bible teaches that local churches are to evangelize (1 Thess. 1: 8) and practice benevolence (2 Cor. 9: 1). The Bible also teaches that churches may cooperate in these works (2 Cor. 11: 8; 1 Cor. 16: 1). The extent to which churches may cooperate has been an issue of controversy among brethren. May churches cooperate through a centralized agency (the sponsoring church), or is cooperation limited to independent action? It is my view that the latter position is correct.

To prove the sponsoring church position, cooperation in benevolence and evangelism have been paralleled. It is argued that since a church may send money directly to other churches in benevolence, the same holds true for evangelism. Therefore, churches may send money to congregations like the Sycamore church in Cookeville, TN, for the purpose of supporting evangelism (the "One Nation Under God" program). It is the purpose of this article to show that church cooperation in benevolence cannot be paralleled to church cooperation in evangelism.

The New Testament does teach that churches may send directly to other churches in order to meet a benevolent need. Churches just did not decide to send money to other churches for no reason. Money was sent when the membership of a congregation was threatened by poverty, as were the saints in Judea (Acts 11: 29). If there had been no need, no money would have been sent. Such is the nature of benevolence. It is precisely because benevolent cooperation is need-based that it cannot be compared to sponsoring church arrangements. Such arrangements are not based on need, or at least genuine needs.

Sponsoring churches "need" money from other churches only in the sense that they have decided to enact a program which they cannot fund on their own. This contrived "destitution" is not parallel to the examples of church-to-church benevolent care in the NT. Let me illustrate with benevolent work in a local church. A congregation does not distribute money to its members for no reason. Churches give their members aid only when those members are in need (see 1 Timothy 5: 3-16). But suppose that a member where you worship decided they wanted a Porche sports car, and became impoverished in their attempt to get it. Does that person qualify for benevolent care since they are in "need"? Obviously not, because their need is contrived. Or, to more accurately illustrate this point, suppose a member where you worship announced that they felt it was their duty to

feed every person in your county, and demanded that the church pick up the tab by relieving the poverty they experience when they embark upon this costly venture. Is that a true need or a concocted one? Clearly such does not fall within the scope of church benevolence.

Now, since according to our institutional brethren what's true for the individual is true for the church, let's apply these principles to church cooperation. If a church decides to perform a work which it knows it cannot fund by itself, it has no more right to receive money from other churches any more than an individual saint should receive money from his local church when he does the same thing on an individual scale. Both are contrived needs, not the type of need with which NT teaching on benevolence is concerned. For this reason, the pattern for church cooperation in benevolence cannot be compared to church cooperation in evangelism.

When will we learn that God does not expect Christians or churches to do more than they have the ability to do. God does not expect me to feed every hungry person in Montgomery County, and He does not expect Oak Hill to mail a pamphlet to every house in America. God expects us, individually and congregationally, to do only what we have the ability to do. And in the final analysis, whether that means we contribute much or little, God is more pleased with the two mites of the widow than He is with the great gifts of the wealthy.

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## **When You Move Or Are Transferred**

*Steve Hudgins*

2922 S. E. 7th Street  
Ocala, Florida 32671

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As a nation we are a mobile people. According to some estimates as many as 20% of the population of this country will move in a year's time. Some of these moves will be within the same city but many will be out of town and out of state moves. Big companies and corporations move their employees about due to promotions, relocations, mergers and what ever. Frequently when people retire they move to warmer areas of the country or to areas where life is at a slower pace. Undoubtedly there are a number of faithful Christians involved in such moves and transfers.

With such moves there are many adjustments that have to be made. Getting located in a suitable area, finding schools for children, finding doctors and dentists, locating other services that will be needed and for faithful Christians a congregation of faithful disciples with whom to meet and worship. Many cities and towns may not offer one a choice. In fact in some places to meet

with a faithful church a family may have to travel a number of miles or start a congregation in their home. In places where there is a choice of congregations what determines that choice? How close it is to the new home? the largest group where one is least needed and can get lost in the crowd and bury any talent one has?, or is it with concern for where one can be the greatest help to the cause of Christ?

Shouldn't our attitude be "I want to be a worker for the Lord and meet and worship where my presence, talents, abilities and means are most needed"? Why would a good song leader be content to warm the pew where there are already a half dozen or more good song leaders while at another congregation, across town or maybe even nearer but smaller, there may be a desperate need for one good song leader? The same with teachers and others who can have a good part in the work and be an encouragement where encouragement is so greatly needed. When you move or are transferred won't you give some thought to this? What about where you are now? Is there a small faithful church not too far away where your presence and help is much more needed?

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by Gwendolyn M. Webb



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learn how to rear their children with genuine love, concern and common sense. She shows that with love and through discipline and establishment of good habits, children can be brought up to be well adjusted, well behaved, loving, motivated and self-sufficient.

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# I

## THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

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### NEW WORK IN FAIRMONT, WEST VIRGINIA

**RICK CLELLAND, Rt. 1, Box 144-A, Rivesville, WV 26588** — In December, 1991 a new congregation, known as the Eastside church of Christ began in Fairmont, WV. Some had been driving 30 miles north to Morgantown and others 30 miles south to Clarksburg to worship. We began meeting in the home of Bill and Ruby Wright. Due to growth we have now acquired a rented meeting place at 934 East Park Ave. with parking available in the rear of Brown's Lumber Company. We began meeting in the new location April 19, 1992. Attendance has been in the 20's with a high of 37. Our first gospel meeting will be held May 4-7 with J. Wiley Adams preaching. When in the area, please come and worship with us.

### FRED E. ENGLAND, 23 Trumball Dr., Wallingford, CT 06492 —

The church here now meets in a small building we purchased at 1213 Old Colony Road, Route 71 in Wallingford. The work began with two, soon became six and now the church has 19. This is a transient area. If all who had worked and worshipped here over the last 19 years were here now we would number about 80. We are encouraged since our move in to more permanent quarters by the interest of neighbors. We have been having some regularly to visit with us. To find us when you visit rustic, historic New England, take I-91 to Exit 15; turn west (toward Cheshire) to Route 150 and turn right. Go north about 1/2 mile and turn left onto Route 71. We are about one mile on the left. We meet on Sundays at 10 and 11 A. M. and 5: 30 P. M. and on Wednesdays at 7: 30 P. M.

### 77TH ANNIVERSARY

**STEVE HUDGINS, 2922 S. E. 7th St., Ocala, Florida 32671** — On April 25 my parents, the H. H. Hudginses, celebrated their 77th wedding anniversary. If Daddy makes it to August 15 he will be 99

years old and mother is 96. Their home has been the place for preachers to stay during meetings for many years in Moultrie, Georgia. The first preacher I remember staying with us was C. R. Nichol about 1923. He baptized my mother along with two others at that time.

(Editor's note: I am one of many preachers who shared the hospitality of the Hudgins household. When the church in Moultrie went liberal, they faithfully carried on and the church met for a time in their home. What a remarkable thing to celebrate 77 years together. Pour of their five children are living. Steve is a faithful gospel preacher in Ocala, Florida. The Hudgins family has contributed much to the cause of Christ through the years. CWA)

### FRED A. SHEWMAKER, 1101 S. W. Dorchester St., Port St. Lucie, FL 34983 —

The church in Ft. Pierce has made considerable progress during the last several months. In May, 1991 the church assumed total support for the local preacher. Men of the congregation are speaking here once a month. Two brethren are preaching elsewhere once a month. Another brother did so until health problems forced him to stop. In January, 1992 we began providing regular support to one preacher in the Philippines and to another in Maine. We recently distributed 8, 000 flyers offering a Bible correspondence course and have for use a video home study course. Jack Hobby of Titusville, FL will preach in our next meeting July 12-17.

### RECONCILIATION IN HAWAII

**Dan Lister, Thad McCall and Ed Sheline** report that a new congregation was started on the island of Oahu as a result of error being taught and practiced on the subject of divorce and remarriage. However in July 1991 the preacher who taught this left the Leeward congregation and attended for awhile with the institutional church at

Keeaumoku and Dominis in downtown Honolulu. Recently, also, a sister involved in an adulterous relationship left the Leeward congregation. The brethren there have decided to seek a preacher who will teach the truth on the divorce and remarriage issue. A good spirit prevails and an open examination of scripture is now under way. As a result of these developments, those who left the Leeward congregation have now returned. The reconciliation and progress are due to a desire to study God's will and a determination to submit to it, rather than a toleration of error and its effects. Please pray for the Leeward church that truth may be upheld and the unity of the Spirit may be the result.

**RICHARD BOONE**, 2590 County Hwy, 45, Hayden, AL 35079 — I am trying to locate a copy of Edward J. Young's commentary on Isaiah. It is a three-volume set. If you have this and would like to sell it, would you please contact me. You may write to the above address or call 205-657-5809.

**CHARLES M. (CHARLIE) CAMPBELL 1905-1992**

The 65 year preaching career of Charlie Campbell came to an end on March 31, 1992, when he left this life. He was 87 years old. His wife of 57 years preceded him in death.

Brother Campbell was born in Ft. Worth, Texas. He lived the last 28 years of his life in Akron, Ohio. He started preaching in Nashville, Tennessee in the 1920s and served in ten congregations in five states. He moved to Akron in 1945 and worked with the Brown Street church for the next eight years.

He devoted his life to the study and teaching of God's word. All who heard him will remember him as an outstanding speaker with a powerful voice which remained with him to the end of this life. In his speech he reminded me of Roy Cogdill. Charlie became well known in this part of the country because of his stand against institutionalism in the 50s and 60s.

His funeral was conducted by his friend, Hubert Showalter. The chapel was filled with brethren and friends. Brother Showalter spoke of how brother Charlie had followed the example of Paul. He was converted like Paul, preached the same gospel, would not compromise truth and was faithful to the Lord. This aged veteran of the gospel carried a heavy burden in his last years because of failing health. Brother Showalter closed his eulogy with these words: "You and I mourn his passing, but if he could speak to us now he would no doubt say with Jesus, "Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children" (Lk. 23: 28). Lewis Willis 491 E. Woodsdale Akron, OH 44301

**FROM AROUND THE WORLD**

**ROMANIA** — Wendell Watts of Anderson, Alabama has just returned from a three month's stay in Bucharest, Romania. He said "Although I am 65 years old and have been preaching about 35 years, this was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. The people of Romania are eager to learn and several have obeyed the gospel. There is an urgent need for someone to go to Bucharest to stay at least a year. David Teel and his family need help in the work. Please have anyone interested in the work to contact me. Phone 205-247-1335.

**HUNGARY**—Richard Copeland reports from Budapest that ten new people came for a study using film strips. The last time they used them eight came and three actually finished the series. A number of private studies continue with varying interest. They have made the decision to stay another year in the work there.

**ARGENTINA** — Carlos Capelli was with the Mercedes church in March with three baptized. At Jose C. Paz congregation there was a gospel meeting in March with Joe Soto of Sequin, Texas. Between April 27 and May 18th he spent one week preaching in Ambato, Ecuador and two weeks in Bogota, Columbia.

**PHILIPPINES** — **WALLACE H. LITTLE** writes: "In the past I have published a listing of Filipino preachers with biographical and preaching experience and other voluntary data for the use of American brethren who might desire it. Having just returned, I have massively updated and expanded it. It has entries on more than 750.

These include data gained from personal knowledge plus what these men have supplied. Americans interested in the work there and who they think might benefit from this information, please phone me at 904-244-7903.

**RODRIGO DIEGO** reports on preaching efforts along with Juanito Balbin in the area around Makilala (Mindanao) and reports 16 baptized.

**JUANITO P. BALBIN** reports from Davao City and also mentions the work in connection with brother Diego. Assisting them in this work was Balbin's eldest son, Dudley Ross. They started a new work in Bulakanon, Makilala, Cotabato where six were baptized in February. On March 5-6 a preacher's lectureship was held in New Matina. On March 19-20 Balbin spoke on the eldership in Tambobong church in the Bagiu District of Davao City. After several lengthy study sessions, he assisted them in appointing three elders and four deacons. He reports that Mindanao has suffered a severe drought destroying crops and creating much need. Some brethren are hungry and others need medicines which they cannot afford. His address is: Juanito P. Balbin, Cor. Sandawa, MacArthur Hiway, 8000 Davao City, Philippines

**RICARDO DELA CRUZ**, Balite Lagao, Gen. Santos City, Philippines 9500, also reports on severe drought conditions in South Cotabao where he lives. He mentions need in two congregations in Gen. Santos City, 3 in Municipality of Malongon, one in Banga and one in Domagil, Norala all in South Cotabato.

(Editor's note: I have known brother Dela Cruz for over twenty years and though we have exchanged many letters over those years, I do not recall his ever asking for anything. He has proved to be a quiet, dedicated worker who goes about his work without complaint. When some men cry "wolf their past record is such that you do not take them too seriously. But when good men, such as brethren Balbin and Dela Cruz, bring such a situation to my attention, I take them seriously. CWA).

**PREACHERS NEEDED**

**JONESBOROUGH, TENNESSEE** — The church which meets at 1025 Depot St. will be needing a full time preacher as of Nov. 1, 1992. Being a small congregation with an average attendance of about 40, some support may be needed. Those interested may write to: Church of Christ, 1025 Depot St., Jonesborough, TN 37659 or contact Dallas Hensley (615-257-6502, Donnie Clouse (615-753-3540, or Bud Kent (615-753-8391).

**ST. CLOUD, FLORIDA** — The church in St. Cloud is looking for a preacher. Attendance averages 20-30 per week. We can provide \$600 per month support. For information call I. G. Maynard (407-892-4187 or Bill Hart (407-892-1105).

**BEDFORD, OHIO**—(Cleveland area)—The church which meets at 515 Columbus Rd. needs a preacher about August 1st. We own a house and can provide full support. Please submit background, references and, if possible, an audio tape of sermon. For information contact the elders: Gerald Paugh (216-255-5493), Joseph Stano (216-232-8286), or Dough Warton (216-248-8495).

**CUMBERLAND, KENTUCKY** — The Poor Fork church near Cumberland, KY needs a preacher. Contact R. B. Browning, 304 River Rd., Cumberland, KY. Call 606-589-2868.

**CARLISLE, PENNSYLVANIA** — The Walnut Bottom church in south central PA needs a full time preacher. There are about 30 members who can supply \$300 support weekly. Those interested should contact Garry Adams (717-423-6707 or Gerry Smith (717-776-3653) in the evenings. You may write: Walnut Bottom Road Church of Christ, 2637 Walnut Bottom Road, Carlisle, PA 17013.

**GLADESVILLE, WEST VIRGINIA** — The church in Gladesville needs a full time preacher. Attendance averages about 20. We have a house and can supply a small amount toward support, so most of the support will have to come from outside. We are only interested in a sound man. Those interested please contact Dean D. Brewer Sr., Route 1, Box 193, Independence, WV 26374 (304-864-6721) or Dixon L. Summers (304-864-6738).



**WERE THEY JUST YOUNG PEOPLE?**

For a long time I have been asked a question after returning from gospel meetings which disturbs me. In reporting now and then that so many were baptized, someone will nearly always ask, "Were they just young people?" What is the point of that question if not to minimize such baptisms as opposed to those who are older at the time they obey the truth? Very frankly, over the last few years I have seen fewer and fewer young people obey the gospel and other men who preach in a good many meetings report the same concern. In congregations where there is a whole back row of high school students which have not obeyed the Lord, there are anxious parents who would give all they own if "just their" son or daughter, who is about ready to graduate from high school, would obey the Lord. In many places brethren are not saving their own. You know, Noah preached for 120 years and saved none except his family. But Peter said he was "a preacher of righteousness" (2 Pet. 2: 5). It is refreshing to me to find young people with tender hearts and who are willing to stand up and confess the name of the Lord and obey him in baptism.

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(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)	

# 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 XXXIII

July 1992

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Special Issue

## Women Professing Godliness



(A Study Of The Role Of Women)

**Donnie V. Rader • P. O. Box 9 • Lexington, AL 35648**

There are two circumstances that prompt this special issue. First is the liberal attitudes that accept and promote the feminist concepts in the church. Secondly, the proper role of women has been dishonored and belittled by some.

The signs of the times suggest that there are problems ahead with reference to the role of women. We can easily see what has become commonplace in the denominational world. For many years their women have taken leadership roles and even become preachers. We can look at what is going on among our liberal brethren and get a little "prophecy" about what lies ahead for us. We are already hearing about women leading in prayer, serving the communion, leading the singing, being appointed as deacons and even preaching. Who could have dreamed this was possible just twenty-five years ago? Those who read some of the papers published by our liberal brethren are well aware of the fact that they have a real battle going on.

We should not be so blind as to think that the same could never happen among us. We are hearing of women attending business meetings. They are taking greater roles in a number of areas. Much of what is done may seem innocent (and is) at first. However, as has happened among the liberal brethren, one step leads to another and then another. As I travel in meetings, I have been asked such questions as "Can a

women say 'amen' audibly at the end of a prayer or during a sermon?", "Can a woman wait on the table and serve the elements if she does not lead in the prayer?", "Can she teach a class and one of the elders sit in to oversee? If one can, what about two, three and all the men?" I am concerned about what I hear.

Brethren, there is an ever present danger of apos-tasy. We can be assured that it will come if we continue to lose respect for the authority of the Bible. I am convinced that the real problem we are facing is a lack of respect for the authority of the Bible. This (the problem of the role of women) is just one symptom of the problem.

On the other hand, many women feel that there is very little purpose they can serve in the kingdom. Some wonder and ask, "What can a woman do in the church?"

This edition addresses both of these circumstances. The first two articles address the feminist movement and its impact upon us. The next two unfold the passages that place limitations upon women and put them in subjection to man. The next three articles show how God's woman can and does profess godliness. We close our study with Biblical answers to questions that are often asked about the role of women.

So we produce this special issue with a two-fold aim: to offset the liberal thinking and at the same time praise and honor women professing godliness.

# *What Is Going On In The Feminist Movement?*

Lewis Willis • 491 E. Woodsdale Ave. • Akron, OH 44301

It would be difficult to find anyone unfamiliar with the Feminist Movement. The national media seems to have adopted promotion of the Movement as a part of its purpose. Public opinion polls are frequently cited to prove that "... feminists and the women's movement have majority support."<sup>1</sup> The National Organization for Women (NOW) tries to prove this majority support by quoting polls that say 60% of women age 18 - 29 consider themselves feminists, while 71% under age 45 say there is a need for women's movement.<sup>2</sup> Well-known to statisticians is the fact that poll figures can be easily manipulated by the asking of carefully phased questions. Thus, most women polled will agree that they do believe in equal rights for women. This carefully phased question enables NOW to get its "majority." However, it can be shown that the majority of women do not believe in the specific agenda of the Feminists. In fact, a recent TIME/CNN poll reports that "63% of American women do not consider themselves feminists."<sup>3</sup> We should not allow them to use their distorted figures. They should even be challenged on the size of their organization. They only have 250, 000 members.<sup>4</sup> What we have here is nothing more than a small group of highly visible and vocal women, implying that they are speaking for all women. Who are these people, and what are the positions of the organizations they represent?

## *History Of The Feminist Movement*

Feminist trace their origin to the 19th Century battle for the right to vote, the Women's Suffrage Movement. They note that the original Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) was introduced in Congress in 1923. They carefully credit Eleanor Roosevelt with putting a women's equality statement in the Charter of the United Nations.<sup>6</sup> NOW, the best known of the feminist organizations, was organized in Washington, D. C., October 29, 1966. Originally, the purpose of NOW was "... to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society... in truly equal partnership with men."<sup>6</sup> Almost immediately, NOW realized widespread support.

To broaden their base, NOW embraced many other "rights" causes, such as, Civil Rights, the Environment, Economic Justice, Elimination of Poverty and Violence, and the Rights of the Disabled. Thus, NOW made itself the "voice" for all of these causes. However, two things happened which caused the Movement to lose steam.

First, the Equal Rights Amendment was defeated in 1982 when it was not ratified by a majority of State Legislatures. Secondly, the Feminist Movement's open-arm policy toward other Movements produced a backlash. "BACKLASH" best describes What Is Going On In The Feminist Movement. The leadership blames the failure of the Movement on the Reagan White House, the Courts, Hollywood and "the media conspiracy."<sup>7</sup>

## *Searching The Scriptures*

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### *The Reasons For The Backlash*

Some of the Causes embraced by the Feminist Movement were highly controversial, causing significant loss in public support. The following positions particularly harmed the Movement:

1. **THE PEACE MOVEMENT.** These were the people who opposed the military establishment. They opposed the "Star Wars" research project, along with military aid to struggling democracy movements in Central and South America. Many Americans favored these efforts and rejected those who opposed the military establishment.

2. **LESBIAN AND GAY RIGHTS.** Support of these groups cost the Movement dearly. Though these people have "come out of the closet," most Americans reject their cause. When the Feminist organizations started listing Gay Rights on their agendas, they lost significant public support. It did not help when NOW inaugurated Patricia Ireland as President. She has "acknowledged a four-year involvement with a woman in Washington, D. C." at the time she was married to her present husband.<sup>8</sup> Gloria Steinem, the leading icon of American feminism, hurt the Cause badly with many followers when she said, "What does it matter what the private life (of the President Ireland is, LW) as long as its open and honest."<sup>9</sup> To most women, even "open and honest" lesbianism is repulsive.

3. **ABORTION RIGHTS.** The Feminist Movement is the principal promoter of the abortion-on-demand Movement. They have applauded Roe v. Wade which legalized abortion. It is estimated that 1.6 million babies are murdered through abortion each year in this country. Feminists look on abortion as nothing more than another form of birth control. Feminists say, "Abortion is necessary for effective family planning."<sup>10</sup> In a 1986 NOW publication, "The Third Decade Agenda," NOW asked its members to endorse the following statement: "We will fight to restore full reproductive freedom of choice... for all women." This fight has thinned the ranks of the Movement.

4. **THE LEADERSHIP.** Today the leadership is regarded as "a generation of out-of-touch feminist leaders."<sup>11</sup> Most women did not agree with the leadership position on many of their controversial Causes. To these women, "feminism came to mean denigrating motherhood, pursuing selfish goals and wearing a suit."<sup>12</sup>

5. **HOSTILITY TOWARD THE FAMILY UNIT.** Many feminists express such hostility. Christina H. Sommers, feminist educator and lecturer, noted the shift in feminist philosophy. She said, "I started to run into this amazing literature by feminists, which was so relentlessly hostile to the family,... denying choice to women who want traditional families... Gender feminists want to eradicate wherever possible the differences between men and women and to abolish the traditional family."<sup>13</sup> I recently read these startling statements: "Radical feminists... are unrelenting enemies of the home as God ordained it and as most of us have known it all our lives... Shulamith Firestone argues... that women in the home are oppressed. Their

oppression stems from their childbearing and childrearing roles. Caroline Bird freely admits that women are seeking to revolutionize the world which patriarchy has created. That includes the radical reformation or the total abolition of marriage and the family."<sup>14</sup> Is it any wonder that women are disenchanted with the Movement?

6. **ANTI-RELIGION SENTIMENT.** Note these views of Feminists on religion: "They argue that much of the Bible - especially the passages dealing with the roles of women in the family and in the church - is culturally conditioned and is not binding on churches or on individuals today... Rosemary Ruether believes Christianity now stands as a barrier to a genuine theology of liberation. Mary Daly argues that God as a Father was an invention of men and cannot represent women. She asserts that the women's movement may become the greatest threat to the major religions of the world."<sup>15</sup> Gloria Steinem regularly makes anti-religion and anti-family statements. Her new book is "... about how religion undermines our self-esteem." She further says Biblical childrearing "... treats children like little animals who have to be tamed and disciplined... The breaking of the will is the goal of this school of childrearing, and its often religious..." Because of this, she believes "the majority of kids in the country have been... abused."<sup>16</sup>

My mission has been to document the current status of the Feminist Movement. Other authors will discuss the Scriptural implications of the Movement. It is encouraging to note that women in general are beginning to revolt against this evil. It is imperative that we continue to expose their opposition to religion, the home and the family, while crediting them with support of homosexuality and abortion. If we do so, it is possible that we might speed their demise.

<sup>1</sup> "Feminists Are The Majority," The Fund for the FEMINIST MAJORITY, 1988.

<sup>2</sup> "How Do Younger Women Feel About The Feminist Movement?," NOW Newsletter, 1-91.

<sup>3</sup> Nancy Gibbs, "The War Against Feminism," TIME MAGAZINE, 3-9-92, pg 50.

<sup>4</sup> Don Truex, "New NOW Leader," Plainfield, IN Bulletin, Vol. II, No. 2, 1-29-92.

<sup>5</sup> "The National Feminist Agenda," The Fund for the FEMINIST MAJORITY Newsletter, 1987

<sup>6</sup> "Statement of Purpose," NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN, 10-29-66.

<sup>7</sup> Nancy Gibbs, Op. Cit., pg. 54.

<sup>8</sup> Don Truex, Op. Cit.

<sup>9</sup> Gloria Steinem interview, THE MORNING EXCHANGE, WEWS-TV, Cleveland, OH, 1-29-92.

<sup>10</sup> "Abortion: For Survival," The Fund for the FEMINIST MAJORITY, 1989.

<sup>11</sup> Nancy Gibbs, Op. Cit., pg. 51.

<sup>12</sup> Nancy Gibbs, Op. Cit., pg. 52.

<sup>13</sup> Scott Jaschik, "Philosophy Professor Portrays Her Feminist Colleagues as Out of Touch and Relentlessly Hostile to the Family," THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION, 1-15-92, pp. 1, 16, 18.

<sup>14</sup> Winford Claiborne, "The Feminist Movement," THE

<sup>15</sup> SPIRITUAL SWORD, Vol. 22, No. 2, 1-91, pp. 11-12.

<sup>16</sup> Winford Claiborne, Ibid., pg. 13.

<sup>17</sup> Gloria Steinem, Op. Cit.

# *The Impact of The Feminist Movement Upon God's People*

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The subject assigned to me is one of great importance because this movement has already had a greater impact upon the church than many of us realize. The feminist movement did not begin to have any great influence upon our government and other institutions until the early 1960's. Since then its influence has steadily grown until it now has a great impact. The

movement has contributed millions of dollars into the campaigns of liberal politicians who in turn have helped the cause of the feminists.

## *What the feminists Relieve and Teach*

The feminist movement has a diversity of beliefs—all the way from the radical feminists to the so-called "biblical" feminists who pretend to be committed to the Bible, but will then argue that much of the Bible is "culturally conditioned" and is therefore not binding on people today. They reject what the Bible teaches about the role of women in the church (1 Tim. 2: 11-12; 1 Cor. 11: 3) and in the marriage relationship (Eph. 5: 22-24). The radical feminists are anti-God and anti-marriage: they are humanists. They have set out to restructure the government, the home and the church. They are intent on changing all our standards in society. They support civil rights for homosexuals and lesbians, are pro-abortion, and approve of any kind of "live-in" arrangement that one might desire. They say that marriage is a "dehumanizing" institution; that it is "legal whoredom" for women, and believe that it must end in order for women to be liberated. They believe children should be taught to believe in "human potential" not in God, and they would give the responsibility of rearing children to the state.

## *Its Impact on denominationalism*

The feminists do not intend to leave religion alone. They have had such an impact on denominational churches that by the middle of the 1970's there were 7,000 women ordained to preach among religious groups in the United States. The Methodist church alone had more than 500 women preaching at that time, and the Disciples of Christ ordained 51 women in 1987 (**The Christian Standard**, Feb. 26 1989, page 23). In a period of ten years the number of females enrolled in seminaries grew from three (3) to sixteen (16) percent. (**U. S. News and World Report**, Sept. 27, 1976, page 84). In 1982 the feminist movement had such an influence on the National Council of Churches that it issued

a new version of the Bible attempting to remove from the text most of what they called "sexist" language.

## *Its Impact on Institutional Churches of Christ*

Institutional churches of Christ are now involved in a great struggle over the issue of women preachers, elders and deacons; women leading public prayers, and women being used to usher and to serve at the Lord's table. In 1990 Freed-Hardeman University had what they called "The Preachers and Church Workers Forum" on the subject of "The Role of the Women in the Work and Worship of the Church". Earl D. Edwards (forum director and Dean of the School of the Bible) gave the following as one of his reasons for having this forum: Because this writer is convinced that if the tendency to place women in public leadership roles is not checked, it will cause division in churches of Christ within a very few years (**Gender and Ministry**, Preface, page 6).

They studied in this forum such questions as: "Are Biblical prohibitions cultural ones?", and "Should today's Christian woman be encouraged to lead prayer (or even preach) in the assembly?" (**Gender**, page 7). Four men spoke: the two men who defended the expanded role of women in the church were Robert M. Randolph (preacher for the Brookline, MA church) and Lynn Mitchell (one of the elders of the Bering Drive church in Houston, TX). Ralph Gilmore and Don McWhorter took the opposing view. Randolph and Mitchell argued that the expanded role of women is allowed today because the restrictions found in the scriptures are "cultural"; Gilmore and McWhorter showed that 1 Timothy 2, 1 Corinthians 11 and 1 Corinthians 14: 34 are **not** tied to culture but to the creation of God. Brother McWhorter said in his summary speech:

First Timothy 2: 11-12 finds Paul still not appealing to culture, but to the normative law of creation as the reason why women cannot teach over men nor usurp authority over men. I do not see any argument that has been made that would change that (**Gender**, page 165). The Bering Drive church in Houston (where Lynn Mitchell is an elder) have women participating in public worship in equal roles with men. In a "Report on Women's Participation in Public Worship" dated March 5, 1989, they stated:

On July 31, 1988, the elders presented a statement to the Bering family concerning the use of spiritual gifts by both men and women expressing our conviction that it is scriptural and appropriate for

sisters, as well as brothers, to serve in Sunday morning worship roles of ushering, greeting visitors, receiving the offering, reading scriptures, leading prayers, leading singing, and serving communion (**The Spiritual Sword**, Jan. 1991). During the aforementioned forum at Freed-Hardeman in 1990, Robert Randolph was asked, "Can women serve as elders today?", to which he replied: "I have no problem with women serving as elders today." When Lynn Mitchell was asked the same question, he said: "I would not take any exception to what brother Randolph said." (**Gender**, pages 74, 75).

Some institutional churches of Christ began a drift from the God-given role of women in the 1970's. In some situations that involved small groups of young people and adults, women were allowed to lead prayers and to participate in chain prayers along with the men. We can see that in a few short years they have progressed from women leading prayers in small groups to a place where it is being advocated that a woman can be an elder and a preacher! Brethren, any trend away from God's pattern, if it is not stopped in the very beginning, will grow into a full apostasy!

### *Its Impact on Conservative Churches*

Conservative churches of Christ have not escaped the impact of the feminist movement. As brother Mike Willis said in **Guardian of Truth**, March 16, 1989: To think that we can live in a society with such a movement as the Women's Liberation Movement influencing religious groups around us without some spillover occurring among us is naive. In the milieu of this movement, we are now seeing articles asking whether or not women should attend the business meetings. Is this the portent of a demand for leadership roles for women? Brother Connie Adams (editor of this paper) said in the February 1992 issue: "There are straws in the wind which indicate that we shall not be immune to this problem." Brother L. A. Stauffer made the following statement in an article entitled, "Women - Their Subjection":

A disturbing sign or two are beginning to display themselves in some churches I know about and others I have been associated with in meetings. A few women have made it clear, especially in the absence of elders, that they want to be in business meetings where decisions are made about the work of the church. This is one small step in the direction of the long strides that have been made in society by the feminist and E. R. A. movement. Are these women looking for equal rights and equivalent roles in the church?

Some congregations among us are now having both men and women to come together to talk about the work of the church. In these meetings they discuss the needs and hopes for the congregation, and make suggestions for the improvement of the work. Brethren, this is just a *first* step in the wrong direction. The next step will be that women will naturally want to be included in the decision-making process. It is like our institutional brethren allowing women to pray in small groups (which

is a violation of 1 Tim. 2: 8, 11-12), now women are preaching (in some places), teaching classes where there are both men and women, serving at the Lord's table and leading prayers in the assemblies! One step away from God's order leads to another, and then another, and another... !

God has put the care of the business of the churches into the hands of men. He intended for every church to have a plurality of elders as soon as men can be qualified (Acts 14: 23, Titus 1: 5). Elders are men, not women. No woman can be an elder because she can never meet the qualifications (1 Tim. 3: 1-7; Titus 1: 5-11), therefore she has no right to be in a business meeting of the local church helping to plan and make decisions for the work. She cannot do the work of one she can never qualify to be, an elder! The man has been given the headship role, not the woman (1 Cor. 11: 3). None of the apostles, elders, deacons or evangelists were women in apostolic times. With the understanding that God has specifically placed the business of the church in the hands of men, no God-fearing woman should want to do what God had forbidden her to do—take the role of headship (1 Cor. 11: 3; 1 Tim. 2: 11-15) and leadership in His church. Just as God placed the husband in the role of headship in the home (Eph. 5: 23-24; 1 Pet. 3: 1, 5-6), He has placed the man in the role of headship in the church (1 Tim. 2: 11-14). Any woman who rejects the headship/leadership role of man, in the home or in the church, has sinned against God who gave the roles of men and women for as long as the earth shall stand.

Why would women today want the role of decision-making in the church? The only answer is that many women (and men) have been influenced by the feminist movement of our day. Many in the church today know more about the feminist movement than they do about the Bible and the God-given roles for men and women given from Genesis! There is a great need in the church today to go back to the word of God and study again the roles God has given us as men and women, and may God help us to be content to abide by the limitations He has placed on us.

The impact of the feminist movement upon God's people has been greater than many realize, and the full impact is yet to be felt if preachers, elders and brethren don't do some good, sound teaching on this NOW! I believe that God gave woman a great role in the home and in the church—she is no second-class citizen in the Kingdom! But, others will deal with these things; this article is intended to show the impact on the church when woman steps out of the role that God has given her.

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# God's Limitations Upon Women

1 Cor. 14: 34-35 & 1 Tim. 2: 11-12

Arthur M. Ogden • 212 Cherokee Trail • Somerset, KY 42501

Every Biblical discussion of contemporary woman and her role in God's service must take into account the restrictive passages of the New Testament. A lack of faith in God's Word is demonstrated when we ignore these passages, call for a new hermeneutical rule, or rule them out upon the basis of this being a new age. Man made rules, designed to eradicate the binding force of these scriptures, also destroy everything else God has ordained. We must accept all God has said or we destroy the basis upon which we accept anything He has spoken. This is how faith in God is determined (Rom. 10: 17).

## 1 Timothy 2: 11-12

**"Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence."** We discuss this text first because it is broader in application.

Through the years most of our efforts were directed toward answering those who would deny godly women the right to do the teaching God accepts and requires (Acts 18: 26; 2 Tim. 1: 5; 2: 2; Tit. 2: 3-5). Today, we must deal with those who wish to ignore these texts.

### The Anti-Women Teacher Position

1 Timothy 2: 11-12 is used by those opposed to women teaching. They forbid women purposely teaching anyone at any time. They have insisted that Paul was saying, **"I suffer not a woman to teach," period.** This could not be what Paul was saying, however, because that would mean Christian women could not do the teaching God requires of them. They could not teach by **singing** (Col. 3: 16), be **teachers of good things** (Tit. 2: 3), or **teach the younger women** (Tit. 2: 4) as directed, if forbidden to teach, period.

### The Passage Must Be Qualified

Everyone who studies this passage knows that it must be qualified. Even the Anti-Women Teacher advocates realize this. One proponent's position on the passage, once he finished qualifying it, went something like this: **"I suffer not a woman to teach the Bible, (that is: to be a teacher, deliver didactic discourses), in the church, in any class the church may arrange, in public, or in worship, nor to usurp authority over the man, the woman, or the child, but to be silence."**

His qualifications were found in his writings. He could not and did not deny them.

We do not argue with one's attempt to qualify the passage, but we do question one's right to qualify what he contends must be, **"I suffer not a woman to teach"** period. Such is blatantly inconsistent.

All of us must qualify the passage. Do we qualify it by our own arbitrary rules designed to suit our theories, or do we qualify it by God's own established rules?

### The Scripture's Qualification

The context of 1 Timothy 2 shows how Paul qualified these statements. Verse 1-7 discuss the universal nature of salvation. Of this salvation, Paul was ordained a preacher, teacher and an apostle. The varying roles of men and women in respect to this work are addressed in verses 8-15. **Men** (males) could pray everywhere (v. 8). The exclusive nature of this statement means women cannot pray everywhere. Why not? The context will reveal the reason.

The conduct of women is examined in verses 9-15. First, they are to dress modestly and conduct themselves as **"women professing godliness."** Second, women are to **"learn in silence with all subjection"** and are not **"to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man."** To whom are they to be in subjection? Obviously, the one over whom they cannot exercise authority, **man.** The reasons given were: (1) the creation, **"Adam was first formed,"** and (2) the curse, **"the woman being deceived was in the transgression"** (cf Gen. 2: 23-24; 3: 16). From the beginning, God recognized man as the head of the woman. For this reason, female Christians cannot teach in any capacity that violates their place of submission to man. On the other hand, they can teach in any capacity required by the scriptures that does not violate that position. Godly women do not violate this principle when they teach their children (1 Tim. 2: 15), other women (Tit. 2: 3-5), or even when they teach men submissively (cf. Acts 18: 26).

### 1 Corinthians 14: 34-35

**"Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church."** This text deals with one specific place where the rule of submission applies, the **assembly** of the saints. Women must not address this assembly. They must remain silent. It is a shame for them to speak in the assembly.

### Inconsistent Positions

The Anti-Bible Class people have used this passage to condemn the Bible Class arrangement, insisting that it only authorizes an assembly where the whole church is together in one place (cf. v. 23). Their position is inconsistent because it permits the teaching of the Bible only in an assembly where the whole church is together in one place. Bible examples of the word of God being taught in places and at times other than when the whole church is together in one place prove this position to be in error.

The Anti-Women Teacher advocates who believe classes are scriptural apply this text to the Bible Class arrangement. To them, "Let your women keep silence in the churches" also means "in any class the church may arrange." However, consistency would demand that all the principles of this text likewise be applied to Bible Classes. This would mean conducting only one class at a time because two or more would violate the principle of only one speaking at a time (cf. v 29-32).

Some brethren have argued through the years that 1 Corinthians 14 is not binding today. There are two theories: (1) The passage is regulating the conduct of "inspired persons." Since divine inspiration ceased (13: 8-13), they contend the restriction no longer applies. (2) The passage controlled of "the prophets' wives" (deduced from the expression "your women" in KJV) and, since the prophets no longer exist, it is no longer binding.

Few have questioned these positions through the years. I questioned them. Were only the "inspired women" or "the prophets' wives" to be under obedience? If these positions contain validity, all other women (except the categories mentioned above) could speak in those assemblies. If not, why not? If all other women could speak, then God penalized these women, not because they were to be under obedience but, because of who they were. Who can believe it? On the other hand, if the other women could not speak, what is the point of the argument? Negating the force of this text upon the strength of these arguments would actually negate the teaching of the entire New Testament.

The reason our sisters at Corinth were forbidden to speak was that **"they are commanded to be under obedience."** To whom were they obedient? They were subject to the general headship of man (cf. 1 Cor. 11: 1-16).

### Nothing Has Changed

Man has been the head of the woman since creation (Gen. 2: 23-24; 3: 16; 1 Tim. 2: 13-14). While the Old Testament does not argue the point as powerfully as the New Testament, it is evident that man was the head of the woman (cf. Num. 30: 3-8, 13). The New Testament thoroughly establishes the point. First, "the head of every man is Christ; **and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God**" (1 Cor. 11: 3). For this reason godly women must recognize and keep the customary rules that distinguish her as a woman (1 Cor. 11: 4-16). Second, godly women must not violate their place of submission to man when teaching others (1 Tim. 2: 11-12). Though they can teach other women and chil-

dren, and even men submissively (Acts 18: 26), they cannot teach in any capacity that violates this rule. Third, godly women must not address the assemblies of the saint (1 Cor. 14: 34-35). Finally, godly women submit to their own husbands (Eph. 5: 22-33; Col. 3: 18; Tit 2: 5; 1 Pet. 3: 1-6).


Has God changed His law? If so, where? Since God established His order with the creation, and He has not changed it, what right do we have to change it for Him? The law of Christ emphasizes this principle and we are still under law to Christ. Women who **profess godliness** have never had a problem with the rule. They praise God by remaining in subjection to man.

### Conclusion

Seeking to nullify the binding force of 1 Corinthians 14: 34-35 and 1 Timothy 2: 11-12 is a serious matter. Those who do so are **"perverting the gospel of Christ"** (Gal. 1: 6-8), are not **abiding "in the doctrine of Christ"** (2 Jno. 9), and they are inviting the wrath of God upon them (Rom. 2: 8-9). It is far better that female Christians adorn themselves with the beauty ordained of God as a daughter of Sarah (1 Pet. 3: 1-6) than to enjoy all the glory this world has to offer.

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# Living In Subjection

1 Cor, 11: 1-3; Eph. 5: 22-33

Dick Blackford • P. O. Box 83 • Tuckerman, AR 72473

I believe the editor of this special issue gave me the hard-est topic. It is the last one I would have picked if I had been allowed. I shall try to deal with it without bringing down the wrath of Christian women upon me. But no promises.

Some women feel that living in subjection is not really living at all. There are some reasons for this: (1) They have not been shown and taught by their mothers; (2) They are rebellious toward authority; (3) They don't understand God's reasons; (4) They have never seen a good husband. Before examining these, let us look first at our texts.

## 1 Corinthians 11: 1-3

We are particularly interested in verse 3 - "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God." The significant word in this passage is **head**. It does not suggest "source" or a superior/inferior relationship. It denoted one thing only **authority** (government). The word authority could be substituted for "head" and one would receive a proper understanding of this verse. The woman's subordination does not violate the equality of the sexes. There is a sense in which being in Christ is "neither male nor female" (Gal. 3: 28).

## Headship Needed In All Relationships

All groups and units of people must recognize headship to be able to function. An army with no leader will be defeated. At the same time it can have only one commander-in-chief who makes the final decisions, or else it will be defeated. *"The subjection of a wife to her husband is not that of force and fear and slavery, but of loving submission which comes from freedom. A body with two heads is a monstrosity; a church with two heads cannot prosper; a house with two heads cannot stand"* (Lehman Strauss, **Devotional Studies in Galatians and Ephesians**, p. 205). God made neither the church nor the family a democracy. He ordained a chain of authority. This does not mean He loves elders more than He loves deacons, or kings more than He loves citizens, or parents more than He loves children, or husbands more than He does wives.

## No Difference Based On Gender

There is no distinction in Christ based on gender (Gal. 3: 28). It is not based on the idea that males are His favorites. It does not enhance a man's salvation above that of his wife. It is based on which is best suited for a particular role. God stated near the beginning that "her

desire shall be to her husband" (Gen. 3: 16). *"This principle involves no humiliation, no injustice, no wrong. It recognizes a difference of function and responsibility, but it precludes selfishness, harshness, and unkindness"* (Charles R. Eerdman, **Commentary On 1 Corinthians**, p. 112). As the Father and Son are "one," so are man and wife (Eph. 5: 31). Though Christ is subject to the Father, there is no rivalry between them. Neither did God intend any between husband and wife, though the wife is subject to the husband. While the woman was made for man, man was never complete until woman was there. There is an interdependence upon each other and upon God. Paul recognized this when he said "Nevertheless, neither is the woman without the man, nor the man without the woman, in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, so is the man also by the woman; but all things are of God" (11: 11-12). Paul is not arguing for anything other than a partnership, though a partnership in which man is the head of his household. The scriptures recognize wives as being on an equality with their husbands mentally, morally, and spiritually.

## To Wives Or To Women In general?

In both 1 Cor. 11 and Eph. 5 Paul is writing to Christians and of married women. In 1 Cor. 11 Paul indicated this by using the creation as an illustration (v. 7-9, 11, 12). He says the woman is the glory of the man. In Eph. 5 he specifically refers to husbands and wives. Generally, a woman is not to usurp authority over a man (1 Tim. 2: 11-14), but my wife is not in subjection to every man on the street. Nor does it mean a widow could not hire a man to do manual labor for her. However, a wife is to yield her will to her husband's. She is not to take the rule, dominate, and act on her own authority, but to subject herself to her husband. It is the will of God.

## Ephesians 5: 22-33

Paul had just stated (v. 21) that Christians are to subject themselves to each other. That means they are not domineering but are concerned about the welfare of one another. But there is a special kind of subjection for wives to their husbands, for "the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is also head of the church." What is the nature of his authority? *"It is the authority that empties itself completely, in complete self-sacrifice, in the interest of loved ones. Every true woman who realizes that ground of authority yields to it by the very fiber of her nature"* (G. Campbell Morgan, **The Corinthians Letters Of Paul**, p. 134). It is almost impossible to discuss the submission of wives without talking of man's love for his wife.

The husband is to love his wife to the same extent Christ loved the church. He should be willing to give himself up. As Christ is the savior of the church, the man should be devoted to saving his wife. This is his great

object in life. Paul emphasizes the dignity of woman. He is to love her as his own body (v. 28). This does not mean he loves her "as much as" his own body, but "because she is" his body. He is to nourish her. This involves protect-ing and comforting. She will look to him for this. "Her desire shall be to her husband" (Gen. 3: 16). They are different physically, biologically, and emotionally. He honors her as the weaker vessel, or body (1 Pet. 3: 7). He is to cherish her (v. 29). This means he places a high value on her and esteems her.

