

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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WHO CAN BUT PROPHECY?

Mike Grushon
4204 Sunflower Ave.
Louisville, Ky. 40216



"A lion has roared: Who will not fear? The Lord God has spoken. Who can but prophesy?"

[Amos 3:8]

The prophet Amos was called by the Lord to perform a very difficult task. He was sent unto the people of Israel to warn them of impending judgment at the hands of God. Amos' task was made increasingly difficult by the fact that the people had turned their backs upon God in the pursuit of materialistic gain and worldly pleasure. They had adopted a false religion of their own imagination through which they worshipped God in a manner that they devised and which they assumed God would accept. Thus the people of Israel were not truly interested in Amos' message. They were content to do things that gratified their lusts and to promote a religion that aided and comforted them in fulfilling their desires.

Into this type of environment came Amos, the sheep-herder from Tekoa. Amos could have reacted in a variety of ways to the conditions that he found in Israel. Amos could have become discouraged by the conduct of the people and returned home without delivering his prophecy. Amos could have compromised his message, deciding that possibly the religion and morals of Israel were the fruits of honest but mistaken hearts. Or, Amos could have done what he, in fact, did, he could declare forcefully and straightforwardly the word of God that had been revealed to him. This was not the easiest course for Amos to take, nor was it the most popular with the

people and the religious leaders of Israel, but it was the course that Amos' conviction dictated that he take (Amos 7:10-17).

There is a striking similarity to be found in the church today. Some of God's people, like Israel of old, have turned their backs upon God. Perhaps it has not been by intention or design that they have so acted, but there is nothing in the inspired record that indicates that Israel planned and premeditated their apostasy. Israel turned their back upon God because they allowed themselves to be deluded into placing confidence in their own wisdom. They allowed the goal of maintaining faithfulness to their covenant with God to be replaced by worldly and material goals. Then they devised a corrupted religion that would both allow them to pursue their materialistic aims and yet satisfy their religious needs. However religious needs can be met without man's true spiritual needs ever being satisfied, thus Israel was not right with God. Some today have turned their back upon God. They have lost sight of the true spiritual goals that should motivate Christians. In the place of these proper spiritual objectives, the wisdom of man has invented a variety of "missions" for the active church. These secular, social, recreational, benevolent, and humanistic activities devised and promoted by so many serve to assure man that something is being done, that his religion is active. Thus man's religious needs are satisfied by a religion of his own invention; man is free to seek his material, social, and commercial goals, and he assumes that God will accept what man has offered. Like Israel of old, man's religious needs have been met, but his spiritual condition is bankrupt in the sight of God.

The question that should weigh heavily upon every child of God is: "How am I going to react to this situation?" Some no doubt will take the course of least resistance and try not to get involved. They will quit contending for the truth of God's word. Discouragement might cause some to throw up their hands in despair and give up. The result is the same, they quit contending. Others will compromise. They will try to find a way not to offend anyone. They will

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campaign on a platform of tolerance. They will abhor forthright preaching and honest, open confrontation of error with the truth of God's word. They will, like the prophet Amaziah (Amos 7:10-13), suggest that God's people would be better off without such preaching. Historically the precedent has been set because in past spiritual crises men have resorted to each of these methods. All of these ways of dealing with the spiritual problem among God's people are deficient. They allow the problem to persist until ultimately judgment and condemnation is the result. Just as Amaziah and the professional prophets of Israel who would not support the preaching and declaration of God's revealed message were responsible for Israel's fall, those who refuse to stand on the foundation of God's revealed will and declare it in this age will share in the responsibility for the failure of their brethren. Amos tells us what the only correct choice is for the child of God. He says, "The Lord God has spoken! Who can but prophesy?" We should echo his sentiment. The Lord God has spoken. He has revealed His will unto us. We are told to contend for it (Jude 3). We are told to be ready to preach it whenever and wherever it is needed (2 Tim. 4:2). We are told to be ready to give an

answer for the reason of hope within us (1 Pet. 3:15). The Lord has spoken and He has charged us with the responsibility to defend it and to contend with it as our spiritual weapon. If this is what the Lord wants, if this is what God says, what choice do we have? If we are going to be worthy of the name of Christ, if we are going to be faithful to our calling as children of God, we have no choice but to do as Amos said he was doing. We must hear the Lord's message ourselves and declare it unto all who need it.

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Editorial

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THE CHURCH TREASURY

Is there any scriptural basis for contending that a New Testament church may have a treasury and may only use it for certain limited purposes? Some do not think so. There is an increasing number, even among those who profess to be "conservative" who call this in question and censure some of us for our "traditional" mis handling of the word of life.

In his tract "Questions and Issues of the Day". Batsell Barrett Baxter said "It seems strange that some have been so quick to tell us what the treasury can and cannot be used for in view of the fact that the scriptures give no instructions or commandments concerning the treasury" (page 23). However, back on page 21 he allowed that from some passages "it is quite obvious that churches had collections of funds, or treasuries, at least for a specific purpose." He places the whole matter in the realm of judgment. It is hard to know what he believes on the subject, for he tells us "the scriptures give no instruction" about a treasury, then tells us, after citing several passages, that it is "quite obvious" that they had treasuries. If it is "quite obvious" from these passages that they had them, then why is it said that the New Testament gives no instruction on the subject? How did he learn that they had them in the absence of information which is at first non-existent and then is really "quite obvious"?

In the September, 1973 issue of RESTORATION REVIEW, Leroy Garrett offers some counsel to the "anti" brotherhood. He says our whole problem is that we start with the false assumption that the New Testament requires and regulates a church treasury. Then, says he, we attack expenditures from the treasury which are not authorized. He says "It is childish to argue that money placed in a collection basket on Sunday suddenly by hocus-pocus becomes 'the Lord's money,' while that which remains in one's pocket is his to do with what he pleases." Later in his article he says "It cannot be proved that any primitive church ever collected a dime into a treasury on Sunday or any other day."

