

# SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

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



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

"DEVOTED TO THE SEARCH FOR DIVINE TRUTH"

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FAST FOOD,  
RUBBER CHECKS,  
J. C. PENNY & ....  
JUDGE HOLFORD

*Wilson Adams*

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Riverdale, MD 20737



young lady and take her to jail. The laughter stopped. The courtroom sat in stunned silence. And the girl? I'll never forget her look of panic and fear as she was briskly escorted from the room.

After a couple of hours she was called back into court. In handcuffs and in tears she stood before the bench. Judge Holford said, "**Young lady, it doesn't matter if you stole one dollar or one thousand dollars worth of food—you still stand guilty of stealing and are in jeopardy of facing a criminal record for the rest of your life.. ..**" After speaking for several minutes and explaining the reasons for his ruling, he levied her a fine of \$100 and ordered her to remain in custody until such a time as her father arrived for a private consultation in the Judge's chambers. It was obvious by her demeanor that she had learned an invaluable (and costly) lesson.

Case number two involved a woman who had written several bad checks to a local supermarket chain. It was quickly evident that the court wasn't about to be lenient towards that kind of behavior. The Judge spoke sternly, "**Mrs \_\_\_\_\_, have you never heard the commandment: 'Thou shalt not steal?'**" Going on, he said, "**That commandment has been around for several thousand years helping to ensure a sane and safe society. But when people like yourself come along who obviously have no consideration or concern for that commandment or for others, societies' stability begins to erode. "For, " said the Judge, "You didn't steal from that grocery store—you stole from your neighbors, your friends, your relatives. They will be the ones to pay the higher prices that the store will charge in order to recover its losses due to people, like yourself, who steal. "** After stating rather bluntly that decent people despise thieves, the Judge demanded that repayment be made and that she pay a stiff financial penalty. (It's interesting to me that the Judge in reaching his decision found the Biblical code of ethics, not antiquated as some today may claim, but rather quite appropriate.)

Finally, a twenty-six year old male, already incarcerated in the state prison in Hagerstown, was now brought before the court on further charges. It seems that he had purchased over \$1, 500 worth of merchandise on credit from the J. C. Penney Company for which they had never received payment.

Back in November I received a summons to appear as a state's witness in Maryland's District Court of Prince George County in order to offer testimony against a District of Columbia man arraigned on theft charges. As you can imagine I wasn't overly anxious at the thought of spending a day in court when other matters were pressing and in need of my attention. But these would have to wait. I had to go to court.

For six hours I watched and waited while the judge proceeded with his jurisprudence. The judge was Bond Holford, a veteran of the bench and, according to the state's attorney I spoke with, one of the strictest. I immediately assessed that Judge Holford wasn't one to tolerate foolishness nor did he mince words in pronouncing his opinions. He was stern, strict and stringent and, yet, was possessed with an occasional tinge of humor which served to relax tense situations. And, too, under that black judicial robe I caught a glimpse of a kind and concerned grandfather who knew the merits of mercy and the value of a second chance. Three cases struck particular interest.

There was a young girl, a student at the University of Maryland, who, on a dare, drove away from a local McDonald's Restaurant without paying for her food. As Judge Holford read the charges several in the courtroom snickered and laughed (including the defendant) at the trivial nature of the crime, fully expecting the judge to throw the case out of court as one not deserving time or attention. He did not. What he did without hesitation was to order the sheriff to handcuff the

The Judge asked for an explanation. Over the next few minutes this young man produced the greatest argumentation against the ills of gambling that I've ever heard. He had begun to gamble, at first wagering small amounts and then steadily increasing his bets. He confessed that he began to feel good when gambling even though he continually lost more money than he won. He watched as his whole life had become wrapped up in his gambling habit. One thing led to another until he was forced to make purchases on credit, sell them and use the money to help pay off his gambling debts. He needed cash. He confessed, "**I then committed the cardinal sin of gambling, I wagered what I did not have. I know that I've done wrong and....**" He choked up and was unable to finish.

The courtroom sat in silence and many were caught up in the emotion of the moment. The young man looked to the Judge who had reclined in his chair engrossed in thought. Judge Holford asked, "Mr. \_\_\_\_\_, how much money do you make in jail?" The defendant replied that he made 90c per day. The sentence then came swiftly: He would stay in prison until at 90c per day the \$1,500 debt was paid! The Judge took notice of the situation that brought on the crime but observed that such did not change the fact that he still owed \$1,500 to J. C. Penney. Restitution for the crime would still have to be made, the consequences would still have to be paid. He was then handcuffed and escorted back to prison.

During all of this I couldn't help but think of Paul's passage in Romans 13: 1-4: Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore he who resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same; for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath upon the one who practices evil. PS. In the event you are wondering about the case for which I was needed

After waiting for six hours—it was postponed. But I don't mind; for as long as the Honorable Judge Bond Holford presides it will always be worth the wait to sit, listen, and watch first hand that crime still doesn't pay.

**And One More Thing**—you parents who have youngsters in school—find out when district court is in session in your area. Take a day off and take your son or daughter to observe for themselves the seriousness of law-breaking. It will be one of the most profitable days you'll ever spend.

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# Editorial

Connie W. Adams

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## OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION

The task was distasteful to Paul. He found it necessary to defend his apostolic work at Corinth, not to enhance his own importance, but to certify the genuineness of their conversion and standing before God. It was difficult to do this without creating the appearance that Paul was elevating himself. Such was not the case. That is what Second Corinthians is all about. Paul had become the object of severe criticism from a few who had come to Corinth and cast reflections upon Paul and his work. They indicted his very character. Whatever he said or did was misconstrued by these false brethren.

In that circumstance, Paul said "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed" (2 Cor. 4: 8-9). Paul said all of this was "for your sakes" (v. 15) and provided the channel for the flow of God's grace to them. Such problems would have intimidated lesser men. But how did Paul view these problems? He said "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4: 17-18).

Did you hear what he called all these things? **Light afflictions.** It was bad enough to be misrepresented. It was humiliating to have to defend the genuineness of his apostleship before a people whose very spiritual life was due to his tireless efforts among them for a year and half. For the sake of the gospel, his own life was often in jeopardy. "For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake" (2 Cor. 4: 11). "And why stand we in jeopardy every hour... I die daily... I have fought with beasts at Ephesus" (1 Cor. 15: 30-32). Here was a man who was beaten, often a prisoner, scourged five times, thrice beaten with rods, once stoned and left for dead, shipwrecked three times, spending a night and a day clinging to scraps of wreckage to save his life, in dangers from Jews, Gentiles, in the city, in the wilderness, among heathen, in the sea and among false brethren. He was often weary, sometimes in pain, in anxious vigils, hungry, thirsty, in fastings, cold and without enough cover to warm him upon the ground in some strange place. You mean all that happened to Paul? Yes it did. Now read 2 Cor. 11: 22-23. Tell us again, Paul: What were all these things? He called them "light afflictions."

The reason he could view them in this manner was because he recognized a cardinal truth many of us forget. He knew the value of each. He walked between what was temporal and what was eternal. He knew the value of each. He walked "by faith, not by sight." We place such heavy emphasis on what is seen: our bodies, our houses, yards, cars. Yet all of these are perishing. What was a light affliction in the realm of the temporal if it led to the salvation of lost men and women and if it served to prepare Paul to "depart and be with the Lord"?

The practical applications of this are many. **Preachers** are sometimes prone to feel sorry for themselves and lament their misfortunes at the hands of their own brethren. They are misunderstood, unappreciated, overworked and underpaid. Why, with all their talent they could have stood the business world on its ear had they not made the supreme sacrifice of giving the brethren the advantage of their great ability! Well, gentlemen, have you ever been stoned and left for dead? Ever really been hungry? Do you have a comfortable place to dwell? Have you been in prison lately for preaching the gospel? Do you think your afflictions are heavy? Paul thought his were light when viewed from the vantage point of the eternal verities with which he dealt. Eternal verities were the catalyst which impelled Paul's preaching. My brethren, we must look beyond the seen and embrace the unseen.

