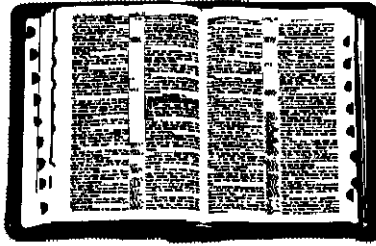


SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

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



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

"DEVOTED TO THE SEARCH FOR DIVINE TRUTH"

VOLUME XXV

FEBRUARY, 1984

NUMBER 2

THINK ON
THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 1631
Lutz, FL 33549



YATER TANT'S INVOLVEMENT WITH CROSSROADS

"I charge thee in the sight of God, and of Jesus Christ, who shall judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables. But be thou sober in all things, suffer hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill thy ministry" (2 Timothy 4:1-5).

In January, 1980 I learned that brother Yater Tant had been invited to speak to the Wednesday evening assembly at Crossroads church of Christ, Gainesville, Florida, on December 5, 1979. I had some idea about how he might have been invited, but I was not sure. If my idea was not true, I could not explain the occasion except that Yater or Crossroads was changing.

I talked with a friend who had some knowledge of what had occurred and he told me how to obtain a tape of his speech. I got the tape and listened to it. I had some questions about brother Tant's influence as the result of what he did not preach while he was at Crossroads.

I went to Birmingham, Alabama in April, 1982 and talked to brother Tant about what he was writing in Vanguard and about his partial endorsement of the Crossroads church. He continues to believe that his

speaking at Crossroads will do them good, and eventually he will get other churches to accept Crossroads. If he does not believe that now, I do not know WHY he continues to seek opportunity to fraternize with them.

I asked him why he did not tell Crossroads what was wrong with the social gospel which they preach and practice. He said they probably would never have invited him back, and by returning he could teach them again. But I asked, if he continued to be mute about the things wherein they were wrong, what good would it be for him to keep preaching to them?

The elders at Crossroads wrote letters to Reuel Lemmons, Jimmie Lovell, Yater Tant and Guy N. Woods, inviting them to speak on the 1982 Florida Evangelism Seminar, Friday, August 13. They were to speak on the topic, "That They All May Be One. Only Yater showed up to speak, but with no more effect than the first time he spoke at Crossroads.

I have no desire whatever to misrepresent in any way brother Tant's connection with the Crossroads church in Gainesville, Florida, nor do I want to misapply or misuse any of his quotes and statements of the glowing reports of the great work being done by this false religious system. I think I understand what he means in his reference to their "success," but I sharply disagree with both his evaluation of their work and his Crossroads "Total Commitment" concept.

I fully understand the fleshly ties and the friendship-business bonds that explain why some take a very lenient and tolerant view of the known sins of Crossroads. It explains the silence of some on the scriptural departure of 14th Street as it progressed toward the present Crossroads System as it is today. In particular, I can explain to my satisfaction the influence that moves Yater Tant toward the Crossroads church and its work. Aside from the fact that Yater is compelled by the desire to bring all "factions" among churches of Christ together in one congregational function, regardless of differences and the basis of differences, he has emotional and nostalgic ties with some in "high places" at Crossroads. His goal for unity is good, but his method is impossible and unscriptural! I love him for trying to provoke peace and unity among brethren, but I cannot

strike hands with him on any plan he has proposed in the last three or four years.

Brother Tant is fascinated by the zealous program they call "total commitment," which he obviously believes will achieve two goals which every sincere Christian desires: salvation of souls, and unity of divided groups in the church.

In the first place, I do not believe Yater Tant knows what the Crossroads system really is. When he explained to me that he saw and talked to young men and women, and attended some of their "soul talks" and prayer sessions, and he did not find such as I described, I told him they had provided a show case for him, and he saw what they wanted him to see.

I have not been to any of the meetings or "soul talks," but I have talked to many who have been there and are still part of the system, and they were not "thrown out" for any reason. They told me what takes place and how the plan works. In most cases they thought they were teaching me "a better way."

Brother Tant is also drawn to Crossroads because he is thrilled with the number baptized. Several have charged that Crossroads baptizes many of their converts two or three times. They are charged with making them so guilty and unhappy that they want to be baptized again, and this explains the large number of baptisms. Chuck Lucas vehemently denies this both publicly (on tape) and in print. I do not have the proof in hand to charge him with lying. I do know this: by some method Crossroads has increased her membership to several times what it was when Lucas arrived in Gainesville in 1967.

I do not believe the problem is with "re-baptism" of young converts, but with the unscriptural methods of indoctrination and discipline of those baptized. I am concerned with the great emphasis on the social gospel and the commercial involvement of the church. I am concerned about the error taught and practiced relating to the organization of the church. These are the things I know to be contrary to the word of God. Brother Tant, why baptize people into such a mess of doctrinal corruption regarding the nature, organization, name and work of the church?

Yater Tant is "totally committed" to bringing about UNITY among brethren at about any cost. Crossroads has an attraction for him because he thinks the zealous program will promote unity in action that will bring parties together. Tant makes it known that he has aimed his biggest guns at bringing together the "pro-institutional" and "anti-institutional" brethren to worship and work together as one body. He says, "Anyhow, for my remaining years, I still want to pursue a course that will lead eventually to the unity of God's people. I realize that liberalism is making serious inroads into the brotherhood, particularly among the larger 'pro' institutional churches; but if brethren in both the 'pro' and the 'anti' congregations can become truly committed and involved in reaching the lost, liberalism will have a very difficult time in creating much of a problem." (Editorial, Vanguard, December, 1981).

(Continued on Page 4)

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Editorial

Connie W. Adams

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CONTRIBUTIONS AND BUYING SERVICES

Until the problems surrounding church contributions to various private business enterprises began to lead to division, brethren did not seem to have much trouble understanding the difference between a church purchasing a service from a business and making a contribution to that same business. All seemed to understand that in the realm of expediency congregations had a right to pay a service company for supplies they needed in the execution of scriptural work.

For example, a meeting house is an expedient to the command for Christians to assemble (Heb. 10:25). There is a vast difference in paying a construction company for supplies and work on erecting a building for the church and in making a monthly contribution from the church to the construction company. In cases of benevolence for which the church is responsible, who would argue that the right to purchase a bill of groceries to feed the needy would authorize the church to make a monthly contribution to the grocery store?

By the same token, churches may purchase Bibles, communion ware and supplies, maps, chalkboards, tracts and class literature to utilize in scriptural work, but they cannot make contributions to church supply houses.

I thought this principle was pretty well understood, but evidently not by some. In the November, 1983 issue of BIBLE HERALD, Clifton Inman, former editor of that paper and for years operator of a church supply business, calls in question the right of churches to purchase ads in such religious papers as GUARDIAN OF TRUTH and in SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES. He also raised the issue in his last speech in the debate we had a few years ago at Middlebourne, West Virginia. Strangely enough, he also had somewhat to say about giving away free samples of religious papers during gospel meetings when I have personally seen any number of preachers in the Ohio Valley hand out copies of BIBLE HERALD at meetings. And all this during the time he was the editor. Brother Fred E. Dennis carried bundles of BIBLE HERALD and a number of other papers around with him for years and gave them out. That neither proves the practice right or wrong but if brother Inman objected to it then, he did not say so loudly enough to be heard very far.

But what about ads purchased by churches in SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES? Brother Inman

charges that these ads are just ways for churches to subsidize such papers. Further he asserts, "And these ads do not help the churches one particle. The churches cannot be helped by these ads!" That is a strong affirmation and has no greater support than the fact that Clifton Inman said so.

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES has never accepted a contribution from a congregation and has no plans to begin that practice now. We sell a product. In addition to making a subscription charge for the paper, we sell some advertising space. Religious Supply Center of Louisville, Kentucky purchases two pages of ad space per month. We also sell ad space to churches who wish to advertise their services for our readers. There are two essential issues involved here: (1) Do congregations have a scriptural right to advertise their services? and (2) May they purchase some of that advertising from a paper such as SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES? If churches cannot purchase advertising space then brother Inman needs to instruct his brethren to stop doing so through newspapers when they have meetings, or on the Saturday church page ads. If it be contended that churches may buy advertising space, but not from a paper operated by brethren, then upon whose authority is that to be based?

The amount of good done in any form of advertising is a matter of judgment. In our own case, people regularly tell me they use our ads when traveling, or to put their family members who are away in school or in the military in touch with brethren who can help to teach them while they are away from home. I have personally been present in congregations in distant parts of this land when visitors came in with ad in hand from STS or one of the other papers.