Let's take another look at what the New Testament says about a treasury. Some have accused us of basing the whole case on I Cor. 16:1-4 where a collection was ordered for the saints in Jerusalem. While this passage does give some information about a collection, it is not the only **one** which teaches on the subject. Even among the apostles **there** was a "bag" which

Judas carried from which some expenses were paid and the poor helped (Jno, 13:29). The Jerusalem church met the needs of its poor members several times. In Acts 2:44-45, they sold possessions, "had all things common" and "parted to all men, as every man had need." In Acts 4:34-35 there was a fund gathered to meet similar needs as brethren sold land or houses and "brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need." The treasury of the Lord's people is still at their feet. From their instructions and examples of what they did, we may learn what we ought to do in such matters. Paul said "Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you" (Phil. 4:9). A major part of the trouble, loud protests to the contrary notwithstanding, is a lack of respect for what we have heard and seen in them.

In Acts 5 there is the account of Ananias and Sapphira who also sold a possession but kept back part of the price while pretending greater generosity than they practiced. There is a lesson in this passage which Brother Garrett and many others need. Peter asked "Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?" (Acts 5:4). What was the significance of saying it was "thine own" before it was sold and "in thine own power" after it was sold and before it was given, unless after it was given, it was not his own and not in his own power? Those who cannot seem to distinguish between the funds of the individual and those of the church need to come to grips with this passage.

Acts 6 tells of the choosing of seven brethren from the Jerusalem church to be appointed "over this business" of serving tables to meet the needs of some widows who had been neglected. From what source of supply did they furnish these tables unless the same practice continued as described earlier in their history?

Paul said the church at Philippi had fellowship with him in giving and receiving in Thessalonica, sending "once and again" unto his necessities (Phil. 4:15-16). From what source did the church there send once and again to Paul if they had no funds from which to do so? Did not the gathering of such funds constitute a treasury? Later Paul received "wages" in payment for service rendered in Corinth (2 Cor. 11:8). From this we know that more than one church had resources from which to send these wages. These passages teach us that it is scriptural for congregations to collect and send funds to provide "wages" or "necessities" of those who preach the gospel. This is a scriptural use of collected funds.

The collection of 1 Cor. 16:1-4 was specifically for the saints in Jerusalem. Benevolent assistance to brethren in need was not new with this passage. It was one use made of congregational funds. What is unique in this passage is the time when Paul said to lay it by in store. He said "on the first day of the week." That is the only passage which mentions a time when such was to be done. Being the only such passage, it

constitutes the total divine instruction as to the time when a collection for scriptural work may be gathered. It is not the only passage which teaches the existence of a treasury, nor of the purpose for which it may be used, but it alone mentions a time, even as Acts 20:7 alone mentions the time when the Lord's supper was observed. If we walk by faith, we will honor that time. If our own wisdom is to be put on a par with divine wisdom, then we might argue that any other time would be just as good. Brother Garrett thinks that all they did in this passage was to lay it up in a sock at home and then when Paul or his messengers came, they had to go around to every house and collect all the socks and put it together. And yet, that is the very thing Paul sought to avoid. He said "that there be no gatherings when I come" (1 Cor. 16:2).

Any way you look at it, if they had to go around and put it all together when they came, that constituted a "gathering." I would like to hear some of these experts who have ruled out a congregational treasury tell us the significance of telling people to put money in a sock at home "on the first day of the week." That is what it says. They read this passage and tell us you can contribute any day because this was just private action at home anyhow. But if it were only private action at home, the time was still limited. They had better not put money for that purpose in that sock on Thursday night! The passage limits a time when this laying up was to be done. Are brethren unaware that the first day of the week was the Lord's day, the day Jesus arose, the day the Holy Spirit fell on Pentecost, the day the church was established and the day on which Christians gathered to break bread? The fact of such gathering would be understood by brethren in Galatia and Corinth. On that same day they were to "lay by in store" to accomplish a work God had appointed. With all due respect to the learned among us who advocate the notion of the "sock at home" I suggest that it will take considerable doctoring to make even respectable silliness out of this contention!

Yes, the early church did have a treasury. They spent it in the work of gospel teaching and benevolence. Each one was to help according to his ability, according to purpose, cheerfully and liberally. I can lay mine aside (purpose in my own heart the amount) and on the first day of the week put it "in store" along with other Christians and do it by faith which comes by hearing the word of God. He who does otherwise, should either produce the passage for his action or else confess to his lack of respect for the principle of walking by faith and not by sight.

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LETTER TO A PREACHER

August 1, 1973

Preacher P. O. Box 262 Petersburg, Indiana Dear Brother:

Since you gave no name I cannot address you by name, but I saw your statement in the July 17th issue of the FIRM FOUNDATION wherein you advertised for a place to preach.

I am particularly interested in one short sentence (if it can be called that) in your ad. You said, "Not anti." The dictionary defines "anti" as follows: "A prefix signifying opposite, against, instead, counter, used in forming nouns and adjectives." (Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary)

Since you used no "nouns and adjectives" and your statement had no object or further description, I must conclude that you are not against anything. If that be true, you are the first preacher I ever heard of who didn't oppose anything and I wouldn't walk ten steps to hear you preach!

Sincerely, Eugene
Britnell

EVOLUTIONISTS DISCOVER TOO MUCH

According to an article in the August, 1973, READER'S DIGEST, the evolutionists are in trouble again. In fact, they have never been out! It seems that some "phenomenal discoveries" in Africa have disputed some "long-cherished theories concerning the origin and evolution of the human race." Consider the following statements:

"According to current evolutionary doctrine, these findings are 'extraordinary.' Most text books state the first primate that can be called man, Homo erectus, did not evolve until around a billion years ago. Yet the bones dug out of deposits in the East Rudolph Basin in Kenya are more than twice as old, and are far more modern in shape than those of our presumed ancestor."

