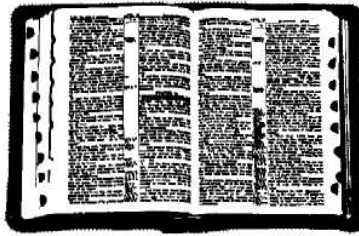


SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

"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 XXVI

MAY, 1985

Number 5

Things Most
Certainly
Believed

Julian R. Snell

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Louisville, Kentucky 40219



WHAT IS WRONG?

In a growing number of instances preachers and congregations are divorcing after a very brief and tempestuous marriage. Obviously something is wrong when a relationship lasts a year and sometimes less with the entire period, excepting the first few weeks of the honeymoon, a continuous conflict. Honest observation and unbiased judgement concludes that in most cases the blame is not all on one side. Generally it must be shared. There are some congregations that have the unenviable ability to maintain a touchy and suspicious, even volatile, atmosphere. Some preachers, let's face it, are unable to exert a stabilizing influence within these situations and when the two come together it is not long until an explosion. In all truthfulness, we must say the Lord himself could not handle some of these situations so as to establish peace and harmony and a workable relationship. In fairness then the preacher is not always to blame and when he is, it is not totally his.

Let me establish a sort of scenario that may help to see our failings and shortcomings with a view to correcting a deplorable and disgusting situation. The Podunk Holler church has had three preachers over the past two years. One was a college man with plenty of book learning and he could really talk. He had been preaching nigh on to forty years and had worked with some big churches. Podunk offered a real challenge and the church felt so fortunate to have him move in. They even put his picture in the weekly issue of the county

paper and his name on the sign in the yard of the church building. They had decided at a business meeting not to paint the name of the preacher on the sign anymore, just to use the stick on type letters, since they were changing pretty often. From the first service they all began to settle in with the expectation that having arrived at such an enviable point in their history they would grow by leaps and bounds.

But alas, after only a few sermons it began to look like, at least to some, that the preacher was not what they needed. He used words that were much too big for most to understand. In fact at one of the first business meetings, held every first Sunday afternoon, a couple of the younger men who had been to college said they could not understand half of what the preacher said. Asked for some examples by the preacher so he could eliminate these from his vocabulary they could not come up with anything. Finally, one said it might have been a word beginning with a "v" and since he did not know one he could not have possibly understood.

Podunk church business meetings were a classic. Rules of order were a bit hard to identify even if there were any. Usually someone stood up in front of the four or five men who attended to be chairman. Someone was called on to pray and that got the sanctified part of the meeting out of the way. From now on it is no holds barred, everybody can get whatever in his craw out and whoever had better look out. It was a time for the loud and the bully type to have their say. Most of the time the hassle went on for a couple of hours with the main topic of argument, conversation and discussion being how to spend the money, who was going to cut the weeds, if the preacher had been putting in enough time in the church's work and was he effective. It became apparent that the latest preacher stacked up about four for him and three against him and that he was in for a rough time. Meeting dismissed. Everyone goes home mad at everyone else, in a hurry so they can get on the phone and tell those not there what happened. "Ma Bell" delights in servicing the members at Podunk, especially if they are on a "per call" rate. They are really busy with that telephone.

Looks like the preacher had better look for other pas-

tures, the congregation has crystallized the factious spirit into two identifiable groups, one for the preacher and one against him, one defending and one condemning everything. The atmosphere becomes volatile and the preacher decides to go and leave them to their own devices.

Several months searching produces a young man filled with zeal and determination coupled with love for the gospel who wants to change his field of labor. He is encouraged to move to Podunk. He arrives and everyone is thrilled. A young man with his enthusiasm will cause this church to grow by leaps and bounds, is the general opinion. After a couple of months the murmuring begins as usual. This time it takes a little different tack. "The preacher does not dress as sharp as some, have you noticed? And his wife, she must buy her clothes at the Goodwill Store and she has such a few. The kids are so sweet but they do not dress too well. Lets talk to him and tell him to clean up his act and dress like the preachers at the big churches do." Nevermind that he is having a hard time making ends meet on what he is paid. The appearance is the thing. The young fellow takes this kind of criticism of wife and family just so long and decides anything will be better than this. Podunk is looking for a preacher.

"Who will we be able to find? This is a good church with no problem but two or three hardheads that no one can get along with. If we can just get rid of them everything will be fine. Besides there isn't a church in the country that treats a preacher any better than we do and the last two just did not appreciate what we had done for them. They just did not know a good thing when they saw it, probably preaching for the money any way." Again and again the same scenario. Do you see anything that is familiar?

Podunk Holler may sound like some place you know, probably does. What is the solution? As always the solution revolves around the matter of attitude, "the mind of Christ" (Phil. 2: 5) and "spirit of Christ" (Rom. 8: 9). The disposition to "bite and devour one another" ultimately consumes the guilty and must be identified with the works of the flesh (Gal. 5: 15). The guilty shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. Where such is the prevailing disposition within a congregation there can be no true identity with the church of the Lord. Like Sardis of old there may indeed be a few within such congregations "which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white" but the candlestick of the church is in jeopardy (Rev. 3: 4). Repent is the plea and clean up the situation is the need that the course of truth and the growth of the church may result.

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Editorial

Connie W. Adams

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BOBBIE IS AT REST

On Sunday, March 31, at 1 P. M., my beloved Bobbie was released from the pain and suffering which had intensified over the last few weeks and transported to a better world where pain and death are no more. A void is left of such magnitude that words cannot express it. For years I have kept the poem which follows which was written by the late and lamented W. Curtis Porter near the approaching death of his wife, who also lost her battle with cancer while claiming her prize in a better world. His sentiments are so clearly my own that I offer them here as my editorial for this month. My heart is too full to write more.

THE FATEFUL HOUR

My heart is torn with sorrow,
My mind is dulled with pain.
As by your bed in sadness
I long to see you gain;
But grief o'er me has fallen —
My soul is filled with woe
Because the dreaded reaper
Has called for you to go.
You've manifested courage —
Your fortitude's sublime —
As with a broken spirit
You near the heavenly clime;
Death's knell is sounding loudly,
With pathos and with power,
And I, so sad and lonely,
Await the fateful hour.

I know your love is fervent,
A love so full and free —
As I pray God in anguish
To hear my humble plea:
To grant that you may linger
My troubled soul to bless,
But if you can't stay longer,
That you may suffer less;
And when you reach the crossing
That heaven be your home —
That God may give me comfort
While sadly here I roam.

I love you still more dearly —
Your pain but breaks my heart
This fateful hour of darkness
Is tearing us apart.
The fateful hour approaches —
It blinds my eyes with tears
As I without you, darling,
Must face the coming years;
But if you go and leave me,
My love will stronger grow,
As faith will look to heaven
To which your soul will go.
And there you'll be a treasure
To beckon still to me
To strive for that reunion
Upon that shore with thee;
With sorrows all forgotten,
With tears all washed away —
We'll then be home forever
Through that eternal day.

— W. Curtis Porter (written near the approaching death of his wife)

MEMORIAL EDITION IN JUNE

Bobbie was a vital part of what made this paper succeed. She was the business manager, kept records, attended to the mailing list, handled billing and worked behind the scenes to see to it that things were handled on schedule and in a business-like manner.

At the suggestion of several of our writers, the June issue of the paper will be a memorial edition, not just to eulogize her memory, but to provide occasion to look again at the scriptures which the writers of the special feel were manifested in her life. We mean for it to be a teaching effort and think all our readers will want to keep it.

FUNERAL SERVICES

Funeral services were conducted on April 2 at the Expressway building in Louisville by Weldon Warnock and Dee Bowman, both longtime friends. Over 400 people packed the house. Congregational singing was led by Rollin Morris. Her body was laid to rest in Hebron Cemetery, a short distance from our home in Bullitt County.

Restoration Footnotes

Earl Kimbrough

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SELF-SUPPORTING EVANGELISTS

The first American preachers to advocate a return to "the ancient order" were by and large self-supporting. They worked at secular jobs to provide for themselves and their families, or depended on a private income, while they preached the gospel. Funds from congregations were not adequate to free them from concern about their livelihood. William Martin Smith wrote a book on the early concepts of the ministry of the Campbell-Stone movement, and appropriately called it "Servants Without Hire".