Perhaps brother Inman could enlighten the editors of the GOSPEL ADVOCATE and FIRM FOUNDATION on this subject since they accept such ads also.

We do not, solicit and will not accept contributions from churches but this editor defends the right of churches to buy advertising space in this paper, in a public newspaper, and to purchase supplies from houses operated by brethren without being falsely charged with making a contribution to a private business. There is a difference in buying a service and making a contribution and I am sure brother Inman recognized that difference when, for many years, he sold literature to churches from the BIBLE HERALD BOOKSTORE in Parkersburg, West Virginia. Interestingly, the same issue of BIBLE HERALD in which brother Inman's article appeared carried back page ads from an insurance agency and from AAA Motor Club both of Fairmont, West Virginia and also one from a jewelry company in Moundsville, West Virginia. Question: Did these businesses make a contribution to BIBLE HERALD or did they buy a service? I wonder if "these ads do not help" the businesses "one particle." Is it true that they "cannot be helped by these ads?" Things surely do get interesting sometimes.

WISDOM FROM GRANDMA GARDNER

My maternal great grandmother was an unusual woman in many ways. She spent her last few years in our home when I was a small child. She knew much about many things, wrote poetry, composed songs and knew a seemingly endless number of old folk songs. She was also very outspoken and sometimes her descriptions were graphic. For instance, my father used to tell of the time a neighbor lady came to visit and soon was about to divulge some juicy bit of gossip to Grandma Gardner about another woman in the community. When Grandma Gardner saw the drift of the conversation she interrupted as follows: "You know, if everyone who totes news had her tongue run out about a yard, and a slit cut in it, and her leg pulled up through it, there would be a whole lot more folks goin' around hump-backed than what there are now." Total end of conversation!

(Continued from Page 2)

Editor Tant notes that APATHY is "the one greatest problem" he sees, and he thinks Crossroads church has the answer. He said, "It was for this very reason that I visited with the Crossroads Church in Gainesville, Florida, and have been strongly impressed with their success in **getting the members involved in Home Bible Studies.**" Then he says, "How are they doing it? Not by recreation, not by 'gimmicks,' not by high-pressure tactics and hoop-la, but by getting the members actively involved and participating in the soul-winning process." (ibid).

I do not know where brother Tant has been, and I do not know what he saw when he was at Crossroads and preached to them, but they DO have church suppers, refreshments, banquets, a camp-ground, entertainment, "Crossroads Singers" who are entertaining all over the country. Some of the strongest pressure tactics found in this country are used in Crossroads' cell-type-confessional-prayer-partner system of control. Far too much evidence over the past several years is available to deny this. Chuck Lucas has created a smoothly operated organization, and he DOES use recreation, gimmicks and high-pressure tactics in the operation of Crossroads.

Finally, a very strong factor in brother Tant speaking at Crossroads church was his friendship and business tie with John Whitehead, brother of Richard Whitehead. I do not know when their friendship or business relationship began, but in October, 1967 Yater Tant introduced in an editorial of The Gospel Guardian IM-PAC, a new Personal Evangelism program which he and John Whitehead sold. This business relationship continued for several years.

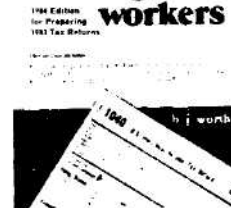
In those days John was a strong, outspoken "anti" institutional, "anti" church sponsoring, "anti" centralized oversight, "anti" social gospel preacher. But John has changed over the years, and he now serves in a

church he once condemned as unscriptural in doctrine and practice. He told me more than once that if he were in the position of his brother or any at Crossroads, and could not give Bible authority for what they did, he would quit. I wonder if John has found the Bible authority? I am certain John feels more secure to have Yater join him at Crossroads!

This explains in great measure why Yater would seek the opportunity to visit and speak at Crossroads, and why the Whiteheads would desire to have him. There is nothing evil about such a relationship, but it just helps me understand why Yater Tant has tried to defend The Crossroads System.

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GOOD ADVICE FROM A DENOMINATIONAL PREACHER

In the December 18th, 1983 issue of the Dayton Daily News, eight area ministers were interviewed in regard to their lives and their congregations. One of the ministers was a Church of God preacher. What he said about "church growth" caught my attention. I believe there is a good lesson in his assessment as to what makes a church grow.

The article reported that Mr. Grubbs, the preacher of the Salem Church of God, came to Dayton in 1968 when attendance average 225 people every Sunday. Today more than 1000 people attend Sunday morning services. Grubbs said: "Growth is not stimulated by gimmicks and publicity—Like a person, a church can gain weight, get fat and not grow at all.

"Rather, a church that grows has to have these three things: First, they must have a vision of who they are and what they're supposed to do; second, they must believe God is able to empower them to be who they're supposed to be; and finally, they must pay the price—in time, talents and treasures." Certainly, Grubb's evaluation is in the right direction of what is required to build up the church. Of course, many of us already knew this, but our problem in far too many places is not implementing his suggestions. Let us enlarge upon what Mr. Grubbs enumerated.

Vision

You will notice, first of all, that a church should have **VISION AS TO WHO THEY ARE**. A faithful, local congregation is the Lord's church, purchased and redeemed by the blood of Christ. Paul said to the Ephesian elders that they were "to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). God's church has been redeemed from all iniquity, purified and made a peculiar (possessed) people, zealous of good works (Tit. 2:14). A local church is the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:27). We are God's husbandry, God's building (1 Cor. 3:9), and the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15). These facts should provide the impetus to be enthusiastic servants in the church.

Secondly, a church needs to **REALIZE WHAT IT IS SUPPOSED TO DO**. Too many times congregations do nothing more than worship on Sunday and have a couple of Bible studies during the week for the members. Religion is confined to the meetinghouse. There is no sounding out the gospel like the Thessalonians did (1

Thess. 1:8), or personal evangelism like those who were scattered abroad from Jerusalem (Acts 8:4; 11:19-21). Grubbs went on to say, "The church can be the most cloistered, remote and unreal place in the world—a real microcosm of unreality. People go to church to get away from the pains of the world, when they should be going to the world —"

Christians must get out into the "marketplace" with the good news of salvation and bring the lost to the Savior. We must hold forth the word of life (Phil. 2:16). Jesus came to seek and save the lost (Lk, 19:10). That must be the church's mission, also. We must break out of our self-imposed isolation and insulation and move out into the field, white unto harvest.

God's Empowerment

The second thing a church needs to grow is to **BELIEVE THAT GOD IS ABLE TO EMPOWER THEM**. Paul had this confidence. He said, "I can do all things through Christ, which strengthened me" (Phil. 4:13). He also stated, "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in the glory by Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:19). To the Ephesians Paul wrote, "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" (Eph. 3:20).

Yes, God provides the strength, the help and needs for the inner man through the Spirit (Eph. 3:16). Of course, this is not miraculous or mysterious, but by permitting our hearts to be influenced and directed by the Holy Spirit through the Scriptures. By increasing in the knowledge of God, we are strengthened with all might (Col. 1:10-11).

To convert the lost, God empowers His children with the gospel, which is His only power unto salvation. The gospel in **THE** power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16). Paul said, "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:18).

The church does not need gimmicks or claptrap methods to win the lost, yea, it must not employ such carnal measures in its efforts to convert the world. Depend on God—not on theatrics, games, entertainment, pleasure, etc. We need to sow the seed of the kingdom and God will give the increase.

Paying the Price

Paying the price of time, talents and treasures is where many of us balk. The cost is too much, the sacrifice is too great.

Our **TIME** is disproportionately consumed on our own interests rather than devoting to the Lord's work the share that it rightfully deserves. Many of us are not willing to take a few extra hours each week, in addition to church services, to have Bible studies in the community, visit the weak, the shut-ins, the sick, and to call on the visitors to our services. As a result, we are not witnessing the baptisms and restorations that we once did.

Our schedule for many of us during the week is one to four hours at the meetinghouse for church services, with the rest of the week, year in and year out, taken up

in bowling, fishing, socializing, club meetings, ball games, shopping, school events, etc., and not one hour is used toward helping some soul be saved for now and for eternity.

All of us need to be "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Eph. 5:16). In view of God's judgment of every man's work, we need to pass the time of our sojourning here in fear (1 Pet. 1:17). It is "high time to awake out of sleep" (Rom. 13:11).

We will give account to God as to how we use our TALENTS. Every Christian has some ability and when an opportunity presents itself to him, he becomes responsible. Someone correctly stated that "responsibility equals ability plus opportunity." This lesson is taught in the parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30). Some of us are going to lose our souls because of the apathy we manifest toward the life of a Christian in general. May God help us to become more interested and more involved in His work.