"Today Africa, not Asia, is favored as the most likely birthplace of the human race. However, there is great disagreement as to exactly who begat whom, for it is apparent that several species, both subhuman and human, overlapped each other in time. The descent of man is no longer regarded as a chain with some links missing, but rather as a tangled vine whose tendrils

loop back and forth as species interbred to create new varieties, most of which died out."

I believe I'll just stick with "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." It is much easier, and I find it far more credible than any theory ever postulated by man. Concerning the origin of man, the only thing that evolutionists are SURE of is that God had absolutely nothing to do with it.

SLIDES WITHOUT HAIR

I'm sure that visual aids (slides, film strips, pictures, etc.) are profitable in teaching the truth, especially in homes and personal work. I do wish that someone would prepare some material which did not portray Christ and the apostles as the long-haired hippies and rebels of our time. All that I have seen are disgusting to me. It is inconsistent to teach against long hair on men and boys and then show "pictures of Christ" with hair hanging down his back.

FADED JEANS

We all know that blue jeans (along with long hair) have become a symbol among many young people. Question: Who wears them WHEN THEY ARE NEW? All that I see are faded, patched (or need it), pockets half off and with images of billfolds, tobacco cans and cigarettes showing, and the legs looking like they had been chewed off by a calf. When I was a boy I would have been ashamed to pick cotton in them. Many young people (both boys and girls) don't care how they look and act—nor what you think about it.

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

A writer for the Associated Press has published a series of articles in the ARKANSAS GAZETTE concerning "religious faiths in America." In one of them, entitled, "Campbell Beliefs Still Evident in Branches," he discussed the Christian Church and Churches of Christ. Concerning who does or does not have national headquarters, he said:

"Perhaps the nearest thing to a Church of Christ 'center' is Abilene, Texas, where thousands of members gather for an annual lecture series at Abilene Christian College, and where the Highland Church of Christ sponsors a nationally-broadcast radio-TV program called 'Herald of Truth'."

Isn't it amazing that men outside the church can see things which many brethren and preachers in the church cannot or will not see? We have tried to show them that such centralized arrangements as the Herald of Truth will activate the church universally in principle if not in practice. If two thousand churches can work through the Highland elders, every church on earth can.

DEBATE ON SMOKING

Due to his objection to what he called my "pot shots at smokers" in this column, Rolf Miller, a preacher in Ventura, California, and I have arranged and are

participating in a written debate on smoking. He is affirming the proposition: "The Scriptures teach that a Christian may smoke." It has been very interesting from the beginning, and we are about half way through it. I will let you know when it is in print for distribution.

"FELLOWSHIP"

I have just received the first issue of a new magazine called "Fellowship" which is edited by Leroy Garrett, Wilford F. Lown and Robert H. Mulkey. Watch for a review of it next month. I can tell you now that it is another effort to agree to disagree agreeably.

WEDDINGS AND FUNERALS — REVIEW NO. 2

Ralph D. Williams

Brother Weldon Warnock and I agree the church is not in the business of providing for weddings and funerals. I'm sure we'd agree that such is an individual and family responsibility (1 Cor. 7:2; 1 Tim. 5:8). Yet, when the meetinghouse is used for these affairs, **who** has provided the place? The individual didn't spend his money to build the facilities. The building, seating, etc. were purchased from the Lord's (church) treasury. If a church were renting a meeting place would it be all right to use church funds to rent it an extra hour or another evening for a wedding?

Combing the hair and clipping a hangnail, like using the rest-room or drinking fountain, need no specific authority. These are individual personal needs which are merely INCIDENTAL to the reason for being at the building. To have a parallel with a wedding one would need to announce that brethren were invited to gather with combs and clippers at a certain time for a special service of clipping and combing.

I'll stand upon my statement that Jesus told us how to use the meeting house when He revealed the "church's authorized work." Obviously the Lord said nothing concerning "a temporal structure" per se. Yet places of assembling are recorded in the N.T. (Acts 20:8,10). And the work and worship required of the church necessitate a place (1 Cor. 11:18-22; Heb. 10:25). Therefore when a place is rented or purchased with the Lord's funds to do His authorized work, the question of HOW to use the place should be self-evident!

How shall we use the communion trays? Some seem uncertain about the building itself, but what about this aid to the Lord's Supper? Would a sister decide to take the bread plates home to serve sandwiches at a bridal shower since the trays weren't being used anyway? The reasoning of some would permit it. The question then is will we use an expedient (building, trays, baptistery) only for the use for which it was purchased with the Lord's funds? In the business world one who takes company property for his own personal use without authority is guilty of misappropriation. We

don't wish to spiritually misappropriate the Lord's funds or property. That's the very heart of this discussion.

Brother Wamock calls my view absurd because he carries it out to an "extreme and untenable" conclusion, which he thinks is necessary. He says no congregation practices keeping off the church's premises everything not related to church activity. (Is our standard of right and wrong to be what churches practice?) Certainly we can't police the grounds or put up barbed wire to stop children from riding their bicycles or playing on it. But the fact remains the parking lot wasn't built as a playground. Neither was it designed to aid shoppers and business men. Such uses are **INCIDENTAL**. If it's a problem put up a sign: "church parking." That states the purpose of this private property. If people violate it, we can't control that nor would it be wise to make a scene over it. Because we can't completely control what outsiders do on the premises doesn't argue or justify planning and using church facilities in nearly anyway anyone may desire.