**To What Extent Is Her Subjection?**

"In everything!" (v. 24. ) That's it. Sounds like a tall order - enough to cause a woman to balk. Some have not only protested but have actually blasphemed against God. Some, both men and women, have never understood this. It means *in everything which is not contrary to the will of God, pertaining to a husband's legitimate authority* - "as is fitting in the Lord" (Col. 3: 18).

I knew a Christian lady who was bewildered by her non-Christian husband. He mistreated her and knew just enough of the Bible to know it said that wives were to "submit to their husbands *in everything*." He would command her to do some demeaning, demoralizing, and ridiculous things just to prove she was in subjection. As A. C. Grider used to say, "A man like that should be ashamed to live and afraid to die." She was frustrated, lost her self-esteem, and her faith was greatly shaken as she attempted to meet all of his demands. WAS THIS WHAT THE LORD HAD IN MIND? Of course not.

The person who plucks Eph. 5: 24 out of context is no different than the one who plucks John 3: 16 out of context and refuses to consider anything else the Bible says on the subject. It is not "fit in the Lord" for her to violate the will of God (Acts 5: 29). Nor is it "fit in the Lord" for man to abuse and mistreat his wife by making a slave of her. It is hard to believe a man could read Eph. 5: 24 and not also read the next verse (and also vs. 28, 29). Such a man is wresting the scriptures unto his own destruction (2 Pet. 3: 16).

**Reciprocal Attitudes**

The wife's demeanor is that of a meek and quiet spirit (1 Pet. 3: 1f). She loves and reverences her husband (Tit. 2: 4; Eph. 5: 33). If she wants her husband to love her, she submits and tries to please him. If a husband desires his wife to "honor and obey," let him have the care and concern Christ had for the church. Rather than terror and threats he should have love and attachment. He is commanded to love her. When each comes to the marriage willing to give, they shall receive.

Some wives have to fight the tendency to be domineering. Some men need to fight the tendency to abdicate and let the woman be in charge - the head. This is not God's will. Adam Clarke quotes a homely rhyme from Francis Quarles:

"Ill thrives the hapless family that shows  
A clock that's silent, and a hen that crows!  
I know not which live most unnatural lives,  
Obeying husbands or commanding wives!  
Let us look again at those 4 reasons why some women living in subjection are not really living at all. (1) *They*

*have not been shown and taught by their mothers.* This is a duty enjoined on older women (Tit. 2: 3, 4). Not only should they look for opportunities, but elders should plan classes for younger women taught by older women. Even if they didn't learn from their mothers they can learn from the Bible. (2) *They are rebellious toward authority* (Rom. 1: 30). The feminists shall receive their reward (Rev. 21: 8). (3) *They don't understand God's Rea-sons.* Which are: a. Man was created first (1 Tim. 2: 13). God has always given preeminence to seniority. He did this with the firstborn in families and he does to man in order of creation, b. Woman was easily deceived, thus better suited for subjection than headship. She over-stepped her bounds and took the lead in the first sin and persuaded her husband to join her. (4) *They have never seen a good husband.* She submits easier to love than to bitterness. "Husbands love your wives and be not bitter against them" (Col. 3: 18). But she is still commanded to submit. This shows the value of courtship. Headship and submission should be discussed before marriage. Both husbands and wives have often been greatly disappointed. A woman who made a bad choice for a husband may have to work with him slowly and win him by her behavior (1 Pet. 3: 1f). She should spend much time in prayer, for both of them.

**Conclusion**

Women enjoy the highest happiness in communities and homes where the Bible with its principles of Christianity are accepted and obeyed. The submission of a wife to her husband is part of her obedience to the Lord (Eph. 5: 22). Eerdman observed that Paul is pictured as an enemy of women, and by leaders of the feminist movement he is regarded with horror and disgust. It is possible that Paul may someday be discovered as the great emancipator and protector of women.

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# *The Woman Whose Price Is Far Above Rubies*

(A Study of Prov. 31)

**Bill Hall • Route 8, Box 385 • Florence, AL 35630**

"Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies" (Prov. 31: 10). These words serve to introduce the Bible picture of an ideal woman. This is **God's** "ideal." This is beauty as **God** sees beauty. This is **God's** formula for happiness and contentment. We would emphasize that this is the ideal. This is the standard for which godly women strive. No one woman has reached it to perfection. Many women, however, focusing on the qualities that characterize the woman of Prov. 31, recognizing her beauty, and realizing that she is a picture of what God wants them to be, have taken on her character to a remarkable extent. We hope that we can encourage others to do so. God's picture of the ideal woman provides a refreshing alternative to the world's standard. The world would picture her as a career oriented, independent, aggressive, self-assertive, refusing to allow anyone or anything to get in the way of her personal ambitions and goals, looking out for self, unrelenting in her pursuit of "success." Some would even go so far as to picture her as being able to out-cuss, out-drink, and out-maneuver any man if competition demands it. We are confident that our readers' faith in God and His wisdom will enable them to overcome the pressures of this modern and sinful world in order to appreciate the beauty and grace of the woman pictured in this passage.

## *She Is Trustworthy*

Whether her husband leaves the home for an hour, a day, or many days, he knows that he can trust her to be faithful to the vows she made when they married and to carry on the affairs of the home in the most efficient manner possible. "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need to spoil" (v. 11).

He is able to trust her in regards to the family's financial affairs. She is a good manager. He faces no temptation to plunder or steal because she has over-spent. He has no lack of gain. She is capable of living within the family income and is conscious of getting good value in her purchases: "She seeketh wool, and flax... She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar" (vs. 13, 14). "She perceiveth that her merchandise is good" (v. 18). She stretches the dollar to provide the very best for her family. Through her careful management the family enjoys what other families of greater income seem to be unable to afford.

## *She Is Unselfish*

She places the interests of her husband and children ahead of her own. "She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life" (v. 12). She loves her husband, rejoices in his successes, helps to build his self-image, and is always supportive in everything that is good. She is unselfish with her husband's time: "Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land" (v. 23). This verse suggests that her husband is respected, that he joins with other "elders" of the city in settling disputes among the people. She encourages him in this even though no doubt such duties require time away from home.

She watches after her children and provides for their needs. "She looketh well to the ways of her household" (v. 27). She makes it her business to know where her children are and what they are doing. She is a disciplinarian.

## *She Is Hardworking*

She "worketh willingly with her hands" (v. 13). She is not the family breadwinner, but she finds ways to supplement the family income by buying a field and then "with the fruit of her hands (out of her earnings - NIV) she planteth a vineyard" (v. 16). "She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant" (v. 24). She is skillful in her work: "She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff" (v. 19).

She is hardworking, but is not in competition with her husband. He does not feel threatened by her, for she seeks his good. She is hardworking, but not in such a way as to neglect her children, for she looks well to their ways. She can be found when a bloodied knee needs attention or hurt feelings need comfort and sympathy. She is hardworking, even though all indications are that the family is prosperous with plenty of household servants. She does not use her affluence as an excuse for idleness, for she "eateth not the bread of idleness" (v. 27).

## *She Is Well Organized*

Plans are made before the day ever begins. "She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens (servant girls - NIV)" (v. 15). It is likely that the "portion" mentioned in this verse refers to "tasks" that the servant girls are to carry out. No time is wasted. She knows what tasks are to be performed during the day, and she is ready to assign them just as soon as the servants are available.

She also is aware of winter's approach and sees to it that proper clothing is available for the family. "She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her



household are clothed with scarlet" (v. 21). Nothing "slips up" on her. She thinks ahead. She is organized. There is little last minute scurrying around in this household.

The future holds no fear for her. "She can laugh at the days to come" (NIV - v. 5). She is well prepared for the future. She has her trust in God. She has nothing to fear. She can live her life in peace and serenity.

### *She Is Benevolent*

She is a woman of compassion, of sympathy, of concern for the needy. A child that is hungry and poorly clothed, a family that has fallen on misfortune, or an outstretched hand from an impoverished fellow-being, stirs her spirit. "She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy" (v. 20). Her children grow up, learning by example the importance of caring for the fatherless and widows.

### *She Commands the Respect of Others*

When she speaks, "she openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness" (v. 26). No malicious gossip comes from the lips of this woman, no harsh and unkind criticism, no shallow babble. Her mind is fertile, and her speech manifests the depth of her thoughts. She is kind, and her lips speak forth words of kindness.

She dresses becomingly. "Her clothing is silk and purple" (v. 21). She cares about her appearance. Her clothing reflects her character and self-respect. She knows what is appropriate for various occasions and dresses accordingly.

She is a woman of strength. All who know her admire her fortitude. "She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms" (v. 17). People respect her for her quiet, but strong, confident demeanor. "Strength and honour are her clothing" (v. 25).

### *She Is Valuable*

She is not just valuable, she is invaluable. Her worth cannot be stated in monetary terms. "Her price is far above rubies" (v. 10). She is not for hire. Her labor is a labor of love. What she does and what she is cannot be bought for any price. She can only be repaid with love, appreciation, and praise. Her "job benefits" are a good self-image, fulfillment, the joy of a well-run household, the respect of her children, the praise of her husband, the admiration of all who know her, and, above all, the approval of God, who calls her a "virtuous woman." Her benefits cannot be stated in monetary terms, for they too are invaluable.

Her life is not an easy one. It calls forth all the energy, determination, and strength she can muster. But her joy is complete. "Her children arise up, and call her blessed" (v. 28); and her husband, in love and appreciation, praises her, saying, "Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all" (v. 29). She may or may not have physical charm or beauty, but she is beautiful with a beauty that lasts and is enhanced with age. The man who finds such a virtuous woman may not be rich in this world's goods, but he is rich indeed. A virtuous woman - God's wonderful gift to man!

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## *A Tribute To The Housewife*

**Donnie V. Rader • P. O. Box 9 • Lexington, AL 35648**

The role of the housewife is one that is very often minimized and not appreciated. I know from personal experience the feeling that comes from having a job that in the minds of many is not work at all. That is precisely the view that many husbands and children have of the woman who guides their house. Many other women, who are not all that thrilled with being house-wives, also have a limited view of the responsibilities. May we learn to give that role the consideration, honor and respect that God would have us give it.

### *It is Honorable*

A few women refer to themselves as "just a housewife" as though they are ashamed that they are nothing more. If the same women held high positions in the business world they would proudly state their job description and the company they were with. May I say with great emphasis that being a housewife (and "just a housewife") is a position of honor for the simple reason that God assigned her that responsibility. Paul wrote that women should "marry, bear children, guide the house" (1 Tim. 5: 14). He also told Titus that the older women should teach the younger women to be "keepers at home" (Tit. 2: 5). When a woman does that, she is fulfilling the highest purpose and usefulness that she possibly can. Then she has all the dignity she can have. The Proverb writer describes such a woman as "virtuous" and worthy of "praise" (Prov. 31: 10-31).

Being a homemaker is not a second rate, inferior role. But, "here she is supreme—she has no equals. Here her first and her best work is to be done" (P. D. Wilmeth, *The Christian Home*, p. 101). Ladies, don't ever apologize, be ashamed or minimize your role.

### *It's A Real Job — It's Work*

For those that think housewives have nothing to do please consider the expression "keepers at home" (Tit. 2: 5) means "caring for the house, working at home" (Thayer, p. 442, emphasis mine DVR). Read again Prov. 31 and it will be obvious that the woman of the house had plenty to do. She cooks, washes dishes, washes clothes, folds clothes, irons, sews, cleans bathrooms, washes windows, vacuums, dusts, goes to the grocery, shops for the whole family and picks up after others in the house. She starts her day before the rest, getting breakfast ready and sending her husband and children off in different directions. She works all day and then her job continues long after her husband and children have come home. She continues to cook, wash clothes

and see to the 1001 needs of her family. There is more truth than poetry in the saying that "A man works from sun to sun, but a woman's work is never done." And don't forget that she puts in overtime every day. She doesn't get the weekends off. Holidays are double duty.

Now, when you think that your wife, mother or friend has nothing to do, maybe it would do you good to spend about a week doing what she normally does. Believe me, you will change your mind! In fact, husbands, it wouldn't hurt us to pitch in and help. Even with that help, she will have all she can handle.

Husbands and children, have you ever thought what the work your wife and mother does is worth? If she were to be paid by the hour or what she is really worth, you couldn't afford her! It is in the home that she works the hardest and is appreciated the least. What we need to do is just stop and thank her for what she does. And most certainly thank the Lord for her because having found a wife, you indeed have found a good thing, and "obtain favor from the Lord" (Prov. 18: 22).

### *She's A Mother too*

Besides all the other household chores, there are times she will have little children to tend to all day. Either one can be a full-time job within itself. But, she does both and never complains while others think she has nothing to do. She is the one who is up at night when the baby needs to be fed and rocked. She is the one who checks on the children every hour when they are sick. She is the one who changes most of the diapers. She does the potty training and reads and sings to them. She somehow manages to do all of that and still finds time for her husband and other family members. How dare anyone minimize the importance of what she does!

Sure the father has the responsibility in rearing the children, especially in shaping them spiritually (Eph. 6: 1-4). However, generally that has been done by mothers (2 Tim. 1: 5; 3: 15). Napoleon said, "The future destiny of the child is always the work of the mother."

### *What's Happening?*

What is happening to the role of the housewife? Why are so many dissatisfied with being "just a housewife"? Many have followed some career to the neglect of the house, children and their husbands. Could it be that some are trying to live by a higher standard than they can afford and it thus forces the wife to leave the home and into the marketplace? Don't misunderstand. I'm not saying that it is wrong for a woman to work outside the home. I am saying that it is a shame when some woman chooses her career (or unnecessary job) and doesn't keep up her work at home and leaves the children to be raised by some hired baby-sitter and the older ones to come home from school to an empty house.

Why isn't more emphasis given in the training of young girls to become housewives? Why is it that so many who marry today have no concept of their responsibilities? Is the art of being a good homemaker becoming a thing of the past? God forbid that the day should come!

Many of the homes among the brethren where I have labored for the past several years have been blessed with women who are seeking to be good housewives and mothers and nothing more. These are women who profess godliness. Those of us who have homes that have been so blessed have every reason to thank God.

### *You're Only A Housewife?*

ONLY a wife and a mother?

When God wants a spirit to bear  
 Intercessory prayer to His presence;  
 Effectual, passionate prayer,  
 He looks to the heart of compassion -  
 A "mothering" heart than can best  
 Understand how He longs for the sinner  
 To come to His arms and find rest.

ONLY an wife and a mother?

When God want a preacher, and one  
 He can trust, He looks to the mother  
 Who is faithfully training her son.  
 And when He ordains that son "preacher, "  
 And gives him the right sort of wife  
 Who will nurture, encourage and strengthen,  
 Who will be "his right arm" through his life.

When God wants a Sunday School teacher

For the little folks He wants to reach,  
 Who will show them the way of salvation  
 As only a mother can teach.  
 He looks to the heart that is busy,  
 At home, in His throne-room with Him  
 While the hands of this hurrying housewife  
 Are keeping her house neat and trim.

Oh, you are not "only a housewife. "

When God chose a name for His church  
 He called her, not slave, nor yet servant,  
 But bride—and when He has ended His search  
 For those who will make up her number  
 And she, as His wife, she will take up the task  
 Of being His helpmeet in Heaven,  
 What greater could anyone, anywhere, ask?

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# What Women Can Do To Promote The Cause of Christ

Connie W. Adams • P. O. Box 69 • Brooks, KY 40109

Paul said there were "women which labored with me in the gospel" along with Clement and other "fellow-laborers, whose names are in the book of life: (Phil. 4: 3). Exactly what these women, Clement, or the other fellow workers did to help Paul in the gospel is not spelled out. But it is clear that it is praiseworthy for women to labor in the gospel. Other writers have dealt with limitations upon that labor. It is my task to expand upon areas in which godly women may labor to promote the cause of Christ.

It is erroneous to think of the cause of Christ only in terms of what is done in public worship assemblies. It is helpful to speak of the church both *collectively* and *distributively*. As Saul of Tarsus persecuted the church at Jerusalem, it is said that he "made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and hailing men and women committed them to prison" (Acts 8: 3). The church was not assembled here, but the people were still described as "the church".

It is in this sense that there is so much which godly women can do to promote the cause of truth.

## *Helping The Local Church*

1. Women can help **establish** local churches. The church in Philippi began with the conversion of a band of women with Lydia who gathered by the riverside for study and prayer (Acts 16: 13-15). They attended to the word spoken, were baptized and immediately showed hospitality to Paul and his companions who continued to preach there. Many congregations would not exist today had it not been for the faith and devotion of a godly woman, or several, who were determined to see the cause planted where they lived. When I preached in Atlanta, Georgia, it was through the encouragement of two sisters who lived in Covington and were traveling about 40 miles each service to meet with the Glenwood Hills church, that the work began in that place. They helped to arrange for Sunday afternoon services in the Legion Hall and did much work behind the scenes to get it going. When crews of men went down on Saturdays to help erect the building, they quietly arranged for the gathering of food and drink for the workers at noon. They never preached a sermon, nor wanted to. They did not aspire to be elders or deacons or lead in any way, but I'll tell you, without them the work would not have been started, at least, not then.

2. Women can help **maintain** the work of a

congregation. The church in Cortez, Florida was kept alive for a number of years by a sister and her children who would not give up. There were times when she and a few other women and children were the only ones who met. They conducted the services. When a meeting resulted in the conversion of a man, he took the lead and they encouraged and helped him and then did the same with other men as they were converted. The church at Ask Fork, Arizona has been kept alive through the work of an elderly sister who refused to give up.

3. Women can help **within** the congregation to promote the cause. They can teach classes of children. I attended the funeral of a dear elderly sister a few years ago and met a number of people who told of the profound influence she had on them as a teacher when they were small children. Her story could be multiplied over the country and around the world. Many faithful workers for the Lord, including elders, preachers, song leaders, teachers, and godly women who do so much to help the work of the Lord, were first instructed by a faithful sister in a Bible classroom who probably had no idea how vital a role she was filling.

Many older women have done much to instruct the younger women. Not only should older women teach the younger on such subjects as being godly wives and mothers, but on a wide range of Biblical studies. Women need to be well grounded in the whole counsel of God. They need to be informed on evidences to support faith, on the nature, work and organization of the church and dangers for corruption from the divine pattern in these areas. They must be taught textual studies of all sections of the Bible including the prophets and Revelation. Various issues which arise and trouble the saints should be thoroughly covered. Sometimes it is a well informed wife, mother or grandmother who is able to quietly point out the truth to the rest of the family. Sometimes a devout wife can save her own husband from grievous error.

Some of the greatest encouragers of gospel preachers are faithful sisters who listen with eloquence and sometimes speak words of encouragement. The quiet dignity and unyielding consistency demonstrated by so many devout women is the source of strength to many of us. For many years I have suggested to younger preachers and other Christians that they spend some time talking with and listening to elderly sisters in Christ. They often have a wisdom borne of experience which enables them to be wise counselors to the younger.

I do not know how many studies have been arranged for me by faithful women. Through their influence they have played a role in leading countless people to Christ. Many times I have been called upon to baptize those

who were taught one-on-one by some sister in the Lord. Women need to learn how to teach in the most effective way. My wife teaches classes often in our meetings for the women on how women can teach other women the gospel. It is a scriptural, common-sense approach that works.

Phoebe was "servant of the church which is at Cenchrea" (Rom. 16: 1). They had entrusted her with some responsibility on behalf of the church there as she journeyed to Rome. Paul gave instructions to the brethren to "assist her in whatever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also" (verse 2). In the same context he wrote of Priscilla and Aquila who were described as "my helpers in Christ Jesus" and said that he and the churches of the Gentiles owed thanksgiving to God for them (Rom. 16: 3-4). He further sent greeting to "Mary, who bestowed much labor on us" (v. 6).

There were certain widows who were to be "taken into the number" (enrolled) (1 Tim. 5: 9-10). These were to be 60 years of age, "well reported of for good works; if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work." These were women to whom special responsibilities were assigned and for which there was compensation. The "enrolling" had to do with being numbered among those to be cared for by the church as the context indicates. They were therefore to be just representatives of all that was good and noble about the church.

### *Promoting The Cause Generally*

Older women are to teach the younger women. "The aged women likewise, that they be in behavior as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed" (Titus 2: 3-5). Notice that older women were to be "teachers of good things." This may be done by word and example. Younger women were to be "good" (or beneficent, contributing to what is noble or praiseworthy). When this is not done, then the result is that "the word of God will be blasphemed."

1. The power for good in the domestic realm is shown in this passage. Where this influence is lacking, society at large suffers, and especially the church. It is this writer's settled persuasion that the present absence of this domestic influence, all too evident across the land, is responsible indirectly for many of the woes which beset the people of God. The family circle is the foundation of all ordered society. Where it suffers, everything it touches suffers with it. Strength in this area helps to develop strong leaders in the churches and contributes greatly to the developing of gospel preachers and teachers and their wives. Weakness in this area is partly responsible for the lack of qualified elders and deacons. Where there is a de-emphasizing of home making, there is also to be seen generally a failure to train children properly. As they reach their teens untrained and undisciplined, their fathers are ill prepared to serve as elders.

Their families are not in control.

2. Women have great power for good in society at large. Remember Dorcas? Upon her death, many came testifying of her good deeds. Luke reports "this woman was full of good works and alms-deeds which she did." When she died, "all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them" (Acts 9: 36-39). Where did Dorcas find the time to be "full of goods works and alms-deeds" and to make "coats and garments" for the poor? What was her role in the church at Joppa? She was neither an elder nor a preacher. She is described simply as "a certain disciple" (Acts 9: 36). Her power for good in the community was felt. She practiced her religion and when she died, she left an empty place in many lives. There is an innate compassion in godly women. We must not allow the pressures of modern society to squelch that. It was said of the "worthy woman" that "She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy" (Prov. 31: 20). So did Dorcas.

Peter said that the godly wife might be able to win her husband to the Lord even when he will not listen to the preaching of the word. He cannot fail to see the power of the word as it makes his wife all she ought to be (1 Pet. 3: 1-6). This is what is meant by promoting the cause generally.

There are women who are engaged in various occupations which bring them into daily contact with many unsaved people. They will observe your dress, speech, dignity and self-respect, your response to pressures from those around you on the job and they will soon learn how much you know about the Bible and whether or not you are real in living according to what you say you believe. You may be the only opportunity some of those who see you daily will ever have to observe a real, live, walking and talking Christian. What is the gospel according to you, sisters? That is the gospel they are reading.

This writer owes much to the power of righteous women: a grandmother, a mother, a sister, aunts, two godly wives, and two saintly mother-in-laws, a host of grandmothers and mothers and sisters in Christ whose lives have touched my own and helped me along the way. All of these have a share in whatever has been accomplished in preaching the gospel wherever doors have opened for me to go. Whatever has been said or done to build up churches and save the lost is due in large part to the power and influence of these good women. May their tribe increase.

## **God's Woman**

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# Questions Often Asked About The Role of Women

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The inspired scriptures will perfect a man unto all good works (2 Tim. 3: 16, 17). Any work that is not authorized by the scriptures is not a good work (Eph. 2: 10). Every question must be answered by the word of God.

This article is limited in content because of space. I shall limit the questions to a woman's role to public worship and service.

I want to lay down three principles from God's word which I believe will govern all questions relating to the woman's role anywhere, especially in the church.

1) God created man and woman and specified their relationship in the family, in society and in the church (Gen. 3: 16). That relationship does not change through the ages.

2) The word of God is complete to furnish everyone unto all good works which God had ordained (2 Tim. 3: 17; Eph. 2: 10). God "... hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness..." (2 Pet. 1: 3).

3) The following divine instruction to women is clear, complete and concise:

"Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church" (1 Cor. 14: 34, 35).

"Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence" (1 Tim. 2: 11, 12). These two passages place the following obligations upon every woman everywhere.

1. Not to speak in the church (assembly).
2. To keep silence with all subjection.
3. Not to usurp authority over the man.
4. To be under obedience.

These verses do not permit any women to speak in the assembly of the church, or to usurp any position of a man. This applies to all churches and all situations in which a woman would usurp any authority over men.

## Woman In Creation

Woman is man's equal, created from him, for him, and for his glory (Gen. 2: 22; 1 Cor. 11: 7-9), but she was created to be in subjection to man (1 Cor. 11: 3; 1 Tim. 2: 11, 12; Eph. 5: 22-24; Col. 3: 18; 1 Pet. 3: 1). The man was

created first (1 Tim. 2: 13). Woman was created afterward for a helper and companion to man (Gen. 2: 19-25). She is to be in subjection to man; he will rule over her (Gen. 3: 16). This applies to society as well as to the family relationship (1 Tim. 2: 11, 12).

## Woman's Work In the Church

The role of women in the church has been undergoing some change in the wrong direction for more than a generation. I have received questions from women across the country seeking some justification from scriptures to engage in a leading role in the public worship, and in the activity of the church which is not permitted to them.

### 1. Are Women Authorized To Preach?

"Let your women keep silence in the churches:... for it is a shame for women to speak in the church" (1 Cor. 14: 34, 35). "... But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be silence" (1 Tim. 2: 11, 12). These passages prohibit women teaching or usurping authority over the man. They are not permitted to be in any position in the assembly of the church that is usurping the authority of the man.

The context of the above statement indicated that "church" refers to the assembly of the saints for edification and worship. The apostle was discussing spiritual gift of tongues to edify the church.

### 2. Can women attend business meetings and participate in the discussion?

A woman is not to usurp authority of man; she is not to take a ruling position in the affairs of the local church. These meetings are called "business meetings" because they are usually the means of conducting the "business" affairs of the church in the absence of elders. Their intended function is to make decisions concerning the affairs of the church. The Bible forbids women taking the lead in any affair of the local church. Women should not attend "business meetings" of the church.

### 3. Can women serve the elements of the Lord's supper to the congregation?

A woman is not to be in any position that usurps the authority of a man because the New Testament forbids that. There is no teaching in God's word that is more direct, positive and specific than 1 Corinthians 14: 34, 35 and 1 Timothy 2: 11, 12.

Serving at the Lord's supper is a leading role of men, and women cannot do so scripturally. Any public direction or service before the assembly for worship by a woman is usurping the authority of the man.

### 4. Can a woman lead a public prayer?

No, if she is in an assembly of men and women.

Leading a public prayer is the same in principle as speaking before the assembly to preach to teach. Public prayer is talking to God, but it is also speaking before the assembly, otherwise, how would they be following the petition to God. She would be violating 1 Timothy 2: 12.

5. *Can a woman say "amen" audibly during the sermon or at the end of a public prayer?*

Most people who pray with one "leading" the prayer say "amen" to themselves, or very softly. To say "amen" audibly, loudly, is attempting to speak a word before the assembly. Could she not quietly say "amen" to herself and accomplish exactly what the Lord would permit her to do?

6. *Can a woman serve as an elder?*

No man or woman can serve as an elder or deacon who is not qualified according to the scriptures. 1 Timothy 3: 1-7 and Titus 1: 5-9 give the requirements that will qualify a man to be an elder, and no woman can attain these qualities. An elder is to be a man and to have one wife. No woman can have one wife by God's law. An elder must rule his own house well (1 Tim. 3: 4), and the woman can not scripturally be the head of the house (Eph. 5: 22-25).

An elder is to have the oversight (1 Pet. 5: 2). Elders are to rule over the flock (Heb. 13: 7, 17; 1 Tim. 5: 17). A woman would violate 1 Timothy 2: 12 to try to be an elder or a deacon.

7. *Can a woman lead singing?*

Many women have good singing voices. Some of them have good knowledge of the Bible and have a good vocabulary, but they are not permitted to speak in the church (assembly) over the man. Directing singing is taking a leading role in part of the public worship, and a woman is not permitted to do that.

In rare cases when very small numbers of saints meet, and only one or two men are present, a lot of help could come from one or two of the sisters, but even here a woman is not to "lead" singing if a man is present. He should try to direct the singing.

8. *Can a woman make the announcements?*

Any public speaking in the assembly for worship is a violation of 1 Timothy 2: 12. She cannot speak or teach over the man, and cannot usurp the authority of the man. She should not be in the position of a man.

A woman should not try to circumvent the word of God by trying to take the role of leadership and rule in the church through her husband, father or brother. In some areas this is what disturbs churches which would otherwise be at peace. Let the woman fulfill the role God gave to them, and let the men treat the women as God requires them to do. This will strengthen both the home and the church.

# SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

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



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

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## THINK ON THESE THINGS

*H. E. Phillips*

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### Serving God With The Heart

Most people today are so engrossed with their personal problems and with the knowledge of world problems that they have little inclination to give much time and attention to their eternal destiny. It becomes easy to drift away from the fundamentals of one's faith when he hears less and less about revelation of God and thinks more and more about his personal welfare and the concerns of this life. It becomes far easier for such an one to go through the rituals of religious practice, which do not demand too much attention from his problems in this life, than to exercise the self-control of compelling the heart to lay aside the cares of this world and follow after the things of the Spirit. We drift away from the truth because we lose sight of what truth is. We talk about honor and praise to God and do little about it because it is the easiest course and takes less time and effort. We promise and never change because we love the things of this world more than we love the things of God. These are facts, and no amount of logic will eliminate them.

Jesus taught a parable of a sower who sowed seeds. There were four kinds of soil that received the seed. This is recorded in Matthew 13 and Luke 8. One kind of soil was hard and compared to the roadside, and seed sown upon it never penetrated the soil, so that the birds of the air carried it away. Other seed fell in soil which had no depth because of the underlying rock. While the seed entered the soil, there was no

area for roots to grow and give meaning and stability to the seed planted. The third fell into soil which had already received other seed which choked out the good seed. But the last fell into the good ground which produced harvest in varying degree according to the ability of the soil. Only the last soil was commended.

In Matthew 13: 14-16, Jesus explains why he taught the parables and why the hearts were such as not to receive the word. "And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear."

One could become a Christian and afterward allow his heart to turn away from the truth so that it would not be right in the sight of God. It is far more important than most people in the church realizes for each one to examine himself and know that his praise and worship to God is an action of the heart and not the service of the lips. The heart is that part of the person which understands and believes. When the heart becomes calloused, one will neither see nor hear so as to understand the truth and be changed.

The heart is that which is convinced of right and wrong and understands the nature of man's sins which separate him from God. This is the reason the account in Acts 2 reveals that those who heard the preaching of the apostles were pricked in their hearts and cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

The heart is the seat of action. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness..." (Rom. 10: 10). Obedience is an action of heart. "... But ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you" (Rom. 6: 17).

The difference between acceptable worship and devotion to God and that which characterized the hypocritical Pharisees is the difference between a worship and devotion involving the heart, which obeys the commands of God on the one hand, and a lip praise which subscribes to the commandments of men on the



other.

We are living in an age when the majority of men and women are caught up in the race for riches and the care of this world, and such endeavors stifles the obedience of the faith from the heart. "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).

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## UNQUOTE "

## Editorial

Connie W. Adams

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### Certain Strange Things

#### To Our Ears

The Athenians spent their time "in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing" (Acts 17: 21). What they were not used to hearing was the simple, unadulterated gospel of Jesus Christ. They honored many gods but they knew nothing of the "God that made the world and all things therein" (v. 24). They were the intellectually elite. They were broad-minded and had room for many gods in their thinking. But the notion of only one true God was indeed "strange" to their ears. And intolerant besides!

They heard Paul until he got to the resurrection of the dead, and that's when "some mocked." Others said "We will hear thee again of this matter" (v. 32). There were some in Athens who believed but there was not the wide reception to truth which Paul found in Corinth later, or at Ephesus, or Thessalonica. The doctrine was just too strange for most of them.

To the **polytheist**, the concept of one God is still "strange." His identity, nature, character and will remain a mystery to him. Paul wrote "there is one God and Father of all who is above all and through all and in you all" (Eph. 4: 6).

To the **evolutionist** the concept of a divine creator of the universe and all life in the earth, is a "strange" sound. He thinks you must be intellectually deprived to believe such. He is much more comfortable with big-bang theories, and speculations about ice ages and fossils. When he "In the beginning God created." he often mocks and closes his ears.

To the **modernist** the doctrine of verbal inspiration and Biblical inerrancy is "strange" indeed. He has become accustomed to viewing the Bible as a piece of allegorical literature, or a collection of folk tales. He cannot fathom what Peter said when he declared that "holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1: 19-21). He has reduced the miracles of the Bible to either a naturalistic explanation, or re-egated them to uninspired legends. The Bible doctrine of sin and salvation through blood redemption offends him. It is strange to him that anyone in this enlightened age could believe that.

To the **denominationalist** baptism for the remission of sins is indeed a "strange" sound. Peter taught it

clearly in Acts 2: 38. But somehow this fellow sees that as a threat to the doctrine of grace. He certainly cannot reconcile it to his popular view of justification by faith only. Mark 16: 16 which links salvation to both faith and baptism, and Gal. 3: 27 which says that baptism puts one "into Christ" create problems for him. You do not hear the TV and radio preachers of the denominations discussing these verses, except to occasionally pervert them. They will preach over and over that baptism has nothing to do with salvation, that sinners are saved before and without water baptism. We are thought strange to preach on it and to urge sinners to obey what the Lord taught.

To the denominationalist it is a "strange" sound to hear "there is one body, one Lord, one faith and one baptism" (Eph. 4: 4-5). If he speaks of the one body, he explains that there is one great universal body of believers and that all the churches are but branches on that one vine. It is strange to his ears to hear that religious division is wrong and that all who believe on Christ through the teaching of the apostles are to be "one" as the Father and Son are one (Jno. 17: 20-21). You hear it said that it is good to have all the choices so we can all find one with which we are comfortable. One body holding to one faith and practicing one baptism? Preposterous! What a "Strange" sound.

To the **advocate of "unity in diversity"** it is "strange" to hear that we are all to "walk by the same rule" and "to mind the same thing" (Phil. 3: 16). He thinks "unity in diversity" in the only game in town. He cannot conceive of brethren believing and preaching the same things on sponsoring churches, church support of private enterprises, church funded recreation, Premillennialism, instrumental music and similar issues. To him, Romans 14 is an elastic passage with room to include whatever doctrinal and practical matter we may want to file away there. To this brother, there is room for all sorts of views on marriage, divorce and remarriage except for those who declare themselves in opposition to some of these views.

To the **worldly minded** it is a "strange" sound to hear preaching against social drinking, dancing, smoking, the wearing of scanty clothing in public, and the need for putting Bible classes and gospel meetings ahead of scouting, soccer practice, little league and other sports activities. "Seek first the kingdom of God" (Mt. 6: 33) sounds all right until it is related to what was just mentioned.

To the **factious brother** it is "strange" to be reminded that we are to "esteem other better than" self (Phil. 2: 3). He thinks it smacks of weakness and compromise to be reminded that "love is kind" and "is not rude" and that it "thinks no evil" (1 Cor. 13: 4-5). He glories in a fuss. He is good at it. He knows how to avoid the real issue and divert the subject to personalities. He will lead a group out of a congregation across town to start a "sound work" and leave the older congregation bruised and bleeding and will precipitate a division that will take fifty years to fully heal, if then, while the unbelieving world looks on in derision and the Devil laughs. It is "strange" for this brother to hear Gal. 5: 19-21 applied to

him and to have "strife, seditions and heresies" placed in the same category (works of the flesh) as fornication, idolatry and drunkenness.

To the **hedonist** it is "strange" to hear that fornication is a sin (1 Cor. 6: 18), that marriage is honorable (Heb. 13: 4), that murder is wrong (even when it includes the unborn child), that we are to "abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul" (1 Pet. 2: 11).

To the **feminist** it is "strange" to be told that the husband is "the head of the wife" (Eph. 5: 22-23) and that she is to be "subject" to him. She does not want to hear anything about her role in guiding the house (1 Tim. 5: 13) and as a home maker (Titus 2: 4-5). She is outraged to be told that in the church woman must not "teach or usurp authority over the man" (1 Tim. 2: 12).

To **some congregations** it is a "strange" sound to hear plain, old fashion, Bible preaching. Story telling, amusement, wit and attempts at eloquence have taken the place of simple, straightforward Biblical exposition, aimed directly at the audience. What is wrong with starting a sermon by identifying and reading a passage and then coming straight "at" the hearers with practical applications? Yes, I know there are different approaches. But I can tell you in many places what I have just suggested would definitely be a different approach from what those in the pews are used to hearing. There is a place for pathos, for humor, for illustration but these are all incidental to the main business of acquainting hearers with exactly what the word of God says and how they can use it to be all that God would have them to be.

Anytime we get to the place that the word of God is a "strange" sound to us, then we are in a lot of trouble.

Using the

## SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

*Ken Green*

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Huntsville, Alabama 35805



### Safe Sex

Our national schizophrenia is evident in many settings. We see it in the feminist demands that women be treated just like men and yet the increasing charges of sexual harassment that stem from a lot of men talking to women like they would talk to a man. We see it in the growing concern for prenatal care and cases of expectant mothers being brought to court for endangering their unborn babies by using drugs; and yet the demand that mothers maintain the right to kill their unborn babies. And we see it in the constant expressions of concern over the AIDS disease; and yet, the continuous call for sexual liberation.

Advocates for do-your-own-thingism constantly push for "safe sex." By this, they primarily mean the use of condoms. The evening news regularly treats us to accounts of high schools and colleges that make free condoms available.

Robert C. Noble, M. D., of the University of Kentucky College of Medicine, is an infectious-diseases physician and an AIDS doctor to the poor. An article by him was published in the AFA JOURNAL, May 1991. He said, "Passing out condoms to teenagers is like issuing them squirt guns for a four-alarm blaze. Condoms just don't hack it. We should stop kidding ourselves."

Doctor Noble speaks of a 21 year-old boy with AIDS that he is caring for: "He could have been the model for Donatello's David, androgynous, deep blue eyes, long blond hair, as sweet and gentle as he can be. His mom's in shock. He called her the other day and gave her two messages. I'm gay. I've got AIDS. His lover looks like a fellow you'd see in Sunday school. He works in a bank. He's had sex with only one person, my patient (his second partner), and they've been together for more than a year. These fellows aren't dummies. They read newspapers. You think condoms would have saved them?"

He quotes from a government pamphlet that states: "Condoms are not 100 percent safe, but if used properly will reduce the risk of sexually transmitted diseases, including AIDS." Dr. Noble fairly shouts: "Reduce the risk of a disease that is 100 percent fatal! That's all that's available between us and death? How much do condoms reduce the risk? They don't say. So much for safe sex... I've noticed that the catchword now is "Safer

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Sex. " So much for truth in advertising. "

"At our place, " Dr. Noble continues, "we are taking care of a guy with AIDS who is back visiting the bars and having sex. Well, did your partner use a condom?" I ask. 'Did you tell him that you're infected with the virus?' 'Oh, no, Dr. Noble, he replies, 'it would have broken the mood. ' You bet it would have broken the mood. " He proceeds to observe that the mood is not the only thing that often gets broken, citing one study that shows a 4 percent breakage rate for condoms during heterosexual relations and a much higher rate with most homosexual relations.

Then the good doctor says something that reveals to us why his comments have not been picked up by the media and widely publicized: "Nobody these days lobbies for abstinence, virginity or single lifetime sexual partners. That would be boring. Abstinence and sexual intercourse with one mutually faithful uninfected partner are the only totally effective prevention strategies. " He says, "My message will fly in the face of all other media messages... In the movie *The Tall Guy* a nurse goes to bed with the Guy character on their first date, boasting that she likes to get the sex thing out of the way at the beginning of the relationship. His roommate is a nymphomaniac who is always in bed with one or more men. This was supposed to be cute. *Pretty Woman* says you can find happiness with a prostitute. Who are the people who write this stuff? Have the 80's passed and everyone forgotten sexually transmitted diseases?"

Dr. Noble concluded by saying that he was teaching his daughters the fact that condoms give a false sense of security and that unmarried people shouldn't be having sex. "Few people have the courage to say this publicly... they sound like cranks. " But the truth is "Condoms aren't going to make a dent in the sexual epidemics that we are facing. "

When it comes to sex education, the only sure counsel is found in the word of God: "**Let your fountain be blessed, And rejoice with the wife of your youth. As a loving deer and a graceful doe, Let her breasts satisfy you at all times; And always be enraptured with her love. For why should you, my son, be enraptured by an immoral woman, And be embraced in the arms of a seductress?" (Proverbs 5: 18-20). "Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge" (Heb. 13: 4). "Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due" (Romans 1: 27).**

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## The Principle Of Obedience

Omri's dynasty brought to the throne Israel's worst kings. First there was Ahab, whose very name has become a symbol of evil; whose wicked wife Jezebel launched Phoenician Baal worship in Israel and butchered all who opposed her. Ahab's son Ahaziah succeeded him. He had so little regard for Jehovah that when he became ill he sought his fortune from Baal-zebub, a Philistine fly god, instead of asking the great prophet Elijah. Amaziah's brother Joram succeeded him. He did put away the sacred pillar of Baal, but stubbornly held to Jeroboam's golden calves.

Ahab's daughter Athaliah married Jehoram of Judah. Under her influence Jehoram was so bad that the chronicler records of his death, "he departed with no one's regret" (2 Chr. 21: 20). Their son Ahaziah was equally wicked. When he died Athaliah killed the royal offspring — her own grandchildren — and seized the throne of Judah for herself.

God finally ran out of patience with this abominable family. Elisha sent one of the sons of the prophets to anoint Jehu, one of Joram's captains, as the next king of Israel. God's commission to Jehu was, "Strike the house of Ahab your master, that I may avenge the blood of My servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the Lord, at the hand of Jezebel. For the whole house of Ahab shall perish, and I will cut off from Ahab every male person both bound and free in Israel" (2 Kn. 9: 7f).

Jehu executed his charge with unparalleled zeal. He drove furiously to Jezreel, shot Joram in the back with an arrow, then dumped his body in Naboth's field. Ahaziah happened to be visiting Joram at the time. Jehu killed him, too. He then proceeded to the palace, ordered the officials there to throw Jezebel down to him, and when they did he trampled her with his horses.

Jehu next sent letters to the elders of Jezreel who were acting as guardians for Joram's sons, demanding that they send the son's heads to him. They complied. Jehu piled the heads in two heaps at the gate of Jezreel, then massacred all he could find of Ahab's priests, and even his acquaintances.

Samaria, the capital of Israel, was next. On the way there Jehu came across forty-two of Ahaziah's nephews (Ahab's great-grandchildren) and slaughtered them. At Samaria the bloodshed continued against all who sup-

ported Ahab's line or worshiped Baal.

What a gruesome page in history!

**Analysis**

How did God feel about this grizzly business? One answer is in 2 Kn. 10: 30: "And the Lord said to Jehu, "Because you have done well in executing what is right in My eyes, and have done to the house of Ahab according to all that was in My heart, your sons of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel. ' "Jehu's dynasty was by far the longest in Israel's history. It was during Jehu's great-grandson Jeroboam's reign that God raised up the prophet Hosea. And through Hosea we get an entirely different view of Jehu's work.

At birth of Hosea's first son, "The Lord said to him, "Name him Jezreel; for yet a little while, and I will punish the house of Jehu for the bloodshed of Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel" (Hos. 1: 4). How is it that God earlier commended Jehu, but now promises to punish him for the bloodshed which God had commanded in the first place? The answer lies in Jehu's subsequent conduct. After becoming king "Jehu was not careful to walk in the law of the Lord, the God of Israel, with all his heart; he did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam, which he made Israel sin" (2 Kn. 10: 31).

Jehu had a common ailment: he did right only when doing so suited him. E. B. Pusey makes pertinent observation:

"If we do what is the Will of God for any end of our own, for any thing except God, we do, in fact, our own will, not God's... Jehu, by cleaving, against the Will of God, to Jeroboam's sin, which served his own political ends, shewed that, in the slaughter of his master, he acted not, as he pretended, out of zeal for the Will of God, but served his own will and his own ambition only. By his disobedience to the one command of God, he shewed that he would have equally disobeyed the other, had it been contrary to his own will or interest. He had no principle of obedience. "

It is gratifying to see people do what is right, what is God's will. Yet that alone does not assure us of God's approval. We must have a principle of obedience, that is, we must do what God says because it is His will and we are serving Him.

**Applications**

"We are starting a new work. " That is good. The commission says to take the gospel to the whole world. If a new congregation is the product of a planned effort to establish the church in an untaught community, God surely will be pleased. But not all "new works" are born of such lofty motives. Occasionally they are the result of brethren not having learned humility, meekness, longsuffering, and forbearance; of brethren who are not diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit (Eph. 4: 1-3). Some do not want to be overseen. Some carnally exalt their personal preferences. God knows. He is able to discern whether there is a pure spirit of obedience or one adulterated by self serving.

Husbands and wives sometimes quit loving each other. In such cases, some are sensitive enough to their

children's needs that they keep the marriage together for the sake of the children. It certainly is God's will that married people stay together (Mt. 19: 6). Here, however, that is not the prime factor. What is being done is mainly from personal considerations. Before God will be pleased repentance is needed: both husband and wife must start loving each other again.

The advent of AIDS has caused some people to rethink their attitudes about sexual relations. A few "experts" are starting to advocate monogamy as the best course. They are right! I hope they are successful in establishing a trend away from pre- and extra-marital sexual activity. Yet you have to wonder how much of a principle of obedience would be behind such a change. Why are people changing? Will they return to promiscuity if a cure is found? God would surely be pleased to see less fornication. But we honor Him only by abstaining because fornication is sinful, not simply to avoid deadly disease.

