

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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ABUSES

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One would have to be a recluse and completely out of contact with the world not to realize that there are many abuses in life. The burden of this article, however, is not that of establishing and substantiating the existence of abuses but to show a common, dangerous tendency of man in view of abuses. Man is prone to believe and claim that anything which is abused is wrong within itself. With the recognition of these abuses, man is also inclined to go to the other extreme.

Many of the problems relative to morality or immorality stem from this inclination. Many of the youth of our country are fed up with the hypocrisy of their elders, so they go to the other extreme—they become perfectly open with their shameless acts of promiscuity and debauchery. They are sick of their parents abusing morality and decency with their drinking of alcohol and commission of adultery; so they are prompted to smoke pot and use mind exploding drugs and live together in fornication — rejecting the institution of marriage because it is abused. They refuse the "old morality" and bring in their new morality (which is immorality — openness and shamelessness). The taxation of the American people is also often abused. The money taken from us by the government is, on occasions, wasted and misappropriated. Hence, some feel taxes are **ALTOGETHER WRONG**.

Again, allow me to reiterate the common, dangerous tendency of man: man often believes that anything which is abused is wrong within itself and with the recognition of these abuses man is given to going to

the other extreme. Now, let us make some spiritual applications.

The Local Church

Admittedly, there are abuses concerning the local church. Some believe that all there is to Christianity is assembling and partaking of the acts of public worship. To them, this is the totality of worship to God. Church buildings sometimes are abused. Buildings purchased with the Lord's money are used by some for facilities for recreation and social activities. On occasions, church buildings have even taken precedence over the preaching of the gospel. I am reminded of a recent (about 6 years ago) erection of a church building (edifice) in Texas which cost almost \$2,000,000 (1.8 million)!

Now, how does this common tendency of man come into play? Because of the abuses centering around the local church, some brethren are attacking the local church arrangement, as taught in the New Testament. They maintain **ALL** church buildings are wrong and that **ALL** social activities (not even involving the local church as such) are sinful (see Acts 2:46).

Church Discipline

By church discipline we have reference to a local church withdrawing from a disorderly member. The New Testament is plain in its teaching of withdrawing from those who walk disorderly (1 Cor. 5:1-11; Tit. 3:10-11; 2 Thes. 3:1). Paul taught, "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (2 Thess. 3:6).

Notwithstanding this lucid teaching and command, there are those who oppose withdrawal. They claim that a church withdrawing from a member only increases problems. Usually, they can cite you instances in which withdrawal only caused division within the local church. They talk about how silly it is for a local church to withdraw from a member when all the member has to do is identify with another nearby church. Some local churches will tolerate all kinds of doctrinal and moral deviations simply because "withdrawing only compounds the problems."

Confessedly, discipline is abused. In some cases, it is not practiced right to start with. Instead of being a

final effort to restore the one at fault and maintain the purity of the church, it is the beginning effort (Tit. 3:10; 1 Cor. 5:1-11). Beloved, just because discipline is abused and, therefore, ineffective, does not mean it is **ALTOGETHER WRONG** and undesirable!

Benevolence

More and more are believing that the way to reach aliens is for local churches to become more benevolence conscious. They tell us that by filling alien's stomachs and clothing their bodies we can win them to Christ. "Brotherhood" benevolent programs for aliens are being made a part of the work of many "churches of Christ."

Truly, such is sickening and disgusting in view of the New Testament not authorizing local churches to assist aliens in this manner and institute brotherhood benevolent programs for aliens (Acts 11:28-30, 1 Cor. 16:1-3). Yet, there are those who are allowing these abuses in benevolence to blind them and cause them to go to the other extreme by allowing needy saints to go unassisted (if they had their way) claiming the local church has no responsibility **AT ALL** in the area of benevolence for needy, deserving saints.

You select the subject, whether it be the eldership, located preachers, plan of salvation, et cetera, and we can show you abuses. Correspondingly, we can cite you instances in which man has opposed the eldership, located preachers, plan of salvation etc. believing them to be wrong within themselves simply because they are abused.

Conclusion

Brethren, let us beware of this common and dangerous tendency of man. Let us not ever condemn the thing itself (when it is right) simply because it is abused. And let us never with the recognition of abuses go to the other extreme.

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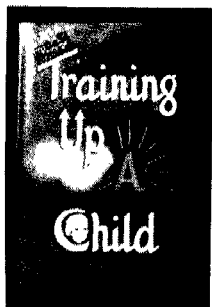
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Editorial

Connie W. Adams

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EDITORIAL STEW

It has become customary as well as useful to write a column under this heading every year at this time. We begin by thanking our readers for staying with us through another year. It is the hope of all the writers that the material presented during 1980 has been edifying to all. Our writers donate their material in an effort to utilize this medium through which to extend their teaching efforts. Some of our writers have been with us since the paper began in 1960 and others joined the list during the early years of the paper's existence. These men have come to be looked upon as trusted friends as they have provided well-written material on a wide range of subject matter, and all with the intent to cause the reader to search the Scriptures. Not only are there "old-timers" among the writers, but we have a number of readers who have received every issue of this paper for twenty-one years. Our heartfelt thanks to all writers and to all readers whether you are an old-timer or a newcomer.

"ANSWERS FOR OUR HOPE" SOON IN BOOK FORM

From the very first issue of this paper, Marshall E. Patton has written a column entitled "Answers For Our Hope" in which he has ably handled the Bible questions which have been on the minds of brethren over the past two decades. Not only has his column provided a wealth of carefully prepared Bible information presented with wisdom and forethought, but it has served as well as a commentary on the issues and questions of the times. In addition to answering questions from readers, he has also prepared several series of articles on needed subjects. Cogdill Foundation is now in process of publishing this material in a hardback book. It will be indexed by subject matter and by scripture references to make it of the greatest use to readers. We cannot give you the exact price now nor the date it will be ready, but it is in the works now. Please do not send funds for advance orders. We will inform readers when it is ready. Watch for further information. We believe that Marshall E. Patton is one of the ablest Bible students of our times and are confident that the appearance of his material in this paper since it began has done much to enhance the good reputation the paper has enjoyed. He stood like a rock beside H. E. Phillips and James P. Miller through the birth pains and early years of the paper when issues needed definition and when the sophistry of false teachers needed to be exposed and the scriptures they perverted needed to be studied in their context. The present editor is much indebted to Marshall E.

Patton for his friendship, wise counsel, studious help and continued support in our efforts to carry on the work of **SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES**. We are delighted that the material which appeared in our columns from his pen will be preserved not only in our bound volumes with their limited circulation but in book form for the study of future generations.

A DIFFERENT SONG LEADER EVERY NIGHT

At the risk of inciting the wrath of no telling how many, I wonder how and why the practice ever got started of having a different song leader every night in a gospel meeting. I remember when I first began holding meetings that brethren either used the best they had or sometimes sent elsewhere to borrow a good song leader for a meeting. Some congregations may be better blessed along this line than others, but frankly, I have seen very few instances in which such a practice did not hamper the singing more than it helped it. Every leader has his own style and cadence. A congregation has to make an adjustment every night under this practice. I have also noticed that there is often little, if any, thought among the leaders as to how the song selection may enhance the sermon. I have preached through whole meetings in which none of the various leaders ever picked up on the announcement of a topic, or asked if there might be some songs which would better fit the occasion. I have seen inexperienced leaders try out brand new songs on the congregation in the middle of a meeting, and that includes an invitation song which is totally unfamiliar, or else one which requires parts which are painfully absent when needed.

I have made it a point to ask elders at various places why they do this. The most common answer is that they don't want to hurt anyone's feelings by leaving him out? Does that apply to those who lead the prayers? Is this an admission that there are brethren in a congregation who are to be used publicly who are so childish that they might have a pouting spell if brethren try to help the meeting? We have heard a few brethren defend this practice and respect their judgment. But I have talked with a number of men over the country who have done extensive gospel meeting work and find that most of them regard the practice of a different leader every night as a greater hindrance than help. What a pleasure it is to work with a good song leader who selects songs which fit the occasion and which do much to stir the hearts of the brethren to greater service. A meeting is the time to put your best foot forward, including the song service. And while we are on the subject, why would brethren even consider using a brother as a song leader anytime whose life needs serious correction and whose faithfulness is marginal at best?

EPIDEMIC! EPIDEMIC!

In spite of preaching, writing and debating on the subject of divorce and remarriage, with all the week-end series and special lessons in classes and the efforts of godly parents to train the young, divorce continues to be an ever worsening problem among Christians. The law of God is trampled under foot, homes are wrecked, families are in turmoil, hearts are broken,

children are bewildered and God-fearing elders and preachers are often scorned by those whose emotions lead them to support transgressors. Over and over we hear it all across the land. The lives of elders, deacons, preachers as well as the rest are being torn apart. It has come to the point that when you meet an old friend of years gone by, you almost fear to ask about the husband or wife. "Oh, didn't you know? We are divorced?" Readers of this paper know that the editor firmly believes there is one scriptural cause for which a wronged companion may put away the offender. We would not penalize those who have every God-given right to make such a serious decision. But we continue to cry out against the permissive tide which seems to be inundating many children of God. I do not understand why elders and churches wish to coddle preachers who give out an uncertain sound, and in some cases a MOST CERTAIN false teaching which in effect calls evil, good and encourages sinners to persist in their sins. It is past time for faithful Christians everywhere to hold up the hands of godly elders, preachers and others who are trying Against increasing odds to maintain some semblance of purity among the Lord's people. The only vaccine that will successfully counter this epidemic is found in the charge "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:2). It would not hurt to ponder the next verse which warns of those with itching ears who seek preachers to scratch where they itch.