1. **There Was a Bias against Paid Preachers.** This was especially true in the Campbell branch of the movement. The Restorers blamed the clergy for much of the division, ignorance, and confusion in religion, and they were afraid the "clergy" would dominate the churches they had freed from sectarianism. Alexander Campbell, himself a wealthy business man-farmer, castigated the clergy as "hirelings" who were more interested in lining their pockets than in saving sinners. Of course, he later changed his views on some things that he had so bitterly opposed, but when the controversy over "located preachers" began in the 1850s, his earlier writings were used against the practice.

Campbell's opposition to the clergy and the brotherhood's fear of clergy domination, together with the general practice of the preachers supporting themselves, resulted in preachers receiving little or no pay for their services. This had a direct influence on the evangelism of the early Restorers. Being self-supporting, they became fiercely independent. They worked on their own often in isolated places, and so they preached in the manner that suited them. They were not nearly as ready, as some think, to accept what Campbell and other editors and writers said. And where they were prone to follow Campbell, many preferred the iconoclastic Campbell of the 1820s to the more moderate Campbell of the 1840s.

The preachers' independence also contributed to differences in doctrine and practice. While unity was stressed and differences did not seriously affect their sense of oneness, the early Restorers thought for themselves. Having to rely on their own resources, financially as well as scholastically, they did not always come to the same conclusion on every point. This independence was furthered, fortunately in my opinion, by the absence of Bible Colleges. The pioneers of the Restora-

tion movement were not schooled at the feet of any particular group of men whose peculiarities in practice and Bible exegesis molded their views of the gospel.

2. **Located Preachers Were Very Rare.** A distinction was made by some between preaching and teaching, with the idea that preaching was for outsiders and teaching for Christians. Campbell said: "There was teaching, there was singing, there was praying, there was exhortation in the Christian church; but **preaching in the church, or to the church, is not once named in the Christian Scriptures.** We preach the gospel to unbelievers, to aliens, but never to Christians, or those who have received it". (*Millennial Harbinger*, 1862, p. 154.)

Such thinking led to traveling evangelists who preached mainly in "revival" meetings. The practical result was that preaching was mostly on "fundamentals of the faith". And while many were converted, very little was done to follow up and strengthen the converts. Those to whom the duty of teaching the church fell more often than not were unqualified for the work. Campbell's error in thinking on "preaching" and "teaching" has continued to plague the Lord's people until the present day.

The nearest thing to located preachers in the early days were the men who preached by appointment at various stations, somewhat like the Methodist circuit riders. These usually divided their time among four churches, with the fifth Sunday reserved for a fifth congregation. This practice encouraged large crowds on "preaching Sunday" and scant crowds on "non-preaching" days. Even in this arrangement, much effort was given to converting sinners, and the church suffered for lack of solid spiritual food on which to grow.

As might be expected from a system of self-supported and self-regulated preaching, many unworthy men entered the ministry and inflicted untold harm on the body of Christ. Reviewing earlier times, B. W. Johnson said: "I have known preachers who would leave home, without deigning to inform their family when they would return, or upon the other hand, would promise they would be back in a day or two, break their word and be away for weeks, without a word in the meantime to relieve the anxiety of the lonely wife". (*The Evangelist*, 1870, p4).

While this system may have been about the best possible under frontier conditions, it failed in some important areas and prepared the way for a number of problems concerning evangelism in later times. We still suffer the lingering effects of some mistakes in evangelism that became engrained in the Restoration movement in its formative years.

But even though they were under handicaps, they were successful to a greater extent than might be expected because they relied on the word of God rather than their own power or knowledge to lead men to Christ. They appealed to people steeped in denominational error to stand out on the Bible alone. They held out the simple gospel that could be believed and obeyed without doubt or fear. They asked denominationalists to "come out of Babylon", their term for Catholic and

Protestant error. Through the zealous preaching, New Testament Christianity was restored, and churches patterned after the apostolic example sprang up throughout the land. There are many faithful Christians today who can trace their spiritual roots to the work of these pioneers.

Using the

SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

Ken Green

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AN ANTIDOTE FOR THE BLUES

Basketball in Alabama is but a poor stepchild. It cannot hope to compete with its firstborn gridiron brother. These folks who have enshrined The Bear are unmoved by hardwood courts and short breeches.

Sonny Smith, Auburn's basketball coach could take no more. He thought he could succeed where others have failed. And he did succeed after a fashion. For the last couple of years the Tigers have pulled off winning seasons. Last years 20-11 record earned for them the first-ever invitation to the NCAA tournament. At this point (this was written in mid-Feb.) it looks like that may happen again.

Still, the student body, townspeople, and alumni are stoic. Filling the building is a rare thing. It's usually about half-full, barely averaging 6, 000. They don't even sell out for contests against the arch-foe Alabama. Smith has felt nothing but frustration.

Sound familiar?

We preachers get frustrated too, don't we?

There are things that serve to discourage. But one biggy in most places is brethren that you just can't light a fire under. The ones that don't help fill the building on Sunday nights and Wednesday nights. The ones that do well if they make two nights of a gospel meeting.

Whether the congregation is winning or losing doesn't make a lot of difference to these folks. They're just not that enthused about this particular game. Other games will continue to hold center stage in their lives.

So the preacher tries to fight the good fight of faith, and constantly fights the blues. Eventually he will look for Utopia elsewhere, either with another local congregation or in another kind of work. He may find something a bit less frustrating where there are more fans of the game. He may not.

But the only way he's going to beat the blues is to change his perspective. Frustration will continue so

long as he must have a big cheering section to rally him on.

I heard one of the "big" preachers say once that he wouldn't stay at a place where there was any appreciable difference between the attendance at all the services. Well, let us be thankful that there are several churches' where there is not that great difference. But from my observation and experience they are in the minority, and any preacher who made that commitment would be very limited as to where he could preach.

That man, by the way, is no longer preaching the gospel.

By way of contrast, I remember a morning service during a week-long meeting at a good-sized congregation. Only a few showed up. There were no more than 15 or 20 present. Granville Tyler was the preacher. If he was disturbed or frustrated it didn't show. His attitude seemed to be "It's wonderful that 15 or 20 people have come out this morning to study God's word! I so appreciate that and hope I can help make this hour one that will be for your profit!"

It was profitable to me. Some 12 or more years later, I still remember the lesson he brought. I've preached it myself a few times. But more precious to me was that disposition of heart. He gave me an antidote for the blues.

God's words to Elijah are applicable in every generation. **"But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace"** (Rom. 9: 4, 5).

Crowds are relative things. Sonny Smith gets frustrated over a crowd of 6, 000. Wouldn't it be great to have that many assembled together to study the word? **But at this present time also God has His seven thousand.** Let's not forget it!

I once heard a fellow say, "If I could go back and change anything, I would want to change a few lives. "

If we can manage to change a few lives, brethren, our days will not have been lived in vain.

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THE SECURITY OF THE SAINT (4)

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FACTORS IN OUR SECURITY

We started this study with some Bible passages showing the confidence that some early Christians had in regard to their salvation. I believe it is possible for us to have that same kind of confidence today. That blessed assurance comes, not from the teachings of men, but from the word of God. When we have a proper understanding of the Bible's teaching about the limitations of the devil, the longsuffering of deity, and the loyalty of the disciple, I think we can then realize why we can truly have confidence.

The Limitations of the Devil

"No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10: 12). It should be reassuring to know that Satan cannot force me to sin. The saying "The devil made me do it" is false. While it is true that the old Dragon will surely tempt me, it is also true that God will always provide the door of escape. It is up to me to enter through that door, instead of yielding to the wiles of the devil. It should strengthen our faith and determination to know that when we "resist the devil... he will flee from" us (Jas. 4: 7).

Some brethren who have tried to give a false sense of security often use hypothetical situations to counter the teaching of the word of God. This effort is similar to the denominationalist's situation of the tree limb which falls on the man who is on his way to be baptized. This case is made up to offset God's command for the alien sinner to be immersed for the forgiveness of his sins. A case supposed by our brethren is "What about a Christian who has tried all of his life to live faithful to the Lord, but when splashed by a careless driver lets out a curse word, and then is hit and killed by a passing bus before he has time to repent and pray for forgiveness?" Let us take note of a Bible character who had lived a life of faithfulness and yet sinned in a moment of weakness and ignorance.