True, socializing before and after services is parallel to weddings in that neither are the function of the church. But they are not parallel where it would be significant in this discussion. "Socializing" or visiting is not a planned activity. Time is **not** set apart for it. Announcements and invitations are **not** extended for participation. A special service is **not** scheduled for that purpose. A request is **not** made of the elders that the building might be borrowed for such use. I've never heard an outsider speak of our "visiting" as they've been heard to speak about a "church of Christ wedding."

The careful attention given the word **INCIDENTAL** is important and appreciated. It means "a chance or undesigned feature of something; casual; hence, minor; of secondary importance." Surely this is part of the key in resolving some of the seeming difficulties in this inquiry. "Incidentals" are a fact of life; something we must live with. They are even found in the Bible. For example, in connection with baptism, who administered it and where were merely incidentals (1 Cor. 1:17; Acts 8:36). However, it's a little hard to believe many brides would be satisfied with an "unplanned" (incidental) wedding. While "socializing" may be "incidental" much of that which I hear is an expression of "care one for another" (1 Cor. 12:25) and courtesy toward visitors (Gal. 6:10). The content of such visiting is indeed a matter of judgment. But this is not the same and I would object if the men wished to meet at the building one evening to talk about and show slides of a hunting trip.

Is it wrong to use the facilities purchased with the Lord's money only for those things for which they were needed in the first place? Should the wishes of the public determine their use? I don't find it narrow to kindly and politely tell folks that the church premises aren't designed for general public use. Tell them (with a smile) if they want to park there to come Sunday at 9 a.m.! Right thinking people, respectful of private property, shouldn't become offended at this

truth. Of course the first consideration ought always to be whether our practice and attitude is offensive to God.

Again, if the word "sanctified" causes misunderstanding, substitute the words "ear-marked" or "reserved" with regard to the use of the facilities. Clearly none believe the building is like some shrine in which we must remain silent or whisper in hushed tones. The meeting place is "set apart" for the special work of the Lord. The worship that is rendered therein is truly "sanctified" in the strictest Biblical sense of the word.

In response to the three questions: the telephone, like the rest-room, exists not specifically for "church work" but to facilitate those who assemble or are at the building at other times (cleaning, bulletin, studying). It serves one's needs while there spiritually or secularly. I wouldn't object if one phoned to check with the baby sitter, called a taxi or ambulance, etc. I would oppose a member coming to the building solely to make social or business calls. If one were at the building legitimately the use of the phone would be merely incidental. If a brother didn't have water or bathroom facilities at home, I'm sure he'd be welcome to come to the building at any hour there was need. In such trying circumstances he'd no doubt classify as a "needy saint" anyway, thus an object of church aid. But if one has utilities at home, why would he make a special trip to the meetinghouse? The telephone, water, rest-rooms all serve the incidental needs of those who have reason to be at the building, during services or any other time.

Again, brother Wamock and I agree when he writes in his next to the last paragraph, the meetinghouse "was built for the worship and work of the church." Is it improper or "absurd" to ask brethren simply to apply that truth in practice? The building wasn't built for public use by the Garden club, Rotary, 4H-club, Boy Scouts, ad infinitum. Therefore the list of five rules or someone else's ten rules aren't needed to determine what activities may be permitted on the premises and by whom. The church has a work and worship to attend to. A place was necessary to accomplish it. Therefore let us be content to use the facilities for which they were originally acquired and authorized.

While some may consider this a superfluous issue, others are concerned enough to investigate and discuss it calmly and brotherly in the interest of doing only what is right. Let us help ourselves and our brethren never to depreciate a question to the extent we fail to fulfil 1 Thess. 5:21.

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I've often heard the witticism, "If I couldn't preach a better sermon than I can practice, I would quit preaching." That may sound clever, but the fact is that if one does not constantly strive to close the gap between what he professes and what he does, then he ought to stop preaching.

Nowhere does this find greater application than in the principles and practices of Christians. Jesus admonished us to "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).

How do your works stack up against your principles? There may be several reasons why many who wear the name "Christian" live ungodly lives wholly incommensurate with that Holy Name. Here are two:

1. Some have no Christian principles. They belong to a church like they belong to a civic club or a fraternity. It's just something else that they belong to. They feel no obligation and have no relish for true spirituality. They're carnal with no desire to be otherwise.

It's almost impossible to reach people who possess this attitude. Sermons won't do it because when they are present, they pay little attention to the sermon. Articles such as this won't hit home, because they either do not subscribe to religious journals or they scan them like one scans the evening newspaper.

If the regulations of the New Testament are enforced as the standard for fellowship and they are personally approached, they will be shocked and tell you in no uncertain terms that they've been "members of that church for (ever-how-many) years but-it'll be a cold day in July before ..."

Overseers who recognize such members by their infrequent and spasmodic attendance or by persistent rumors of their worldliness should try to teach and admonish them in love. If that fails we must be faithful to the rules (1 Cor. 5:3-7; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14, 15) and withdraw from the disorderly.

2. Some Have Not Considered: I believe that some are not mature enough in their Christian growth to see certain inconsistencies in their lives.

Balanced and healthy portions of the word of God in our preaching and teaching will produce good results in the lives of those with honest and good hearts. They desire the sincere milk of the word that they might grow thereby (1 Peter 2:1, 2). They utilize this word as they utilize a mirror, beholding their character as seen through the pure and holy eyes of God (James 1:25). They examine themselves (2 Cor. 13:5).

"... the Father seeketh such to worship Him" (John 4:23).