**Parents** often are frazzled with the everyday annoyances of our existence. We work hard to provide better things for our children than we had. Children require attention, much of our time, a generous amount of our love and concern, and are unwittingly the cause of much anxiety. I see young mothers wrestling with small children in services. They have worked hard just to get them ready to be there. Often, they hear very little of what is said. They are fearful that their little ones are distracting to others and sometimes wonder if it is really worth all the hassle. Oh yes, young mothers. Look beyond the seen to the unseen. Remember Paul? He would have called that a "light affliction." And it is "but for a moment." Ask those of us whose children are now grown and have babies of their own. Parents, while providing for the things which are temporal, please do not neglect the things which are eternal. Preparing your children for heaven is far more important than dental work, sports, good grades, degrees, musical skills, the latest fashions and the social graces. These all may have a place, but they are temporal. They are light in comparison with an "eternal weight of glory."

**All Christians** face circumstances in life, at one time or another, which we consider "afflictions." The car breaks down and we face expensive repairs. The furnace needs replacing. Or the roof must be replaced. An appliance quits. In frustration we ask "Why me"? Health problems arise and we are distressed. We see our loved ones become ill, sometimes gravely so. We even have to bury our dead. In agony we plead "What am I going to do now? How can I go on? Why did this happen to me?" But remember, these are "light afflictions" when viewed from the realm of the eternal.

How shall we handle these "light afflictions"? "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day" (2 Cor. 4: 16). While the temporal things are decaying, dimming and weakening, the inward man is becoming brighter and stronger. This "inward man" is "renewed in knowledge" after the image of Christ (Col. 3: 10). "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man" (Rom. 7: 22). Here is the blessed man of whom the Psalmist said "but his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night" (Psa. 1: 2). As we grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, we are making the inward man stronger day by day, even while the outward man, concerned with the temporal things which are seen, grows older and weaker. I don't know about you, dear reader, but I needed to be reminded of these things.

## SIMPLICITY IN CHRIST

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### THE EUNUCH'S CONFESSION

While we are not saved by confession only, it is still necessary for us to confess Christ before men in order to be saved (Mt. 10: 32, 33; Rom. 10: 9, 10). And, why not? If this is what the heart believes, then the mouth should confess it, "for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Mt. 12: 34). Philip had preached Christ unto the eunuch (Acts 8: 35), so it is no great mystery that the eunuch's confession was in harmony with what he had been taught.

The conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch is one of the plainest examples of salvation to be found in the Bible. Here is seen the simplicity of the gospel plan of salvation in action, both from the standpoint of the one who teaches the gospel, and the one who obeys it. There is no reason for either party to become confused by reading this inspired account. There are only two individuals involved, so we can keep one eye on the preacher, and the other on the one who is in need of conversion.

The simplicity and power of this account (Acts 8: 26-40), is only magnified by the feeble efforts of false teachers to circumvent it. One false teacher will try to substitute the word "Spirit" for the word "water," in order to replace water baptism with Holy Spirit baptism. These would have both Philip and the eunuch going down into the Spirit. The folly of this effort is seen when we are then forced to substitute "water" for "Spirit," and later have Philip being caught away by the water of the Lord!

Yet another futile effort to confuse this simple ac-

count of conversion is the one where the sectarian preacher tries to prove that the sprinkling of water on a person constitutes baptism. In spite of the fact that the record says, "and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch," one preacher theorized that the eunuch had a bottle of water under the seat of the chariot, held it up for Philip to see, and said, "See, here is water..." One problem with this theory is that "they came unto a certain water" (v. 36), and the greater problem would be getting "both Philip and the eunuch" down into that bottle. However, the greatest problem with trying to introduce sprinkling into this text, is that of confronting other passages of scripture which teach that baptism is a burial (Rom. 6: 4).

The simplicity of this Bible account of conversion was impressed upon me years ago when I received a request to go and baptize a penitent believer. The unusual thing about this request was that the person to be baptized was a deaf mute. A special class for deaf mutes was being conducted one day each week at the church building, and the teacher (who was "bilingual"), called for me to come and do the baptizing. Now, I have turned down several requests to perform marriage ceremonies, for the Lord did not tell me to go into all the world and perform marriage ceremonies. So, I think I can be selective, or even a "teetotaler" if I wish, but I saw no way out of this request to baptize a penitent believer.

On the way to the church building, I thought of Philip and the eunuch. I placed the Bible in front of the deaf mute, and pointed to each word of the text, beginning with Acts 8: 35. When I was half-way through v. 37, the young man spontaneously put his finger on my Bible (I couldn't have coached him, even had I wanted to), and pointed emphatically to each word of the text which said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." At the same time he was doing his best to say the words as he pointed to them, and I imagined I could understand what he was saying, though it may have been that I had been coached because I had heard that confession so many times before from others, and had also made it myself just before I was baptized.

Like the eunuch, this young man went on his way rejoicing, and this preacher went on his way thanking God for such a plain, simple account of a conversion which took place somewhere between Jerusalem and Gaza more than nineteen hundred years ago. It has been thirty-two years since that deaf mute "made the good confession" as we sometimes say, but I have never grown tired of reading and preaching about the eunuch's conversion. And, while I have never insisted on a certain "formula" for those who wish to confess their faith in Christ, my wish has been that all would be as sincere as I think that deaf mute was.

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**THE MAN OF SIN**

**QUESTION:** *Who is the man of sin in 2 Thess. 2: 31 Who sits in the temple of God and claims he is God? Was this Nero? Verse 8 shows that the man of sin is destroyed at the brightness of Christ's coming.*

**ANSWER:** 2 Thess. 2: 3-4 states: "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. "

This is a difficult passage since the "man of sin" is not identified. Consequently, several interpretations have been offered, some of which are imaginary and even anti-biblical. The "man of sin" (v. 3) and the "son of perdition" (v. 4) and the "lawless one" (v. 8, ASV) are used synonymously in the chapter.

The Thessalonians were assured that Christ's coming would not occur until there was a falling away of the church and the "man of sin" was revealed. This "lawless one" would be in collusion with Satan (v. 9), sitting in the temple of God, opposing and exalting himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped. He was restrained by him that letteth (preventeth) until he who restraineth be taken out of the way (v. 7). The Lord will finally destroy this "man of sin" at His coming (v. 8).

The following views have been offered as to who the "man of sin" is. Space will not permit us to write at length about each one.

(1) **The papacy.** Historically, Protestants have attributed the "man of sin" to the pope (that is, the line of popes) of the Roman Catholic Church. Some members of the Lord's church have taken the same position. Certainly, to a great extent, the Catholic Church would fit Paul's characterization, but why single out the Catholics and ignore the false Protestant bodies of religion?

The Catholic Church with its first pope (606 A. D.) came along much too late to be the personage in the chapter. The "man of sin" is connected with the apostasy of the church. The Catholic Church is not the New Testament church apostatized, but rather it grew up out of the apostasy. The Gnostics, Ebionites, Montanists, etc., all heretical sects of the first and second centuries, would have been closer to Paul's description than the popes. Too, I do not know of any pope that has gotten even close to the temple of God, much less sat in it

(2) **Nero Redivivus.** This theory says that Nero Caesar did not really die in 68 A. D. but merely hid himself with the idea of later returning to power to set up an anti-Christian kingdom, or he was really dead and would rise again. "Redivivus" is a Latin word meaning, "brought back to life. " This position makes Paul predicting a falsehood because Nero never returned. Hence, the "man of sin" is not Nero.

(3) **Roman emperors.** It is proposed that the "lawless one" was the line of emperors, such as Caligula, Nero, Vespasian, Titus and Domitian. But the "lawless one" will be here when Jesus returns (v. 8), eliminating totally the possibility of the Roman emperors, whether one or the line of emperors.

(4) **Beast of the sea of Rev. 13.** Though there be similarities between the two, they are not identical. Both stand in close connection with Satan. Both oppose God and both suffer defeat. However, the sea beast, a symbolic expression for civil rulers, specifically Domitian in Revelation, rises up out of the sea (the sea symbolizing society). In contrast, the "man of sin" arises within the church (temple of God). Therefore, they are not the same personage.

(5) **A world dictator.** Premillennialists believe that during the Great Tribulation on earth (a seven-year period wherein there will be World War III, famine, pestilence and persecution, all concocted in their wild imaginations), a ruthless, cruel and godless tyrant will take over the world, that is, the revived Roman empire, consisting of the federation of the ten common: market European nations. Hal Lindsey said, "I believe that this very man lives right now somewhere in Europe. "

Of course, there is nothing in the Bible that is even a forty-second cousin to such an outlandish theory. There will be no seven-year tribulation, no seven-year rapture, no revived Roman empire and not a literal battle of Armageddon. Yea, there will be no such Fuehrer!

