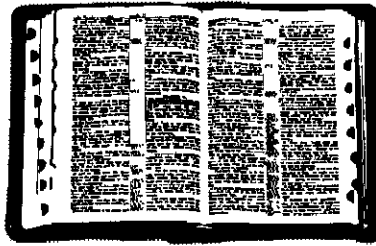


SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

"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

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THINK ON THESE THINGS

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Lutz, FL 33549



WHY DOES CROSSROADS TEACH ONE THING PUBLICLY AND PRACTICE ANOTHER?

Why does the Crossroads church of Christ teach one thing publicly on a given subject and practice something else on the same subject? There is sufficient documented evidence to show both what Crossroads claims as doctrine and what she practices. The preacher at Crossroads is Charles "Chuck" Lucas and what he says fairly well represents the church. If you have read the previous articles that will be understood.

So many have written so much on every phase of the Crossroads system that it will not be my objective in this article to discuss the various issues I mention to show the contrast between doctrine and practice.

I want to be as honest and fair as possible. I do not want to misrepresent Chuck Lucas or Crossroads and that religious movement anywhere. But it is a fact that Chuck Lucas, the elders and teachers at Crossroads, and Crossroads trained preachers teach and preach one thing and practice another on many subjects. Some-times this involves something they preach against, but they practice; sometimes they teach to do something and do not do it. This is the nature of the matter I am discussing.

Charles G. Goodall wrote a good booklet called **The Crossroads Heresy In The Light of The Scriptures**, in which he observed that there was a "wide discrepancy between the reports of those presently in the Crossroads system in contrast with that of those formerly associated with it." (page 2).

Charles Goodall reports a meeting he and the elders at Nebraska Avenue had with Martin Bentley, preacher at Sunrise church in Tampa, and four Sunrise leaders to discuss some of their practices. He said, "Their strategy was exactly as I had appraised the elders it would be; they categorically denied every indictable facet of their practice. Crossroads brethren have consistently done this whenever challenged." (page 4).

Crossroads is not the only religious system that is guilty of this sin. Many of those who will read these lines and approve every word against the Crossroads doctrine and practice will be guilty of the very thing which I am discussing. Perhaps not in the same area, but having to do with the authority of Christ and the obedience of the word of God.

Those churches who are involved in church support of orphan homes, homes for the aged, homes for unwed mothers, day schools, colleges, hospitals, and a dozen other social, medical, educational and recreational activities will argue long and loud that they accept NO authority but the word of God. They claim that they believe the Bible is verbally inspired and the only source of authority. They will say, "We speak where the Bible speaks, and are silent where the Bible is silent." That is what they preach! But if that be true, what is all this that I see and hear about these human organizations supported from the church treasuries to do "works" that the Bible says not one word about by direct command or statement, necessary conclusion or Bible ex-ample?

If you are wondering why many of the liberal churches are so vicious in their attack against Crossroads, it is in part because they are more advanced in their technique than most others. Besides, Crossroads has been somewhat "unorthodox" from the liberal point of view in their work. They have maintained an independent, highly organized operation, and are more successful in numerical growth than most of these others, and they are reacting.

What Crossroads Teaches versus What She Practices:

In November, 1981 Charles Lucas published "AN OPEN LETTER To the Brotherhood of Churches of Christ" in the Firm Foundation. In this Open Letter Lucas listed some things he said, "I strongly believe..."

This Open Letter was as much a defense of the Crossroads church as it was of himself. I want to state a few of these and point to the common practice of Crossroads.

1. "The gospel is the power of God for salvation—not any method, program or merit of man."

I am in complete agreement with that statement. I believe it is exactly what the Bible teaches (Rom. 1:16; Gal. 1:6-9; 2 Thess. 1:7-9). But in practice the Crossroads evangelistic programs of Campus Ministry and preacher training for the spread of the Crossroads philosophy is more important than the gospel. The "methods" of "soul-talks," "workshops" and "seminars" which serve more for indoctrination of the system than gospel preaching, are deemed essential. This is the evidence of their practice.

2. "Total commitment to Christ as our Saviour and Lord is expected of every Christian."

I believe that statement as it stands represents what the New Testament teaches on the subject. But in practice it is not to Christ as Saviour and Lord that Crossroads teachers and disciples are "totally committed"; it is to the system of Crossroads and its philosophy, as well as its leaders. They demand and get total commitment.

Do not be misled: Crossroads' "total commitment" is not in practice what Lucas claims for it in public teaching. I have carefully read several reports and papers from those who left Crossroads, and I have read two or three in defense of the system. I believe I understand fairly well what each side says, and the bottom line is: Crossroads preaches one thing, which Chuck Lucas, the elders and the leading element try to defend from the Bible, and practice another, which nearly all, both in and out of the system, who will talk about the subject, will agree is different.

To be "totally committed" to a form of doctrine and a human organization to promote it, as Crossroads church is, is far from being "totally committed" to Christ as our Saviour and Lord. The later will result in unity of the faith which will not allow us to be divided as Crossroads is separated from others.

3. "The Bible alone is the inspired and authoritative Word of God."

That is exactly what the Bible teaches. It is not only inspired; it is **VERBALLY** (word for word) inspired. (1 Cor. 2:9-13; Acts 2:4; Matt. 10:19,20; Rev. 22:18,19). It is not only authoritative, it is **COMPLETELY** and **FULLY** authoritative (2 Tim. 3:16,17; Jude 3). It would be interesting to see an article from the pen of Chuck Lucas on the verbal inspiration of the Bible and the complete and final revelation from God in it.

4. "Real church growth should not and will not occur through appeals of entertainment, recreation or humanistic psychology but only through the power of the gospel."

I agree with this statement as being based in Bible truth. But again, the statement is one thing and the practice is another. The fact is Crossroads does depend

(Continued on Page 4)

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Editorial

Connie W. Adams

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THE WORD OF THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL

From the place of his imprisonment in Rome, Paul wrote a letter to the church at Colosse, a place where he had not personally preached. These citizens of the Lycos Valley had become citizens of the kingdom of God's dear Son (Col. 1:13). Paul was thankful for their faith. He wrote "Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of your love which ye have for all the saints, For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth" (Col. 1:4-6).

It is interesting that in this passage several divine principles are tied together. They had faith in Christ, love to all the saints, hope of heaven, and had come to know the grace of God. But notice that none of that could be enjoyed apart from "the word of the truth of the gospel." Indeed, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). There is a "hearing of faith" (Gal. 3:2). Later in Colossians 1, Paul spoke again of "the hope of glory" but hastened to connect that hope with the message which he preached: "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Col. 1:27-28). You will observe also that "the grace of God" is something which they "knew... in truth."

We are living in an age of subjectivism. Too many are looking within themselves for satisfying answers to the nagging questions of human existence. Forgotten is the precept stated long ago by Jeremiah "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23). The humanist philosophy is that whatever we choose voluntarily from alternatives, having considered the consequences, is right for us and that we ought to prize that choice and assert it to the point of making it a pattern of conduct. This is what is meant by "values clarification" in education today.

Denominationalism has, for many years, placed emphasis on religion that is "better felt than told." Great store has been placed by being satisfied with religious faith and practice, assuming that whatever is sincerely done must be right. Many have relied upon subjective "feelings" as the evidence of salvation whether the word of God taught it or not.

Much is said about salvation by grace through faith. That is Bible doctrine and is certainly taught in Eph. 2:8-10. But God's truth on any subject is the sum total of all he said on the matter. The passage from Colossians 1 shows that there is a "word of truth" by which things may be determined and that word of truth is in the gospel. So then, the final measure of truth in the spiritual realm is the gospel of Christ. Every doctrine and practice must be measured by that standard. The Holy Spirit was to guide the apostles into "all truth" (Jno. 16:13). If the Lord did not teach it and the Holy Spirit did not move the apostles and prophets to preach it or write it, then it is not part of "the word of the truth of the gospel." And since God proposes to save all men, Jew and Greek alike, by the gospel (Rom. 1:16-17), then if it is not in the gospel there is no salvation in it. If it is not a part of salvation then it becomes a source of damnation. That is why we must not go beyond "what is written" (1 Cor. 4:6; 2 Jno. 9-10).