AN OPEN LETTER

Mr. Ed Carter, Mission Committee
Central Avenue Church of Christ 304
East Central Avenue Valdosta,
Georgia 31601 Dear Sir:

Your mimeographed letter and questionnaire of March 28, 1973, received, and I am authorized to reply for the church here. We are not returning the questionnaire, first, because it seeks to pry into the internal and financial affairs of the church in Perry, and to obtain information which concerns no person associated with the questionnaire. Secondly, it implies that churches of Christ may scripturally receive contributions from other churches for evangelistic work, for which we have no New Testament precept or example. And thirdly, it solicits information to be made available for a "state-wide meeting of elders, preachers and church leaders" to be held at Olive Street church in Marietta, Georgia, on May 19, 1973.

THIS UNSCRIPTURAL MEETING IS APOSTASY

We find no scriptural authority for any person or church to call such a meeting, whether world-wide, nation-wide, area-wide, state-wide, county-wide, city-wide or community-wide. In the absence of any duly elected earthly head for churches of Christ, either in the form of a single person or a representative body, the only way such a meeting could be called would be by some self-appointed person or group of persons. The Roman Emperor, Constantino, who was not even a member of the church at the time, called the first General Church Council at Nicea, in 325 A.D., and he was self-appointed. Obviously, any self-appointed man or group of men has the same authority to call a General Council as he or it would have to call a "state-wide meeting." The calling of any such meeting which involves more than one church of Christ is a violation of the autonomy of the local church.

WHAT JUSTIFICATION FOR IT?

To say that such a meeting is not a "conference" or "council" is to attempt to beg the question with double-talk. A "state-wide meeting" called to "ex-change ideas which can help in completing the evangelizing of Georgia and North Florida" is "the same old woman with another dress on," whether you call it a "meeting," a "Conference," a "Council," a "Workshop," a "get-together," a "confab," or some other name. Truly, "a rose by any other name would

smell just as sweet;" but the reverse is also true, a Church Council by any other name is just as unscriptural. There is not a forty-second cousin to it in the New Testament!

To say that its purpose is good is to argue that the end justifies the means, and Paul said he did not preach any such (Romans 3:8). To say that attendance is voluntary, does not make it right. Bank robbers are volunteers, also!

A FORCED DILEMMA

The simple act of calling such an unscriptural meeting places every church of Christ in Georgia and North Florida in a dilemma. Either they must bow to the will of the callers of the meeting, fill out the questionnaire and attend; or they must refuse to do so and bear the stigma of "not believing in co-operation!" Regardless of how scriptural their reasons may be for not co-operating in this state-wide conference, they are never heard, and the vicious supposition is that they are "opposed to co-operation" under any circumstance. Hence, they are branded as "anti's," whispered about, and ostracized. This breeds suspicion, false-accusation, alienation and broken fellowship among brethren in the Lord, and the promoters of such go on their way toward restructuring the churches of Christ into a denominational "Church of Christ" to take its place among all the other denominations.

WHO SHALL PRESIDE?

In such a meeting there must be a presiding officer to conduct it. Regardless of whether he is chosen by majority vote, by the promoter of the conference, or is a volunteer; he exercises authority over other churches whose representatives attend and occupies a position of ascendancy above his fellows. This is the ecclesiastical "Patriarch," "Presiding Elder" or "Archbishop" in action and the "clergy-laity" relationship in embryo. The historical fruit of this is the ecclesiastical hierarchy of Roman Catholicism.

A LESSON FROM HISTORY

Note the following from the *Visualized Bible Study Series* by Jule L. Miller and Texas H. Stevens, Lesson Five, frames 44-46: "But soon after the death of the apostles, uninspired men began exalting one elder above others and reserving for that elder alone the title of 'bishop.' From this seemingly innocent beginning, a dangerous trend developed which ultimately triggered a struggle for power among church leaders. In spite of Christ's Teaching, soon individual 'bishops' were presiding over several congregations within a district which came to be known as a diocese. Eventually, these so-called 'Bishops' within certain regions started meeting together to discuss mutual and current problems. By the third century formal meetings were taking place attended by the bishops within a given Roman Province. These meetings, innocent at first, soon gave rise to the formulation of human rules and doctrinal statements to be used by the churches. These church laws, however, were doctrines and commandments of

mere men, not those of Christ and His apostles. Then came the first human creed designed to govern all Christians. Known today as the Nicene Creed, it was written in 325 A.D. by bishops from the western portion of the Roman Empire when they met together for the first worldwide council at Nicaea, near Constantinople. This council was called together, not by divine authority, but simply by the Roman emperor, Constantine. These men assumed to themselves the authority to make and bind religious laws upon God's people, a power which belongs only to Jesus Christ, the only Head of THE CHURCH. . . Ultimately a worldwide council also was accepted as part of the changing organizational structure of the church. This was another departure from God's way which paved the path for the development of papal power some years later."

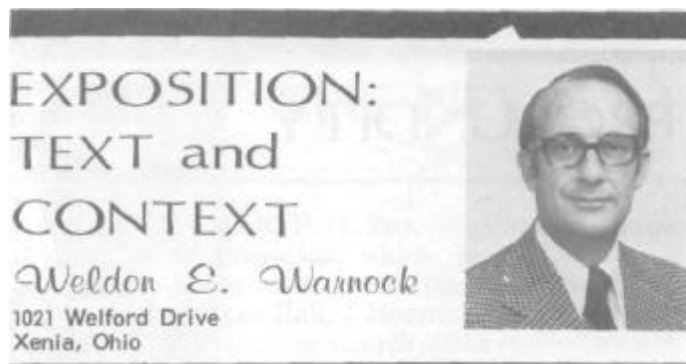
IS HISTORY REPEATING ITSELF?