The Bible describes Job as a man who "was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil" (Job 1: 1). Satan wanted to destroy this righteous man. He even accused God of building "a hedge around" Job so that Satan could not tempt him to do evil. God permitted Satan to take away the material blessings of Job and finally to afflict Job himself with a physical

ailment. During the course of the debate with his three friends, this "blameless and upright" man sinned. Job accused God of afflicting him "without cause" and laughing "at the plight of the innocent" (9: 13-24). He said God regarded him as His enemy (13: 24) He said, "There is no justice" and declared that God was persecuting him (9: 7, 22). As Job later accounts, he did these things because "I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know" (42: 3).

While Job was saying these rash things against God, why didn't Satan cause a passing chariot to run over Job and kill him? He had Job where he had wanted him. Satan did not, because he could not. Before Satan began his affliction of Job, God had said to the devil. "Behold, he is in your hand, but spare his life" (2: 6). Elihu and God spoke to Job to point out his sins to him (32: 3; 33: 12; 34: 7-10, 35-37; 35: 2, 16; 38: 1-3; 40: 6-8). Once Job became aware of his sins he repented "in dust and ashes ... And the Lord restored Job's losses" (42: 5-6, 10).

The Longsuffering of God

In the case of Job we see God's patience of longsuffering with Job. He did not strike Him down dead the very moment he sinned. Such is not in keeping with the character of God.

"Longsuffering is that quality of self-restraint in the face of provocation which does not hastily retaliate or promptly punish" (W. E. Vine). God is longsuffering (Ex. 34: 6-7; Psa. 145: 8; Rom. 9: 22; 1 Pet. 3: 20). God is longsuffering because He is "not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3: 9). Therefore we can have confidence knowing "that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation" (2 Pet. 3: 15).

However we can be guilty of trying God's patience. God said that His longsuffering would forgive "iniquity and transgression and sin" but "by no means clearing the guilty" (Ex. 34: 6-7). The Jews are an example of some who abused God's longsuffering. "The goodness of God" should have led them "to repentance," but because of their "impenitent heart" they were "treasuring up... wrath" for themselves "in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God" (Rom. 2: 4-5). God's longsuffering will end (1 Pet. 3: 20, Gen. 6: 3). I think we would be safe in saying it ended for Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10: 1-2), for Uzzah (2 Sam. 6: 6-7), and for Ananias and Sapphira (Ac. 5: 1-11).

Not only do we read of the longsuffering of God, but we can observe the longsuffering of Jesus in his dealing with the seven churches of Asia. He urged Ephesus to "repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lamp-stand from its place" (Rev. 2: 5). He exhorted Pergamos to "Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth" (Rev. 2: 16). He had even been longsuffering with the false prophetess Jezebel at Thyatira. He "gave her time to repent" but she abused the Lord's longsuffering and "did not repent." Because of this continuing in sin, he would "cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into

great tribulation" (Rev. 2: 20-23).

The Loyalty of the Disciple

How grateful we should be to God for His patience with us! This divine character should cause us to respond with greater dedication to His service. We should not continue to wallow in the mire of sin and try His patience as Israel did, but forsake our sins and do His will.

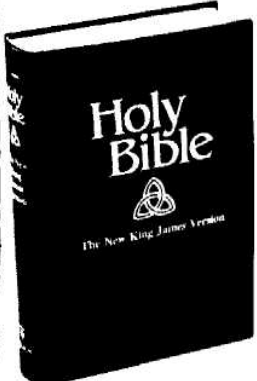
While God "upholds all who fall, " we have to look to Him and "call upon" Him with fear and love (Psa. 145: 14-20). While God "shall not... utterly cast" us down, we must "depart from evil, and do good" (Psa. 37: 27). While God will "establish... and guard" us, we must "do the things" commanded (2 Thess. 3: 3-4). While we "are kept by the power of God, " it is also "through faith" (1 Pet. 1: 4-5). While God is "able to keep" us "from stumbling, and to present" us faultless, " we must keep ourselves "in the love of God" (Jude 24, 21).

Conclusion

Satan is limited; he cannot force me to be lost. God wants me to be saved. He has done and is doing all that is in his great power and will to do to save me. I must show my loyalty to him in obeying his word. Realizing these things will help me have the assurance of salvation.

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ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL DISCIPLINE BEGINNING EARLY

As surely as God's moral and spiritual power is expressed through his written word—the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments—just that certain it is that no other power can wield the moral and spiritual influence over the developing child's moral and spiritual life as can the sacred writings. This assumes, of course, that loving parents care enough about their child's moral and spiritual knowledge and growth that they give early and continuing attention to Biblical influence over the child from the earliest possible point of the child's ability to learn God's word and its personal amenability to the God who gave that word. Happy is that child whose parents expose him early and continuously to the Bible!

Growth is Gradual

The discerning parent realizes that just as the developing child crawls before walking and walks before running so he proceeds mentally, morally and spiritually. I heard of a famous educator who, following an address to a group of mothers, opened the meeting for questions from the floor. One anxious mother inquired, "How soon should I begin the training of my child?" The lecturer asked, "When do you expect the birth of your child?" To this question the mother glibly responded, "Oh, my little boy is already five years old!" With concern the speaker came back cautiously but pointedly. Said he: "My dear lady, I hope you will not be offended by what may appear to be a pert reply to your question, however, I think that you want me to be frank in my response. In all candor I want to impress you and all others in my audience with the need for an early start in training your children. Don't wait a minute longer. Leave this meeting now. Go home and get started with that precious child. You have already missed the five most important years of its life!"

Parents Must Supply Stimuli

Well did the wise man say, "A child left to himself causeth shame to his mother" (Prov. 29: 15). The fact that a little child is impressionable to spiritual stimuli is clearly observable in the usage Jesus made of such an one when he took it in his arms, saying, "Whosoever

shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein" (Mk. 10: 15). This should challenge every parent.

Children Learn What Parents Teach

Some one has observed that the time to being training a child is "two generations back" i. e., with its grandparents! Certainly there is evidence that one of the most famous New Testament characters received a "double portion" of spiritual attention, i. e., from grandmother as well as mother. Paul reminded Timothy of his earliest training when he wrote him about "the unfeigned faith that is in thee; which dwelt first in thy grandmother, Lois, and thy mother Eunice" and later exhorted him, "Abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 1: 5; 3: 14, 15). After thinking through these statements, who can successfully deny that the prevention of juvenile delinquency begins not in the church house, school house, court house or White House but in the child's own house at parental knees!

Children Won't Wait

Seldom does a baseball team come to bat in the last half of the ninth inning when the score is 10-0 against it and yet win the game. So it is with the parent who waits till the child is in its teens before starting the disciplinary process. The game is already lost at that point. Children won't wait. Constant alertness to the mental ability, habits, likes and dislikes, strengths, weaknesses and its aptitudes are "musts" for the parent who succeeds in the awesome responsibility of rearing the child to maturity!



GO ABROAD, YOUNG MAN—GO ABROAD

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Young man, if you are looking for your place in the kingdom of God, perhaps you should consider a European field of work. However, a word of caution is in order at this point. As Homer Hailey has said, "Don't preach unless you have to!" Of course, it must be understood that you will know if you "have to preach."

One objection that is sometimes heard, or perhaps thought but not expressed openly, is that the "visible results in foreign fields are relatively insignificant compared to results obtained at home." Yet, a soul is a soul wherever you find it.

The Power of "insignificant" Influence


The wisdom of God delights in using the insignificant to accomplish the profound and the satisfaction of this great principle seems to find its very fulfillment in foreign work.

I suppose we have all heard about the gospel preacher who was asked how one of his meetings turned out. He replied, "Oh, we only had one response, a barefoot twelve-year old girl was baptized; and how that little girl grew up and raised a "mess of gospel preachers" who in turn, directly or indirectly, influenced hundreds—perhaps even thousands—of souls to call on Christ. Everyone of us may thank someone else, whether mother, father, friend or neighbor—they were all preachers—for playing an influential part in our own salvation, and that is certainly the way that God intends for it to be.

Some obscure bank clerk in a hot and dusty Oklahoma town, now known only to God, may be credited with picking up my own mother, then a young child, and taking her to Bible class every Sunday morning, thus introducing the truth of the gospel of Christ to future generations of my own family.