(6) **Principle of lawlessness.** The advocates of this position maintain that sin is personified as a man who manifests a spirit contrary to everything taught in God's holy Word. This, in my judgment is the truth of the passage. Thayer, under *harmartia*, states that sin as a principle and power is "rhetorically represented as an impersonal personage" in Rom. 5: 21; 6: 12, 14; 7: 17, 20 (p. 31). Sin is depicted in these passages as a king and master.

McClintock and Strong, commenting on the "man of sin, " said, "an impersonation of the sinful principle spoken of by the apostle Paul in an emphatic manner" (Vol. 5, p. 689). *Pulpit Commentary* states, "in whom sin is, as it were personified, as righteousness is in Christ" (2 Thess., p. 24).

In the book, **Questions Awarded**, authored by D. Lipscomb and E. G. Sewell, it says, "The man of sin is understood to be a principle of error or lawlessness that arose in the church. . . . This lawless principle is a principle among those claiming to be the Lord's people but are not willing to be controlled in all things by the word of God" (p. 603).

Hence, it seems more plausible that the "man of sin" is lawlessness, a disrespect for truth, figuratively de-


picted as a man who usurps the rule of the church through apostasy of God's people.

The "man of sin" is present in every age whenever men in the church oppose Christ, alter the truth, speak presumptuously, go beyond what is written, introduce innovations into the church or ignore God's Word. They are sitting in the temple of God, showing themselves to be God and exalting themselves above all that is called God. The only thing that prevents men from perversion of the truth is a love and respect for it. This, in my estimation, is the restrainer in verse 7.

Only God has the prerogative to make laws (Jas. 4: 12) for His people. Any man, or group of men, who makes laws to govern people religiously, or revises God's laws, enthrones himself as God and becomes a usurper of the authority that belongs only to Jehovah. Such a man becomes lawless, wicked and the son of perdition. When Jesus comes, all lawlessness will cease and those who work iniquity will be separated from the presence of the Lord (Lk. 13: 27).

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### **FORGIVENESS ONLY IN CATHOLIC CHURCH**

On his radio network newscast December 11, 1984, Paul Harvey announced that the pope had ruled that Catholics could not receive forgiveness of sins by going directly to God. I was watching for the information in the press, and on the following day the Arkansas Gazette printed the announcement as follows:

"VATICAN CITY (UPI)—Pope John Paul II blamed the evils of the modern world Tuesday on 'the loss of the sense of sin' and called on Roman Catholics to return to the confessional.

"The pope warned Catholics and non-Catholics alike against 'the illusion of sinlessness' in a 140-page, 25,000-word 'Apostolic Exhortation Reconciliatio et Paenitentia' (Reconciliation and Penance).

"At the heart of every situation of sin are always to be found sinful people, he said.

"The pope blamed 'secularism' as a primary cause for the 'eclipse of conscience' in the modern world, and he defined secularism as 'a movement of ideas and behavior which advocates a humanism totally without God, completely centered upon the cult of action and production and caught up in the heady enthusiasm of consumerism and pleasure-seeking, unconcerned with the danger of 'losing one's soul.'

"The papal document grew out of the work of the 1983 World Synod of Bishops on 'Reconciliation and Penance in the Mission of the Church,' called by the pope to examine why a growing number of Catholics are abandoning the sacrament of confession.

"There is no real alternative to individual confession, the pope told the world's almost 800 million Roman Catholics, and it is the 'only normal and ordinary way' of celebrating the sacrament of penance.

"Group confession and general absolution, increasingly popular both in the United States and the Third World, may be used only 'in cases of grave necessity,' he said.

" 'And there remains unchanged the obligation to make an individual confession of serious sins before again having recourse to another general absolution,' the pope said.

"But the pontiff made clear he was speaking not only to Catholics.

" 'Indeed, even beyond the boundaries of the church and the community of believers, the message and ministry of penance are addressed to all men and women

because all need conversion and reconciliation, he said."

The pope is concerned because 'a growing number of Catholics' no longer make personal confession before the officials of the Catholic Church.

The language of the pope in stating the official Catholic position on confession is clear. "There is no real alternative to individual confession" and "there remains unchanged the obligation to make an individual confession of serious sins..." Of course he has reference to confession of sins before a Catholic priest in order to be forgiven.

Let us consider the official Catholic teaching on forgiveness through prayer:

"Christ himself forgave sins. He forgave Mary Magdalen because she loved much; and He said that God alone could forgive sins. For three years He forgave sins and then He left this earth. But He enshrined His work in a society which would continue for every generation so that all generations of mankind would get the same chance of knowing His message and His precepts. This society was made up, first of all, by His Apostles and disciples. It had a mission—to go and teach all nations; it had a head who was to be Christ's Vicar—"Thou are Peter and upon this rock I will build my church;" and it had certain powers. One of these powers was that of Baptism which was to be a passport into His society or Church. Another power was to forgive sin...

"Catholics, therefore, believe that forgiveness of sin is the special prerogative of Christ. He has given or delegated this power to His Church; this, and this alone, makes it possible for one man to kneel before another, one ordained and authorized by the Church to exercise the power of forgiveness given it by Christ.

"The man whom the Church authorizes to forgive sin is always a priest. He studies for the job almost twice as long as the time needed to qualify in the legal profession, longer than the time necessary to qualify as a medical doctor...

"And how sure can we be that our sins are forgiven merely by sorrow in the secret of our heart? The way God willed is certain—in Confession. In the Sacrament of Penance Christ speaks through the priest, and the repentant sinner stands on Calvary. No matter how late our repentance, and even if the bell is about to toll, we know that on this day we shall be with Him in Paradise." (**YES, a Priest Can Forgive Your Sins** by the Knights of Columbus, pages 3-5.)

The only power or authority to forgive sins given by Christ to His apostles and the church was through the preaching of the gospel which men and women believed and obeyed for the remission of sins (Matt. 28: 18-20). There is nothing in the New Testament to indicate that even the apostles, much less any other men, had people bowing before them to confess their sins and obtain forgiveness. And where does the Bible teach that certain men have to study so long to qualify for others to confess to and pray through in order to be forgiven of sins? Yes, there are occasions when we are taught to confess to one another and pray for one another, but not in the way which the Catholic Church teaches and prac-

tices.

In the article from which we quoted above, reference is made to Jesus' statement to the apostles: "As My Father has sent Me, I also send you. And, when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; and if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." (John 20: 21-23.)

How did the Spirit-filled apostles forgive sins, and what did the procedure entail? We find the answer to this when the Lord's plan was put into operation, as recorded in Acts chapter two. Peter, standing with the eleven, preached the gospel concerning the Christ. When some believed the message and asked what to do, they were told to "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2: 38). Only in this way did the apostles bind the will of Christ and forgive the sins of those who obeyed it.

The basic fallacy in Catholic teaching on prayer and forgiveness is their denial of the priesthood of all believers. The apostle Peter wrote, "You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (I Peter 2: 5). In verse 9 of the same chapter, he referred to Christians as "a royal priesthood." In the same epistle he admonished, "therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers." Among those to whom this teaching was given were "newborn babes," and we cannot believe that they had studied prayer and forgiveness long enough to be lawyers or doctors.

Every Christian is a priest. Forgiveness, as taught in the New Testament, involves not just a priest but rather two priests! Prayer to God must be "through Jesus Christ" who is our High Priest (Heb. 4: 14-16; 7: 25-27). Each and every Christian who prays through Christ is a priest, and because of this is qualified to approach God through the great High Priest.

Remember, there is "one mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus" (I Tim. 2: 5). Because of this, true Christians refuse to pray to Mary, "saints" or so-called priests on earth today. They can and must pray directly to God through their High Priest, Jesus the Christ.