The church has too many in it like the old fellow misquoted Matthew 22:14. Jesus said, "For many are called, but few are chosen." The old gentleman's version was, "For many are cold, and few are frozen."

Finally, church growth demands TREASURES. To preach—the gospel at home and abroad requires money—a lot of money. There are many avenues that may be utilized to take the gospel of the world, such as television, newspaper articles, correspondence courses, gospel meetings, filmstrips, radio programs, distribution of tracts, etc. Inflation has caused a great increase in all of these and the members of the church must give more than they used to in order to compensate for the spiraling costs. Churches should set challenging budgets for the year and then endeavor to meet the budget to accomplish the work planned. Too many times brethren wait to get the money and then decide for what to spend it, with all too frequently having a lucrative bank account left over. This is going at it backwards.

The more we give, the bigger our treasuries and the more with which to work. Hence, generous giving leads to larger and larger churches, providing the money is put to proper use.

In conclusion, it is time that we open our eyes to the field of labor, open our hearts to the power of God, ration our time to allow a generous share for the Lord's work, unleash our talents and overflow His treasury with love offerings and then behold one of the greatest revivals we have seen in our lifetime.

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MARDI GRAS

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Paul wrote to the Galatians, "You observe days and months and seasons and years. I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain" (Gal. 4:10,11). Likely the observance of no day would cause more consternation than participation in all the activities of the day we call "Mardi Gras." This article will serve as an introduction to that day.

Origin

As in several other holidays (holy days), the celebrations of Mardi Gras are descended from pagan festivals. Spring festivals in celebration of the fertility of the earth were common long before the first century. These were often characterized by various sacrifices—sometimes of humans, especially virgins—and general debauchery. In time they were adopted with modifications as "Christian festivals" in commemoration of some Biblical event of significance.

A number of historians relate Mardi Gras to the Roman festival of Lupercalia, a fertility god, which was celebrated February 15. "During the Lupercalia complete and universal license was granted the citizens of Rome. Almost all laws were abandoned and a Roman might do anything, not always even excluding murder, on that one day. It was an uninhibited debauch during which every caprice was freely and openly indulged . . . Rape, robbery, and the slaying of enemies, while disguised, were popular diversions. All social barriers were down, and slave and freedman, patrician and pauper, ran riot in the streets of Rome, hand in hand."¹ That description would not miss by much the scene of Mardi Gras in the twentieth century.

Many participants in the Lupercalia were masked. The first to wear them were female impersonators. The aristocracy often wore them to avoid being recognized in association with the common people, or "to avoid the gossip that might follow in soberer days ahead."⁵ Though there is a good bit of secrecy about the modern celebration, I fear it is not out of a sense of shame (Jer. 6:15).

The Roman feasts of Saturnalia and Floralia are also mentioned in connection with Mardi Gras.³

Religious Significance

Mardi Gras is the day preceding the beginning of Lent on Ash Wednesday, which occurs forty days prior to Easter, not counting Sundays. In Roman Catholic

theology the Lenten season is a time of fasting and penitence in preparation for the celebration of Easter.

The three days immediately prior to Ash Wednesday were known as Shrovetide. The name is from "shrive," which means to administer penance and to absolve from guilt. During these days the people would make their confessions to the priest and be "shriven" in anticipation of Lent. The last day was known as Shrove Tuesday.

Meats and fats were often forbidden during Lent. So it became customary to have a feast in which these things were consumed the day before the Lenten season began. That practice was abused and perverted into a time of unrestrained merriment which evolved into the modern celebration. "Mardi Gras" is French for "Fat Tuesday." The season became known as Carnival.

"Carnival" is from two words meaning farewell to meat or flesh. Some think it came from the practice of leaving off meat during Lent; others, that flesh is the more accurate idea, denoting the putting aside of all earthly pleasures. "Carnal" is from the same root. Carnival actually covers the period from Epiphany, the twelfth day after Christmas (a commemoration of the visit of the wise men), until Ash Wednesday. It might last less than one month or more than two, depending on the particular year.

In spite of the abuses Carnival still has the approval of the Catholic church. "The Carnival in Catholic countries, and in Rome itself, is a special season for feasting, dancing, masquerading and mirth of all sorts. In itself this custom is innocent. . . . But the pleasures of the Carnival easily degenerate into riot, and the Church therefore encourages pious exercises at this time."⁴ Needless to say the religious aspects of the season, and Mardi Gras in particular, have long since lost their emphasis.

History

Carnival has been observed in a number of European countries for several centuries, particularly in Italy. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries their Martedì Grasso was a day much like the ancient Lupercalia. After decades of savagery, laws were finally enacted which stopped much of the violence. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries peaceful celebrations took place in the Colosseum.

Carnival celebrations were also common in such cities as Paris, Madrid, Geneva, and Warsaw. At one point the season was lasting as long as half the year in Venice.

In England the last day of Carnival was often called Pancake Tuesday, after the custom of making great quantities of pancakes and having contests in flipping them (thus the "flapjack"). Football games between various parishes were common in the eighteenth century as a part of the celebration. There was also a custom in some parts of beating cocks to death—thought by some to be a kind of punishment of the one heard by Peter when he had denied the Lord, though that tradition is not sure.

Specifically when the observance began in the United States is uncertain. It is generally considered to have begun with some French explorers early in the eighteenth century. With few exceptions the celebration is limited to the gulf coast of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and a few counties in the panhandle of Florida, areas explored and settled by the French. When the Spanish occupied this territory in the eighteenth century much of the celebration was outlawed, but it was gradually renewed after the Louisiana Purchase.

Nineteenth-century observances varied greatly from one year to the next. The day was frequently marked by violence on a large scale. Often dozens were killed. Prostitution was rampant. Mardi Gras appeared in danger of extinction when in the middle of that century a mystic "Krewe" was formed, a private, secretive club that paraded on Mardi Gras. Its members were dressed as demons with Satan himself on the throne. Other krewes were formed in the decades to come, and presently there are more than sixty of them, though the activities of some are limited to balls, anointing kings and queens, etc. Many are named after Roman gods. The modern celebrations are financed completely by these private organizations, hence Mardi Gras is billed "the greatest free show on earth" (it might be argued that it is worth what you pay for it!).

Celebrations

Much of the Carnival festivity is hidden from public view in exclusive, lavish balls and ceremonies. Parades begin more than a week before Mardi Gras. These feature gaudy floats manned by members of the various krewes, many of whom are so inebriated they must be tied onto the float. They throw beads, doubloons, coconuts, trinkets, etc., to an audience shouting, "Throw me something, mister," while scrambling, shoving, stomping, and scratching to snatch the worthless throws. Several children have been killed in the shuffle in the past couple of years.

The French Quarter, where parades are banned, becomes one giant party. Nudity is commonplace and drunkenness prevails.

The attitude of most is summed up by one local writer. "There is pleasure to be had as a spectator, but not nearly so much as when you become part of the show. This is supposed to be your farewell to the flesh, too, so make the most of it. You can do penance tomorrow. If you are not going to be a Mardi Gras [a costumed participant], you might as well spend the day in the country"¹ (exactly what my family did last year).

Words like drunkenness, sensuality, immodesty, idolatry, revelling, carousings, and the like sum up much of the day's activities, though I wonder if they capture the real picture. It amazes me that people attempt to observe religious holidays God has not authorized by doing things He has specifically forbidden.

Fat Tuesday is the pride of New Orleans. I am reminded of Isaiah's statement, "Woe to those who

call evil good, and good evil; who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; . . . Woe to those who are heroes in drinking wine, and valiant men in mixing strong drink" (Is. 5:20,22). Peter warned, "For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousals, drinking parties and abominable idolatries. And in all this, they are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excess of dissipation, and they malign you; but they shall give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead" (1 Pet. 4:3-5).

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ Robert Tallant, *Mardi Gras* (Gretna, LA, Pelican Publishing Company, 1947), pp. 86,87.
- ²Tallant, p. 86.
- ³ Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977), Vol. III, p. 401.
- ⁴ "Carnival," *A Catholic Dictionary [Addis and Arnold]* (London: Virtue & Co., Ltd.), p. 124.
- ⁵ Tallant, p. 219.

Using Great Plainness of Speech

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MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, AND REMARRIAGE Introduction

The world in which we live today is in a state of upheaval. The home is in serious trouble, and a divorce is almost as easy to obtain as a new suit or dress. In many cases, it is not as expensive.