We all need a warning here. It is not our right to offer pardon to an alien sinner on less terms than God has provided in "the word of the truth of the gospel." Neither is it our right to offer pardon to an erring child of God on less terms than the word of God directs. In either case we have acted presumptuously and have not benefited our hearers in the least. All the fallen trees on the way to the baptistry and suddenly stepping in front of unexpected trucks, or praying soldiers in foxholes, or death bed stories, will not change what the God of all truth has said. I will leave the right of clemency in the hands of him who made us all, but I dare not offer it unless I can put my finger on it in "the word of the truth of the gospel." Paul said the secrets of men will be judged "according to my gospel" (Rom. 2:16) and exactly there I propose to leave the matter. I can do no other without intruding into a realm which is not mine. I appeal for others to do likewise.

AUGUST SPECIAL ISSUE

We have been concerned over the past few years to see more and more Christians come to Bible classes with an assortment of the newer translations and paraphrases of the Bible. I fear that many are depending entirely on some of these for their Bible study without understanding the danger involved. Certainly there is some value to be gained by comparing different translations on a passage. We believe that, regardless of what some have said, the best and safest translations of the Bible are still the King James Version and the American Standard Version. These are based on the Textus Receptus and have been declared by all concerned to be the most accurate and exact English translations available. In fact, proponents of some of the newer translations have criticized these two versions for being "too mechanically exact." Well, I would prefer to be as exact as possible in studying the word of God.

Unless some study is given to this matter, we are going to soon have a generation which is Biblically illiterate and which has absorbed much error due to faulty translations. One of the versions we see more and more people using is the NEW INTERNATIONAL

VERSION. We think this version has serious flaws and that it teaches outright error in a number of instances. Those who produced it have defended their right to comment in the text as well as to translate. This is extremely dangerous. For instance, they translated the word SARX, rendered "flesh" in reliable translations, with the words "sinful nature" on 25 occasions. They did it 9 times in Romans 8 and 6 times in Gal. 5. This is inexcusable and actually is blatant Calvinism.

Dorris V. Rader and his son Donnie V. Rader have done a considerable amount of work on the NIV and we are going to publish their material in the August issue of this paper. There will also be related articles by former editor H.E. Phillips and the present editor of this paper. We believe the material is such that many brethren might want to consider extra copies of this edition to put in the hands of members where you worship. If so, we would appreciate some indication of your interest so we might be able to better project the number of copies we will need to print. This material needs as wide circulation as possible.

(Continued from Page 1)

upon the Crossroads Singers and other forms of entertainment for "church growth." Do not be naive; if all the social and entertainment functions were eliminated from Crossroads completely, it would die as far as its present reputation is concerned. The very things that Lucas says will not make real church growth are the things that make Crossroads what it is. Thus, it must not be "real" church growth.

What Crossroads Teaches Against But Practices:

In the same Open Letter Chuck Lucas gave a list of things he says he never believed, taught nor sanctioned. Among these are some things they teach against but practice.

1. "That every sin of thought or action should or must be confessed to a prayer partner."

Now I have never been in their "prayer-partner" operation, and by actual practice I do not know what is done or not done. I must take the evidence supplied by others to draw the conclusions that form my conviction. I have three sources of testimony: 1) those who have been prayer partners but are no longer in the system; 2) those who are still in the Crossroads church and are prayer partners, both mature and novices; and 3) the literature written both by Crossroads and those aligned with her and others who have been there as a part of it. Now where would I go to get better evidence? To Chuck Lucas or the elders? I am quoting from an Open Letter from Chuck Lucas. I know what he says about it. I am saying that what they preach and teach is one thing, and what the overwhelming evidence shows the practice to be is another.

The junior prayer partner is taught to confess all sins of deed or mind to the senior prayer partner and seek his help and advice as he prays for him. It is so widely practiced among all of the Crossroads philosophy that I am amazed that one would deny it.

2. "That women may lead men in prayer in the assemblies of the church."

I suppose by "assemblies of the church" Lucas means the Lord's day morning and evening worship in the main auditorium of the church building. Other assemblies where men and women are together for worship and Bible study are excluded because both Lucas and the elders practice it. That is fact I have encountered with some from Crossroads or who have been taught under Crossroads influence. These all learned the practice at Crossroads, even though Lucas says he has never believed, taught nor sanctioned it.

3. "That the book by Robert Coleman, THE MASTER PLAN OF EVANGELISM, or any book other than the Bible, should be the basis for our doctrine or practices in evangelism or personal relationships."

Charles Goodall says in his tract, page 5: "The September 21, 1975 Crossroads bulletin lists this book to be reviewed in their Campus Ministers Training Program. It does not take a scholar to see that it is the blueprint of the Crossroads philosophy. Roger Lamb, a proponent of the Crossroads system, said in a speech promoting the Campus Advance program: 'This is it; this is the plan; it's all in this book.' (He referred to THE MASTER PLAN OF EVANGELISM he was carrying in his hand.)¹¹" (Ref. quote from Jackie M. Stearsman, in **Con-tending For The Faith**, XII, No. 4,12).

In some of the printed material and on cassette tapes of sermons and lectures, Lucas and the elders have defended the use of Coleman's book in their programs.

4. "That peoples' sins or other confidential matters should or may be freely shared with others in the church."

This is the main function of the prayer partner concept. The junior partner is urged to confess all of his sins, private and public, to his senior partner in the hope that he will be relieved of the guilt of sin. He is expected to seek counsel from the senior partner about all areas of his life, with the promise that he will be made closer to the Lord and sin less. The attitude and teaching of the leaders and more mature members of a soul-talk group bring out the confessions and confidential matters of one's life or he soon leaves the class. This is almost a universal report of behavior at these sessions.

5. "That there should be any superior/inferior or junior/senior concept of spiritual ranking among Christians."

It is somewhat startling that Chuck Lucas would make this statement when his writings and taped sermons and lectures are so filled with the idea of a prayer-partner concept of a mature and young convert as partners. If this isn't a "junior/senior concept" I do not know how one would be created. The idea of this arrangement is to have "confessions of sins (and it is always from the weak to the strong, the young to the old, the junior to the senior, the inferior to the superior in spiritual maturity, it is supposed), and the one who hears the sins can pray for the sinner. Lucas says he does not believe this and has never believed it, but he helped create the prayer-partner arrangement and promotes it.

Chuck Lucas concludes this list with the statement that even though he has never believed and taught any of these things, he is aware that some of them are taking place. I do not understand why he does not get in the pulpit and denounce all of them. He should call upon his brethren at Crossroads to repent and forsake these unscriptural practices! Over two and a half years have passed since he wrote this Open Letter in the Firm Foundation and they are still doing all these things I have stated in this article. It is a matter of teaching one thing in public and practicing another.

The Crossroads system is a false one. The Crossroads philosophy is a dangerous one. It is a promised panacea for apathy and worldliness, but its carnal appeals draw away disciples after the human rewards of this life. Its numerical growth stems from the dynamic personality of the leadership, the entertainment, the social gospel with all its empty fruits and rewards, and the individual involvement in time and energy consuming programs. And finally the system will fall to rest with all other schemes and relics of men. God's word will live forever (Matt. 24:35).

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WHERE'S THE SCRIPTURE?

A. C. Grider

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I have been amused in recent days by the television commercial in which there is a large bun but only a very little beef. Somebody in the back asks several times "Where's the beef?" The thing that makes it interesting is that, indeed, many times you can hardly find the beef in some of the hamburgers you buy.