I know of a family in England comprised of six faithful men together with their families who were introduced to Christ by some unknown insurance man that came to call on the mother for insurance premiums each week.

David King, one of the most powerful and influential preachers the British brethren have ever known and contemporary with Alexander Campbell, was led to conversion by means of a tract stuffed into his pocket in a London railway station. The tract lay crumpled in his coat pocket for months, then after reading and reflecting on it, it took two months to find and attach himself to the brethren who had given it to him. So it is that something small and insignificant to us could become a force of God to move entire worlds.



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"Let No Man Despise They Youth"

It distresses me just a little bit when some of our older brethren seem to disparage younger and less capable preachers from engaging in foreign fields because of their youth. It has been said, "Don't send a boy to do a man's job." I wonder how many of David's brethren reflected the same thoughts when he stepped up to meet the mighty Goliath? Even so, that may be very well put with respect to many situations, but in foreign work you can't get many "men" to leave their "stateside work" and go abroad except for a brief preaching tour. A few have gone and done a good work, but this is the exception and not the rule. Again, I am not at all persuaded that foreign folk are that impressed with those among us we call "men." It has been my own observation that a foreign worker does not need a great deal of experience in congregational type preaching in the United States to be a good and effective field worker abroad. What is he to learn here that he could not learn just as well or better in the field? A man already has the basic prerequisites for a profitable foreign worker if he is devoted to teaching sound doctrine and has an understanding and love for people.

It is quite possible, even probable, that one highly qualified in American congregational preaching will make some fundamental mistakes in foreign fields. It seems to be an irresistible temptation of some preachers to "Americanize" already existent foreign churches and reject foreign customs (I am speaking here of things which fall strictly into the realm of opinion). If changes really need to be made, extreme care must be taken to maintain the confidence of foreign brethren.

I do realize there can be problems with immature and "wide-eyed youth" but there are many competent young men whom God has blessed with very good judgment. Wives and children have probably been responsible for the return of more foreign workers, both young and old, experienced and inexperienced, than any other one factor. In this respect, "youth" itself can work to one's advantage. When children are preschool or elementary school age, the cultural shock of going abroad is often minimized. Many times the family is drawn closer together, lessening the power of peer pressure when the children reach that critical age. A number of older and proven foreign workers have been forced home because of children approaching adulthood with highly questionable futures if left abroad to compete in an extremely restrictive society.

For the most part, foreign fields require trench people who will receive very little attention from anyone except God. Homesick, isolated from family and friends, they face multiple disappointments and sometimes persecutions. Isn't it more reasonable for one to spend his trials of apprenticeship among the very problems he will be facing day by day than to run the risk of developing an "American love of" and expectation for "dynamic results" which will only magnify his frustrations and probably limit his effectiveness and time spent in foreign fields.

Misplaced Trust? In the past, some good churches have heartily supported a foreign worker who they feel failed—for whatever reason. They consider themselves "burned" and are therefore "wiser now" and determined never to repeat their mistakes "ever again" (possibly the Lord did not consider him a failure). I thought we all understood the principle of responsibility which does not always hold us at fault for another's eventual deficiency or failure. What church is there among us that would never "ever again" hire another preacher just because some previous man did not live up to their expectations?

Again, it has been objected that after all, we are stewards of the Lord's money and dollar for dollar, money is spent more effectively here than there. Are we to understand then that the cost value of a soul is too expensive in the rest of the world? and must we "write off" the multitudes beyond our immediate doorstep? Certainly, we should do our work at home, but let's not forget foreign fields.

Young man, if you have Bible knowledge and a talent for teaching others, can perhaps learn a new language, and are willing to face frustrations and disappointments daily, you should soberly consider a foreign field as your life's work. Seek out and correlate all the human counsel you can, and lay that desire before the Lord with much prayer and meditation. If you still feel compelled to evangelize, "go abroad, young men—go abroad."

The Search for the Ancient Order

By Earl Irvin West

This three-volume work on the search for the landmarks of primitive Christianity covers the Restoration Movement from 1849—1918. Volume I traces the history from the early beginnings through the movements of Stone, Campbell, the early pioneer preachers, Lard, McGarvey and others. Volume II, carries on from the Civil War to "Horizons of Destiny." Volume III takes us to the end of World War I.

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EXPOSITION:
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CONTEXT

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RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS

QUESTION: *What does Acts 3: 20-21 mean, particularly the "restitution of all things"?*

ANSWER: The verses state, "And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."

The sending of Jesus in v. 20 is undoubtedly the second coming of Christ (Heb. 9: 28). In view of Jesus' return, Peter declared in v. 21, "Whom the heaven must receive until the times of the restitution of all things."

When Jesus ascended from Mt. Olivet (Lk. 24: 51), heaven received Him. The word, "receive," is from the Greek word, *dechomai*, and is defined by W. E. Vine to mean, "receiving, said of a place receiving a person, of Christ into the heavens, Acts 3: 21; or of persons in giving access to someone as a visitor... by way of giving hospitality to a visitor." Hence, Jesus was received in heaven, as is a welcomed guest in one's home, and he will continue there until the time He comes again to judge the living and the dead. Some translations have, "Whom the heaven must retain," but Hackett accurately says, "*receive*; not *retain*, which the usage of the verb forbids" (*Acts of the Apostles*, p. 82).

Peter said "the heaven MUST receive Him," indicating the necessity of His returning to heaven so that the scheme of redemption could be executed and consummated. Jesus returning to heaven allowed the Comforter to come (Jn. 16: 7), enabled Jesus as High Priest to enter the holy of holies (Heb. 9: 24-26), permitted Him to direct the welfare of the church (Eph. 1: 20-23) and to act as our intercessor (Heb. 7: 25).

The expression, "the times of restitution" (v. 21), conveys the same idea as when Jesus said, "Elias truly shall come, and restore all things" (Matt. 17: 11). Both passages are speaking about a moral and spiritual restoration. Elijah (John the Baptist, Matt. 17: 13), came to prepare the minds and hearts of Israel for the acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah. Now, through faith in Jesus and obedience to Him through the gospel, both Jews and Gentiles, may be restored from moral and spiritual degradation to a covenant relationship with God.

The "times of restitution" is the gospel age and it will continue until the long suffering of God ceases (2 Pet.

3: 9-10), and the last enemy, death, is destroyed (1 Cor. 15: 24-26). The "times of restitution" involves the same period as "the regeneration" wherein Jesus sits on His throne and the apostles sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19: 28). The regeneration is now, the gospel age (Tit. 3: 5) where sinners by God's mercy are saved by the "washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit."

Furthermore, this period of restoration or restitution is the period the holy prophets spoke about (v. 21), the period when Jesus would be Prophet (v. 22), the days of which all the prophets from Samuel onward, foretold (v. 24), and the time when all of us would be blessed in turning away from our iniquities (vv. 25-26). Obviously, therefore, the "times of restitution" is the present dispensation wherein men are brought back to God through the blood of Christ.

SIMPLICITY
IN
CHRIST

P. J. Casebolt

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"THE CHILDREN OF THIS WORLD"

Jesus said, "... for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light" (Lk. 16: 8). In the days of Christ and the apostles, there were those "not of Israel" which surely put the fleshly Israelites to shame, in spite of all the advantages which the Jew had. I think I can still see examples of the principle taught in the above passage.

An incident happened in the life of J. D. Tant (and, I think, recorded in **J. D. Tant, Texas Preacher**), which will serve to introduce the line of thought I wish to pursue. Bro. Tant had just finished conducting a meeting, and needed transportation to his next appointment, in the form of a horse. None of Tant's brethren could see their way clear to providing the needed horse, so a Methodist loaned him one. (Maybe those were the same brethren who promised to pay Tant for the meeting when their cotton crop was harvested!)

At one time in my life, I was helping to support myself so that I could preach for smaller congregations. The ideal arrangement would have been for some larger congregation to support me, but many are not interested in that simple method, so I just chose the shortest distance between two points, which constitutes a straight line, and supported myself.