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## WHOSO FINDETH A WIFE—I

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Despite the opinion of today's woman, who believes that being a wife is so simple she must have something real to do with her life, it is not that easy. Christians, too, have fallen into the notion that there is nothing to being a wife. Rather than studying what God has said with open and unbiased mind, we have accepted the stereotype handed down by society, family, even older Christians. Whereas the "older training the younger" is scriptural procedure, if their training comes only from their subjective experience, and not from the word of God, each generation gradually drifts from the original. Today, countless of us read Ephesians 5 and 1 Peter 3 in every ladies' Bible class, and still do not recognize our own failures as wives. We have brainwashed ourselves into believing that because we can quote these scriptures, are willing to say, "My husband is the head of the house," and at least follow the norm in the church, we are good wives. No wonder we find it so easy! Paul warned the Corinthians about using something other than the scriptures to measure their righteousness (2 Cor 10: 12). One can always find someone worse than she, if she looks low enough. And James and John both taught that saying and doing were two entirely different things (Jas 2: 18, 20; 1 John 2: 4; 3: 18). The friends and neighbors who really see us every day (as opposed to we who blind ourselves to our behavior) may have an entirely different opinion about who runs our homes!

Yes, the New Testament is our guide for living, and Ephesians 5, Colossians 3, and 1 Peter 3 are rich passages for the woman (and man) to turn to. But, if one does not know how to apply them, their benefit is lost. Romans 15: 4 gives the Christian the authority to search out the Old Testament for other clues as to what God meant a wife to be. She will find there many simple descriptions that will give her both a broader perspective and a deeper insight into the job she has before her. It is a few of these passages which we wish to study.

### A Good Thing

Proverbs 18: 22 states that a wife is a "good thing." Does one become a good thing by simply saying, "I do?" In other words is every wife a "good thing?" There might be a point to this we overlook. Because we know the answer is "No," we add a few words to the scriptures: "Whoso findeth a wife might have/should have found a good thing." But that is not what it says! A wife is something he has to look for, whereas women who want to marry are a dime a dozen. We are also told that

a worthy woman (wife) is hard to find (Prov 31: 10). Perhaps the point is that not every married woman deserves to be called a wife!

A double standard existed in the Victorian age which was, of course, wrong, but is useful in illustrating the point. While women were expected to live morally exemplary lives, men could have both a wife and a mistress without censure. Yet, even when the wives knew of the other women, as they usually did, they considered themselves in the exalted position. It was an honor to be a man's wife, and one recognized the responsibilities it laid upon her in behavior and management of the home. The woman was insulted if she was asked to become his mistress. Such a proposition included the tacit statement that he considered her unworthy to be "wife." Those who did accept the proposition were those who despised responsibility and desired self-indulgence.

The whole system, of course, was sinful, but let us carry out the illustration. If one is not worthy to be called "wife," what is the alternative? With ERA in full swing, the responsibilities to husband and home are swept aside. It now becomes more important to assert and indulge SELF. A woman may keep her own name, or add his as an appendage to it. She may have a career, which he must realize takes precedence over the home they planned to make together, and which may even take precedence over his career. She may farm out her (and his) children to someone else to raise, very often, strangers. She expects, and demands, that he constantly (not just in times of sickness or domestic upheaval) share her home-making duties on nothing less than a 50-50 basis, because she is too tired from doing extra thing which God has not required of her. She may be bringing home some of the bacon, but many of the responsibilities of a wife are left undone. Regardless of a signed sheet of paper, she is at best his "kept woman."

It is one thing to say, "I am this man's wife." It is quite another to be his wife. We should count it an honor to be our man's wife, and act accordingly in fulfilling our responsibilities, but if being a true "wife" requires much from the woman, it follows that much must be required of the man in how he treats her. He must not treat her as a "kept woman," but truly as a "wife." Peter instructed the men, "... giving honor unto the woman..." (1 Pet 3: 7). It is much easier to be a real wife when one is treated as a real wife. Husbands, when you enter a room, be proud to have her on your arm and she will be proud to be there.

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### FALSE VIEWS OUTSIDE THE CHURCH

There have been many theories advocated through the centuries to try and handle the problem of sin in the life of a believer. As we studied in our first article, God and sin do not mix. But since we as God's people commit sin from time to time how can we have the assurance of salvation? Some of the views offered in answer to this question are contrary to the Scriptures.

As we study this matter it might be good to remind us that any view offered which takes away the "fear... of... come(ing) short of" the eternal rest must be a false view (Heb. 4: 1). Or any idea which takes away the need to "take heed lest" we fall must also be a false idea (1 Cor. 10: 12).

This study is devoted to some of the false views which have been taught by different men outside of the church of the Lord.

#### The Catholic View

As the Catholic theologians wrestled with the problem of sin in the life of those they believe to be God's people, there developed a classifying of sins. The Catholic Encyclopedia states:

"All sins are not equal before God, nor dare anyone assert that the daily faults of human frailty will be punished with the same severity that is meted out to serious violation of God's law. On the other hand whosoever comes into God's presence must be perfectly pure, for in the strictest sense His 'eyes are too pure to behold evil' (Heb. 1: 13)." (Vol. XII, p. 575).

Since one may have these "daily faults" or venial sins in his life at the time of death, what is the answer for the removal of these sins so that one may "be perfectly pure" to come into the presence of God? The Catholic answer is purgatory. Edward J. Hanna's article on that subject in **The Catholic Encyclopedia** says:

"Purgatory (Lat. **purgare**, to make clean, to purify) in accordance with Catholic teaching is a place or condition of temporal punishment for those who, departing this life in God's grace, are not entirely free from venial faults, or have not fully paid the satisfaction due to their transgressions... For unrepented venial faults, for the payment of temporal punishment due to sin at time of death, the Church has always taught the doctrine of purgatory." (Vol. XII, p. 575).

There are a number of things wrong with the idea of purgatory. One thing that is wrong with this view is it advocates a second chance after death. If enough prayers are said for the departed he will then go from the area of punishment into God's presence. The Bible teaches that after death comes "the judgment" (Heb. 9: 27). The doctrine associated with purgatory allows for one who has died to go from a state of punishment into a state of bliss. Abraham said this transfer from one area to another was impossible because of "a great gulf fixed" (Lk. 16: 26). The Catholic idea would also destroy the urgency for obedience now. Yet Jesus said, "I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work" (Jno. 9: 4).

#### The Calvinist View

Those who have accepted the theology of John Calvin say that the believer is secure because he cannot possibly fall from the grace of God. In other words, once one is saved, none of the sins which he commits will cause him to be lost. As stated in the creeds:

"Those whom God hath accepted in the Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, and given the precious faith of his elect unto, can neither totally nor finally fall from the state of grace (John x. 28, 29; Phil. i. 6; 2 Tim. ii. 19; 1 John ii. 19); but shall certainly persevere therein to the end and be eternally saved." (The Philadelphia Confession of Faith, pp. 36-37).

The Calvinist then believes that while the believer sins, these sins do not separate him from God like the sins of an alien sinner does. The reason they say this view is so is because they believe that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to the account of the believer. God then does not supposedly see the sins committed by the believer; He sees only the perfect, sinless life of His Son. The Constitution of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America reads:

"That, for the sake of Christ's reconciling work, God will no more remember my sins or the sinfulness with which I have to struggle all my life long; but that he graciously imparts to me the righteousness of Christ so that I may never come into condemnation."

This view is also contrary to the Bible's teaching. It really has God overlooking sin, instead of forgiving sin. But as we studied in our first lesson such is not the attitude of God toward sin. The imputation of Christ's righteousness bases our justification on what is commonly called "the doing and dying" of Jesus. While Jesus certainly had to live a sinless life to be the proper sacrifice for sin, the Bible teaches that the basis for our justification is the blood of Jesus (Rom. 5: 9; 1 Jno. 1: 7). This view also seems to downgrade the evil character of sin and the importance of obedience of God that was discussed in the first lesson (2 Pet. 2: 22; Lk. 13: 3; Mt. 7: 21; Heb. 5: 9).

#### The Arminian View

Those Protestants who could not accept Calvinism sought yet another explanation for the question of secu-

rity. Their teaching is sometimes called "the second working of grace." "the baptism of the Holy Spirit," or "entire sanctification." A book published by the Pentecostal Holiness Church entitled Focus on Doctrine seeks to show the difference between this view and Calvinism.

"Calvinists assert that the state of conflict must necessarily be lifelong, and that only physical death can resolve it. It is the teaching of the Pentecostal Holiness Church, as of all Wesleyans, that God had a better plan... The carnal state is a condition of divided loyalties. It is the attempt to live for God and self at the same time.... Sanctification ends this state of duality, cleansing out the carnal element, and consecrating the cleansed personality to the holy will of God." (pp. 24, 25, 28).