But in spiritual matters we also have a question. It is presented as a caption for this piece. Where's the scripture? I maintain there is absolutely no scripture for the following:

1. Where is the scripture for the church helping any kind of a home. Call it the original home, or the substitute home, or the restored home, or the legal home, or the divine home. I don't care what you call it, where is the scripture for the church supporting it? I say there is none.

2. Where is the scripture for a church helping another church to preach the gospel? Of course, I suppose, when each church does all of the preaching it can do they are helping each other. But I am talking about scripture for one church sending money to another church to preach. I say there is none.

3. Where is the scripture for the church helping anybody but saints. I can read several scriptures that teach churches to help poor saints. But where does the scripture teach churches to help non-saints? I say there is no such teaching in the Bible.

4. Where is the scripture that instructs churches to build and maintain benevolent organizations such as orphan homes? I say there is not such scripture.

5. Where is the scripture where two churches ever pooled any money to preach the gospel? Two or three thousand are doing it but where is the scripture to authorize them to do so? I say there is none.

6. Where is the scripture for a church to take charge of another church's money for any purpose whatsoever? Churches are to assist sister churches in taking care of their poor saints when they are unable to do so without assistance. But where is the scripture for a church soliciting or otherwise obtaining money to be spent as it is being done among our liberal brethren? I say there is none.

7. Where is the scripture for a church assuming a work which is beyond its ability to pay for? I am not talking about some kind of a calamity where a church might be temporarily short of funds to carry on. I am talking about assuming a work that it knows it will not be able to support and who then must solicit help from

other congregations. I say there is no such scripture.

8. In short, where is the scripture for a sponsoring church of any kind, at any time, for any purpose? I say there is none.

Our brethren have simply overstepped the bounds of the Bible and they are completely without chart or compass in what they are doing. Most of them have realized that and have quit trying to defend what they are doing. We are going to keep on asking where's the beef, I mean where's the scripture? Until they find it I am going to charge that they have gone on and are not abiding in the doctrine of Christ and that they have not God. See 2 John 9-11.

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"TREATY SIGNALS END OF CATHOLICISM AS OFFICIAL STATE RELIGION IN ITALY"

In the closing paragraph of our last article we said, "Ironically, about the time our ambassador to the Vatican was announced, it was reported that the nation of Italy and the city of Rome were taking steps to break some relations with the Vatican! They have had enough, while we are just getting started."

We consider this development to be of great significance and importance to the two nations and the world, therefore we desire to present additional material for our readers. Under the above heading, the following article appeared in the **Arkansas Democrat**, a daily newspaper, February 19, 1984:

"ROME (AP)—Italy and the Vatican signed a revised treaty Saturday that ends the status of the Roman Catholic Church as state religion and reduces the emphasis on religious instruction in public schools.

"Premier Bettino Craxi, a Socialist, and Cardinal Agostino Casaroli, the Vatican's secretary of state, signed the agreement revising the Lateran Pacts that have been in effect since 1929.

"Pope John Paul II did not attend.

"The revised relationship between church and state comes at a time of increasing secularity in Italy. Many practices defy church teaching. Nudity is routine on television programs, surveys show more and more Italian women use contraceptives, and abortion and divorce are legal, despite the church's condemnation.

"The signing ceremony at Villa Madama, a Renaissance palace now used as a government guest house for visiting dignitaries, was broadcast live.

"The state and the church are, each in its own area, independent and sovereign,' Casaroli said, borrowing phrases from the new agreement. 'Both collaborate for the promotion of man and the common good.'

"Craxi, standing by his side, added: 'We are closing in a happy way a long and sometimes difficult chapter involving the church and state.'

"Negotiations for the revised agreement began in 1967.

" 'Catholicism had and continues to have deep roots in the Italian heritage,' said Craxi, Italy's first Socialist premier. He read the entire Concordat, as the pact is known, to the television audience.

"The 14-article treaty starts by noting the 'process of

political and social transformation witnessed in Italy during the last decades.'

"Under the treaty, Rome loses its status as a 'sacred city' and becomes a capital city of 'particular significance' for the world's Roman Catholics, who number more than 790 million.

"The treaty does not alter the Vatican's status as an independent state run by the pope.

"The agreement says Catholic religious education will continue to be offered in public schools but parents will have to specifically request it. Now, Italians who do not want the instruction have to ask for an exemption.

"The Vatican has retained some privileges. For example, Italian priests will still be exempt from military service and the state cannot take over Catholic churches without approval from church authorities.

"The Vatican will turn over control of Italy's Jewish catacombs to the Italian state. Rome's small Jewish community hopes the state will allow the Jewish catacombs in the city to be opened to tourists. The Vatican will retain control of Italy's Christian catacombs, which are a popular tourist attraction.

"Before Parliament decides whether to give the pact final approval, a special commission has six months to sort out the most complex issues—including the tax exemptions of some charities and religious institutions not part of Vatican City or its extra-territorial property."

We regret that this separation has been caused, at least in part, by the increase of humanism and immorality among the Italian people. We have the same problem in America.

There's another interesting aspect of this change. For many years the Catholic Church has tried to convince the world that Catholicism is the antidote of communism, socialism, and immorality. History and present facts do not support the claim. The truth is, totalitarianism breeds totalitarianism, and enslavement breeds defiance. That's what Catholicism is experiencing.

Seven hundred ninety million Catholics in the world! What a task before us! Each of them should be converted to pure and simple New Testament Christianity. Of course the majority of those people were made Catholics without their knowledge or consent. It happened when they were infants.

From the Vatican viewpoint, we have serious doubts that this change in relationship between Rome and Catholicism came about "in a happy way."

We would hope that this development in Italy might be a warning to America concerning the problems and dangers of entangling alliances with the Vatican.

SPECIAL FEATURE

IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS, GRACE AND FORGIVENESS—NO. 2

by
Franklin T. Puckett

There are those who want to fellowship everybody no matter what they do. Men like Carl Ketcherside, and others, want to fellowship everybody, and I heard Ketcherside make the statement that any baptized believer was his brother and, therefore, was in fellowship with him and he with him. Even though they might be in error, they were still in fellowship.

III

Well, the word, "fellowship," may be used in different senses. We'll have to use it in the light of the context in which it appears and in the relationship in which it is used. But from that standpoint he reasons then that people in the so-called Christian Church who brought in instrumental music without divine authority are to be accepted in full fellowship because they may be wrong in that, but he says because they have been baptized back here, and are people who have been baptized into Christ, he says, then God will not look at their imperfect service, but He will reach over here and take Christ's perfection and put it over here to their account.

And though they live and die in this erroneous doctrine and practice which has divided the people of God and has opened up the door for all kinds of error, God won't hold it against them. That is why I'm saying unto you it's going to produce the doctrine of the impossibility of apostasy among us. And one step leads to another.

And he has gone so far now as to say we ought to fellowship even those who have not been baptized, by immersion, who are believers. Why, the unbaptized he said are his brethren in prospect—in prospect. So, we ought to go ahead and fellowship them. And it opens up the door for extending the hand of fellowship to all of those who have brought in their institutionalism and all kinds of promotional schemes and have disrupted the peace and harmony of God's people and have opened the door for all of the errors that are now sweeping astray hundreds and even thousands of people. Because they say, "Well, after all, they are sincere, and earnest, and God will just take the perfectness of Christ and put it over here to their account. And he'll go ahead and save them anyhow; he'll impute righteousness unto them."

IV

My friends, I want you to see something of what the Bible teaches along that line concerning this matter of fellowship. Over in 1 John, chapter 1, John says, "That

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which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you that your joy may be full." Alright, this is why he was writing the letter. And this is what he is writing unto them—what he and his fellow apostles were declaring unto them.