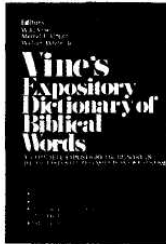
"And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4: 13). We would all do well to search our hearts. Is the principle of obedience there?

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**"First Principles"**

It is the duty of everyone who names the name of Christ to depart from iniquity (2 Tim. 2: 19). The same person is responsible to "go onto perfection" (Heb. 6: 1).

I'm caused to wonder if some of us think that the passage in Hebrews refers only to the preparation and presentation of sermons on the part of preachers; that once a preacher has preached on "first principles" he never needs to do so again.

The preacher who spends all his time on first principle subjects is not declaring the whole counsel of God, and his hearers are going to be undernourished. Conversely, the preacher who mentions these first principles only once every twenty years is not giving his hearers a balanced diet.

Somewhere along the line, some of us have unconsciously applied "the doctrine of the first principles" (ASV), exclusively to faith, repentance, confession and baptism. As a result, not only are some members of the church ignorant of the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, but evidently some preachers are ignorant of them, too.

For instance, there are preachers among us who seem to be confused as to what constitutes repentance on the part of alien sinner, who teach that responsible people can be saved without baptism, who teach that we can still receive miraculous gifts which were imparted by the laying on of the apostles' hands, who teach that Christ came the second time in judgment at the destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70.

It is no wonder that many saints may not be grounded in the doctrine of first principles, when those who preach and teach are not grounded themselves. Somewhere along the line, someone has failed.

This failure may be due, at least in part, to the notion that first principles are beneath a mature preacher's collection of sermon outlines. We preach and write on subjects which are calculated to impress or edify other preachers, while forsaking those subjects most needed (and even desired), by the average listener or reader.

Again, while the preacher has a responsibility to God, to himself, and to his audience to dispose a variety of spiritual food as the occasion requires, it is still the responsibility of each person to "grow in grace, and in

the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3: 18).

Even the mature child of God never tires of hearing any part of the "old story" of the cross. Paul thought it needful to remind the Christians at Rome and Colosse what transpired in their lives at the time they were baptized (Rom. 6; Col. 2: 11-13; 3: 1, 2).

The best advice I can give to preachers as to sermon content is from the pen of the apostle Paul, as he wrote to all preachers, in 2 Tim. 4: 1-5. And, while some new converts or babes in Christ may best exist for a time on milk only (Heb. 5: 13), even a diet of meat can be accompanied by a glass of milk now and then.

Some good cooks may specialize in hot rolls, cornbread, or apple pie, but they need to compliment those specialties with other foods. Some preachers may need to get off their "specialty" now and then and give the people a good mess of cornbread, pinto beans, and turnip greens.

My wife can prepare a delicious meal which will accommodate the diabetic, the person on a low-salt diet, and her husband as well. I can always add the salt or the red-eyed gravy to suit my own taste.

It is hard to feed people what they need when they only show up for an hour on Sunday morning, but even at that I think some of us can offer a better balanced diet than what some have received in the past.

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**Be of One Mind**

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Some of God's commands are harder than others to accomplish, and sometimes we dismiss them perhaps without even really understanding what God wants of us. In Paul's letter to the Romans, chapter 15, we find Paul continuing the theme begun in chapter 14 of edifying each other, and not doing something which would cause another to stumble. Finally in verse 6 Paul writes: "That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. " Is it really possible for Christians to be of "one mind?" Isn't this something we're already doing in most congregations? Or are we killing some congregations because we need this very thing that God commanded?

When Paul wrote to the Corinthians he discussed a problem some of them had regarding the one who had taught them or baptized them into Christ. Paul wrote: "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. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Cor. 1: 10-13). Because these brethren were not of one mind, and glorified men rather than Christ they were in the process of destroying the congregation. Later, in chapter 3 we find Paul continuing the thought by saying, "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?" (1 Cor. 3: 1-4). This carnal spirit, this mind of the flesh is divisive, hinders our growth since we are unable to eat of the meat of the word, and causes death. Paul told the Roman Christians: "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 me 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" (Romans 8: 5-8).

Notice how many times God tells us to be of one mind or one spirit. In Romans 15 where we began Paul wrote: "Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 15: 5-6). Back in chapter 12 he wrote: "Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits" (v. 16). At the end of Paul's second letter to the Corinthians he wrote: "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you" (2 Cor. 13: 11). To the Philippians the Holy Spirit caused Paul to write: "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" (Phil. 1: 27). In the second chapter Paul wrote: "Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind" (Phil. 2: 2). And in chapter 4 Paul wrote: "I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche that they be of the same mind in the Lord" (Phil. 4: 2). Perhaps our mistake in reading these verses is to assume that they mean that we must always see every issue exactly alike, and that we will never have different opinions about things. But is that really what God demands of His people? Or does He instead demand that we all have such a oneness of spirit and mind that we all submit ourselves totally to the authority of God through His

word? Does He not demand of us that we put away our selfish pride and arrogance and instead submit to each other in lowliness of mind (Phil. 2: 3)? But we persist in trying to have our own way regardless of the harm to each other and the congregation. This oneness of mind does not excuse error. Instead it will help to eliminate error because with one heart and mind and spirit we will seek to know God's will, not our own, and do it. With lowliness of mind we will each "please his neighbor for his good to edification" (Romans 15: 2), and "receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God" (Romans 15: 7).

Some of God's requirements do seem difficult for us as long as we persist in thinking that a thing can't be done. God doesn't ask of us what we are unable to do. And He does ask us to be of ONE MIND!

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## The Sponsoring Church (part 2)

*Andy Alexander*

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In our last article we noted several errors concerning the sponsoring church arrangement, chief of which was the lack of Bible authority for such an arrangement. In this article we want to investigate the sponsoring church a little further and examine some additional reasons that have been offered by those who support this working relationship.

### Rules

What are the rules governing the sponsoring church? Who decides who is going to be a sponsoring church? Who gets to be the sponsor, the church that receives all the money, and who gets to be the supporter of the sponsor, the ones who give all the money? If this were a Scriptural arrangement the Bible would be our guide for answering these questions; but since this cannot be found in God's word, where do we go for the answers?

These are valid questions. What if all the supporters decided they wanted to be sponsors of a work they could not afford, where would they go for the needed funds? Who is going to tell all the supporters, now turned sponsors, that they cannot be sponsors?

Various forms of these questions were posed to brother Jeff Smith, a local preacher in Shelbyville, and a supporter of the sponsoring church. No answers were given. Attempts were made to justify the arrangement., but no answers were given to these questions. Let me point out that we are not picking on brother Smith. There are numerous supporters of the sponsoring church, but the congregation he preaches for in Shelbyville supported

the One Nation Under God campaign and it is for that reason that he was called. It is our hope and prayer that he and all others who promote this unscriptural working arrangement will see the error involved in such an arrangement and repent of their sins.

**Expedient?**

It is argued by those who promote this arrangement that the sponsoring church is just an expedient. In other words, it is a help or an aid to the church in carrying out the work God has assigned. Does the sponsoring church arrangement expedite the transfer of funds from one source (the local church) to another (the preacher in the field)? Actually, the more hands that touch the money, the slower the flow. Instead of aiding the process of the transfer of funds, the sponsoring church impedes it.

If two checks were sent to the same preacher in the field and one was sent directly to him and the other was sent to a sponsoring church earmarked for him, which would reach it's destination first? Not only is this concept unscriptural, it does not help the local church fulfill its responsibility in the most expeditious way.

**Additional Arguments Offered**

**WE DO LOTS OF THINGS WITHOUT AUTHORITY.** This argument is made by some who do not understand how to establish Biblical authority. They evidently believe they do not have authority for a building, lights, church treasury, and other such items. However, there is authority for these items whether they understand how to establish it or not. Let us study the authority that we have to build and maintain a building in which to worship God.

Christians are commanded to assemble (Heb. 10: 25). We cannot assemble without a place. Whether it be under an oak tree, in a house, or in a building, there has to be a meeting place. The place is authorized under the command to assemble. God allows each local church to decide for themselves what type of place will best suit their needs.

We have examples in the Bible of the church meeting in homes, in upper rooms, and in places other than the home (1 Cor. 16: 19; Acts 20: 8; 1 Cor. 11: 22, 34). The woman at the well in John 4: 20-24 was concerned about the right place to worship God, but Jesus taught her that the time was coming when the place would be irrelevant and those who properly worshipped God would do so in spirit and in truth. So, a place is necessary and authorized under the general command to assemble, but where and what type of place is left to the discretion of the congregation.

Everything that we do is to be done in the name of the Lord Jesus and if we do not have authority, general or specific, then we had better give it up.

**BUT, ITS A GOOD WORK.** This is another statement made by some who promote the sponsoring church. Some people believe that calling something a good work automatically give it God's stamp of approval.

Uzzah probably thought that keeping the ark of God from falling and being broken to pieces was a good work, but he quickly discovered that he had violated God's law (2 Sam. 6: 6-7). We can do a work that God commands, but if we do not do it the way that He commands, it will

not please Him. It was right to move the ark, but God had expressed through Moses how the ark was to be transported and violating the command of God led to the death of Uzzah.

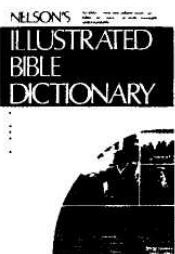
For instance, take the Lord's Supper. We are commanded to partake of the Lord's Supper and we know by example that we are to do this on the first day of each week (Matt. 26: 26; Acts 20: 7). Will it please God if we decide to partake on Tuesday? We may believe that it will help us be more spiritual. Our intent may be sincere, but our actions will be wrong and God will not be pleased.

Teaching the gospel is a good work (Mk. 16: 15). We know, by example, that the church may do this by supporting a gospel preacher directly (Phil. 4: 15-16; 2 Cor. 11: 8-9). These passages illustrate how the first century church obeyed this command. There is as much authority for creating and supporting a sponsoring church arrangement as there was for the Israelites to move the ark on an ox cart. Ox Cart religion will not save!

**FELLOWSHIP US ANYWAY, ITS JUST A MATTER OF OPINION.** Those who go too far and do not abide in the doctrine of Christ often use this argument as a reason why fellowship with them should not be broken. They want to put matters of faith in Romans 14 instead of 2 John 9-11 where they belong.

The Christian Church wants to call instrumental music a matter of opinion, those who advocate divorce and remarriage for any cause want to use Romans 14 as a basis of fellowship, and the denominations want to put all differences into Romans 14. Using the logic of the liberal churches, we would have to fellowship everyone including the denominations of men. Why did the apostle John bother to write 2 John 9-11 if it has no practical value?

The sponsoring church arrangement is sinful. "Sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3: 4). Lawlessness means a state of being without law. The sponsoring church is without law — there is no authority from God for such an organizational structure — therefore, it is sinful. Those who promote it and those who support it and those who blindly follow along are in sin and need to repent and ask God's forgiveness. We plead with our erring brethren to come back to the way of righteousness.



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## Were The Early "Church Fathers" Catholic?

*Greg Litmer*

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Leading Catholic apologists, such as Karl Keating, author of **Catholicism and Fundamentalism**, quote extensively from the writings of various early church writers. Since so many of the Catholic doctrines are not found in the scriptures, they believe that these writings supply evidence that the doctrines peculiar to Catholicism were held and practiced by the very earliest Christians. Mr. Keating states their position very well in the following manner. After referring to Dionysius of Corinth, Tertullian, Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Peter of Alexandria, Lactantius and Eusebius, he states, "Remember, these are the works which form the basis of Christian historical writing in the immediate post-New Testament centuries... their cumulative testimony should carry considerable weight." (**Catholicism & Fundamentalism**, p. 204)

Were the early "Church Fathers" Catholic? Did they believe those doctrines now recognized as being peculiarly Catholic? Let's examine just a few of them.

A fundamental belief of Roman Catholicism is transubstantiation. The **Baltimore Catechism**, states the doctrine this way.

"The whole Christ is really, truly, and substantially present in the Holy Eucharist. We use the words, 'really, truly, and substantially' to describe Christ's presence in the Holy Eucharist in order to distinguish Our Lord's teaching from that of mere men who falsely teach that the Holy Eucharist is only a sign or figure of Christ, or that He is present only by His power." p. 273.

"When Our Lord said, This is My body, the entire substance of the bread was changed into His body; and when He said, This is My blood, the entire substance of the wine was changed into His blood." p. 276

Of course, those passages referred to by Catholic writers in an attempt to support this doctrine are those passages dealing with the institution of the Lord's Supper and John 6. Karl Keating even goes so far as to say, "There is no record in the early centuries of any Christian doubting the Catholic interpretation. There exists no document in which the literal interpretation is opposed and only the metaphorical accepted." (**Catholicism & Fundamentalism**, p. 238).

Can we find any early "Church Fathers" who did not hold the doctrine of transubstantiation?

1. Justin Martyr (mid 2nd century), "Now it is evident, that in this prophecy (allusion is made) to the

bread which our Christ gave us to eat, in **remembrance of His being made flesh for the sake of His believers**, for whom also He suffered; and to the cup which He gave us to drink, **in remembrance of His own blood**, with giving of thanks." (Dialogue with Trypho, **LXX**)

2. Tertullian (early 3rd century) "Then, having taken the bread and given it to His disciples, he made it His own body, by saying, This is my body, **that is the figure of my body.**"

(Against Marcion, IV: 40)

3. Origen (early 3rd century) "Now, if 'everything that entereth into the mouth goes into the belly and is cast out into the draught, ' even the meat which has been sanctified through the word of God and prayer, in accordance with the fact that it is material, goes into the belly and is cast out into the draught, but in respect of the prayer which comes upon it, according to the proportion of the faith, becomes a benefit and is a means of clear vision to the mind which looks to that which is beneficial, and it is not the material of the bread but the word which is said over it which is of advantage to him who eats in not unworthily of the Lord. **And these things indeed are said of the typical and symbolical body.**"

(Commentary on Matthew, XI: 14)

4. Cyprian (mid 3rd century) "Knowing then that I have been admonished that, in offering the cup, the tradition of the Lord must be observed, and that nothing must be done by us but what the Lord first did on our behalf, as that the cup which is offered **in remembrance of Him** should be offered mingled with wine." (**Epistle 62**)

Catholic apologists point to John 6 as the key passage in which our Lord speaks of what will be instituted at the Last Supper. Here, they say, is where the clearest teaching about Transubstantiation is to be found in the scriptures. Is it true that no record exists from the early centuries of Christianity doubting the Catholic interpretation? Is it true that no document exists in which the literal interpretation of John 6 is opposed and only the metaphorical accepted? Is it true that those early Christians were Catholic and held to the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation?

1. Clement of Alexandria (late 2nd century) "Elsewhere the Lord, in the Gospel according to John brought this out **by symbols, when He said, 'Eat ye my flesh, and drink my blood; ' describing distinctly by metaphor** the drinkable properties of faith and the promise, by means of which the Church, like a human being consisting of many members, is refreshed and grows, is welded together and compacted of both - **of faith, which is the body, and of hope, which is the soul; as also the Lord of flesh and blood.**"

(The instructor, I. vi. 43)

2. Tertullian (early 3rd century) "He says, it is true, that "the flesh profiteth nothing; but then, as in the former case, the meaning must be regulated by the subject which is spoken of. Now, because they thought His discourse was harsh and intolerable, **supposing**

**that he had really and literally enjoined on them to eat his flesh**, he, with the view of ordering the state of salvation as a spiritual thing, set out with the principle, 'it is the spirit that quickeneth; ' and then added, The flesh profiteth nothing, ' — meaning, of course, to the giving of life, he also goes on to explain what He would have us to understand by spirit; "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. '... Constituting, therefore, His word as the life-giving principle, because that word is spirit and life, He likewise called His flesh by the same appellation; because, too, the Word had become flesh, we ought therefore to desire Him in order that we may have life, and to **devour Him with the ear, and to ruminate on Him with the understanding, and to digest Him by faith.** "

On the Resurrection of the Flesh, XXXVII)

The early church writers are also very important to the Catholic teaching concerning the Papacy, and it is true that many of them teach that Peter was in Rome. The more important question would be, "Do they teach that Peter was the first pope?"

1. Tertullian (early 3rd century) "Just, for example, as if Peter too had censured Paul, because whilst forbidding circumcision, he actually circumcised Timothy himself. Never mind those who pass sentence on apostles! **It is a happy fact that Peter is on the same level with Paul in the very glory of martyrdom.**

(On Prescription Against Heretics, Chap. XXIV)

3. Cyprian (mid 3rd century) "**For neither did Peter, whom first the Lord chose, and upon whom He built His Church, when Paul disputed with him afterwards about circumcision, claim anything to himself insolently, nor arrogantly assume anything;** so as to say that he held the primacy, and that he ought rather to be obeyed by novices and those lately come. "

(Cyprian, Epistle LXX, 3)

3. Eusebius (early 4th century) "Now Clement, writing in the sixth book of the Hypotyposes, makes this statement. For he says that Peter and James and John, after the Saviour's ascension, though pre-eminently honored by the Lord, did not contend for glory, but made James the Just, bishop of Jerusalem. " (Ecclesiastical History, Book VI, ii. I)

The main passage that Roman Catholic authorities use in support of Peter's supposed papacy is Matthew 16. In light of the great weight given to the early church writers by Roman Catholic as they seek to find foundation for their beliefs, we must ask, "How did the early church writers interpret Matthew 16?"

1. Origen (early 3rd century) "And perhaps that which Simon Peter answered and said, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God, if we say it as Peter, not by flesh and blood revealing it unto us, but by the light from the Father in heaven shining in our heart, we **too become as Peter, being pronounced blessed as he was,** because that the grounds on which he was pronounced blessed apply also to us, by reason of the fact that flesh and blood have not revealed to us with regard

to Jesus that He is Christ, the Son of the living God, but the Father in heaven,... And if we too have said like Peter, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God', not as if flesh and blood had revealed it unto us, but by light from the Father in heaven having shone in our heart, **we become a Peter, and to us that might be said by the Word, 'Thou art Peter', etc. For a rock is every disciple of Christ of whom those drank who drank of the spiritual rock which is followed them, and upon every such rock is built every word of the church.** "

"But if you suppose **that upon that one Peter only** the whole church is built by God, what would you say about John the son of thunder or each one of the Apostles? Shall we otherwise dare to say, that against Peter in particular the gates of Hades shall not prevail, but that they shall prevail against the other Apostles and the perfect? Does not the saying previously made, The gates of Hades shall not prevail against it, 'hold in regard to all and in the case of each of them? **And also the saying, 'Upon this rock I will build my church?'** (Origen's Commentary on Matthew, 10 & 11)

Considerable emphasis is given to the word "rock" in Matthew 16: 18. The Catholic position is that the word Cephas is merely the transliteration of the Aramaic Kepha into Greek and Kepha means rock. Therefore, there is no difference between Peter and rock. They teach that Matthew was originally written in Aramaic, that Matthew was essentially saying, "Thou art Rock, and upon this Rock I will build my church. " Only in the Greek translation of the Aramaic original was there a difference. This they teach in spite of the fact that not one single fragment of an original Aramaic Matthew has ever been found.

However, did those early church writers recognize a difference between Peter and Rock?

1. Tertullian (early 3rd century) "Again, He changes the name of Simon to Peter, inasmuch as the Creator also altered the names of Abram, and Sarai, and Oshea, by calling the latter Joshua, and adding a syllable to each of the former. But why Peter? If it was because of the vigour of his faith, there were many solid materials which might lend a name from their strength. **Was it because Christ was both a rock and a stone? For we read of His being place 'for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offense'.** (Against Marcion, Chap. XIII)

Do not be deceived. While some of what those early church writers taught was true and some was not, it is important to note that right or wrong, they were not Catholic.

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## What About Murphy Brown?

*Doug Seaton*

3825 S. Germantown Road  
Germantown, Tennessee 38125

Television is considered by many to be a major source of moral and behavioral influence. Others consider television to be a reflection of values in society. Depending on your view of television's power and influence, you probably found either alarm or amusement with the national debate over the television character Murphy Brown's recent child born out of wedlock, and the attention it received from the Vice-President of the United States.

Our society is having great difficulty trying to find a reason for people to have children in marriage. For years children have been in classrooms where evolutionary ideas, alternate lifestyles, and ideas of total freedom have been emphasized. National leaders as well as many "church leaders" have looked the other way as teen pregnancy rose to record numbers, and abortions became as common as the measles. The young have been given sex education, birth control pills, and monthly checks if they have had children out of wedlock and were unable to provide for them.

Now as the illegitimacy rate has soared from about 5 percent 30 years ago to 17 percent today, and to 62 percent among black children in this country; people are finally starting to get upset. In the midst of some of this country's worst rioting ever (centering among poor young people raised without fathers), along comes a single white professional woman who makes a decision to raise her child born out of wedlock on national television. The obvious mixed message was just too distasteful to many who see the violence and poverty which result from many fatherless homes.

The Bible teaches the importance of marriage, the sin of sexual conduct outside of marriage, the need to have children in wedlock, and places upon both parents the responsibility to love, teach, and provide for their children. The scriptures do this without giving a lesson on socially responsible behaviour, they give these teachings as commands from a loving God. "Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge" (Hebrews 13: 4). "Children obey your parents..." (Eph. 6: 4). "I desire that the young widows marry, bear children, manage the house" (1 Timothy 5: 14). (See also Deut. 6: 6-9, Titus 2: 4-5, & Ephesians 5).

Once we leave a Biblical basis for our morality, why shouldn't we do whatever seems right to us? We are simply reaping as a society what we have sown, and unfortunately the reaping is just beginning. (See

Galatians 6: 7, & Proverbs 14: 34). Corruption and promiscuity among the rich didn't stop there. Now, it has reached all levels of society in huge numbers with disastrous results.

As society has slid so have the toleration of members of the Lord's church with promiscuity, divorce, and filth in entertainment. Let's be honest with ourselves. How have our personal habits, language, dress, and thoughts been influenced by the world? Do we listen to filth on television and accept that as "just the way it is?" Do our children see movies in the home with filthy language, nudity, and violence that your parents would have turned off? As adults are we so strong that being continually around evil has no affect on us? If that is really the case why are so many seemingly strong members of the church either engaging in ungodliness or having severe problems with family members in these sins?

Where are our values? Why is it that so many have difficulty seeing anything wrong with close, intimate, slow dancing in low cut dresses? I realize society doesn't see anything wrong with this kind of dancing in unmarried people. But, why can't Christians seeing the rotting of our society's moral fiber see where it begins. It begins with unchaste handling of males and females. Whether this occurs in our homes, or on the dance floor, or in parked cars is not the issue. The issue is, How does this behaviour affect the purity of my thoughts and the purity of my actions? Each one of us needs to personally work on maintaining the purity Christ intends.

The best time to handle the problem of pregnancy outside of marriage is before that pregnancy occurs. God will forgive transgressions, but why fall victim to sin when it is avoidable. The message I get from Murphy Brown is to avoid fornication and then you won't be faced with the choice of being a single parent or having an abortion. The most effective means of birth control ever devised for single people is abstinence! Let's think about these issues and examine our lives. Are our viewing and living habits consistent with the life of a Christian? They can be, if we follow Christ.

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## Blood Sacrifice: "Barbaric Tripe?!"

*David Posey*

9230 Larkspur Dr.  
Westminster, California 92683



"Steve Brow's letter, 'Jesus' plan for man, ' makes me wonder. Do religious people pay any attention to the words they say and write? For example: What kind of barbaric tripe is this 'blood sacrifice which would pay for the sins of all mankind?'" What is being referred to here is not just the slitting the throat of a farm animal and hoping for a good harvest next season, which is bad enough. No, *human* sacrifice is what is being offered as a noble deed. And *self* human sacrifice, to boot. "Aside from that, what in the world is the connection between 'sins' and 'sacri-fice'? If I rob or murder someone, how is spilling sacrificial blood (animal or human) of a third person, like Jesus, compensation to the victims? Where's the justice? Where's the common sense?"

**Steve J. Moore Irvine**

This letter to the editor appeared in a recent issue of the Orange County Register. What would you say to Mr. Moore? Let's assume for a moment that his questions are not rhetorical, but sincere. Let's assume that, unlike Pilate, who asked "What is truth?", and then didn't stay for the answer, that Mr. Moore would be willing to give you thirty minutes of his time to hear you out. *What would you say?*

We do not have adequate space to do justice to the answer here, but there are a few thoughts we can suggest that may get us started in the right direction. Mr. Moore is totally confused about why blood has to be offered in order to take away sin. In fact, he fails to see any connection whatsoever between sin and sacrifice, and I suspect he is representative of many people we meet, some who may darken our threshold as visitors. The whole concept of sacrifice, blood and retribution for sin is repugnant to them. On the other hand, we've heard it for so many years, we've rather gotten used to it, perhaps forgetting how radical it must sound to someone with no understanding. Paul called the whole idea the "foolishness of God" because he recognized man's failure to see any "common sense" (i. e., human wisdom) in the gospel plan.

In the first place, most folks have it all backwards—they are man-centered instead of God-centered. Mr. Moore betrays this attitude when he complains that a third-party's sacrifice has no benefit to the victim. In other words, Jesus' sacrifice does not undo the results of a crime—the murdered and robbed stayed murdered and

robbed, as if Jesus had done nothing.

But that is hardly the point. The point is that if Mr. Moore was stupid enough to murder someone (i. e., breaking all bounds of moral restraint and, indeed, "common sense") — certainly a *sin*, if one accepts the concept of sin in the first place — what happens if he afterward decides to reform his life? Will 50 years of refusing to murder atone for the one murder he did commit? More to the real issue, what does he *deserve* from God, regardless of what society imposes on him if he gets caught? What is God to do with him?

You see the questions revolve more around God than around *us*. Yes, we benefit or we pay, depending upon what God does, but it is based upon what *God* does more than on what we do. Actually, we affirm that it takes far "less" (*less* only in the human sense) than murder and robbery to offend God. Everyone who has the capacity to sins against God eventually: "for all have sinned and fallen short of His glory" (Rom. 3: 23). There is no exception. The question then is not: "How could this loving and good God destroy 'good' people"? When left to themselves, there are no good people! "There is none righteous, no not one" (Rom. 3: 10). The proper form of the question is: "How could God, who is both perfectly merciful and perfectly just, save any of us, seeing that we have all sinned against Him?" There is a major difference between those two questions, and everything hinges on which question we own. The first is man-centered; the second is God-centered.

If we understand the form of the second question, things begin to fall into place. God must be just as well as merciful. Justice requires the destruction of the unjust, otherwise it would not be "justice." It is precisely at this point where many people fail to understand the gospel. They have so concentrated on the mercy and kindness of God that they have ignored His justice. But, "consider the goodness *and* severity of God..." (Rom. 11: 22). God is both just *and* loving and, perfect God that He is, there must be full expression given to both.

This is where the concept of "sacrifice" comes in. If any sinner is going to be reconciled to God, his sins must be taken away. God does not—cannot! — coexist with sin. Sin must be dealt with before a person comes to God. But God's love has provided a way, although it was a difficult and costly way for Him. He sent His only Son to die for the sins of the world. The death Jesus would die would have two components, but one was more critical than the other. He would die a *physical* death, shedding his precious blood on the cross. He did this, not like the animals who were the involuntary subjects of sacrifice under the Old Testament (they were a type of the perfect sacrifice to some), but as a voluntary and perfect sacrifice, a perfectly innocent man dying a criminal's death. That fact alone should get our attention.

But the more severe pain came in another kind of death. Until the cross, God's wrath against sin had never been satisfied (or "propitiated," a term worth learning — see Heb. 2: 17; 1 Jn. 2: 1, etc. ). Now, I realize that Mr. Moore and his theologically—naive colleagues may not see the point, but I can't help that (perhaps C. S. Lewis' statement applies here: "those who can't

understand books written for grown-ups shouldn't attempt to read them"). In any case, God's anger against sin could not finally be assuaged by any number of animal sacrifices (cf. Heb 10: 4) or even by imperfect human blood. God was not interested in such, and those who engaged in human sacrifice were an abomination to God (Jer. 19: 5). Jesus' sacrifice was not just another "human sacrifice." When He shed His blood, He underwent a *spiritual* death as well — God's son was separated from God! "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us. that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5: 21). You see? God threw all of humanity's sins on the body and soul of His Son Jesus "He was wounded for our transgressions" (Isa. 53: 5).

Why blood? Because He had to give His life for us in order to undergo the full experience of human death (cf. Heb. 2: 14-17), a death He would overcome when He was raised three days later and which He will one day finally destroy (1 Cor. 15: 26). And "life is in the blood" (Lev. 17: 11). The taking of communion memorializes this blood (as well as the body He gave) as that which was given to atone for our sins, and not for ours only but for the sins of the whole world. Yes, a third party does offer compensation to sinners, including Mr. Moore, if he would accept it. But you have to have faith.

## A Mixture of Matters!

*Luther W. Martin*

707 Salem Avenue  
Rolla, Missouri 65401

Though not a scholar, I **do** have a reasonably good library, and therefore, I can refer to my collection of Lexicons, Greek Dictionaries, and Grammars. **1 Corinthians, 14th Chapter**

Anything from the 14th Chapter of First Corinthians, is dealing with problems related to supernatural gifts that prevailed in the Lord's church before the New Testament was completed. Spiritual gifts (supernatural abilities) existed during the first forty years of the Lord's church. Their purpose was to accomplish the spread of the good news of Christ to people of all languages and nations (Mark 16: 17-18, 20; Heb. 2: 1-4; Micah 7: 15).

In Mark 16, the Lord was **working** with the apostles and **confirming** the word preached, with accompanying signs. Please note the present-tense suffix, **ing**. It was **then** taking place.

In Hebrews, approximately forty years later, the word was **confirmed**, past-tense! It **had been** accomplished! Please note the suffix **ed**, now used; confirmed!

In Micah, according to the days of Israel's coming out of Egypt (40 years), I will show them marvelous things. With miracles beginning with the ministry of Jesus (John worked no miracle — John 10: 41), about 30 A. D.,

and then ending when Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A. D.

The prohibition concerning the silence of women in the assembly (14: 34-35) is from the word *sigatosan*, "let be silent." In similar manner, the man who might be inspired to speak in a foreign language, but with no interpreter present, "let him keep silence in the church (assembly);" from *sigato* (v. 28); and finally, in verse 30, "let the first **hold his peace**," (*sigato*). Each of these verses use the same root word, and thus enforce the same degree of silence upon the persons mentioned and under the circumstances described.

Verse 33, reminds the reader that tumult and confusion is to be avoided in the Lord's church... this was particularly prevalent when first one and then another prophet or spokesman, might receive a revelation. One might also receive a "song!" Thus, "hath a psalm." If so, it was delivered or revealed to the assembly by the one to whom it had been given. But even this was in sequence, or by course, and NOT simultaneously with resulting confusion. Thus, this chapter is being totally misused in any effort to apply its teachings to the modern-day-assembly. There are other passages that apply to the Lord's church today and that deal with the subjection of women to their husbands, or womankind to mankind.

### 1st Timothy 2: 11-12

"Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. " Note that 1 Cor. 14: 33 deals with "your women, " "wives, " and some even insert "*married* women. " While 1 Tim. 2: 11-12 concerns the generic "the woman" or "a woman. " The Greek word here is *hesuchios*, meaning quiet, tranquil, causing no disturbance to others... "Having a meek and quiet spirit. " (1 Pet. 3: 4).

### "Reflexive" and "Reciprocal" Pronouns

Definition — Reflexive Pronoun — "It expresses the action of the subject upon itself. " (Essentials of N. T. Greek, page 121).

Definition—Reciprocal Pronoun—"It represents an interchange of action between the members of plural subject. " (Ibid., page 120).

Instances of "reflexive pronouns" are found in both Eph. 5: 19, and Col. 3: 16. However, in both examples, the "reflexive" is used in place of a "reciprocal" and is given identical translation.

**Eph. 5: 19** — "Speaking to one another (*heautois*) in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. "

**Col. 3: 16** — "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another (*heatous*) in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. "

Both the Textus Receptus (upon which the KJV is based) and Eberhard Nestle's Greek Text (upon which several modern English Versions are based), used the identical Greek words as Italicized above. In either passage, the terms "one another, " "each other, " or "your-selves, " may be used, and constitute an accurate translation.

### A. T. Robertson's Greek Grammar

"(g) Reflexive in the Reciprocal Sense. This use of

*heauton* does not really differ in idea from *allelon*. This is in harmony with the ancient Greek idiom. The papyri show this same blending of *heauton* with *allelon*. (Robertson was quoting from page 876, of James Hope Moulton's *Prolegomena*). Robertson then lists both Eph. 5: 19 and Col. 3: 16 as examples of the use of Reflexive Pronouns in the Reciprocal Sense. (Page 690).

Therefore, even though *heautois* is a **reflexive pronoun** it is used a **reciprocal pronoun** in both Eph. 5: 19 and Col. 3: 16.

#### J. Stegenga's Greek-English Concordance

"*HEAUTOIS*—dative, plural, masculine, 3rd person (reflexive pronoun) — Eph. 5: 19, among others; and meaning: yourselves, themselves, them, ye, you, ourselves, one another. " (Page 91).

"*HEAUTOUS* — accusative, plural, masculine, 3rd person (reflexive pronoun) — Col. 3: 16, among others; and meaning: "themselves, yourselves, ourselves, one another. " (Page 91).

#### Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the N. T.

"*heautou, -es, -ou, etc.* or (contracted *autou, -es, -ou*; plural *heauton*; dative *-ois, -ais, -ois, etc.*; reflexive pronoun of the 3rd person. It is used 1. of the 3rd person singular and plural, to denote that the agent and the person acted on are the same;... " "3. It is used frequently in the plural for the reciprocal pronoun *allelon, allelois, allelous*, reciprocally, mutually, one another;... "Thayer then lists several passages, and among them is Col. 3: 16. (Page 163).

Thus, to translate in Eph. 5: 19 and Col. 3: 16, either "one another" or "yourselves" is correct. Brethren are in error who take the position that one rendering is "false" to the exclusion of the other.

#### Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich and Danker's Greek Lexicon

"*heautou, es, ou, plural heauton* reflexive pronoun... 1. of the third person singular and plural, to indicate identity with the person speaking or acting... " "3. for the reciprocal pronoun *allelon, allelois, allelous*, even in

classical authors... "They then list Col. 3: 16, along with others. (Page 213).

Therefore, even though *heautois* is a **reflexive pronoun** it is used for the **reciprocal pronoun** in both Eph. 5: 19 and Col. 3: 16.

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## THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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**CARROLL FINK, Jonesborough, TN** — After more than six years with the church here, we have again turned our sights toward Texas which we have considered home since moving from California to Clute, Texas in 1973. In 1978 we purchased property in Livingston, TX and helped begin a sound work there. Elmer Moore preaches there now and recently was appointed one of the elders. We will be moving to Livingston and would like to work full time with a congregation in the eastern part of the State. If that does not work out I will take my social security and do part time preaching for churches in driving distance of Livingston on the Lord's day. My phone number is (615) 753-8261 or 753-3515.

**SHANE SCOTT, Mt. Sterling, KY**— After three years with the Oak Hill congregation in Mt. Sterling, I will begin working with the brethren in Portage, Indiana in August. Although I will miss being in my home country of central Kentucky, I am excited about the new opportunities Portage will present.

The Oak Hill church is still looking for a preacher and I would commend them to anyone interested. If you are interested you can contact Arnold Smith (606) 498-1375.

**GLENDON MCCLURE, P. O. BOX 1413, Antioch, CA 94509** — We just completed a good meeting with Keith Sharp of Grenada, MS preaching. Three were restored. Sermons included "The Cost of Discipleship, two nights devoted to Divorce and Remarriage, The Unity of the Spirit, The Progressiveness of Sin. On the Lord's day we had sermons on The Great Commission, Let's Go Fishing For Men, Preaching Trip to Nigeria and Into All the World.

**DEATHS**

**RALPH P. AUTRY, SR.** — On March 17, 1992 the earthly sojourn of a sound and dedicated soldier of Christ came to an end. For over fifty-two years the proclamation of the gospel was foremost in his life, both in word and example. Bill Hawkins and Leslie Sloan led the funeral gathering on March 19 as remembrance was made of a life that brought the sweet news of Jesus Christ to so many in Georgia, South Carolina, Florida and Tennessee. He also took the lead in gaining support for others engaged in the work of preaching the gospel.

He began preaching full time in Union, South Carolina in 1936 and gave up full time work in 1987 to continue work as an elder at Rock church near Dickson, Tennessee. For many years he preached in the Nashville area while supporting himself.

Born in Oconee County Georgia on November 21, 1913, his life ended while his wife of 55 years, Marjorie, their children and three of the five grandchildren were at his bedside. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints."

**LEAH KEY** — This bright and devout young Christian left us at the age of 20 after the most courageous battle I have ever witnessed to overcome a brain tumor. I can truly say I have never known anyone quite like her. Leah was engaged to be married to Brett Narmore a fine young preacher who has been working with the Hebron Lane congregation near Louisville. Her parents, Charles and Annetta Key are members of that congregation. She was a joy to all who knew her and her valiant battle attracted the admiration and ignited the prayers of Christians throughout the country. "After her first operation, a receptionist the hospital, after being overwhelmed with phone calls inquiring about her condition, asked this question: WHO IS LEAH KEY?" (Reported by Donald Townsley and included in his remarks at

the funeral. A large crowd attended the services on April 18, 1992, which was conducted by Donald Townsley. Our loving respects to these grieving parents, to brothers Brad and Bruce and to Brett. (CWA)

**PREACHERS NEEDED**

**MIAMI, FLORIDA** — The church on Quail Roost Drive, located in south Dade County, is in need of a full time enthusiastic evangelist who excels in personal work. Support from other sources will be necessary since this congregation of about 35 can only provide partial support. Those interested may contact Joseph K. Giffen at (305) 252-0585 or write to him at: P. O. Box 561533, Miami, FL 33256-1533.

**LANGLEY, KENTUCKY** — The Maytown church is without a full time preacher. We have 20 members and are located in Floyd County in eastern Kentucky. Those interested may call Emmett Lawson (606) 478-2516 or 478-4040 or write: Maytown Church of Christ, HC 80, Box 395, Langley, KY 41645.

**PREACHER AVAILABLE**

**DAVID A. BECK, 1404 Morningside Dr., Lake Wales, FL 33853** — I am considering moving to another work after seven and a half years in Lake Wales. The church is at peace and moving is my decision. I am 45 years old and have been married for 26 years. My wife is 44. We have raised four children, two boys and two girls. Before coming to Lake Wales, I worked along with Phil Roberts at Cortez, Florida. Before working in Cortez I worked with Ken Thomas in Bradenton. Contact me if you are interested. My phone number is (813) 676-5112.

**FROM AROUND THE WORLD**

**SPAIN** — Efrain Perez reports three more baptized at the Badalona congregation in Barcelona.

**SOUTH AFRICA** — Paul Williams reports one baptized and five withdrawn from in Eshowe. I lift the following from one of his reports about the drought situation in Venda. "Most of the country is mountainous, hot and dry. There is usually enough rain to keep agriculture going, but the present drought has made the land dust dry. In the valley where the rivers are still flowing there is a little grass for cattle, but everywhere else there is not a blade of grass to be seen + The drought in southern Africa is the worst in history. Between eight and ten million tons of grain will have to be imported to avert mass starvation. South Africa is well-placed because of its good harbors and railways and its ability to pay for what it needs, but the countries north of us are in great trouble. They don't have money and are therefore dependent on donations, and they don't have the infrastructure to get food delivered to the people. Nearly all the grain will be transported through South Africa, and South Africa will help get it delivered to the people in Zimbabwe, Malawi and Zambia. The countries are working together and with the help of people who donate the grain should be able to keep starvation at bay until next harvest. This certainly is our prayer."

**RAY VOTAW** — writes to tell us of the urgent need which ERIC REED has to replace the \$600 a month support which he has lost. Anyone wishing to inquire may write: Eric Reed, P. O. Box 637, Bellville, Cape 7530, Rep. of South Africa.

**HUNGARY** — Richard Copeland and Jeff Archer report the conversion of two in Budapest in April. Several people are attending a Tuesday night class.

**PHILIPPINES** — Domie A. Jacob reports that 4 were baptized in February (two at Cordon and two at Der-an). In March four were baptized at Cordon and one at Der-an. In April 39 were baptized, most of them having been Jehovah's Witnesses who attended the gospel meeting and Bible studies. All of these were in Isabela Province.

Kenny Marrs of Pinole, California, and his father, Kenneth, spent about three weeks working in the Cagayan Valley. Rody Gumpad reports on their visit and says that 36 were baptized during that time and the brethren were much encouraged.

C. A. Apatan reports from Pagadian City in Mindanao that in the last two months nine were baptized there with ongoing Bible studies with a number of prospects.

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### RESPONSE TO ATTACKS

Several readers have asked if we planned to respond to the most recent attack in FAITH AND FACTS. The answer is "no." We have dealt with the issue involving the nature of Christ. We have offered propositions which represent the differences and offered a place in Louisville to have such a discussion. The complaint that nobody is willing to debate this matter is absolutely false. The controversy has descended far beneath the dignity which ought to characterize brethren in controversy over any subject. We are willing to contend for truth and right but not on the level on which this matter is being discussed. I shall continue to preach and teach what I am confident is the truth of God's word on the nature of Christ and am willing to defend that teaching in

fair and honorable circumstances. But there will be no replies to personal attacks. There is never an end to such things and the cause of Christ is the greatest loser of all in endless wrangles.

We were also brought under fire in a widely circulated booklet entitled "Fellowship On Divorce and Remarriage" by Samuel G. Dawson. Though our brother mailed a copy of this booklet to preachers all over the country, he did not honor me with a copy and I saw it second-handed. There are a number of inaccuracies and misrepresentations about me and I have written brother Dawson personally about this. It would serve no good purpose to try and respond to the personal remarks and innuendoes in this work. My attitude about that is the same as expressed in the foregoing paragraph.

### PRAYERS NEEDED

Phyllis Key, wife of David Key who manages Religious Supply Center, is battling with a malignancy in the liver. It is growing and chemotherapy has been discontinued since it seems to have had no effect in slowing the growth rate. Phyllis is loved by all who know her and many of our readers have heard her pleasant voice in ordering from the book store. Phyllis, David and all the family urgently need your prayers.

\*\*\*\*\*

### THANKS TO DONNIE V. RADER, AGAIN

We have written many notes to thank Donnie V. Rader for his work with us on the paper. Well, it is time to do that again. Donnie edited the July special issue on "Women Professing Godliness." The material he put together, the arrangement of it and the work done to make it all come together were done with excellence. Our thanks to him and to all those who contributed articles for the special. You did your work well and much good will come from it.



# 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 XXXIII

September 1992

Number 9

## THINK ON THESE THINGS

*H. E. Phillips*

P.O. Box 1631  
Lutz, FL 33549



### The Consequences of Procrastination

The term "procrastinate" is defined: "to put off doing something until a future time" - "to defer, postpone." And of course, the word "consequences" simply means that which follows or results from a certain course or action.

The road to hell is paved with good intentions, someone has said. One of the easiest things to do is to plan and promise to do what is right and good, but when the time comes to fulfill the plan, something always happens and we do not get it done. Almost everyone intends to do right, straighten up and repent before he dies, but we always want to wait until tomorrow or some future convenient time.

The young people feel they must "sow their wild oats," because "we live but once." The middle-aged think they must work and make all the money they can while they are in their productive years, because the time will come when they cannot do so. "We must make hay while the sun shines, you know." The aged think they must enjoy a few years of retirement and fun before they settle down to seriously practicing religion. The cycle continues with every generation and every segment of our society. But we do not reckon with the fact that there is a judgment to which every one of us must give an account. This judgment is based upon our language (Matt. 12: 34), upon our deeds done in the body (2 Cor. 5: 10), and upon our works (Rev. 20: 12).

The normal and almost natural schemes devised by

man to defer his responsible and religious conduct to some future time while he imbibes the pleasures of sin for a season are all totally absurd. Men and women die at all ages, and many of them suddenly. Eventually all of us die (Heb. 9: 27). When death overtakes one at any age, his activity on earth ceases, and his intended good is never done. The Lord said, "Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh (Matt. 25; 13).

In Luke 12, Jesus spoke a parable stating that a certain rich man increased abundantly from his labors. He planned to pull down his barns and to build greater ones. And having filled these new barns, he would say to himself: "And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God" (Luke 12: 19-21).

The man in this parable made a number of fatal mistakes, one of which was to defer or ignore his present duty to God while he made all provisions for his present and future physical needs.

The apostle Paul was called before Felix and Drusilla because they wanted to "hear him concerning the faith in Christ." As the apostle reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix reacted by trembling, no doubt at the realization of the consequences he must pay if he continued to pursue his present course of life. But in this he responded: "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee" (Acts 24: 25). Three important facts are to be noted in this verse: Felix listened and understood what Paul said. He understood his course of life was out of harmony with what Paul preached and understood the consequences if he continued, thus he trembled. Finally, he gave the indication that at some "convenient season" he would hear again with a view to changing his life. All evidence indicated that Felix did what most people do today: he procrastinated until it was too late.

The plans to ignore the will of God in one's course of life, with the built-in plan to someday repent and reform, always results in leaving this life without God.