Thus, these individuals believe that God will finally bring about a change in the believer so that he will not commit a sin, and that he will perfectly keep God's commandments.

**The Discipline of the Wesleyan Church reads:**

"Inward sanctification begins the moment one is justified. From that moment until a believer is entirely sanctified, he grows daily in grace and gradually dies to sin. Entire sanctification is effected by the Baptism of the Holy Spirit which cleanses the heart of the child of God from all inbred sin through faith in Jesus Christ. It is subsequent to regeneration and is wrought instantaneously when the believer presents himself a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, and is thus enabled through His grace to love God with all the heart and to walk in all His holy commandments blameless." (1972, p. 30).

Common experience ought to be enough to show the fallacy of this theory. The Bible shows that this situation was not true in the lives of the early Christians (Gal. 2: 11-14; 1 Cor. 9: 27). Indeed, John wrote, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us;" (1 Jno. 1: 8). This teaching has sanctification as a "second work" which follows justification. In 1 Cor. 6: 11 Paul places sanctification, washing, and justification as happening together. Most of the advocates of this teaching have two baptisms—water baptism and Holy Spirit baptism. The Bible says there is now "one baptism" (Eph. 4: 5).

**Conclusion**

As these views are all in conflict with Biblical teaching we must reject them as "the commandments of men" (Mk. 7: 7-9). Let us not be deceived by the philosophies and opinions of men, but rather let us be content to receive only the simple, pure, and saving Word of God.

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*Please Renew Promptly*

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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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**"NOT BREAD"**

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness (Isa. 55: 1-2).

These verses teach there is a place to go and things to do whereby one may eat and drink freely and find complete satisfaction. The place to go is God and the thing to do is "harken diligently unto me". This is the eating and drinking in the passage that enables the "soul to delight itself in fatness".

The passage also suggests that there are places one can go and things one may do, that promise satisfaction and fatness, but cannot deliver. "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not?"

Jesus had in mind such delusions when he asked if a son asked his father for bread would he give him a stone (Matt. 7: 9).

Pulpit Commentary (Vol. 24, p. 341) illustrates this by quoting the following from preacher H. McMillan. "A strange plant, called the nardoo, grows in the deserts of Lento, Australia. Its seeds formed for months together almost the sole food of the party of explorers who, a few years ago, crossed the Continent. When analyzed, the nardoo bread was ascertained to be destitute of certain nutritious elements indispensable to the support of a European though an Australian savage might, for a while, find it beneficial as an alternative, and thus it happened that these poor, unfortunate Englishmen perished of starvation, even while feeding fully day by day upon food that served to satisfy their hunger."

I believe the case of these explorers illustrates very vividly the danger referred to in our text and the case of many today from a spiritual standpoint in their quest for life and happiness.

Solomon experimented with wisdom, fame, pleasure, and riches "Till I might see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heavens all the days of their life" (Eccles. 2: 3), and declared "All was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun" (vs. 11). In other words, these

things were "nardoo bread", not bread of life. He identifies true bread as "Fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole (duty-happiness) of man" (Eccles. 12: 13).

Let us study some inviting things which are not bread.

### **Humanism Is Not Bread**

Humanism, as set forth in Humanist Manifesto No. 1 and 2, is a philosophy that ignores the God of creation, professes evolution, and recognizes no fixed moral standard. Man himself is the center of everything. Pleasing, satisfying, and advancing men physically and socially is said to be the chief goal in life. The sanctity of marriage, home life, moral principles, and even physical life itself are insignificant in comparison to fulfilling one's own desires or ambitions.

Religion, marriage, home life, and curbs on sex and social behavior are all looked upon as enemies to successful living. There have been societies in past history that followed this philosophy. All came to destruction rather than to "life". Read Romans 1: 18-32 and the History of The Fall of The Roman Empire.

### **Materialism Is Not Bread**

There are many who look upon money as bread that sustains and gives real meaning to life. They even designate it "bread", speaking of where the "bread" is and those who have "bread". Applying this figurative term to money shows one's belief that money is life sustaining.

Of course, money does play a part in man's physical and social welfare. God, therefore, decreed that man, "in the sweat of thy face shalt eat bread, till thou return unto the ground" (Gen. 3: 19), and directed man to engage in honest labour that he might have to support his family, give to others, and lay up treasures in heaven (Eph. 4: 28; 1 Tim. 5: 8; Matt. 6: 19-21). When these motives are behind one's pursuit of money he is indeed laboring for that which is true bread, not the money itself, but achieving these objectives.

When people act from a materialistic standpoint, thinking that money and the things it will provide is the fountain of life and happiness, they are in for disappointment and sorrow. The wise man said, "When goods increase, they are increased that eat them: and what good is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes? The sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much; but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep. There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt..." (Eccles. 5: 11-17).

The Holy Spirit directed Paul to write Timothy, "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.... Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who

giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (1 Tim. 6: 9-10, 17-19). The media has made it possible for us to see from the lives of many who, evidently, gloried in their money, the loneliness, heartache, drug and alcohol addiction, broken homes, early deaths, mental illness, etc. Think of Howard Hughes, Elvis Presley, the Vanderbilts, Kennedys, numerous movie stars, and many you may know "closer to home"! Truly, those who turn their backs to Jesus and his Word—the true bread of life—to travel the materialistic road "labour for that which is not bread" and of whom it may later be said "He hath laboured for the wind" (Eccles. 6: 16).

### **Sensuality (Pleasure) Is Not Bread**

We live in an age when many have embraced the Humanist philosophy of "If it feels good do it", and Situation Ethics (if it satisfies you-gives you pleasure, then it is right for you). Thus, the bottle, drugs, sexualized music, free love, dance halls, night clubs, etc. is the bread that gives and sustains life and happiness. It is the same with some, who may have some conscience against immoral things, but give themselves wholly to pleasing themselves in some sport or innocent material endeavor.

One of the things Solomon experimented with was pleasure. "And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy... and behold all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.... I said of laughter, it is mad; and of mirth, what doeth it?" (Eccles. 2: 1-11).

The prodigal left his father's house "well off", undoubtedly with a heart filled with desire and hope for satisfaction and happiness in "riotous living", but what looked like bread to him turned out to be far from it. "And when he had spent all (His brother charged him with devouring his living with harlots) there arose a mighty famine in that land and he began to be in want... and he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him... I perish with hunger" (Luke 15: 11-17).

Paul wrote, "But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth" (1 Tim. 5: 6). Moses realized that the pleasures of sin are only for a season, so with respect unto the recompense of reward, he choose the lot of the people of God (Heb. 11: 24-26).

Even with all these Scriptural warnings and the examples observed from others about us, it is true, as predicted, many are "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (2 Tim. 3: 4). Truly, "all that glitters is not gold," or life-giving bread. Making pleasure your chief aim in life, allowing it to make you neglect spiritual endeavor, even though you maintain "a form of godliness," will be revealed, in time, especially the judgment, to be that which was not bread-only bread of destruction.

(In a lesson to follow, I will discuss "False Religion Is Not Bread")

**PAUL, MOSES AND 430 YEARS**

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I have observed that many brethren do not know how long Israel was in Egypt. In the interest of a better understanding of what the Bible teaches on this matter, this monograph is offered.