It took nearly 300 years after Nicea to crown the first Roman Pope. The digressive brethren of the 1800's devised and restructured the Christian Church denomination in about a hundred years, so that now they are a full-fledged denomination. How long will it take you brethren who are promoting these "state-wide meetings" to arrive at complete apostasy? It may be later than you think! In the space of the past ten years "city-wide campaigns" borrowed from the Christian Church have been promoted. The Herald of Truth has called numerous area-wide and national conferences or "workshops." City-wide and area-wide "rallies" for youth, evangelism, benevolence and education have been called, and "World-wide Mission Seminars" have been held. Now comes your "state-wide" conference attempting to draw information and representatives from Georgia and half of Florida to the Olive Street church in Marietta, Georgia. Less than three years ago this same Olive Street church reported in its bulletin that it had been given permission by some other churches to oversee the work of the church of Christ in Cordele, Georgia. Where is scriptural authority for the elders of one church to oversee the work of another church, or for other churches to give them such permission to do so? Upon what meat have the elders at Olive Street been feeding that qualifies them to oversee another church 200 miles away, or to call a "state-wide" conference (if they did) on evangelism? It so happens that the church in Cordele over which they were given oversight is an institutional-minded faction which pulled out of the church there when they were unable because of a legal clause in the deed to take possession of the building. Why do those elders not stay at Olive Street and attend to their own business as Peter commanded (1 Peter 5:1-4)?

These are some of the reasons we have for not returning your questionnaire and for not attending your conference at Marietta.

Yours for scriptural action,
J. Edward Nowlin

(for the church, Perry, Florida 32347
714 N. Calhoun Street)



THE CHRISTIAN'S WARFARE

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:3-5).

Various figures and symbols are used in the Bible to depict the life of a Christian. In our text the apostle borrows the imagery of war to portray the struggle against sin. The passage under consideration may be divided into three major thoughts: (1) the warfare, (2) the weapons, and (3) the victories.

THE WARFARE

It Is A Spiritual Conflict. Paul said that "we do not war after the flesh" (v. 3). The same apostle also wrote, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12). There is no place in the kingdom for carnal struggles like the Crusades in the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries or the rampages of the Mohammedans in the seventh century. The kingdom of Christ is spiritual (Jn. 18:36), and its warfare is a spiritual conflict between truth and error, righteousness and wickedness.

It Is An Essential Battle. We must fight or die, conquer or be conquered. There is no place for neutrality (Mt. 12:30). Soldiers of Christ must be strenuously involved. I have been disappointed over the past twenty years with some of my fellow-preachers who have refused to get into the fight for truth on institutionalism and centralized control. Churches have been led into digression, and thereby ruined, but these preachers thought the fight was unimportant. The fruits of this are now being seen in ultra-liberalism.

It Is A Vigorous Endeavor. All military battles imply an intensive exertion. This war is no exception. We cannot relent for one moment toward sin, error and worldliness. Jude wrote to "earnestly contend for the faith." Vine says that "earnestly" is added to convey intensive force. Truly we are engaged in a most arduous conflict.

It Is A Most Important Struggle. Eternal interests are involved. The immortal souls of men are at stake.

The momentousness of this struggle is further seen by the fact that God, angels, demons and men have an interest in it. Great and decisive battles have been fought among men, but the greatest of all is the one the Christian is fighting.

THE WEAPONS The Weapons Of

Our Warfare Are Not Carnal (v. 4).

Christianity is not promoted or defended by the physical sword. The kingdom has no geographical boundaries to maintain. The kingdom is within the hearts of regenerated men (Lk. 17:21). Isaiah, foreseeing the spiritual nature of the kingdom, said, ". . . and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isa. 2:4).

But there are other carnal weapons, besides the sword, that the church of the Lord or the Christian may not rely on. Such things as sophistry, prejudicial statements, misrepresentation, etc. are nothing more than fleshly in nature and have no place in the panoply of the Lord's army. Social functions, gimmicks and exploitation of professional people by the church are simply carnal measures to accomplish spiritual ends. These means may gain us numbers, but have they conquered the hearts for Christ? Not at all! Only the gospel can do this. Albert Barnes fitly wrote in connection with this scripture, "We do not depend on eloquence, or talent, or learning, or wealth, or beauty, or any of the external aids on which the men of this world rely. They are not such as derive advantage from any power inherent in themselves."

Our Weapons Are Mighty Through God. (v. 4). The weapons God has provided are powerful and mighty. They are the only weapons that will subdue the enemy. Read Eph. 6:13-17 where Paul enlarges upon the Christian's armor. Trusting in God and relying on his armor will bring us victory. Gideon slew the Midianites with 300 men because he did it God's way. In like manner, we too can overcome if we do it God's way.

THE VICTORIES

Strongholds Are Pulled Down (v. 4). A stronghold is a fortress, citadel or anything on which one relies. Thayer says on the word, "strongholds," that it means "arguments and reasonings by which a disputant endeavors to fortify his opinion and defend it against his opponent" (p. 471). For example, a person has an opinion that faith only saves the alien sinner. He proceeds to fortify his opinion by reading "only" into John 3:16 or he makes the meritorious works of Eph. 2:9 works of righteousness or gospel obedience. The truth of God will pull down this stronghold as well as all other doctrines of men.

Imaginations And Every High Thing Are Cast Down (v. 5). "Imaginations" would be those reasonings that are hostile to the faith. They are the philosophy, vain deceit, tradition of men and rudiments of the world listed by Paul in Col. 2:8. The "high thing" would involve false religious systems, such as Judaism, paganism and denominationalism, as well as

the anti-Christ forces of a more secular nature. These elements serve as a barrier, rampart or bulwark against the truth. But the mighty weapons of God shall expose them and demolish their fallacious positions.

Thoughts Of Men Are Brought Into Captivity (v. 5). G. Campbell Morgan stated it well many years ago when he said, "The purpose of the church's warfare is the capture of the inspirational centers of human life. Behind all our speaking is our thinking. The church's warfare is aimed at the capture of these inspirational centers, in order that they may be possessed by the ideals and purposes of Jesus Christ. The purpose for which the church fights, and must forever fight, is that she may bring the thinking of men into harmony with the thinking of Christ. . . . The church's business is to create opinion; to capture the thinking of men, and compel it to the thinking of Christ" (Therefore Stand by Smith, p. 483).