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ANOTHER BUSY YEAR

1980 has been a very busy year for the editor. Good health was enjoyed through most of it and we were able to conduct classes at Expressway as planned and to work in 20 gospel meetings between March and November. These meetings took us from Miami to the shores of Lake Erie and from Virginia to Utah and many places in between. In addition opportunity was given to preach the gospel in five cities in Italy and in London, England. We saw more than 40 souls obedient to the truth in addition to a good number at Expressway over the year.

1981 looms before us with 19 meetings planned and another round of classes through the winter months at Expressway. Classes are planned to deal with Catholicism, Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Masonry and two sections of classes on the book of Jeremiah. Meetings are set from Ontario, Canada to Florida and from Pennsylvania to California. In a later issue we will list the meetings by months for the benefit of any readers in those areas who might want to come.

In August, 1980, the work at Expressway was blessed with the arrival of Jerry Parks and his family to live and labor among us. He has been preaching for a number of years and has done excellent work in Ohio and Kentucky. He came here from the Kettering church in Dayton, Ohio. We knew Jerry Parks when he first began preaching in the Akron, Ohio area. We anticipate a long and fruitful association in the work in Louisville.

RELIGIOUS SUPPLY CENTER

With the exception of the ads purchased by congregations to advertise their locations and meeting times for the benefit of moving and traveling brethren, our only advertising client is Religious Supply Center of Louisville, Kentucky. Our business relationship remains as pleasant as it was in 1973 when they began advertising with us. Their business has steadily grown. There are several reasons for this. One is that they are well stocked. Another is that their store is next to a branch of the Post Office and orders go out the same day they come in. Another is the friendly, "down home" attitude of David Key, the manager, and his wife Phyllis, and Marie Ricks and Mary Catherine (Wimpy) Threlkel. They know how to fill your orders, carry on a friendly conversation, take your money in payment and let you leave feeling good about having spent your money with such good folks. They tell us also that one reason for the growth in their business has been their advertisement through Searching the Scriptures. If you think nobody reads this paper, just ask them. Remember that they can fill your needs for literature, tracts, good books (even books for children), Bibles, maps, film strips, projectors, communion supplies, and even fiber glass baptisteries. Think of Religious Supply Center when you are ready to order next time.

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ABOUT H. E. PHILLIPS

Several readers have asked both brother Phillips and myself why we had several months in 1980 without material from him in the paper. Some are always quick to read something between the lines which is not there in the first place. During the past year, my beloved brother has battled health problems, stood by his lovely companion, Polly, through her sometimes serious health problems, and maintained a busier preaching schedule than was good for him. He has traveled much and has done much of his work when he was not up to par physically. He and I wish to assure all our readers that he is as much concerned for the future work of this paper as he has ever been. He has offered his apologies for not being able to write as much as he would like to. None of our readers could possibly regret the absence of his material from the paper more than I. Relax, brethren. There has been no breach between the former and present editor, of this paper. We stand where we have for many years as good friends and fellow-workers for the cause of our Lord. We happily anticipate receiving whatever material he is able to send and will have it right on the front page where it belongs. I am sure that thousands of brethren join me in praying for continued improvement in the health of both H. E. and Polly Phillips and that we may benefit from his timely writing for many years to come.

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**THE RESULTS
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In the first three chapters of Romans Paul shows that "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." But in the later part of chapter three (3:21-31), he give the readers hope by telling of God's plan to make men righteous. Because of the sacrifice of Jesus, God is "just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (3:26). An example of justification by faith is found in chapter four when Paul discusses, the justification of Abraham. In Romans 5:1-11 Paul turns his attention to the blessings or results that we have because we have been justified by faith. It is these blessings that we want to consider in this article.

Peace with God

"Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1). A man who is still in a sinful condition cannot have harmony and concord with God, because sin alienates us from God (Isa. 59:2). But because our sins have been forgiven, so that we may be counted as righteous, we now have peace with God. The peace has been made possible through Christ. He made it possible to be delivered from the wrath of God (Rom. 5:9).

Introduction Into Grace

Paul continues, "through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand." (Rom. 5:2a). The word PROSAGOGE, translated "introduction" (NASB) or "access" (KJV), literally means "a leading or bringing into the presence of PROS, to AGO, to lead), devotes freedom to enter through the assistance or favour of another" (Vine, p.21). It is only because we have Jesus as our high priest that we can come into God's presence (Heb. 10:19-22). But this blessing like all the others is based on certain conditions. We have the introduction "by faith." It must be a faith which includes "having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb. 10:22). And we also must "stand" in this grace. The word "stand" being in the perfect tense implies that we once took our stand in this grace and we continue to stand in it.

Rejoice In Hope

Those who have been justified by faith "exult in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 4:2b). Hope is desire plus expectation. The hope that we now have is of the glory of God. Peter says it is a living hope of the inheritance reserved in heaven for us (1 Pet. 1:3-4). Having such a great hope, we glory or boast.

Rejoice In Tribulation

It might be considered only natural to rejoice because we have the hope of heaven, but Paul adds, "we also exult in our tribulations" (Rom. 5:3a). Paul gives us the reason why we can rejoice even during times of affliction (5:3b-4). "Tribulation brings about perseverance." Overcoming the pressures of life helps to produce the good quality of patience within us (Jas. 1:2-4). Perseverance, in turn, brings about "proven character." While the KJV translates DOKIME "experience," the word means "approvedness, tried character" (Thayer, p. 154). By the perseverance of trials we pass the test and show ourselves approved before God (Jas. 1:12). But this proven character results in "hope." If our character is not approved before God and we know it, then we can have no hope of heaven (1 Jno. 3:20-21). But for these reasons we "exult in our tribulations."

Love of God In our Hearts

Because we have been made righteous, "the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us" (Rom. 5:5). The proof of God's love can be seen in the death of Christ (Rom. 5:6-8). He died while we were helpless (5:6a). He died at the right time (5:6b; Gal. 4:4-5) He died for the ungodly (5:6c-7). He died as a demonstration of God's love (5:8).

Saved From The Wrath Of God Paul mentions another result of justification by faith when he wrote in verse nine, "Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him." Because of sin mankind was under the wrath of God. To the Gentiles Paul said, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness" (Rom. 1:18). To the Jew he stated, "But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God" (Rom. 2:5). But now, Christ's blood has been shed as a propitiation to appease God so that we may be justified (Rom. 3:24-25).

Reconciled

Before justification we were enemies of God (Rom. 5:10a). But now Paul affirms, "we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Rom. 5:10). The word reconcile means "to change from enmity to friendship" (Vine, p. 260). We are now the friends of God. Abraham was also the friend of God when he was justified by faith and works of obedience to God (Jas. 2:21-24). We shall be saved by Jesus' life as He ever lives to make intercession for us (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25). "We also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation" (Rom. 5:11).

Conclusion

Are these great spiritual blessing yours? They cannot be unless you have been justified by faith. They, like all the spiritual blessings, are in Christ (Eph. 1:3). Are you in Christ (Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:26-27)?

A BEAUTIFUL WORD TURNED SOUR

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Just how sick-minded sodomites and lesbians came to be identified by the word "gay" is not easily apparent to me. *The American Heritage Dictionary Of The English Language, New College Edition* gives five definitions of the word "gay", the last of which is "**Slang. Homosexual.**" Of the other four, the only one even remotely suggesting anything at all about sexual activity is the fourth—"Dissolute, licentious." Yet somewhere along the way, that bunch of putrid perverts has so applied the word to themselves as to now practically monopolize it. Perhaps this is in part due to the fact that the sane and sensible segment of society which has such a revulsion to their "alternate life style" has just become reluctant to use a word which they so delightedly, publicly apply to their sinful mode of sexual expression.

I personally resent the fact that such a beautiful and expressive word as "gay" has been made so sour that youngsters cannot even hear the word nor use it among their peers without smirks and snickers as though the speaker were trying to infer something he was not actually saying. My *American College Dictionary* defines the word: "1. having or showing a joyous mood: **gay spirits, music, scenes, etc.** 2. bright or showy: **gay colors, flowers, ornaments, etc.** 3. given to or abounding in social or other pleasures: a **gay social season.** 4. dissipated; licentious: to **lead a gay life.**" Synonyms are listed as: "gleeful, jovial, glad, joyous, light-hearted; lively, vivacious, frolicsome, sportive, hilarious." Nor do any of these terms even remotely suggest homosexuality.

As we suggested above, perhaps the number four definition could apply to them. You see "dissipated" comes from "dissolute" which means "indifferent to moral restraints; given over to dissipation, licentious." This last term, "Licentious," is defined as "1. sensually unbridled; libertine; lewd. 2. unrestrained by law or morality' lawless; immoral. 3. going beyond customary or proper bounds or limits." Yes! Yes! this definition definitely applies to those reprobates. But I'm extremely doubtful that's what they mean by the term—but truthfully describe them, it does.