Misunderstanding of this seems to be based on the ASRV of Exodus 12: 40, which says, "Now the time that the children of Israel dwelt in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years." This contradicts Galatians 3: 17 which says that the Law was given 430 years after the Promise to Abraham. Hence, our problem is basically to harmonize Exodus 12: 40 and Galatians 3: 17. Please note the following:

Abraham was 75 when the Promise was made (Genesis 12: 4); he was 100 when Isaac was born (Genesis 21: 5); Isaac was 60 when Jacob was born (Genesis 25: 26); and Jacob was 130 at his going down into Egypt (Genesis 47: 9). Joseph was 30 when he stood before Pharaoh (Genesis 41: 46); 7 years of plenty and 2 of famine made him 39 when Jacob came down (Genesis 41: 47; 45: 6). Joseph dies at 110 (Genesis 50: 26); hence, taking 39 from 110 we have 71 years from going down to the death of Joseph. Moses was 80 at the Exodus (Exodus 7: 7); therefore, 71 plus 80 equals 151. Subtract this from 215 and we have 64 years for the period from the death of Joseph to the birth of Moses. When we add 71, 64 and 80, we get 215 years, the other half of Paul's 430 years from the Promise to the Law. Arithmetically:  $100 - 75 = 25 + 60 + 130 = 215$ . Then:  $110 - 30 = 80 - 7 - 2 = 71 + 80 = 151 + 64 = 215 + 215 = 430$ . Graphically, thus:

25	60	130	71	64	80
PROMISE—ISAAC	ISAAC—JACOB	JACOB—EGYPT	EGYPT—d.JOS.	d.JOS—b.MOS	M—EX.
	215			215	
PROMISE TO EXODUS—430					

The chart verifies Paul's statement, but what of Exodus 12: 40? Let us see some other translations:

The KJV says, "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years." (emphasis mine, JEN) The New King James says, "Now the sojourn of the children of Israel who lived in Egypt! I was four hundred and thirty years." The footnote says, "Samaritan Pentateuch and Septuagint read **Egypt and Canaan.**" I do not have a copy of the Samaritan Pentateuch, but I do have the Septuagint and it says, "And the sojourning of the children of Israel, while they sojourned in the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan, was four hundred and thirty years." It is easy to see that the 430 years included the time spent in Canaan and in Egypt. Furthermore, Flavius Josephus says, "They left Egypt in the month Xanthicus, on the fifteenth day of the lunar month: four hundred and thirty years after our forefather Abraham came into Canaan, but two hundred and fifteen years only after Jacob removed into Egypt." (Antiquities of the Jews, II, 15: 2)

Adam Clarke, in his Commentary on Exodus 12: 40 quotes the Samaritan Pentateuch: "Umoshab beney Yshrael veabotham asher yashebu baarets Cenaar, ubaarets mitsraim sheloshim shanah vearba meoth ahanah" translated "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, and of their fathers, which they sojourned in the land of Canaan and in the land of Egypt, was 430 years." Then he cites Paul's statement and adds, "That these three witnesses have the truth, the chronology itself proves: for from Abraham's entry into Canaan to the birth of Isaac was 25 years, Gen. 12: 4, 17: 1-21, Isaac was 60 years old at the birth of Jacob, Gen. 25: 26; and Jacob was 130 at his going down into Egypt, Gen. 47: 9; which three sums make 215 years. And then Jacob and his children having continued in Egypt 215 years more, the whole sum of 430 years is regularly completed."

LET'S BE A LITTLE  
MORE OPTIMISTIC

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The apostle Paul said, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Phil. 4: 8). Oh, how we need to think on things that are good. Rather than spending our time dwelling on things that are negative and bad, we should strive to center our thoughts on things that are good and positive.

We hear a lot of pessimistic talk today which reveals many negative attitudes. It is not uncommon to hear someone say, "We just can't get people to come like they used to come to meetings." "Nobody is interested in the gospel like they ought to be." When we try to plan gospel meetings, debates, personal work programs and the like, someone will be sure to inform the rest that our efforts just don't do much good anymore. When I first started preaching, I would preach every third Sunday for a small congregation out in the country. They had not had a meeting in several years, so I tried to persuade them to have one. At first the reaction was, "People in this community will not come to the meeting like they did years ago. We used to have meetings and the house would be full. But the last meeting we had didn't bring many out, so we haven't had one in a while." We hear others telling us that the future of the church isn't so bright. We are told that the church is drying up on the vine. Some have estimated that within ten years there will not be very many churches around. And by another ten or twenty there may be none! We hear a great deal about how the brotherhood is so divided.

Brethren sometimes have the same kind of attitudes toward the world in general. How many times have I heard someone of the older generation say that things are not like they used to be. It is not unusual for me to hear that the evil in the world is worse now than it ever has been. When our economy is in bad shape, there will be some sure to say that it is the worst time this country has ever seen. We talk as though there have never been hard times before.

Obviously then you can see that we have a problem with pessimistic thinking. Pessimism affects our whole life. If we have such an attitude toward one thing, we will have the same toward other things. I once heard a man on television asking why was it that when we opened a loaf of bread we see the end piece instead of the beginning piece. Pessimism is contagious. It spreads a

lot faster than optimism.

Pessimistic thinkers are not peculiar to our time. When the children of Israel were about to take the land of Canaan, there were some who said, "We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we.... The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature...we saw the giants... and we are in our own sight as grasshoppers, as so we were in their sight" (Num. 13: 31-33). Yet there were others with a little optimism like Caleb who said, "Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it" (Num. 13: 31). Joshua also exhibited that same attitude in saying, "If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey" (Num. 14: 8).

Our lives will be much like our thinking. The Proverb writer said, "For as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23: 7). If we are negative and pessimistic thinkers, things around us will be bad, dark and gloomy for that is all that we will see. We sometimes are like the man who got on the bus with some Limburger cheese under his coat. When the heat on the bus caused the cheese to begin to smell he jumped up and said, "The whole world stinks!" And yet if we develop a positive and optimistic attitude things about us might not appear so bad. We then will have a brighter outlook. We will see the good as well, if not more so, than the bad.

However, there will be times that we need to face the facts. There are warnings to which we must take heed. There will be problems that must be dealt with. There is sin and wickedness the world over. We must admit our shortcomings and limitations. Yet, in spite of all this we must remain optimistic. Let us consider some encouraging things.

1. **The gospel will work.** The gospel still has the same power that it always had. It remains the "power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1: 16). God made a promise long ago that his word would not return unto him void, but it would accomplish what he pleased and prosper in the thing whereunto he sent it (Isa. 55: 11). When God's word is taught we will see some results! That doesn't mean that every person will obey that hears. That has never happened. But the point is that men and women will be converted by the preaching of the gospel today just as they were converted in the first century. Example after example can be seen in the book of Acts where God's powerful word pricked the hearts of the hearers. And when the message is still the same today, there will be the same kind of results. Paul encouraged the Corinthians by saying that our labour is not in vain in the Lord (1 Cor. 15: 58). Anytime I preach the gospel I am not wasting my time. My attitude will not be that it won't do any good. I'll just preach the message and leave the results between the hearer and God.

2. **There has always been and will be a remnant of the people of God.** We read sad predictions from the pen of able men that the church is on the decline. Little or no new works are being established and older works are folding up. We are to understand from them that there

is a possibility that the membership of the church in the next generation may be zero and the church disappear. We (at least some of us) have become too concerned with statistics and numbers. And thus, some have taken some statistics and calculated that if we continue at the same rate then the church will disappear. But a very important point has been overlooked and that is that it just doesn't work that way. I once took a rate of a child's weight increase from birth to one month and calculated that if he continued such an increase at the same rate that he would weigh over four-hundred pounds by the time he was ten. However I had over-looked one simple point, that being that it just doesn't work that way. Let us carefully consider some promises of God. (a) The kingdom cannot be destroyed (Dan. 2: 44; Heb. 12: 28). Though local congregations may fold, the Lord's kingdom will always be. (b) There will always be a remnant of God's people. This promise is seen in that there has always been a remnant. Though prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel were pointing out the serious consequences of the wickedness of Israel and showing their fate, they left some hope that there would be a remnant left (Isa. 1: 2-9; 10: 20-ff; Jer. 3: 14; 23: 1-3; Ezek. 11: 13; 14: 22; 34: 11-ff; 37: 11-12). In 536 B. C. the remnant did return and began to restore the service of God (Haggai 1: 12, 14; 2: 2; Ezra 9: 8). When we come to the New Testament we again find Israel being rejected of God (Rom. 9-11). Yet there was a remnant to be saved. Paul said, "Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved ..... Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodom and been made like unto Gomorrah" (Rom. 9: 27-29). The question is raised in chapter eleven as to whether Israel has been wholly cast off. The answer in verses 1-10 is that there is a remnant. Just as when Elias thought he was the only one left and God said there were yet seven thousand, "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace" (Rom. 11: 2-5). All of this stands as a promise that there will always be a remnant of the people of God.

3. **Cycles of history.** The psalmist wrote, "weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Psa. 30: 5). This is a basic principle that after the night, the morning comes. After the darkness the daylight will break. After the storm the sun will shine. Yes, there may be some rough times in the world and in the church, but we can afford to be just a little optimistic knowing the cycle of events. We may suffer through some bad economic times. There may be a recession or even a depression, but expansion will follow. There may be times when people are out of work, but that will be followed sooner or later by a pick up in work. There have been times when styles and fashions were about as bad as they could be when women wore the mini-skirts and men wore long, stringy hair. And yet those times were followed with longer dresses and shorter hair. We often say that history repeats itself. We see that principle in the repeated apostasy that has taken place in the body of Christ. When the first apostasy came it was followed

by a period of restoration and growth. So it has been true of every apostasy. Yes, the night and the darkness of apostasy will come again, but soon the daybreak of recovery and growth will appear.