Now then, he goes right ahead to say, "This then is the message which we have heard of him and declare unto you." Alright, here's the message. Now the fellowship that we may have with them is conditioned upon conforming unto the message they were declaring. The message is the instrument or the means by and through which they might obtain unto fellowship. Alright, this then is the message which we have heard of him and declare unto you, that God is light. In Him is no darkness at all."

Now get the message. The message is that God is light. In him is no darkness at all, not one bit. Now watch the next statement, which is a conditional sentence and the condition, of course, must be considered and accepted in order for the result to follow. But just as surely as the condition is true, the consequent result is also true. Now watch it! "If we say we have fellowship with him," that is with God, "and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth." Could you put it any plainer than that? If we say we have fellowship with God, or with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth.

There are two realms. One of them is the realm of light and the other is the realm of darkness. So, here is the realm of light. (*Draws diagram on chalkboard.*) And here is the realm of darkness. Now the realm of light is the realm in which we walk with God. The realm of darkness is the realm in which we walk in sin. Light stands representative of righteousness. Darkness stands representative of sin. And so, here you have light and darkness.

Now this is the message. God is light and in him is no darkness at all, not one bit. Now if we say we have fellowship with God, that is, we are partners with him, we jointly share with him, and walk over here in darkness, we lie. He did not soften it by some euphemism, either. He did not say, "We miss it slightly." He didn't say, "We prevaricate." He said, "We lie!" That's just what it is, and do not the truth. No man can claim to have fellowship, partnership with God, be sharing with God and be walking in darkness. If he does he lies about it. That's what the Scripture says. Do you believe the Scripture?

Now that just simply means, my friend, we can't get out here as Christians and dabble around in the world and be walking in sin, having our course of conduct, and our way of life, our mode of conduct in sinful practices, no matter what they are. For, fellowship with God demands that we walk in the light. Now if we are walking in darkness and claim fellowship with God, we lie about it. That will be the result if that condition is true.

V

Now watch the next passage. "If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another

and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sin." Alright, now then, here again you have a conditional sentence. "If we walk in the light," but the walk in the light is to walk in the counsel of God, to walk in righteousness, to walk with God. That is our mode of conduct, our way of life, our habit, our procedure, and so if we walk in light as he is in the light, then we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.

Now then, the next verse says, "If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." Now, none of us are perfect. If we say we have no sins, we are deceiving ourselves. We're not deceiving many other people. I've bumped into a few people in life who claim to live sinlessly. They claim that they live without ever committing a sin of any kind. And so John says, "If we say we have no sin (there is your condition), we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." There is your consequent result. So, we cannot claim to be without sin.

But, now then, notice the next statement, "If we confess our sins," here is your next conditional clause, "If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." The forgiveness of our sins and cleansing from unrighteousness is conditioned upon our confession of our sins. And our confession of sins is conditioned upon the recognition of the fact that we have sinned, but our cleansing by the blood of Christ is conditioned upon our not continuing to walk in sin or in darkness. And we cannot continue to walk in it and claim fellowship with God, without lying. Now those are simple sentences if we will just look at them and accept them for what they are.

Furthermore, an interesting thing that is noted here is that the tense of all these verbs here is what is called, "present tense." And in the original language in which the New Testament was written, which was the Greek language, tense does not have nearly as much to do with time as it does in English, but rather places the emphasis upon the stated condition of action. Only in the indicative mode does it have to do with time and even then it is not the primary point of emphasis.

Now in the "present tense," the state or kind of action is "durative action," that is, it is "continuative action," going on and on and on. It is continuative. But there is another tense called, "aorist tense," which is called, "point action." And so it has to do with just a point. And it comprises the entirety of the action. When it began, when it ended, how long it continued is not set forth in that tense. It is simply the action of undefined, but the action considered is a point.

VI

Alright, now I want us to notice some things here. If we say we are having (that is present tense, continuative action), we are continuing to have fellowship with God, and we are walking, continuing to walk in darkness, we are lying. Just as long as we are claiming to have fellowship with God and as long as we are walking in darkness, we are lying. But if we are walking, (present tense, continuative action), if we are continuing to walk

in the light as He is in the light, then we are having (continuing to have), fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, is cleansing (continuing to cleanse), from all sin.

The blood of Christ continues to cleanse us from sin just as long as we continue to walk in the light as he is in the light. When we cease walking in the light, then the blood of Christ ceases cleansing us from our sin. But yet, it may be said that we are not without sin, and that is true, if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. But we cannot continue in that sin. We cannot continue to walk in it and still have the cleansing blood of Christ.

Sin may sometimes invade our lives in the moment of weakness or sudden temptation but continuative action is prohibited. We cannot continue in it day after day, week after week and month after month and year after year and still be constantly being cleansed by the blood of Christ. For the cleansing is commensurate with the continuing to walk in the light. That's what the passage is teaching.

Now then, one might commit a sin over here, point action, and not continue in it, finding himself guilty of sin, stop it right there, quit it. But then he is to confess his sins. So if we are confessing our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

—To be continued

Insight

Dee Bowman
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WHAT THE BEER COMMERCIALS DON'T SAY

Advertising is the most obvious symbol of free capitalism. It symbolizes competition and, ideally, allows the consumer to be a smarter buyer. It's all around us. Billboards, match-book covers, on buses and taxis, park benches, even American graffiti is a form of advertising. But the media is the giant of the advertising industry, Radio, television, and newspaper capture most of the advertising dollar in America.

Media advertising has become very sophisticated during the last several years. Talented writers, musicians, actors, and production experts have joined forces to produce works of art in twenty-second vignettes which not only capture your attention, but tug at your heart strings (remember the "Mean Joe Green" com-

mercial?). In such a short time they can set the stage, tell the story, and tempt the buyer. Anyone not impressed with the finely tuned abilities of today's electronic media has not been watching it.

Perhaps the cleverest of all today's commercials are being done by the beer companies. Even those of us who would never use the product are amused by their commercials. The ability of the producers to paint a picture of and thereby appeal to the average worker is astounding. They can make any profession seem as if it is the most important job around. And every holiday season the air waves are saturated with timely and beautiful pictures of family and friends, warm fires, and the spirit of togetherness. And who has not felt chills of excitement at the sight of beautiful horses pulling sleighs of happy people through the snow-laden country side at dusk, passing lighted houses half-buried in the new fallen snow, and gliding effortlessly toward the small village and on to the country home elaborately adorned in the decorations of the season. The comedy of their commercials ranges from subtle innuendoes to vaudeville slapstick and is done with flawless capability. Some of the most entertaining moments on television are the beer commercials. Actually, there's more professionalism in them than in most of the programs.

But in the midst of all this professionalism and intriguing production there is something terribly wrong. The commercials don't tell the whole story. I suggest to you that while the commercials are works of art, the product they advertise is helping to erode the morality of our people. We are being "sold a bill of goods."

You will not find a word in the commercials about all the heartache the product causes. They don't show a husband coming home in a drunken stupor slapping his wife and kids around. They don't show how many marriages have been sacrificed to the foam-crowned golden brew. They don't picture for us the problems encountered by the teenage alcoholic. They don't show us pictures of a man's liver which has been eaten away by excessive use of the so-called "heavenly potion." There is never any mention of the grieving mother and father who have lost a son or daughter because of some teenage drinking party, many times "just down the street." They don't tell us that about half the arrests made in America last year were alcohol-related. And they don't ever show the medical reports that link alcohol to such things as heart disease, emotional breakdowns, and literally dozens of other health problems.

The beer commercials don't show the number of accidents and deaths caused by their product and others like it. Did you know that in the past ten years alone more people have died in alcohol-related auto crashes than were killed in the Vietnam war? And the National Highway Safety Commission estimates that from 1980 to 1990 the figure will double, to about 500,000. It should also be noted that huge outlays of cash are required to investigate, prosecute and otherwise handle all the legal ramifications attached to these cases. I saw one recent report that said that citizens of this country pay out an average of \$616 in losses for every dollar collected by the government from taxation of alcoholic

beverages. But we don't see that on the commercials, do we?