Probably everyone who reads this series of articles has experienced the heartache of divorce, either in their own lives or in the lives of a family member or some close personal friend. For the past few years the Devil has done a good job breaking up marriages; and we, the American people, have certainly been willing subjects. Nearly 50% of today's marriages end in divorce, and in some areas the rate is 2 out of 3. This condition is not confined to any given area. In 1980 Paul Harvey re-ported that in a small county in West Tennessee there were more divorces per capita in one given month than any other county in the United States.

My purpose in preparing this material is three-fold. First, it is my prayer that those who have never married will be able to grasp the awesomeness of the responsibility they are undertaking in choosing a husband or wife and will understand that marriage is a life-time commitment.

Second, I hope that those who study this material will be able to see the truth on the subject of divorce and

remarriage as taught in the Scriptures and use it to combat false doctrines being propagated by false teachers both in and out of the church.

And finally, to those who have already made the mistake of being divorced and remarried, I hope that the study of this material will in some way help you to see the position that you have placed yourself in before God and rectify it before it is everlastingly too late.

The thoughts for the first article on marriage have been drawn from several different sources; however, the material and charts for the divorce and remarriage is-sues were compiled while I was preparing for four de-bates on this subject.

Marriage — God Ordained

That marriage is ordained of God cannot be successfully denied. In the very beginning of time, when God made man in His own image and after His own likeness, He saw that it was not good for man to be alone; and he made him a help meet. The word "meet" means, " 'a helper,' literally, 'a help,' ezer. Her position is further defined by the expression 'like Turn,' keneghdo, literally 'as agreeing to him,' or 'his counter part.' She is the kind of help man needs, agreeing with him mentally, physically, spiritually" (H. C. Leupold Commentary on Gene sis, page 130). "And God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh thereof; And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of the Man. There-fore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gene-sis 2:21-24).

What Constitutes Marriage?

Since the origin of marriage is divine and since it is the first and most permanent of all human contracts, we would certainly expect God to tell us what it takes to constitute marriage as He would have it.

"MARRIAGE" APPROVED OF GOD	
<small>Matt. 19:5</small>	
Man's Actions	God's Actions
1. AGREEMENT	1. DIVINE SANCTION
2. COMPLIANCE WITH CIVIL LAW	2. A BONDING TOGETHER (One Flesh)
3. VOWS	
4. COHABITATION	

According to Matthew 19:5-6, it takes four things on man's part to constitute a marriage. As you can see from the chart, the first thing to be considered is "agree-ment." This "agreement" is based on God's statement to "leave and cleave." The word "leave" means "to leave behind" (W. E. Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, Page 666); while the word "cleave" means "to join fast together, to glue, cement, is primarily said of metals and other materials" (IBID page 198).

Thus the man and woman are to be "glued or cemented" together agreeing to "leave behind" father and mother and "cleave" to each other.

Because of Romans 13:1 which says, "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers," they must, in order for their marriage to be approved of God, comply with whatever civil laws are in effect wherever they are living, as long as these laws do not violate God's law.

The third consideration is the matter of taking vows. All marriage ceremonies with which I am familiar end with both parties vowing to remain together "till death do us part." Not only is this vow made between male and female, but God is also witness to it. Thus there are actually three parties involved in the marriage — the bride, the groom, and God. The taking of vows constitutes a covenant between marriage partners to live together as husband and wife.

There are many occasions recorded in the Old Testament where vows were taken, and we learn that God was very strict in insisting that the vow be carried out. Solomon said, "When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou has vowed" (Ecclesiastes 5:4 cf. Romans 15:4).

Finally the marriage is consummated by the sexual union or cohabitation. Obviously, all of the above things must be involved in order for there to be a marriage. Marriage is not just agreement for sexual union, this alone would constitute fornication.

God's Purpose for Marriage

I believe that God has at least four purposes for marriage: sociological, biological, procreative, and religious. We will examine these in the order which I have listed them.

First, we will consider the sociological aspect of marriage. Companionship is one of the primary purposes for which God instituted marriage. In Genesis 2:18 we read, "And the Lord God said, it is not good that man should be alone, I will make him an help meet for him." This is the abiding value of marriage.

The second purpose is biological. For every desire that God has placed within man He has provided a lawful and Scriptural way to fulfill that desire. God has placed within man the urge for sexual relations (I am told that hunger and thirst are man's greatest desires, and that the sexual desire is the next greatest) and has provided a lawful means to fulfill that desire. "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife her due: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one another, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency" (I Corinthians 7:2-5).

God's prescription for fulfilling the sexual desire is for every man to have his own wife and every woman her own husband. However, it is not enough just to know

the solution. Paul continues by commanding every husband and wife to "render their due." Here are some comments on the expression "rendering their due." "Some have rendered the words, not unaptly the **matrimonial debt**, or **conjugal duty** — that which a wife owes to her husband, and husband to his wife; and which they must take care mutually to render, else alienation of affection will be the infallible consequences, and this in numberless instances has led to adulterous connections. In such cases the wife has to blame herself for the infidelity of her husband and the husband for that of his wife. What miserable work has been made in the peace of families by a wife or husband pretending to be wiser than the apostle, and too holy and spiritual to keep the commandments of God" (Commentary on I Corinthians, by Adam Clark, Page 221).

Often we witness the very thing set forth by Adam Clark. People do not carry out the commandments of God; and after the husband or wife has allowed themselves to be tempted by Satan, and because of incontinency has yielded to temptation, the one who is unwilling to "render their due" is then ready to "put away" their mate, placing all the blame on the one who yielded to the temptation. (The word "incontinency" means want of strength to regulate one's desires or appetites. "Want of power, hence, want of self-control" — W. E. Vine, Page 594). However, it may be pointed out here that the one who "holds back" on yielding to his or her mate has violated specific commands of God and is also guilty. Paul said, "The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath now power of his own body, but the wife" (I Corinthians 7:4).

Notice also another command that is violated in this situation. Paul said, "Defraud ye not one another..." (I Corinthians 7:5). Notice in the paragraph above that Paul said we are to, "render that which is due." Paul says that failure to "render that which is due" is "defrauding" the other, thus making the one who failed to "render their due" guilty in God's sight of "defrauding." That one is guilty of violating two commands of God — to "render that which is due," and to "defraud not." However, it should be noted also that these sins on the part of one do not give the "defrauded partner" the right to seek the fulfillment of his desires elsewhere.

Since God has given a lawful means of satisfying this strong desire He has placed within man, satisfying it by any other means is sinful. Notice various means which God condemns:

1. **Homosexuality** is an unlawful means of satisfying our sexual urges. This is so stated in both Old and New Testaments (Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Romans 1:26-27; I Corinthians 6:9; Jude 7).
2. **Bestiality** is also condemned by God as a means of satisfying our sexual desires because beasts are not suited to man (Genesis 2:20; Exodus 22:19; Deuteronomy 27:21).
3. **Polygamy** is also sinful, for God has set forth that there is to be one man for one woman for life (Romans 7:2-3).

The third reason for which God instituted marriage is for the procreation of the race (Genesis 1:28; I Timothy 5:14). However, as we have already observed, this is not the only reason for marriage, though some religious bodies teach this.

The fourth and final purpose for marriage that I consider here is religious. You will recall that Paul said one of the reasons for each man having his own wife and each woman having her own husband was "to avoid fornication (I Corinthians 7:2). You will also recall that Paul said fornication is a sin (Galatians 5:19). The Hebrew writer said, "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Hebrews 13:4). Thus marriage was instituted by God so that man may fulfill the sexual desires given him by God and yet avoid the sin of fornication.

TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES

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For more than twenty years I have been saying that, according to the Liberal position on sponsoring churches, ALL OF THE MONEY OF ALL OF THE CHURCHES OF ALL OF THE WORLD could be placed under the elders of a single congregation and that they alone could decide who should preach, where he should preach, what he should preach and when he should preach. I suggested that they would be reluctant to admit it because they simply did not know where they were headed. I suggested this to Guy N. Woods, in my debate with him. He wouldn't admit it, but he DIDN'T deny it! I presented the same to W. L. Totty, and H. C. McCaghen, and Alan Highers. None of them admitted it but NONE of them DENIED it!

Now comes a report of the Dale Smelser-Buster Dobbs debate in Ft. Wayne, Indiana. And Dobbs is reported to have swallowed the "whole thing" hook, line and sinker. He is reported to have admitted that if the elders of a congregation decided to do so they could contribute every cent they took in to a sponsoring church and that the latter could then spend the money as they saw fit. And he admitted that every congregation in the world could do the same. Thus it would seem that the whole "ball of wax" of the Sponsoring Church type of work has been reduced to an absurdity.