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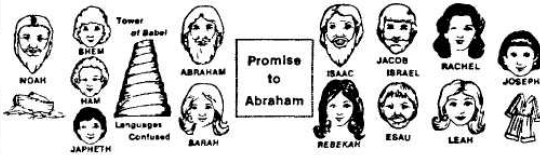
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## " QUOTE

**"History Is a vast  
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## UNQUOTE "

## Editorial

Connie W. Adams

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### More Premillennial Compromises

For a long time I have been telling brethren that the premillennial church of Christ and their preachers are denominational in attitude and practice. An article in the June, 1992 WORD AND WORK edited by Alex V. Wilson, documents that beyond doubt. For the benefit of readers in other parts of the country, Louisville was, and yet is, the center of strength for the premillennial churches of Christ. R. H. Boll, who brought this heresy into churches of Christ lived here, preached for the Portland Avenue church where Alex V. Wilson now preaches, and edited WORD AND WORK from this city. There are yet 26 premillennial churches of Christ within a 40 mile radius of Louisville, a few of them fairly large.

They continue to operate Portland Christian School, publish WORD AND WORK, conduct a radio program called "Words of Life" and the news column in WORD AND WORK continually reports activities which they support in several locations over this country and in Japan, Nigeria and the Philippines. They announce and support various denominational dispensationalists who come to town to lecture on prophecy, "the rapture" and related themes.

In February, 1991 we had a nine hour extended discussion with them with five men of the persuasion and with Gene Frost, Paul Earnhart, John Humphries, Guy Roberson and the writer. This was well attended and demonstrated clearly the wide gap between us doctrinally.

Now, Alex V. Wilson announces the following:

"Next October, a gifted preacher, John Guest, will hold a city-wide evangelistic crusade in Louisville. So the churches in our city have been asked to cooperate in backing this effort.

"Leaders in our congregation checked and verified that John Guest believes firmly in the authority of the bible, the deity of Christ, salvation by God's grace through Christ's redeeming death and triumphant resurrection, and the necessity for sinners to be converted. From all reports the evangelist has also proved himself to be a man of moral and financial integrity. So we weighed the pros and cons of supporting this crusade. After prayerful thought and discussion, we decided to participate as a church, though of course it is up to each individual member as to what he or she will do."

What is interesting about this is that John Guest is an

Episcopalian, an Englishman now living in Pennsylvania. In addition to what he is said to believe, it could be added that he also believes in and practices infant baptism. If you think joining hands in support of denominational preachers who teach and practice error on the subject of baptism, is something new with these folks, you are simply mistaken.

Alex V. Wilson was concerned for putting this in historical perspective and so went back to 1956 to the time when Billy Graham, a Baptist who does not teach baptism for the remission of sins, came to Louisville for a crusade. Premillennial churches of Christ endorsed his campaign. Some of the brethren in this area bought a half-page ad in the COURIER-JOURNAL, a daily newspaper, to oppose the Graham crusade and to point out from scripture the error of his teaching. This greatly embarrassed the premillennial folks. R. H. Boll had died a few months before and E. L. Jorgenson was the new editor of WORD AND WORK and speaker on the radio program, "Words of Life." Here is Jorgenson's editorial note before printing the text of his radio address on October 20, 1956.

"The Graham evangelistic crusade in this city is now history. One "Church of Christ" bought costly space in the **Courier-Journal** (our largest daily) to attack the teaching of the evangelist through the public press. The intention was good, no doubt, but the judgment used (as we see it) was bad. The display had many scriptures, all true of course, and many of them well applied; but resentment rose high-that this was done at the opening of the crusade! On every hand members of our free Churches of Christ (for they too wear Christ's dear name) were being asked if they approved the attack, or if those churches were connected with, or represented by, the advertisement. Accordingly, On October 20, as the first half of E. L. Jorgenson's regular radio address on the "Words of Life" radio program the following script was read, and a copy was sent to Mr. Graham. -E. L. J. "

The following is the first part of this script and tells much about the lack of conviction of these who borrowed their millennial speculations from the sectarian world in the first place.

"Just now, and for one more week, our city, or rather the evangelical churches of our city, are engaged in a great union effort to bring the unsaved amongst us to a definite decision for Christ.

"It is indeed a thrilling sight, and a heart-warming experience 'to those that love the Lord' to see the new coliseum at the Fair Grounds filled to overflowing; rank upon rank, thousands on thousands; a veritable sea of faces, all upturned to the man who comes out to speak for God; to speak of faith and repentance; to call the sinful to repentance and surrender, and to call us all to a new and deeper dedication to the person and service of Jesus Christ the Lord.

"The famous evangelist is, of course, a baptized believer-immersed, as he told us; and that he preaches the news of the gospel there can be no doubt-that is, if the gospel is what Paul says it is in 1 Cor. 15: 3-5: namely, 'that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on


the third day according to the scriptures; and that he appeared to Cephas', etc. You see, 'the gospel' is not what we do; it's what He did; it's not what we have done; it's what He has done for us... This gospel, thank God, we hear, in the union evangelistic meetings, and we do greatly rejoice to hear it."

In the remainder of his speech he argued that it would be best to have Graham do his work and then perhaps later he and his brethren could expound the way more accurately to these new converts. He added this near the end of the speech.

"What then, Shall we oppose the whole crusade? Shall we resort to half-page advertisements, to throw cold water on the effort although we know that thousands whom we could never reach will hear, out there, the great fundamentals of faith, repentance, decision for Christ, and confession of Christ - preached in mighty power? No, 'we have not so learned Christ.' In that sort of opposition, you may just 'include me out.'"

No wonder the editor of WORD AND WORK went back to the precedent from E. L. Jorgenson for supporting false teachers. Billy Graham does not believe or preach baptism for the remission of sins. In fact, baptism, period, is conspicuously absent from his messages. Now comes an Episcopalian who baptizes babies and denies the essentially of immersion to preach a denominational message which will deceive the hearts of all who come to hear him. He will say some true things, but he will not preach the whole counsel of God. If he did, then the premillennial churches of Christ would not support him. If he taught the truth on prophecy and fulfillment, on the nature of the present reign of Christ in his kingdom they would not support him. This is what happens when people leave the simplicity of the word of God and become enamored of the intoxicating wines of denominational speculations.

This is a good time to sound a warning to a rising generation of preachers some of whom are overly impressed with the verbal and printed oratory of popular denominational preachers who are either charismatic, Calvinistic or dispensationally oriented. Those who do not understand the basic nature of man, the distinctiveness of the church revealed in the Bible, the gospel plan of salvation and the basic rules of Biblical interpretation are not safe teachers. They may say some good things in very compelling and exciting ways, but they are just not safe teachers. Preachers, look over your libraries. From what well are you drinking to satisfy your thirst for knowledge of the mind of God and for materials that will enhance your ability to "preach the word in season and out of season." "Buy the truth and sell it not" (Prov. 23: 23).



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## Uncertain Sounds

In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul says "things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they have a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?"

In context, Paul is showing that in the exercise of spiritual gifts, unless "ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? For ye shall speak into the air." Paul is showing that in order for them to be effective their speech must be distinct. If there is no difference in their speech, it is as if they "speak into the air."

We understand this principle even today in most things. Why do we know when in the woods we are about to step on a rattlesnake? The sound of the rattling of the snake is very distinct from the song of the bird.

### Strange Sounds

When we hear a strange sound, one of the first things we want to do is to identify its source. A strange sound on the surface usually says trouble is not far away. A strange sound does not mean all is well.

Paul told the young preacher, Timothy, "continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of knowing of whom thou hast learned them" (2 Tim. 3: 14). Timothy had both heard and learned from the apostle Paul (2 Tim. 2: 2). Those things that he heard of Paul, he was to teach to others. What he had not heard and learned from Paul or the Scriptures, he was not to teach.

However, in the day of Paul and Timothy, there were strange sounds being heard. (1) Some said the resurrection was already past (2 Tim. 2: 18). (2) Others said there was no resurrection, (1 Cor. 15: 12). (3) There were those that said, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved" (Acts 15: 1). (4) And there were still others who said "Jesus Christ is not come in the flesh" (1 John 4: 3). Much of the New Testament was written to combat these and other errors that were being taught.

### Strange Sounds Today

All of the strange sound did not cease in Paul's day. Today we are hearing sounds just as strange as those mentioned above.

**Women Professing Godliness**

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Over the last several years, there are men whom the people of God have respected and properly honored in love for their work and who have stood in the front of many a battle. Today, some of them are giving out some **uncertain** sounds. What they are preaching and/or writing is as uncertain a sound as the resurrection is past. There was a time when anything they wrote was read with great care and much appreciation. Today it is different. To see where they are going to preach or see their name on an article **makes one hold his breath until he** sees **what they have said**. There was a time when there was never any question about the sound that they would give forth. Today one wonders until they finish speaking or until one finishes their article. Often what they say is "sound speech" (Titus 2: 8). But then there is that sermon or article that gives forth an uncertain sound.

There are other preachers whose sound is not uncertain - it is the certain sound of error, without any question. Whether they know it or not, what they are saying is the same thing the denominational world has said for years, and many times they are saying it in the very language that the denominational world has used. Error is error, whether preached from a denominational pulpit or a pulpit among brethren. Error is not sanctified and made holy because it is preached in a building where the church of Christ meets.

If a man is not going to preach the truth, he should quit preaching and get out of the way of those that will preach the word of God, without addition, subtraction or substitution.

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### I Am Who I Am

It was a climatic moment when God appeared to Moses and commissioned him to lead His people out of Egypt. Moses first asked, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh" (Exodus 3: 11). God said, "I will certainly be with you" (verse 12).

Moses then said, "Who are You?" "Then Moses said to God, 'Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, "The God of your fathers has sent me to you, " and they say to me, "What is His name?" what shall I say to them?' "

Moses knew God. He was not an unbeliever. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was part of the heritage that he had learned from his Hebrew parents. But he needed to know more.

"And God said to Moses, I AM WHO I AM. ' And He said, Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, "I AM has sent me to you"" (verse 14).

This divine name has been transliterated into the English as "Jehovah" or "Yahweh. " We find a number of comparable descriptions of our God in the New Testament (Hebrews 13: 8; Revelation 1: 8; and Hebrews 11: 6 where "He is" is the third person equivalent of "I AM."

But in this study I shall direct your attention to seven occasions in the book of John where Jesus identified Himself as "I AM. " We need to perceive that He who hung upon the cross is He who spoke from the burning bush. Such cannot help but give us a deeper sense of the deity and majesty of our Lord.

**John 4: 26:** "Jesus said to her, I who speak to you am He. " " He was addressing the Samaritan woman at the well. She had engaged the Lord in conversation in response to His request for a drink of water, and had quickly found herself in a deep spiritual dialogue. Wishing, perhaps, to postpone a personal decision, she said, " I know that Messiah is coming' (who is called Christ). When He comes, He will tell us all things. ' " It was at this point that Jesus identified Himself as "I AM. "

The Pronoun "He" is not in the original text as is indicated by the italics in the KJV and NKJB. The verse might be rendered, "The One speaking to you is I AM. " Here was a word of instruction to a heart honest and good.

**John 6: 20:** "But He said to them, 'It is I; do not be afraid. "' The disciples were exhausted with toil and anxiety when they saw a figure walking upon the sea. But Jesus spoke to them the exhortation that graced His

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lips so often: "Fear not. "

The passage might be translated, "Be not afraid. I AM. " Here was a word of power to these trembling disciples.

**John 8: 24:** "... for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins. " Again the pronoun "He" is italicized. It does not appear in the Greek text. Jesus quite literally said, "If you do not believe that I AM..."

He was here speaking to Pharisees. They were religious folks who really did not know God because they thought religion was merely a matter of doing externals. They were looking for the Messiah, but did not recognize Him when He stood before them (verse 13).

Here was a word of rebuke to hard hearted unbelievers.

**John 8: 28:** "Then Jesus said to them, 'When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He. ... ' Or, "... then you will know that I AM..." He was speaking to the same unbelieving crowd and he foretold that they would be responsible for "lifting Him up, " or crucifying Him. The cross would become the proof of His deity.

But how could this be? Likely many hundreds of thousands had been crucified. There was nothing unique about that. Oh, but the distinctive feature in Christ's crucifixion was that death could not hold Him. He was the only One to come down from the cross and live again.

**John 8: 58:** "Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM. ' " This is the only reference which is clearly stated by the English.

Abraham died about 1800 B. C. We are not left to speculate as to the reaction of the Jews who heard these words: "Then they took up stones to throw at Him..." (verse 59). They understood the import of what He said. Four hundred years before Moses had been addressed from the burning bush, "I AM!" And four thousand years before, and four trillion years before, Jesus proclaimed, "I AM. "

**John 13: 19:** "Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am He. " In this scene of the last supper, Jesus declared that the Scripture would presently be fulfilled. When that happened, they would know, He stated, that "I AM. "

**John 18: 4-8:** "Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, 'Whom are you seeking?' They answered Him, 'Jesus of Nazareth. ' Jesus said to them, 'I am He'.. Then - when He said to them 'I am He, ' - they drew back and fell to the ground. Then He asked them again 'Whom are you seeking?' And they said, 'Jesus of Nazareth. ' Jesus answered, 'I have told you that I am He. '"

Three times in this text Jesus said "I AM. " Once more before Israel crucified Him, He let them know that they were arresting "I AM. "

I think that we will not come closer to recognizing the Lord Jesus in all His glory then when we truly begin to comprehend the significance of these statements.

## BREAD OF LIFE

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

*Herschel E. Patton*

7637 Fleming Hills Dr. S.W.  
Huntsville, Ala. 35802



## Who Is Jesus That I Should Follow Him?

The importance of following, obeying, or submitting to anyone, or thing, depends on who or what is making a request or demand of us. Does what we are asked to submit ourselves to have the right, power, or ability to seek our submission and fulfill the promises made?

People are invited and urged, in the Bible, by evangelists and individual followers of Jesus to believe in and follow Him. Jesus, himself, said "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11: 28). An affirmative response on our part depends on who he is and his ability to do what he says.

### Who Is Jesus?

This question was often raised by the people when Jesus was on earth. When Jesus made his triumphal entry to Jerusalem, with people crying "Blessed is he that commeth in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest... all the city was moved, saying 'who is this?'" (Matt. 21: 6-10). In the city, Jesus cleansed the Temple, healed the blind and lame (12-14), and was asked by the chief priests and elders "By what authority doest thou these things? Who gave thee this authority?" (23-27).

When Jesus healed a man possessed with a devil, blind and dumb, the people were amazed and said "Is not this the son of David?" (Matt. 12: 23). The people were rightly identifying him with the promised seed of David (Acts. 2: 29-36).

Jesus was not just an ordinary man, like had appeared at various times before, gained a following, but came to nought (Acts 5: 34-41).

When Jesus asked his chosen disciples "Whom do men say that I the son of man am?" They replied, "Some say that thou art John the Baptist (Herod thought this - Matt. 14: 2); Some Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets" (Matt. 16: 3-14). These, however, were wrong about who Jesus was. When Jesus put the question directly to His chosen disciples Peter rightly answered "Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God" (Matt. 16: 16).

Historically, there was a man by the name of Jesus, who was born, lived, attracted a lot of attention, was crucified, buried, and disappeared mysteriously from the tomb in the place and time frame of the New Testament. This is vividly confirmed in history. But, today, as

in that day, many are confused, and at a loss to explain who he REALLY was.

**Jesus Claimed To Be Deity**

When Jesus healed the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath day, and was criticized, He said "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." The Jews then sought to kill him, saying: "He not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God." Jesus continued to affirm his deity saying, "What things so ever He (God-Father) doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.. .. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom He will." He further said the Father "hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father" (Jno. 5: 17-23).

In verse 33 Jesus mentioned John the Baptist's witness of him. "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world... I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Spirit. And I saw, and bear record that this is the Son of God" (Jno. 1: 15-34).

**Further Evidence That Jesus Is "Son of God"**

Prophecy of Jesus and it's fulfillment is proof that He was, indeed, the Son of God.

Prophecy		Fulfillment
Born of a virgin	- Isa. 7: 14	Lk. 1: 26-35
Place of birth	- Mic. 5: 2	Lk. 2: 1-6
Heal	-Isa. 53: 4	Mt. 8: 17
Mocked-scourged	-Isa. 50: 10	Mt. 27: 27-31
Hands/feet pierced	-Ps. 22: 16	Lk. 23: 33
Gall and vinegar	- Ps. 69: 29	Mt. 27: 33
Garments divided	-Ps. 22: 18	Jno. 19: 23
No bones broken	- Ps. 34: 20	Jno. 19: 36
Be raised	-Ps. 16: 10	Acts 2: 23-28

The teaching of Jesus (Mt. 7: 28-29; Jno. 7: 46). His compassion and mercy (Acts 10: 38), and character (Jno. 8: 46; 1 Pet. 2: 22) all show there was more to Jesus than common man. His many miracles were such that brought from men the exclamation "Only God could do such" - "Surely this was the Son of God."

**God In The Flesh**

When Mary, betrothed bride of Joseph, was found with child of the Holy Spirit (Lk. 1: 30-35), the angel appeared to Joseph and explained the situation, and said "Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1: 21). It was further revealed that all this fulfilled the prophecy (Isa. 7: 14) that said "Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel, which being interpreted is, GOD WITH US" (Matt. 1: 19-23).

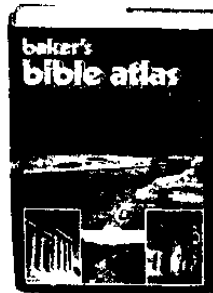
Paul listed as the first point in the "Mystery of Godliness," "God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3: 16). John wrote that the Word that "was in the beginning, and by whom all things were made, was with God and was God... and was made flesh and dwelt

among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth" (Jno. 1: 1-4).

Much has been written of late about the deity and humanity of Jesus. Many fine things have been written on both the deity and humanity of Christ, but after reading an abundance of material written, every writer has declared a belief in the fact Jesus was both God and man while on earth. If anyone denies this, he would be going against the passages already mentioned in this article that affirm Jesus, on earth, was "God manifest in the flesh," and all miracles of Jesus that were performed to convince people that He was "The Christ, the Son of the living God" (Jno. 20: 30-31). On the other hand, if one claimed Jesus, on earth, was not completely human, but had an advantage over us when he suffered or was tempted, this would be in conflict with Heb. 2: 17-18 ". . . Behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted"; "For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4: 15-16). See also, Phil. 2: 7.

Who was Jesus while on earth? He was "God manifested in the flesh." He proved to people here on earth that he was the Son of God by his works, like, miracles, death on the cross and resurrection. He is now glorified, sitting on the right hand of God in heaven, reigning over his people (church-kingdom).

If Jesus was and is all he claimed and proved himself to be, then believing in, coming to, and submitting to His will is man's only hope for salvation and eternal glory (Matt. 7: 21; Heb. 5: 8-9; Rev. 22: 14). This is why all should follow Him. He is, indeed, Bread of Life.



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### "A Sore Evil"

According to Solomon, several things can come under the heading of "a sore evil" (cf. Eccl. 5: 13ff).

In our time, I would like for us to consider the sore evil of religious division. Not just division in general, but a particular type of division.

We can never expect unity among denominational churches. The very term personifies division and confusion (Mk. 3: 25; 1 Cor. 14: 33). The entire tree of denominationalism is corrupt, from the tap root upward (Mt. 12: 33; Jas. 3: 11, 12).

As fast as some form of union (not unity), is achieved in human mergers, some resist the merger and maintain their former identity, or start new churches. As long as human organizations employ human methods, the system does not solve the problem of division, but rather begets it.

Unity can, and should, prevail among God's people (Jno. 17: 20, 21; Eph. 4: 1-6). But, it seems that every two or three generations, a spirit of apostasy and digression destroys the peace and unity of even God's people (Judges 2: 10). This evil spirit of division existed in Paul's day (1 Cor. 3: 3; 2 Thes. 2: 3), and continues to exist in our time. Such division not only causes some of God's people to be lost, but it gives the enemy occasion to blaspheme and obscures the identity of "the way of truth" (Rom. 2: 24; 2 Pet. 2: 1, 2).

But, let us suppose that some could seek and find the truth in spite of the major differences that separated the people of God (e. g., Sadducees/Pharisees, instrumental/non-instrumental, institutional/non-institutional, and liberal/conservative).

To further complicate matters, and as if denominationalism and major divisions among God's people were not enough, some seem determined to splinter these already sore divisions into even more confusing and contradictory choices.

The liberal/institutional brethren have their own problems along this line, and none of us have much room to gloat or rejoice over division in the ranks of others.

However, I'm concerned more about those splinter groups among conservative brethren, for in this realm only can I hope to have some degree of influence for good. The more liberal brethren quit listening to the Lord and to me a long time ago, or else they wouldn't be where they are now.

Recently, while I was grieving over a senseless, seemingly unnecessary "split" among conservative brethren in a particular community, I was amazed and depressed to realize how many other such divisions would fall into the same category. And this application pertains only to those cases which would fall within the scope of my knowledge. I'm sure there are others.

What is even more incongruous is the fact that most of these splintered groups are not financially or spiritually able to support themselves. They were not even able to do that before they split, and are now "in debt" even deeper.

Brethren, it is high time for us to stop subsidizing strife, vain glory, and senseless bickering. It is also time for some of those splinter groups to reorganize under the appropriate chapter of spiritual and financial bankruptcy, and learn responsibility.

Don't misunderstand me. I have worked with, and encouraged small congregations which were established because of **doctrinal** differences with liberal brethren. I think my record will bear out this statement, or else I would not even attempt to press the point and advise others. (See "Procrastination On The Plains," either already published, or soon to be published, in **STS**.)

Some of these small congregations have divided simply because of selfishness, a desire for preeminence, or personal disagreements over the most trivial of opinions and issues. Sometimes the problem revolves around a preacher who either does not have enough wisdom or enough love for the cause of Christ to prevent schism in the body of Christ.

As I said before, the number of such congregations is so prevalent and includes so many geographical areas, that it would be folly to accuse me of having one particular congregation in mind. But if the shoe fits, wear it; if it pinches too much, change shoes.

The sore evil of the whole thing is that we have a difficult time converting people to the truth, given the conditions of the religious world in general. Now, even if we succeed in baptizing someone, where shall we advise them to assemble, worship, and discharge their collective duties as Christians?

It was Solomon who talked about these "sore evils," and the vanity and vexation of spirit which comes because of the seemingly incongruous offerings of life under the sun.

And, it will take the combined wisdom of Solomon, and one "greater than Solomon" (Mt. 12: 42), to solve some of the problems which brethren have created.

I just pray that we can get the matter resolved before the head of the church comes back to claim his bride (Eph. 5: 25-27; Rev. 19: 7).

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## Can God Count On You?

*Norman E. Sewell*

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In the letter to the Hebrews we find this admonition, "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised; )" (Heb. 10: 23). The reason I am to "hold fast" is that God is faithful, He can be depended on. Perhaps each of us needs to ask the question, "Can God count on me.?"

Many passages clearly show this aspect of God, that He is faithful. In Hebrews chapter 11, as the writer described the faith of Sarah he wrote: "Through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised: (Heb. 11: 11). Sarah counted God as trustworthy and dependable; He would keep His promise to her.

Many of us count 1 Corinthians 10: 13 as among our favorites because of the wonderful promises contained in it. Paul wrote to the Corinthians to warn them about sin by first showing them some of the mistakes made by the Jews. Then he warned them, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are writ-ten for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10: 11-12). Then he gives God's promise. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. " Why does this promise mean so much to us? Because God is faithful! We know from the record of God's dealings with the Jews that he did indeed always keep His word. And thus we know that he will keep His promises to us as well. There will always be a way of escape from temptation so that we are not overcome. When we sin it is because we give in to temptation, not because God has failed us.

Further, in the first letter of John we learn of God's gracious provision for those who walk in the light, for Christians. He promises that "if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1: 7). Then in verse 9 he writes: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. " The fact that Jesus' blood continues to cleanse those who walk in the light and who confess their sins is of great encouragement to every Christian. How awful life would

be if we had no hope of forgiveness when we fail to live as God expects. But God is faithful; we can count on Him to do just what he promises.

Again in the Hebrew letter we find another promise showing God's care for His people. "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he that said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb. 13: 5-6).

But the question remains, "Can God count on me?" In Hebrews 10 where we began this study the writer lists several things expected of those who have been forgiven through Jesus' blood, and who count Him as our High Priest. In verse 22 we read: "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith. " Have you ever heard someone say, "I don't feel close to God"? When we don't feel close to God whose fault is it? The instruction given here and in James chapter 4 is "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you" (v. 8). How much effort do we give to drawing closer to God? Can God count on you?

Again the Hebrew writer encourages: "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering" (Heb. 10: 23). Later in the chapter he wrote: "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise" (v. 35-36). Its easy to become discouraged and want to give up because God's schedule isn't our schedule; but the instruction is to hold fast.

Further the Hebrew writer said: "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works" (Heb. 10: 24). We who have been redeemed are expected to help and encourage each other. We may do this in part by spending time together socially, preferring one another to friends who are of the world. But partly we do this by the time we spend together in worship and study of God's word. Perhaps this is why the very next verse reads: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. 10: 25). Christians who don't seem to want to worship and study with other Christians have missed the point of these verses; that we can count on God and that he expects to be able to count on us as well. **CAN GOD COUNT ON YOU?**

How do we know if God can count on us? The answer is given simply in Luke chapter 12. Jesus had taught a parable about servants being watchful for the coming of their master. When Peter asked about it Jesus said: "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing" (Lk. 12: 42-43). God counts us faithful in the doing of His will, now. We have no need to look for some "good thing" like the rich young ruler by which we may earn our salvation; it isn't obtained that way. Instead He asks that we be found, "always abounding in the work of the Lord, that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15: 58). God is faithful? Are you?

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## Preaching The Living Word of the Living God In Order To Produce A Living Faith and Living Hope

*Billy Ashworth*

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Jesus commanded the apostles, as recorded in Mark 16: 15, 16, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." In Hebrews 4: 12 we read: "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

Paul writing to the saints at Rome said: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1: 16, 17). Gal. 2: 20: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." The apostle Peter wrote: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead..." (1 Pet. 1: 3).

The reader must be impressed with the repetitive use of the word **LIVING** in the title of the article which is reflected in the passages of Scripture cited. We do not preach a dead message from a "dead God." The foolish revival of the old cliché by Altizer: "God is dead," is not only blatantly false, but also nonsensical since there is no such thing as dead deity! Only a **LIVING GOD** could reveal a **LIVING** message to produce a **LIVING** faith and a **LIVING** hope!

It is important to notice the command: "Go ye into all the world and **PREACH** the gospel to every creature." This passage contains what is called The Great Commission in contradistinction to the Limited Commission which Jesus gave to the twelve and seventy and limited them to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 10: 6; Lk. 10). The Twelve were to preach, "The Kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mt. 10: 7). The Seventy were to preach, "The Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you" (Lk. 10: 11). Of course, the message was the same in both instances.

But after Pentecost, when the apostles were to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," the message was "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses... Therefore let all the

house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ." (Acts 2: 32, 36) J. W. McGarvey, in his commentary of Acts of Apostles, commented on verse 36: "He had made him Lord by causing him to sit on God's own throne, to rule over angels and men; and he made him Christ by causing him to sit on the throne of David according to the promise."

Here we find the apostles beginning to carry out the Great Commission as Jesus directed them in Acts 1: 8; "... ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." The message was NOT of a "coming kingdom" but of the kingdom of God's having come with Jesus, the crucified and resurrected Savior, sitting enthroned on the universal throne of dominion-the **KING** over His Kingdom!

At this point, I want to make it clear that I believe the Bible not only tells us **WHAT** to preach, but **HOW** to preach the message. The sermon preached by the apostle Peter as recorded in Acts 2: 14-40, is the finest example one can find of the scriptural way to preach. The arrangement of the sermon, the cogent arguments he made in response to the critics who scoffed: "These men are full of new wine: are unexcelled. Peter appealed to the prophets of the Old Testament and said: "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;..." He gave prophecy after prophecy of these Jews who knew them but failed to understand them, and said: "Him (Jesus of Nazareth)... ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain;..." (Acts 2: 23). Peter was speaking by inspiration of the Holy Spirit the gospel of Christ, God's power to save. He responded to the carping critics, identifying of whom he was speaking and why. He had not been trained in "audience psychology" how to speak so kindly no one would know of whom or what he was saying. He never heard the warning by weak, compromising people, "That kind of preaching will run people off." He had no fear of losing his job as "minister of the gospel" in Jerusalem, but he did fear losing his soul in hell by failing to do what the Lord commanded him to do. He preached for conviction of his audience-not to please them but to save them.

One finds Peter preaching as Paul later commanded Timothy to do: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season: reprove, (convince, NKJ) rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4: 2). Today one hears such warnings as: "You are too negative. Preach Positive." That is the psychology of the world which lives and breathes the positive approach -negatives are out. I do not think Paul meant to advise Timothy to preach two negative sermons for every positive one, but two of the three instructions given above were negative. The apostle Peter used these principles on Pentecost-he reproved, rebuked and exhorted the Jews and convinced them of their heinous crime of having crucified and slain their promised Messiah. Listen as he challenged his audience: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2: 36). The result: "Now when they heard this, they were

cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" They were convicted by the Gospel, God's power to save as delivered by a powerful preacher!

Peter did not "run all his audience off" for we know that after Peter told them to "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..." that "they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." How many "ran off" because they did not like the sermon, I do not know. But I do know that about three thousand obeyed the gospel the first time they heard it preached by this powerful preacher. But if Peter had been a modern day "Gospel preacher" who is more concerned with giving the people what they want to hear instead of what they MUST hear to be saved, the ones who stayed and applauded him would have gone away lost.

The gospel of Christ is God's power to save. Men have developed awesome weapons capable of destroying this world with all living beings and things in it. Man has also manufactured chemical weapons capable of destroying eight times the entire inhabitants of this world. But man cannot produce anything or anybody capable of saving himself from sin! Only the God who made us in His own image can do that. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3: 16).

God revealed the message (the Gospel) to men who were inspired by the Holy Spirit who spoke it and wrote it down for mankind that we might know what we must do to be saved. The message is God's power to save. But it must be preached to lost, perishing humanity. Lying dormant on the pages of the Bible, the gospel will not save. Faithful preachers of the gospel must preach it (herald it abroad/proclaim it). The gospel is God's power to save. To preach it powerfully is man's part in salvation. I realize that each of us has different dispositions/temperament, but I personally believe the powerful gospel deserves powerful preaching. We need to stand forth with the Sword of the Spirit and preach with all boldness and plainness of speech, persuading men without favor of friend or fear or foe (Acts 4; 29, 31; 2 Cor. 3: 12; 2 Cor. 5: 11).

## Baptist Church Baptism

*William V. Beasley*

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For a preacher in the church of Christ to attempt to write an article on **Baptist Church Baptism** is, in the eyes of many, suspect. Does he have an axe to grind? Can he/Will he be fair? This article is being presented in concern... concern for souls. If the teachings of the Baptist Church (the book from which I shall quote was published by The American Baptist Publishing Society) are correct then I do **not** understand the New Testament; on the other hand, if I am teaching the truth then Baptists are wrong, still lost, still in their sins.

It is possible, and I fully realize this, that many Baptists do NOT believe what the Baptist Church teaches. I would appreciate hearing from members of the Baptist Church (Yea or Nay). This article is sent forth in **love**... love for God and for souls. If you disagree with what is presented let me know. Dear reader, it does no good to get angry. I am not angry... I am concerned. If you disagree, disagree in love; deal with the passages presented and with the arguments made.

### Baptist Dogma

Chapter III of The Standard Manual For Baptist Churches by Edward T. Hiscox is entitled "Church Ordinances," and deals with Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Following this short chapter there is a series of eight notes to more fully explain the Baptist concept of these two subjects. "NOTE 8. - Baptism is not essential to salvation, for our churches utterly repudiate the dogma of 'baptismal regeneration'; but it is essential to obedience, since Christ has commanded it. It is also essential to a public confession of Christ before the world, and to membership in the church which is his body. And no true lover of his Lord will refuse these acts of obedience and tokens of affection" (pp. 20-21). This statement is NOT something I would make up. Honest, I wouldn't do that. To me, this statement is **shocking**. We will, the Lord willing take a closer look at this statement a little later.

### What Saith The New Testament?

When Nicodemus asked Jesus concerning being "born anew (again - KJV)," Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3: 5). Being born of water is, as a study of the New testament shows, water baptism (see Mark 16: 16; Acts 2: 38; 22: 16; Romans 6: 3-4; etc. ). The apostle Peter, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, tells us that baptism "doth now save you" (1 Peter 3: 20-21).

## Questions And Answers

by: H. Leo Boles

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**The Hiscox Statement**

"**Baptism is not essential to salvation, for our churches utterly repudiate the dogma of 'baptismal regeneration'...**" We have already shown that Jesus (John 3: 3-5), Ananias (Acts 22: 16) and Peter (Acts 2: 38; 1 Peter 3: 20-21) placed baptism **before** being saved, remission of sins, and the washing away of sins. The second phrase seems to place authority to decide doctrine in the hands of the church (".... for our churches... "). Not so! The church is to follow the teaching of the Christ... and not to decide/determine doctrine. I'm not sure what Mr. Hiscox had in mind when he wrote of "baptismal regeneration." If he means the same thing as do Lutherans ("Therefore we believe in baptismal regeneration, that is, that children who are born in sin are reborn in baptism" - **SENIOR CATECHISM, Luther's Small Catechism in Question and Answer Form** by J. A. Dell, page 176) I would join hands with Mr. Hiscox in not believing in such. If, on the other hand, he is saying that baptism has nothing to do with **regeneration** ("2. a spiritual rebirth or conversion"-Webster) we must cry out, "Not so! Not so! Remember John 3: 33-5. Also consider that we are "baptized into Christ" (Galatians 3: 27) where we are "a new creation" (2 Corinthians 5: 17).

"... **but it (baptism) is essential to obedience, since Christ has commanded it.**" Dear reader, this is SHOCKING. Baptism, we are told, is not essential to salvation but is essential to obedience. That is, any way you cut it, teaching salvation without obedience, but Jesus "became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation" (Hebrews 5: 9). Baptist Friend, which of these two do **you** believe? Mr. Hiscox? The Hebrew writer? Which?

"**It is also essential to a public confession of Christ before the world, and to membership in the church which is his body.**" Mr. Hiscox is teaching salvation without a public confession of Christ, but the rulers in Christ's day on earth were condemned because they refused to confess Him (John 12: 41-42). Read and consider 1 John 4: 2-3. Mr. Hiscox also teaches that one can have salvation without being a member of the church, without being a member of the body of Christ (Ephesians 1: 22-23). Shocking! Mr. Hiscox would have individuals saved outside of the church, outside of the body of Christ, outside of Christ. Baptist Friend, do you so believe?

"**And no true lover of his Lord will refuse these acts of obedience and tokens of affection.**" Mr. Hiscox teaches salvation without baptism, but without baptism one is "no true lover of his Lord," therefore one can (according to Mr. Hiscox and Baptist Church Doctrine) be saved without being a "true lover of his Lord." Yet Paul wrote: "If any man loveth not the Lord, let him be anathema" (1 Corinthians 16: 22). "Anathema" means "devoted to destruction." Baptist reader, do you believe that the man who is "no true lover of His Lord" is saved? Do you believe Mr. Hiscox and Baptist Church Doctrine? Or do you believe that "no true lover of his Lord" is anathema? Do you believe Paul and the Holy Spirit? Which? It can't be both.

**Conclusion**

In writing an article like this I realize that I open myself up to being disliked... perhaps even hated. But I also know that love has prompted this article, "And I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls. If I love you more abundantly, am I loved the less" (2 Corinthians 12: 15)?

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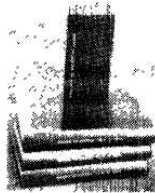
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## Philippine Trip 1992

*Jerry Parks*

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East Alton, IL 62024

Through the generosity of many, another preaching trip to the Philippines, has been accomplished. Brother John Humphries was my traveling companion again this year. Brother Humphries and I have been working together on such preaching trips since 1986. I could not ask for a better co-laborer in the gospel. John is a veteran of many trips overseas and knows what he is doing. His teaching is rich and powerful and he is an encouragement everywhere he goes. We enjoy our time together but because we can accomplish more by going in different directions, we actually spend very little time together. We simply touch base with one another from time to time to make sure that all is well.

With each trip overseas to the Philippines and other 3rd world countries, it seems to get more and more difficult and takes longer to recuperate. But with each trip, I can see more and more the value of such efforts and especially the need to continue making such trips. I feel confident that we are becoming well adopted to the ways and needs and problems of the Filipino brethren. Each year we meet and become better acquainted with more and more of the brethren. Each year we have opportunity to work with and stay in the homes of those who are striving to preach Christ in that difficult part of the world. Most of the brethren seem comfortable when we're in their presence. The novelty and tension of an American in their midst seems to have subsided. The brethren seem more at ease and willing to concentrate as we conduct Bible classes and give advice in trying to help them solve problems that exist between brethren.

We spent the 1st week together conducting classes at brother Ben Cruz's house in Manila. The national elections which were underway when we arrived, kept us from doing any real traveling till after May 11th. While at Manila, John taught a series of lessons on the book of Daniel and I presented a series of lessons on the 7 churches of Asia.

On May 12th John continued his studies in Manila while I traveled by bus to Hagonoy for a visit with the Agulto family. Two were baptized there. Then the next day I traveled by bus to Tarlac (the Mt. Pinatubo area) where I had an opportunity to conduct classes morning, noon, and evening in the home of brother Dominador Arcega at San Felipe. I spent one week there and 7 more were baptized. I also had opportunity to visit with brethren in 5 other congregations while staying in the home of brother Arcega.

After my stay in Tarlac District I returned to Manila and traveled with brother Ben Cruz to Pampanga District. Ben had converted a man shortly before that time who was from that village. The man returned to his home place and told the others about the pure gospel of Christ. When we arrived, the entire village was eagerly waiting our arrival. Included in that number was a denominational preacher who questioned me for hours after I had finished preaching about the one true church. Consequently, he and a number of the others in the village were baptized when brother Humphries returned to that location the following week. Stories like that make the trip worthwhile, no matter how many discomforts one must endure.

On May 21st I made a quick trip to Olongapo (Subic Bay) to follow up and verify some relief efforts for the Mt. Pinatubo victims. By this time brother Humphries had departed for a one week stay in Malaysia (Borneo) to visit with several newly established congregations. Early on the morning of May 23rd, I flew to Davao City on the Island of Mindanao in the southern most part of the Philippines. While there, I stayed in the homes of brother Juanito Balbin and with brother Joy Notarte. While in that area I traveled to at least 9 remote congregations traversing difficult mountain terrain through Mt. Apo, Davao Del Sur and Digos areas. These trips were made in Joy Notarte's Volkswagon "Bug"

On May 27th I was joined by brother Humphries and we traveled in a Jeepney owned by brother Manibog to Kidapawan in North Cotabato. Halfway there the drive shaft fell apart and we were stranded till we could hitch a ride on another jeepney. We finally arrived at the home of brother Manibog. The next day we visited 5 congregations before returning by Jeepney to Davao. On May 29th we traveled by boat to Samal Island and preached and visited brethren for several hours before returning to the home of brother Notarte to pack for our return flight to Manila.

We arrived in Manila just in time to participate in the wedding of Teresa Cruz who was marrying a young man she personally converted from Catholicism.

In all, there were 25 baptisms that took place while we were on this trip. Many Bible classes for preachers and other interested people were conducted. Several disputes were settled and we were able to provide some much needed financial help to needy saints. That included buying food for drought victims, buying eye glasses, medicine, clothing, as well as repairing fishing boats and other equipment so brethren could once again start making a living. The drought victims living in the Davao Del Sur area have been especially hard hit and are suffering greatly. Their crops are a disaster and they have had to eat the rice that was needed for replanting. Now many are not only suffering from the lack of food and water, but also suffering from disease and sickness that always follows from such a severe drought. They are desperately in need of food and medicine and have no money to purchase such necessities. Filipino brethren from other areas are trying to help, but they need much more. I would be happy to give you the names and addresses of those to contact if you could help.

Once again, I express my appreciation to all those who make such trips possible. If I can supply you with more information about any of these matters, I would be happy to do so.

## Gossip's Corrupt Fruit

*Tom Moody*

P.O. Box 26  
Milton, Vermont 05468

"Gossip" is idle talk or rumors about others. The word can also be applied to the person who initiates or repeats idle talk.

Many jokes are made about gossip. Some seem to view gossip as a harmless exercise - an annoyance or nuisance at worst.

Christians should realize that gossip (Slander, tale bearing, being a busy body) is sinful and carries with it the potential of much heartache and devastation. The sinfulness and seriousness of gossip is clearly illustrated by its effects which are listed in a number of scriptures. Jesus made this point by comparing our words to fruit from a tree:

*"Either make the tree good, and his fruit good: or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit.*

*O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matthew 12: 33-34).*

What is gossip's fruit?

1. Gossip makes a fool of the one who practices it. "... he that uttereth slander is a fool: (Proverbs 10: 18).

2. Gossip causes deep wounds.

*"The words of a tale bearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly" (Proverbs 26: 22).*

3. Gossip will separate close friends.

*"A forward man soweth strife: and a whisper separateth chief friends" (Proverbs 16: 28).*

4. Gossip brings shame upon the one who spreads it. *"Debate thy cause with thy neighbor himself; and*

*disclose not a secret to another: lest he that heareth it put thee to shame and thine infamy turn not away" (Proverbs 25: 9-10).*

If you are tempted to gossip, work on purifying your heart (evil speech proceeds from the heart, Matthew 15: 18-20). Increase your love for others, and learn to use your speech *"to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers"* (Ephesians 4: 29).

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everyday? (Daniel 6: 10, 13)**

**Do you read  
your  
Bible  
everyday?  
(Acts 17: 11)**

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## **THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS**

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

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

**GROVER STEVENS** is now working with the Overland church in Lawrenceburg, Kentucky. A new auditorium has been completed with the older one converted into classrooms. A new record of 121 gathered recently and one was baptized. Jim Ward of San Antonio, Texas was there recently in a very good meeting with record attendance.

**TOM WHEELER, Rt. 6, Box 393H, Florence, AL 35633** - Mildred and I are enjoying being a part of the River Bend church which meets a few miles northwest of Florence. Our work here is peaceful and pleasant. Danny Graham was with us in a meeting in May in which, seven were baptized. Mike Waters will be here in September (13-18) in a meeting. I was in a meeting in May in Galena, Indiana. When in this area, please come by and worship with us.

**MIKE MILES, 1200 Handel Dr., Virginia Beach, VA 23454** - The Tidewater church is finally moving into its permanent meeting place, on August 9, 1992. Our location is 217 Taxus Street in Chesapeake, Virginia. Form I-64 take Battlefield Blvd. south to Kepsville Road, then left to Dupont Street, then right to Taxus Street. The building is on that corner. We number about 90 at present. If you have family or friends in the area please let us know. My number is 804-427-9677.

### **DAN WALTERS DROWNED**

I recently learned of the tragic death of brother Dan Walters. While on vacation (his first in many years, due to the small size of the church he worked with) in Florida, he drowned in the Gulf waters above Spring Hill. His son was rescued from the undertow and survived. Dan had written for various periodicals and had engaged in several written discussions. I had a copy of his manuscript on the Revelation and found it to be an interesting work. His widow, Anna and son are in need of the prayers of God's people as they decide how to continue their lives without this fine soldier of Christ. Submitted by Ralph Walker, Concord, NC.

(Editor's note: Sister Walters sent us a note also about this tragic news. Services were conducted on June 20, 1992 at the Wise Funeral Home chapel in Bonham, Texas by Darrell Tubb and Earl Dale. He was buried in Moores Chapel Cemetery in Fannin County, Texas. Our hearts go out to Anna and her family. )

**PASADENA, TEXAS** - The June 24, 1992 bulletin from Southside in Pasadena reports 14 baptized and 10 restored there just recently.

### **DEBATE IN GULFPORT, MS**

Kevin Campbell is to meet Bobby Sparks on Greenville, Texas in a debate September 21, 22, 24 and 25, 1992. The debate will take place in Central Missionary Baptist Church's building at 7: 30 nightly. Propositions the first two nights concern the essentiality of water baptism for salvation. The last two nights deal with whether or not a child of God can so sin as to be lost eternally. For further details call Kevin Campbell at 601-831-4357.

**B. G. ECHOLS, 7 Ridgewood Ave., Glen Ridge, NJ 07028** - During the first six months of 1992 we had four adults baptized and eight identified with the church in East Orange, N. J. Most of those identified came from nearby liberal churches.

**DAVID MCCLISTER, 6025 Monrovia, Shawnee, Kansas 66216** - In June Rick Billingsley of Middleburg, Florida and I spent 17 days working in Newfoundland, Canada. Rick's brother, Dennis, is stationed at the U. S. Naval facility at Argentina. He and his family were interested in establishing a congregation there and we went to help. Two were baptized and we found a place in the small town of Placentia, Newfoundland (which is only a few miles from the Naval base) where the Christians can meet on a regular basis. We found many who were willing to study with us and left some studies still in progress. Dennis is following up on these and we expect to hear of more baptisms soon. Dennis will be leaving there in October, 1993. Rick and I are already planning to return next summer for more personal evangelism. Our goal is a congregation of native people that can stand with or without families present from the base (the base is scheduled to close in 1997). A start has been made and the potential is good for future growth. A good man is needed to work permanently in this area. Dennis will help to find support for the right man to come. If you are interested, please call Dennis Billingsley (709) 227-2820.