And why is it that the fancy dressed, appealing commercials don't tell us what alcohol does to the eternal welfare of its users? Beer and whiskey and other inebriants are the adhesive that holds much of today's immorality together. The practitioners of immoral actions and lewd conduct almost always accompany that action with some kind of intoxicant, alcohol being the most prominently used. Alcohol, by destroying inhibitions and eroding shame, breaks down resistance and encourages all manner of illicit and lewd activities. Drinking is habit-forming and anyone who says differently is not your friend. It very often introduces its users to stronger drugs. It takes away a man's will and leaves him devoid of the mental mechanism he needs to be wise in his judgments. He turns to situation ethics because such a standard releases him from obligation regarding morality. Such loss of control is sinful and wrong and will cause a man to lose his soul. But do the commercials tell us anything about Hell? I haven't seen it, have you?

The next time you decide that "weekends were made for beer," or that "this one's for you," or it's "filler time," just remember that the beer commercials which have so impressed you with those little musical slogans didn't tell you the whole story.

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MAY ONE MARRY A "PUT AWAY" PERSON?

If only men would accept what Jesus said about the matter of divorce and remarriage in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9, we would not have the problems that we have today on this subject. The majority of the problems are caused on all religious subjects, not by what the Bible actually says, but by what men want it to say. Paul warned of this when he told Timothy that men "... after their own lusts shall leap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and be turned unto fables" (II Timothy 4:3-4).

In the passages under consideration, Jesus gives a rule and then gives the exception to the rule. Here is the rule. "Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another committeth adultery." No question about it. The one who puts away his wife and marries another commits adultery. However, Jesus made an exception to this rule. "Except it be for fornication." That's the

"exception" made by Jesus. The obvious conclusion is that if one does put away his wife "for fornication" (that is the **reason** he put her away), he does not commit adultery when he remarries.

TO illustrate the above point, let's look at another rule given by Christ with an exception. Jesus said, "Ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). If there had been no exception to this rule set forth by Jesus, the people would no doubt have perished. However, there was an exception given. Jesus said, "Except ye repent." So, Jesus made the rule, but He also gave an exception to it. Thus Matthew 19:9a is very clear as to what God authorizes regarding the person who does the "putting away." If he puts away his wife for any cause other than fornication, when he remarries he commits adultery. However, if he puts her away "for fornication" and remarries, he does not commit adultery.

The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia sets forth seven things for which a Jew could put away his wife and give her a writing of divorcement under the Law of Moses. The following chart shows some of these causes along with the only cause Jesus gave.

Reasons To "Put Away"	
Pharisees: Put Away For Every Cause (Matt. 19:3)	
(ISBE Vol. II P. 864)	
<i>Put Away</i>	Personal Dislike
	Breaks Any Vow
}	Spins In The Street
	Burning The Bread
}	Fornication
Jesus: Only One Cause (Mt. 19:9)	

Today the majority of people are put away and given a writing of divorcement for "every cause" besides the cause given by Jesus, even as the Pharisees expressed. Jesus said Moses allowed it because of the hardness of their hearts, but from the beginning it was not so (Matthew 19:8).

In discussing this subject, some have taken the position that "committeth adultery" is a one-time-act, and therefore after the act is committed, those involved may then repent of this "one-time-act" and be free to remain together. The original language, however, will not bear this out. In fact, to the contrary. The expression "committeth adultery" in the original language is present indicative, and is used "to denote that which habitually occurs, or may be reasonably expected to occur." Or, "to describe that which recurs at successive intervals, or is conceived in successive periods" (Dana and Mantey, Page 183-184). In order for it to be a simple one-time-act, it would have to be in the aorist tense.

May The Guilty Party Remarry?

Some have come to the conclusion that the person who has been put away "for fornication" (the guilty party) is not under consideration in these passages. However, it would be ridiculous, as you can see from the following chart, to say that the one who has been "put away" for fornication is not "a put away person." Yes, they have been "put away." What did Jesus say on this subject? "Whoso marrieth her that is put away commits adultery." Thus Jesus said that one who marries a "put away person," (whether she is put away for "burning the bread" or "for fornication," she is still a "put away person"), commits adultery.

**Marrying The
"Put Away" One**

**"Whosoever Marrieth Her
Which Is**

Put
Away

**Personal Dislike
Breaks Any Vow
Spins In The Street
Burning The Bread
Fornication**

Jesus: Only One Cause (Mt. 19:9)

move the "exception" to the second clause, it would no longer exist with the first. This is clearly seen in our second point.

Second, as you can see from the chart which I had diagrammed of the Greek, simply giving the literal translations of the words in English, of Matthew 19:9, the phrase "except it be for fornication" is an adverbial phrase which modifies the verb "shall put away." But if it is transposed to the latter part of the sentence it would have to modify "her that is put away." That would mean that you would have to change an adverbial phrase to an adjectival phrase. This cannot be done grammatically.

Matt. 19:9

Whoever ὅς	and καί	shall put away ἀπολύσῃ	the τῆς	wife ἑαυτῆς	commits ἁμαρτανεύσει	adultery ἁμαρτανεύσει
		not for ἄνευ	the τῆς	of him ἐκείνου		
		shall marry γαμήσῃ	another ἄλλην			
		and καί	he, who ὁ ἄλλος	marries γαμήσῃ	her that is put away ἡ ἀπολυθεῖσα	commits adultery ἁμαρτανεύσει
		I ἐγώ	to You ὑμῖν	Say λέγω		

This cannot be done grammatically!

Matthew 19:9b Not In Text

In an effort to try to circumvent God's law regarding the "put away fornicator," some have suggested that the latter part of Matthew 19:9 is "spurious," not in the original text, and therefore should not be considered. However, 48 Greek scholars believed there was enough evidence for it in the manuscripts, to place it in the text of the King James Version. And, 101 Greek scholars of the American Standard Version thought there was enough evidence to leave it in the text, but with a footnote that states, "The following words to the end of the verse, are omitted by some ancient authorities." However, if you decide that Matthew 19:9b should be thrown out, which I am not ready to admit in view of what 149 Greek Scholars who wrote the King James and American Standard Versions did by placing it in the text, you would still have the same statement in Matthew 5:32b about which there is no question regarding its authenticity.

Does The Exception Clause Apply To Both Parts Of The Passage?

Some say that the one "put away" for fornication is not committing adultery when she remarries, because the "exception clause" in the first part of the passage also applies to (and could be inserted in) the last part of the passage.

There are at least two things wrong with this position. First, by reason of the position of the "exception" in the sentence it cannot modify both clauses. And if we

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HUBBARD HOWELL OBEYED THE GOSPEL

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MATTHEW 13:23—"AND HE THAT WAS SOWN UPON THE GOOD GROUND, THIS IS HE WHO HEARETH THE WORD, AND UNDERSTANDING IT, VERILY BEARS FRUIT, AND BRINGS FORTH, SOME AN HUNDREDFOLD, SOME SIXTY, AND SOME THIRTY."

I realize that many good righteous souls have obeyed the gospel in other areas, and that much good is being done in sowing the seed to a lost world. I believe, however, that the story of brother Howell is worthy of relating, because of its' unique nature, in our modern world.

Hubbard Howell is a simple man. He is 54 years old and married with four girls and one son. He is a second generation pulp-wood hauler who works hard and is known as a man of his word. He expects people to be honest and he deals this way with others. He was born and raised in Shelby County, Alabama and has had an interesting life. He is one of the few pulpwooders, who will still take the time to hitch up a team of Belgian horses and go "stump a field", which is thankless work. He lost an eye in an accident with a chain-saw, but he is able to see in other ways than with his eyes. Hubbard is also my friend and I love him.