When a thing can be thus reduced to an absurdity it is not the truth and it is contrary to the truth. At the time I was advancing this argument with Woods, Totty, McCaghen, and Highers, I did not realize it was so potent and so powerful. I should have pressed them to at least say something about the matter. Instead, they just

ignored it. But I am glad somebody among them has now come out flat on the matter and admitted the obvious. I am going to ask Smelser how he managed to get Dobbs to come up and lick the log.

Surely, now that Dobbs is co-owner of the Firm Foundation, things will move fast among the Liberals. On the other hand, perhaps Dobbs will act like Reuel Lemmons before him and write up and down, in and out so that nobody can pin him down as to exactly what he believes. At any rate it is refreshing to know that somebody has had the courage to admit the consequences of his doctrine.

Of course, if a church can send \$100 to a sponsoring church, it could send \$200 or \$300, or as Dobbs said it could send ALL OF IT! But will our liberal brethren now back off and shell down the corn and admit that they have over stepped the bounds of reason as well as Scripture? And will they take a stand for the truth? Or, will they be like Brother Woods who said "there is no place for benevolent organizations in the work of the New Testament Church" and then say he wasn't talking about any of the benevolent organizations it is now supporting. It appears that they are in the position of the man who took in a mouth-full of scalding hot coffee. He realized that he had to do something quickly and realized that whatever he did was probably the wrong thing to do. But I hope and pray that this admission by Buster Dobbs will at least cause them to pause and take stock of the situation and pull back and get in line with the word of God.

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IS CALVINISTIC SOVEREIGNTY BIBLICAL?

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There can be no doubt about the fact that John Calvin and his theological allies believed the Bible to be the inspired word of God and the true testing ground for all religious propositions. They were convinced that the Scriptures upheld their views. (In the Institutes Calvin refers to no less than 2400 passages to support his system.) But every lover of truth in every generation is morally bound to take the Bible in hand and conclude for himself whether Calvinism can legitimately be found there. II John 9 says, "Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God"; and I Thessalonians 5:21 warns us to "examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good."

No one can deny that the Bible teaches a man is saved by the grace of God and not by his own meritorious works (Romans 3:23, Ephesians 2:5, Titus 3:5, et al.). But does this mean that God saves him unconditionally, apart from the cooperation of his own will? Paul says in Romans 1:16 that "(the gospel) is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes." John writes, "As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12).

Traditional Calvinists, however, have consistently regarded those passages which affirm salvation apart from works to be denying all human cooperation in the salvation process. Requirements which a man must fulfill, they say, would negate salvation by grace and oblige human free will. While these scriptures do say that no man can earn his salvation by works (for this would demand perfect obedience, Gal. 3:10-12), they do not teach that salvation by grace is unconditional. Faith as the basic prerequisite for redemption is continually emphasized throughout the New Testament, along with repentance, baptism, and other human activities. Romans 4:16 is decisive on this matter. Describing how a sinful man obtains righteousness Paul says, "it is by faith, that it might be in accordance with grace." Far from teaching that the need for man's response would nullify God's grace, Paul says it is his response of faith that establishes his salvation as being by grace. The Scriptures repeatedly affirm the necessity of human cooperation in the salvation process. Conditions must be met. Instructions like those given in Mark 1:15 are clear: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

Calvinism attempts to counter these passages by arguing that faith, repentance, and other so-called re-

quirements for salvation are actually brought about in the elect by the supernatural impartation of God. Appeal is made to such places as II Timothy 2:25, Romans 12:3, II Peter 1:1 and Philippians 1:29 where faith and repentance are said to come from God. But these verses do not state that they are given supernaturally or apart from a man's own determination. Romans 10:17 on the other hand teaches that faith comes by hearing the word of Christ, and Romans 2:4 says that God's kindness is what motivates one to repent. The majority of passages dealing with faith and repentance clearly present them as autonomous responses to the gospel of God. The Bible only speaks of repentance and faith unto salvation coming from God in the sense that God provides the motivation and the opportunity. Calvinism's notion that they are bestowed supernaturally makes them symbolic, rather than authentic human activities. The frequent pleas in the New Testament for all men to believe and repent become feigned. They are vain petitions addressed to those who could not possibly heed them unless God supernaturally granted the power to do so.

Calvinism argues in this fashion in order to maintain its doctrine of divine sovereignty. But its errors along this line become even more apparent in the face of several key scriptures. Revelation 2:20-23, for example, gives Jesus' indictment against the church at Thyatira for tolerating "the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she leads my bond-servants astray, so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols" (verse 20). This wicked woman, to whom the record ascribes the name of the most treacherous of Old Testament women, was influencing these early Christians to associate themselves with the festivities of pagan worship. Notice what is said in verses 21 and 22: "And I gave her time to repent; and she does not want to repent of her immorality. Behold, I will cast her upon a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds." It is obvious from this passage that the Lord's desire was that Jezebel repent; if not, why does He say, "I gave her time to repent"? Yet, she did not. The verb employed is *thelo* ("to will"), and literally the verse says, "she does not will to repent." How can Calvinism explain this statement? Here is a clear example of an individual who was not under the absolute, deterministic control of God, but possessed the freedom to choose whether she would or would not submit to God's wishes.

A similar text is Luke 7:29-30: "And when all the people and the tax-gatherers heard this, they acknowledged God's justice, having been baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected God's purpose for themselves, not having been baptized by John." God's will regarding the Pharisees and lawyers was that they submit to John's baptism of repentance even as others had done (cf. Luke 3:3-14). But these stubborn men "rejected God's purpose for themselves." Thayer says that the verb Luke uses, *atheo*, means "to thwart the efficacy of anything, nullify, make void, frustrate" (**Thayer's Lexicon**, p. 14). Calvin-

ism teaches that men do not have the ability to thwart the will of God, that the only reason why some reject the gospel is because God does not desire for them to accept it. This passage teaches the opposite. God's desire was for these men to repent and be baptized, but they had the right to not comply, and they exercised it.

Jesus' lament over sin-sick Jerusalem in Matthew 23:37 further attests to the fact that salvation depends upon a man's voluntary submission to the divine will. He cried out, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling." Calvinism teaches that the only reason some are not gathered into the family of God is because they are not of the elect, and therefore not regenerated by God. But Jesus says that the people themselves are to blame, for they refused to believe in His gospel. Twice in this passage the very *thelo* ("to will") is used, once positively to denote Jesus' willingness to save these Jews; then negatively to denote their unwillingness. Here then is another passage demonstrating that the divine will is not deterministic and irresistible. If Calvinism is correct then Jesus' declaration of remorse for the lost city is nothing but a facade. Lord, why are you bemoaning their rejection of the gospel when it was by divine decree that they not be granted the power to obey? The Scriptures plainly teach that election is not unconditional.

Nor does it consist of the selection of particular individuals for salvation and others for reprobation. The Bible teaches that the gift of salvation, while not universally efficacious, is universally offered. Paul told Timothy, "God our Savior... desires all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (I Timothy 2:3-4). To Titus he wrote, "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men" (2:11). Peter said in his second epistle, "The Lord ... is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance" (3:9).

In an effort to skirt the obvious sense of these passages, Calvin suggests that there is both a general call to redemption and a specific, effectual call extended only to the elect.

There are two species of calling;—for there is a universal call, by which God, through the external preaching of the word, invites all men alike; even those for whom he desires the call to be a savour of death, and the ground of severer condemnation. Besides this there is a special call which ... God bestows in believers only, when by the internal illumination of the Spirit he causes the word preached to take deep root in their hearts.

(Institutes, III:24:8)

The Scriptures never talk about two types of calling. But by making such an assumption at the outset, Calvin can then regard all passages speaking of a potentially universal salvation to be referring to the ineffectual call, something the original readers of the New Testament were expected to understand. Calvin's posi-

tion makes the universal call unauthentic. God invites even the reprobate to enjoy redemption, knowing they have no ability to accept for He has not granted it. (Curiously, Calvin still asserts that the full blame for their failure to respond lies not with God, but with the reprobated individual himself. The unchosen, he says, have "an asylum to which they may betake themselves from the bondage of sin, while they ungratefully reject the offer which is made to them", *Institutes*, III: 24:17.) In what kind of God do Calvin and his followers believe? A sovereign God, is the consistent reply, who has the right to withhold mercy from whomever He desires. Certainly God has this prerogative, but the same Bible that affirms His sovereignty also proclaims His love and equity. "I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right, is welcome to Him" (Acts 10:34-35). The God of Calvinistic theology could not adequately be represented by the good Samaritan in the Lord's parable. He is more akin to the priest or Levite. Calvinism's God sees one sinner lying on the side of the road and extends His aid; but further down the road He unsympathetically passes by another in precisely the same predicament. *(Continued)*

The Mystery of Iniquity

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THE POPE SPEAKS TO THE LUTHERANS

During the early days of the Reformation, Pope Leo X called Martin Luther "the wild boar that has invaded the Lord's vineyard." Luther responded by calling the pope "Antichrist" and the Catholic Church "the most licentious den of thieves, the most shameless of brothels, the kingdom of sin, death, and hell."