Of course, in their clamor for social acceptance, they seek to reject the appellatives which suggest they are dissolute, licentious, immoral. And in an effort to evade the Scripture's condemnation of their behavior, they will do as some did in the "Gays Parade" in Kansas City, June 21, 1980, crying out that "God continues to be alive and communicating to people on how to live today." They thus suggest a latter-day revelation of approval. Those who would declare the Bible's condemnation of their lifestyle are accused of promoting bigotry. Of course, any bunch of sinners who wanted to form a "community" could make the same accusation against any who condemned their sin. How about "the drunkards' community", "the thieves

community", "the liars' community", "the rapists' community" right along with the gay community?"

But the Bible, the word of God, condemns them nonetheless. Reverting to the dictionary definition, "licentious", we see them in the Bible term "lascivious", one meaning of which word is "licentious." See this sin condemned in Gal. 5:19, Eph. 4:19, etc. Their condition is vividly portrayed in Romans 1 as "uncleanness" (v. 24), "vile passions" (v. 26) and unnatural use (v. 27). For such behavior, those who so lived "received in themselves that recompense of their error which was due", and God "gave them up" (v. 24, 26, 28). This sin was prominent among the evils for which Sodom and Gomorrah were overthrown (Gen. 19:4-11). In the Mosaic period there was the simple declaration, "There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite of the sons of Israel" (Deut. 23:17). The next verse calls them "dogs." In these verses, both natural (man with woman) and unnatural (man with man) illicit relationships are condemned.

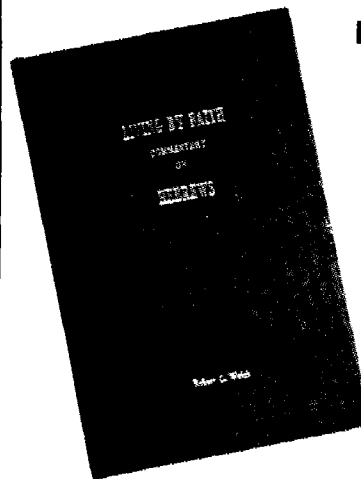
Since the homosexuals themselves speak of the heterosexual person as "straight", maybe instead of "gay" they should just be called "twisted" or "crooked", the obvious opposites of straight.

Some who would be benevolent toward the homosexual speak of them as "sick." They are sick all right—in the same sense in which all sinners are sick and for which the Great Physician came into the world. And they can be healed of that sickness just like other sin-sick souls can be healed—by coming to God through Christ (Jno. 6:44-45; 14:6) in gospel obedience which includes repentance of the sin (Acts 2:38; 17:30-31; Gal. 3:26-27).

HEBREWS

Living By Faith

Robert C. Welch



At last it's here. Faith and Facts Press has just finished Robert C. Welch's companion volume to his commentary on Romans, *Obedience Of Faith*, a commentary on Hebrews. This book is bound in hard back; 242 pages long. It consists of scores of essays on the difficult pas-

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IV. Self-Denial

Self-denial is basically self-control. There is no more necessary quality in a leader than self-denial or self-control. The question we will be looking at in this study is this: "Are you and the Lord in control of your life?"

This all important lesson is seen in Nehemiah 5:14-19. Here Nehemiah shows that the former governors laid burdens on the people by taking their food, money, and by domineering the people. In other words they ruled in such a way as to indulge themselves. "But I DID NOT DO SO, BECAUSE OF THE FEAR OF GOD. . . WE did not BUY LAND. . . ALL MY servants were gathered there for the work." Here is one of the most important principles of this study: to BE AN EFFECTIVE LEADER ONE MUST BE AN UNENCUMBERED INDIVIDUAL! Nehemiah was not interested in the pleasures of banqueting on the bread and wine of the people. He was not interested in the wealth to be obtained from the silver of the people. He was not interested in the buying and management of land. Well, if he was not concerned about pleasure, wealth, and land management power, what then was he interested in? GATHERING ALL OF ISRAEL TOGETHER TO DO THE LORD'S WORK (5:16)!

One of the great tragedies of our generation in the church is the attitude that "I want to be financially free and independent of the brethren." To do this, leaders, preachers, elders, etc., have in turn set up businesses that make profit selling to the very ones from which the preacher wants to be free. There is nothing wrong with the preachers "making tents" as did Paul. Yet the abuse of this is wrong, and in fact, is exactly what Nehemiah says he did not do. Nehemiah said he did not use the people with whom he was working for his own gain or profit. Instead, Nehemiah says he was busy doing what he came to do in the first place: gathering Israel together to rebuild the wall. Brethren, can there be a clearer lesson in all of God's word to demonstrate to us that those that lead have no business becoming wealthy at the expense of those that they are seeking to help? We need to see this lesson in our work and concentrate on rebuilding the walls of Zion rather than signing up new distributors for our business. How many preachers, teachers and elders have become so encumbered in the business side-lines that the Lord's work has suffered? Men taking full time salaries oftentimes take on devoting

themselves to everything but full time studies. They have developed into salesman and everything else other than for what they were hired. How can we preach about the sin of materialism from the pulpit in gospel meetings, while we spend hours in the living rooms of brethren telling them how rich they can become and how they too can drive a company Cadillac?

Brethren, we fail today because too many of us are burdened down with all the very functions that Nehemiah rejected! A mass of Scripture speaks forcefully to this simple fact that we need to understand. First, Heb. 12:1, . . . "let us lay aside every ENCUMBRANCE and sin which so easily ENTANGLES US, and run with endurance the race that is set before us." Secondly, 2 Tim. 2:4, "No soldier in active duty or service ENTANGLES HIMSELF IN THE AFFAIRS OF EVERY DAY LIFE. . ." Thirdly, 2 Peter 2:20 speaks of those who escape the defilements of the world only to become entangled again in them. There are basically three ways in which leaders can become entangled and encumbered:

First, in materialism. As we view the documentaries and read the news accounts of the primitive cultures that are starving to death across the world, one factor impresses our minds. Such an existence reduces life to its more basic essentials. The danger of a highly technological and affluent age is the excess baggage of materialism. Material possessions breed status, and stature breeds pride. Leadership that is concerned about material values will fail in a spiritual kingdom. "Know ye not that friendship with the world is enmity with God." "No man can serve two masters, God and mammon." A materialistic leader who wants to drive the most expensive type of car will seldom truly sacrifice his pleasure to give to the Lord so that lost souls can be reached. This type of leader will be more worried about hurting feelings than in saving souls.

Secondly, in service. Not only can we become encumbered and entangled with the love of material possessions, but we can also become so entangled that we have no time left to give to the Lord's cause.

Time is probably the most valuable commodity we have in this modern age. Success in the world takes time, effort and energy. When worldly success becomes our God, we will have nothing left to give to the Lord. The church today is failing because **NOBODY HAS TIME TO REBUILD THE WALL!** Some are eating the bread and drinking the wine of their own pleasures. Some are striving for the silver to be gained. Others are buying land, and the result is that **EVERYBODY** is too busy to lead. Find a congregation where the leaders are too busy in business, and you will find a dead church. But it was not so with Nehemiah because he refused to become involved and entangled in these **NON-ESSENTIALS**. When Paul called for the Ephesian elders to meet him at Miletus, had they been most elders of today's congregations, they would have been too busy to come! Many of our would-be leaders are too busy: too busy to visit; too busy to pray; too busy to even be concerned about all the things they are too busy to do. We have become so entangled in the world in which we live there is no time for the Lord.

Yet, there is another facet of this problem of time which deals not with those entangled with the world, but with those who are sincerely trying to serve as best they can. Usually, in every congregation many are caught up with the worldly encumbrances and the work falls on the shoulders of a selected few leaders. Now, how are they going to functionally carry the work load of all the others? The answer is we must properly understand the function of decision making: **HOW AM I GOING TO USE MY TIME?** It involves the constant process of decision making, of choosing between many things, any and all of which might be good. This, in turn, involves a choice between the GOOD and the BETTER. Every time we select a Better thing, 40 other **Good** things must receive a NO! There may be things which would be helpful and beneficial, but which do not fulfill the **number one objective** of leadership. Therefore, the effective leader must select between the better things and the best. In this way we can all become prepared to work with both hands and accomplish the Lord's will. Every leader must be able to make the correct decision between the Good, Better, and Best. Martha was doing a good thing as she prepared a meal for the Master, but Mary chose the BETTER part as she sat at His feet to hear every word from His lips. The church will die under "spiritual Marthas" who have not learned how to make the decision of leadership. This is why it is so important for every part of the body to function in its place. In Acts 6, if the Apostles had left the teaching of the Word and prayer in order to serve tables, then Satan would have been the victor. Spiritually each leader must function in his correct place, just as do the members of the physical body. A would-be Bible class teacher who manicures his/her lawn and then rushes through a lesson preparation is no leader. A would-be preacher who forsakes the preaching and teaching of the Word in order to make money is no leader.