He recently has a heart attack while working in the woods and had a life-threatening situation for a while as a result. While in the hospital, I went to see Hubbard and found he was very humble about his lost state before God. We had a word of prayer, which I began, and in which Hubbard intervened. He cried out "Oh God, Oh Jesus, my Lord, please help me to do what is right, I am lost, and I know that I ain't got many more chances to do what I ought, help me find what is right and do what you want me to do, I don't want to go to hell, I just want to love you and know you, Oh Jesus, Oh God, Oh Lord, IV sure been mean but I am going to do better..."

He stopped here, because he was crying, and I finished up our prayer and wiped my eyes also. Here was a soul who prayed as Cornelius must have for salvation and the right way. Two other brethren and I went to see Hubbard in the hospital and read the Bible to him and prayed with him. You see, the reason we read to Hubbard is that he never learned to read for himself.

He has had the blessing of working with a faithful and devout Christian for many years. This good saint has been working on Hubbard for several years and Hubbard respects him dearly. He believes that this man is

what a Christian ought to be. Hubbard has had some experience with "religious people" before, and they made him think that he had to "feel" something before he was saved. He never could get that feeling for some reason. I guess He was just too honest to have fallen for any false idea about "feelings." He had been to our gospel meeting before he had his heart attack and was really impressed with "Bible preaching" as he called it. He came in his overalls and brought his granddaughter, who came barefooted, because she had no shoes.

After he was released from the hospital, Hubbard met with his friend from work and they continued to talk about the Bible. I received a call from our brother one night stating the good news that Hubbard wanted to be baptized. I met them at the building and before baptizing Hubbard, asked him a few questions. He answered this way: "I am not going to try to fool nobody, I don't know what the Bible says cause I can't read it, but I know that I am lost and going to hell, and from what has been read to me, I know that I should be baptized. I believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and I am willin' to change my life to be like Him. I want to go to heaven and I am on my way to hell like I am. I want to start now to do what he said. After a word of prayer we baptized this man into Christ, after hearing him make the good confession. The cold water did not bother him a bit, and he was certainly a happy soul when he came up out of the water.

Hubbard told us to be sure and tell him when he messed up so he could make it right. He told us he was serious about going to heaven and that he wasn't just hoping to go, he was "aimin" to get there. We had another word of prayer and heard him express his gratitude for salvation and then returned home refreshed.

I could not help thinking as I drove home; "Isn't this what it is all about"—one honest precious soul with a tender heart, who wants to serve God and do what he can in the kingdom. I had ask myself, whether I had been plowing the wrong fields. I would probably have bypassed Hubbard's house, while going door to door, because it is real messy and rough, and they probably wouldn't listen anyway. How many others like him are out there waiting to hear the truth? But, I am ashamed to say that many of them will never be reached, because too many are too busy planning how to do personal work in the safety of their office, and too good to get out there and dig into the business of plowing the spiritual soil. Under the guise of organization, we often neglect the fields which are white unto harvest. We often streamline our "programs" for the middle class, who often have so much of this worlds goods, it blinds them to the need for Christ. They have everything within their grasp and overlook the greatest need of all, Jesus. Yes, Hubbard is a case of a simple, down-to-earth man hearing the Truth, believing it, and obeying it.

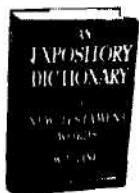
Hubbard has adjusted well to our services and feels accepted by the kind brethren here. We are thankful for Hubbard and his example to us. He has helped us more than he will ever know. One Wednesday night I read Matthew 27 about Christ's crucifixion, and noticed that Hubbard was wiping his eyes with his handkerchief. He

told me after services that he had never heard that they spit on Jesus, and it was a good thing he wasn't there when they spit on his Lord. He has said that he thinks his talent is to lead people by example. He did not tell his wife, he had obeyed the gospel because, he figured it would be better for her to notice his change, than for him to have to tell her.

Hubbard is progressing well in the kingdom and brings his grandchildren with him to what he can. He fervently wants his family to obey the gospel, and we are working on that now. He is not an ignorant man, he just cannot read. He has to rely on memory while we can look up what we forget.

Hubbard Howell has helped me to be a better Christian and has shown me that there is a lot of good soil right in front of us if we will but open our eyes and plow the right fields. I have rediscovered the simple joy of just reading the precious Word. I have also learned again, that happiness lies not in what we have in this life, but in the spiritual peace which is available to all through Christ. I am afraid that in some instances many who claim to be Christians, are little more than spiritual bigots, in regards to whom we teach. There are congregations all over this land that have worked for years establishing a work, only to close it up, after a few years, making no effort to reach those who surround them. Instead, they abandon an area and move to a "better" part of town and sell the old building they labored so hard to purchase, to a denomination. We may have come a long way, materially, in a lot of places, but could it be in our quest to be like others, we have set ourselves up as an elite club of spiritual snobs? Who made us the standard, anyway? Perhaps, we have lost a grasp on the true purpose for which we preach and teach. We have made a long journey from the simple, plain teaching, which rocked the hills of Zion and turned the world upside down for Christ. Let us resolve to fervently sow the seed to every creature, and may God bless the church with more servants like Hubbard Howell.

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BREAD OF LIFE

"I am the bread of life... so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." Jno. 6:35, 57.

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"FEED MY SHEEP"

As Jesus drew from Peter a three-fold affirmation of love for him, he charged Peter to "feed by sheep" (John 21:15-17). Jesus was not a literal shepherd with literal sheep and in need of someone to help tend them. Both "sheep" and "feed" in this text are obviously figurative.

Paul spoke of his work of evangelism and ministering as "feeding". He said to the Corinthians, "I have fed you with milk and not with meat" (1 Cor. 3:2) and referred to himself as a "minister by whom they had believed" (vs. 35). This activity is further signified by such figures as "planting" and "watering" (vs. 6).

Elders in the church at Ephesus were told to "feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). They would do this through teaching that would protect the flock from those "speaking perverse things" (vs. 30J) and "convince the gainsayers" (Tit. 1:9). Peter charged elders to "Feed the flock of God which is among you" (1 Pet. 5:2). The word "feed" (K. J.) is poimaino in the Greek, meaning "to tend-to shepherd" (Vines). Actually, the word means "to act as a shepherd. It is used of feeding cattle (1 Cor. 9:7; Lk. 19:7). The thing signified is the teaching, protecting, admonishing, and leading that elders are to do, and are able to do because they have the qualifications of 1 Tim. 3:2-7; Tit. 1:6-9.

The Sheep

In all the afore mentioned texts, sheep is figurative. The context shows the sheep under consideration are people—a special kind of people. The charge given to elders (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2) involved the church of God (flock) where they were elders. The sheep were not the property of the elders, but of the Lord. They were His church (flock) and elders were charged with feeding (tending) them.

The sheep that Peter was told to feed involved the Lord's people-sheep- in prospect. Besides those early disciples of the Lord, many others would enter the fold through Peter's feeding, and that of the other apostles, to whom they would have a continual feeding responsibility. The Lord said "And other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." The sheep of this passage were people who would be a part of the one fold through hearing (heeding) the voice (word) of the Lord—the true shepherd, and owner of the flock.

The Lord informed Paul, by a night vision, that he had much people in Corinth, the result of his "speaking and holding not thy peace" (Acts 18:9-10).

The sheep of the Lord are all those people who will and do "hear his voice" and "turn to the Lord". In every case of people becoming sheep in the Lord's fold, they heard the gospel message, believed, repented, confessed and were baptized into Christ-His body-the fold of God.

The Feeding

Reflecting upon who the sheep are, and how they became such and remain, reveals the nature of the "feeding". People become the sheep of God through the "feeding" done by Peter, Paul, and all others who shouldered the responsibility of "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature"—"preach the word ... reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine..." The thing fed (Bread of life) is what results in salvation... in everlasting life. Indeed, it is the word of God that quickens (gives life), builds up, and saves.