But times, and people, and attitudes, and convictions have changed! In December of last year, 1983, the Associated Press published the following article under the heading "Pope joins in service at Lutheran Church."

"ROME — Pope John Paul II, in a historic visit to a Lutheran church, said Sunday that despite bitter past differences between Roman Catholics and Lutherans, 'we desire unity, we work for unity.'

" 'The gift of this encounter moves me deeply,' the pope said during the first visit by a Roman Catholic pontiff to a Protestant church in his own diocese.

"It also was the first time a pope attended a service of the Lutheran church, which is founded on the precepts of Martin Luther, the excommunicated German priest who led the Protestant Reformation that split the

church 462 years ago.

"I have come in the spirit of the Lord that calls us in our days, through ecumenical dialogue, in the search for full Christian unity,' the pontiff said in German.

"'And in the 500th anniversary of the birth of Martin Luther we seem to discern from far away the dawning of an advent of a recomposition of our unity and community,' John Paul added.

"The pontiff shook hands with many of the estimated 400 worshippers who took part in the service, which was broadcast in part on nationwide television. About 100 journalists from various countries crowded into the balconies.

"John Paul appeared tired as he sat beside his host, Pastor Christopher Meyer, on a raised platform before the marble altar of the small church. The pontiff stumbled over several words in his sermon during the hour-long service.

John Paul was without his mitre — the symbol of the papacy — when Meyer greeted him as bishop of Rome at the white travertine church on Via Toscana just off the Via Veneto.

"Together they joined the congregation in reciting a prayer written by Luther for Christian unity.

"It is Advent, from Latin for 'an arrival,' a celebration leading to the anniversary of the birth of Jesus Dec. 25. The service did not include Holy Communion — a sacrament the two churches celebrate differently."

When something is done or said which is antithetical to what a dead man believed and practiced, it is commonly said that if he knew it he would "turn over in his grave." If that were true, surely Martin Luther would be spinning in his grave. His modern-day followers have compromised the cause for which he suffered and labored so diligently.

From a recent article by the local preacher of the Christ Lutheran Church we quote:

"Luther held the priesthood of all believers. This meant when one believes in Jesus, he does not need the Pope, the priest or anything else but Jesus to intercede for him. The washerwoman could serve the Lord just as much as the priest in front of an altar. The celibate life was not better than a Christian carrying out his faith in service to God and man. Luther gave dignity to all work, all men and their tasks.

"The bulk of his writing was against the institutionalized church. He felt the Pope was not infallible; that he was not the only one who could call a council, or place himself over the word. Luther thought the laity should receive both bread and wine in the Holy Communion and that the sale of indulgences, which were supposed to enable sinners to get out of purgatory, was not scriptural and should cease."

While Luther was a man of ability and conviction, and the freedom-loving people of the world are indebted to him, we certainly do not defend all that he did and taught. For example, he taught salvation by faith only. While we can appreciate the fact that he was driven to this position by an equally false position, the Bible does not teach it. The apostle Paul expressed the truth on

this, clearly and succinctly, when he wrote that salvation was by "faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6). See also James 2:14-26.

Is there hope for unity among Catholics and Lutherans? An article in *Christianity Today*, December 16, 1983, answers the question by saying: "What does this increasing doctrinal unity signify for the reunion of the two Christian communions? Msgr. Jerome Quinn of Saint Paul Seminary does not believe the two theological systems are yet sufficiently compatible for a united church to emerge in the next generation. Gerhard O. Forde of Luther Northwest Seminary in Saint Paul also says there are 'all kinds of conditions about eventual union' that must first be resolved. He notes that to date the Vatican has been 'remarkably silent' about the dialogue team's continuing efforts."

Yes, and we note that the pope was silent about his position as Vicar of Christ and head of the church when he addressed the Lutherans. The news report said that he appeared "without his mitre — the symbol of the papacy." Could it be that he wanted the Lutherans to think of him as the bishop of Rome, rather than the pope of the universal church?

We can be reasonably sure that any compromise in their efforts toward unity will not affect the office of the pope. And that is the real issue, and one that we plan to study in future lessons. Will the Lutherans accept the office of the pope? If not, how can there be unity among the two groups? We say again, the pope will stay as he is presently regarded, for without that office there would be no Catholic Church!

The pope said that he came before the Lutherans "in the spirit of the Lord... in the search for full Christian unity." If he and all others would follow the teaching of the Lord and his true apostles we could have unity among all believers in Christ. Christ prayed that we be one by believing on him "through their word" — the word of the inspired apostles (John 17:20). Their word which described the "unity of the Spirit" was that we all believe in one God, one Lord, one Spirit, one faith, one baptism, one body, and one hope (Eph. 4:3-6). Why can't we all understand and accept that? That is the only plan for unity revealed by the Spirit, and the only one acceptable to the Heavenly Father. If Catholics, Lutherans, and all other denominations would turn from their man-made doctrines and traditions and accept the plan given by the Lord and his apostles, all believers would be "sufficiently compatible" to experience peace and unity in the one body, the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let's all work and preach and pray to that end.

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Alvaton, KY 42122

David Lipscomb the man, once edited the **Gospel Advocate** and was known for his opposition to unscriptural innovations in the church. A college named after him is located in Nashville, Tennessee and has not followed the principles he strongly held to. In fact, David Lipscomb the man, could not teach at David Lipscomb College where he taught when he lived.

The November issue of the David Lipscomb News has an article on the back page, written by G. David England, Director of Lipscomb News Bureau. The article is entitled, "First Elders Conference Meets Goals." It seems that England should check his facts for this is not the first "elders conference" to meet goals. If the facts had been checked, another elders conference could have been thought of. In fact, it was an elders, preachers and teachers conference which was vehemently and adamantly opposed by David Lipscomb the man.

The article tells us that "some 48 men from congregations of the church of Christ in middle Tennessee and southern Kentucky visited the David Lipscomb College campus Oct. 8 for the first Elders' Conference." The purpose of this conference was to try some group training and be better elders. One elder is quoted as saying, "Of the many things that have marked this administration, one has been building stronger ties with the brotherhood. As I serve as an elder, I have sensed my own personal need and have sensed from my fellow elders the need for learning more about how to fulfill the role of shepherd and overseer." My mind went almost automatically to 1 Peter 5:2-3, which teaches elders to "tend the flock of God among them" and I wondered if this man might not be better off reading Peter and Paul than he would be attending a DLC Elders' Conference.

Another statement the report made that is interesting is as follows. One of the elders of the Division Street church in Smyrna, Tennessee is quoted as saying, "I think it potentially is one of the greatest things to happen to the church in middle Tennessee. It brought together a group of elders representative of elders of Middle Tennessee congregations. Many good things can come of it." I ask you to please remember that last statement to the end of this article.

The other elders' conference these people should have known about is one that the man for whom the college takes its name was rather deeply involved in. Earl West wrote a biography of David Lipscomb and in the book he describes Lipscomb's involvement with a meeting in West Tennessee.

Early in January 1910, this problem (of combining churches, DRS) forced itself anew on Lipscomb in the form of an overture from the church in Henderson, Tennessee, a call for a meeting of all elders and preachers to meet at Henderson, January 25-28. The call referred to those congregations in southwestern Kentucky, eastern Arkansas and northern Mississippi, and was signed by J. W. Dunn, G. A. Dunn, G. Dallas Smith, John R. Williams, N. B. Hardeman, L. D. Williams, W. Claude Hall, F. O. Howell, D. A. Parish and T. B. Thompson. The article went in part:

Fully appreciating the condition of the cause of Christ in West Tennessee and adjacent territory, and knowing too, what great good can be accomplished by concerted action on the part of both preachers and churches, we desire to call a meeting of all loyal preachers and teachers of the gospel of Christ, and all elders, with all who are interested in strengthening the walls of Zion and carrying the gospel to the lost, to meet at Henderson, Tennessee on January 25-28, 1910. (*Gospel Advocate*, 1910, p. 59).