Thirdly, in desires. Not only must we be in control of our time and material possessions, but we must manifest self-control in our desires. Sometimes the temptations we must necessarily be faced with in our attempt to maintain purity seem oppressive. However, another principle of leadership is to understand "OTHERS MAY, BUT I CANNOT!" To know what one cannot do is to appreciate self-control. To know that if I am to lead I cannot desire to fill my mind with lustful thoughts. To know that if I am to be pure in heart, I cannot desire to go certain places and see certain things.

In conclusion, we need to see the necessity of stripping our lives down to the essential elements and not to become entangled with the world. Worldly success takes time. Spiritual leadership takes time. To be a Spiritual leader as was Nehemiah, we must have one objective in mind: "GATHER TO WORK."

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A CHRISTIAN'S REVIEW
OF "CAMPBELLITE QUESTIONS
AND BAPTIST ANSWERS"

(No. 8)

Eugene Britnell

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"15. 'Is not the Baptist church a human organization deriving its name from, and built upon, the ordinance of baptism?' No. The name Baptist came from heaven, for God called John a Baptist. Baptist churches are built upon the one true and tried foundation, Jesus Christ, that the gates of hell cannot shake (Matt. 16:18)."

I deny that the Baptist Church came from heaven! The man doesn't live who can find the scriptures which so teach. Again he is wrong in saying that God called John "a Baptist." He was "the" Baptist—the only one. And what does John's name have to do with the Baptist Church? He was not a church, nor did he build one.

According to Baptist doctrine, the church was built before Peter made the confession which became the foundation upon which Jesus promised to build his church. So they have the church built before the foundation was laid. Just another Baptist error.

It is true, as the question implies, that the Baptist denomination is built upon the ordinance of baptism. Without baptism, there could not be a Baptist nor a Baptist Church on the earth! Speaking of baptism and church membership, the Baptist Manual by Hiscox says: "And while they cannot become members without baptism, yet it is the vote of the body which admits them into its fellowship or receiving baptism."

"16. 'How then can it be the household of God or church of the New Testament, which is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone?' Easily. Baptists alone claim Jesus Christ as the Founder and Head of their churches. All others have human heads and human founders. Baptists alone demand that every one received into their fellowship shall acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus and that He is Head over all things to His churches today. Campbellites have ruling elders usurping the Headship of Christ; and invest their ministry with episcopal authority in receiving members, thereby destroying the democracy and brotherhood of their members. Baptists only acknowledge the headship of Christ in all things."

When he says that Baptist churches alone claim Jesus as head and founder he states a falsehood. We make the same claim for the true church of Christ, for that's exactly what the Bible teaches (Eph. 1:22, 23; I Cor. 3:11). If, as he says, all religions except Baptists have human heads and founders, then all but Baptists are wrong, lost, and their religion is in vain (Psalm 127:1; Matt. 15:13) Yet he has already said in answer to questions 9 and 10 that millions of Methodists,

Presbyterians and others will be in heaven. How can that be true if they must be in the Baptist Church to be on the rock foundation and have Christ as head? Which time did he tell the truth?

He is wrong again in claiming that Baptists alone demand that those received must acknowledge Jesus as the head of the church. We teach and emphasize that very truth and ask all who come for baptism to confess Jesus as the Christ and Son of God (Acts 8:37).

When he says, "Campbellites (having references to churches of Christ) have ruling elders usurping the Headship of Christ," he states another lie! I know that's plain language, but that's exactly what it is. The Lord authorized an eldership, composed of a plurality of men who meet the qualifications of First Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9, for each congregation (Acts 14:23; 20:17; I Peter 5:1-4). They serve over the church (I Peter 5:2), but under the oversight and authority of Christ, the chief Shepherd (I Peter 5:4) and head of the church. Christ has all authority in the church, and he rules through the New Testament under which we all live.

In contrast, Baptists do not respect this congregational form of government. The most of them use a board of deacons, but in the New Testament they are described as servants in the church, not overseers. In Baptist churches, the local preacher is THE Pastor, the big sheep among the flock. For such there is no scriptural authority.

May I emphasize again that scriptural elders do not usurp the headship of Christ. He has given them a work, and delegated unto them the necessary authority to do the work (Acts 20:28; Heb. 13:7,17).

Churches of Christ do not exercise "episcopal authority in receiving members." Christ adds the saved to the church, the universal body (Acts 2:47). A congregation has some voice concerning those who are in its fellowship (I Cor. 5:1-70 2 Thess. 3:6).

Baptist churches are the ones guilty of exercising control over the members, for they govern and guide them through their human creeds, the Baptist Manuals. Upon receiving members, they demand an "experience," vote to decide whether or not to receive them into fellowship, and then demand that they submit to Baptist baptism before they will accept them. These are all human standards, but they are enforced by the Baptists.

"'17, 'If John the Baptist founded the Baptist church, are not Baptists the disciples of John, instead of Christ?' No, indeed. John did not found anything. He only prepared the material out of which the Lord built His own church. No Baptist contends that John founded a church. Jesus did that Himself."

Some Baptists have taught that John built the church, but we are willing to let Mr. Taylor state what he believes. He is right in saying that Jesus built His church. Since it was and is His, it should wear his name, not the name of John who did not build it and to whom it does not belong. It is easy to see why people conclude that Baptists are disciples of John instead of Christ, for they insist upon wearing a designation which was given to John rather than wearing the name of Christ. If the church was not built by John the

Baptist, why call it the Baptist church? And if Baptists want to be identified with Christ and not John, why don't they wear and defend the name of Christ which is "Christian" for the individual and "church of Christ" for the body of Christ? (To be

"CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS"

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John the Baptist was described as "the voice of one crying in the wilderness" (Mt. 3:3). Doing his preaching in the wilderness of Judea, he came proclaiming the necessity of repentance in view of the coming kingdom. He referred to many of the religious people of his day as a "generation of vipers" (Mt. 3:7) thus, in a very real sense, he also preached in a spiritual wilderness. That is, to a people destitute of true spirituality.

History has known many who cried out in a spiritual wilderness. Elijah cried out against the sins of Israel and the prophets of Baal (1 Kgs. 18). Jeremiah wept over the sins of Jerusalem and those who seemed not to care (Lam. 1:8,12). Ezekiel, Jonah, Peter, Paul, and a host of other great men of God. These men had several things in common that it is vital for people of our generation to notice.

First, they preached the will of God. Their sermons were not filled with references to the creeds of men for authority for what they taught. Their lessons were not designed with political reform being the motivational factor. They recognized that life came through the will of God. But today, even brethren have become so caught up in the social gospel that they have forgotten the need for a "thus saith the Lord."

Second, these great men of God were often few in number but even that had little effect upon them. "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil" (Exo. 23:2) was not just something they preached but something they practiced. Their task was not easy. They had to condemn sin in every form and that was not popular. But, nevertheless, they accomplished the task before them. They preached the will of God. Though they often had to suffer for their preaching, they realized it was a work that had to be done and, with the help of God, they did it.

The need of the hour is for more men with these same characteristics. Men who are interested in preaching a pure gospel even though they are in the minority and unpopular. Men who will not only preach from the pulpit but from the pew also and in their daily lives. Men who will spend hours after they get home from work studying and teaching their family and friends instead of watching hours of filthy television programs. In essence, the need is for more godly people who are more than just nominally interested in their own souls and the souls of others. Men who will give of themselves and their time to the Lord's cause. Now, what about you? The wilderness is there but there are too few crying.

Using Great Plainness of Speech

J. T. Smith

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HUMANISM IS ATHEISM

I have observed from the writings of many of those who are connected with the feminist movement (lesbians as well as "queers" who support the feminist movement) that they are humanists. When I first heard the word "humanist," it sounded like a perfectly good word. Then I began to investigate and find out just what humanism is.

Most people think that humanism is simply a deep concern for humanity. However, I obtained a copy of the Humanist Manifestos I and II, and it was very enlightening indeed. The first Humanist Manifesto was drawn up in 1933 and signed by thirty-four liberal humanists in the United States. They "defined and enunciated the philosophical and religious principles that seemed to them fundamental" (Page 3, Ibid). Perhaps this is why Jane Kathryn Conrad, a humanist, said, "Humanism is my religious belief. . ." (Humanists of the Southwest, October 1978).

On pages eight and nine of Manifesto I, I read, "First: Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created. Second: Humanism believes that man is a part of nature and that he has emerged as the result of a continuous process. Third: Holding to the organic view of life, humanists find that the traditional dualism of mind and body must be rejected. Tenth: it follows that there will be no uniquely religious emotions and attitudes of the kind hitherto associated with belief in the supernatural."

"Humanist Manifesto II was first signed by 114 individuals of prominence and distinction. (It was adopted in 1973-JTS). It has since been endorsed by countless numbers. . ." (Page 4, Ibid). On page sixteen of Manifesto II under the title "Religion" I read, "We find insufficient evidence for belief in the supernatural; it is either meaningless or irrelevant to the question of survival and fulfillment of the human race. As non-theists, we begin with humans not God, nature not deity." "While there is much we do not know, humans are responsible for what we are or will become. No deity will save us; we must save ourselves." "There is no credible evidence that life survives the death of the body" (Page 17).