### **DIVISION HEALED**

In January, 1990 a situation that is all too common among brethren occurred in the congregation that meets on Fairmont Blvd. in Rapid City, South Dakota. The congregation was split asunder due, regrettably to circumstances that Paul so capably describes in Gal. 5: 20-21. Seemingly the only way to control the situation was to put distance between some brethren, thus some separated and began another congregation. Also, all too often, the story ends at this point with division continuing to exist between brethren, even though they all claim to love God and desire to worship him eternally "together" around the great white throne. To God's glory, however, the brethren in Rapid City were not satisfied to ignore this division of the Lord's body. They remembered Abraham's admonition to Lot in Gen. 13: 8: "Please let there be no strife between you and me, for we are brothers. " They also remembered Paul's warning to the Corinthians to have "no divisions" but to be of "the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1: 10). After considerable prayer, study, meditation, encouragement, and most important, the grace of God, the brethren in Rapid City have been reconciled to God and to each other. Almost two and a half years after the division, the brethren stood tall on their convictions and mustered the courage to say "I have sinned, forgive me. " Now there is once again one body of loving saints in Rapid City who assemble at 1302 E. Fairmont Blvd.

**MARIETTA, OHIO UPDATE** - The congregation meeting at 324 Fourth Street in Marietta began with 11 members present on January

1, 1991. Highest attendance to date has been 38 with an average now of 23. Our numbers are consistent on Sunday and Wednesday evening. We have been helped by many brethren in various ways with most of our encouragement coming from brethren in the Ohio Valley. Several from liberal churches have attended and indicated willingness to study with us. We are searching for property we can afford. Lots are very expensive. A number have helped in teaching and preaching including some of our own number. The support and encouragement we have received has far outweighed the efforts of some here to discredit and discourage us. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 44, Marietta, OH 45750.

**J. O. GABBARD, 49 Gabbard Rd., Roundhill, KY 42275-9522** - At the age of 71, I will fulfill a longtime dream by enrolling in Florida College August 24, 1992 to study some things I have wanted to probe into for many years. Though I have a bachelor's degree from a state university, I look forward to some study in Greek, Hebrew and advanced Bible courses. So with a little help from some good friends, including David Key, Earl Robertson, Connie W. Adams, James P. Needham, I have been able to tie up loose ends and look forward to going back to college to study with good, dedicated teachers.

#### NEW CONGREGATION

**CHURCH OF CHRIST, P. O. Box 1332, Noblesville, IN 46060** - On May 3, 1992 a new congregation began meeting in Noblesville, Indiana. We now meet at 1010 South Third. H. L. Collett is the preacher. Beginning with 22 we have grown to an average attendance of about 40. We had a meeting June 14-19 with several area preachers. These were Mike Hale, Mo Hafley, Wayne Chappel, Galen Miller, Boyd Sellers and Ron Daly. Visitors, saints and local people supported the meeting. Average attendance was 48 with a high of 73. We are working at peace to spread the gospel. H. L. Collett is in need of some additional support. His phone number is 317-773-8864.

#### PREACHERS NEEDED

**HODGENVILLE, KENTUCKY** - The church here needs a gospel preacher. Attendance averages 65-70. Those interested may call Al Parker (502) 358-9336, or Jim Bickford (502) 358-4088.

**GULFPORT, MISSISSIPPI** - The Morris Road church needs a scripturally qualified preacher to work with them. They can provide \$850 per month support. For further information please contact Mike Vickery (601) 875-2084 or (601) 392-4757.

**HERMISTON, OREGON** - The church in Hermiston is looking for a sound gospel preacher. A man on retirement or social security is preferred. We have some additional support. Contact Ray Gossett (503) 567-0741.

**CHARLESTON, WEST VIRGINIA** - The church meeting at 873 Oakwood Road needs a preacher. The building is conveniently located off three interstate highways and a major corridor highway. Good area for schools. We are a small congregation but will be able to assure full support. Contact Henry Williams (304) 727-2466 or Paul Stewart (304) 345-2391.

**LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY** - The Oak Grove congregation, 9203 Thixton Lane, Louisville, KY 40291 desires a full time preacher. Average attendance is 55. Residence and income of approximately \$1700 per month can be furnished by the congregation. For further information please call Russell Smith at (502) 968-0059 after 6 P. M. or send written inquiries to 9503 Slayton Court, Louisville, KY 40229.

**ALBANY, OREGON** - The Oak Street church in Albany needs a preacher sometime in the first quarter of 1993. There are about 50 members with a normal attendance of 70 on Sundays. We have all age groups. We are located on the western side of Oregon 30 miles south of Salem and 50 miles north of Eugene. We are about an hour from the Pacific Ocean on the west and one hour from the Cascade Mts. on the east. The city of Albany has about 30,000. To our east is Lebanon with 15,000 and Corvallis to our west with 40,000. There are several "liberal" groups around us. Those interested may contact Chuck Carroll, 1175 11th Ave. S. W., Albany, OR 97321.

#### FROM AROUND THE WORLD

**CANADA- ROY DIESTELKAMP** reports from St. Catherines, Ontario

that four were recently baptized there. Chuck Bartlett has now moved to Jordan, Ontario to work with the church there. An effort is planned for the fall to begin a sound work in Buffalo, New York. A strong family is moving there, the man being a school teacher who can also preach. Two families who live in Buffalo have been worshipping in St. Catherines.

**ITALY** - Randy Harshbarger and James Johnson of Mt. Pleasant, Texas and Robert Harkrider of Orlando, Florida recently visited the work in London and then spent some time in Italy. Brother Johnson is one of the elders at Southside in Mt. Pleasant where Randy Harshbarger preaches. The specific purpose of their trip was to visit with Valerio Marchi and family in Udine, Italy since the church there has been helping to support him in the work for several years. The church in Udine now has 23 members and average attendance of 35. It is composed mostly of younger people but at least two men are working toward being elders someday. The church there pays \$1,000 per month rent for a meeting place downtown. To buy is out of the question. They also help \$700 per month with brother Marchi's support. They are diligent in their efforts. Five times in ten years they have gone door to door in this city of 90,000. Brother Harshbarger also attached a letter about the urgent need of Francesco Fosci at Latina to replace the support he is losing. We had a notice about this recently in STS. Randy made this closing appeal: "Doors are opening in Eastern Europe and we need to send men willing to go. Yet, the men in Italy are there to stay. They speak the language. They speak the language. They know the work. They are dedicated. Help if you can." For further information, contact Randy Harshbarger, P. O. Box 242, Mt. Pleasant, TX 75456-0242.

**ITALY** - Roberto Tondelli recently reported on renewed efforts of the Roman Catholic Church to restrict teaching contrary to the Catholic faith. In a national daily paper dated June 8, 1992, a Mr. Ratzinger who is head of the Doctrine of Faith Congregation, a Catholic institution also known as the "Holy Office" published the following: (1) "from now on whoever writes articles about the pope or the Catholic Church can run the risk of being denounced and brought before a court if the ecclesiastical authority considers those articles offensive to the Catholic faith; (2) the Vatican intends to control and to restrict the amount of religious information in the media; (3) 'God's people' (Catholics) and Catholic paper sellers should not sell or distribute publications that are contrary to Catholic faith."

**CZECHOSLOVAKIA** - Al Diestelkamp reports that another 17 have been added to Christ during the last six months and three new congregations have been established. In Prague the past few months there are about 35 in attendance. 45 were present one Sunday morning in May. There are usually several adult visitors. The Jeff Youngs and Bill Bynums have returned to the states. The David Hartells and Wayne Fanchers will go to Prague to work with Mike Morrow, Charlie Brackett and Steven Baxley. There is a need for workers in four other cities where there are now Christians living.

**GERMANY** - Steve Wallace reports one baptized and one restored at Bitburg and Stuttgart.

**CHILE** - Carlos A. Capelli of Buenos Aires, Argentina was in Chile for twenty days in June working with five congregations. Four were baptized. There was a full house for meetings in Santiago where the brethren meet in a new building. It is not finished but they are able to use it.

**SOUTH AFRICA** - Dan Huddleston has recently made four trips to Venda to encourage brethren there. The last trip was with Al Payne of Texas and they spent a month. There are 15 congregations in Venda. Twelve baptisms were reported in the last few weeks.

**PHILIPPINES** - Alfonso S. Catalan and Ruben C. Gumansing of Siay, Zamboanga del Sur report that in May 11 were baptized, 10 restored and three placed membership from public and private teaching efforts. They also wrote of the prolonged drought which has left many brethren in dire circumstances. We have heard from many brethren in Mindanao about this.

Bert G. Enostacion is now back to his full-time work after recovering from a near fatal accident while he was in a gospel meeting in Ilocos



Norte. He expresses gratitude for the prayers and support given him and his family in this time. Work among college students has resulted in five baptisms. Wayne Mariano, a young man in his late 20's, is working with him in la Union in preaching.

Dominador D. Arcega writes that seven were obedient to the gospel while Jerry Parks of East Alton, Illinois was there for preaching in May.



#### ADVICE OR DIVINE INSTRUCTION?

It is often said in sermons that Jesus, Paul or Peter "advised" certain things to be done. "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" was not a simple recommendation, it was a divine mandate. Did Peter on Pentecost simply "advise" his hearers to "repent and be baptized" or did he give divine commandment? Was Paul giving Timothy "advice" when he said "Preach the word" or was he setting forth divine instruction on the work of an evangelist? In our current usage of language advice can be accepted or rejected. The same cannot be said for divine revelation. Could it be that one reason our hearers make no response to the preaching they hear is that they do not understand the imperative nature of the message? Let's speak less of inspired men giving advice and more of "thus saith the Lord."

\*\*\*\*\*

#### RESPECTFUL BEHAVIOUR IN PUBLIC WORSHIP

The age of accountability is not easy to identify. But one thing is

certain: those old enough to be accountable are also old enough to stay awake during a gospel sermon, old enough not to whisper and talk in the public assembly and old enough not to have to run in and out to the water fountain or rest room repeatedly. They ought to be old enough to stand and sing with the rest when the congregation is asked to do so. They ought to be old enough to know better than to engage in shoving matches, or general horse play while the almighty is being worshipped. And they should be mature enough not to knock older people down as they dart here and there in a crowd after dismissal. One veteran preacher stopped once during his sermon and said "If brother Tom and brother Bill will stop frogging each other on the arm, I will go ahead with my sermon." Nuff said!

\*\*\*\*\*

#### NEW CHRISTIANS

It is refreshing to observe the excitement of new Christians. Like the first time my friend, Bob Darnell, served at the Lord's table and earnestly related "what they did to my Lord." You see, he was converted from Judaism. And isn't it a breath of fresh air to hear a new Christian pray and simply pour out his heart to the Lord before he learns to recite all the phrases that older Christians seem to drift into using. And does it not thrill you to catch the awe and excitement of one who is so happy to be freed from that heavy load of sin and to walk in the company of Christians. Have you lost the "joy of your salvation"?

#### IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

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RESTORATIONS	111

(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)

# 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 XXXIII

October 1992

Number 10

## THINK ON THESE THINGS

*H. C. Phillips*

P.O. Box 1631  
Lutz, FL 33549



### By Whose Authority?

"And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?" (Matt. 21: 23).

God possesses inherent authority by right of creation, and that all power in heaven and earth flows from Him. Jesus himself said that all authority had been given unto him; therefore, he possesses the delegated authority from the Father. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power (authority — ASV) is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28: 18). He said it is **given** unto him; somebody gave him the power. It would follow that he did not have all power until it was given unto him. We are talking about a power that rules supreme in this dispensation, and Jesus said this power was given unto him. It would follow that anything in this age must be authorized by Jesus Christ in order for that authority to be divine.

In John 12: 48-50 Jesus speaks of this power: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak."

On the first Pentecost following the ascension of Jesus, Peter made the following statement asserting the power of Christ: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both lord and Christ" (Acts 2: 36).

Paul wrote to the Ephesians of the blessings from God through Christ that were in accord with His eternal purpose and power, and said, "Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1: 20-23).

Christ sat down at the right hand of God after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever (Heb. 10: 12). His authority began when he was raised from the dead and sat down at the right hand of God. "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him" (1 Pet. 3: 22).

It will be noted that Jesus received ALL authority, that all principalities and power have been made subject to him, and that the Father speaks to us today through His Son (Heb. 1: 1, 2). He has all authority until the end of time: "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15: 24-28).

"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Col. 3: 17). We are directed to act by the authority of Christ in all that we do and say. To speak by the authority of Christ is to speak by the authority

of God, from whom all authority emanates. To speak by any other authority is to deny the authority of Christ.

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## Searching The Scriptures

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## " QUOTE

**"Truth never damages a cause  
that is just."**

**—Mohandas K. Gandhi**

## UNQUOTE "

## Editorial

Connie W. Adams

P.O. Box 69  
Brooks, Kentucky 40109



### The Veneration of Mary

Somehow the word got out that Mary was to put in an appearance at a Catholic church building in Cold Spring in northern Kentucky around midnight on August 31. As might be expected a large number of people gathered, some from distant places, to witness this event. The media gave it wide coverage. A professor from a Catholic school said it was his "opinion" that Mary did appear to the "pastor" of that church and thought that this place might become a shrine. Another party said she saw Mary in a pine tree. One woman said she had already had a miracle - her silver colored rosary beads turned to gold.

What is behind all this excitement? Numerous claims have been made over the years that Mary has appeared in unlikely places. At Conyers, Georgia a woman claimed that Mary appeared now and then to her on her computer screen. Busloads of pilgrims have been there. We have all heard of Fatima and Lourdes. Many miracles have been claimed at these spots. Entrepreneurs have seized the moment to hustle all the traffic would bear. At Cold Spring, before the day was over, T shirts were being stamped and marketed.

But all of this grows out of ignorance of the Bible and what it teaches about Mary. Superstition thrives on ignorance. The Bible teaches that Mary was a devout young Jewish woman who was favored by God when she was allowed to be the mother of Jesus our Lord. Isaiah had prophesied that "a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and thou shalt call his name Immanuel" (Isa. 7: 14). Mary was that virgin. An angel of God appeared to tell her "Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women" (Lk. 1: 28). Then she was told "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: Therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (v. 35).

Mary was a virgin at the time of conception and remained so until after the birth of Jesus. "Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name Jesus" (Mt. 1: 24-25). But she was not a perpetual virgin as Catholic dogma insists. The expression "knew her not" means they had no fleshly relations "till she had brought forth her firstborn son." The

implication of that is clear. He did not "know her" until after Jesus was born. Did he "know her" after that? Yes, indeed. Jesus not only had a mother, he also had brothers.

"While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him" (Mt. 12: 46). When he came to Nazareth the people who knew him there said "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon and Judas?" (Mt. 13: 55). In Mark 6: 3 his brothers are named again and it is added that he had sisters.

That Mary was a devout, God-fearing woman we stoutly believe. That she was a virgin at the time of conception we also confidently believe. But to teach that she remained a virgin is to flatly dispute what the Bible clearly states. The doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary is false. "Marriage is honorable in all and the bed undefiled" (Heb. 13: 4). That was true for Joseph and Mary as for others. Mary was never intended to be the object of veneration. She was not declared in Scripture to be a mediator or intercessor for God's people. There is not a trace of a hint in the word of God that prayers were ever addressed to her so that she might "pray for us sinners." "There is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2: 5). Jesus taught his disciples "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you" (Jno. 16: 23). In fact, the whole notion of dead saints interceding for the living is foreign to the Bible.

Christians constitute a "royal priesthood" (1 Pet. 2: 9) and we have every right to "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4: 16). Every Christian is a priest unto God and may "offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 2: 5). We have only one high priest, Jesus Christ. "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" (Heb. 6: 19-20).

For centuries the Roman Catholic church has required superstitious relics to keep the ignorant deceived. I have witnessed at St. Peter's in Rome a long line of pilgrims waiting their turn to kneel and kiss the foot of a metal statue seated in a chair which purports to be a statue of Peter. The truth is, it was originally a statue of the Greek god Jupiter which was taken in one of the crusades and brought to Rome and given a new identity. The foot which these pilgrims kiss is actually the third one welded to that leg, the first two having been missed so many times they were worn away. There are two Catholic churches in Rome each claiming to have as a relic the skeletal head of John the Baptist. Two-headed, was he? Near Rome is the Church of the Three Fountains where it is claimed Paul was executed. The legend goes that when his head was severed from his body at the executioner's block that it bounced three times and that each time it struck the ground a fountain burst forth. They have an abbey there and a church


building is constructed so that the altar is near the spot of these three fountains. Near the catacombs is a small church building with a velvet rope around a plaster caste of what is claimed to be the footprint of Peter preserved for centuries in the sand and now given more permanent form for posterity to see. This is in the "Quo Vadis Church." In the cathedral in Turin there is a vial of cloudy looking substance which purports to be actual milk from the breast of the virgin Mary. The relic in numerous locations is a splinter from the actual cross of Jesus. One Catholic church building in Rome displays the chains of Paul. On and on it goes with legend after legend to dazzle the faithful.

The religion of the Lord Jesus Christ has been revealed by the Holy Spirit to inspired men in the first century who spoke that message orally and who wrote it down on the pages of Scripture. Divine Providence has preserved that sacred message for all the world to read. It is an absolute standard by which every doctrine and practice may be measured. It says the same thing to every body. We may misunderstand it differently, but if we understand it, we will understand it alike. That message was confirmed by miraculous demonstrations in the time frame in which it was being revealed and attested by witnesses who told what they saw and heard. 2 Pet. 1: 16-18 and 1 Jno. 1: 1-3 speak to this point.

In spite of all the excitement and expectation on August 31, 1992 in Cold Spring, Kentucky, the only appearance was in the imagination of those who willed it so. Of the resurrection of Christ, Paul said "this thing was not done in a corner." After his resurrection Paul said "After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep" (1 Cor. 15: 6). How different that is from a professor saying that it was his "opinion" that the "pastor of the church" did receive an appearance of the virgin, Mary, or a woman saying that she saw her in a pine tree. Frankly, I would not turn around for the difference in this whole affair and the claim of Oral Roberts that he saw a 900 ft. Jesus who talked with him for several hours and told him to tell his viewers on television to each send him \$40 so he could get his troubled "ministry" out of debt. Both of these claims are based on subjective evidence.

Respect Mary for her devout character and rejoice that God so favored her to bear our Lord. Absolutely! But venerate her beyond the role God gave her and address prayers to her and invoke her to "pray for us sinners?" Well, no, we have one mediator to do that for us and through his name we may come before the throne of the Almighty ourselves with our petitions.

**ACCEPTED  
OF HIM**  
(2 Cor. 5:9)  
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### A Couple of Thoughts

Below are a couple of short thoughts that are unrelated, yet we include both in this column for your consideration.

#### Sunday Morning

It was Sunday morning. The sun was bright, the air crisp and the birds were flavoring the morning with their songs. I had just walked out the door to head to Bible study when I noticed the parking lot was full of cars — cars that were not usually seen until the next hour. "What is going on?" I thought. "Have we overslept and missed Bible study altogether?" Then I looked at my watch and was assured that we had not. "Hmmm... this is strange" I said to myself as I pushed the door to enter the building.

Standing in the vestibule were not only our "regulars" but many of those who either occasionally or never come to Bible study. I overheard one brother say "We decided we could do better than we have been doing." I spoke to a few and made my way into the auditorium where there were others who had not been in the habit of attending at this hour. A smile came across my face that every one noticed.

My second reaction was one of shame. "How could I ever have thought that they were not interested in what we are studying in class?" I thought to myself. "I must apologize for ever saying that those kind of people will never change" I whispered to the song leader that day. They did change! They were there!

On how we sang with zeal and enthusiasm just before we dismissed to the classes. "This is going to be a great day" I thought as I watched the children file to their different rooms. I was standing up ready to teach my class when Joan awakened me and said it was time to get up, get my shower and take Krista to school.

#### My Word Processor Doesn't Know Much About The Bible

I have a word-processor with a built-in spell checker that "sounds off" when something appears on the screen that it doesn't recognize. This can be, and in fact is, helpful when I misspell a word. Yet, it gets to be annoying when it "sounds off" about things it knows nothing about.

Practically every thing I run through this WP is religious in nature. I compose all my sermons, class notes, articles for a local hand-out bulletin as well as

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articles for this journal on this WP. Every time I give a Bible reference it "sounds off." At first, I would check the screen to see what was wrong. But with time, I have learned to just ignore the "sounding off" when I have cited a Bible reference. I've concluded that my WP doesn't know anything about the Bible. Oh, don't get me wrong. It recognizes God, Christ, Jehovah and a few Bible characters, like Moses, Peter, Paul and John (oops, its telling me it doesn't know John). But, you see, that's not real Bible knowledge. It is just unfamiliar with any reference I cite.

Sometimes people are like Word-Processors. They know a little about God, Christ and a few Bible characters. Yet, when you begin discussing what the Bible really says and cite Bible passages, they don't know what you are talking about. And like the WP, that's when they "sound off"—when they don't know what we are talking about.


Now, I can solve the problem with the WP. It has a "user's dictionary" which is where I can teach it things it doesn't know. I can put Bible terms there so that it will recognize them when they come up on the screen. I must confess that I haven't put anything in my "user's dictionary" yet, because it takes time. It is a slow process. But, if I ever did, I think my WP would quit "sounding off" so much.

You see, we can solve the same kind of problem with people as well. Each person has some unused capacity to store more information. The answer is to take the Bible, little by little, and feed it into the mind. This is called "growing in knowledge" (2 Pet. 3: 17). This also requires an open and receptive mind (Acts 17: 11). When we develop a good working knowledge of the Bible, we will know what we are talking about and consequently we will do less "sounding off."

Using the

# SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

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## Guidelines of Justice

An article appeared in **Christianity Today** a few years ago which provided some observations on the subject of capital punishment that enhanced my understanding. I jotted down some of the basic points and have used these in my teaching; but I've lost the original source, so am not able to give credit to the writer.

We tend to assume that the Old Testament was filled with such vengeance and blood that the ultimate penalty was carried out with little forethought. This article demonstrated that while the death penalty was clearly authorized under the law of Moses, as it is also under the authority of Christ, that there was several guidelines which served to place restraints on the execution of such punishment.

Here are seven such principles:

**Proportionality:** "... you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe" (Exodus 21: 23-25).

The punishment was to be proportionate to the offense. One was not to be put to death for knocking someone's tooth out.

**Intent:** "But if he pushes him suddenly without enmity, or throws anything at him without lying in wait, or uses a stone, by which a man could die, throwing it at him without seeing him, so that he dies, while he was not his enemy or seeking his harm, then the congregation shall judge between the man slayer and the avenger of blood according to these judgments" (Numbers 35: 22-24).

In such a case of accidental death, even where negligence played a part in the tragedy, the man slayer was not to be put to death. He was punished, however, in that he was compelled to remain in a city of refuge until the death of the current high priest (verse 25).

**Due Process:** These passages in Numbers 35 imply the right to trial. One had the liberty to flee to a place of judicial asylum until his case came up. Six cities of refuge were appointed for this purpose (verses 9-15). In the event of such incarceration, one was responsible for his own upkeep. The government was not liable for such. The victim's family was prohibited from taking vengeance until the case was heard.

While the victim's next of kin was to be the avenger

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of murder, it was not his place to determine guilt. Impartial judges were appointed for this purpose (Deuteronomy 17: 8-13). The "eye for an eye; tooth for a tooth" principle was never addressed to individuals, but to judges duly appointed and recognized.

**Individual Responsibility:** "The fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor shall the children be put to death for their fathers; a person shall be put to death for his own sin" (Deuteronomy 24: 16).

Under God's law, one was responsible only for his own actions. There are problematic passages such as the case of Achan's transgression (Joshua 7). His entire family was put to death, though Achan was the one who transgressed the Lord's command and brought defeat to Israel. We can only conclude that Achan's sons and daughters were co-conspirators in the concealing of the stolen goods, though this information is not explicitly given.

**Fairness:** "You shall not pervert the judgment of your poor in his dispute. Keep yourself far from every false matter; do not kill the innocent and righteous. For I will not justify the wicked. And you shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the discerning and perverts the words of the righteous" (Exodus 23: 6-8).

There was to be equal justice regardless of wealth, status, prestige, or rank. Though a system of servitude was recognized, the servant was not without rights: "And if a man strikes the eye of his servant, or the eye of his maidservant, and destroys it, he shall let him go free for the sake of his eye. And if he knocks out his servant's tooth, or his maidservant's tooth, he shall let him go free for the sake of his tooth" (Exodus 21: 26, 27).

**Reluctance to Execute:** "Say to them: 'As I live,' says the Lord God, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?' (Ezekiel 33: 11).

To some the Old Testament seems bloodthirsty. But actually, the death penalty was applied with great restraint. Exceptions were made as in the case of David: "And Nathan said to David, The LORD has put away your sin; you shall not die" (2 Samuel 12: 13). Mitigating circumstances were considered.

**Certainty of Guilt:** "Whoever is worthy of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses, but he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness" (Deuteronomy 17: 6). Those witnessed were to then participate in the execution. Such would generally give one pause to consider the gravity of the issue at hand!

Also, if one testified falsely to pervert justice and have an innocent person put to death, and this was discovered, then: "you shall do to him as he thought to have done to his brother; so you shall put away the evil person from among you. And those who remain shall hear and fear, and hereafter they shall not again commit such evil among you" (Exodus 19: 19, 20).

That passage, by the way, should settle the question for Bible believers as to whether capital punishment serves as a deterrent to crime. God said it does.

I believe that government has the right, and has too


often failed to exercise the right, to require life for life. But these principles should serve to emphasize that such is an awesome responsibility and should be approached only with the utmost care and procedure.

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**SIMPLICITY  
IN  
CHRIST**

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## Pitfalls of the Preacher's Study

Since the miraculous gift of knowledge has been done away (1 Cor. 13: 8), preachers have to acquire knowledge by study (2 Tim. 2: 15).

A preacher has to study somewhere (1 Tim. 4: 13). Some preachers may be able to study anywhere. Others need an environment that is conducive to study and meditation, which may also vary from one preacher to another. Some are not in a position to be choosy, and have to do the best that they can with what they have.

Some preachers with families simply do not have the room to study at home or conditions are not conducive to concentration. The church building may provide a place for study, but it can be next door or across town.

The preacher's study may come in all shapes and sizes. They run the gamut from suites fit for corporate executives to damp dungeons stuck in some underground corridor. One preacher I knew built his study a Sabbath day's journey from the house, framed it out of rough sawmill lumber, and positioned it on stilts to fit the hillside. The floor plan was so cramped that one person had to enter, close the door, then move out of the way so the next person could enter. But, it was his study, and he was proud of it.

But I'm more concerned about what goes on in studies than I am about the architecture or the geographical location of said study. Some preachers, elders, and brethren may appreciate what I have to say. A few may not. And, while I would neither desire nor attempt to formulate guidelines to cover the situation, there are some things worthy of our consideration.

Sometimes the preacher's study takes on the role of an office, or it may serve a dual purpose. I have no objection to the nomenclature, but different people have different concepts of what an office is or isn't.

Once a preacher is settled in a regular office with regular hours, he can expect the professional bums to start calling. (They have been calling all the time, but no one was there to greet them.) These highway hoboes, either local or transient, will rob the preacher of pre-

scious time as well as anything else they can get.

Then, there are the telephone solicitors. They want to sell the church something, are making a survey, or some civic or social club wants something for nothing. Even when I go to the building for an hour to put my lesson on the board, the phone will ring. It must ring dozens of times when I am not there (my study is in my home).

There are members of the local congregation who think that just because the preacher is at the building that they need to call him for something, no matter how trivial. Some call or stop by just for a social chat, or have some foolish question to ask. You almost have to be rude to get these folks off the line so you can get back to studying.

Sometimes the preacher's study or office turns into something akin to the popular confession booth peculiar to the Catholic church. A sister comes by to seek counseling or pour out her troubles, and the preacher tries his best to console or counsel, as the occasion requires. The motives of both may be as pure as snow, but one thing leads to another until both are in too deep to avoid temptation.

I would not for a minute impugn the motives of my sisters or fellow preachers, but I personally know of some illicit affairs which had their origin or consummation in the church office or study. Maybe the incident began elsewhere, but the secluded "study" provided a convenient place for the temptation to turn to enticement and that which follows.

Yes, some people will abuse anything, and if they are

determined to sin, they will find a way to do it. But I am not talking about hardened, willful sinners. I'm talking about recognizing a situation which may contribute to unintentional sin and its resultant reproach, and the removal of those ingredients which may lead to such.

Another pitfall of the preacher's study, and possibly more demanding of our attention because of its prevalence, is using the study to turn the preacher into a "pastor" by proxy.

We are aware that some preachers fill a dual role as both elder and preacher, but I would think these arrangements are in the minority. Some elders simply want the preacher to do their work of overseeing the flock and taking the pressure off of the elders, and some preachers may love to have it so. Other preachers tell me that they don't like the arrangement, but don't know how to get out of it gracefully.

If preachers are going to be of any value to the world or to the church, it will be as a preacher doing "the work of an evangelist" (2 Tim. 4: 5). The preacher can take more pressure off of elders by doing the work assigned to him by the Holy Spirit, than by trying to do the work of the elders. And, elders can take the pressure off of the preacher by being elders, and thus leaving the preacher free to do what he is supposed to do, and best suited to do.

As an evangelist, I want to share my knowledge with anyone who can use it, and I want them to feel that they can call on me twenty-fours a day, seven days a week when they need me. I will make arrangements to get my

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needed rest and relaxation as occasion requires.

As an evangelist, I have helped and encouraged elders in their duties, and have stood in front of them, beside them, and behind them as they endeavored to discharge those duties. Not a few will testify to this fact.

But I am not going to sacrifice my opportunities, responsibilities, and privileges to study the word of my God, even if I have to stay out of the "study" to do it.

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## "Unity In Diversity" Puts On A New Dress

The old denominational idea of "unity in diversity" has put on a new dress and come to town. Some brethren are taking up with the idea not recognizing it for what it is. Or, do they know?

### Denominational Concept

Paul said, "If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: how that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words; Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) (Eph. 3: 3-4). "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5: 17). From these verses one learns that to read the writings of the apostles of Jesus Christ, the will of God can be understood. Paul and the other apostles wrote what was revealed to them (2 Peter 1: 16-21; 1 Cor. 15: 3).

However, the denominational world has said we can not understand the Bible alike. You see it one way, I see it another way, and still someone else sees it a different way to the two of us. While we all disagree about what the Bible says, divided, we are agreed, united, that we are all headed to the same place. There are just different roads to the same place, heaven.

If the denominational world should look into the Bible, they say the one God, Christ, Spirit and hope of Eph. 4: 4-6 we agree on, thus these are essential. However, the one body, baptism and faith of Eph. 4: 4-6 we do not agree on, thus these are essential. Just who has set the standard of how to determine what God has said is essential and non-essential I have never known. Denominationalism says all churches are just branches of the One Vine. All denominations make up the one true Church of Christ. Thus, denominationalism pic-

tures for us organic division (different churches) yet spiritual union (all churches headed to the same place). All of this is the concept of "unity in diversity" or unity in division.

Such is a contradiction of terms. "Unity in diversity" makes as much sense as a square circle, a hot snow ball, liquid ice, or dry water. **Any time people talk 'unity in diversity' they are talking COMPROMISE OF THE TRUTH.**

### Christian Church

When brethren departed from the faith and went out to form the Christian Church and introduced the missionary society in 1849 and the instrument of music in 1859, one of the things that followed was their wanting to be united while separated or divided from their brethren. The attitude was if you will not worship with us using the instrument, then worship elsewhere, but don't condemn us for using the instrument. We can be divided, worship in different congregations, yet be united by your not condemning us for our innovations. Call it what you will, their concept was "unity in diversity. " The Christian Church people wanted to be united even with differences between us. Meetings were conducted to try and have unity with us. Have brethren forgotten the Murch-Witty meetings? All of the talk about unity was in reality talk about how they could be united with us through a compromise of the gospel. They wanted error to go unopposed. We can be united if you will not say anything about our innovations.

### Institutionalism

When brethren began the practice of the "sponsoring church" and church support of human benevolent and educational institutions, their plea was for a "unity in diversity" of a sort. Their plea was you preach the gospel the way you see best. You care for orphans the way you see best. Let us do the same and we will all be one big happy, united family. Their plea was for a "unity in diversity" which amounted to a compromise of the gospel. There were those of us who would not agree to their compromise and preached, wrote and debated against their departures from the pattern set forth within the Scriptures. Just like those who introduced the instrument without scriptural authority were responsible for the division in the church, so these who introduced the "sponsoring churches" and church support of human benevolent and educational institutions are today responsible for the division that followed.

### Ed Fudge

Following the teaching of Leroy Garrett and Carl Ketcherside a few years ago, Ed Fudge began to follow them into digression and today has left the Lord's church and is out there in the sea of denominationalism. When they started their journey the only thing that was important was **gospel** which they defined as believing Christ was born, lived, died, rose, was seen, ascended and was crowned. Anyone who believed this, regardless of anything else, they perceived to be in fellowship or united with them. On **doctrinal** matters like the instrument, Premillennialism, institutionalism, etc. these they said did not stand in the way of unity. So regardless of what you believed about these matters they would be

united in diversity with you. They were bit with the "unity in diversity" but and when that bug got through chewing on them, the virgin birth was no big deal to some of them, others were "witnessing for Christ" on the topless beaches of the world, and all at once there was no hell! They started out trying to justify their position by a misapplication of Romans 14. They finished up a long way from Romans 14 or any other Bible passage.

#### "Unity in Diversity's" New Dress

With brethren being exposed to "unity in diversity" as advocated by the denominational world through the years, with essentially the same arguments being made by the Christian Church folk, then the institutional brethren singing the same tune, and seeing the havoc such brought to the church when promoted by Ed Fudge and company, one would think God's people would be so well acquainted with this error that we would reject it as soon as it would raise its head again. Not so!

This error has put on a new dress and come to town and a lot of brethren do not see it for what it really is. It is the same old denominational attitude of compromise. Denying it will not change the facts.

Within the last couple of years the beloved brother Homer Hailey brought out his most recent book, **The Divorced and Remarried Who Would Come To God** in which he advocated that the alien sinner was not under the law of Christ in regard to marriage, divorce and remarriage. Therefore, one who is not a Christian may marry, divorce and remarry as many times as he chooses. When he comes to Christ in gospel obedience, the one to whom he is then married is the one to whom he may stay married. We are told the teaching of Jesus in Matt. 19: 1-9 does not apply to the alien sinner, just to the Christian. This is not a new doctrine among brethren. Essentially the same thing was taught 35 years ago by a man in the Fort Worth, Texas, area by the name of E. C. Fuqua. However, for the most part it was rejected by brethren back then.

Before brother Hailey's book came out, he had publicly spoken his views and written them in some of the papers. Several brethren took the time to review what he had said and answer it.

The New Testament has somewhat to say about how to deal with those teaching contrary to the doctrine of Christ. Paul said, "These things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another" (1 Cor. 4: 6). "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds: (2 John 9-11).

Yet, in view of this plain teaching, the biographer of brother Hailey, brother Ed Harrell wrote a long series of articles in his paper, **Christianity Magazine**, in which he says he does not agree with the teaching of brother Hailey. However, he is not willing to call him a

false teacher and thinks brethren should continue to extend the right hand of fellowship to him and others who believe and teach the same thing. Thus, on the question of morals one brother can believe and/or preach one thing and another brother can believe and/or preach another and we are told both should be in fellowship with each other. Upon what basis is this defended? Upon the same basis all the other groups mentioned in this article defend their "unity in diversity" — Romans 14.

Jesus plainly said, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Matt. 19: 9). Jesus said "whosoever," He did not say "a Christian." Adultery does not fit the context of Romans 14 and cannot be defended by this chapter.

Romans 14 deals with matters that do not in and of themselves affect the salvation of the soul — eating meats or herbs (v. 1-3) and how one regards a day (v. 5). God received both those who ate meats and those who did not, and those who regarded one day above another and those that did not (v. 3, 15: 7). Each man was to do what he was "fully persuaded in his own mind" (v. 5). If a man is "fully persuaded in his own mind" that adultery is fine, does that make it so? If a man regards adultery unto the Lord (v. 6) does that make it acceptable to the Lord? I am surprised that brother Harrell and some other able brethren are making this use of Romans 14.

Another defense that was made of brother Hailey's position was that some of those objecting to it were young men. Does that mean if a young man quotes Mark 16: 16 that it should be disregarded because of his age? How can a man whose hair Mother Nature had turned silver and whose grandchildren are nearly ready for high school be called a young man? One of the men calling someone a young man is only **eight** years older than one of the men he is calling young.

#### Modern Day Gospel Advocate

For the benefit of a host of my younger fellow gospel preachers, let me call something to their attention. Back during the institutional controversy the late brother B. C. Goodpasture was the editor of the **Gospel Advocate**. He had a one sided paper—anybody or any article that disagreed with the **Advocate**, brother Goodpasture would not give them space in the **Advocate**. You either agreed with him or you could forget about getting anything published there.

Of brother Goodpasture's refusing to print both sides of a question, brother Harrell once observed "Goodpasture refused to open the **Advocate** to opposing articles, judging, he said, that such would not be in the best interest of the church... He defended his decision to close the **Advocate** to open discussion.... " (**1981 Florida College Annual Lectures**, p. 244).

Further, brother Harrell said, when discussing "the Emergence of Denominational Leadership," "The method used to spread the message in a young religious movement, including the New Testament church, is open confrontation. Both in the first century and in more recent times the spread of the gospel has been marked

by open discussion and debate. When one is truth-oriented, he has nothing to defend except his teachings and he has no tools for fighting except his ideas. When one's religion becomes institutional other forces come into play. Open debate (even limited debate) may no longer seem wise if it disturbs the peace of the group and threatens the health of institutions" (*Ibid.*, p. 250).

In refusing to print some excellent material on Romans 14 by brother Harry Osborne, material which differed with brother Harrell's position, it appears he is setting Christianity Magazine in the same direction Goodpasture set the Gospel Advocate. I am sorry to see brother Harrell follow the path that Goodpasture did in refusing to print good material that differed with his views, for in time, it will work the same havoc within the church that Goodpasture caused. Any paper that does not permit an honorable, open investigation and discussion of the Word of God does not deserve the respect and confidence of brethren. No editor should print a fuss or a dog and cat fight. However, an honorable exchange of views on positions or various passages is how we learn. Ideas and views that are challenged and exchanged in discussion is how we learn. Learning is not re-reading what you already know and believe.

## Preaching The Living Word of the Living God In Order To Produce A Living Faith and Living Hope (II)

*Billy Ashworth*

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Since I believe the Bible tells us WHAT to preach and HOW to preach, I believe gospel preaching is distinctive. There is a difference in a sermon preached by a committed preacher from that which is delivered by a man who is not on fire with the greatest message that lost and fallen humanity has ever heard. The **urgency** with which the sermon is delivered tells a lot about the preacher — the fearless approach, the realization of the awesome responsibility he has as a person who is in the "soul saving" business, the boldness and plainness of speech which he uses in order to reach the hearts of his hearers, the sincere persuasion he demonstrates as he warns and exhorts hearers to "save yourselves from this untoward (corrupt) generation."

One of the surest signs of God's people beginning to drift is lack of distinctive preaching. The preaching of the truth in love admits NO apology. The preachers of the gospel, as shown by the examples we have, refused to compromise the truth in order to persuade people to be baptized. From all indications they did not shorten their sermons to keep some disgruntled members of the audience from "walking out" on them while they were trying to help them go to heaven. They never heard such expressions as we are hearing, such as "That kind of

preaching won't work any more. You are going to be a dinosaur. You are just preaching yourself out of a place to preach with your long-winded sermons, and your speech is just too hard." Also, "Do not call names of the people or churches of whom you speak. I have a friend visiting with me and he/she will get offended if you do such a thing." Brethren, I have heard such ridiculous assertions as these from unconverted members of the church of Christ.

I hope the reader will pardon some personal remarks I have to make here. I have been preaching the gospel of Christ for nearly forty years. As R. L. Whiteside wrote many years ago, "I was baptized into a fight." He was baptized into a fight against false doctrines of denominationalism without the church! I was baptized into a fight against denominationalism within the church! Having left the denomination in which I held membership from age twelve, I understood "the issues" of human institutionalism the first time it was explained to me. It was not that I was so "smart" that I understood so quickly. It was that I had just left that over which my brethren and sisters were dividing the church. From that day, I "unsheathed the SWORD" and have opposed the digression of God's people which has now developed into just another denomination!

I had suffered the loss of family and former friends with whom I was associated. That hurt. But the vicious opposition toward me and my preaching by professed Christians, members of the church of Christ, has hurt much more. Now, as I am in the process of "winding down" (not quitting!) my nearly four decades of preaching and teaching the wonderful gospel of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, I am saddened by what is happening among us (conservatives, the remnant which I helped to save from apostasy). There are ominous signs I see as the prelude to another apostasy which may not culminate in my lifetime, but is surely coming! Here are some things that bother me very much:

1. There is a growing indifference among us about spiritual matters. We are living in the latter stages of a half-century of fiscal prosperity financed by deficit spending by the Federal government. Secular education to equip our younger people to make lots of money has become a real problem. Many members of the church today know much more about how to make money that they do about how to make heaven. They often lose interest in things spiritual. Marriage counselors tell us that money is the main problem in divorce proceedings. The Federal government's irresponsibility in spending far more than it takes in has become a way of life by Americans. The advent of television has been devastating to our nation and much of the world. The amount of money the television industry accumulates and controls is beyond comprehension. This leads to the next item of concern:

2. The control that the secular humanists (atheists) have secured over the news media and the public educational process in this nation, is the greatest threat to faith this world has ever faced. The secular humanists are determined to eradicate the reality of "the prayer-hearing God" (Preface: Humanist Manifesto II, p. 13). In

some public schools here in Middle Tennessee, the heart of the South, students are forbidden to mention GOD in addresses at the end of the school year. The liberal news media are determined to make a nation of agnostics out of my children and grandchildren, and YOURS. They have gained control of television, newspaper, magazines, in which they promote that "science affirms that the human species is an emergence from natural evolutionary forces (Ibid, p. 17). Further, "We find insufficient evidence for belief in the existence of a supernatural;... No deity will save us; we must save ourselves... Ethics is autonomous and situational" (Ibid, pp. 16-17).

There it is. These infidels have tried to dethrone God and enthrone man. "Values clarification" in our school systems — at least many — encourage the student to disregard the teaching of loving parents and religious leaders and set their own standards. All of this devastation of morality and crime-ridden cities by drug abusers is the result of such atheistic garbage. When we hear grown people who are members of the Lord's church say that "Man is an animal," it would be interesting to ask them where they got that information since it is a flat denial of God's revelation!

3. I am gravely concerned at the deterioration of "gospel preachers" who have been seriously affected by the swift change in society during the past twenty-five years. Much of it is due to the changing demands made on preachers by elders and/or members in general. Often, when disgruntled members insist on a change in the preacher because they do not like him or his preaching, even though such people are usually in a minority of the congregation, elders, or in the case of absence of elders, the leaders listen to their complaints which are usually trivial — seldom is there an accusation that the preacher they do not like does not preach the truth—the whole counsel of God! It usually amounts to just the opposite. These people are often as they were in the days of Isaiah: "This is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord: which say to the seers, see not; and to the prophets, prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits" (Isa. 30: 9, 10).

Although I have debated publicly the "anti-located preacher" brethren three times, affirming the proposition that "it is scriptural for a gospel preacher to locate with and preach to a church (congregation)," I am persuaded that their objections to the "system," as they call it, are built on abuses of located preachers who will "water down" the message in order to preach for a congregation who makes such demands on preachers in order to pacify the factions. Why would elders have to get approval of the factions of a preacher whom they are considering for the local work. ?

Back during the days of the division over institutionalism, some preachers compromised their convictions (if indeed they had any) in order to be employed by churches who did not want any preacher who might "rock the boat" in which they were enjoying sailing undisturbed on the way to apostasy. I knew preachers when the fight started who knew the truth but compromised and lost entire congregations to apostasy.

## Baptism Administrator

*William V. Beasley*

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For a few moments of time think along with me on the subject of Baptism Administrator. Who is a proper administrator of baptism? Does the Bible give any qualifications for one to be an administrator of baptism? Or, as we would normally ask it, "Does the Bible give any qualifications to baptize?" If so, what are those qualifications?

### Denominational Dogma

"In answer to the oft-repeated question, What is Baptism? it may be said, Baptism is the immersion in water, by a proper administrator (emphasis mine, wvb), of a believer in Christ

### By a proper administrator

... is meant a person who has received from a church authority to baptize.... it does seem incredible that baptism should be valid in the absence of the church authority referred to. What other authority is there? Will anyone say, the authority of Christ? The supreme authority is undoubtedly his, but does he confer on men the right to baptize **through his churches, or, independently of his churches?**" (J. M. Pendleton, **BAPTIST Church Manual**, pp. 64-65). Before going on a side trip, it is in order to pay my respects to a portion of Mr. Pendleton's statement. The Lord does not have churches (plural)" unless, of course, Mr. Pendleton has reference to local congregations. Jesus promised to build, as He said, "my church" (Matthew 16: 18). Jesus is said, by inspiration, to be "head over all things to the church, which is his body the fullness of him that filleth all in all" (Ephesians 1: 22-23).