You will notice that the strongholds of error must first be destroyed before the hearts of men can be captivated. God told Jeremiah, "See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant" (Jer. 1:10). So, brother, when you hear the preacher reproofing and refuting error, he is just getting things ready in order to win the souls of honest people.

In conclusion, may we fall in behind Jesus Christ, the captain of our salvation, lifting high the royal banner, marching on to war. Victory is assured!

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I didn't know what it meant, either, until I looked it up. Essentially, it means to be deep, and intellectually, to have depth of knowledge. Unfortunately most who speak and write profoundly end up by being confusing. In my bygone salad years, I can remember being very profound once or twice. Even my listeners thought so. We were all drunk, and they were as confused as I over what I was saying. And perhaps this confusion was what the Lord had in mind in Isaiah 35:8 and 2 Corinthians 11:3. After listening for an hour to a very brilliant (I think) speaker, one of the elders in that audience turned to me and said, "He sure is a good preacher! Wish I could understand what he said."

Paul came preaching Jesus Christ and Him crucified (1 Corinthians 2:1-4). He did this BECAUSE HE WANTED THEM TO UNDERSTAND CHRIST'S TEACHING, not **how** well educated **he, Paul**, was. When I read from brethren who are so profound I must follow "finger under the line," and looking up every other word in my dictionary, and am still left wondering what was said, I doubt their effectiveness in teaching. Likewise when writers must explain the explanation they made to explain what they first wrote, or by their involved reasoning leave me "a dollar short, a mile behind and a day late" in trying to determine where they stand on any particular issue, I find myself toying with the idea they are not really trying to be understood, rather to confuse.

There is a way we can tell all what we mean. We may speak where the Bible speaks, and be silent where it is silent (1 Pet. 4:11). I can say pretty plainly that I am opposed to what passes under the general definition of institutionalism, that I stand against denominational doctrines and practices as being opposed to God and the followers of Carl Ketcherside with their "one fact and one act" theology of fellowship are in fellowship with the devil and not God. Now you may not like what I say. but you will have little trouble understanding it.

I submit, we need a good deal more plainness, and an equal amount less profundity.

Or, do I need to explain what I mean?

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THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

JOHN W. PITTMAN, P. O. Box 784, Camden, Maine 04843—The congregation which formerly met in Thomaston, Maine now meets in Camden in the Megunticook Grange Hall, 7 Mountain St. If traveling this way you will find the church listed in the Camden Herald or the Courier-Gazette, in Rockland. We had a gospel meeting in October with Jim Sasser of Rogersville, Alabama. Two other meetings were held in June and July. Howard See, of Nashville, Tennessee and Roger Rutter of Richmond, Ohio came for these meetings. There are job opportunities here for Christians and the air is clean and fresh.

LARRY R. DEVORE, Box 86, Roseville, Ohio 43777—Due to the illness of C. D. Plum, Bob Dickey of West Lafayette, Ohio will hold our meeting Nov. 26-Dec. 2. A new congregation has been established in Cambridge, Ohio. They are few in number but rich in faith. At Roseville the attendance is 35-40. Two were withdrawn from here recently. Sidney Yoder and Don Roush serve as elders.

RICK SMITH, 807 S. Fenner Ave., Cleveland, Texas 77327—In the past two years the church here has grown from 75 to over 120. 32 have been baptized and several have confessed wrongs. Ernest Finley preached in our July meeting with five responses to the gospel. Home Bible studies have been rewarding.

ALICE DIESTELKAMP PASSES—With sadness we report the death of Alice Diestelkamp, beloved wife of Leslie Diestelkamp and mother of Karl, Al and Roy Diestelkamp, all faithful gospel preachers. She fought gallantly against cancer. The influence of this good family has spread far and wide. Her passing leaves not only a void in that family circle but in the kingdom of God as a whole.

ARMONDO ORTEGA MATA, Lista de Correos, Ojinaga, Chihuahua, Mexico—A new congregation began to worship God June 17 of this year in a suburb called Colonia Porfirio Ornelas in Ojinaga City. We are ten Christians. There is another church in downtown with forty Christians where Catarino Lujan preaches. Ojinaga is across from Presidio, Texas on the Mexico-USA border.

LIBRARY NEEDS BOUND VOLUME I OF SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

ANNIE MAY ALSTON, Librarian, Harding Graduate School, 100 Cherry Road, Memphis, Tennessee 38117—Here in the library of Harding Graduate School we would like very much to have a complete file of SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES for the use of our students now and for those who will come later. At

this time we lack Volumes 1-2, 1960-1961. Would any of the readers of this paper who might have Volumes 1-2 be willing to part with them for the wider use of this library? If so, contact the librarian at the address above.

(Editor's note—We have had several requests lately for bound volumes of the first 4 years of this paper. We do not have any. Only 200 are printed each time and these soon become collectors items. Religious Supply Center has a few volumes left from Volumes 5-6 to the present but they are dwindling. The editor will personally pay \$25 for any copy of bound volumes 1-2. We are soon going to be binding Volumes 13-14, 1972-1973. If you want one you should get your order in even now to Religious Supply Center, Inc., P. O. Box 13164, Louisville, Ky. 40213. Since only 200 bound volumes are printed, they in reality become good investments to say nothing of the good teaching material)

BOBBY J. DOBSON, 3004 N. Garden Ave., Roswell, New Mexico 88201—I am now working with the church at 13th and Richardson St. in Roswell. There are 30 members in this town of 42,000. Opportunities for preaching the gospel are great. I previously worked two years with the church in Mira Loma, California during which 19 were baptized and 39 restored. The church there is sound and anticipates a new building. Tony Hamon followed me in the work there.