On page seventeen on the subject of "Ethics" I read, "We strive for the good life, here and now." Then on page eighteen on the "Individual" they say, "In the area of sexuality, we believe that intolerant attitudes, often cultivated by orthodox religions and puritanical cultures, unduly repress sexual conduct. The right to birth control, abortion, and divorce should be

recognized. "... Neither do we wish to prohibit, by law or social sanction, sexual behavior between consenting adults. Individuals should be permitted to express their sexual proclivities and pursue their lifestyles as they desire."

Under the heading of "Democratic Societies" on pages 19 and 20 I read, "It also includes a recognition of an individual's right to die with dignity, euthanasia, and the right to suicide." "The principle of moral equality. . . Individuals should be encouraged to contribute to their own betterment. If unable, then society should provide means to satisfy their basic economic, health, and cultural needs, including wherever resources makes possible, a minimum guaranteed annual income."

And finally, under the heading of "World Community," page twenty-one they say, "We thus reaffirm a commitment to the building of world community, at the same time recognizing that this commits us to some hard choices."

You may be asking yourself, "Well, so what? What is Smith getting at?" I'm glad you asked that question. The answer is that thousands are joining in with the above philosophy. These thousands are working, yes I said working daily to try to promote these very principles and get laws passed that will promote such things. Betty Friedan, who was one of those who signed Humanist Manifesto II said in a speech last year as she launched stage 2 of her effort (the first being the Women's Liberation Movement, and now the second being the Human Liberation Movement), "The family is here to stay—only it comes in different forms these days to keep up with social and technological change. A family is a nurturing ground for human values for everyone." Others of this persuasion said the diverse forms here or coming along, include, in addition to the regular nuclear family, families trying out marriage; families living under terms of renewable contract marriages; communes of adults with no children and, perhaps, no sex; communes of adults with children; communes of older Americans of both sexes and single sex communes."

It is not enough that we have people who believe, teach and practice such filth, but in President Carter's appointment of a national IWY (International Women's Year) commission authorizing \$5 million for State and National IWY conferences, the President appointed 42 members of the council with Bella Abzug, who is a leading feminist, who as a congress-woman introduced a bill to give "civil rights" to homosexuals, chairman. It is my understanding that out of 42 women appointed by President Carter, 41 of them held the feminist view. These are the kind of people who are working to "liberate" the homosexuals, get laws passed that will change what "families" are and what these "modern" families can do. Why just recently a New Jersey Judge granted custody of 5 children to two practicing lesbians. This is one of the "homes," "families," the humanists (feminists, atheists) are striving for.

Someone may be saying, 'Oh, Smith is getting excited over nothing.' Perhaps you could have said that 15 years ago when some of these "queer" (I think the

word "gay" is too good a word to be used on such filthy rights movements started. Now, many of our people in Congress in "high places" are supporting the "queer movements." For example, we all know of our President Carter "pressuring" some in the State of Illinois to try to get the E.R.A. passed. Thankfully, he did not succeed. But how about the following?

It is hard to believe that those who are in "high places" in government do not realize or have knowledge of the Humanist Manifestos I and II. Yet according to the Free-Mind, a newsletter of the American Humanist Association, Volume 21, Number 6, the following telegram was read at the annual conference of the American Humanist Association which met in Orlando, Florida, April 7-9, 1978. This telegram was signed by President Carter.

"Those who participate in the Annual Meeting of the American Humanist Association are furthering a movement that greatly enhances our way of life. "As you know, the advancements of human rights has become the cornerstone of this administration's actions at home and abroad. "The work of your organization in this

area is, therefore especially gratifying to me, and I welcome this opportunity to applaud your important accomplishments. "May you have a most productive and inspiring 1978 session."

Surely Mr. Carter does not know of the desires and objectives of the Humanist movement. Gloria Steinam in the Saturday Review of Education, March, 1973 said, "By the year 2,000 we will, I hope, teach our children to believe in human potential, not God." Ms Steinam is a humanist.

Then why this article? These people who are "in the know" about humanism (whether Mr. Carter is or not I do not know) are endeavoring to bring our nation down to degradation. Let us not, as Christians, sit idly by while they are diligently working to do so, and let this happen without a fight for right and truth. We have the God-given-right to voice our convictions on these matters according to the laws of this great nation. Let us do so. Let us not sit idly by and "fiddle while Rome burns" and allow our great nation to "go under" without lifting a hand to stop it. Let's work in our community and in our schools. And, when we hear of bills that are about to be passed that promote humanism, remember, atheism is being promoted. Let us work and try to do that which will help our children and grandchildren to have the same freedoms we have had in worshipping God.

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"SONS OF GOD" AND THE "DAUGHTERS OF MEN"

By Luther W. Martin
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In the sixth chapter of Genesis, the Bible records the fact that the "sons of God" noticed that the "daughters of men" were beautiful (fair), resulting in unions from which "men of renown" were born. Some readers of Scripture have speculated rather wildly, concluding that the "daughters of men" came from the entirely different race of people other than Adam. It is to this theory that I would like to direct this article.

Children—Sons—Daughters

Throughout the Bible the words children, son or daughter, were used in different ways. (1) Denoting **relationship**, such as between parents and offspring. (2) Denoting **character**, such as a pupil takes on the character of his teacher. (3) **A natural sense may be ascribed to either (1) or (2), and (4) a figurative or symbolic application may be made of either (1) or (2).**

In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ spoke of "Peacemakers . . . being called 'the children of God'" (Mat. 5:9). Thus, those who take upon themselves the character of the Prince of Peace, becoming faithfully obedient to His gospel, become rightly called God's children. Christ further stated in Matt. 5:45, that those who loved their enemies, blessed those who cursed them, and prayed for those who spitefully used them . . . that ye may be the **children of your Father** which is in heaven." Here again, by adopting the conduct and character of Christ, people may become qualified to be termed God's children!

" . . . As many as received Him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God..." (John 1:12).

"... Gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad" (John 11:52).

I John 3:9-10 speaks of "children of God" and "children of the devil". Obviously, those who served God were termed "His children", while persons rejecting Christ and serving Satan were termed "children of the devil".

Elymas the sorcerer was called a "child of the devil" (Acts 13:10).

Judas, who betrayed Jesus, was called the "son of perdition" (John 17:12), after allowing Satan to control his thoughts and actions. The "Man of sin" mentioned in Paul's 2nd Letter to the Thessalonians, was also called the "son of perdition".

The Ephesian Christians were admonished to "walk as children of light" (Eph. 5:8). John recorded that Christ urged people to believe on Him that they might be "children of light" (John 12:36).

Christ spoke of the "children of the resurrection" in referring to the faithful at the judgment (Luke 20:36).

The Lord's disciples were figuratively referred to as the "children of the bride-chamber", with Christ as the bridegroom (Matt. 9:14-15).

Peter wrote of wives who were Christians, "Even as

Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well..." (I Pet. 3:6).

The "Scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites" reprimanded by Jesus in Matthew 23, were described as producing proselytes who were "twofold more the child of hell" than themselves (Matt. 23:15).

Belial or Beliar

The term "belial" or "beliar" is really not a proper name worthy of being given a capital "B", but is a word meaning "worthless, reckless, or lawless". This word is used some seventeen times in the Bible, with only one usage in the New Testament. "What concord hath Christ with Belial?" (2 Cor. 6:15). The Christians at Corinth were being warned NOT to be unequally yoked with unbelievers, in business, in marriage, or in any relationship that was so close and intimate as to place the Christian in an untenable situation. Verse 18 concludes . . . "I will receive you and be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." In the Old Testament:

Deut. 13:13—"children of Belial"

Judges 19:22—"sons of Belial"

Judges 20:13—"children of Belial"

I Sam. 1:16—"daughter of Belial"

I Sam. 2:12—"the sons of Eli were sons of Belial"

II Sam. 20:1—"man of Belial"

II Kings 21:13—"two men, children of Belial" And a number of other passages with similar expressions.

Christ as the "Son of Man"

Christ, in being born of Mary, a virgin, was the "son of Mary" in natural birth, but was the "super-natural" son of God, sired by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:20). He was frequently termed "the son of man" in the Scriptures because he "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). In the beginning, He was the Word, "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us ..." (John 1:14). He suffered as mankind suffers, "the Son of man hath not where to lay his head" (Matt. 8:20). "The Son of man came eating and drinking. . . ." (Matt. 11:19). ". . . Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him . . ." (Matt. 12:32). ". . . So shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matt. 12:40).

Conclusion

Although I have given only a very few examples of the uses of the words "son", "child", "daughter" or "children", I believe I have managed to clarify the subject of the "sons of God" and the "daughters of men" as used in Genesis. Surely after giving study to this subject, the idea that the "daughters of men" came from ancestors other than Adam, will be abandoned.

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ENTERING GOD'S FAMILY

William V. Beasley

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The most exalted privilege of man is to be a child of God: "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and we are" (I John 3:1). Such cannot truly be compared to being related to the royal families of Europe or Asia, being the offspring of a president, having ancestors who came to American on the Mayflower, or being filthy rich (Rockefeller, Hunt, Hughes, etc.). There is a great truth taught when we sing "The Child of a King": "A tent or a cottage, why should I care? They're building a palace for me over there! Tho' here I'm a stranger yet still I may sing: All glory to God, I'm the child of a King! I'm the child of a King, The child of a King! With Jesus, my Savior, I'm the child of a King" (verse 3).