At any rate, I continued to preach in meetings within driving distance (70-80 miles), and sometimes obtained leave from my construction job, or quit it, to travel long

distances. During one such meeting some seventy miles distant, I asked the brethren if they could delay the starting time of the meeting by fifteen minutes or half an hour, to give me more time to make the trip after work. They refused my request, and even said they would like for me to conduct a half-hour of singing before the regular meeting. Whereupon, I went to my foreman (a worldly man), and he told me I could leave work a half-hour early each evening, so I would have time to get to the meeting. The children of light did their best to hinder me in the preaching of the gospel, while a child of this world helped me to do my duty!

When I first began preaching, some of my over-Sunday appointments were more than a hundred miles away. My boss, who was a Catholic, told me that on such trips I could wait and return to work on Monday, and he would fill out my time card himself. I made certain that I did him a favor every time that I could.

I remember one young preacher several years ago who was ready to quit his job, and devote full time to "the work of an evangelist." I helped him find a place to preach, and all he needed was a little additional help from his home congregation so that he could have a salary near what he was making at his secular job. He was told that a preacher had no business making as much as those who were employed in secular positions. Now, twenty years later, the same man is still working at a secular job, serving the church as best he can.

I have had "the children of this world" give me time off to preach in meetings, or such portion of a day as I needed in order to conduct a funeral. One foreman told me that if all the world was like him, it wouldn't be a fit place to live, so for me to "get on out of there and go preach." Another said, "We have to take time to bury the dead, or else they will stack up." One told me that the preaching I was doing was worth more than the entire construction project of some seventy million dollars (at 1969 prices).

At the same time, elders in a congregation were considering docking me part of a week's wages, if I spent part of that week travelling to or from a meeting with another congregation. I told them the only thing I knew for them to do was clock me when I left and entered the city limits, and prorate my salary accordingly. I must have made it sound absurd enough that they relented and decided to pay me for the whole week. At least they didn't suggest evicting my wife and children from the preacher's house (which belonged to the church), for that portion of the time when I was preaching in another town.

Some preachers and brethren have not yet learned that they are "workers together" in the Lord's cause, instead of adversaries. We could learn a few lessons from "the children of this world."

Using Great Plainness of Speech

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THE ALIEN AND GOD'S COVENANT—OBJECTIONS

In our last lesson we discussed the meaning of the word "covenant" as used in the Scriptures, and the fact that all men everywhere are amenable to it today. Some brethren have objected to this position stating that they do not, for varying reasons believe a non-Christian is amenable to the new covenant. If this is true it would, of course, change completely the condition of one, as viewed by God, regarding the marriage, divorce, and remarriage question.

In this lesson, I want to examine some of these objections and state some reasons why I believe they are not Scripturally correct.

OBJECTION NUMBER ONE: The objection is made that one is not subject to the covenant until he is a part of the covenant. In other words, one is not subject to the New Testament until he becomes a Christian.

This objection is carried a step further by saying that if one who is not a Christian is subject to the conditions of the covenant, then everyone who is not a Christian is responsible before God to partake of the Lord's Supper, give on the first day of the week, etc.

ANSWER: First of all, to take the above position, one would have to say that the "first principles" ("those things one must do in order to become a Christian), are not a part of the "new covenant." But as I pointed out in my last lesson, when the apostles began to reveal God's covenant or testament to the people on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ, the conditions that were to be met (that they might be recipients of the covenant) were a part of the covenant.

Let me illustrate. God said He was going to make a covenant with Abraham. He told Abraham that he must leave his father's house and go to a strange country that he would later receive for an inheritance. Not only was this condition required of Abraham, but a great number of conditions were required for Abraham and his seed in order that they might receive the blessings of the covenant.

As we also mentioned in our last lesson, this was not the case of the covenant that God made with Noah and his seed concerning His promise that the earth would never again be destroyed with a flood. This obviously sets forth the fact that a covenant may either be conditional or unconditional. This is the reason, I believe, that the Greek word normally translated "covenant"

could also, according to definition, be translated "testament" in Heb. 9: 16-17. The benefits of a testament or will are subject to the conditions set forth in the will and are certainly a part of it. Hence those who are to be the recipients of a covenant, or will, are amenable to it. Now since God has stated in His covenant that He is "... not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter 3: 9), then all are amenable to it.

In reply to the second part of the objection, many things are taught in the New Testament which all Christians would not be held accountable to perform. For example, the regulations given to "fathers" are not binding on one who is not a father. He would not be subject to the regulation until he met the qualifications. The same principle would be true of one who had never obeyed the gospel.

OBJECTION NUMBER TWO: According to Romans 2: 14-15 Paul discusses the "... law written on the heart." Therefore, the reason that all men today are not amenable to the Law of Christ should be obvious. The Jews were the covenant people of God and were subject to the Law of Moses. At the same time the Gentiles, to whom Paul is having reference in Romans 2: 14-15, were not subject to it. Therefore today neither Jews nor Gentiles, who have not obeyed the gospel, are a part of the covenant but are subject to "... the law written on the heart" just like the Gentiles were while Moses' Law was in effect. The "law written on the heart" is that sense of what is morally right and wrong that was implanted in man's heart by God at the beginning of time.

ANSWER: The Law of Moses was given to the Jew and not the Gentile. It is therefore true that God did not condemn the Gentile for not keeping the Law of Moses. Now the question is this. Where is the evidence that this "law on the heart," this moral law, to which the Gentile was amenable while the Law of Moses was in effect, was implanted in man by God in the beginning of time? And where is the evidence that it is still in effect today for those who are not members of the Lord's church, (covenant people)? I deny that it was or is. Here's why!

First of all, I do not believe that which Paul was discussing was some moral law implanted in many by God in the beginning of time. For you will note that there is more to Paul's statement than that which has been presented thus far. Paul said of the Gentiles that they "... show the work of the law written in their heart" (Romans 2: 15). More about this later.

Even though we have no record of God coming to the people before the promise to Abraham and the bondage in Egypt and telling them specifically to do this or not do that, we know they had law. For example, I read in Genesis 15: 16 where God said, "But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." The very definition of the word "iniquity" suggests that there was law. The word "iniquity," as used in the Old Testament, is described in W. E. Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, page 199. "The word (iniquity) signifies an offense, intentional or not, against God's law." Thus man had law, for he was committing iniquity.

Also in Romans 1: 18-19, Paul sets forth at least three things which he would prove: 1. That the Gentiles had law. 2. That they would not let the law be known (which signified injustice). 3. That the wrath of God revealed because of their ungodliness and unrighteousness. This shows us that they were not fulfilling their responsibilities to God or man. What responsibilities? Those revealed by God's law. Remember Paul said in Romans 4: 15, "Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression." Thus when we say that God's law is being violated, we are simply saying that we are violating truth, for God's law reveals truth. But how did this truth come from God? It either came immediately, as God spoke directly to man as in the case of Adam, or mediately through angels or inspired men. Since Paul had already pointed out that the Gentiles had the truth, it should be obvious to every Bible student that if they had truth, they had law. Paul expresses the many ways the Gentiles had sinned at the close of Romans chapter one. Thus When Paul says in Roman 2: 12-15 that there were those who had sinned "without law," he is simply referring to those who did not have a revelation from God on tablets of stone like that given to the Jews. The law the Gentile had came through "nature" (tradition), which is not to say that they **were without law**, but theirs was truth handed down from generation to generation. In violating it he sinned just as surely as the Jew did when he violated that which was written on tablets of stone.

"Yes," someone is heard to say, "but the law that was being violated was that 'law on the heart' that Paul discusses in Romans 2: 14-15." Let's notice that expression as it is used in the New Testament. The expression is also used in Hebrews 8: 10, 10: 16. In these passages Paul is describing the gospel being given to mankind in the beginning of the gospel dispensation. Why should one think that the expression meant anything different for those in the Old Testament?

Also, as we have already mentioned, the text in Romans 2: 15 says that these people "... show the work of the law written in their heart." If you will observe the list of sins in the latter part of Romans chapter one, you will see that they are comparable to those things that were condemned by the Law of Moses. The deeds that were done were such as the Law of Moses required. Many of them not only knew them, but in contrast to Romans one, many of them also kept them. They loved truth, and desired to know anything that God had spoken concerning their salvation (cf. Acts 10).