DUDLEY R. SPEARS, 6554 Meisenheim / Glan, Burgermeister-Kircher str 9, West Germany—To all brethren everywhere who are concerned about the cause of Christ in Germany we send the following information concerning our new location. For the past few years the brethren here have been meeting in the chapel of the U.S. Army Hospital. In order to be more available to German people we hope to reach we have rented an empty grocery store in an excellent location. It needs lots of work and is a bit expensive, but we all feel this is a move forward for the Lord's church in this city. We have translated into German a series of correspondence lessons being used by the Expressway church in Louisville, Ky. We also have translated James R. Cope's tract of "The One True Church" and L. A. Mott's tract on "What Is the Church of Christ." We will advertise our services and meeting place in the local papers and offer the free correspondence course and tracts. There are probably a number of Christians in this area who do not know of our meeting place and are looking for a sound congregation. Please contact either Dudley R. Spears, telephone 06753-2026 or Charles Nietro, telephone 0671-33228. The address of the meeting place is 137a Rudesheimer Strasse. It is highway 48 in the direction of Rudesheim and Saar-

brucken. It is easy to find. Bible Study is at 9:30 a.m. and morning worship at 10:30 a.m. each Lord's Day. We meet Lord's Day evenings at 6 p.m. and Wednesday evenings at 7:00 p.m. Our work is showing progress already and we anticipate much good from the effort here. It is the first time the brethren here have made an effort to preach to the German community. Please remember us in your prayers.

MARIO BALSAMO, 115 Park St., Grinnell, Iowa 50112—1 have moved to work with the church in Grinnell. Attendance averages 25-30 with contribution of \$75-\$100 a week. The church here can only provide \$250.00 support per month. If any reading this would like to have fellowship with us in this work have them contact me at the above address. For verification of this need contact Robert W. Bennett, Box 26, Reasnor, Iowa 50232, phone 515-793-2359. Also, if any individual or congregation not using their Jule Miller film strips would like to sell them, please contact me.

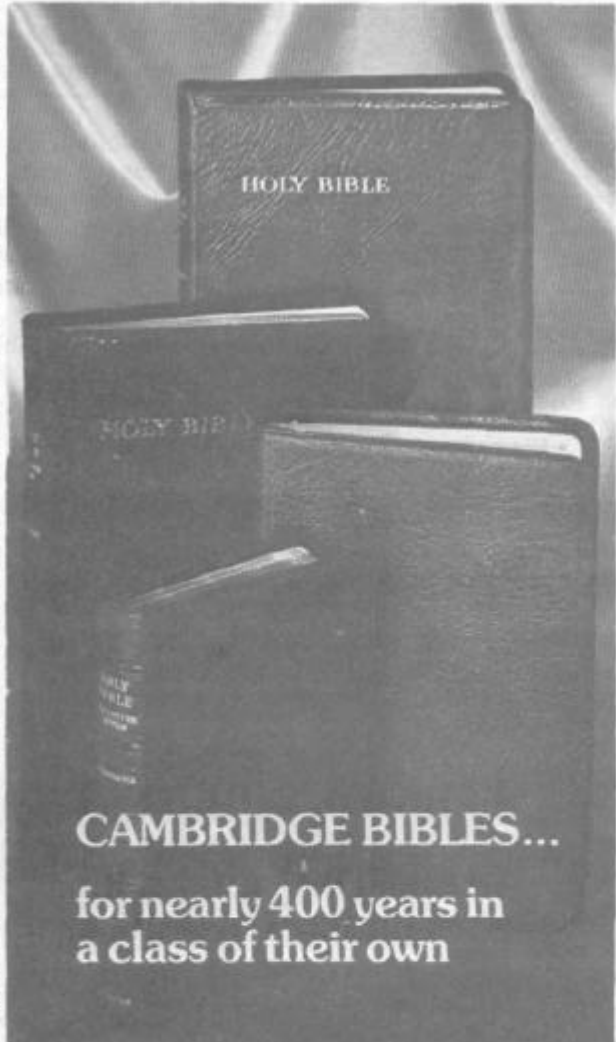
PREACHER WANTED

SUSANVILLE, CALIFORNIA--The church of Christ in Susanville is in need of a faithful gospel preacher. If interested, please write to P.O. Box 283 (zip 96130) or call 916-257-3870.

CONNIE W. ADAMS, P.O. Box 68, Brooks, Kentucky 40109—During the recent meeting at Westwood in Glasgow, Kentucky, 11 responded. 2 were baptized, 2 placed membership and 7 were restored including 3 from one of the liberal churches. After five years Everett Hardin continues to do excellent work there. The new Hebron Lane congregation is off to a good start. The first Sunday we had 96 in the morning and 100 that night. We are running in the 90's now on Sundays and the 80's Wednesday nights. The contribution is leveling off near \$450 a week. Some visitors from the community are beginning to come.

**ON BEHALF OF PREACHERS
IN FOREIGN FIELDS**

Americans have complained much lately of the continual rise in the cost of living. Yet, recent figures published in U.S. News and World Report show that our rate of inflation is the lowest by far of any major nation today. But some of our brethren laboring in foreign fields are really under pressure with the tremendous rise in prices. The American dollar has taken a beating in many of these places. If the dollar was devalued 10% in a country, as it was in several places, then that means the preacher there living on wages from the U.S.A. took a 10% cut in pay while prices were still rising at a rapid rate. Also when a man is preparing to go to another country to preach and appeals for support, before turning him away because you think he is seeking too much, first investigate the state of the dollar there and the cost of living. Many brethren in other lands today preaching the gospel are badly in need of a raise in support. Think it over brethren as you plan your work for 1974.



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