A study of entering the family of God is **most important. Every legitimate means of one becoming a member of an earthly family is used in the New Testament of one becoming a member of God's family.** So far as I know there are only three. There are not three different ways of becoming a member of God's family, but there are three figures given. Salvation is one—God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34).

Adoption

The Old Testament did not legislate concerning adoption, but there are examples of adoption. Ephraim and Manasseh were adopted by Jacob (Gen. 48:5, 16). Moses was adopted by Pharaoh's daughter (Exo. 2:10), and Mordecai adopted Esther, his niece (Esther 2:7, 15). In the New Testament "adoption" is spoken of only by the apostle Paul, and then only when writing to churches which were predominately Gentile in composition. Paul uses "adoption" to denote the choice of Jehovah of the Israelites to be His special people (Rom. 9:4). "Adoption" is also used of the redemption of the body; its deliverance from sin, pain and death in the glorified state (Rom. 8:23). It is also used of God's reception of Christians as sons of God (Gal. 4:1-7; Eph. 1:1-5). The "**spirit of adoption**" (Rom. 8:15) enables us to feel toward God as children feel toward a loving father, and is distinguished from the "**spirit of bondage**," which compels one to feel toward God as a slave toward his master (Rom. 8:14-21).

Adoption is just as binding as birth. In our society, I have been told, even more so. In some states one cannot disinherit an adopted child. In speaking of "adoption" Paul probably borrowed the term from the Greeks or Romans. A Greek could adopt a son "with the invariable condition that the adopted son accept the legal obligation and religious duties of a real son" (ISBE, p. 58). Even in the Old Testament the binding force is seen. To Joseph Jacob said: "And now thy two sons... are mine; Ephraim and Manasseh, even as Reuben and Simeon, shall be mine" (Gen. 48:5). Esther was taken by Mordecai "for his own daughter" (Esther 2:7).

Try to imagine how terrible it would be if we

(Gentiles) held second-class citizenship in God's family; if we were inferior to Jewish Christians. Can you contemplate a different plan of salvation, or receiving different treatment (harder or easier). What if God showed less concern toward us than He did toward Jewish brethren? Such is not true. Adoption takes place in the mind of God and we are "his own."

Marriage

In the New Testament Jesus Christ is called the bridegroom (John 3:29) and the church is the bride (Rev. 21:2, 9). The bride figure speaks of **purity**: "**...that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ**" (2 Cor. 11:2; see also Eph. 5:25-27). This **purity** can be accomplished in one of two ways (this is true physically as well as spiritually). One can either not sin (perfect obedience) or one can receive forgiveness for sins committed. The one who is forgiven is **just as pure as** the non-sinner. Such, beloved reader, is our only hope!

Birth

Birth is the most natural/popular way of entering a family. The child of God today must be "**born anew**" (John 3:3, 5). It would be well to notice how the marriage figure ("**. . . having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word. . .**"-Eph. 5:26) and birth figure ("**. . .having been begotten again .. through the word of God. . .**"-I Pet. 1:23) agree. These passages (Eph. 5:23-26; I Pet. 1:23; John 3:3-5; Gal. 3:23-4:7) point to one thing: **BAPTISM OF A PENITENT BELIEVER**. At this point we are born anew, married to Christ and God adopts us as His children.

Conclusion

Would you be born of God? married to Christ? adopted as a son (daughter) of God? "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved..." (Mark 16:16).

PREACHING IN TODAY'S WORLD

Truman Smith
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Henderson, TX 7592

George Plagenz, of the Cleveland Press, visits a different church each week and then writes a review of his findings. He is particularly concerned with the preachers and the job they do in preaching their sermons each week. He rates worship service, music, sermon and friendliness, granting up to three stars in each category. In nearly two years Plagenz, who listened to many pulpit "greats" a generation ago, has found "only two preachers worth three stars," he says.

While we recognize that George Plagenz is only able to judge the quality of preaching according to worldly standards, what he has to say is revealing, and we might do well to consider some of the things he has to say.

He notes that the tone of preaching has changed in

recent years. As a case in point, he refers to a paper, which is a sister magazine of the *Christian Century*, known as *The Pulpit*, renamed itself some ten years ago *Christian Ministry*. This change was made in an effort to take some of the "sting" out of the name of the magazine. He blames this attitude in part on the backwash of the 1960s. "A lot of men went into the ministry for reasons other than preaching. They were interested in social action, so now we're stuck with them," says Plagenz. So, you see, there is a lack of fervor and zeal in the delivery of many sermons. Somehow the term "minister", has a sound that many prefer in the place of "preacher." To them, it does not sound so "harsh." They do not like a bold preacher, one that reproves, rebukes, exhorts with "all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:2). But with a "soft-pedal" "minister" in the pulpit, the sinner can be more comfortable. He can leave when the service is ended with the feeling that the "church" has sheltered him for that time and has given him a place of refuge. To him, this is what preaching is to accomplish and what religion and the church is all about. Truly, the devil wants nothing more than this! The devil's purpose is accomplished when the sinner becomes convinced that his sins are respectable enough that his church acquiesces in them by not ever "getting on his toes." Of course, you and I know that many of these denominational churches have even gone into practices such as dancing, gambling, drinking, etc., etc., all in the name of religion. Naturally, people come flocking! Even many of our own brethren have learned to spice-up their church activities with things that appeal to the flesh. The devil certainly is happy with this. Certainly, he's not going to fool around with them, for he already has them under his control!

The December 31, 1979 edition of *Time* magazine reported that "Many preachers devote far too little time to research, reading and writing in sermon preparation." The report continued: "The problems are compounded when the clergyman is a liberal in theology, which may mean that he is uncertain about the importance and accuracy of the Bible or even about the urgent need for biblical teaching."

Yes, that's how far many denominational "ministers" have gone. But brethren, there is even a need for us also to allow, yea, require preachers of the gospel to spend enough time in study and preparation to be able to present biblical and forceful sermons that will cause the sinner to be "pricked" in his heart (Acts 2:37), and be willing to repent of his sins, and be baptized into Christ for the remission of his sins (Acts 2:38). The sinner simply cannot be comfortable under the sound of such preaching. When the apostle Paul preached to Felix, the record says that Felix trembled (Acts 24:25).

The kind of preaching which Paul and the other apostles did was definitive in nature. They spelled out in bold terms the difference between truth and error (2 Cor. 3:12). It seems that they were not concerned in the least about whether or not they would get invited back.

Brethren, let's be like them and tell it like it is!

GOD'S WILL—REALLY?

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Macon, Ga. 31210

A baby one year old dies after doctors have used every mechanical device available and all of the knowledge they possess to keep her alive, then we say, "God's will was done". A soldier in Viet Nam falls on the field of battle and Dad says, "I can hardly bear the loss of my son, but I must bow to the inscrutable will of God!" Cancer strikes and we wonder why God wills such a kind and good person to suffer in such an agonizing and painful way. An auto accident destroys the life of a friend and seriously injures another and we say, "We don't understand it but we must see the will of God in this calamity". These statements raise serious questions about our understanding of God's will. Did Jesus and the apostles go against God's will when they healed the sick and raised the dead? Are sickness, accident, death and disease the will of God? Does a doctor work against the will of God in a life devoted to alleviating human suffering?

That there is confusion, thoughtlessness, ignorance and rebellion concerning the will of God is very evident in what we hear about it daily. The expression "the will of God" and similar statements are found in the Bible and one must be careful to use them in the same context of meaning as they are used there. It may be well to state here that many passages of scripture (e.g. I John 2:17, Ephesians 6:6) indicate that the Bible is God's revealed will for man to follow. The only way we can know God's will for our salvation, both in becoming a child of God by the new birth, and in our manner of life from then on, is revealed only in His Word. In this article we are NOT dealing primarily with the Bible and salvation, but with God's rule of the world in the every day mundane things of which life consists and man's relation to those things, A small hardback book, almost tract size, by Leslie D. Weatherhead set me to thinking about the Christians response and attitude toward life's happenings.

The death of the Viet Nam soldier was the will of the Viet Cong, not the will of God, even though God may be using the total conflict in a providential way to work out His purposes. The auto accident may have been due to carelessness, drunkenness or mechanical failure, it was not the will of God. Death is an enemy of God for we read, "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (I Cor. 15:26). Sickness, death and disease should be blamed on the right one. "Should not this woman whom Satan hath bound, lo these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond . . .?" (Lk. 13:11-17). The works of Jesus, the Apostles and doctors against disease and death is God's will! It is like the injury our child receives in learning to ride the bicycle we bought for him. The injury was WITHIN our will because we wanted him to learn to ride, but certainly it was not our in-

tentional will that he be hurt or killed. Would any be so ignorant or thoughtless as to say, "His father willed that he be injured"?

Perhaps many people have taken solace in attributing some blessing or affliction to the will of God and take great comfort in such a haven, but anything based on a false premise must ultimately be of no value. Truth is the rock upon which we should base all of our relationships with God and man.