4. **Man is basically the same.** We sometimes think about the crime and wickedness throughout the world and wonder what this world is coming to. I have heard people say that the world is more wicked today than it ever has been. If you will but stop and consider, man has not changed. Man really isn't any worse today than he has ever been. There is nothing new under the sun (Ecc. 1: 9). Take a little time and read the list of sins found in Rom. 1: 18-31, 1 Cor. 6: 9-11 or Gal. 5: 19-21 and see if man is any different. Drunkenness is a major problem of our day. Yet that has been a problem starting even with Noah. Homosexuality is an openly practiced sin of this generation. However we find that Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed for that very sin. The news is filled with accounts of the problem we have with murder. And yet that has been a problem ever since the day of Cain.

In the day of Noah there were only eight righteous people (1 Pet. 3: 20-21). Most of us can count more than that within our own families without even counting others within the local congregation of which we are members. You see, the world has been in worse shape. When we think about the opposition and the threats that the apostles faced, (Acts 4, 5) we ought to thank God that we live in better times.

When we think about the problems among brethren and how sometimes brethren can't seem to get along, we ought to reflect back on the problems brethren had in the first century. They were divided over following men (1 Cor. 1: 10-13), disagreed over circumcision (Acts 15), and had problems over fornication and marriage (1 Cor. 5). In all of these respects, man is basically the same.

5. **"Doom" sometimes works for good.** Sometimes the results of failure will result in good. That is not to say that doom or failure is good or that God approves of it. Nor should we hope for it. We see this principle in the fact that the Babylonian captivity taught the people of God a lesson. When the Jews of Rom. 9-11 were rejected it ultimately accomplished bringing many of the Gentiles to salvation and the return of some of the Jews. The Gentiles would not become a part of Israel as long as the hypocritical Jews remained (Rom. 2: 24). Now that God has rejected them, the Gentiles accept their place in Israel (Rom. 11: 30). This thus provoked some of the Jews to jealousy and caused them to return (Rom. 11: 31).

When apostasy and division comes, it will be terrible and sinful, a thing we should fight against and never hope that it happens. But if it does, it will cause us to become a little more concerned and spend more time in studying. There is more interest then in debates and more questions asked than any other time. When congregations begin to dwindle or even fold up, it is a sad thing indeed. And yet that would probably cause us to work harder in teaching those about us. Other congregations would wake up to their responsibility.

6. **Hope of eternal salvation.** If none of the other points were true, this alone is enough to keep us excited because our future is so bright. Paul wrote saying, "For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come" (Heb. 13: 14). We have the promise of a life to come (1 Tim. 4: 8). When we realize that this life is not all there is, but there is a better one to come, we cannot help but be just a little more optimistic

How about us all trying to be a little more optimistic every day?

## THE RULE OF FAITH

**Luther W. Martin**  
**707 Salem Ave.**  
**Rolla, MO 65401**

Upon what do you base your authority, for what you believe, teach or practice in religion? The chief priests and elders of the Jews asked this of Jesus as He was teaching: "By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?" (Matt. 21: 23.)

This matter as to what a person embraces as a "Rule of Faith" makes all the difference in the world, whether they are headed for Heaven or Hell!

Archbishop Tillotson of the Church of England, wrote over 150 years ago, concerning the "Rule of Faith":

"A rule, when we speak of a rule of faith, is a metaphorical word, which in its first and proper sense, being applied to material and sensible things, is the measure according to which we judge of the straightness and crookedness of things; and from hence it is transformed by analogy to things moral or intellectual. A moral rule is the measure according to which we judge whether a thing be good or evil; and this kind of rule is that which is commonly called a law.... "

"A rule of faith is the measure, according to which we judge what matters we are to assent to, as revealed by God, and what not. And more particularly, the rule of Christian faith is the measure, according to which we are to judge what we ought to assent to, as the doctrine revealed by Christ to the world. " (Tillotson's Rule of Faith, Part I, Sec. I.)

### Roman Catholicism's Problem

The Roman Catholic has a dual rule, consisting of both Scripture and Tradition. And when tradition differs from Scripture, the Catholic almost always follows tradition, rather than Holy Scripture. This matter of "Tradition" will usually consist of Papal decrees, some of which are said to be infallible, while others are not infallible, Encyclical Letters, some of which may or may not be infallible, Rulings of General Councils, and finally Canon Law. So, the Roman Catholic is truly hard-

pressed to define just what constitutes his "Rule of Faith".

### The Christian's Rule of Faith

The Christian looks to the Bible alone, as the written Word of God. But at this point, the Catholic will assert: "Yes, you non-Catholics take the Bible alone plus each person's private interpretation. " But allow me to respond and reply: "The true Christian accepts the Bible alone, and if any "interpretation" is required, then we accept the sum total that the Bible records concerning any one subject. "

Please allow me to produce an illustration: The Roman Catholic may practice sprinkling a few drops of water upon a convert and call this action "baptism". But the true Christian, will state, that the act of baptism consists of total immersion of the convert's body in water. And the Catholic will respond: "Oh, That's just your interpretation!" This I firmly deny! Now, let the Scriptures "interpret themselves":

(1) "John was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was **much** water there" (John 3: 23).

(2) "And both Philip and the eunuch **went down into the water**, and he baptized him (Acts 8: 38).

(3) "**Buried** with Him in baptism..." (Col. 2: 12).

(4) "Therefore we were **buried** with Him by baptism into death..." (Romans 6: 4).

Now, what does the New Testament itself explain regarding baptism? (1) MUCH water is required. (2) The convert WENT DOWN INTO THE WATER, thus requiring a body of water, not a pitcher of water! And (3) the action of baptism is a BURIAL. Now, if the Catholic practice were correct, a few drops of water on a convert does NOT require MUCH WATER. The Catholic convert does not go down into the pitcher! And, the flipping of a few drops of water upon the convert does not constitute a BURIAL! Now, do you understand HOW the New Testament "interprets" itself?

The Christian exercises private judgment in running the Scripture references. This "private judgment" is exercised upon the **Rule of Faith**, but the "private judgment" is NOT the rule. It is no more the rule itself, than the microscope, through which we may observe one-celled plants and animals. We do not confound the one-celled plants and animals with the microscope. It is merely an instrument by which we observe the subject. The Scriptures constitute the Rule of Faith, not the eyes and ears which may study it.

### The Written Word Is a Sufficient Rule of Faith

"And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name. " (John 20: 30-21). Since the written Word of God, the New Testament is adequate or sufficient to produce faith that in turn leads obediently to eternal life in Christ's name, we have no need for other "Rules of Faith" or traditions, Catechisms, Books of Discipline, Confessions of Faith, etc.

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for

instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3: 16-17).

**Conclusion**

What do YOU accept as a Rule of Faith in religious matters? Depending upon "your" accepted "Rule of Faith", you are either headed for Heaven or Hell

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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*

**LECTURESHIP**

**YOAKUM, TEXAS**—The church in Yoakum announces a lecture program for February 22-24. The church meets at 606 Sheehan in Yoakum. The theme involves "Advantages in Christ." On Friday night, Jack Holt and J. T. Smith will speak. On Saturday morning R. J. Stevens will speak and then lead an hour of singing. At 5 P. M. Jerry Fite will speak, followed at 6 P. M. by Harold Fite. Speakers Sunday A. M. will be Larry Bilbo and Terry Summerlin. At 5 P. M. Darrell Starling will speak, followed at 6 P. M. by Ron Halbrook.

**FERNANDO VENEGAS**, Casilla No. 122 C. C. 5500 Mendoza, Argentina—After four months of study with me, a good lady was baptized into Christ. In late November and early December we has a gospel meeting with preaching by Gonzalo Yobanolo from Puente Alto, Chile. We had visitors every service and the members supported it well. Two were baptized in this effort, one the mother of two of our members and the other our daughter.