The Importance of Feeding

God still wants every soul that would be receptive to spiritual food and would "hear His voice" to be fed. He still says to every gospel preacher, elder, teacher and whosoever will "feed my sheep". If we would say with Peter, "yea Lord, thou knowest that I love thee", even three times, we should also hear the charge "feed my sheep".

The world can not be converted and the converted can not endure unto the end unless this feeding is done. Let there be a dirth of preaching and a lack of "watching for souls" (tending) by elders and there will be the loss of many souls—spiritual starvation.

Churches that become caught-up in flesh-satisfying projects, material things, even to maintaining a large bank account, to the neglect of feeding the Lord's sheep, have lost sight of their primary mission. The elders of such churches are more interested in numbers, projects, and an abundant, satisfying social life than in "watching for souls".

Unless material things are "expedients" and "feed my sheep", they have no place in the plans and budget of a congregation. And, when we as individuals, lose sight of our responsibility to "teach others also", by word of mouth, an exemplary life, and financially supporting "sounding out the word", we are not heeding our Lord's command to "Feed My Sheep".

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"ALMS TO MY NATION"

Several years ago I was meeting a Baptist preacher in debate and he made what I considered a fatuous argument. My moderator whispered in my ear, "Ward that argument is so silly I would not answer it." I replied, "we both think it is silly but some of his people think it is great. I must answer it." Many people feel the argument I shall answer in this article to be somewhat ludicrous and perhaps even asinine, but it must be answered. As a matter of fact, I have a request from Oklahoma to answer the argument.

When Paul stood before Felix the governor to urge his claims of Christianity he spoke of the alms he had brought to his nation. As one goes back in the New Testament, he will find Paul as a SAINT, raised money among SAINTS for the poor SAINTS in Jerusalem. Passages vindicating this position may be found in 1 Cor. 16:1-3; Rom. 15:26; 2 Cor. 8, 9 and other places in the Bible. To my knowledge, no one has ever argued this money was not raised for SAINTS. However, we have some who will argue it was not raised for "saints only." They will insist that sinners were also supported out of the church treasury. One of the latest arguments used to try to sustain that position is the "Nation" argument. Some brethren have compassed both land and sea to find a scripture which will uphold their view. Brother Roy Deaver has kept me busy the last few years answering such quibbles. About the time I think I have all of them answered he pops up with a new one. Even if I consider these arguments contemptuous they must be answered.

In his **Biblical Notes**, December issue, page 98, Roy says, "As previously indicated, this collection was 'for the saints.' more specifically, it was for the 'poor among the saints' (Rom. 15:26). But, we hasten to emphasize, it was not for the saints only." Roy then proceeds to make the "nation" argument by saying, "in Acts 24:16 it is recorded that Paul said (with regard to the collection presently being considered) 'now after some years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings.' Paul took the collection to his nation. Obviously, the word 'nation' cannot be limited to people who were Christians. The 'poor among the saints' were a part of the 'nation,' but the nation included **more** than the poor among the saints."

There are a number of reasons why the above argument will not stand the Bible test and I shall give a few. First, the argument is false because Roy Deaver, him-

self, will not accept it. There is an old cliché in the field of polemics which says, "that which proves too much proves nothing." This argument proves too much for Brother Deaver and his colleagues. For example, they have argued for years from (2 Thes. 3:10) that if a man will not work "Neither should he eat." They have insisted that a no-good lazy man could not be supported from the church treasury. Now let us try the argument on for size. The thrust of the argument is this (1) A nation has both saints and sinners; therefore, money sent to a nation goes to both saints and sinners. (2) Now let us use the same logic on 2 Thes 3:10 (the man who will not work). A nation has both men who will work and men who will not work; therefore money sent to a nation goes to both men who will work and men who will not work! This is what we call meeting oneself coming back! Brother Deaver argued that the word "nation cannot be limited." Gentle reader, if it cannot be limited then it includes all. These brethren also argue from (2 Jno. 9) that a false teacher cannot be supported out of the church treasury. Well, let us use his argument again, (3) Any nation has both true teachers and false teachers; therefore any money sent to a nation goes to both true and false teachers. Remember he said the word nation "cannot be limited." Obviously, what these brethren would like to do is LIMIT it in the way they want to and forget the rest. Kind friend, I apologize for having to answer such a ludicrous argument. Speaking of Acts 24:17, A. T. Robertson, the fine Greek Lexicographer, says, "To bring alms (eleemosunas poieson). Another example of the future participle of purpose in the New Testament. These alms were for the poor saints in Jerusalem (1 Cor. 16:1-4; 2 Cor. 8 & 9; Rom. 15:26) who were none the less Jews." Obviously, A. T. Robertson, a Baptist knew the word nation did not include sinners. Please note he said the money was for saints.

Another reason for rejecting the "nation" argument is that this word ethnos (nation) does not always include all people of that nation. Proof of this can be found in John 18:35. When the Lord and Pilate had their famous conversation Pilate said, "Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me." Please note the conjunction and between nation and priests. The priests were Jews and a part of the nation but not included in the word nation as used in the context. Notice Christ had been delivered by the nation (some of the Jews) and also the priests (other Jews). The conclusion is irresistible that the word "nation" does not always include all people of that nation. When the Lord said, "He that believeth and is baptized," we know believing is one thing and baptism is another. When Peter said, "Repent and be baptized" we know repenting is one thing and baptism is another. When the Bible says, "Thine own nation and the priests" we know nation is one thing and priest is another. One does not have to be astute to see that the so-called nation argument is turned into a tail-spin.

Then again, if one will turn to Acts the 28th chapter he will find a refutation of the "nation" argument. Paul was in the city of Rome where he had a meeting with the chief of the Jews. In the text he says, "Men and brethren

though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs or our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans." I would like to emphasize the word Jerusalem in the above context. Now notice what he said, "Not that I have aught to accuse my nation of." Please observe that Paul's confrontation was not with Jews from all over the world but at Jerusalem! Paul referred to the Jews ONLY at Jerusalem as his nation. Then to seal the argument the Jews in verse 21 said, "We neither received letters out of Judea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee." Please notice these Jews did not say, "We did not receive letter from Jews all over the world." but only **Judea** where **Jerusalem** was located. Yet Paul called this his nation. In summary let us observe the use of the word "Nation" as used in the New Testament. (1) When Pilate said, "Thy own nation and the chief priests" we understand that the word "Nation" was limited! When Paul said, "Alms for my nation" the word nation had to be limited because it could not include lazy people, false teachers or sinners. Kind friends, remember the corollary used above will help all see the truth and thus solidify the bleeding body of Christ.

SOME THINGS GOD DOES
NOT INTEND TO DO

Johnie Edwards
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There are some things that God just does not intend to do. A lot of people have wrong concepts of what they believe God has in mind to do. Let's take a look at some things God does not intend to do.

God Does Not Intend to Speak Any More Truth:

There are those who are waiting for God to speak something more than He has already spoken. There are no new doctrines yet to be delivered. Paul wrote the Ephesians, "Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit" (Eph. 3: 4-5). The word of God has been revealed and God "hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son..." (Heb. 1:1-2). Wait no longer for God to speak to you except as He already has in the Word of God.

To Be Mocked

Paul wrote the Galatians, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7). God does not intend to be mocked

by allowing man to sow one thing and not reap what he sows. In fact, the apostle further stated: "For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal. 6:8). We all will reap as we sow. It will be as the people of the Old Testament. "For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind. . ." (Hosea 8:7).