The Church of God denomination (headquarters in Cleveland, TN) has three different classifications of ones who can baptize. Both the ORDAINED MINISTER and the LICENSED MINISTERS "shall have full right and authority to:... Baptize converts... " (**The 59th General Assembly of the Church of God 1982 Minutes**, "Supplement to the Minutes," pp. 95, 96). The EXHORTER "shall have full right and authority to:... In cases of emergency he may be authorized by the State Overseer to baptize converts... " (Ibid., pp. 96, 97). The LADY MINISTER is "without authority to baptize converts... " (Ibid., p. 97). I would pause just long enough to ask for Book, Chapter and Verse for an ORDAINED MINISTER, LICENSED MINISTER, LADY MINISTER or a "State Overseer. "

"In the absence of an ordained pastor, the elder shall request the president of the conference or local field to arrange for the administration of the rite of baptism to those desiring to unite with his church" (**Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual**, p. 85).

"Non-Catholics and sinners may validly baptize, for the validity of the Sacrament does not depend upon the personal worthiness or orthodoxy of the minister..." (Bertrand L. Conway, **The Question-Box**, p. 238).  
**What Saith The Scriptures?**

There is, so far as I know from studying the Bible, not one mention of any qualifications necessary for one to baptize another, or as the denominational writers would say, to be a baptism administrator. If such is to be found, I have missed it. If you know of one, IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, please let me know. In all of the examples it was noted that those doing the baptizing were men... but even this is not stated as a qualification, only noted as examples. When at all possible men should do the baptizing, as per the examples. What if such is not possible? Suppose two women were stranded on the proverbial desert island, I would see absolutely nothing wrong if one baptized the other.

There are some principles that need to be considered when looking at this subject. The New Testament is silent regarding a "clergy-laity" distinction. This is, I believe, the real source of misunderstanding about who can baptize. All Christians are priests (Revelation 1: 6; 5: 10; 1 Peter 2: 5, 9). If we can not talk about it in Bible language it is time to leave it alone (1 Peter 4: 11). Where do you read, in the New Testament, about "clergy" and/or "laity?"

We need to learn to respect the silence of the scriptures (Hebrews 7: 14). Since there are no qualifications given in the New Testament, **how dare we** (mankind) **presume to speak for God?** We could repeat, for emphasis, the "clergy-laity distinction" here. Dear reader, **how dare** we?

The apostles were commissioned to teach and baptize (Matthew 28: 18-20)... before the church was established (Acts 2). Our authority ("... teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you..."

— Matthew 18: 20; see also 2 Timothy 2: 2) is found in the Great Commission and based on their being given this authority.

In the "great persecution against the church" (Acts 8: 2) were only "ordained ministers" persecuted? "They therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word" (Acts 8: 4).

Are only "ordained, licensed ministers" and "exhorters" faithful? None would declare such. But we read of "faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2: 2). The command was to MAKE DISCIPLES

— BAPTIZE — TEACH (Matthew 28: 18-20).

### **Qualifications And Baptism**

There are qualifications connected IN THE NEW TESTAMENT with baptism... yes indeed. The qualifications are not concerning the one doing the baptizing (Baptism Administrator)... if there are such where are they? The qualifications given in the New Testament, concern, the one being baptized. What are these qualifications? What are these prerequisites to Bible Baptism? Bible Baptism requires a taught person (Matthew 28: 19-20) who has come to be a believing individual (Mark 16: 16). One who believes what? The gospel, the thing taught. For some specifics see He-

brews 11: 6; John 8: 24; and Colossians 2: 12 (Romans 6: 4). This taught believing person must also be a penitent individual (Acts 2: 38), who has confessed his faith (Matthew 10: 32; Acts 8: 37).

If there were qualifications connected with the one doing the baptizing (even if it were necessary that that one was a Christian), we could never know if we were scripturally baptized or not. Our faith would have to stand in man ("Was he really a Christian? Was he ordained? Is he a proper baptism administrator? Etc. ). As it is, Praise God, our faith stands not in man, but in the Blessed Son of God, the lamb of Golgotha.

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## **"The Sin of Backsliding"**

*Norman E. Fultz*

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To call one a "backslider" is not the most complimentary thing he could be called. Many folks who are in reality backsliders do not like to be so designated. They choose a milder term to describe themselves or another who has lapsed into sin. "Erring" and "out of fellowship" are frequently substituted, for they do not sound so harsh. Webster defines the term "backslider" as "To slide back; to lapse morally or in the practice of religion. "

It means a starter who doesn't finish. It means one who reached a certain plateau and slid down. It means one who began but did not continue. It means a failure, or at least about to fail. No, it isn't complimentary!

Some will jokingly call themselves back-sliders, but backsliding is not a laughing matter. It is a serious situation. The kingdom of Judah in Jeremiah's day is a good illustration. While there are many references in the Old Testament in which God's people are called backsliders, for now consider just Jeremiah 2. Look at some of the figures God uses to depict their condition.

They had been given a good land, but they defiled it (Jer. 2: 6-7). Even their pastors had transgressed, the priests did not know the Lord, and the prophets prophesied by Baal (v. 8). While nations who worshipped idols were unknown to change their gods, God's people "changed their glory for that which does not profit" (v. 11). In short, they had "forsaken" Him (V. 19). Yes, truly backsliding is a serious thing.

Backsliding results when the heart is not right (Prov. 14: 14). The heart is not fully committed to God and his ways (cf. Mat. 22: 37), and the affections are not properly focused (cf. Col. 3: 1-3). The heart is the seat of action (Prov. 4: 23). Thus when the heart is not right, the actions will reflect it.

Are there any present-day backsliders? There were

some in the days of the apostles. Peter spoke of some becoming "entangled again" in the rudiments of the world (2 Peter 2: 20). Paul called some by name (2 Tim. 4: 10; 2: 16-17), and James said Christians could be guilty of spiritual adultery and become enemies of God (Jas. 4: 4).

We frequently find those who have "quit the Lord," turned back to the world, and sold their spiritual birthright. Many never assemble with the saints (Heb. 10: 25), live unbecomingly (Phil. 1: 27), leave their first love (Rev. 2: 4), become lukewarm and indifferent (Rev. 3: 15-16). In short, they have lapsed in the practice of the religion of Christ. They are backsliders!

How great is the mercy and long-suffering of God! He appeals to the backslider to return to Him. "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings" (Jer. 3: 22). "O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity... I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him" (Hos. 4: 1, 4). And again, "O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved...." (Jer. 4: 14). And in the New Testament the appeal is, "Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works..." (Rev. 2: 5). And even to those backslidden into self-satisfied indifference, the Lord pleads, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone will hear my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me" (Rev. 3: 20).

God's plan makes a way for all people who would be saved; so, dear backsliding brother or sister, He will save you if you will repent and return unto Him. Otherwise you will be lost forever in the devil's hell.

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to every creature"  
(Mark 16:15)**

**Where Is God?**

*Norman E. Sewell*

115 Rose Street  
Harrison, Arkansas 72601



One of my favorites among the Psalms is the 139th. In it David writes: "O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassed my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me" (Psalm 139: 1-5). To some this might seem very frightening, to know that God knows our thoughts and is acquainted with all our ways. But David seems to view it differently for he writes in verse 6, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it." One clear thought of this Psalm is that God knows all there is to know about you and me. Is this frightening? It doesn't have to be, but it is sometimes when we have failed to live up to what He expects of us.

As David continued, in the next section he tells that were ever we go, God is there. Again, this is not intended to be frightening, but comforting to the one who seeks God's presence and care. David wrote: "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee" (Psalm 139: 7-12). Where can I go that God does not see me and care for me? Can I go into the heavens, off into space somewhere and God not be there? NO! Can I go into the grave and God not know about it? NO! If I am in peril in the sea, does this hide me from God or keep me away from His loving care? NO! Can I go into utter darkness and be hidden from His view? A THOUSAND TIMES, NO!

In the next few verses David tells of God's blessings upon him, even before he came into this world. David wrote: "For thou hast possessed my reins (formed my inward parts—nkjv): thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance,

yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them" (Psalm 139: 13-16). These are very interesting verses, especially in light of the current thinking of so many people that an unborn child is not really a person, only tissue that a mother may decide to keep or abandon. But David said that God formed his inward parts in the womb, and that God saw him while he was yet unformed and imperfect. God knew all about him even before he was fully formed in physical terms. How could this be if the unborn child is not a living being?

Then comes the final section of this marvelous Psalm. David wrote: "How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand; when I awake, I am still with thee" (v. 17-18). Perhaps if we appreciated God's knowledge of us, His constant presence in our lives, and His constant provision of us we too would say, "How precious also are thy thoughts unto me." Yet we often act as though God's thoughts, His word, is the least important of things when compared with TV, magazines, books, sports, etc.

In verses 19-22 David speaks of God's eventual punishment of the wicked, and declares that he too hates those who hate God and who rebel against Him.

How many of us would say as David did in verses 23 and 24, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." God does know our hearts, and the evil thoughts that sometimes try to enter there are not hidden from Him. Now is the time to examine our hearts, and to know if there is any wicked way in us. Now is the time for us to long to be led in the way "everlasting."

Certainly God will not lead us in the wrong way, but we don't always follow as closely as we should. Now is the time to recognize the blessing of having God with us, knowing us and caring for us. Now is the time to examine our hearts to know what evil is there so that we may remove it. Now is the time to prepare for everlasting life. And "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8: 31).

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# Revelation

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## Blaspheming God

*Wallace H. Little*

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Fort Walton Beach, Florida 32548-5212

Misguided consideration for the oversensitive feelings of the spiritually weak and inept, by sugar-coating God's Word to make it more palatable, 'humanizing and modernizing the gospel in order to bring it up-to-date,' and a reluctance to clearly delineate sin, is but a manifestation of one's own incompetence and lack of love for the sinner. Far better that these be shown the certainty of their own damnation in their present wandering path so that they might come to a complete understanding of unquestioning acceptance of God's Word, and their need for obedience to it.

If it is possible to prevent it, after a study of the Bible, publicly or privately, no one should ever be permitted to go away thinking he has a choice between two evils and still be acceptable to God. We must leave no doubt in his or her mind on where he or she stands as shown by the precise mirror of God's Word, the Bible, the ONLY thing that is able to save our souls.

Teaching must be so unmistakably plain that everyone who continues to follow the devil understands that this is his or her own personal choice. He or she must be made clearly aware of the consequences of this personal decision.

The gospel must be preached plainly, simply, earnestly, with an open bible and an open heart, and with all the love and ability of which the preacher/teacher is capable, along with all his force. In 2 Timothy 4: 1-4, the grand apostle Paul wrote it this way: "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, Who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

To fall short of this, when teaching or living, is to debase yourself, and all those about you, and to blaspheme God.

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**DONNIE V. RADER** — P. O. Box 9, Lexington, AL 35648 — We just finished a meeting at Northside with Donald Townsley. We had good attendance every night. Non-Christians from the community attended. We were able to set up at least one home study during the meeting with the possibility of another. The preaching was true to the book. Donald is a book, chapter and verse preacher who stands strong against sin and error in every form. One lesson we could learn from this meeting is that you don't have to have a softer or "moderate" form of preaching to have good numbers. Preaching it like they did in the N. T. still works.

### MATTHEW KEITH UNDERWOOD

Matthew Underwood, the two-year-old son of Harold and Sue Underwood, died on February 3, 1992 just a month before his third birthday. Matthew was born with severe physical problems and his short life on earth had been a tremendous struggle. His doctors were amazed that he lived as long as he did. David Thomley conducted the funeral on February 6 at the Hawkins-Brooks Funeral Home in Munfordville, Kentucky, with the burial at Fountain Run Cemetery. Harold Underwood continues to preach for the Green's Chapel church of Christ. Friends may write to Harold and Sue at the following address: P. O. Box 698, Munfordville, KY 42765. — David Thomley, Bowling Green, Ky.

**NORMAN BROWN, Virginia Beach, VA**—There is still a congregation in Virginia Beach. The majority moved out to another location but those of us with a long history in Virginia Beach wanted to continue the work in this city. We now have 40-50 attending almost every Lord's day. We have 20-30 on Wednesday nights for Bible study. We still have the same goals as most congregations: to teach the gospel, to have scriptural elders and deacons and to have our own place to meet. But it will be a long hard struggle. We presently worship at the Bow Creek

Recreation Center, 3427 Club House Rd., Virginia Beach, VA 23452. Phone 804-486-6245 or 804-486-6639. Mailing address: P. O. Box 8693, Va. Beach, VA 23450.

**NORTH FT MYERS CHURCH OF CHRIST, 200 Pine Island Rd., N. Ft. Myers, FL 33903** — a letter signed by men of this congregation states that Jimmy Tuten, who has labored with them for the past eight years is in need of additional support. After economic circumstances caused the loss of support he was able to bring with him when he came here, he agreed to work with his hands as a "finish specialist" in home construction. For the past five years he was worked two days a week at this sometimes working 14 hours a day in order to keep up with both secular work and his work with the church. He has maintained a busy schedule of classes, preaching and home studies. The church grew spiritually and numerically. Internal strife erupted and caused losses of numbers and financial resources which set us back a couple of years in our effort to be self-supporting. We need his effort here on a full time basis and appeal for \$500 a month in support to be sent to him. If any can help or wish additional information, please call him at 813-772-4934, Russ Mathews at 813-694-1016 or Richard Combs at 813-574-1445.

### SPECIAL TRAINING SERIES FOR PREACHERS

The church in Annandale, Virginia announces a second series of lessons to assist the preachers they support in the gospel. This will be conducted Nov. 3-6, 1992 with classes beginning at 9:30 A. M. with a one hour break for lunch. Also, in connection with this series we will conduct a gospel meeting using five of the men who plan to attend. Others are invited and members at Annandale will offer hospitality to as many as possible. Those who wish to stay with a family there, please contact Derrick Proctor, 4731 Hersand Ct., Dale City, VA 22193 (703-680-3420). Speakers for the series will be Hiram Hutto (Language of the



Bible), F. Chappelle, Dale Smelser and David Brewer (Preaching the Word), Bobby Graham (Pastoral Epistles), Sewell Hall (Problems for Preachers), Ney Rieber (non-verbal Communication), Alan Williamson (Practical Computer Use).

**DEBATE NOTICE**

J. T. Smith, Tulsa, Oklahoma and Olan Hicks, Searcy, Arkansas will discuss the biblical teaching on marriage, divorce and remarriage. The discussion will be held in the meeting house of the West End Church, 1609 Parkside Dr., Bowling Green, KY. The dates are Nov. 30, Dec. 1, and Dec. 3 and 4. Each session begins at 7 P. M. with three alternating twenty minute speeches. The first two nights Olan Hicks will affirm: "The Scriptures teach that all divorced people, including those whose former mates are still living, may, with God's approval, enter and maintain a marriage with another person." The last two nights, J. T. Smith will affirm: "The Scriptures teach that only those persons who have divorced their mates for fornication and those whose mates have died, may, with God's approval, enter and maintain a marriage with another person." For further information call 502-842-7880 or 502-781-4947.

**BARRY M. PENNINGTON** — The church at Huntsville, Texas has asked me to "come over into Macedonia" to strengthen them. They have about 25 in attendance and a small weekly contribution. Many of the former members have moved away. They are able to supply about \$250 per week in support. Huntsville is the home of Sam Houston State University and there are about 30, 000 in this area. The Southside church has had good times and bad and has stood for the truth over the years. They need help and I need help to devote full time to the work. You may contact the elders of the Woodlands, Texas church where I have been preaching for information about me. They are; Dennis Bray (713-367-1235) and Rod McCasland (713-367-9833). Also for reference you may contact Oliver Murray (713-460-1429) or Ardie Brown (214-221-5777).

**PATRICK L. KELLY, P. O. Box 822, Portland, ME 04104** — Our Sunday morning attendance averages 19 and our contributions averages \$212 a week. I am working here with inadequate support (short with \$1, 000 a month) but am determined to preach the gospel in this needed place. I conducted my first meeting at LaVista, Nebraska and also spoke in Sioux City, Iowa Mike Divis from La Vista returned to Maine with me for the funeral of Marcus Dixon, one of our members and Mike has seen first-hand our situation and needs here.

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**FROM AROUND THE WORLD**

**KENYA, EAST AFRICA** — Paul Ayres and Allan Turner spent six weeks in July and August preaching in Kenya, East Africa. They traveled about 2, 000 miles in the country, witnessed the baptism of 45 (including seven denomination preachers) and saw churches established in six different areas. As far as is known, this is the first such effort there by non-institutional brethren. The door in East Africa seems to be standing wide open at the moment.

**INDIA**—On September 21 John Humphries left for his 16th preaching and teaching trip to India. Untold good has been accomplished by these efforts and others who have at various times accompanied him.

**PUERTO RICO** — Ray Madrigal, 165 Hillington Dr., Paducah, KY 42001, reports he spent two weeks in July, 1992 preaching in Puerto Rico. Although 90% of the people of this mountainous island claim to be Catholic, several Pentecostal groups have been active there in recent years. Since the mid-1950's, over 30 churches of Christ have been established with 40-50 members average. Institutionalism and the social gospel are present almost everywhere due to the influence of DeWayne Shappley and his "Prenza La Paz" publishing house in Bayamon. Brethren with whom Ray studied were hungry for teaching, especially on the subject of Bible authority. The church in Dorado has been resisting the errors of liberalism and teaching sound doctrine since 1979. Due to the preaching of Ramon Vargas and Herminio Isern, this church is growing in grace and knowledge. Both men support themselves as they labor for the Lord. On one Saturday afternoon brethren from all over the island came to the home of Ismael Rosario (in Aibonito) to study, sing and pray together. A lesson was taught on "Authority" which dealt with sponsoring churches and church support

of various institutions. Several were present from institutional churches and listened intently and manifested a good spirit. Ray said "While brethren and churches rightly respond to the unprecedented opportunities in East Europe, let us not forget our Latin-American neighbors who are also receptive and hungry for the truth.

**LITHUANIA**—Steve Wallace from Germany reports on efforts which he, Derek Chambers, Kieran Murphy and Harry Osborne made in Vilnius, Lithuania. This was a follow-up effort to what had been done earlier there by Wallace and Chambers. Much material was prepared in both Russian and Lithuanian. Their collective work lasted six weeks. They set up tables on the "municipality Square" each day but Sunday and spent 3 to 4 hours daily at this task. They gave away much material and had many Bible discussions. They also distributed announcements about their Sunday Bible lectures. On Sundays they had a lecture period from 1 to 5 P. M. Two lectures were give through an interpreter, each followed by a question and answer session., Private studies grew out of this. The results of these efforts were: (1) over 15, 000 tracts were given away; (2) there were many public Bible discussions on the square; (3) organized studies of greater length were conducted with a good number of people; (4) many heard the gospel appeal for the first time; (5) many contacts made for future studies; (6) it was confirmed that balanced preaching (including the negative with the positive) does not drive people away; (6) it was learned that much can be done there for a fraction of the cost for the western world; (8) a number of needed study materials are now in process of being printed in Russian (9) the stay was not long enough. There is a need for long term workers to come and work this field. A longer effort is planned for this fall.

**PHILIPPINES**—KENNETH MARRS, P. O. 453. PINOLE, CA 94564 reports on a trip in March and April, 1992 with his son Kenny to the northeast province of Cagayan on Luzon. They worked out from Tugegarao visiting congregations in the surrounding areas, conducted "home yard meetings" at night, preached on the radio, had a class for song leaders and held many informal discussions. Thirty-six were baptized during this time. The abject poverty of many people among brethren was seen often. Brother Marrs plans to go again next January and February for a month for preacher training and teaching but this time in four different population centers. He says "one cannot ignore the pleas, urgings and the need to return... I know of no place on earth where a more enduring and burgeoning good can be done in so short a time. It will not always be so: Satan will see to that. But right now these fields are white and begging to be harvested." He stands in need of some help for the expenses of his trip. The editor of this paper met with brother Marrs in California last summer and discussed his earlier trip to the Philippines. He is in his 70's but still very active and his held in respect among the brethren who have observed his work for many years. Write to him at the above address or call 510-799-2864.



**OF ONE HEART AND ONE SOUL**

Christians in Jerusalem were so united in heart and soul that the deprivation of some was felt by all, so much so that land owners willingly sold possessions so that none among them lacked what was needed to sustain life. There is still a refreshing generosity among the Lord's people when there is a storm or other natural disaster. Conversation with two brethren in the Miami area a few days after hurricane Andrew devastated a thirty-mile path across lower Dade County, Florida, told of calls from throughout the nation to find out the needs of victims there. Both of them had received and disbursed much goods to those who lost so much. I am frequently called by brethren who have received appeals from other nations where drought, storm or civil strife has touched the lives of Christians in those areas, trying to verify the needs with someone they think has either been there, or knows of the need from other sources. This speaks eloquently of tender hearts.

But what about "one heart and one soul" when there is not a storm or other calamity to bring out the best in us? What about the splitting and splintering of once strong and peaceful congregations by folks who just don't like each other? I often get news items about a "new congregation" from places where I know a congregation has existed for many years. While I understand the need to plan and help new congregations to begin in needed places, all too often the story is repeated—there is strife and clamor. I commend the outpouring of help from tender hearts in time of trouble. But should we be less concerned about the tragic wreckage of congregations by self-willed people who have so little regard for the welfare of a local church? "Of one heart and one soul"? Well, are we?

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**EUODIAS AND SYNTYCHE**

There is a mild hint of trouble in Phil. 4: 2 when Paul wrote "I beseech Euodias and Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord." We know nothing more about it than what is stated here. Something threatened harmony between them. Paul's appeal was gentle. "I beseech." He wrote.

I thought of this today when I received a report from a brother in another country about a problem which surfaced between two sisters known to us who were co-owners of a business. They decided to sell the business and hard feelings arose between them. It threatened to undermine not only the relationship between these two women who were among the firstfruits of the gospel in that place, but also the harmony between families, the faith of children in both families and the peace of the congregation itself. Three wise brethren went to them and reasoned with them. They pointed out how much they had suffered together from family and friends when they obeyed the Lord. They were admonished about the harmful spiritual effects this could pose to their own children and what it could do to the church. Guess what? They listened! Those arriving early for the service the following week found

these families embracing each other. The husband of one of the sisters stood before the congregation and said that all difficulties were settled. There was great rejoicing. Now that's a story with a happy ending.

Somehow I like it better than hearing "the church at \_\_\_\_\_ has divided over personal differences (that is seldom ever acknowledged -CWA and a new congregation has been established three blocks away and we are looking for a sound preacher and want to find congregations that will support him to help us meet this great challenge."

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**"LEAVE GOD OUT OF THE CAMPAIGN"**

I don't believe God is either a Democrat or Republican. But I surely do believe that we are in trouble in this country for having already left God out of things. We have left him out of school. You can take his name in vain before a classroom of students, but you'd just better not say one word to commend him. We have left God out of sex education. You can teach young people in school how to commit fornication in graphic detail and give them birth control information and devices but you can't teach that it is sin to engage in sex relations outside of marriage. We have left God out of families and the wreckage from that ought to be evident even to the most sophisticated unbeliever. God is even left out of churches when his word is scorned or ignored. He certainly has been left out of Washington for all too long. Those who do not read and believe the Bible are blissfully ignorant as to the root causes of the horrendous moral mess in this nation. The principle is so simple. "Righteousness exalteth a nation but sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov. 14: 34). The Lord's people ought to be far more concerned with questions and issues which have direct impact on morals than they are with purely secular objectives. No, let's NOT leave God out of the campaign. Let all contenders for public office revere the word of God and let them seek to lead these people by time honored principles of justice and truth, the practice of which has been a boon to those nations which have exercised them and a scourge to those which have disdained them.

# 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 XXXIII

November 1992

Number 11

## THINK ON THESE THINGS

*H. E. Phillips*

P.O. Box 1631  
Lutz, FL 33549



### The Word Is Inspired of God

Some time ago I came across this paper that I had written several years ago. I believe it is useful to publish it now, with some modification. I hope it may serve to enhance the reader's respect and love for the sacred scriptures.

I accept the Bible as the word of God without reservation because I believe it was verbally "breathed" of God, every word of it. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness..." (2 Tim. 3: 16). I understand that it was not written in English. It was given by "inspiration of God" in the Hebrew and common Greek of the time when it was written.

This generation lacks reverence and respect for the word of God. Efforts to destroy the Bible have been continual and violent through all the generations from the time it was written to this present time. In spite of the persecution, it stands as strong today as it did in the days of the apostles. There is something unique about the Bible that distinguishes it from all other books ever written.

The Bible is a book apart from all other books that exist. It makes claims that, if not true, would indict it as the greatest fraud ever perpetrated upon man. The writers, the central figure, the subject matters, the doctrine, and the promises of it would be as evil as Satan himself, IF the Bible is not all it claims to be.

If, on the other hand, the Bible is what it claims to

be, it is the word of God and is not in any sense the word of man (1 Thess 2: 13). This Book is not just the theme of religious thought that has come down to us through the ages. It is the very words of God given to the apostles, no subtraction or no modification by any of them. In fact, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, the apostles forbade anyone to add to the word given (Rev. 22: 16), or to take from the words given (Rev. 22: 17), or to change them in any way (Gal. 1: 6-9). It is sin whether this is done by teaching something not in the word, or by failing to teach what is revealed; or by trying to modify the word by translating it in an "in-other-words" type translation. This does not respect the revelation of God, nor the inspiration of the Bible.

I like to preach and teach about the **inspiration** of the word of God because that is what separates it from all other religious literature. I have heard men from the pulpit, in the classroom, and I have read articles that leave the impression that the men who wrote the Bible were speaking from their own experiences and wisdom instead of being verbally directed by the Holy Spirit. I am sure most of these men believed in the God-breathed message the apostles spoke and wrote, but we should make sure that those who hear us understand that fact.

All the apostles testified that the message they preached and wrote came from God. Moreover, they affirmed that the Holy Spirit gave them the words to reveal the message from heaven. The apostle Paul wrote: "How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit (Eph. 3: 2-5). The mystery pertains to that which was in the mind of God, which only God could reveal (1 Cor. 2: 10, 11). God made known this revelation by the Holy Spirit through WORDS (1 Cor. 2: 13; Matt. 10: 19, 20).

Paul wrote to Timothy to "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they



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shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Tim. 4: 2-4, ASV). Paul affirms that he wrote the commandment of the Lord by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 14: 37; Eph. 3: 2-5; Gal. 1: 11-12; 1 Cor. 2: 10-13). The charge he wrote to Timothy was by the inspiration of God. Those who turn away their ears from this truth, are turning away from God's inspired revelation and are turned to false doctrines. That is where most of our problems begin.

The "revelation" began on the day of Pentecost, after the ascension of Jesus into the heavens (Acts 1: 8; 2: 1-4). God has chosen to reveal His mind by Christ through the Holy Spirit. This revelation is made by "speaking words" given to the apostles by the Holy Spirit. "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come" (John 16: 13). "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God"... "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Cor. 2: 10, 13). One cannot respect the words unless he respects the Person who gave the words.

# Searching The Scriptures

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## " QUOTE

**"There are lots of people who  
mistake their imagination  
for their memory."**

**—Josh Billings**

## UNQUOTE "

# Editorial

Connie W. Adams

P.O. Box 69  
Brooks, Kentucky 40109



## Searching The Scriptures To Cease Publication

With the December, 1992 edition, *SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES* will cease publication. That issue will complete thirty-three years of service to our readers. Several things have combined to bring us to this decision. The continual financial pressure from printing and postal costs, plus other necessary expenses certainly have been a factor. But the principal cause for this decision is the need for relief from the taxing deadlines with which this editor and publisher has lived for the last nineteen and a half years.

Since 1975 I have been involved in gospel meeting work for nine months of each year. Every time I have returned from a meeting, there has been one of two monthly deadlines to face. Some work had to be done on the road along with the busy activities of gospel meetings. The years have taken their toll. It is necessary to relieve some of the pressures under which I have been working so I may devote my remaining days to the work which has always been first with me - preaching and teaching the gospel.

### Agreement with *GUARDIAN OF TRUTH*

I have entered into an agreement with the *GUARDIAN OF TRUTH* to the effect that all rights to the name *SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES* will be owned by them to prevent any further publication under that name and to guarantee that our subscribers will receive their money's worth for any unfulfilled portion of their subscriptions. *GUARDIAN OF TRUTH* has agreed to supply one and a half issues of their magazine for every one that was due from *SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES*. In other words, if you still have six months remaining on your subscription to STS, you will receive nine issues of GOT. All church ads will be fulfilled in GOT on a one-for-one basis. Our readers will get more than their money's worth from this arrangement. *GUARDIAN FOR TRUTH* is ably edited by Mike Willis with a staff of capable writers. That magazine is published twice a month and contains 32 pages per issue. We have had only 24 pages once a month.

### Editor to Write for *GUARDIAN OF TRUTH*

I have been asked to write regularly for GOT and have consented to do so. I am comfortable working with Mike Willis and the able men which assist him in his work. The two papers have cooperated with each other through the years. Our general aims and purposes have been the same. It was my privilege to serve as an Associate Editor for what was then known as *TRUTH MAGAZINE* (which later became *GUARDIAN OF TRUTH*) from 1966 until June, 1973 when I became editor and owner of *SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES*. I left the staff of that paper with goodwill and continued to urge people to subscribe and read it. It will be a great pleasure for me to do the same again. Those who have followed my writings in STS for the past nineteen and a half years will now be able to find what I write in GOT. In addition to a column which will appear frequently, though certainly not in every issue, I will continue to write the short items which have appeared in STS under the heading "Editorial Left-Overs." This has been a popular feature in STS and many readers have told me that they always look for that first.

In addition to that, it is hoped that many of the writers for *SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES* will continue to write and submit their good material to GOT. Without the faithful work of these men, we would have been out of business long ago. Their reward for their labors has been the good they have done for their readers.

Our final issue will include a history of the paper from first to last by H. E. Phillips, who, along with James P. Miller began this work in January, 1960. As you might expect, we will take a nostalgic look back and then we will consign *SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES* to the archives of history where its merits or demerits will be judged by those who have read it through these years, or those into whose hands bound volumes may fall. I will sit down to write that last editorial with mixed feelings. But I am thankful for the opportunity to teach the word through these pages and grateful for the good men who have helped in so many ways and for those who have subscribed for themselves and for others. Over the years many kind words have been written and spoken about this paper (and some no so kind). We will cherish the kind words and try to learn from the other kind.

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15: 58).

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## ACCEPTED OF HIM

(2 Cor. 5:9)

*Donnie V. Rader*

P.O. Box 9  
Lexington, Alabama 35648



### The Proper Perspective

In our service to the Lord we must maintain the proper perspective. If we do not, we can easily become discouraged or we may become overly excited and euphoric when we need to be a little more cautious.

Getting a proper perspective means that we take an honest look at the way things *really* are and not just see what we *want* to see. The proper perspective comes when we see the larger picture. We sometimes become weary and disgusted because we are only focusing on part of the picture. Taking a bigger view may give reason to be encouraged and even quite optimistic.

At times our optimism and enthusiasm overshadows our sense of being realistic. I believe it was Luther Blackmon that told about the man who thought he had a good pair of shoes. All they needed were half-soles, heels and uppers. Besides, the strings were real good. We cannot afford to ignore real problems. Neither can we allow a few problems to blind us to the good that is present.

At one time Elijah had lost the proper perspective. He thought there was no one but himself wanting to do what was right. He said, "I alone am left." God had to help him get the proper perspective by telling him that there were yet 7,000 that had not bowed their knees to Baal (1 Kings 19: 10, 14, 18).

There are three things we need to see to get the proper perspective.

#### The Progress We Have Made

We need to look back and see where we were and how far we have come. Have we made any progress? Are things better now than they were? Or, are we going in the wrong direction? Remember, that progress is in many instances, slow (Heb. 5: 11-12).

Individual Christians need to stop and consider the progress they have made. Do you know the Bible better now than you did a few years ago? Are you stronger and more mature (Heb. 6: 1)? Are you able to endure and overcome things that you could not in the past?

Churches have to do the same. While things may not be as we would like them to be in the congregation, the question is "Are we making progress?" Are we moving (even though slowly) in the right direction? Are we more united, stronger and striving to do things according to

the Bible? Are we trying to *deal* with problems rather than ignore them? Don't forget that progress will not always be labeled "progress" by some.

#### What Are We Doing Now?

The proper perspective involves seeing what we are presently doing. Are we striving to do what the Lord says do? Can our concepts, teaching and practices be justified by the Bible (2 Cor. 4: 13)? Is there a stronger sense of unity than in times past (1 Cor. 1: 10)? Are we growing in knowledge, in maturity and in number? Are we moving in the right direction rather than in the wrong direction?

We can easily get discouraged when we listen to those who are discontent. If we focus our attention there, it will give us a limited picture of the church. We can begin to think that most of the people care little about doing what is right. It is somewhat like three or four old frogs in a pond - they can make enough noise that it sounds like a hundred. What we need to do is take a look at how many are wanting to follow the Bible and try their best to live by it (Phil. 1: 27). Those people don't make as much "noise," but must be taken into account to get the proper perspective.

#### Our Potential And Goals

To get the right view we must see how bright or gloomy the future is. Is there reason for some optimism as we contemplate the coming days?

What is our potential as individuals? What are you capable of doing? What kind of growth can you experience? What can you become? It is sad to see those who waste their time and throw away their potential (Heb. 5: 11-12).


What is our potential as a church? What will the church of tomorrow be? Will the homes and the families that comprise the church be good solid homes or will the lack of Christianity in the home destroy the church? What is the potential for future teachers, song leaders and even elders? Does the future look better and brighter than the past?

What goals do we have or should we have? Individually, we must set our sights on being the kind of individuals that the Bible describes (1 Cor. 15: 58). When we do, we have also set our sights on heaven (Col. 3: 1-3).

As a local church, we must set our goal to become like the local church that God approves (Rev. 2-3). That means we must deal with the things that God does not approve of- even though such processes are unpleasant (Rev. 2, 3; 1 Cor. 5 and 2 Thess. 3). We must strive to be active and carry the gospel to others (1 Tim. 3: 15). We must work toward becoming scripturally organized (Acts 14: 23). Churches that are content with the status quo and just "keeping house" (though sometimes they really don't do that) just don't have much of a goal to do what is pleasing to God.

Getting the proper perspective always helps. At times it will paint a dark picture. But in most cases it will give us some reason for encouragement.

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



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## "Safe Sin"

Go ahead and drink but have a designated driver. Give the drug addict clean needles to make using drugs safe. Legalize prostitution so we can control it and keep the girls healthy. Legalize liquor so the drunk will not drink dangerous home brew. Legalize abortion so you won't kill yourself with a coat hanger. Pass out contraceptives to students so they won't produce babies or get AIDS.

"In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25).

### A Contradiction

I know those two words, "safe sin," contradict each other since "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). Man has not ceased his ingenious ways at trying to make sin safe. A sinful practice is acceptable if the undesired consequences can be avoided. While man likes to avoid the consequences of sin in this life, it is extremely dangerous for it deceives him into thinking he got away with it. Consequences of sin in this life can be deterrents to eternal consequences if we will use them as warn-ings.

### Safe(?) Sexual Sin

In my youth (not as long ago as you might think), we were warned of two sexually transmitted diseases (STD's). Now there are over 40, with AIDS being the major one at present. The consequences of promiscuity can be any of these STD's, unwanted pregnancy and unwanted family responsibility. When the idea of promoting "safe sex" is advanced, we are communicating to society to go ahead and commit fornication, but be careful to prevent any undesirable consequences. It is acceptable to practice illicit sex, but try not to contract AIDS or other STD's and try not to cause a pregnancy (if you do, there is always abortion).

### Why Illicit Sex Is Not "Just A Physical Thing"

We are commanded in 1 Cor. 6:18 to "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body: but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body," or his own being or self.

"Did you love her? Naw, it was just a physical thing." Illicit sex is never just a physical thing. Paul says our body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, that our bodies are members of Christ (1 Cor. 6:13-20). In marriage, it is

Christ who joins two who have made the commitment to be true to each other, including sexually. We are also connected to Christ "your bodies are members of Christ" (1 Cor. 6:15). Sin is a spiritual term. We damage our being in every sexual act committed outside God's limits, because we become "one" (blended, intermingled) with someone other than who Christ joined us to. Then, in a few minutes we tear that oneness apart into two separate beings again. It doesn't rip our body, but it rips our *mind, will, emotion, and spirit*.

The *mind* is now damaged because it has memories and knowledge it was not equipped to cope with apart from a lifetime commitment. The *will* is damaged because it has been bent like a wire against our conscience saying "no," and is made weaker. The *emotions* have been traumatized by the pulling back that comes after being blended and intermingled. And we get a deep wound in our *spirit* because death is administered to us instead of life. This happens whether or not you catch a STD. "*When Potiphar's wife tried to lead Joseph into premarital sex... it was not fear of conception, infection, or detection that kept him from it, he said: 'How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God (Gen. 39:9)'*" (Earl Kimbrough, STS, Vol. XVII, No. 7).

We say, "God you just don't understand." Yes He does. Sex was 100% His idea. He invented the whole process. He is for us, but in His love He tries to prevent us from damaging our lives and our being. He has given us proper channels for every drive we have.

### Marriage: Just A Piece Of Paper?

Concerning sex outside marriage, Farrah Fawcett said, "*I see nothing wrong with it if you know you love each other and are really committed. What difference does a piece of paper and a ceremony make? It's purely a business contract.*" ("*Farrah Fawcett Has Decided Marriage Isn't For Her,*" *Jonesboro Sun (AP) 5/1/90*). My answer: If you are not married, you are not committed, because MARRIAGE IS THE COMMITMENT! It is the legal, publicly witnessed and binding commitment between a man and a woman. Nothing else is. When two people live together outside of marriage, they want the privileges but not the responsibilities. When responsibility begins to develop one begins to look elsewhere. It is not "What therefore sex has joined together," but "What GOD has joined together" (Mt. 19:6). So it is not just a physical joining, it is a spiritual joining of two people.

### The God Of Taste Buds

Did you know God didn't need to give you taste buds? You don't need them. This ought to tell you something about God and how thoughtful he was of us. Food is simply to maintain and repair your body and you don't need to go "Mmmmmmm, mmmmmmm," over chocolate sundaes. There is only one reason for taste buds, and that's pleasure.


Someone may reason, "If God is the God of pleasure and wants me to enjoy what I eat, then I ought to be able to enjoy any amount at any time in any way. Right? Wrong! That's not logical. I know my stomach holds 2 quarts, so to eat 10 pizzas, 15 cheeseburgers and 8 chocolate malts is not really smart. It's best that I limit

my enjoyment. Likewise, we can't reason that because God has given us sexual appetites or the gift of attraction, that any amount is good at any time.

**Sex: A River of Beauty and Joy**

God's intention was satisfaction and fulfillment. He limits our behavior before marriage, not to take away, but to channel this beautiful flow like banks channel a river. It is foolish to knock down the banks of a river to give it "freedom" or "liberation." If the river said "I want to flow where I want to flow when I feel like flowing," we would end up with a flood and destruction and loss of life instead of something beautiful. CONCLUSION: There is a vast difference between "freedom" and a "free-for-all." Once we understand why God said what he said, it won't be as hard to control.

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**Walking By Faith**

For we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5: 7). We come to Jesus by faith (Mark 16: 16), and the whole journey from conversion to glory is made by faith as we look at the things that are not seen (2 Cor. 4: 18).

Let us consider some aspects of this spiritual life which is comprised of trusting rather than seeing.

**I. Believing that Jesus lived and walked among men:** We, of course, never saw Him. We did not behold the signs He performed; neither did we hear the gracious words that He spoke. Jesus said to Thomas, "... because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20: 29). We walk by faith, not by sight.

We tend sometimes to consider this a disadvantage. Things would be much easier, we think, had we lived when God became flesh and walked among men. Surely all doubts would vanish if we could see Him and hear Him.

Yet the stubborn fact remains that all who did see and hear Him did not believe. He was despised and rejected by men. He came unto His own and His own did not receive Him.

Those who will not accept the gospel account would not believe if they saw the evidence for themselves.

**II. Believing the miracles of the Bible:** When we challenge the alleged miracle workers of modern times to demonstrate their powers, we are accused of being unbelieving sign-seekers. But, in fact, we are not unbelievers. We believe in God; in the Son of God; in the inspiration of the Bible; and we believe every miracle that is recorded in the Bible. We believe that the sun stood still over Gibeon; that the dumb ass spoke; that the walls of Jericho fell; that Jesus healed the sick, lame, and blind, and walked upon the sea. We believe it all.

What we do not believe is that such power has been given to men today. We do not have to believe this to believe God. We walk by faith, not by sight.

**III. Believing that our labor in the Lord is not in vain:** We are assured that this is the case (1 Cor. 15: 58). "In due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart" (Gal. 6: 7).

Such assurances imply that we need not expect to always see the fruit of our labor. Others may reap where

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we have sown. When we are at the point of crying out: "What good am I doing?!" it may well be that we have done more good than we know. We must labor by faith, not by sight. Let us continue to preach the word; teach the Bible classes; put forth the personal efforts to save the lost, and just accept God at His word that such will not return unto Him void.

**IV. Believing in God's providential workings:** God holds the world in His hands. In Him we live and move and have our being. All things work together for good for those who love God and are the called according to His purpose (Romans 8: 27). But we often do not see this. An old Puritan proverb says that God's providence, like Hebrew, can only be read backwards.

When we travel by air, few of us could explain the physical and aerodynamic laws that enable a hunk of machinery to fly. I certainly wouldn't want to fly in anything that I had a part in building. I really don't know how the thing works. And yet I'm reasonably confident that it will take me to my destination.

A child in a loving home certainly does not comprehend the purpose and the wisdom of much that is done for him and to him. He does not understand that denials and discipline are for his good. Yet he trusts the love, the goodness, and the wisdom of his parents.

How much more is it true that we do not fathom the providences of our God. Yet we trust Him. We walk by faith, not by sight.

**V. Believing in the incorruptible inheritance:** We have never been privileged to ascend on high and behold the wonders of that city whose builder and maker is God. We have not peered into that book of life to see our name written there. Yet we believe the promise of our Lord that He will come again and that where He is we shall be also (John 14: 1-3). We believe that a rest remains for the people of God.

Like Israel of old in the desert, they had not seen Canaan land. They had not beheld the beauty of Mount Zion or stood on Jordan's banks, but they believed. They walked by faith. And we also who are traveling to the promised land are walking by faith, not by sight.

The day is coming when we shall walk by sight. We believe that our Lord walked among men; but one day we shall behold Him as He is and we shall be like Him. We believe the evidences of His power, but we shall one day know from experience that power that raises the dead. We believe that our labor is not in vain; but we will one day know the results of that labor. We believe that all things work together for good; but we shall one day behold the whole picture. We believe that there shall be fullness of joy in the presence of God; but one day we shall taste that joy, and we shall walk by sight.

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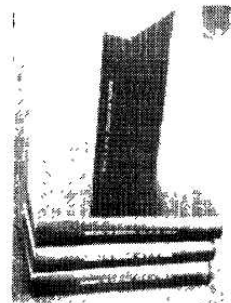
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## Simplicity In Christ

For more than 40 years I have contributed articles to various periodicals published by brethren in the church of Christ. I also have contributed articles on a variety of subjects to secular publications, and for the past several years have written a regular column for the Chiefland (Fl), *Citizen*.

In all of my writings, I have endeavored to display one main characteristic—simplicity. I have studied the English language in textbooks, dictionaries, by reading from other authors, and have taken special courses with one thought in mind—communicating in the most effective manner possible. And in my judgment, the most important ingredient to effective communication, whether speaking or writing, is simplicity.

When the editor of *Searching the Scriptures* asked me to write a regular column for that publication, under a heading of my choice, I did not hesitate. I would write under the caption, "Simplicity In Christ" (cf. 2 Cor. 11: 3). The first of those articles appeared in November, 1984 (p. 10/250), though I had contributed articles to STS in past years.

I think that I am capable, as anyone with an average education would be, of composing complicated sentences and paragraphs, using ambiguous words and ideas. But even in the age of miraculous gifts, the apostle admonished, "... except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air" (1 Cor. 14: 9).

The apostle Peter said that in Paul's writings there were "some things hard to understood..." (2 Pet. 3: 16). And notice that Peter said some things, not all things. Even if you have the knowledge and are able, it is hard to explain some things to some people when their ears are stopped, their eyes are closed, they have not grown as they should have, when they are encumbered by the traditions and philosophies of men, or when they are willfully or carelessly ignorant.

I do not mean to leave the impression that there are only a few writers/speakers who possess the quality of simplicity in desire or ability, but why are some so "hard to be understood"? It may be that some readers/hearers still possess some of the hindering qualities mentioned above, or that others have already clouded the issue with the muddy waters of half-truths, statements out of

context, or "foolish and unlearned questions," but when you try to follow someone through a maze of sophistry, hypothetical situations, or ambiguous and nebulous language, you will have a difficult task in such a journey.

Some writers/speakers may wish to appear profound and learned, resorting to deep, dark dissertations which are intentionally foreign to simplicity. And, whether such ones succeed or fail in this attempt, the result is still the same as far as the hearer/reader is concerned. Paul speaks of the man who intrudes "into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind" (Col. 2: 18).

There may be a time and place for scholarly offerings, but simplicity is not necessarily foreign to scholarship. Then, there are those who simply are unable to reduce their literary or polemic offerings to simplicity, even though they may have such a desire to do so. Some in this category know that simplicity is not their forte, and some may not know it, but the reader/hearer knows.

Then, there are those writers/speakers who either consciously or unconsciously avoid plain language because they do not want the reader/header to understand the author's true position on a given subject. This attitude is patently unfair to the issue being discussed, as well as to all those who are involved in or concerned with the issue.