The purposes of the meeting were said to be "that the brethren might get better acquainted; learn from one another more of the conditions of this great field of labor; mutually encourage and inspire one another for the work of preaching the gospel, and gain a more intimate knowledge of the Henderson school."

Lipscomb responded to the invitation by saying:

Some of the brethren last week called for a meeting of the preachers and elders in West Tennessee. We do not doubt that these brethren intend only the best for the churches, for themselves and others. But I have been through and under these meetings so much it surprises me to hear of such meetings. . . I have seen much evil come out of them to the preachers and the people. I never saw any good come out of them to anyone... (Remember the statement made by the elder from Division Street in Smyrna, Tennessee?, DRS) It is scriptural and right to call one man in to teach the members aright. But I never found an inspired man called in at a council of elders and preachers. Let us all individually and solidly try to stand on solid ground. *Life and Times of David Lipscomb*, p. 271-

272.

There can be little doubt about David Lipscomb (the man) and his attitude toward an elders' conference. His attitudes was that there was no good to come from it. Today, those who attend the same thing that he opposed at a college named for him think there is nothing but good that can come from it.

But then David Lipscomb the man was severely criti-

cized for his opposition to the meeting. The late A. G. Freed learned that such meetings were conducted regularly in Nashville and wrote a scorching rebuke to Lipscomb. (Ibid, p. 273). Following that there was quite a lot of discussion about whether or not Henderson church should control and direct the funds of other congregations and Lipscomb finally wrote again about the problem.

Now what was that but the organization of a society in the elders of this church. The church elders at Henderson constitute a board to collect and pay out the money and control the evangelist for the brethren of West Tennessee, and all the preachers are solicitors for this work. This very same course was pursued in Texas a number of years ago. The elders of the church at Dallas were made the supervisors of the work, received the money, employed the preacher, directed and counseled him. For a number of years they employed C. M. Wilmeth. He then dropped out of the work and the Texas Missionary Society took the place. Other experiments along the same course have been made. All of them went into society work.

All meetings of churches or officers of churches to combine more power than a single church possesses is wrong. God's power is in God's churches. He is with them to bless and strengthen their work when they are faithful to him. A Christian, one or more, may visit a church with or without an invitation and seek to stir them up to a faithful discharge of other duties. But for one or more to direct what and how all the churches shall work, or to take charge of their men and money and use it, is to assume the authority God has given to each church. Each one needs the work of distributing and using its funds as well as in giving them (Ibid. p. 275). I realize that we still do not operate according to the standards of living set in 1910, but we ought to operate by the same standard of authority David Lipscomb appealed to then. Lipscomb was opposed to more than the arrangement of several churches in a sponsoring church aggregate—he opposed "all meetings of

churches or officers of churches to combine more power than a single church possesses." He saw no good that could come from them and he was right. He lived to see such meetings develop into missionary societies which in turn divided the church of the Lord. Now, it is different. The college which wears his name leads in conducting the very type of conferences and councils he opposed.

One of the stated purposes of the 1910 meeting was to get the churches better acquainted with the Henderson school. One of the purposes of the 1983 meeting was to develop "stronger ties with the brotherhood" through the college itself. We can look for more of the same and it is said to know it will happen. A college that wears the name of a man like David Lipscomb and who practices the very things he devoted his life to opposing, is not worthy of the name.

But why such an article as this? It is not mere expose or fun-making. We urge all to seriously consider these events and the historical background. Apostasy does not occur instantly—it develops over a long period of time. I believe that we are along the way now and are seeing the growth and development of something that our grandchildren will see clearly as another apostate group with all the denominational trappings and machinery available to them. It is never too late as long as there is life. Perhaps someone who has not been able to see before the direction the institutional brethren have been going can see it now. Let us all sincerely hope so.

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THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

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

HERSCHEL E. PATTON, 7637 Fleming Hills Dr. S.W., Huntsville, AL 35802. My first year of retirement (from local work) has been a very enjoyable and satisfying one. Both Reba and I have enjoyed excellent health. For the past year I have preached regularly for the Vinemont church, near Cullman, Alabama. Besides this, I have preached in meetings in Nashville, Murfreesboro, Memphis and

Columbia, Tennessee and Little Rock, Arkansas. At the invitation of the brethren at Jordan Park in Huntsville, Alabama where I formerly preached for five years, I have decided to terminate my work at Vinemont the first of November to assume the responsibilities and work of a full time elder at Jordan Park. I have now been appointed an elder at Jordan Park, along with brother Jimmy Hooper, one of the

most talented, dedicated, humble and loved men I have ever known. Brother Ken Green is the preacher at Jordan Park, whose ability, Bible knowledge, and devotion is a great asset to the elders and the whole congregation. The brethren at Vinemont have been very fortunate, I think, to secure the services of brother Dick Poplin of Shelbyville, Tennessee to move there and work with them on a full time basis. After retiring from the Postal Service, brother Poplin desired to preach regularly for a church that would not be able to otherwise support a man full time. He has preached for years by appointment and for several years has served the Eastside church in Shelbyville as one of it's elders. I believe Dick and Sybil will do a wonderful work at Vinemont and be a great asset to the Lord's cause throughout Cullman County. I have some meetings scheduled and plan to continue preaching in a limited number of meetings, but my duties as an elder at Jordan Park forbids my being away very much.

ROBERTO TONDELLI, Via Quirino Roscioni, 69, 00129 Roma, Italy. The dates of October 3, 4, 5 I was with the congregation of Christ in Trieste, Italy in a special engagement of sermons dealing with "Death, Resurrection, and Judgment." Trieste is about 700 kilometers from our home near Rome. The brethren there received us very well and were especially prepared for the meeting. They printed 1,200 copies of a 16 page bulletin to pass out. In addition they put up 500 large posters advertising the meeting all over the town and surround-ing villages. The meeting was also advertised through the radio and by newspaper. The first night there were 80 total present including 45 non-members. The second night there were some 30 non-members present with the same number again the last night. Following each lesson we had an hour question and answer period set aside for discussion. This proved quite interesting. The church in Trieste is meeting in a very nice apartment which includes an office, large auditorium, and two classrooms. Gianni Berdini is the local preacher. Several visitors who came to the meeting indicated a desire to keep on studying with Gianni. I am to go back to the Trieste congregation November 18-20 for another short meeting. On Thursday, October 6, I went to Udine, Italy (about one hour from Trieste) to meet Stefano and Antonella Corazza. I preached for the church there that night. We were all very glad to see each other again. Here at home in the Pomezia congrega-tion things are going well. I have been preaching some of the material presented in Trieste and it has been received favorably. In fact we did much advertising concerning these sermons. We printed up 500 posters to place on walls in various places: Pomezia, Albano, Ardea, and Rome. We also printed 6,000 pamphlets to distribute to people locally. I am also writing letters to RAI LAZIO REGION, which is the government radio broadcasting in the region called Lazio (where Rome is). I am trying to get them to announce our meetings on the radio. We continue to have our weekly radio program on Radio Pomezia each Wednesday at 6 p.m. Some of you may know brother Rodolfo Berdini. Brother Berdini is to have surgery in a few weeks to remove his thyroid. They have to do this to avoid cancer of the thyroid. Remember him in your prayers please. Greetings to all the saints in America.

CARLOS CAPELLI, Casilla #83, 1665 Jose C. Paz, Buenos Aires, Argentina. It is thrilling to see that when the same gospel is preached today as was preached on Pentecost that the results are also the same. Here in the Jose C. Paz church, one precious soul was won to Christ after the sermon on October 23. She was formerly a Catholic. I continue to have several Bible studies with many non-Christians. Also we are happy to note that four souls were baptized into Christ in Boulogne. While in Boulogne on November 1, I had a debate with 10 men and a "pastor" of a Pentecostal church. The debate lasted about three hours. I had another debate in Boulogne on November 9th with some people from the "New Apostolic Church." Next week I am to have a discussion with a "Only Jesus Pentecostal" concerning the trinity. This should prove to be a very enlightening and interesting study and is an excellent way of eliciting and proclaiming the truth.

My work, "Comparing the Churches" (Comparando las Iglesias) is now ready. I printed about 5,000 copies and hope it does much good. Also I printed 1,000 booklets entitled "Investigating the Church of Christ" (Investigando la Iglesia de Cristo). We continue to have our radio program — The Bible Speaks. However, the cost will increase 100% in January. We hope we can continue with this work. On a national note — the Democracy has returned to Argentina after eight years. The coming period will be critical in deciding the future of our nation. Pray that the Lord will turn the events of history into a blessing for this land and for glory to His name. Lord willing I will leave January 1st to go to Bogota, Columbia to work with the brethren there for a short time. My family is well and we send to you our best wishes.