Even though the Jew was under the Law of Moses and the Gentile under other instruction given by God, the fact of the matter is there were not two laws to which the same people were amenable. Today, since ALL men are amenable to the "new covenant" (testament) as we have already shown, then if there is another law (law on the heart) to which man is amenable, he is subject to two laws at the same time. Obviously this is not true.

OBJECTION NUMBER THREE: If the above statement is true, then why did Paul, who was amenable to the new covenant in view of the fact that he was

"a covenant person" (in the covenant), state that there were still those who were without law? "And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law" (1 Cor. 9: 20-21).

ANSWER: The explanation of this passage, in light of the book of Romans, seems a simple matter to me to explain. Paul was simply contrasting Jew and Gentile and in an accommodative way is talking about those whom he was trying to convert as being "with law" (the Jew who had a written law that he was trying to hold on to) and those "without law" (the Gentile who did not have a written law as did the Jew).

HOW TO BE A CHRISTIAN IN A WICKED WORLD

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If a preacher has never experienced labor in the secular world it will be easy for him to neglect this topic. He may not be as understanding of those who are daily confronted with the secular world.

The greatest paradox for the new Christian after baptism is the realization (and frustration) that so much has changed and yet so many things have not. He has a new commitment but still has the same responsibilities. He has a new goal but still has the same family, the same neighbors, and the same job. He has been forgiven but is still bombarded by the media's sensual stimulations (vulgar music, TV, etc.). Thus, when a person is converted a new tension comes into his life—the tension of a life which is turning against the everyday current of the world! Every church needs a spiritual maternity ward for its newborns. In a recent study with some new Christians we arrived at six points which will help us face the world.

I. LEARN TO RECOGNIZE THE NATURE OF SATAN AND SIN. Satan is deceptive. He doesn't wear a sign telling you who he is. He appears the opposite of what we would expect (2 Cor. 11: 13-15). His ambition is to destroy man (1 Pet. 5: 8, 9). Filled with trickery, snares, and traps, he is the "deceiver of the world" (Rev. 12:9).

Sin is also deceptive. It wears a false face of beauty, appealing to the five senses. But all that glitters is not gold. Sin wears a false face of fulfilled blessings, but it can never deliver what it seems to promise. It wears the face of being advantageous, saying you can get ahead

by being dishonest. As Horace Greeley once said: "The darkest hour in any man's life is when he sits down to figure out how to get rich without earning it. " Sin also wears the face of servitude, though it is always the master of those who embrace it. Sin won't "play second fiddle" to anybody. It can also switch its disguise. About the time you learn to recognize it, sin will then appear as a cure for the problems it caused! Some turn to prostitution to finance a drug habit; some turn to theft to finance a gambling habit, etc.

II. DEVELOP A HATRED FOR SIN. "Through thy precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way" (Ps. 119: 104). If this is not our attitude then something is wrong somewhere and we need to back up to point number one. Learn the nature of sin and take a look at the trail of sad consequences it leaves behind. "Sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov. 14: 34).

III. REMEMBER HOW JESUS MET TEMPTATION. He was tempted in every way we are (Heb. 4: 15). He met every temptation with scripture (Mt. 4: 1-11). Should you memorize scripture? Yes. The Psalmist memorized. "Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Ps. 119: 11). This is the best reason for memorizing. Jesus' memory of scripture prevented sin.

Like Jesus, Simon the sorcerer was tempted following his baptism. Unlike Jesus, he wasn't able to quote scripture and he fell (Acts 8: 13-24). The contrast between Jesus and Simon and their encounters with sin immediately following baptism should be embedded in our minds. It seems Satan tries harder during the first year of a Christian's life than at any other time. He knows if he is to conquer, this will be the best time—before their roots have time to grow (Lk. 8: 13).

IV. PRAY. When Jesus was tempted to forego the crucifixion he prayed, "not my will, but as thou wilt" (Mt. 26: 39). He prayed immediately after his baptism, a most appropriate time to begin (Lk. 3: 21). Our Lord prayed when his popularity was at its peak (Mk. 1: 33-37). Everyone likes popularity, but we are endangered by thinking too highly of self (Rom. 12: 3; 1 Cor. 10: 12). Some men love fame to the extent that they will seek the praise of men at all cost (Jn. 12: 42, 43).

The last thing Jesus did on the cross was pray (Lk. 23). This had to be the point at which temptation was greatest. How easy it would have been to call down the angels and forego any more agony! How we underestimate the importance of prayer!

V. CHOOSE PROPER COMPANIONS. A blessing is upon the one who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly (Ps. 1: 1). We cannot exaggerate the value of this wisdom. Peer pressure is the downfall of many. Evil companions lead to corruption (1 Cor. 15: 33). The phrase "be not deceived" is a caution sign to alert us to the danger. The wise man gives a description how sinners entice (Pro. 1: 7-19). He concludes, "Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird. " When a bird sees the trap being set, he will not get caught. We must be wise enough to see the end (consequences) of a thing. It is easier to be a Christian when you spend your leisure with those who are upright. Contrary to popular opin-

ion, you can have fun without doing anything wrong. Plus, you will be able to sleep at night.

VI. RESIST. This is a novel approach in meeting sin that many have never considered (J.s. 4: 7). You may have to say it out loud, but if you do it with conviction the devil will go away. Jesus did and the devil did. God does provide a way of escape and never leaves us with a choice of two evils (1 Cor. 10—13). We are not promised that it will be the easiest path to follow, but it will always be there. Continued strength will come if you avoid idleness. We are what we think (Prov. 23: 7). Therefore, use Phil. 4: 8 to make a list of worthwhile things to think and do.

CONCLUSION: If you are a new Christian, welcome to the kingdom! Godspeed to you along the journey. You are not alone, for there are many who care about you. If you have been a Christian for a number of years and your life seems stale and you have thought of quitting, please don't. If you are lost, you will not be lost alone. Probably, you will influence others. May you be encouraged in knowing there is hope for you and you can help others. You may need to freshen up on the principles we have discussed. Be assured that Jesus cares (1 Pet. 5: 7) and so do many brethren.

**GOOD FRIENDS AND
GOOD FOOD**

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Every family has its own peculiar practices and distinct rituals. We all do different things in different ways. We are not alike, and that's good. Chances are that your family carries on certain routines and traditions which are practiced with predictable regularity. It may be Monday night family time, or it may be Saturday morning breakfast out, or perhaps it's a standing appointment at grandma's for Sunday dinner. Whatever the case may be, we all carry on our cherished kindred customs. Ours? Well... Ours is pizza. Piping hot Sunday night pizza with extra cheese and pepperoni. Company and pizza. Good friends and good food to close out a good day. Now, to us, that's especially special.

Do Christians socialize as much as they used to? I tend to doubt it (although I've never seen an official "poll" on the subject). Perhaps we're too busy or in too much of a rush or maybe we're just not interested in that sort of thing. That's sad. Maybe we spend too much time arguing that social events are not a responsibility of the church but, rather, the home (which is true)

and NOT ENOUGH TIME MAKING THEM A PART OF THE HOME! Christians should enjoy being with Christians.

I suppose one of the closest unions possible on earth occurs when folks eat together. There is a feeling of commonness present—of sharing, of warmth, of concern, and of love for one another. And who can forget the feeling of feet fighting for position under a crowded table or elbows trying to keep to their restricted air space; all the while laughing, talking and occasionally eating. It's what memories are made of.

Some of my fondest recollections growing up center around good friends and good food. Just Christians being together and enjoying it. I can still see brother Seaton working up a sweat cranking that homemade ice-cream on a warm Kentucky evening. I'll never forget the Brown Street ladies huddling together at the pot luck gatherings worrying about whether or not there would be enough to feed everyone (there always was!) And I'll always remember the visiting brethren from other places coming by to share our "Sunday roast". Those are precious memories because those are great people.

And I can't help but believe that some of the most cherished memories in the life of our Lord were like that. Consider the time He spent at Bethany with Mary, Martha and Lazarus. He went there often and obviously enjoyed the gracious hospitality and warmth of their home. Good friends and good food meant a lot to Jesus.

Listen to Solomon: "Here is what I have seen to be good and fitting: to eat, to drink and enjoy oneself in all one's labor in which he toils under the sun during the few years of his life which God has given him; for this is his reward" (Ecc. 5: 18).