There are however the problems presented in the first paragraph of this article that I am sure we can more clearly understand with some thoughts in conjunction with the revealed will. It is the mundane, the every day occurrences that we want to discuss here. Every day our own personal will is expressed in what we do and what we say. Homer Hailey made a statement in 1975 in a lecture on "Prayer and Providence" which must be recognized in any discussion of God's will as relates to the Christian life or to the every day life of the sinner. "Through the Hebrew nation, Israel, God brought His Son into the world. In doing this He controlled the destinies of kingdoms, conditions and individuals, always working in a way that DID NOT INVADE NOR VIOLATE THE SANCTITY AND SOVEREIGNTY OF HUMAN WILLS". I emphasize these last words in capital letters because we believe that, whether saint or sinner, we are all free agents to determine our own destinies, and that God will not invade or violate that which He has given man.

In 2 Peter 3:9 we have a well known and oft quoted verse of scripture which reads, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward not willing that any should perish, but that all would come to repentance." From the fact that God is not willing that people perish, it is evident that God's INTENTIONAL will for man is that man would come to repentance and be saved. But God does not force His intentional will on anyone. If He did we would have universal salvation. In Matthew 18:14 Jesus said, "Even so, it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." In spite of God's will many little children die. If His will were done, not an infant or child would die. Death is an enemy of God, yet who would deny that He uses it to His purposes? God's intentional will for Israel was that they should enter the promised land, obey Him and have permanent possession of the land that flowed with milk and honey. Human will interfered however, so they were cast out. God intends good for man and not evil. Even our suffering is to be for doing well, not evil. This is God's will (I Peter 3:17). There seems little doubt that the soldier killed in Germany in a World War died either by the will of the Kaiser or Hitler. The Viet Cong willed the death of many a soldier in Viet Nam. President Lincoln died at the personal will of J.W. Boothe, not at the hand of God. Were we discussing Divine providence, we would point out how He uses man's conduct to work out His own purposes.

Due to the circumstances of life we may not be able to carry out God's intentional will for us. Think of a

lady friend of the family who is past 50 years of age and would have loved to marry and have a family of children. She has stated this, but she was never asked to be a bride. In God's overall plan, we can be sure God intended for the younger women to marry, bear children and replenish the earth. Can this woman, under the CIRCUMSTANTIAL will of God, have eternal salvation? Most assuredly, any who will hear and obey the gospel can be saved, whether young or old, single or married (Rev. 22:17, John 3:16 and a dozen other passages). A passage teaching that we are to take advantage of circumstances is Galatians 6:10: "As we therefore have opportunity, let us do good unto all men".

The battle against disease and death is the will of God because Jesus, the apostles and others spent long hours and days in this work to establish in the minds of those healed and those who watched that their word was the power of God, the same power that raised the dead and healed the sick. Jesus placed the blame on Satan for the infirmities we suffer in the flesh (Luke 13:11-17). Satan used sin to bring death and disease into the world (Hebrews 2:14). Certainly we don't know very much about HOW God answers prayer or works things out for good for His people. Our prayers for the sick and dying are in harmony with God's will and need not express a doubt by praying, "if it be thy will, may John get well and be restored to his normal health". Farther along we may understand all but for now we must ask in faith without doubting.

Another aspect of His will has to do with His overall knowledge and foresight. The ULTIMATE will of God cannot be changed or held back or put forward by the will or prayers of the saints nor by the legislation of men. God willed the creation of the universe, and He wills its future destruction at a time to suit His eternal purpose and wisdom. He willed that in the fullness of time His Son would enter the world and shed His precious blood so man's sins could be forgiven. He willed the scheme of redemption would be worked out in such a way that no man nor group of men could say, "We worked it out this way". It was to be by His grace. By His ultimate will we will all stand before the judgment bar of Christ to be judged according to the deeds done in the body, whether we want to do that or not. He wills it!

The action and words of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane sets an example for all of us in our attitude toward God's will in conflict with our human will. Jesus prayed, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matt. 26:39). It is evident that the will of Jesus the man, the human being, was not the same as the will of the Father and that Jesus wanted a change if possible. As a human being He was saying that if there is no other way, I will do Your will. Our prayers should follow this pattern of expressing to God our will in a matter but if there is a better way, not our will but the Father's be done.

Now we have a very logical question in view of the foregoing, "How can I determine the will of God in a certain decision making situation over which I

exercise some control"? Should we move to another town? Should I change jobs? My husband has been unfaithful to me, should I divorce him? A person lost in woods can determine North, South, East and West if he knows woodcraft. There are means we can use to determine the choice we should make, the direction we should go if we will use those means in trying to determine God's will.

First, when a decision is to be made, the one who knows God best, by close association, by study of His word, can best be assured as to the proper thing to do. He can pray continually for God's providential working in the matter. Pray without ceasing. A group of women working in an office desire to buy their boss a gift for his birthday so they phone his wife who knows him best and ask her what he might appreciate. Buying a dress for a deceased person, the daughter she has lived with the last ten years says. "I know what Mom would like to be dressed in for the final viewing." The mortician can only guess, the daughter knows. Her close association guides her in the choice. By living close to God day by day, year in and year out, we can best determine what the Father's will may be as we search for the right thing to do.

Secondly, your conscience can often be of help when the thing involved has moral or spiritual consequences. This would apply more forcibly according to how well you have trained that conscience by learning the things written in the word of God. As baptism is the answer of a good conscience, so also other acts in life guided by His word can be the answer of a good conscience.

Thirdly, the use of common sense, facing in a realistic and hard-nosed way the pros and cons of a situation, can be of great help. The person who moves his family of six young children into an area where there are no other Christians knowing full well he doesn't have the zeal or hope (desire plus expectation) of starting congregational worship, is not using common sense. I have seen this happen and then the parents wonder where they went wrong when their children quit traveling long distances to church, marry outside God's family, divorce and their daughter date men still married to someone else. Objectivity, the use of unbiased reasoning, common sense, might mean less income but greater spiritual security for those we love and even brought into the world. Is God's will that inscrutable in things like this?

Fourth, ask help in decisions from those even more experienced in the Lord's work than we, to assist with their viewpoint. Elders, deacons, preachers, older women, all would be glad to help in determining God's will if you have the humility and desire to seek their suggestions. Many books and pamphlets cover a wide variety of subjects, and if written by Godly people, may be of real assistance. Jesus stated a principle which can apply in areas other than prayer to God, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you" (Mt. 7:7-12). Read the next verses too.

Fifth, don't rush into situations. Take as much time as you logically can to make your decision. God's will may not be determined in ten minutes. We

tend to desire instant answers but the wise person really seeking to know, will take time to seek out help in prayer, study, friends and meditation. God may want more time to work it out than you are willing to give.

Sometimes we would do well to ask the question, "Do I really want to know God's will or am I seeking sanction to do my own will?" How often we run into this situation when young men or women come to the preacher or elder and ask about marrying a certain person they are in 'love' with. Advice is lightly taken. Another question equally important might be, "Do I have the courage to do His will when I learn what it is?" Maybe I am like the rich young ruler and desire eternal life, but if it costs me doing my thing, or giving up what I have gained in this world's goods, I don't have the courage to do it. Be assured of this, when we do to the best of our ability what the Lord wants us to do, we can have that peace that passeth understanding." Our conflicts are resolved and we can go on our way rejoicing in the full assurance of faith. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:8-9).

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WHERE ARE YOU LOOKING?

Luther A. Bolenbarker
1020 Maxey Rd.
Houston, TX 77015

In the fourteenth chapter of Matthew immediately after feeding the five thousand Jesus retired to the hills to pray. Then in the fourth watch of the night He came walking on the Sea of Galilee toward the disciples who were in a boat rowing hard against the wind. When the disciples saw Jesus they thought He was a ghost, but He assured them, "Take heart, it is I; have no fear." Peter responded, "Lord, if it is you, bid me to come to you on the water." Jesus said, "Come." Peter kept his eye on Jesus and went walking across the waves. But, then he began to look at the wind and waves and started to sink. "Lord save me," he cried out. Jesus reached out His hand and caught Peter, giving him a stern rebuke for his "little faith."

You and I are in a storm on the sea of life. The waves of disappointment, frustration, anxiety and doubt buffet us from every side. Sin is everywhere, the devil is just waiting for us to slip and remove our eyes from Jesus. When we do then Satan has us and he knows it.

Where should we look? If we look back we may see the failures of the past. If we look toward the future we may be overwhelmed by the uncertainties of life. If we look only at human wisdom we could become disillusioned. If we look only at our possessions we will soon see that moths, rust and inflation consumes them. If we look at our earthly friends we soon see inconsistency. If we look only at our health the look itself may make us feel sick. If we look inside ourselves we see our own weakness and the power of sin against which we struggle.

Where then can we look? "Only to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith . . ." (Heb. 12:2). Jesus is the same "yesterday and today and forever" (Heb. 13:8). As long as we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, we will lose sight of all the trivial, insignificant things of this life. It is in Jesus that we find our strength and not in ourselves. Where are you looking? Look to God's Son, Jesus.

THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

Send all News Items to: Wilson Adams, 317 Trinkle Ave., N.E., Roanoke, VA 24012

PREACHER'S NEEDED

DELAND, FL—The church which meets at 823 North Boulevard will be in need of a full-time gospel preacher by mid-November. A preacher's house and full support are furnished by the congregation. All interested parties write in care of P.O. Box 1966, Deland, FL 32720, or call Elmer VanCleaf (904) 734-3544.