ANOTHER FAITHFUL SAINT HAS GONE TO HIS RE-WARD

FORD CARPENTER, 18468 Catalpa St., Hesperia, CA 92345. Claude Eugene Worley, well known business man, who for the past 30 years has been preaching and teaching among the faithful churches throughout southern California, departed this life at Desert Hospital, near his home in Palm Springs, California on October 31, 1983, after what seemed to be a brief bout with cancer. Claude was 81 years old when he died. W.C. Moseley of Folsom, California and I conducted a memorial service at Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Hollywood Hills where his body was laid to rest beside his faithful wife of 42 years who preceded him in death by about 8 months.

Claude was born February 27, 1902 in Rochester, Texas near Abilene, and attended school in Sabinal. When he was 9 years old his family moved with a small "American Colony" into Mexico under the leadership of a gospel preacher named W.A. Shultz. A short time later they returned to McAllen, Texas, where he finished grade school and High School. He attended college at Stanford in Palo Alto, California; University of Texas at Austin, and U.C.L.A. and U.S.C. in Los Angeles. He had an A.B. and was an M.A. candidate at U.S.C. He served as Assistant Supervisor of Public Instruction for the Los Angeles City School system for 19 years before retiring to enter into business. He operated an Import-Export business for 5 years, and for about twenty years engaged in buying and selling investment properties. But in all of his life, Claude's primary concern was being a faithful Christian. Being a successful business man he was able to be a great financial help to the congregations with which he worked and often assisted in the financial support of gospel preachers in difficult places. He helped in the establishment of several churches in places where a need was brought to his attention and often drove many miles to preach for struggling groups who needed help.

Claude never did consider himself a "full time" preacher for or with any congregation although on several occasions known to me he drove from his home in Beverly Hills every Lord's Day to preach on an interim basis for a year or more — to Bakersfield (Pioneer Blvd.), Simi Valley, Palm Springs, Culver City, and Winnetka Ave. in Canoga Park on two different occasions. There are few faithful congregations in the area which have not called on him at some time to "fill in" for a Sunday. Meeting work for small churches with little means of support took him to San Francisco and several remote areas of Oregon and Washington and on at least one occasion to southwestern Canada. He also left a provision in his will for a substantial amount of his resources to be put into a trust fund to support gospel meetings for small churches which cannot afford such support. This fund, when it is set up, will be administered by brother W.C. Moseley and myself.

Claude will be sorely missed but all who visited with him in the weeks that he knew the end was near heard him confidently quote Paul's statement in Phil. 1:23 — "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ; which is far better..." So, we sorrow but "not, as others who have no hope" (1 Thess. 4:13) because we truly believe "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord... that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them" (Rev. 14:13).

THE ROBINSON — CRAWFORD DEBATE

On the nights of December 5,6,8,9,1983, brother Bill Robinson, Jr. met Mr. R. Lawrence Crawford in debate. Bill Robinson, Jr. is a gospel preacher and Mr. Crawford is a Baptist preacher. The first two night were conducted in the meeting house of the Floral Heights church of Christ, Wichita Falls, TX where brother Robinson preaches, and the

	IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH	
BAPTISMS		422
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(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)		

last two nights were conducted in the Victory Baptist church in Wichita Falls. The Victory Baptist church had imported Mr. Crawford from Hayward, Calif, to meet brother Robinson in the discussion.

All four nights were given to a discussion of the subject of salvation, and at what point in one's obedience is one saved. Is one saved at the point of faith, or is repentance and baptism essential before one receives the remission of sins? The question is certainly a timely one in view of the fact that much of the religious world teaches and practices the Baptist position that one is saved at the point of faith, before and without water baptism.

It was obvious from the very outset of the discussion that Mr. Crawford had under-estimated brother Robinson. Mr. Crawford having had 37 debates obviously thought that this twenty-eight-year-old kid would not last through the discussion against the mighty Dr. R. Lawrence Crawford. In fact, he said the second evening that he was surprised that the "young man" was doing as well as he was. Yes, brother Robinson was doing "weller" than Mr. Crawford anticipated I am sure.

A number of things "stood out" in the debate. In his first speech, brother Robinson presented some charts showing that no one passage teaches everything that a person must do to be saved. He then began to show charts with passages like Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38, etc. that teach beyond shadow of doubt that baptism is essential to salvation. Mr. Crawford in his first negative required of brother Robinson some-thing that he (Mr. Crawford) could not do himself. He demanded that Bill find where the Bible said that baptism was "essential" to salva-tion — "in those words" and he said he would quit the debate. I guess he would. The word "essential" is not found in the New Testament... PERIOD. However, during the course of his speech, Mr. Crawford said that repentance was "essential" to our salvation. When brother Robinson asked him for the passage that said so, he gave Luke 13:5, "Except ye repent..." Well, brother Robinson pointed out, that you didn't have to be a "Dr." to know that "except" doesn't spell "essential." However, the good "Dr." was saying that if the passage could be found that said "except" you are baptized you cannot be saved. In his next speech, Bill used a chart on John 3:3-5 which says "except" one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Also, the chart showed that Dr. John R. Graves (on whom Mr. Crawford relies heavily as one of the great Baptist scholars) had said that the word "water" in John 3:5 meant baptism. Crawford said, "I stand by Dr. Graves," but he did not quit the debate.

Another glaring mistake made by Dr. Crawford was to translate the word eis in Acts 2:38, "because of." In reply to this, brother Robinson had a chart with twenty-two translations which translated the word eis in Acts 2:38, "unto," "for," "in order to." However, none of them said "because of." Yet, when Mr. Crawford replied to the chart, he said they all meant "because of." What Baptist preachers won't do to try to win a point.

Needless to say, Mr. Crawford basically followed the false theories that are set forth by Baptist doctrine, throughout the discussion. It was evident to all that Mr. Crawford had taken on more than he had bargained for. Brother Bill Robinson, Jr. did a marvelous job in de-fending the truth. He is to be commended for his knowledge of The Book, for his conviction and courage. Even though both men "pressed

their points," the discussion was orderly and neither speaker became "ugly" in any way. Would to God that there could be an increase in this kind of discussion.

Lectures in Yoakum, Texas

The church in Yoakum, Texas announces a lecture series for February 24-26 on the theme of "Modern Controversies." Speakers will be: Bill Crews, Dee Bowman, W.R. Jones, James Rodgers, Elmer Moore, Harold Fite, Harland Huntoon, James Trigg, Elton Haley and Eddie Callender.

New Paper to Begin

A new 32-page journal named TODAY has been announced by Bob Buchanan of Bowling Green, Kentucky. The flyer announcing it states "It is designed to be edification and meat for the Christian, while at the same time containing milk for the new convert and/or the non-Christian. A discussion of our internal problems has often con-fused the non-Christians we have given religious journals to. TODAY will try to present the gospel in more of a positive thrust." Annual subscription price will be \$15 in the U.S.A. and \$18 in foreign countries. The address: Today Publishing Co., P.O. Box 237, Bowling Green, KY 42102-0237.

NOTE TO ALL SUBSCRIBERS OF STS

With the January issue we had our mailing list transferred to a computer at the printing plant in Beme, Indiana. The paper has been printed and mailed from there for a number of years. With the new computer mailing printout, we ask all readers to check their addresses for accuracy and also to notify us of failure to receive any issue.

SEND NEWS ITEMS TO THE EDITOR

For the past three years, the Newsletter Reports has been edited by Wilson Adams. We thank him for a job well done. We would like for him to be able to write more than his work now allows and therefore release him from the responsibility of handling the news column. From now on all news items should be sent to the editor at P.O. Box 69, Brooks, KY 40109. There is much good news among brethren over the country. Please share it for the edification of others. Again, we ask that you please be as brief as possible. Debate and lectureship notices need to be sent much sooner than some do. We work on a one-month-in-advance basis with our printer. To allow editing time, an item to appear in April, should be on my desk by Feb. 25.

The News Column and Church Splits

Unless we have information to the contrary, news items are received at face value. We cannot know of every disturbance which may result in brethren parting company. Should an item be carried which speaks critically of another congregation, then those of the contrary part will want a hearing also. We carry a news column to edify readers with news of activities among brethren the knowledge of which will inform and strengthen the readers. The fact that we carry an item from a preacher and about a given congregation does not mean that we endorse everything about either the preacher or the congregation. Please do not try to put us in the middle in such cases.