Solomon says that when a man sits down with good friends and good food that he has a physical reward. To be able to eat and drink are a part of God's provisions and to share such with others produces an inner feeling of compensation and satisfaction like nothing else can. It's one of the joys of life.

Let's begin again to open our homes and hearts to hospitality. Let's begin to make some memories for our children. Let's begin to understand that bad company corrupts good morals but that good company produces the opposite effect. Let's begin to be around good company. Let's begin to have more social association among Christians. Good friends and good food. What could be better? Y'all come!

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SERMONS INSIDE AND OUT

Compiled by

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THE RAISING OF LAZARUS

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The account of the Lord raising Lazarus from the dead is found in John 11: 1-46. Lazarus was the brother of Martha and Mary (Lk. 10: 38-42; John 12: 1-9). Lazarus, Martha, and Mary lived together in Bethany which was located on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives. Bethany was about fifteen furlongs or two miles from Jerusalem, (Jn. 11: 18). Jesus had loved this family and had spent much time with them when he was in Judea (vs. 5). Lazarus and his sisters were obviously wealthy (the pound of "pure nard," ASV., which Mary used to anoint Jesus was "very costly," from about \$50.00— up,, and the tomb in which Lazarus was buried was indigenous to the wealthy of Jesus' day, Jn. 12: 3, 11: 28). The raising of Lazarus invincibly demonstrates the deity of our Lord and serves as another undeniable miracle.

PURPOSE OF LAZARUS' SICKNESS. John's account begins by saying, "Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus..." (11: 1). Mary and Martha sent a message to Jesus (Jesus was in "Bethabara," KJV. or "Bethany beyond the Jordan," ASV., 10: 39, cf. 1: 28) informing Jesus of Lazarus' sickness (11: 3). Was there a purpose for Lazarus' fatal sickness? If there was, what was it? Negatively, Lazarus' sickness was "not unto death..." (11: 4). That is, death was not simply the object. There was a greater purpose in Lazarus' sickness than simply death. Positively, "... but for the glory of God that the Son of God might be glorified thereby" (vs. 4). The miraculous raising of Lazarus would glorify God and irrefutably display Jesus' deity. Also, Lazarus' resurrection would result in many believing on the Lord (11: 15, 45, 12: 9-11).

REASON WHY JESUS DELAYED COMING TO BETHANY. As we have already seen, when Lazarus became ill Mary and Martha sent word to Jesus. Mary and Martha both expressed the belief that if Jesus had come in time, Lazarus would not have died (11: 21, 32). After Jesus received the message, however, he continued at "Bethabara" for another two days (11: 6). Why did he tarry or delay his coming? Jesus' delay was not because of indifference (11: 5, 35). Jesus was busy at "Bethabara" in building on the foundation established by John the Baptist (10: 39-41). However, this was not the real, paramount reason. Jesus' delay, beloved, was "to the intent ye may believe..." (11: 15). Jesus intends not just to heal a sick person, or even raise a dead man—

but resurrect a dead man who had been in the grave four days (11: 17)!

AN OBSERVATION CONCERNING DEATH. Intelligent reader, have you ever thought about how Jesus described death? Notice the language Jesus used regarding Lazarus: "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep" (11: 11, all emphasis mine, dm). Death is often referred to as "sleep" (cf. Matt. 27: 52; Acts 7: 60). "It is a beautiful and tender expression," Albert Barnes wrote in commenting on "sleep" as used in the scriptures for death, "removing all that is dreadful in death, and filling the mind with the idea of calm repose after a life of toil, with a reference to a future resurrection in increased vigour and renovated powers" (**Barnes on the New Testament**, Vol. 2, pg. 297). In the case of saints, death is peculiarly a sleep in that there is no suffering, weariness, and pain (Lk. 16: 19-31).

SOME CONSIDERATIONS RELATIVE TO LAZARUS' DEATH. Lazarus' death was certain. He had been in the grave four days (vss. 17, 39); he had on grave-clothes (vs. 44); and decay had begun (vs. 39). Jesus had raised Jairus' daughter while she was still in her father's house (Mk. 5: 35-43); he had raised the widow's son while he was being carried to the place of burial (Lk. 7: 11-17); but there is no record of Jesus ever having raised one whose body was already in a state of decay— until Lazarus!

There is a marked difference in Jesus' miracles and the pretended miracles of the fakes of our day. Jesus went to the graveyard (place of the tomb) to a known, confirmed dead person (11: 39-44). After the stone has been removed, Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth" (11: 43). All attention is now placed on the tomb. "And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus said unto them, loose him, and let him go" (11: 44). Even the enemies of Jesus had to acknowledge this miracle (vss. 47; 12: 10, 11).

WHAT THE RESURRECTION OF LAZARUS MEANS TO YOU AND ME. Lazarus' resurrection provides more faith producing evidence of Jesus' power and deity (Jn. 20: 30, 31). The raising of Lazarus also evinces that the resurrection of the body is not impossible for the Lord, (Acts 26: 8). Jesus can and shall raise all the **dead** (Jn. 5: 28, 29; I Cor. 15: 20-23, 51-58). Hence, Jesus is the resurrection and the life (Jn. 11: 25).

Conclusion: As a result of Lazarus' resurrection from the dead, many believed on the Lord and others had their faith enhanced (Jn. 11: 45, 12: 9-10, 11: 15). When the Pharisees, however, received word of this miracle, "then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death" (Jn. 11: 53). What effect does Jesus' raising of Lazarus have on you?

READ YOUR BIBLE TODAY

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

RADIO PROGRAM CANCELLED

According to a news item in the bulletin of the Plainfield, Indiana church, station WXIR has cancelled a long running program which was heard five days a week. The station manager said the action had been contemplated for two years. The manager, Gary Arnold, said that the program had been "positive in approach," and "not unduly argumentative or confrontational." The reason for the cancellation was purely doctrinal. He objected to the fact that the approach was non-premillennial, advocated "one body" and insisted that the age of miracles was past. He found this objectionable and "harmful to young Christians" in the listening audience. It is certainly regrettable that freedom of speech on that station is reserved for those who teach false doctrine. The present preacher is DON TRUEX who was preceded by Johnie Edwards.

P. J. CASEBOLT, 2803 4th St., Moundsville, WV 26041—About July 1, I plan to begin work with the church in Chiefland, Florida, which meets at the corner of Second St. and Second Ave., S. E. For the past two and a half years I have been working with the Cedar Avenue church in Moundsville, having also worked with them for a two year period around 1980-81. The congregation has survived liberalism and other internal problems, had done extensive repairs to the building, and is engaged in an extensive program of work both locally and in other places. Lord willing, I shall return to this area for meetings from time to time. Stop and visit with us in Chiefland.

P. S.—I personally appreciate the generous response to the needs of our son-in-law, David Joy, during and following his heart transplant. The prayers were especially helpful, and he is doing well at this writing (March, 1985).

REPORT FROM SALEM, OHIO

PETER McPHERSON, 1874 Allen Dr., Salem, OH 44460—The "Western Reserve" is rich in early "Restoration" history. Walter Scott preached throughout this area in the early 1800's. Churches were established in New Lisbon (now Lisbon), Warren, Youngstown, Sharon, PA. Salem and in many other places. Nearly all of these churches fell into digression ranging from the extreme modernism of the Disciples of Christ denomination to the somewhat less liberalism of the Christian Church. In some of these localities sound churches were established over the years and as history often repeats itself, they too accepted centralized cooperative machinery and human institutions to do the work of the local church, and "liberal" churches of Christ resulted. But once again in some of these places doctrinally sound congregations have been planted and Salem is just one such place.

In 1962 Bill Wallace helped to start a congregation here in Salem. He only stayed two months. For three years the church struggled to grow by the help of "appointment speakers" from other places (mostly Akron). Preachers that followed to date are Billy Farris, Jim Lovell, Marvin Noble, Larry Chaffin, Morris Hafley and the writer. From meeting in an old building on 2nd St., (which they outgrew) they moved into a lovely new meeting house in 1981. The church has not only been able to support its own preacher but has helped others as well as local benevolent work.