Others may engage in rash, shoot-from-the-hip pronouncements which invariably need explanation or retraction later, and yet it is the hearer or reader who is often victimized by such careless, offhanded oratory or writing. All of us have said things on the spur of the moment that needed some clarification, but it is hard to understand why some writers are continually being "misunderstood" or "misrepresented," when a writer has more time to contemplate what is being written than does one who engages in extemporaneous speaking.

We should be ready to give an answer concerning anything which has to do with our "hope" (1 Pet. 3: 15). But that doesn't mean that we are obligated to answer every foolish question which people may ask on untaught subjects (2 Tim. 2: 23).

Brethren, let us desire and strive to "use great plainness of speech" (2 Cor. 3: 12). And the more we "speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4: 11), the nearer we will come to accomplishing our goal.

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### Things The Lord Hates

Hate is a strong word. It has stubbornly resisted the metamorphosis that some words have undergone wherein their meanings were softened or watered down. Some may use the word casually (as in "I hate English peas") but generally, this word is reserved for use only when we feel the deepest of dislike and despise.

Hate means to loathe, detest, to despise; to feel ill will toward; to find deeply distasteful or disagreeable. It is an emotion so strong that it sometimes brings about physiological changes in men. At the thought of some-thing or someone toward which one feels hate the stomach begins to roll. Accompanied with a feeling of bitterness, the heart rate, blood pressure and even body temperature begin to rise. Considering this, it is no surprise that the feeling of hate is generally thought to be bad.

But consider that hate is also an attribute of God. God's feelings of hate are expressed toward evil things and evil men. Solomon wrote, "There are six things which the Lord *hates*, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, And hands that shed innocent blood, A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that run rapidly to evil, A false witness who utters lies, And one who spreads strife among brothers" (Prov. 6: 7-9).

Our goal should be to think like God thinks and feel like God feels. The things which God loves are things which we should love. The things that God hates are the things we should hate. Let's take a closer look at this passage in Proverbs.

**GOD HATES "HAUGHTY EYES."** Haughty is a synonym for proud and carries with it the idea of being vain to the point of arrogance; having excessive self-esteem; having or showing great pride in oneself and disdain, contempt, and scorn for others. Certain of the Pharisees "trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt" (Luke 18: 9) prompting Jesus to teach a parable showing that such pride will be humbled (Luke 18: 10-14). God hated this attitude in them and He hates it when it surfaces, and it does, among us! God wants us to have a different attitude (Matt. 5: 3).

**GOD HATES "A LYING TONGUE."** Lying is an

attribute of the devil (John 8: 44). Since the dawn of creation it is a sin that has plagued otherwise good men of God. But God hates lying no matter who the liar is. "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who deal faithfully are His delight" (Prov. 12: 22). God wants us to lay aside such as a part of the old man of sin and speak truth with one another (Col. 3: 9-10, Eph. 4: 25).

**GOD HATES "HANDS THAT SHED INNOCENT BLOOD."** The key word in this phrase is "innocent." God had established the nation of Israel on the foundation of righteousness and justice (Psa. 89: 14). Provision was made in her laws for the guilty to be punished and the innocent to go free and instruction was given to judges to be fair and impartial (Deut. 16: 18-20) in their judgments. But alas, such was not to be. Judah was carried in chains to Babylon in part because of the sins of king Manasseh who "filled Jerusalem with innocent blood" (2 Kgs. 24: 3-4). It is not hard to understand the hatred God has for this sin when we understand that wicked men shed the innocent blood of His only begotten Son (Acts 3: 14-15). God wants us to be fair, honest, and impartial in all our dealings (1 Tim. 5: 21; Jas. 2: 1, 9).

**GOD HATES "A HEART THAT DEVISES WICKED PLANS."** It is one thing for a man to sin in a moment of weakness and another, entirely different, when he plans and schemes to commit his wickedness. Both are sins of which one must be accountable, but one is committed when knowledge or discipline is less than what it ought to be while the other is committed out of high-handed rebellion. The latter is described in Micah 2: 1-3 as a people who scheme iniquity on their beds at night only to awaken in the morning to follow through with their wicked plans. God loathes such rebellion!

**GOD HATES "FEET THAT RUN RAPIDLY TO EVIL."** It is hard for those of tender conscience to comprehend that there are actually people who hate good and love evil and who consciously choose an evil way of life over that which is good. But a realistic view of events in our own hometown proves it to be so. David accused and warned, "You love evil more than good, falsehood more than speaking what is right... But God will break you down forever; He will snatch you up, and tear you away from your tent, and uproot you from the land of the living" (Psa. 52: 3, 5). For all those who constantly seek for evil to do, **BE WARNED!** God hates such! Our attitude should be to "abhor what is evil; cling to what is good" (Rom. 12: 9). If our generation perishes, the number one reason could be because **WE DO NOT ABHOR SIN!**

**GOD HATES "A FALSE WITNESS THAT UTTERS LIES."** Exodus 20: 16 commanded, "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor." That one would bear false witness suggests collusion to pervert justice (Cf. Deut. 17: 6-7; 19: 15). "A false witness will not go unpunished..." (Prov. 19: 5, 9). When Jezebel sought false witnesses to rise up against Naboth she knew it would take worthless men (1 Kgs. 21: 9-10) for such is unbecoming the righteous. Bearing false witness is a sin which comes from the heart and, according to Jesus, such defiles the man (Matt. 15: 19-20). Please remember

this the next time you are tempted to say that you heard someone say something they didn't say, or declare that you saw someone do something they didn't do, that such is false witness. You will have to stand before God and answer for it.. He hates such!


GOD HATES "ONE WHO SPREADS STRIFE AMONG BROTHERS. " God wants His people to be people of unity. It is one of those few things that is both good and pleasant (Psa. 133: 1). Once obtained, we are to be diligent to preserve it (Eph. 4: 3). Strife, dissension, and division are signs of carnality (1 Cor. 3: 1-3). It's no wonder that God hates him who spreads strife. Remember this the next time that you are tempted to say something that has no other real purpose than to spread discontent and perhaps cause anxiety among brethren. God hates such!

Each of the seven things listed above deserve a more complete treatment than it is possible to give in one article. But the one thing I hope rings clear is that God is passionate in His feelings about such evil things and the evil men who promote them. They will not be overlooked in judgment. He HATES them and so should we, His people! For that reason let these things not be named among us.

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## Preaching The Living Word Of The Living God In Order To Produce A Living Faith And Living Hope(III)

*Billy Ashworth*

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"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.... But without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11: 1, 6). "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2: 20). "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also (Jas. 2: 26).

From the passages above, we find that a living, not a dead faith is absolutely essential to be pleasing to God. I believe that Paul is the greatest example of having a living faith of any person who ever lived. In addition to his affirmation to the Galatians as quoted above, I thrill at the account of his addressing the captain of the ship on the voyage to Rome "when neither sun or stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away. But Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am and whom I serve, Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and lo, God hath give thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me" (Emphasis mine, BA; Acts 27: 20-25).

Observations: This is the greatest statement ever recorded regarding a LIVING FAITH! Paul, an apostle of the Lord Jesus, without fear of men or apology to those who were heathens, boldly affirmed his living faith in the living God. He was not in the least ashamed to declare his faith in the face of those who did not believe. Paul's faith was a settled faith. "I BELIEVE GOD THAT IT SHALL BE EVEN AS IT WAS TOLD ME. " The life of Paul from the time of his conversion in the city of Damascus, where "it shall be told thee what thou must do" (Acts 9: 6), is the greatest demonstration of the power of the gospel that has ever been recorded on the pages of Divine Revelation. The great persecutor became the persecuted for Jesus' sake. He believed God, obeyed Him, and never looked back - never wavered in his living faith.

Notice his confidence in death: "For I am ready to be

offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all of them that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4: 6-8).

Paul did not say that his confidence in death was because he had been baptized, although that obviously was essential, nor that he was a member of the church of Christ as many today hope to make heaven do, but he said "I have fought a good fight, I finished the course (he was not a quitter), I have kept the faith. " I believe that Paul was setting forth a principle that I have held for a long time: Anything worth believing that is so essential to salvation, is worth defending. If it is not worth defending, it is not worth believing. Paul was a **fighter!** This sets him apart from many members of the Lord's church today. We who have fought the battles over the years to save people from sin and false doctrine and to save a remnant from the apostasy that has occurred in the past twenty-five years, are not very popular with brethren and sisters of the younger generation. Those of us who have stood on the polemic platform toe-to-toe, face-to-face with false teacher, both within and without the church of our Lord, have not endeared ourselves to many of the saints.

I believe Paul demonstrated his living faith and love for the Lord and the church of the Lord when he confronted a "certain sorcerer a false prophet named Bar-Jesus" as recorded in Acts 13: 6-12. This false prophet tried to turn away Paul from the deputy, a prudent man, named Sergius Paulus, who desired to hear the word of God. "Then Saul, (who is called Paul, ) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him (Bar-Jesus) and said, O full of all subtlety and all mischief (villainy, ASV), thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now the hand of the Lord is upon thee and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season... Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed. "

Paul claimed to have the spirit of Christ. He felt the same way that the Lord did toward false teachers. Read Matthew 23 and see how Jesus felt toward false teachers, Pharisees, who were Jews. Then listen to His warning in Matthew 7: 13-16a: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be who go in thereat... Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. " To what did Jesus refer when He said, "Enter ye in?" Obviously He meant "Enter Ye into the coming kingdom" as is evident at verse 21. Frankly, I feel toward false teachers as Paul did. I do not believe they are "good men" who "all they need to do is be baptized" as I have heard some brethren say. They need to quit sinning and repent of their evil ways and believe and obey the gospel of Christ.

### A Living Hope

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pet. 1: 3-5).

What a wonderful passage left by the apostle for those of us who make our way through "this present evil world" and amid trials, heartaches, disappointments and persecutions. This is motivation to us to "finish the course, keeping the faith, " that we might receive that "crown of righteousness at that day (judgment day)" (2 Tim. 4: 7, 8). Paul wrote: "For we are saved by hope" (Rom. 8: 24). This shows that all of us who hope to make heaven are living by faith in the living word of the living God. We can say with Paul: "I believe God that it shall be even as it was told me" (Acts 27: 25).

Yes, I believe that Christ was **bodily** raised from the dead and became "the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Cor. 15: 20). Christ was the first raised from the dead not to die again and is the assurance of the general resurrection of all the dead of all time at His second coming. He said: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5: 28, 29). I believe Him, that it will be even as it was told to the people who heard His wonderful promise, and that you and I who read it were included in His promise.

We can and must do as the Hebrew writer exhorted: "Let us lay aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of" the throne of God" (Heb. 12: 1b, 2). Then we can sing with Paul: "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15: 57). What blessed hope! I love the words of the song: "Heaven will surely be worth it all. "

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## Bass Fiddles and "Church Work"!

*Luther W. Martin*

P.O. Box 430  
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It is always in order to provide definitions for any subject being considered. *Ekklesia* is the word most commonly rendered "church." Therefore, we define EKKLESIA - A Greek word, composed of two Greek terms: (*ek*) out of, or out from; and (*klesis*) a calling; or (*kaleo*) to call; therefore meaning "to call out of," or "a calling out from." We should emphasize that the word *ekklesia*, was not in itself a religious word. However, it has become such, over the centuries.

Historically, *ekklesia* was used by the Greeks to designate an assembly or gathering of citizens, called as a body to deliberate concerning affairs of State. It is so used in Acts 19: 39.

The term was also applied in Scripture to a riotous or unruly mob (Acts 19: 32, 41).

Next, we define CHURCH - An English word that has become an "ecclesiastical" word, over the ages. It derives from the German (*Kirche*); Dutch (*kerk*); Scottish (*kirk*); Anglo-Saxon (*circe, cyrce*); and Middle English (*chirche*).

Other English words that may properly be used, are: assembly, congregation, gathering, or community. Unlike "church," these synonyms carry no religious implication, although "congregation" is beginning to do so.

Inasmuch as the Lord's people, initially, owned no buildings in which to assemble, until some time after the first century, consequently the word "church" is never applied to a building, in Holy Scripture.

Neither the King James Version nor the Revised Version of the English Scriptures, have the word "church" in the Old Testament.

The Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, the Septuagint (LXX), does contain the word "church," and renders it from two different Hebrew words. *Edhah*, the older of the two words, comes from a root word, which means "to appoint." Therefore, a congregation assembled by appointment; such as, the congregation of Israel in the Exodus. They had an appointment with God, and were to obey His instruction. *Qahal*, comes from a root word, meaning "to call." Initially, this word applied to the mustering of men for military service; and the summoning together of the community for civic counsel.

Gradually, in both the Hebrew and the Greek societies, the words being applied to political and civic gatherings, began to be applied to religious assemblies and purposes.

The word "church" is used in Scripture in both a singular and plural local application; and, in a singular

universal sense.

### **Ekklesia in the Gospels and Acts**

The word *ekklesia* is used 115 times in the *Majority*, *Byzantine*, or *Koine* Text, which represents about 85 to 90% of all manuscripts; and 114 times in the Nestle-Aland/United Bible Societies text. The single omission in the latter text, is Acts 2: 41.

The *Textus Receptus*, which is one example of the *Majority Text*, contains *ekklesia* in Acts 2: 41, indicating that the Lord's assembly was then, (on Pentecost, A. D. 33), in existence. The textual critics, Griesbach, and Wordsworth are in agreement with this. But, Lachmann, Tregelles, Tischendorf, Alford, and Westcott-Hort, choose to delete *ekklesia* in this passage.

The only instances of *ekklesia* or *church* in the four Gospels, are found in Matthew 16: 18, and 18: 17 (twice). These passages look to the future, inasmuch as Christ's community or congregation had not as yet been established. (See Acts 2). Matthew's biography of Christ was written for Jewish readership, and therefore such subjects as "church," "kingdom of heaven," and "the exception allowing divorce" (due to the Jews' hardness of heart), are included in the first book of the New Testament, but are not found in Mark (for the Romans), Luke (for the Greeks), or John (written many years after the kingdom, the church, had been established).

In Acts of the Apostles, *ekklesia* was used to designate the congregation in Jerusalem, that convened as a result of the call of the apostles' preaching (5: 11). Stephen, in his sermon as recorded by Luke, made reference to the *ekklesia* (congregation, assembly) in the desert or wilderness, led by Moses (7: 38). Due to persecution, the people of the "Way" were dispersed throughout Judea and Samaria (8: 1). The *ekklesia*, (used in a collective sense) church(es), congregation(s), in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, were at peace and gained strength, after Saul's conversion to Christ (9: 31).

Elders (plural) were appointed in every church (*ekklesian*); i. e., in each assembly (14: 23). The *ekklesian* was gathered together (14: 27). The Apostles and elders, with the whole *ekklesia*, sent their own selected messengers to Antioch (15: 22).

### **Ekklesia in the New Testament Epistles**

In his Epistle to the church in Rome, Paul's first use of *ekklesias* is in reference to "Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea." (16: 1). This verse has "worried" some brethren, because, depending upon the theology of the translator, some versions refer to Phoebe as a "deaconsess" (C. B. Williams); "a ministering servant" (Conybeare); "deacon" (NRSV), "servant" (C. K. Williams); "omostram" (Young); or "helper" (New Life N. T. ). The Greek word, *diaknonon*, simply refers to a duty, rather than an office. Phoebe was a female servant, just as all sisters in Christ should be.

Paul writes about the churches *ekklesiai* of the Gentiles; churches of the nations, *ethnon* Rom. 16: 4. He was writing about Aquila and Priscilla's work and sacrifice in his behalf. That, if it had not been for this husband and wife team, Paul might have lost his life, and the "ethnic assemblies" or "Gentile congregations" would have been deprived of the teaching afforded them by the Apostle.

Paul was known as the Apostle to the Gentiles (Eph. 3: 8; 2 Tim. 1: 11).

*Ekklesiai* - "... The churches of Christ salute you." (Rom. 16: 16). Literally, "all the congregations of Christ greet you;" or "all of Christ's assemblies express regards."

Numerous synonyms are used in the New Testament for the word "church." Many of these are based upon Old Testament themes in reference to the Israel of God. Consider: the Seed of Abraham (spiritually), living stones built into a spiritual house, royal priesthood, holy nation, temple, bride of Christ, chosen generation, olive tree, and Vine and branches = Christ and His called-out-ones.

#### **Contrast Between "Synagogue" and "Church"**

As we mentioned earlier in this article, the term "church" **never** refers to a building in which the "church" assembles. This misuse of the word "church" may have been helped along by the gathering place of the Jews, the synagogue.

(1) "They have **burned up all the synagogues** of God in the land." (Psalms 74: 8). A structure that could be destroyed.

(2) For example, a synagogue could be "gone **into**" (Matt. 12: 9).

(3) A synagogue had "chief seats **in it**" (Matt. 23: 6).

(4) A synagogue could be "come **out of**" (Mark 1: 29).

(5) A popular Centurion had "**built us a synagogue**" (Luke 7: 5).

(6) Immediately after his conversion, Saul "preached Christ **in the synagogue**" (Acts 9: 20).

(7) Justus' house was "**next door to** the synagogue." (Acts 18: 7).

A synagogue was a material building, but an assembly, community, congregation, gathering or church is made up of people, persons, individuals, or figuratively, "living stones."

#### **"Robbers of Churches" An unfortunate Translation!**

In Acts 19: 37, the KJV reads: "For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither **robbers of churches**, not yet blasphemers of your goddess." Now this sounds as if "churches" are material buildings, subject to plundering. But the Greek word which the KJV translators essentially rendered as "church-robbers," is *hierosulous* which actually means **temple robbers**. The episode had to do with Demetrius the silversmith, and his fellow-craftsmen, who were makers of silver images of the goddess Diana (Artemis). Since Paul and his associates were teaching against idolatry, Demetrius accused them of blaspheming the goddess and of plundering her temple! Hence, "church-robbers" according to the KJV. Demetrius was making use of any popular accusation against the Christians, that might sway his audience. It would be like shouting "horse-thief!" at a western neck-tie party. The word *ekklesia* is not used in Acts 19: 37.

#### **Conclusion**

In addition to misusing the word "church" by applying it to a building, many folk misuse the word by misapplying it to their conception of the work of the Lord's

church!

Many years ago, when I was manager of a radio station, we had a number of western bands, or "hillbilly musicians" who appeared regularly on various programs. One fellow was a skilled bass "fiddle" player. Now, in hillbilly parlance, a bass fiddle was not played with a bow, such as was the practice in symphony orchestras. Instead, the instrument was "slapped" providing rhythm and syncopation for the rest of the band. Anyway, this particular musician had been quite popular, playing for night-clubs, honky-tonks, and such like. But at some point, he left town, and I had not seen him for several years, when, one morning, I encountered him on a downtown street. We met, shook hands, exchanging pleasantries, and he remembered that I had not appreciated nor approved of his having played for dances, etc. So, he was eager to tell me, that: "I no longer play for dances! I've gone into church work!"

His family had been of the Pentecostal persuasion, and actually all the family members had learned their music by playing at Pentecostal church services. Of course, when he started playing for dances, his family was gravely embarrassed, and did not approve of his actions. But now, he had returned to the fold, so to speak, and he and his bass fiddle had "Gone into church work!"

So, when the word "church" is used, it can and may be woefully abused and misused! The New Testament specifically gives instruction as to just what constitutes "church work!" Many brethren need to learn this fact.

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## The Christian Is Not A Sinner

*Voyd N. Ballard*

9289 Skyway #6  
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The word "sinner" (singular) is found some eleven times in the New Testament, and the word "sinners" (plural) some thirty times; however neither word is ever used with reference to the faithful child of God. The fact that a child of God can sin and sometimes does sin no one with any Bible knowledge will deny. However, this does not mean that sin dwells in the child of God, nor that he practices sin. If he allows sin to dwell in him and if he is habitually practicing sin he has fallen from grace and is again walking in darkness. The child of God walks in the light and if he does stumble and sins he repents and prays the forgiveness of God through the Advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous (1 John 2: 1). Can a child of God sin? Yes. Does he sin? Yes. However, there is a world of difference between a child of God who sins occasionally and a person in whom sin dwells and who habitually practices sin. The sinner is a servant of sin and sin dwells in him. The child of God is a servant of righteousness and **SIN CANNOT DWELL IN THE CHILD OF GOD!** Sin may slip in occasionally but the child of God does not permit it to dwell there. Through repentance and prayer he is cleansed from it by the blood of Christ. **"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin"** (1 John 1: 7). Walking in the light includes repentance and prayer on the part of the Christian, and guarantees forgiveness for **ALL** sin. When an alien sinner who believes in the Lord and repents of his sins is baptized he has all of his sins washed away by the blood of Christ. **"Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins"** (Acts 22: 16). When he comes up out of the water of baptism he is just as clean and pure and sinless as he was the day he was born, for he has been **cleansed by the blood of Christ.**

Likewise when a child of God repents and prays for forgiveness of his sin he is cleansed. God has forgiven him and he is just as pure and sinless as he was when he was born into this world and when he arose from the water of baptism. Repentance, confession, and prayer for forgiveness are God's requirements and when a Christian who has sinned meets these requirements **"the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from ALL SIN."** I will always remember the prayer of one of the elders (Bro. Roades who went to Heaven a few years ago) in the Turlock, California church where I preached for over five years. Bro. Roades prayed like this: "Lord forgive us of all our sins and now that Thou hast forgiven us" I like that

kind of prayer-"**NOW THAT THOU HAST FORGIVEN US**"-That is a prayer of faith, and I could tell by the way Bro. Roades prayed that he believed it. He asked God's forgiveness, and he believed that God had done just that very thing. And you want to know something? **I BELIEVE IT TOO!** This is the assurance that the faithful child of God has. Sure, the child of God can sin, and admittedly does sometimes slip into sin, but if he allows himself to dwell in sin or sin to dwell in him, he does so because he fails to "ask in faith, nothing wavering" (Jas. 1: 6).

If you go to sleep at night with sin against you it is your fault, because you did not ask for forgiveness.

When I say sin cannot dwell in the child of God I am not saying that such is impossible, but I am saying that you cannot be a faithful child of God and allow sin to dwell in you. And you do have control over whether or not you will serve sin. **"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof"** (Rom. 6: 12). The attitude on the part of a Christian that "I am a sinner and I am going to sin because I am a sinner" is a defeatist attitude, and wholly contrary to the teaching of the New Testament. We need to rid our minds of the idea that Christians just have to sin. We may sometimes sin, but there is no provision made for us to sin, but rather that we "sin not" (1 Jno. 2: 1). What John says here can be said of every epistle in the New Testament. Everything written to Christians are things written **"unto you that ye sin not"** (1 Jno. 2: 1). John says exactly what every epistle in the New Testament says to Christians, **"These things write I unto you, that ye sin not."** God does not want us to sin; He does not expect us to sin, and He has not therefore made provision for us to sin. He has provided a way of cleansing in case we do. **"And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world"** (1 Jno. 1: 1, 2).

I am well aware of all the passages in the New Testament teaching us that a child of God not only can sin, but that he can so sin as to completely fall away and finally be lost in Hell. I am quite familiar with the many warnings directed to the children of God to "take heed lest ye fall." I have used these many passages in debates with Baptist preachers who were trying to prove that a child of God cannot so sin as to be lost. However, none of these passages teach that the child of God should sin or that he is a sinner. On the contrary they are written to teach us that as the children of God we are **"dead to sin"** and should not live any longer therein (Rom. 6: 2).

Denominational preachers are noted for declaring that all men are sinners - Christians and aliens alike, but the Bible does not so teach. I repeat again that **there is no passage in the New Testament that describes the faithful child of God as a sinner.** Let him who thinks so produce the passage. If you are a faithful child of God you are not a sinner. The fact that it is possible for you to sin does not make you a sinner, because if you do sin you will not allow that sin to



remain against you. You may occasionally slip and sin, but there is a good deal of difference between the Christian who does so and the sinner who is wallowing in sin.

Rather than being called a sinner the children of God are described as:

CHILDREN OF GOD; Rom. 8: 14, 17

SERVANTS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS; Rom. 6: 18

SERVANTS OF GOD; Rom. 6: 22

REDEEMED; Eph. 1: 7

FORGIVEN; Col. 1: 14

SAINTS; 1 Cor. 1: 2

WASHED, SANCTIFIED, JUSTIFIED; 1 Cor. 6: 11

HEIRS OF GOD; Rom. 8: 17

And this list could go on and on. As the Hebrew writer said, "And what more shall I say? for the time would fail me to tell" of all the similar terms that are used to describe the child of God, and everyone of them just the very opposite of the term "sinner." No, No, Brother the **REDEEMED, WASHED, SANCTIFIED, JUSTIFIED, FORGIVEN, SERVANT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS** is not a sinner. True, it is possible for him to sin and sin may slip in once in awhile, but he will not let it stay there. There is no way in the world that you can be consistent with the Bible or good reasoning for that matter and add the term "sinner" to the above list! I affirm again: **THERE IS NOT ONE PASSAGE ANYWHERE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT THAT EVEN SO MUCH AS IMPLIES THAT THE FAITHFUL CHILD OF GOD IS A SINNER.**

It is true that we were all sinners before our obedience to the gospel of Christ for "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Jesus came to "seek and save that which is lost." Paul said, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief (1 Tim. 1: 15). Paul, of course, is not describing his present state as a Christian and as an apostle, but is showing that he was the chief of sinners before becoming a Christian. He said it was when he was a blasphemer and

a persecutor in ignorance and unbelief (Verse 13). In Romans 7: 15 Paul says, "For that which I do I allow (**know**) not: for what I would, that do I not; (**for not what I would, that do I practice;**) but what I hate that do I." This does not mean to be simply conscious of a particular act one is performing. If a man does not know what he is doing he is demented. When Paul was persecuting the church, he was certainly conscious of his acts, but was utterly ignorant of the nature and consequences of his deeds. He did not know that every act he performed in persecuting the church was a crime against God and man; he thought he was doing right. So, the sense in which he did not know what he was doing was not that he was unaware of his acts-but in the sense that he did not know what he was accomplishing.

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**VERNON E. FORD, 13521 Memorial Highway, Miami, FL 33161**  
- The North Miami church desires to make contact with a faithful brother who speaks Creole fluently. A Haitian brother who is also fluent in English is preferred but another who is knowledgeable of the Haitian culture as well as being fluent in both Creole and English would be acceptable. We are interested in talking with this man with the possibility in mind of his coming to Miami and working with me in the North Miami area which has a rapidly growing Haitian population. If you are this brother please contact us. If someone knows of such a brother please have him contact us. Call Vernon E. Ford (305) 685-3203 or H. F. McLeod (305) 437-3363 or write us at the address above.

**DAVID A. PADFIELD, 2612 S. Villa Dr., Evansville, IN 47714** - A debate on Premillennialism has been scheduled between Todd Weiner,

a premillennialist from Maryland, and myself. The first part of the debate will take place at the meeting house of the Northwest church of Christ in Evansville, IN on November 5 and 6. In this part of the discussion, Weiner will affirm that "The Scriptures teach that Jesus will reign on this earth with His saints after the advent of His second coming." The second part of the debate will take place in Baltimore, Maryland on November 19 and 20. I will affirm that The Scriptures teach that the event signified by the smiting and destruction of the image in Daniel 2: 35, 44 began to take place on the day of Pentecost." For additional information, you may write to me at the above address or call (812) 477-9433.

FLORIDA COLLEGE ANNUAL LECTURES  
FEBRUARY 1-4, 1993

"The Gospel and Epistles of John" has been designated as the theme for the 1993 annual lectures at Florida College. The lectures will begin on Monday evening, February 1 and continue through Thursday evening, February 4.

Florida College president C. G. Caldwell, III, has been chosen by the Bible faculty as the key-note speaker. Other evening speakers are Ferrell Jenkins, Ralph Walker, Jr., and Don Truex.

Speakers during the day, who come from as far away as California and New Jersey, are: Clark Dugger, Wayne Geoff, Max Dawson, Gardner Hall, Jack Owen, Rick Lanning, Lewis Willis, Larry Houchen, Jerry Earnhart, William B. Norris, Ray Ferris and Mike Grushon.

In an effort to alleviate overcrowding in Hutchinson Auditorium, three members of our Bible faculty (Melvin D. Curry, Ferrell Jenkins and Curtis Pope) will present a series of classes on the Gospel and Epistles of John. These classes will be conducted in Puckett Auditorium and will run concurrently with the regular morning lectures.

The major lectures will be published under the title **The Gospel and Epistles of John**, and will be available during the lectures and afterwards from the college bookstore and other bookstores.

There are numerous motels within a few miles of Florida College. The college has made arrangements with the following inns for special rates: Travel Lodge, 813-935-7855 (\$33 by Jan. 24); Shoney's Inn, 813-985-8525 (\$47 by Jan. 24); Rodeway Safari Resort, 813-988-9191 (\$32 by Jan. 5); Day's Inn (\$45 by Nov. 30); Quality Suites Hotel, 813-971-8930 (\$70 by Dec. 30). Full details are available from the office of information at Florida College (813-988-5131).

We hope many friends of Florida College will come and join us for this great week of learning and association with those of like mind. - Ferrell Jenkins

#### A TRIBUTE TO JESSE FLOWERS

Jesse Edward Flowers was born on September 8, 1941 in Miami, Florida to Jimmy and Jennie Flowers. He was the only boy in a family of four children. He majored in Bible at Florida College, excelling in this subject. There he met Charlotte Smith who became his bride. Upon completion of his education, Jesse began proclaiming the gospel.

He preached on a regular basis for congregations in Miami, Florida, Seymour, Indiana, Louisville, Kentucky and Bowling Green, Kentucky. He took a strong stand for the truth and contended earnestly for the "whole counsel of God."

Jesse and Charlotte reared four children - Laura, Jenny, Jesse Alan and Rachel. All of their children are faithful Christians. Jenny and Jesse Alan are now attending Florida College. Jesse Alan has a strong desire to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. His father had the opportunity to hear him preach twice before he died.

Jesse suffered a massive heart attack in 1984. The doctors gave him only six months to live. With God's help and a cheerful, courageous attitude, he lived eight more years. He had to lie down often and could only preach once on Sundays as health permitted.

Charlotte had to go to work to help support the family. She has worked the midnight shift for Kroger's bakery so she could be with her family in the daytime. She tenderly and lovingly cared for Jesse. Her mother-in-law called her a "a worthy woman."

His spirit left his body on August 20, 1992. Rick Russell and Tim Hale conducted the funeral service in Bowling Green. Bobby Thompson and Bill Simmons spoke at the graveside in Madison County, Florida. If you would like to express your sympathy to Charlotte, her address is: 233 Mark Trail, Bowling Green, KY 42101.

Jesse's great love for his family, fellow-Christians and the Lord helped him through life. He let his light shine. I am so thankful for Jesse's life and good influence on me. - Don Hastings, 40807 C. R. 54 E., Zephyrhills, FL 33540

#### PREACHERS NEEDED

**SELMA, ALABAMA** - The Poplar St. church, 2420 Poplar St., Selma, AL 36701, is in need of a gospel preacher. Our present preacher has been with us over four years and will be leaving by the first of the year. Our attendance and membership have about doubled in that time. We can supply \$1200 per month support and any additional support will need to be raised. For additional information call: Nile Castleberry (205) 872-1839.

**MOBILE, ALABAMA** - The West Mobile church is interested in locating a gospel preacher to begin working with us in early 1993. This

is a new work which is long overdue for this area and we would like someone who has been involved in such a work before. Support from other sources will be necessary in the beginning stages of this work. We also need furnishings for a building, study materials. Interested persons may contact Robert Tate (205) 3452-2041 or write same at 605 Highland Woods Dr. E., Mobile, AL 36608 for additional details regarding this work.

#### PREACHER AVAILABLE

**MALCOM S. KING, 3310 Pine Ridge St., Orange, TX 77630** - Having completed 32 years of local work, I am now available for appointments and meetings. Should any congregation be interested please contact me at the above address or call (409) 883-5307.

#### FROM AROUND THE WORLD

**CHINA** - Recent reports indicate that eight more have obeyed the gospel in China and two more in Hong Kong. Several Christians have been in and out of China during the summer for teaching.

**NORWAY** - Thomas Bunting of Bergen reports an increase lately in the number of those taking the Bible correspondence course. A couple of those they have been studying with have visited services. Summer reports from Bergen have been encouraging. In September, Tom spent three weeks working in Vilnius, Lithuania where efforts are being made to get a good work started. Considerable interest has been shown there on previous trips from several brethren.

Tom also reports that the American dollar had fallen 20% on the money exchange which takes a big bite out of their real income. Other brethren in Italy and other European countries have reported similar things which means that all those workers depending on U. S. support have actually taken a big cut in income in terms of buying power. Churches supporting men overseas would do well to keep abreast of this situation and be prepared to help offset these losses if possible.

#### MOSCOW, RUSSIA CHURCH

**CARROLL W. PUCKETT, Montgomery, Alabama** - There is a sound church now meeting in Moscow, Russia. It is called the South West church of Christ. Contact Dan Tholen at Ramenki dom 9, Korpus 3 Apt. 424, Moscow, Russia 117607 telephone 931-23-67.

The present membership consists of two Russians and two Americans. Yelena Zakheim was baptized last year by Greg Gwin and Phil Morgan. When my wife and I were there, I baptized Ludmila Ivanovna Ereminaon July 18, 1992. Ludmila was our Russian teacher at Moscow State University for three weeks. During that time we spent many hours after class teaching her the truth. Dan Tholen from Tampa, Florida was in the class and has decided to stay there and work with the newly formed church. On or about June 30, 1992, John Farrell made contact with Yelena. John has a degree in Russian and had come to Moscow to teach the truth. He preached his first sermon in Russian on July 12, 1992. On July 19 there were nine (9) present for worship not including Yelena who was out of the city. John has returned to California. Mike Garth from Tampa, Florida is now in Moscow to work with Dan Tholen. The first service was conducted in Russian except for two songs in English and one prayer in English. On August 9, 1992 there were 13 present for worship.

The church now has a meeting place, song books, Lord's Supper accessories and has a treasury since July 5, 1992. During the three weeks we were there, Dan and I had Bible studies with eight different persons, some with more than one session. We arranged for five persons to obtain copies of sermons on video and to have Bible studies later. We made contact with five additional persons who are interested in Bible studies in the future. Follow-up has taken place on these. We gave literature, Bibles and correspondence courses to several persons.

The church at Temple Terrace, Florida paid for ads to be placed in a local newspaper in Moscow for people interested in the Bible. So far, more than 100 responses have arrived and are being contacted. Several young men from the Moscow Free Speakers Toastmasters Club have been to church services. Dan and Mike are studying with them and two of them are especially interested.

Yelena arranged for the Bible to be taught in a large school. Dan will teach the Bible in English everyday to 14 to 17 year old students. Dan will be paid as a staff teacher. Yelena has arranged for the Bible to be taught at Moscow State University from September 11 to October 10, 1992 by Greg Gwin, Phil Morgan, Tommy Poarch and other preachers

who are going to Moscow on September 10, 1992. Ed Harrell visited there in late July. I am excited about the opportunity now to spread the gospel in Moscow. The public and private schools are open and asking us to teach the Bible every day to their students. The Russians like Americans and are particularly interested in a knowledge of the Bible. Russia is free, no restrictions on religious activity and has opened its schools for the Bible to be taught.

Presently the door is open, for how long is unknown. The Russians are not only receptive but will obey the truth when compared with errors of the Russian Orthodox Church and other false religions.

Expenses are little compared to the U. S. A. Presently an American living on rubles can live comfortably on \$250 per month. Dan Tholen and Mike Garth are both being supported that amount by the church in Temple Terrace, Florida. Considering the economics of preaching in Moscow and the unusual opportunities to teach the Bible, I strongly encourage faithful preachers to move to Moscow as soon as possible. Learning the Russian language is made easier by the fact that Yelena and Mila both speak Russian and English and both are Moscow State University language teachers.

Churches and preachers should seriously consider Moscow now and parts of the former USSR a little later. Moscow's population exceeds 9 million people with another 3 million in the Moscow area.

The church at Eastbrook (Montgomery) furnished Bibles and several hundred brochures, tracts and other study materials for Betty and me to use and leave in Russia. These materials were printed in Russian and English. Brother Tommy Moore and I, as elders of the church at Eastbrook, felt the need to invest the Lord's money in Moscow. Since our return, I have had several churches, elders and preachers who have indicated great interest and willingness to support the preaching of the gospel in Russia and at least three Christians are now planning to go to Moscow in 1993. There is a great need for others to go on a permanent basis for teaching the word of God.

For additional information call me at (205) 288-1461, home at night, or during the day at my office (205) 262-2909. My mailing address is 2527 Montreat Dr., Montgomery, AL 36116-3029.



### **EDITORIAL LEFTOVERS TEACHING THE BIBLE IN RUSSIA**

Isn't this a switch! The Bible can now be taught everyday in public and private schools in Moscow but not in the public schools of the U. S. A. It cannot even be read here in public schools. God and his word are to be left out when studying the origin of life, family relations and sex education. Secular humanism can be taught and it is being taught. Birth control devices can be handed out but the Bible cannot be taught. But you can go to Moscow and teach the Bible in schools and even be paid for your service.

Brother Puckett has thrilled us with the news of what is taking place there. An effectual door is opened. Those who can should go and those who cannot go should encourage and help those who can. It may well be that Christians from Moscow and other parts of the former USSR will need to come to the U. S. A. to try and rescue our humanistic, hedonistic, heathenistic, Godless nation.

#### **CLOSE-OUT SALE**

Through December 30, 1992 all bound volumes of SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES which are still available will be offered for sale at \$5 each plus \$3 for postage and handling. That is a saving of \$7 on each bound volume since they sell for \$12 each. We have them from Volumes 19-20 (1978-79) to Volumes 31-32 (1990-91). You may order these from: STS, P. O. Box 69, Brooks, KY 40109-0069.

Volume 33, our last year of publication, will be bound to match all the others and will be offered for sale by GUARDIAN OF TRUTH, P. O. Box 9670, Bowling Green, KY 42102. They will advertise it when it is ready in 1993.

# 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 XXXIII

December 1992

Number 12

## THINK ON THESE THINGS

*H. E. Phillips*

P.O. Box 1631  
Lutz, FL 33549



### A Reflection

Where shall man find peace, happiness and security in this life? "There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour. This also I saw, that it was from the hand of God" (Eccl. 2: 24).

Our years are as a tale told (Psalm 90: 9), as a shadow (Eccl. 6: 12), as a dream (Job 20: 8), as the grass that fades away (Psalm 103: 15, 16; 1 Peter 1: 24) and as vapor that vanishes after a little while (James 4: 14). This reality every person must encounter sooner or later.

Brother Adams asked me to write a brief historic review of my work with Searching The Scriptures, the purpose toward which we labored and the policy that governed the editorial work. Many things will have to remain unsaid because of the limitation of space. I am happy to record some of the highlights in the history of this paper as they appear to me.

With sadness and nostalgic reflection I begin to write what is to be my final article for Searching The Scriptures. Recollections of the early history of this journal and those associated with it stir my emotions to gratitude and to some measure of melancholy as I appraise the opportunities the grace of God has granted to us.

When the first issue of Searching The Scriptures was published on January, 1960, I did not think about how long it would live. That never entered my mind. I was concerned about how effective it would be in

accomplishing the goal James P. Miller and I had for this effort.

#### **"Now In The Very Beginning... "**

Those who knew James P. Miller and heard him preach will remember the above phrase. It was his usual beginning of his sermon. The history of Searching The Scriptures cannot be told without including James P. Miller. His work, advice and encouragement were invaluable from the beginning. A more detailed account of our relationship is found in Searching The Scriptures, March 1978, Page 41. Jim Miller gave his appraisal of our relationship in his editorial of May, 1967, pages 257, 258.

The Florida Newsletter in 1958, which became the Southeastern Newsletter in 1959, was the beginning of Searching The Scriptures. (More details about this in STS, May, 1973, pages 259, 260). I was grateful to God for this medium through which His word could be taught. My interest in and love for the paper have continued throughout its existence. The experience as editor has taught me lessons that I shall remember all of my life.

When a man puts his mind in print and sends it out into the world, it lives for many generations; it cannot be retrieved. It is like throwing a basket of feathers into a wind storm; you will never gather all the feathers together again. A man should make sure his heart is right with God, his motives are pure and his words are carefully chosen to speak only the truth of God's word.

In the editorial of April, 1960 issue we said: "When one takes his pen in hand, as we usually express it, to write something for the present and future generations, he should fully realize that he is about to declare what kind of man he is and what his ambitions and goals are. This fact alone should make one approach the task with a clear mind and a careful expression. So many writers, as well as speakers, express themselves without first taking into account the results of their statements: the good or evil that will follow. " I have always been more concerned about what God reads of my heart and attitude than what men will say.

#### **Honor To Whom Honor**

We received much opposition, some even antagonistic and baleful, but there were also many good men

and women: preachers, elders and deacons, their wives and faithful brethren who gave encouragement and help in many ways during those early days. Some of those good people have since laid aside the armor and answered the final call to close the earthly sojourn here and enter into their rest (Rev. 14: 13). Among them is the beloved James P. Miller who stood with me from the beginning.

I am so grateful to so many for so much. We owe an inexpressible debt of gratitude to those staff writers who came aboard in the following years, and to all who contributed articles from time to time. Thank you for your important contribution.

The pressures of editing a religious paper affect the editor's family. Members of my family have been supportive from the beginning. To Polly, my faithful wife of more than 57 years who supported me in my work with the paper from the beginning; to my three daughters and their husbands; to my mother and four brothers; to my grandchildren and their husbands/wives, I owe a debt of gratitude. To many faithful brethren across the country, I express to you my sincere thanks for your personal interest, support, and encouragement. "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you" (Phil. 1: 3).

**Connie W. Adams Becomes Editor**

I had no thought of ever disposing of Searching The Scriptures. Early in 1972 some health problems brought the entreaty of my family, my doctor, friends and concerned brethren to pass this work to another. It finally became obvious to me that I could not continue the load of work I was doing.

In the early spring of 1973 Connie Adams and I completed the agreement for the transfer of Searching The Scriptures to him. With the June, 1973 issue the paper passed from my hand to his. During the transition we spent several hours together in fervent prayers with tears as we contemplated the wonderful opportunity and enormous responsibility we were sharing at the changing of the guard.

In the final editorial before relinquishing the editorial duties to brother Adams, I said: "Somewhere around 1963 to 1965, during the Lecture Week at Florida College late one night, I drove Connie Adams to the place where he was staying after the last lecture that night. We spent almost an hour talking about **Searching The Scriptures** and its future, and the need for some continuing force to fight the invading evils of institutionalism and liberalism. It was on this night and under these circumstances that Connie W. Adams asked me to give him first opportunity to buy **Searching The Scriptures** if I ever sold it. At the time I had not thought of ever selling it. However, I gave him my word that I would contact him first under such circumstances, and through the years our verbal agreement has been honored by both of us" (Searching The Scriptures, May, 1973, page 261).

My intention was to allow this paper to cease and to bury it with honor and dignity. This decision would have eliminated the possibility of its reputation to be used by any other to propagate error. I found in Connie

(Continued on page 279)

# Searching The Scriptures

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## " QUOTE

**"The press is the best  
instrument for enlightening  
the mind of man. . ."**

**—Thomas Jefferson**

## UNQUOTE "

## Editorial

Connie W. Adams

P.O. Box 69  
Brooks, Kentucky 40109



### Putting To Rest A Labor Of Love

In May, 1973 Ed Byers and I brought the physical properties of SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES to Louisville in a U-Haul trailer. As we pulled out of the driveway of the residence of H. E. Phillips, both he and his dear wife, Polly, stood in the doorway weeping. We were both too choked with emotion to say anything for a long time. I wondered then how I would feel if I were bidding farewell to what had become such a vital part of his life. And now I know! As I write this last editorial for this paper, which ends thirty-three years of service to our readers, my mind is filled with memories and my heart is full to overflowing.

#### The Beginning

H. E. Phillips has given a history of this paper from its inception. My own involvement with it began with a gentlemen's agreement sometime in the mid-1960's when H. E. Phillips promised me that should it become necessary for him to give up his work on the paper, I would be given the opportunity to continue that work. The time came sooner than either of us expected. After major health problems brought pressure upon him from his doctors and family, he called me during the Florida College lectures in January, 1973. I went to his house where I found him struggling with the flu. He told me he could not go on with the paper and asked if I would take it and publish it. Over the years he had borrowed from his insurance to pay printing bills and that had accumulated to just under \$10, 000. We made arrangements to retire that amount over the first three years of our ownership of the paper. That freed his insurance. That was just one sample of the many sacrifices the Phillipses made in publishing this paper.

It was not the best time for us to begin this work. We had agreed to go with a new work which was a peaceful "swarm" from the Manslick Road church in Louisville and we had to borrow money to build a house. At first it seemed impossible to do all that and take on the work of the paper. But my wife encouraged me to do it and offered to help in every way she could. She gave up her teaching job and took on the business operation of the paper.

With her faithful help and the continued work of the brethren who were writing, plus the support of readers we were able to keep it going.