**NEW CONGREGATION**

**CHOICE L. BRYANT**, 1508 Geraldine Lane, Arlington, Texas 76010—On January 5, 1985 at Thous and Oaks Park in Mansfield, Texas, a faithful church began meeting. This is a fast growing area which affords a great opportunity. If you know of any member of the church in that area interested in working and worshipping with a church free of the unscriptural institutional projects, please contact us. I am in need of some support in this work. Any who know me and would be interested, please contact me soon. My phone number is (817) 640-8354.

**AN UNUSUAL COMPLIMENT**

**WILLIAM V. BEASLEY**, 602 W. Westmore Rd., Tucson, Arizona 85705—Many and varied complimentary things are said about the efforts of preachers to teach God's word. Some are deserved and some are not. This short notice is about one which was and is deserved. When John Humphries, Tom Moody and I went to India this past fall, we took, as our custom is, a good number of cassette tapes of sermons and Bible studies to be left with the various Indian preachers. Among the tapes given to one of the very capable preachers, V. John Prabhu Das, was a series by brother Homer Hailey. These brought a smile to the face of brother John, since he was acquainted with brother Hailey's teaching from tapes left on earlier trips, and said that listening to the 'other series' was like opening a banana and eating it... very sweet. " His teaching is easily understood and certainly profitable. We pray that brother Hailey will continue to enjoy good health, and continue to be able to teach via the pulpit and printed page.

**DEAN BULLOCK**, 500 Cunningham, Lufkin, Texas 75901—After almost thirty-eight years of preaching, I am "giving up local work" and moving to Lufkin, Texas. My health is excellent. I plan to preach meetings and "fill-in" anywhere needed when not busy in meetings. Over the past 35 years I have conducted from 6 to 10 meetings per year. Now, without local commitments, I can go when and where called. Osby Weaver will follow me here at Mound and Starr in Nacogdoches. Please note my change of address. Phone number (409) 632-1133.

**An Open Door in Philadelphia**

**TERRY Partain**, 138 Varner S. W., Winter Haven, Florida 33880— We found an open door in Philadelphia, PA. James Baker, a young gospel preacher with roots in that city had moved there in the summer of 1984, coming from Miami, Florida. He set up residence in old Germantown and rented a room at the local YMCA for Sundays. He found two sisters in Christ and soon met a man and his wife with a genuine interest in pure New Testament doctrine. Since the church in Bartow, Florida had helped brother Baker move, it offered to send Ron Drum to spend a week knocking on doors in the area. Ron enlisted the help of Webb Harris, Frank Andre and myself. We arrived at midnight Tuesday morning. We wondered about the dangers of the big city. Had this journey been a mistake? Would anybody open a door to us? Should we enter if he did? We first met neighbors, then started conversations on the streets of the busy business districts. As we began knocking doors we found many who received us warmly.

As Ron Drum and Webb Harris were talking to a family living near the Post Office, a sister walking nearby overheard them mentioning the church of Christ meeting at the "Y". She waited and then approached them to discover that they were teaching what she held to be the truth. She and several others were driving some distance to a small church meeting in a converted residence. They were meeting that night and she invited us to go. We found 30 to 40 gathered to hear a speaker from Boston who lectured on the humanity of Jesus. At the end of his remarks he made no appeal to the lost. As he sat down the song leader suggested that if anyone wanted to come forward he could do so while they sang. In his closing remarks the song leader asked a brother to lead in prayer and to be sure to offer thanks for the coffee and doughnut holes. You see, during the last points of the lecture some of the ladies left the meeting and busied themselves in the kitchen preparing the coffee and treats. The smell of percolating coffee punctuated the closing remarks of the preacher. James will stay in contact with these as long as possible and try to teach. The highlight of our week was the Sunday morning meeting with the small congregation brother Baker had worked hard to gather.

Since our return we have been told that a woman we met who had left the Adventist Church has obeyed the gospel. Others we met that week have opened their doors to brother Baker. He works 40 hours a week at an Oldsmobile dealer and has to conduct his home studies at



nights and on Saturdays. He needs and deserves full-time support for his work. Why not write him: James Baker, P. O. Box 44012, Philadelphia, PA 19144.

#### PREACHER NEEDED

**NEWPORT NEWS, VIRGINIA**—The church at Newport News is seeking a full-time preacher. Average attendance is about 30-35. We can supply partial support of \$800 per month. If interested please send resume with references and a sermon cassette (if available) to: Church of Christ, 315 Harpersville Road, Newport News, VA 23601.

#### PREACHER AVAILABLE

**J. M. KENNEDY**, 401 Business 31 S., Peru, Indiana 46970—I am interesting in relocating with a faithful congregation. I am 56 years old, married, and have four children, one of which is still at home. I have been preaching for 38 years, 32 of which have been in located work. If interested write to me at the above address, or phone (317) 473-6850.

#### EDITORIAL LEFT-OVERS

##### BROTHER TANT

The final issue of VANGUARD was the December, 1984 edition. It is now merged with THE EXPOSITORY REVIEW published by Bob Craig and edited by Robert McDonald of Odessa, Texas. Brother Tant retires from editorial work after serving as editor of TRUTH IN LIFE, the GOSPEL GUARDIAN and VANGUARD. His work with the GOSPEL GUARDIAN during the crucial years of the fifties and sixties was monumental. In spite of the stress and tensions of those years, he "kept his cool" and maintained the kindest of spirits to wards those who opposed him. He was the object of much abuse during those years. His two debates in the mid-fifties with E. R. Harper on the sponsoring church, were landmark events. I was one of about 1,000 preachers who heard the discussion in Abilene, Texas. His book on the life of his father (J. D. TANT, TEXAS PREACHER) is in its third printing and still selling well. It is a classic.

It was brother Tant who first encouraged me to write. He printed every article I ever submitted to the GUARDIAN. His own writing was superior in style and usually, in content. His education is broad and furnishes him as a writer with a rich warehouse full of interesting facts and humorous illustrations. There was often an elegance about his writing. Even when I did not agree with what he was saying, I always found myself reading his editorials and never failed to read his "Overflow" column which was always entertaining.

This editor disagreed with brother Tant on his proposal about a "box in the vestibule" as a means of solving differences over church support of private institutions. We also disagreed about his association with the Crossroads church in Gainesville, Florida and his assessment of some of their work. We have taken note of these differences in this paper. But I am sure that neither what I have written along these lines, nor that written more recently by former editor, H. E. Phillips, has caused brother Tant to become out of sorts with either of us. Some brethren think that because you disagree with someone, that makes you personal enemies. Such is not the case. We wish for him and sister Tant health and happiness in their remaining years.

#### INVESTIGATE!

We are happy to carry without charge notices of churches needing preachers or of preachers who wish to change locations. It is impossible for us to know about the merits or demerits of all who send such notices. We carry these as newsworthy items. Such items should not be construed as endorsement of everything in every congregation in search of a preacher and who announces such need in this news column. Nor are we in position to know about every preacher who wants to move. Churches and preachers ought to make careful investigations of each other. Such would avoid many sorrows for both. We are not in the preacher placing business. We simply carry these news items as an accommodation to brethren.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### SORRY ABOUT THAT!

I only learned recently that the last couple of issues of the paper were being mailed out from the printing plant with the address label on the front page obscuring either part of the article, or the title of the article or the picture of the writer. We have taken steps to correct this and hope there will be no further problem over it. Thanks to those who pointed this out. Please advise us of any abnormality in receipt of your paper. Some of it we cannot control but some of it we can. Thanks for your patience. And thanks also for the considerable number who recently have sent new subscriptions along with their own renewals.

#### EDITOR'S MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 1985

March—Manslick Road, Louisville, KY  
 Jonesboro, Georgia  
 Middlebourne, West Virginia  
 April—West Lafayette, Indiana  
 Wellandport, Ontario, Canada  
 May—West End, Bowling Green, KY  
 Lakeview, Hendersonville, Tennessee  
 June—Houston, Mississippi  
 Mt. Pleasant, Texas  
 Kahoka, Missouri  
 July—Pound, Virginia  
 2nd and Walnut, Paragould, Arkansas  
 August—Merrillville, Indiana  
 September—Barnesville, Ohio  
 University Heights, Murfreesboro, Tennessee  
 October—Muncie, Indiana  
 12th Street, Bowling Green, KY  
 November—East Alton, Illinois  
 Peru, Indiana

#### IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS 238  
 RESTORATIONS 56

(Taken from bulletins, and papers received by the editor)