Attendance runs around 80 on Lord's Day morning. This area has been hit hard economically. We have many good families developing and we hope to have elders some day. Presently, cooperation, peace and zeal characterize this church. H. W. Eddy (81 and still teaching senior high school) has been heavy on good reading materials, special meetings and topics and that has contributed much to the work. We have other fine teachers and dedicated families. Personal evangelism has been one of my main targets. Progress has been made, though slow at times in that area. I have half a dozen outside classes a week. We have baptized some all along. We have mailed out 20,000 Bible

courses and have converted some from that.

In 1984 we had meetings with Bob Waldron (special on singing), Jim Needham (special on Humanism) and Lewis Willis (special on first principles). In 1985 we will have Bob Waldon (special on Bible Geography) and Gene Frost (topic not yet arranged). A host of other gospel preachers have held meetings here and to them we are grateful. One more thing. The teenagers ASKED for a special class. We are conducting this in our home. So far they love it. If you have any good ideas, let's share. We must not forget the young people. Families must provide outside get together times for them also.

DON GIVENS, P. O. Box 7181, Bellevue, WA 98008—The church at Waipahu, Hawaii has invited me to work with them and I have agreed. I was recently there in a meeting. There is a great need for a stable and experienced preacher. They have found it difficult to get an experienced man to move that far and live in isolation from the mainland. I have been preaching 24 years and worked for 9 years in small, struggling churches in Canada. We are familiar with hardship and isolation. I need to raise some \$1700-\$1800 in monthly support, and about \$4000 in moving expenses. The church in Waipahu will supply us with living quarters. We will sell about 80% of our household goods to cut down on moving costs. Our departure time is the end of July, Lord willing. Could congregations (or individuals) help with either (1) monthly support (my biggest concern) or (2) moving expenses? Any amount would be gratefully received and acknowledged. For personal references, contact Homer Hailey, Hoyt Houchen, Robert F. Turner, Ken Sterling or Joe Corley. For further information, phone me at (206) 747-9719.

DAVID COCHRAN, Rt. 2, Box 203, Bristol, WV 26332—The congregation which began three years ago in Clarksburg, West Virginia, still meets in the Conference Room at the Towne House (West) Motor Lodge and is known as Westside. Preaching has been done by our members and other faithful preachers including Paul Casebolt, Marshall Patton, Connie W. Adams and Barry Hudson. We meet on Sundays at 10 A. M. and 6: 30 P. M. and on Wednesdays at 7: 00 P. M. The church here began with a few Christians meeting in a private home. Attendance now runs 25-30. This is the only sound congregation in a four county area. We invite travelers to meet with us. If you have relatives or friends in this area, please put us in contact with them. Phone (304) 782-2132.

VIVION ROAD LECTURES

VIVION ROAD CHURCH OF CHRIST, 2026 N. E. Vivion Road, Kansas City, MO 64118—The church here announces a lecture series for June 24-27, 1985 with Harry Pickup, Jr., Peter J. Wilson and Ken Van Duesen as speakers. Each morning Harry Pickup, Jr. will discuss "The Church of God's Eternal Purpose" and Peter J. Wilson will discuss "Discipleship." In the afternoons Ken Van Duesen will discuss "Restoration." In the evenings, Harry Pickup, Jr. will speak on "Fellowship" and Peter J. Wilson will speak on "The Power of Positive Christianity." Phone (816) 452-3684 for more information.

RICHARD W. TERRY, Rt. 1, Box 293A, Houston, MS 38851—We have just had a successful meeting at the Thorn congregation on "Crisis in the Family." The five lessons were (1) Choosing a Suitable Spouse, (2) Maximum Marriage, (3) Rearing a Godly Family in an Ungodly Society, (4) Discipline in the Home, and (5) The Dilemma of Divorce. Tapes of these lessons are available to those interested. Write me at the above address.

CHARLES F. HOUSE, P. O. Box 1031, Douglas, AZ 85608-1031—I am looking for a faithful retired family. We need a man who can lead singing and help in house to house teaching work. I have a small two

bedroom house next to the church building which I will provide rent free in exchange for this help. It would also help if he were a "handy man" who could make small repairs as needed. This is a Catholic stronghold on the Arizona-Mexico border. The sun shines here 360 days a year. Let me hear from you. Call (602) 364-9649 between 4 and 8 A. M. (Arizona time only).

CARLOS A. CAPELLI, Casilla #83—1665 Jose C. Paz, Buenos Aires, Argentina—The church in Jose C. Paz does not have the necessary funds to make needed repairs on the old building we bought. We need about \$5000 for this work. As individuals, could you help us? I also need help for a copying machine to assist in the work in Buenos Aires. It would expedite matters if you would send to my account in a bank in Phoenix, Arizona. It is "Valley National Bank, P. O. Box 2951, Phoenix, AZ 85062 c/o Carlos A. Capelli account #1051-4208. (Editor's note: I recently visited with brother Capelli while he was in the states and appreciate very much the work he and others are doing in Argentina and Chile—CWA).

FROM THE PHILIPPINES

DOMINADOR D. ARCEGA of Tarlac, Philippines reports that 20 have been baptized and 5 restored at San Felipe congregation, in San Manuel, Tarlac. There were four preachers working in this province but now there is only one. One preacher died and two other moved seeking work to support their families.

RODY C. GUMPAD, Tanza, Tuguegarao, Cagayan 1101, Philippines—February 25-28, 1985 we had a successful lectureship/preacher training and gospel meeting. Brethren Bob Buchanon of Bowling Green, Kentucky and Howard Jones of Paden City, West Virginia were our guest speakers. They are good men of God, sound in the faith and able teachers of the truth. We prayed together, sang together, joked together, laughed together and studied much together. There were 30-40 preachers (including their wives) in attendance. We saw 15 baptized into Christ. Three of these were former denominational preachers. One preacher left the liberals to stand for the truth. We are much edified.

NEW CONGREGATION

ROBERT W. TRASK, SR., P. O. Box 1505, Chiefland, FL 32626—On January 27, 1985, after much prayer, the Rosewood Church of Christ came into existence. We are meeting in a house being loaned to us which is located 1.9 miles west of the intersection of County Road 345 and State Road 24, about 7 miles east of Cedar Key. In our first month, we have averaged 18 for Sunday morning worship with an average contribution of \$50. Two have been baptized. Visit us if you are in this area.

PREACHERS NEEDED

PARIS, KENTUCKY—We are in immediate need of a preacher in Paris. We now have 27 members and attendance runs 30-35. We are in process of purchasing a permanent meeting house from the Church of

God and hope to be in it in April, 1985. Some outside support will be needed. Contact Don Bishop, 135 Echo Dr. Paris, KY 40361. Phone (606) 987-1273; or Jim Sizemore, Rt. 4, Box 212, Cynthiana, KY 41031. Phone (606) 234-9432.

GREENTOWN, OHIO—The church here is seeking a preacher on a full-time basis. We are presently a group of 30 meeting in an American Legion Building in Greentown, a small town halfway between Akron and Canton. I have been working at a secular job and preaching here for four years. Members are interested in and supportive of Bible study opportunities beyond the regular assemblies and we have worked together in peace and harmony. We can supply about \$400 per month with the rest being secured elsewhere. I can assist in seeking help from nearby congregations. Contact: Phil Duren, 1112 Cosmos St. N. W., Hartville, Ohio 44632 or call (216) 877-3903.

MOBILE, ALABAMA—The Tillman's Corners church is looking for a preacher. He will need some outside support. Attendance runs about 70. Contact J. P. Halbrook, Rt. 2, Box 45 A-1, Grand Bay, AL 36541. Phone (205) 865-6292.

PREACHERS AVAILABLE

KEITH STORMENT, 808 Bond Ave., Barnesville, OH 43613—I am interested in relocating. I am 31 years old with several years preaching experience. Would like to relocate with a sound, mature congregation on or before June 1, 1985. References will be gladly supplied. Call (614) 425-3233.

J. M. KENNEDY, 401 Business U. S. 31 S. Peru, IN 46970—I am interested in relocating with another faithful congregation by or before June of this year. I am married, 56 years old, and we have four children, one of which is still at home but working here in Peru. I have been preaching for over 38 years, 32 of which have been in located work. Write me at above address or call (317) 473-6850.

DENNIS E. ADAMS, Rt. 1, Box 123F, Newburg, PA 17240—I am interested in working full-time with a congregation in need of a preacher. I am 35 years old. Write me at address above, or call (717) 423-6492.

Please Renew Promptly

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