In the May, 1973 issue, I wrote the following:

Those of us who write shall attempt to be clear, concise, candid and always scriptural. When differences arise, as surely they will, we will do our best to practice the Golden Rule. The editor does not expect to agree with every sentiment expressed by every writer on every subject. Each one bears responsibility for what he says. Divergent views will be given a hearing when offered in proper form and in good taste. We shall reserve the right to decide when enough has been said on a subject and to choose what is thought to be the most representative material on a topic on which several have offered articles. We are aware that our writings constitute a part of our preaching and that we shall be called to account for what we teach. Our highest ambition is to please God. We do not expect everybody to like everything we have to say and sincerely hope that the Devil and all his angels will be sorely displeased. "

At the close of that article we quoted the following from Ben Franklin as he began editing THE CHRISTIAN REVIEW: " This work is fully under our own control, and if it does not proceed with regularity, firmness and stability, the responsibility is OURS. "

#### With Sincere Gratitude

We owe a debt of gratitude to so many people. First, the writers who have contributed so generously of their time and knowledge to benefit our readers deserve a special word of thanks. Over the years, several writers have left to publish papers of their own. Special notice is given to the 25 years of service from Marshall E. Patton who during that span of time wrote our question column, Answers For Our Hope. The first twenty years of that column are now in a hardback book by that same title. It is a storehouse of rich help for Bible students and will remain a valuable tool as the years go by.

This work could not have been done without the patience and loving help of my family. The business work of the paper was ably handled by my wife, Bobbie, until about two weeks before her death in March, 1985. Our Wilson and Martin deserve a special word of appreciation. They helped in many ways to collate bound volumes, sort for mailing and other mundane chores. Wilson handled the news column for awhile and contributed many articles. Beyond that they endured the many demands on my time which often kept me from doing things with them. I do not recall ever hearing them complain, but I am sure there were times when they were tempted to view the paper as a rival for their father's time and attention.

We have been blessed with good office personnel. Fay King and Nola Snell helped in the early days. Joan Rader (and Donnie) came to our rescue when it became evident that Bobbie's time was growing short. Without them, we could not have kept the paper on schedule. When I married Bobby Hughes in March, 1986, she handled the business office until Jane Ashbrook came to work for us. This freed Bobby's time so she could travel with me in gospel meetings. Jane worked faithfully with us until after her father, A. C. Grider, died and then resigned to help take care of her mother. Karen Arbuckle then came to work for us and continues through this

final issue. Her work has been diligent and efficient.

From the beginning of our ownership of the paper, RELIGIOUS SUPPLY CENTER of Louisville has advertised in the paper. Our relationship with David Key and all those who work at the bookstore has been most pleasant. Their advertising with us enlarged their business and provided us with needed funds to keep the paper going. They are a major supply house for books, tracts, and general church supplies.

Through the years, H. E. Phillips has been a loyal friend and trusted adviser. He has never tried to second-guess me but has always been ready to listen and offer counsel when I have called upon him, and that has been often. It has been an honor to have his material on the front page of the paper. I am thankful that the relief he gained from turning over the paper to me has lengthened his days of faithful service to the Lord. Among my fondest memories are moments HE. Phillips and I have prayed together. There was the time when we met in Atlanta to finalize the business transactions of the paper. Then in a private corner at Kennedy Airport in New York before boarding a plane to Italy in 1976 to preach among brethren there, we besought the Lord for his protection over us and our families left behind. His prayer at the funeral home the day Bobbie was laid to rest helped give me strength for that day. Again, we prayed together when I met with him to seek his advice about laying this paper to rest and accepting the offer to write and work with the GUARDIAN OF TRUTH. Our association has been long and pleasant, but those moments were the most poignant of all.

Where do I begin to express my love and gratitude to Donnie V. Rader? Over the last few years he has come to my aid countless times. He had edited the paper through the summer for the last three years, including the special issues which enjoyed a wide circulation and brought forth so many words of appreciation from those into whose hands they have fallen. Then when back surgery hampered me again, Donnie extended his editorial work until the first of this year. He has continued through this year to do all the paste-up work. We have consulted many times about many things. He is an excellent preacher of the gospel, deeply committed to the truth and possessed of a considerate spirit which makes him all the more helpful to his hearers. The kingdom needs many more like him. He is like a son to me. The readers of this paper need to understand that without the faithful help of this good brother, we could not have met our schedule and would have found it necessary to close the paper much sooner. Donnie, keep you pen sharp, and continue to use your talent in both preaching and writing.

I am indebted to Bobby for her quiet support of all my work, including this paper. She is a devout Christian and a wise counselor whose input has been invaluable in all my work, including the editorship of SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES. She has had a keen sense of the importance of this work.

Thanks are in order to Mike Willis and all those connected with GUARDIAN OF TRUTH for their generosity in satisfying the unfulfilled subscriptions with

their excellent magazine and for working so thoughtfully and carefully in making this transition. The opportunity to write again in that magazine is appreciated and it is hoped that our readers will want to follow what we have to offer through that medium.

### **Looking Back**

It is difficult to assess objectively what has been accomplished through this periodical. I am convinced that it played a significant role in the second wave of the conflict over the nature, organization and work of the church. Many are standing for the truth today because of these efforts. Others were encouraged who had endured much suffering in the jarring conflicts surrounding those issues.

But what of the last nineteen and a half years? We have tried to teach truth and oppose error on those questions while addressing a wide range of subject matter which, in our judgment, was needed by our readers. We have striven for balance. Every month when the paste-up was done, we have gone through the paper one more time to see how many different subjects were touched in that one issue. We have had our share of controversy. Some blunders in judgment have been made. But we have honestly tried to do what appeared at the time to be the wisest course of action. It has been impossible to please everyone and no attempt has been made to do that.

Over the years we have heard from many readers who have written, called or spoken to us during our travels to preach who have thanked us for our work and told us of something we printed which was especially helpful to them. We have received many letters from other countries from preachers who told us they have used many articles from SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES for sermon and class material. Our writers have heard from so many readers over the years. In 1975 in the Philippines I met two different men who told me that they had been denominational preachers and that they began learning the truth which led to their conversion from a copy of a special issue we did on "An Unchanging Kingdom in a Changing World."

If we have helped one soul to learn the truth and obey the gospel, if we have strengthened one Christian, if we have stabilized one soul on the brink of apostasy, if we have lifted up one despondent spirit, if we have illuminated one Bible student on some difficult passage, if we have promoted greater zeal and interest in the work of the gospel around the world, then these 33 years have not been in vain.

So then, with a heart filled with emotions, and with gentle hands, we commit SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES to the archives of history. "And now brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 20: 32). "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, be with you all. Amen (Rev. 22: 21).

### **Bound Volume 33**

This final year of SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES will be bound to match all previous bound volumes. GUARDIAN OF TRUTH has agreed to have this bound

and offered for sale to all those who desire a copy. This will probably be ready by sometime in February. You may contact GUARDIAN OF TRUTH BOOKSTORE, P. O. Box 9670, Bowling Green, KY 42102.

\*\*\*\*\*

**A Reminder To All Subscribers**


As we pointed out in last month's paper, all unfulfilled subscriptions to SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES will be filled by GUARDIAN OF TRUTH on a one-for-one-and-a-half basis. GUARDIAN OF TRUTH is printed twice a month and contains 32 pages per issue. If you are still due six issues of STS you will receive 9 issues of GOT. Then when your subscription has expired, we urge all readers to renew with GUARDIAN OF TRUTH.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Thanks To EP Graphics**

EP GRAPHICS (formerly ECONOMY PRINTING CONCERN) of Berne, Indiana has printed SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES from the time I became the owner and editor. We not only appreciate their work, but also the quality people who make up this business. They have become more like family than mere business people. We have found the management and personnel of this large printing concern to be among the most honest and dedicated people we have met. Thanks, folks.

**ACCEPTED OF HIM**  
 (2 Cor. 5:9)  
*Donnie V. Rader*  
 P.O. Box 9  
 Lexington, Alabama 35648



**Searching The Scriptures An Overview**

During the Florida College lectures in February, Connie called me to his motel room to tell me about the offer that the *Guardian of Truth Foundation* had made to buy *Searching the Scriptures* and put it to rest. I was surprised at first, but saw rather quickly that this would remove part of Connie's pressing work load. Though he had not decided whether to accept their offer or not, I knew that's what he would do.

Since that day I have thought many times about the paper, its beginning, its reputation, its editors, its writers, its policy, its accomplishments and those who have worked behind the scenes. In this final issue of STS I want to share with you some of those things that come to mind when I think about *Searching the Scriptures*.

**H. E. Phillips**

Launching a major journal is no easy task. Anyone can start a paper, but its another thing to get one off the ground and keep it going for many years. It takes a lot of work, a lot of time, a lot of wisdom and a lot of money. H. E. Phillips gave all of that and more to starting and publishing *Searching the Scriptures* from 1960 until 1973.

He and James P. Miller worked as co-editors in the early years of the paper. Someone rightfully gave Miller the title of "Mr. Outside" and Phillips the name "Mr. Inside." Brother Miller worked among the brethren across the country to help build and circulate the paper while brother Phillips did the desk work of writing, editing, proofing and putting the paper together.

H. E. Phillips sacrificed much for this paper. He spent many hours behind the typewriter or at the desk - all in addition to his local work. He worked until late in the night after spending a full day doing his local work. He has told me that there were many nights he would work all night long and then get a shower, eat breakfast and go at it again. Many readers may not realize that he started a bookstore, a tape business and produced the *Living Voice Bible tapes* (he directed the recording of the entire New Testament by a Shakespearean actor) all in an effort to have money to keep *Searching The Scriptures* going. He borrowed money (at times against his life insurance policy) to keep STS in the hands of his

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readers. Many of the readers in the early years of the paper received the paper because brother Phillips was paying for it himself. Not only that, but he sacrificed his health. After two heart attacks (1967 & 1971) his doctors and family urged that he reduce his work load.

Under the editorship of H. E. Phillips this paper enjoyed a large circulation, a good reputation and was respected as a paper that was set for the defense of the gospel.

Since the day he turned this work over to Connie W. Adams, he has faithfully contributed articles for practically every issue.

H. E. Phillips has been a friend and encouragement to many preachers, particularly young preachers, including this writer.

Thanks, brother Phillips. Without you thousands of readers would not have enjoyed *Searching the Scriptures* every month.

#### **Connie W. Adams**

Connie W. Adams became editor and owner of *Searching the Scriptures* in May 1973. He had carried the paper on the same steady path on which James P. Miller and H. E. Phillips placed it.

On numerous occasions Connie has expressed to me his view of what the paper was to him. He viewed it as a mere extension of his influence. He stated this in the May 1973 issue. "Then why do it? Every preacher wants to influence as many souls for good as he possibly can in his lifetime. Writing through such a medium as this affords such opportunity not only to teach truth now, but to put it in permanent form so that it may chance to have effect on generations to come.... This work is viewed as an opportunity to advance truth, as a challenge and as a fearful responsibility." Connie has never thought of this work as being a spokesman for the brotherhood. He never has viewed his editor's chair as a lofty throne. In fact, having worked closely with him for a while, I know the editor's chair is anything but that. At times it is a real hot seat.

Connie has sacrificed much as well. Other than his family, I have seen as much as any one what Connie has given to this paper. He has edited the paper longer than brother Phillips did. For nearly 20 years he has met two deadlines a month. First he had his editorial and news column to write and proof all the articles for the next month's issue by the first of the previous month. Then on the fifteenth of the month he received the typeset galleys from the printing plant and had a "paste-up" to do and then proofread the paste-up. All of that is just getting the paper in the mail. Daily there are incoming renewals that have to be posted in the books. Though he hired someone to do his office work on the paper he had the responsibility of overseeing that the bills were mailed by the 20th and the mailing list updated by the 25th of each month. Besides all of that, an editor receives a ton of mail. (I know - I have picked his mail up when he was out of town.)

In addition to all of the time he has put into the paper, he has worked hard keeping the paper operating on a business basis. He, like brother Phillips, has sacrificed his health in the process. When he first got the paper he

had it printed in Berne, Indiana which is about a four to five hour drive from Louisville. He would drive there every month to pick the papers up and brought them home to address and mail them. Hauling and lifting boxes upon boxes of paper wore out his station wagon, but worse, it wore out his back. In recent years he has had back surgery twice. He believes his problems go back to lifting all those papers.

I first met Connie in 1980 shortly after I moved to Louisville to work with the Manslick Road congregation. We soon developed a warm friendship. We have much in common. Our views on many questions and issues of the day are much alike. How we approached things are very similar. Besides our common love for the Lord and his word, we have a common interest in journalism and particularly *Searching The Scriptures*. Yet, there are many things that we don't have in common: He likes basketball (a diehard Kentucky fan); I don't care for sports at all. He can play a guitar or mandolin; I can't play anything. Children make him nervous; they don't bother me. I can do a few handy-man things; he can't drive a nail. But, we still have a lot in common.

When Bobbie (Connie's first wife) got sick, Joan (my wife) and I offered to help with the paper if needed. Within a week or two of that offer, Connie had put Joan to work. This began what has continued to be a close working relationship on the paper.

In December 1985 Connie came back to work with us at Manslick Road. While I did the local work, he taught special classes during December, January, and February. From March to November he was in full-time meeting work. We had an excellent working relationship. We never had a cross word one time. Some preachers may have trouble working together, but we never did. Having him in the audience was never an occasion for criticism. He always encouraged. He has an ability to deal with younger men as equals - at least he did with me. I learned much and still do from our association and friendship. When I left Manslick Road, I summed up our relationship by saying, "He is my Paul, and I am his Timothy."

I love Connie dearly and rejoice to know that his work load will be lighter. Connie is a "work-horse" who needs to slow down a little. If he did not, his usefulness in the kingdom would be shortened. May God bless you Connie with many more years of effectiveness in his service.

#### **The Policy Of The Paper**

The policy of the paper is one reason it has been well respected. Though there has been no written policy, it has been to be fair and teach the truth found in the Bible. Three things come to mind about the paper's policy. (1) *Balance*. There has been a good balance of milk and meat, positive and negative, controversial and non-controversial and reproof and exhortation. The paper has never been top-heavy with one subject. It has never run any subject or issue in the ground. (2) *Fair*. While no topic has been ridden until it was wore out, the editors have given every topic and issue a fair hearing. There has been no closed-door policy that would not allow a response. (3) *Exchanges had a limit*. Exchanges

and debates have been allowed in these pages. However, there was always a limit to how many articles there would be. The exchanges did not continue until the readers became weary.

**The Paper's Reputation**

Some papers develop an ugly name and carry a bad smell about them. But, not *Searching the Scriptures*. It has not been a one-issue paper. Personal axes have not been ground. It has been held as a paper of respect and dignity. I believe it was Jeff Kingry who told Connie a few years ago that if he had to draw a caricature of *Searching the Scriptures* he would put a coat and tie on it. That suggests dignity and honor. That kind of reputation makes me proud to be a part of the paper.

**The Good It Has Done**

Literally thousands have been taught and edified. Many have been led out of institutionalism. One such example is Mike Baggett of Water Valley, MS. He was working with a liberal congregation. One of the members was receiving STS and passing the copies on to Mike. It was here that Mike was challenged to think about the doctrines and practices of liberal churches. He then studied his way out and took his stand. The good reaches far beyond the United States. Brethren in Italy and in the Philippines have been helped more than most readers realize. Every major issue to arise among brethren since 1960 has been addressed in these pages.

**Those Who Have Worked Behind The Scenes**

The readers of any paper do not see what all it takes to get a paper in the mail and keep it going. Connie has not been able to do all this himself. Several have worked hard keeping the mailing list updated, keeping bills paid and mailing the monthly statements. There is a lot more to it than might appear. *Bobbie Adams* did all of this before STS had a computer, before the printing plant did the mailing and when every bill had to be typed

individually. Then *Joan Rader* worked for a while after *Bobbie's* death doing the same work the same way. Then *Bobby Adams* helped get all the bills and mailing list on computer and has done a lot of work on the paper in addition to those Connie has hired. When Joan had to quit, *Jane Ashbrook* (wife of Lee Ashbrook, an elder at Manslick Rd. and daughter of the late A. C. Grider) worked a few years. After Jane quit to help see to her mother, *Karen Arbuckle* has carried the load until now.

Without the work of these godly ladies, you would not have received your copy of STS every month.

I am saddened to see STS come to an end. But, that eventually happens to papers. As the years go on others will start and cease as well. For the time, we give our honor to this paper it's editors for a job well done.

**Phyllis Key Passes**

Phyllis Key, known to many of the readers of STS and most customers of Religious Supply Center died Nov. 19th after a battle with cancer. She was bookkeeper for RSC and helped her husband, David Key, manage the store.

Her funeral was conducted on Nov. 23 by Phillip Mullins and Dee Bowman with Connie W. Adams leading a prayer. Kenneth Chumbley spoke at the graveside ( in Butler Co., KY) and Donnie V. Rader closed with prayer.

Our sympathy to her husband David, her daughter Wendy O'Banion and her sons, Mike and John. Phyllis was 54.

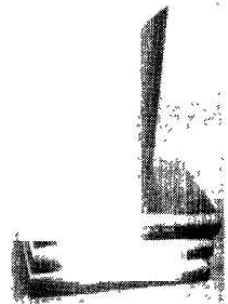
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Dear Dad

*Wilson Adams*

P. O. Box 185  
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Dear Dad:

I just want you to know that the assignment you have given me is one of the toughest I have ever undertaken (although I imagine that everyone else writing in this final issue shares those same sentiments). It's hard to be objective when you're so emotionally involved. I'll do my best.

Before I say anything else I want to express my deepest appreciation for your confidence in me with regard to the Paper; a confidence that was expressed early on. While other kids were getting their first jobs flipping burgers or bagging groceries, I was a part-time employee of a religious journal. It was back in the dark ages (before computers) that Mom and I would address, bag and mail the paper out of that little hole-in-the-wall office complex you rented next to the Beauty Shop in what was (and still is) the largest strip mall in Brooks, Kentucky (which isn't saying a whole lot!) And then there were all the trips we made together to Northern Indiana to pick up the Paper. Hey, remember the time my tennis shoes got too close to the heat vent on that old VW and we kept smelling smoke? That was on one of those trips.... We had a lot of laughs, good talks and great times. In its own way, *Searching The Scriptures* provided us with some quality and quantity family time. Thanks for the memories.

In April 1980 I took on the job of compiling and editing the news column. It was then I learned the fine art of condensation (which is another way of saying I took a red pen to a lot of excess verbiage). That lasted until January of 1984 when, because of time restraints, I asked to be relieved.

Most of all I've appreciated the opportunity to write and express my thoughts to a larger audience than otherwise would have been possible. It's been an honor, Dad, and I want you to know that. I'm very sorry that I haven't been able to write anything for the last couple of years but, as you know, I made the decision to focus all my energies on my family and my local work. It was a decision I do not regret. And it made me feel good to know that you understood. However, I will tell you this, with the encouragement of a wonderful wife and three great kids, I will begin to write again whenever opportunities are present. (Some things just stay in your blood!)

*Searching the Scriptures* has long enjoyed a good reputation among a lot of brethren. Its soundness has

never been questioned. Its fairness has been one of its trademarks. Words like "balance," "even-handed," and "reasonable" have often been used when others describe the Paper. I have never heard STS spoken of in the same derogatory spirit as some of the other papers. I think that says something. I think that says a lot.

In my opinion your editorials have been some of the best material available the last twenty years. Your ability to take a difficult subject or controversy and simplify it for the common man has helped make *Searching the Scriptures* what it is. Frankly, there are times I read after some writers and wonder if I'm the only fellow who can't understand what they are talking about. I doubt it.

I read again Solomon's words in Ecc. 12: 9 where he noted that he carefully "pondered," "searched out," and "arranged" the words he wanted to use. I know you can identify with that task. Every writer can. And the reason it is so important to find just the right words when writing is given in the next verse - "*The Preacher sought to find delightful words and to write words of truth correctly.*" I believe Solomon is saying that a preacher's job (whether communicating orally or in written form) is to use words that are easy to grasp and readily applied. Words that cannot be understood are not "delightful" words. Thanks for speaking clearly, Dad. Thanks for your diligence in presenting the truth correctly. Thanks for writing to say something rather than just finding something to say. And thanks for the warmth and humor you have added and allowed others to add in this paper. It's one thing to present the truth. It's another to present the truth with a human touch. There are several men who seemingly don't know how to do that.

What I'm trying to say is that I believe you have done an excellent job with a very difficult assignment. Anyone who thinks editing a paper is an easy job has obviously never done it. It takes a lot of patience, it takes a lot of wisdom, and it eventually takes its toll. Solomon was right when he warned, "the writing of many books is endless, and excessive devotion to books is wearying to the body." The same can be said for editing a paper.

I've noticed that what had been your labor of love for so long had become a labor of hardship. The time restraints, deadlines and work that went into STS became mentally and physically draining. The enthusiasm was gone. Maybe I'm off base with this observation but I felt you lost some of the spark for the Paper when Mom died. Sometimes I felt like *Searching the Scriptures* was as much a part of her as it was a part of you. And although the Paper has continued on since her death it has never been quite the same.

I have hoped for some time that you would let STS die rather than passing it on to another. Obviously, I made it clear that I didn't want the pressures that accompanied the job. (I think a lot of people assumed you would eventually hand it down to me. They were wrong. *Searching the Scriptures* is not a family heirloom. You never offered it and I never wanted it). I have also made my feelings clear that it should not be given to anyone else. For one reason, *you* would always feel the weight

of responsibility for everything that would happen in the future. I know you. I know, because in many ways, I'm just like you. (Now there is a scary thought!)

I'm glad you have decided to let it die. *Searching the Scriptures* comes to an end at a time when it has a good name and has meant so much to so many. The timing is right.

And... it wouldn't hurt you to cut back a little. (I'm treading softly here... ) I know that you will always be on the go as long as you live. Your preaching is much needed in meeting work where bland mediocrity has often taken the place of emotional exhortation. Your writing will continue to have an impact through your relation with *Guardian of Truth*. (I look for you to bring to that paper the same balance, simplicity and warmth that has been a trademark of STS). Your contribution will only enhance and help G. O. T. But it will be good for you to climb out from under some of the energy draining pressures and time-consuming demands that go with the editor's chair. And you know, Dad, there are five precious grand-kids that think you're the best thing to come along since micro-wave popcorn. Maybe now you'll have the time to stay an extra day or spend an extra moment with them. That's certainly no criticism of the past. It's just a fact that you had to meet the deadlines of the Paper. We all knew that and appreciated the way that you faithfully honored your commitments. But sometimes its good to experience a change of scenery and gain a fresh direction. Enjoy.

I hope I haven't rambled too much. I love you, Dad, and want only what is best for you. You have asked for my opinion and I've given it the best I know how. I think you have made a wise decision. Others may not agree but, then again, its not their decision. Thanks for allowing me to have a part for all these years. Thanks for your constant love and encouragement. And a special thanks for always being there when I needed you. May God bless you and Bobby in the days ahead with good health, warm memories and many years of productivity in His service.

In appreciation for a job well done, Wilson

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## **Remembering: Carrying In One's Thoughts**

*Martin W. Adams*

495 Brook Ridge Circle  
Cordova, Tennessee 38018

As parents, we never know what will be our children's lasting impressions of their early years. We strive to instill values and ground them in truth and often it is the intangible which clings to the soul through life. Many things today flood me with memories that to someone else would mean little. Such as artificial lures with triple hooks (you know, the kind that the tail wiggles when reeled through the water). Brother "Uncle" Weldon Warnock borrowed my brand new one when I was a kid with my Dad on a meeting and caught a 5 lb Bass on the first cast; and Yoo-Hoo Chocolate drink - my great-grandfather used to buy them for us when we would visit the store with him. Little things perhaps, but these memories will always be with me. Let me share another memory which to long time readers of *Searching the Scriptures* may have some meaning. A memory of a young boy trying his best not to fidget around while his father and mother talked with Brother and Sister H. E. Phillips in their Tampa, FL home. *Searching the Scriptures* was coming to Louisville, KY and into my life.

As with any small family run business, *Searching the Scriptures* became a focal point of our family. New terms came to have meaning; paste-up, galleys, bundles, and stencils. An opportunity to earn a little extra money by addressing the papers, doing some typing, or compiling bound volumes became available. There were trips to Berne, IN to the printer to pick up the papers each month. These trips were special times with Dad (except for the loading and unloading). Once when our station wagon was not big enough to carry a special issue we rented a U-Haul van only to have it break down ten miles north of Louisville on the way home. You know, in frustrating situations you find out what kind of person one's father really is. Dad taught me so many things through *Searching the Scriptures* business. It was on these trips to Berne that Dad taught me to drive. The work taught me about deadlines. It taught me the value and potency of the printed word. The few articles I've had printed in *Searching the Scriptures*, including this one, have left me each time with the same feeling as when Dad pulled the car over and gave me a chance to learn. So to all the subscribers during the years, thank you for your patience with a father instructing his son in the lesson that a thing is not always as easy as it looks.

Being an editor is not an easy thing. It can be consuming. It consumes your time, your family, your finances, your peace of mind, and at times your common sense. Rocket engines can operate in a vacuum, publications

cannot. Searching the Scriptures revolved around my Dad's desk, our kitchen table, and sometimes the ping pong table in the basement where bound volumes were compiled. I grew up thinking phone calls late at night (J. T. Smith, are you listening?) and during supper, **always** during supper, were normal. You don't know how many times Dad missed events when a deadline had to be met. So before you are too quick to react to an article remember the legitimate sacrifices these men make in order to write what they believe. Sometimes I think people forget about that. From our family's perspective, as I'm sure it was with the Phillips family, it has been a labor of love. At times the paper was treated almost as a member of the family; one with which I admit to having some sibling rivalry. But from an early age, it gave me a sense of involvement in a special work. No one has benefited any more from Searching the Scriptures over the last twenty years than I. It has served me as a source of information about other Christians in other places, as a source of study material, and as a link with home while away in college.

Dad has always said that all papers have a life. Things change. There is no denying it. For personal computers now, one can buy a multimedia cassette disk containing 16 different Bible versions, 2 Bible dictionaries, Strong's Concordance, 2 full sets of commentaries, and Greek and Hebrew texts all cross-indexed for \$300-\$500. All this placed on an object the size of a cool-whip bowl lid. It is amazing. I do not know the future for our "brotherhood" papers. They may change and avail themselves of new technology or they may not, but I do know this; that the **need** for a sound, balanced approach to scripture will still be present. No doubt others will continue working to fulfill that need. So whether they're published on an electronic bulletin board medium or printed and addressed by hand, the help will be there for us to use in our searching of the scriptures.

**With Mixed Emotions**

*Bobby Adams*

I had been a reader of Searching the Scriptures many years before Connie and I were married and had always loved and appreciated its' stand for truth. However, after I came to work in the office seven years ago, my interest increased considerably. As I worked with subscriptions, I came to think of each of you readers as friends. It was delightful to be able to meet some of you in our gospel meetings or at lectures. The subs then had faces. I will miss each of you. I have enjoyed working with Joan Rader, Jane Ashbrook and Karen Arbuckle these past seven years. A grateful "thanks" to each.

So it is with mixed emotions that I view the closing of the paper. The very thought brings me to tears because I know the deep love Connie has for it. I have seen him agonize over various issues, always desiring, first and foremost, that God be pleased with his decisions. I have seen him fearful that he was not giving his **very** best to both his readers and to his preaching. So it will be somewhat a relief to have the deadlines removed so he can devote all of his time to his first love, preaching the Word, (and perhaps seeing our children and grandchildren a little more often).

*Smith - Hicks  
Debate*

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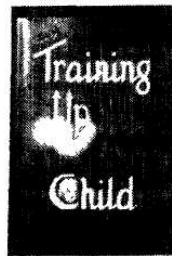
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## WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

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1021 Welford Dr.  
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It has been said that all good things have to come to an end. Whether or not this axiom is absolutely true, it is certainly true of many things. I believe that *Searching the Scriptures* has been a good thing and now it is going to come to an end. However, the impact it has had for good will continue on.

### About The paper And Its Editor

According to my records, Connie W. Adams became the editor of *Searching the Scriptures* in June, 1973. The paper began in January, 1960 by two highly respected gospel preachers, James P. Miller and H. E. Phillips. Two years later brother Phillips became the sole editor until Connie W. Adams purchased the paper from him in 1973.

It is my considered opinion that the paper has had a terrific influence for good over the years. Like all human endeavors, no claim has ever been made for perfection. But it has been steady, fair, kind, but never soft in dealing with issues of the day. It has reached a lot of people all over the world for good.

Connie, my brother in Christ and in the flesh, has done an excellent job in the editorial chair. I write this to some degree with prejudice. He has kept things steady even during some times of turbulence and unrest among the brethren. His obvious efforts to exercise restraint under pressure is most admirable. And I do admire my brother in so many ways but especially for what I know him to be as a faithful gospel preacher and a Christian who has always been dedicated to serving the Lord. Compromise of truth has never entered his mind. This is very apparent in his editorship of *Searching the Scriptures* as well as his pulpit and Bible class work.

I want to take this means, as the paper is phased out, to express my appreciation, not only for Connie and *Searching the Scriptures* but also for having been extended the privilege of writing articles in this journal from time to time. Although I have not been as prolific a writer as some others, I consider it a signal honor to have been given this opportunity.

Congratulations, Connie, for a job well done and may God bless you in your future journalistic efforts in a different area. I wish to conclude my remarks with a passage from the masthead of *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).

## A Stalwart Paper For Truth

Religious journals can have a tremendous import for good or evil. Their influence toward the development of wholesome or unwholesome attitudes among brethren is unquestionable and undeniable. Doctrinal and moral positions are embraced and espoused by many individual Christians and multiple congregations because of the power of the printed page.

For example, the state of Kentucky (my home state) was split several years ago almost right down the middle of the state over the divisive issues of the missionary society and instrumental music in worship. Churches of Christ in western Kentucky resisted, by and large, these human innovations because of the influence of the Gospel Advocate under the capable and courageous leadership of David Lipscomb. However, eastern Kentucky was another story. Isaac Errett and his Christian Standard journal, published in Cincinnati, Ohio, captured the minds of most of the brethren in that part of the state. They became known as the Christian Church. Some kept the name, "Church of Christ."

This issue of *Searching the Scriptures* brings to a close the publication of a paper with a long and lustrous past. Only Almighty God could know the good that STS has contributed to the lives of thousands of people since the day of its inception. Having begun in Florida under the dedicated editorship of H. E. Phillips, it was later sold to Connie Adams, where he, as editor, has maintained the same devotion and commitment to truth and right as its founder. These men are to be highly commended for their tireless efforts in disseminating the word of God through religious journalism. They used a tool, which, in the wrong hands, could be lethal, spiritually, but they took it and used it for the Cause of truth. It has had a great positive influence in the brotherhood.

*Searching the Scriptures* has been a balanced paper, free of hobbyism, radicalism and liberalism. It has not been a one-issue paper that sounded like a broken record every time you read it. Neither did it have an ax to grind or a vendetta to carry out toward other brethren. The paper had one main objective and that was to teach the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

The militancy of STS has been appreciated by a great

number of brethren, myself included, because sin and error cannot be dealt with, using a powder puff. The sword of the Spirit is our offensive weapon and writers for this paper have used it effectively. The editorial policy has reflected the spirit of New Testament preachers who manifested the spirit of the greatest preacher of all time, Jesus Christ. Brethren, a paper that our Lord could not fully express himself in has no biblical justification for its existence. Thank God STS did not adopt the Robert Schuller approach for its editorial policy.

It has been my privilege to have been a Staff Writer for STS since back in the 70's. Beginning with the January, 1985 issue I have written the Question Column under the caption, "What Saith the Scripture"? I express my appreciation to all those who have sent their questions for my consideration.

We close our few remarks by stating our sincere thanks to H. E. Phillips and Connie Adams for their work of faith and labor of love in keeping an excellent monthly religious paper coming into our homes for lo, these many years. It will be missed!

**T. G. O'Neal**  
P.O. Box 723  
Bessemer, Alabama 35021



### Asleep With Dignity At Age 33

In the fall of 1959, fifteen brethren, including five preachers, met in Orlando, Florida, and with brethren H. E. Phillips and James P. Miller as co-editors, *Searching the Scriptures* was given birth.

On November 20, 1959,, my beloved friend, Jim Miller, wrote asking that I assist in getting this paper "off the ground" and write for it. I have paid subscriptions for someone else with every issue of the paper, from the first issue to this the last issue. My first article was in the second issue and I count it an honor that Connie Adams has ask that I submit an article for this the final issue.

In late December, 1959, as brother H. E. Phillips was putting the first issue of the paper together, his beloved wife was involved in a serious automobile accident in South Georgia and was confined to the hospital in Tallahassee, Florida, for several weeks. It was from here that Elwood put together the first issue of *Searching the Scriptures*.

From January, 1960, until May, 1973, Elwood edited the paper. After two years, arrangements were made for financial and editorial responsibility to rest solely with Elwood. However, James P. Miller was listed as co-editor for the first ten years. The heavy load of editorship and financial responsibility took its toll on Elwood's health and he edited his last issue in May, 1973.

During the Florida College Lectures of 1973, he told me of the verbal agreement he had with Connie Adams to give him the first opportunity at *Searching the Scriptures* should he ever decide to give it up. Elwood asked me to ask Connie to contact him while he was in Tampa for the lectures, which I did. Later that spring, Connie asked me to go with him to Atlanta to meet Elwood in order to work out arrangements for the transfer of the paper to him, which I did.

Beginning in June, 1973, Connie began to edit the paper and has until now. Again the editorship and financial responsibility has taken its toll and Connie has decided to close the paper down. While I do not intend to speak for anyone else, those who have been directly involved with the paper over the years would rather see it close down than to see it fall into the hands of those who would take it beyond "that which is written" (1 Cor.

### *A Message From Religious Supply Center*

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4: 6) and "the doctrine of Christ" (2 John 9-11). Thus, after 33 years of publication, *Searching the Scriptures* is being put to bed to sleep with the same dignity that has characterized her for all these years.

While Elwood edited the paper, he was assisted by many whose names have never seen the light of print. Among those are special people like his beloved wife, Polly, his daughters, Carolyn, Juanita and Elaine.


When Connie became editor, his Bobbie was his right arm, until her death, putting the paper in the black. At this time Joan Rader took the enormous task of sorting out what only Bobbie knew and helped Connie keep the paper doing. During the last several years Donnie Rader has done an outstanding job of editing the paper and giving Connie some relief from time to time. Connie has been blessed with another Bobby to share his life and help him in his life's work.

When Jim Miller wrote me that he and brother H. E. Phillips were starting *Searching the Scriptures*, I had no idea who H. E. Phillips was. Throughout the years of our association together, I have come to regard Polly and Elwood as two of the finest Christians I have ever known. To me they are second parents.

At the time *Searching the Scriptures* was started Connie and I already knew each other. Over the years our relationship has developed to the point, I regard him as the brother I never had. Together we have traveled, visited, preached, debated and cried in times of sorrow. Many have not understood our relationship. But we have always understood each other. That is all that matters. No one will talk about him in my presence and get away with it!

Elwood and Connie, thanks for the opportunity you have given me to teach the truth through the pages of *Searching the Scriptures*. Brethren owe a debt of gratitude to you for giving us a paper that has been true to the Book, fought the good fight of faith with dignity and honor. May God keep you and yours and give you the crown at the end of the road.

**SIMPLICITY  
IN  
CHRIST**



*P. J. Casebolt*  
Rt. 1 Box 210  
Middlebourne, WV 26149

## "Search The Scriptures"

"Search the scriptures... " (Jno. 5: 39) - in three words, Jesus gives the key which would solve all of our problems and reveal all of our opportunities.

The Jews failed to identify the Christ, and rejected him as their king, because they failed to search the scriptures. When the Jews required a sign (cf. 1 Cor. 1; 22), the only sign given to them was "the sign of the prophet Jonas" (Mt. 12: 39ff). Jesus told Jerusalem that it would not be prepared for its impending destruction "because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation" (Lk. 19: 44).

Searching the scriptures is so indispensable to the truth that Abraham said concerning the five brethren of the rich man, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Lk. 16: 31). And I am persuaded that in our time, under "a better covenant" (Heb. 8: 6), that searching the scriptures is still the key to all of our religious problems and opportunities.

\*\*\*\*\*

No matter what the Bible says about creation, the plan of salvation, the identity/mission/organization/work/worship of the church, marriage/divorce/remarriage, or any other subject - if you cannot persuade people to "search the scriptures, " they will never arrive at or accept the truth on any of these subjects.

If you want to carry on a spiritual conversation with one who is not a member of the Lord's church, or with one who is a member, the first question to be resolved is, "What shall we use for a source of knowledge and authority?" Until this matter is resolved, you may as well save your breath. Or use the time in an effort to establish the all-sufficiency of the scriptures.

\*\*\*\*\*

We sometimes forget the different attitudes toward the truth as set forth in "the parable of the sower" (Mt. 13: 18ff). Every effort to sow the seed of the kingdom will find its counterpart somewhere in this parable. In one chapter (Acts 17), we can find three different attitudes toward the truth.

At Thessalonica (vv. 1-9), Paul "reasoned with them out of the scriptures" (v. 2). And in spite of hostility and persecution from the unbelieving Jews, many received the truth "not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" (1 Thes. 2: 13).

At Berea (vv. 10-14), we find a people "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" (v. 11). And, as is always the case where you find such an attitude, "Therefore many of them believe..." (v. 12).

At Athens (vv. 15-34), Paul found a general attitude of indifference among the philosophers, and among "all the Athenians and strangers" (v. 21). And in my own experience, this latter attitude is the most difficult with which to deal. Generally, it is seed down "by the way side" (Lk. 8: 12).

\*\*\*\*\*

It is imperative that the seed sown be incorruptible (1 Pet. 1: 23). It is also necessary that the one sowing the seed be faithful in such efforts (Jno. 4: 35-38). But we should not become discouraged, either with the seed or our own faithful efforts, if the results are not as they



could and should be. For the primary hindrance to fruitful labors in an affluent and immoral society is the failure of hearers (in or out of the church), to "search the scriptures."

Evidence to support this conclusion is found in the Philippines, Africa, India, Europe, and other parts of the world. The difference between being converted or not being converted is the difference between searching or not searching the scriptures.

Brethren, even if your efforts appear to be fruitless, don't give up (Gal. 6: 9). Even if your work suffers loss, don't look for another work or another vineyard (1 Cor. 3: 13-15). And even if people reject the scriptures, they are rejecting God, the truth, and eternal life, not you (1 Sam. 8: 7; Acts 13: 46).

I personally appreciate the efforts of those who have used the publication called *Searching the Scriptures* to provoke people to do just that - "search the scriptures."

I appreciate the opportunity which it has afforded me to tell of the "simplicity which is in Christ" (2 Cor. 11: 3).

Let us not cease to "search the scriptures" or encourage others to do the same, for the time will come when those same scriptures will search our hearts in judgment.

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## The Guardian of Truth Welcomes Subscribers of Searching The Scriptures

*Mike Willis*

27 Kings Court  
Danville, Indiana 46122

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With the rest of the readers of this journal, I view with a degree of sadness the publication of this final issue of *Searching the Scriptures*. For thirty-three years, this paper has been used in service to Christ Jesus our Lord. Its garments have not been stained by the sin of promoting and defending false doctrine; the reputations of its editors have not been marred by immoralities. It has an unblemished record in its propagation and defense of the truth, which deserves our laurels of commendation. The names of both H. E. Phillips and Connie W. Adams were respected and loved when I began preaching the gospel in 1966. They had already earned the respect of brethren who loved and obeyed the truth. I have been privileged to get to know both of these brethren personally and have learned to love them for the truth's sake. The bond we share in Christ has been precious to me.

Inasmuch as brother Adams has decided to discontinue publishing *Searching the Scriptures*, I am delighted that he has chosen *Guardian of Truth* to fulfill his obligations to his readers to provide them a paper for

the full term of their subscription. Through the years, *Searching the Scriptures* and *Guardian of Truth* (formerly known as *Truth Magazine* and *Gospel Guardian*) have shared a common commitment to the same principles of truth. Before becoming editor of *Searching the Scriptures*, brother Adams was a staff writer for *Truth Magazine* during the years it was edited by my bother, Cecil Willis. He was added as an Associate Editor in January 1966 and served until June 1973 when he became editor of *Searching the Scriptures*. Announcing Connie's leaving, Cecil wrote of brother Phillip's selection of Connie as editor saying, "I don't know whom they might have chosen that would have been better qualified in ability and disposition than Connie Adams.... Connie Adams has been one to whom I very frequently turned for advice regarding some of the difficult decisions which every editor must make." He continued to explain that Connie had been a fellow soldier in every aspect of their work.

Now brother Adams' work through *Searching the Scriptures* is over. He has done his work well, as evidenced by the high regard in which this paper is held among brethren. We join the host of brethren who congratulate him and his staff of writers for a job well done.

But brother Adams will continue to write. We are delighted to announce the brother Adams has agreed to resume his position as Associate Editor of *Guardian of Truth*. Those of you who have appreciated the good work he has done through the years with *Searching the Scriptures* will want to know that you can continue to read his good writings in *Guardian of Truth*. Therefore, as we fill the subscription obligations of *Searching the Scriptures*, we hope to introduce you to another paper which you will learn to appreciate just as much as you have *Searching the Scriptures*.

As editor of *Guardian of Truth*, I welcome each person who is a new subscriber to *Guardian of Truth*. We hope to continue to serve you in the same exemplary manner as you have grown accustomed to in the past. We welcome your comments, news items, preacher needed ads, church ads, etc. We desire to serve God's people; we have no desire to be served, become a lord over God's people, or otherwise harm the body of Christ. We welcome you to our mailing list.

The first issue of February will be a special issue of *Guardian Truth* edited by Connie Adams. Its theme is: "In Remembrance of These Things." Many of the writers of this special issue will be men whom you have been accustomed to reading in *Searching the Scriptures*. You won't want to miss an issue.

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(Continued from page 266 H. E. Phillips)

W. Adams the fidelity to divine truth and the ability and experience to fill the editor's chair. I believed he would do so with a firm resolve to hold this paper to its original purpose of preaching and defending the gospel. This prompted me to sell the paper to him.

Brother Adams has justified the faith and confidence I had in him by his diligent work as editor of *Searching The Scriptures* for nearly twenty years. I do not know anyone who could have done a better job as editor than Connie W. Adams.

Brother Adam has honored me upon several occasions. He offered me the front page of the paper to write whatever I thought was necessary, for as long as I wanted to write. That has been gratifying to me and I express to him my sincere appreciation.

I do not remember that Connie Adams and I ever had an angry word or a moment of dissension through the years. We have spent many hours talking together about the paper and various issues that confronted the church. We have exchanged many letters and talked many times by phone. I understand his emotions as he prepares to lay to rest this paper that has claimed so many hours of his valuable time and demanded such a sacrifice of labor and funds. Editorial and publication deadlines are a pressure that only those who have done it understand. I express to Connie my personal appreciation for his work well done. Only eternity will reveal the good he has accomplished by the printed page over these twenty years.

#### **The Editorial Policy From The Beginning**

The opening words of the editorial in that first issue were: *"Truth and truth alone can make men free.* Our Master taught this lesson to the Jews that believed on him in John 8: 32. With this issue of *SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES* you hold in your hand a new paper that is born to do just that. The truth has a right to be heard from the pulpit, over the airwaves, on the television screen, and on the printed page. This is one purpose of *SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES*. " "... The pages of *SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES* will be open to men of good faith. We will allow anyone who has something worthwhile to say to speak his mind. We will not, however, allow propagandists to sow seeds of discord. This paper will not be devoted to unfair controversy and personal sarcasm... "

The last paragraph of this editorial says in part: "We have no policy but to be scriptural, fair, sincere, and faithful in our work as editors of this paper. We know nothing more that could be asked of us in presenting this paper for your edification... "

In the editorial of August, 1972, page 115 we wrote: "From the beginning we have earnestly sought to use the printed page to study the word of God with all who will read and study with us. We belong to no man or group. We strive to serve no special human interest. We are not for sale to any man for any price, because our own salvation and the salvation of others is in the balance. "

This policy has been followed to the present time. Brother Adams has diligently pursued the principles of truth and fairness in his labors as editor, as we endeavored to do from the beginning. He has admirably steered this publication in the direction we believe it should go.

### **The Honorable Demise Of Searching The Scriptures**

About a year ago brother Adams asked me to consider with him the destiny of *Searching The Scriptures*. He felt that he was unable to continue much longer with the paper because of his health and pressing deadlines. In the environment of deep emotions we considered the options that were available. With tears and fervent prayers to God, he decided to lay this labor of love to rest and leave its influence enshrined in the archives of history. Undoubtedly generations yet unborn will read its pages when we sleep with our fathers. As we are borne along by the tide of time toward eternity, we shall live in peace with the knowledge that no man or group can destroy its influence and use the name to propagate error.

I concur with his decision to bring this faithful labor of thirty-three years to a close with the December, 1992 issue. I empathize with him in his judgment and decision to end the paper; and commend his sense of responsibility to the readers of this religious magazine over the course of its history from 1960. It was not an easy decision to make. A combination of factors merge to make the decision essential.

In my editorial for the final issue of *Searching The Scriptures* before turning the helm to brother Connie Adams, I described some brief facts that led to the birth of *Searching The Scriptures*. As I now look back to the beginning, I see in the heart of a young man a yearning for the victory of truth over error and the determination to spread the gospel of Christ to as many as possible. My heart remains dedicated to that same gospel of Christ, but the body cannot do what it once did.

For my closing words in this final article in *Searching The Scriptures*, to the editor, all writers for this noble journal and to the readers, I adopt the inspired words of the apostle Paul: "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 20: 32). Amen.

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