NORTHWOOD, OH—The congregation here is in need of a full-time preacher. We can supply full support to a man and his family. Our attendance averages 50+ and we are anxious to work with a preacher who will boldly speak the truth and help with the personal

work in the community. Northwood is a suburb of Toledo. Please call or write Charlie Shreve (419) 865-8338 at 6818 Fenwyck Rd. #3, Maumee, OH 43537.

SUPPORT NEEDED

RICHARD SIMS, 108 Wells Fargo Trl, Jacksonville, AR 72076. The faithful church in Ruston, LA is made up of about 20 dedicated Christians. The congregation has a house that has been nicely converted into a meeting house. Brother Earl Hartsell started this work about five years ago and has now moved to Nashville, TN to
(Continued on Page 294)

Florida College Annual Lectures

January 26—29, 1981

THEY BEING DEAD YET SPEAK

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
9:00		F. B. Srygley Edgar Srygley	H. Leo Boles: Distinguished Preacher, Teacher, Debater, Commentator Yater Tant	C. R. Nichol: Princely Preacher, Debater, and Author Connie W. Adams
9:55		G. C. Brewer: Perennial Protagonist Ron Halbrook	T. B. Larimore: Eloquent Preacher Earl Kimbrough	N. B. Hardeman: Orator, Evangelist, Educator, and Debater James R. Cope
10:50		M. C. Kurfees: Careful Scholar and Astute Author Irvin Himmel	R. L. Whiteside: Interpreter of the Word Almon Williams	W. Curtis Porter: The Debater's Debater Eugene Britnell
11:45		John T. Lewis: Beloved Builder of Churches Herschel Patton	J. D. Tant: Colorful Frontier Preacher Claude Wilsford	Foy E. Wallace: Militant Warrior James W. Adams
Evening	Men and Their Times: A Sociological Perspective "Colly" Caldwell	R. H. Boll: Premillennial Visionary Robert Welch	Daniel Sommer: Thunder on the Right Earl Robertson	B. C. Goodpasture: Leader of Institutional Thought Ed Harrell

THEY BEING DEAD YET SPEAK By Melvin Curry

The Florida College Lectureship, to be held January 26-29, 1981, will present biographies of sixteen gospel preachers who have exerted tremendous influences on the current trends among churches of Christ. Names like **Srygley, Boles, Larimore, Tant, and Kurfees** were household words when we were growing up, and the prospect of learning more about them thrills me. Some of the others—like **Hardeman, Porter, and Wallace**—I have had the privilege of knowing personally though none intimately. All of the men studied made their own unique contributions toward the realizing of "Apostolic Christianity" in the 20th Century. In fact, many of them were quite controversial and promoted innovations that divided churches. This material promises to be rich and informative. You may wonder why certain men were left out. Obviously, limitations had to be imposed because of time and space; therefore, we tried to choose the individuals who seemed to be most influential. Also, common sense dictated that we not include any living preachers although many are worthy of such honor.

The 1982 Florida College Lectureship will continue the same general theme but will center more on the controversial issues in which these men were involved along with some problems that have developed since their time. Issues such as Premillennialism, institutionalism, Bible colleges, unity-in-diversity, instrumental music, carnal warfare, and marriage and divorce have been suggested and will be treated from the historical viewpoint so that they may be seen in their proper perspective. For example: What men were tied to what issues? What effect has a given controversy had on the directions churches are going in the mid-Twentieth Century? Our hope is that these two books of lectures will become source-books for the study of contemporary church history.

If you have any suggestions about future lectureships, we will be happy to hear from you and will give them careful consideration. As an educational institution, we desire to achieve quality within the bounds of propriety.

preach. The brethren in Ruston have asked me to move there to work with them. We plan to move to Ruston in December and will need a great deal of financial support. I am 32 years old, married with three small sons. I have six years full-time experience: four years with the Westside church in Aurora, IL and two years with the McArthur Dr. church in Jacksonville, AR. For references brethren may contact Ray Ferris, Karl or Leslie Diestelkamp, Keith or H.F. Sharp, or Phil Roberts. I can be contacted at 108 Wells Fargo Trl., Jacksonville, AR 72076. Phone (501) 982-8396. If any of the readers of STS can help us in this work, we and the brethren in Ruston would greatly appreciate hearing from them.

NEW WORK IN BRENHAM, TX

WARREN R. KING, P.O. Box 1528, Brazoria, TX 77422. With a large number of churches, a person may be surprised to learn that a huge portion of the state has existed for years with no conservative congregation! It is even more surprising to discover that this area lies between two very large centers of population, Houston and Austin. The town of Brenham lies roughly in the middle of this huge area. On October 5 a group of about 50 people assembled for the first time in a renovated building to worship God. The Highway 290 church of Christ in Brenham was begun. Plans are to meet at 2:30 p.m. each Sunday during October, then begin a morning and evening schedule in November. The building is located on Highway 290, the main route between Houston and Austin, about 1 1/2 miles east of Highway 36. My family and I have made plans to move to Brenham in June of 1981. Current commitments with the church in Brazoria, where I am now preaching, prevent our moving before that time. Of course, to be able to meet the challenge effectively, I will need the support of faithful brethren in other places. Although there will be no need for support until June, I would like to have my support committed by January. This will allow me to spend time in laying "groundwork," rather than searching for support. Your spiritual support will also be greatly appreciated. Any inquiries concerning the work in Brenham may be directed to Carlos Lawhun, Rt. 2, Box 245, Brenham, TX 77833 (713) 836-4833. Inquires concerning my background and work may be sent to the elders of the church in Brazoria, TX, or the elders of the church in Yoakum, TX. Several preachers may also provide some information concerning my background including Keith Sharp (Conway, AR), Robert McDonald (Odessa, TX), W. R. Jones (Houston, TX), Elmer Moore (Palestine, TX), James Wilson (Paris, TX), and Ardie Brown Jr. (Beaumont, TX). My address is P.O. Box 1528 Brazoria, TX 77422. Phone (713) 798-2923. May the Lord continue to bless us all in His service.

INSTITUTIONALISM ALMOST DEFENDED DICK

BLACKFORD, P.O. Box 225, Owensboro, KY 40302. On Sept. 3, 1980, this writer accompanied Dale Barnes (preacher for the Antioch church of Christ) to the home of John Gaines (preacher for the Yeaman church of Christ) to make arrangements for a two night discussion of the issues regarding the work of the church in benevolence and evangelism. (Through previous correspondence these men had agreed to such a discussion). At that time an agreement was typed up by brother Gaines and signed by both men. The discussion was to take place on September 18-19, 1980, at the Antioch building. After advertising had already been done, brother Gaines backed out of the agreement just three days before the

discussion was to begin. Brother Barnes had taken off work from the coal mines for a week and a half to allow him time to prepare for the debate and had spent a considerable amount of money in preparation. Brother Gaines is a four-year graduate of Freed-Hardeman College and is engaged in full-time work with the Yeaman church.

About the time I reach the point that I think nothing will surprise me, something does! In this case it was a big disappointment. My disappointment is two-fold. (1) It is nearly impossible to get digressive brethren to defend the towers they are building for which they have not counted the cost (I am talking about division), and (2) A gospel preacher has not kept his word. At this point if brother Gaines could prove institutionalism to be scriptural it would not help his loss of integrity. He stands in danger of the eternal consequences which befall all covenant breakers (2 Tim. 3:1-5; Ecc. 5:4; Rom. 1:31). I had to think long and hard if this had ever happened before and finally remembered a case where a Baptist preacher had backed out of a discussion in which he had signed to participate. This leaves brother Gaines in mighty poor company.

Brother Gaines reminds me of a hit n' run driver. When he had the advantage of the pulpit he preached on the issues in this area and conducted a one-sided debate in which he had no live opponent to expose his error. But getting him to engage in a fair discussion was like pulling hen's teeth.

When Dale and I visited brother Gaines he tried every way in the world to get out of the proposed discussion. The only reason he would do so was because he had said he would in their correspondence, but the arrangements had to be almost totally upon his terms. Dale bent over backwards to let him have his way just so the discussion would materialize. The one encouraging note at the time (which can now be viewed with great irony) was a statement made by brother Gaines. He said he saw no point in putting the agreement in writing because "we are both Christians." (If that doesn't mean anything what does)? We went ahead and got the agreement in writing and he typed it up and signed it right there. If his spoken word was as good as he claimed I thought surely his signed agreement ought to mean something, but it didn't!

DEBATES IN VIRGINIA

WILSON ADAMS, 317 Trinkle Ave. N.E., Roanoke, VA 24012. This is to inform the readers of STS that two religious discussions took place in the Old Dominion during October. On the dates of Oct. 6, 7, 9, 10. Tom O'Neal met Roy Hall on the located preacher question. The discussion was held in the Richlands Jr. High School in Richlands, VA. Then the next week Tom O'Neal met Walter Bailey of Newport, KY on the same issue. This discussion was held on the nights of Oct. 16, 17 in the church building at Cedar Bluff, VA. I attended those two nights and can say that Bro. O'Neal ably defended the truth. This question has caused much division in that part of the state and we are hopeful that these discussions helped some to see the truth. Dover Stacey moderated for Tom O'Neal.

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