To Be Blamed For Confusion

Often men believe that God is the cause of all the religious confusion that exists in the world today. Not so! In fact, God does not intend to be blamed with such. He wrote the Corinthians, "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints" (1 Cor. 14:33). Man, not God, is the cause of religious confusion in the world. God says the same thing to all of us who read the Bible and the Bible is of no "private interpretation" (2 Pet. 2:20).

For His Word To Be Destroyed

Down through the ages, man has tried to destroy the Word of God—but it cannot be done! The Psalmist said, "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven" (Psa. 119:89). The word of God is eternal. Jesus said of the word, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35). Most of the things with which we have to do will not endure for long "but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (1 Pet. 1:25). We might laugh at the word of God, deny it, reject it, but it will be present and face us in the judgment day. Jesus said, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (Jno. 12:48).

To Save You In Your Sins

Sin separates man from God (Isa. 59:1-2) and God does not intend to save us in our sins. In fact, Jesus said, "... that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (Jno. 8:24). God commands "all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30). Unless you change your mind about sin and as a result of that thinking mend your ways, God does not intend to save you! A public confession is required to please God. Paul wrote the Romans, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:9-10). God's plan of salvation includes baptism. Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mk. 16:15-16). Did you realize that God means that? God does not intend to save those who are responsible short of their obedience for Jesus is "the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:9). Neither will God save the one who has been baptized unless his living is in harmony with the New Testament. Faithfulness is required of God's people in order to receive the "crown of life" (Rev. 2:10).

Let's not be guilty of God-playing!

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THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

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PREACHING TRIP TO CHILE AND ARGENTINA

ROYCE CHANDLER, Mason, Ohio—From February 19—March 4, I worked in Chile and Argentina. Although I had visited brethren in Columbia eleven times, this was my first trip to these other two countries.

In Chile: The churches are spread out there, but I was able to preach in Santiago, Quillota and Quilpue. It was a great pleasure to meet those brethren and to see the maturity and stability of those churches. We drove to Cartegena one day to baptize a lady there who had studied a Bible correspondence course and expressed the desire to be a Christian. This week in Chile was preparatory to going to Argentina for a week's lectureship, and 23 brethren from Chile chartered a bus (no frills, such as a bathroom), and they rode for 36 hours through the Andes Mountains and across the hot and humid plains of Argentina in order to be in Buenos Aires for the lectureship.

The Lectureship: There were 13 preachers present, representing Chile, Argentina, Columbia and the U.S.A. Nine of those men took turns preaching five lessons each day, Monday-Friday. In addition, all five local churches in Buenos Aires held gospel meetings all week so there was even more preaching every night following the day lectures. Those who attended every service and every lecture (and that was most of them) heard thirty-six lessons during the week, going Sunday-Sunday. Quite a feast. The result of all that, besides the fellowship and edification, was seen in that eight were baptized and two were re-stored, not counting the baptism in Chile.

This has redoubled my interest in this work and I am eager to return someday, Lord willing. The work is also expanding in the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Puerto Rico, and Bill Reeves and Wayne Par-tain are planning to go, for the first time, into Spain later this year. What a thrill to be a part of such a work that seems to be growing more

and more every day. Thanks to everyone who helped with my support for this trip. Your keen interest and fellowship are a tremendous encouragement to me and to all the brethren in the Latin world. You are a special breed!

NOTICE

The Panlener church of Christ in Las Cruces, New Mexico, is trying to locate ERCIL RAY WARREN in regard to a bond he holds on the building here. If you know of his whereabouts, please contact the church at 1325 Panlener St., Las Cruces, New Mexico 88001.

SERMON OUTLINE SERVICE BEGINS IN MAY

PREACHER TO PREACHER begins in May with a monthly mailing which will include a minimum of four previously unpublished two-page sermons from various contributors and a religious variety page. A three month trial subscription is available for \$3, or you can send \$10 and two of your sermons (\$12 with no sermons) for a one-year subscription: **PREACHER TO PREACHER**, do Art Adams, 2805 Russell Street, Portage, Indiana 46378.

JOHNIE EDWARDS, 4001 E. 3rd St., Bloomington, IN 47401—After seven years with the Plainfield, Indiana church, I have begun work with the church in Ellettsville, Indiana, just outside Bloomington. I worked with this congregation before the work in Plainfield. The church publishes a teaching bulletin mailed twice monthly and you may request it by writing to me at the above address. Phone: (812) 336-4630.

INFORMATION SOUGHT

ROSS SPEARS, Rt. 1, Box 121A, Alvaton, KY 42122. Anyone who knows of any brethren who live in or near State College, Pennsylvania, please contact me at the above address or call (502) 781-4947. I will be studying at Perm. State University and would like to work and worship with brethren who do not support or endorse institutionalism and the social gospel. Anyone who knows of the nearest local church to State College, PA, please let me know that also.

MT. PLEASANT, TEXAS LECTURES

The Southside church of Christ, Mount Pleasant, Texas will conduct a gospel meeting with different speakers June 17-21. The theme will be: Jesus Christ: His Church, His Mind, His Completeness. Speakers for the week will be Marshall Patton, Huntsville, Alabama; A. W. Goff, Russellville, Arkansas; C. G. "Colly" Caldwell, Tampa, Florida; and Max Dawson, Beaumont, Texas. Singing will begin at 7:30 led by Richard Montgomery. Limited housing is available upon request. Call or write: Randy Harshbarger, P.O. Box 242, Mt. Pleasant, Texas 75455. Phone (214) 572-7521/2148.

RICHARD C. SIMS, P.O. Box 57, Dubach, LA 71235—After three years with the Hwy. 80 church in Ruston, Louisiana, my family and I are moving in June to Gatesville, Texas to help a new work. At the

present Paul Stringer and his family are living in Gatesville and driving over 30 miles to services in Waco. I will need to raise all of my support for the work and for moving expenses. If any congregations are able to help with our support we would like to hear from them. Also, if any readers of **SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES** live near Gatesville or know anyone who does, please contact us. Until June we can be reached at the above address. Phone: (318) 777-8595.

CHARLES DEGENHART, 117 Harrington Rd., Newport News, VA 23602—One Air Force family of two transferred to England recently. Two placed membership or two were baptized. Attendance and contributions are the highest they have been over the last three years. We would like to move away from the East Coast to a less humid climate. If you can use us contact us at the above address for references. Phone: (804) 874-2928.

EDITORIAL LEFT-OVERS

The month of March found us in three gospel meetings. At Perry, Florida we worked with Charles Murray in a well attended meeting. The church is blessed with two good elders, one of whom is J. Ed Nowlin who also preached at Perry for several years and is remembered with great appreciation for his years of excellent work in east Tennessee and Atlanta, Georgia. This north Florida church is blessed with much talent. .. We were also in a good meeting at Mound and Starr in Nacogdoches, Texas, our third time there. Robert Harkrider and Dean Bullock provide an excellent balance of teaching strength with this good church. Much life is added to the work by the presence of 50-60 students from Stephen F. Austin University. Alan Finley also works with them on a part-time basis. Two were baptized and one restored... Then, late March found us (Bobbie and me—not just the editorial "we") in Houston, Texas with the historic Norhill congregation, Oscar Smith, who preached there for 17 years, continues as one of three fine elders. Derrell Shaw is the local preacher and is respected by the church for his good work. Norhill is now in an older part of town and many younger families have moved into the suburbs. Many Spanish speaking people now live in that area and there is a Spanish speaking congregation which meets in one section of the building regularly with Ruben Amador as the preacher. It was also a personal pleasure for me to spend time with Hollis Blackmon who led singing at Norhill for over 20 years and who is the brother of the much loved and greatly lamented Luther Blackmon. I don't know if Luther learned his down-home expressions from Hollis or the other way around, but in any case, the week provided refreshing to my spirit. I greatly miss the likes of Luther Blackmon, Franklin T. Puckett, James P. Miller and other good men who have passed on in the last few years.

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	205
RESTORATIONS	82
(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)	