

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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THINK ON
THESE THINGS

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PREACHING CHRIST

It is amazing to note the various topics discussed and the manner of preaching that is being done in the "name of Christ." A week seldom passes but that I do not receive a brochure or letter trying to sell me something that will enhance my preaching. I am guaranteed to be more successful if I purchase their program. It is strange, but I never remember receiving one that directed me to the word of God, and urged me to simply "preach Christ and him crucified."

We hear on every hand the claim from denominational preachers that they are "preaching Christ," but by the New Testament standard there is far too much diversity in both their teaching and practice for it to be true gospel preaching. Much of the preaching of today is designed to elevate and honor the preacher instead of Christ. Appeals are made for money and "big business." The average denomination today is a big business, and it operates as such. Many churches of Christ are falling in line and becoming as secular as any denomination. This means that the people in the pews are no longer sinners who need the gospel, or saints who need to be edified. They are customers and clients who must be treated as such. Remember: "The customer is always right." To this slogan most conform in their preaching. Special honor is paid to fathers and mothers, special days are observed, special events remembered, great projects are developed, personal programs are created, etc., and just enough attention is given to Christ and his word to try to make it appear that "gospel preaching" is

being done there. In some cases more time is given to self-praise in their own glory and accomplishments than in telling what men and women ought to do to be saved and to honor Christ.

"Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word. Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did" (Acts 8:4-6). "And when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women" (Acts 8:12).

Gospel preaching must include the life, death, resurrection and authority of Jesus Christ. The only foundation upon which one can successfully build is the preaching that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. No other foundation can be laid but the preaching of Christ (1 Cor. 3:11). This foundation is the preaching done by the apostles and prophets (Eph. 2:20). When Philip preached to the eunuch he "began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus" (Acts 8:35). When he preached to those in the city of Samaria, he preached Christ unto them. In preaching Christ, Philip not only told them Christ was the promised Messiah and Saviour of the world, but he also preached about his kingdom: the kingdom of God. Gospel preaching, therefore, involves preaching about the kingdom promised by the Old Testament prophets and fulfilled in the days when the Holy Spirit came down from heaven and empowered the apostles to speak the authority of Christ to the world. This kingdom is the church of Christ. Preaching Christ must include the church over which he is the head. The kind of preaching usually today is far from giving the truth about the nature, organization, function and purpose of the church. Not many in the church today really understand this because too much preaching does not touch the subject.

There have been many theories and plans that have been preached concerning the nature, worship, work and organization of the church, all of which have contributed to the terrible state of denominationalism of the present day. The greed and sensual desires, with the material hopes of men have been expressed even in the

creeds, written and unwritten, that are the common topics of much preaching today. Premillennialism has been preached as "gospel preaching" concerning the kingdom of God, but this doctrine is unscriptural and anti-scriptural. Much of the preaching of the kingdom of God today is characterized by a false concept of the nature of the church. It has become more a social order and commercial business than the spiritual body of Christ. To preach Christ we must preach the "things concerning the kingdom of God" — the church of Christ; this involves its true mission, nature, organization, worship and discipline.

Furthermore, preaching Christ means to preach the "name of Jesus Christ." This name is all important because it is the only name given by which men must be saved (Acts 4:12). We are to do all that we do "in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ," and this includes word and deed (Col. 3:17). One cannot escape the authority of Christ when he preaches Christ as Lord and King.

The name of Christ involves the authority of Christ. All authority has been given to him, and when one does not respect his authority in all matters regarding the church and manner of life, he is a worker of iniquity. This authority demands that the gospel in its purity be preached to all men. It requires the believer to repent and be baptized for the remission of his sins (Mark 16:15, 16; Acts 2:38). The authority of Christ demands faithful obedience throughout life. When any preacher presumes to announce conditions and terms of service to God that are not taught by the authority of Christ, that preacher is not preaching Christ as it is revealed in the New Testament.

Perhaps the most serious consequences of failing to preach "the name" of Christ is appearing in the church today in the form of denominationalism and materialism. The church is made little more than a money supplying agent for many human projects invented without the authority of Christ. We can expect nothing better unless and until we really preach Christ and his authority. The very nature of the kingdom prohibits the kind of work being done in many areas throughout the world.

Paul instructed Timothy in his work of preaching Christ. "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:2). Preaching Christ requires straight and plain preaching that sometimes carries rebuke of error. Only the gospel of Christ will save the lost.

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Editorial

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WAR AMONG THE LIBERALS

It gives us no pleasure to observe the wars and rumors of wars raging within the more liberal churches of Christ. For many years now they have eschewed those of us they have disdainfully called "antis" and have preached our funeral several times. The reason they have to keep preaching the same funeral is that the corpse refuses to cooperate. As Mark Twain once said, "The reports of my recent demise are greatly exaggerated."

Of late, some who fought the "antis" furiously, claimed victory over the slain carcass, and lectured us about "where there is no pattern" and "binding where the Lord has not bound" are now sounding for all the world like the "antis" they claimed to have vanquished. Among those who stood in support of church financed private enterprises, sponsoring churches and at least modified forms of church related social and recreational activities, there is to be heard much weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. Now THEY are afraid of the "liberals." There has been an ultra liberal element for many years, represented by the sentiments expressed in such journals as MISSION. Now, Reuel Lemmons, erstwhile editor of FIRM FOUNDATION is publishing a new paper which is certainly much more liberal than the present FIRM FOUNDATION. That paper now is published by Buster Dobbs and edited by William Cline and is militantly opposed to what is going on by those who are farther to the left than they are. I notice announcements of lecture programs featuring speakers who are among the more conservative-minded still in the liberal camp. One thing that strikes me is the appearance of about the same group of speakers whether they are speaking at Getwell church in Memphis or somewhere in Texas or California. They are men, all of whom seem to be alarmed with what is taking place.

Articles are appearing in bulletins and periodicals on Bible authority. Some are even so bold as to ask for scriptural authority for "Family Life Centers" with their gymnasiums. Some are outspoken about the issue of divorce and remarriage and advocate quarantining such men as James D. Bales because of his position on the subject.

A Significant Development

Perhaps one of the most significant developments is the change of editors for the GOSPEL ADVOCATE, for years the leading voice of the brethren who came out in

favor of church support for benevolent organizations, sponsoring churches and through her news columns, a multiplication of unscriptural activities. Guy N. Woods, who served as editor until recently, gave the ADVOCATE a little more conservative flavor editorially than it had tasted in years. But he sealed his fate as editor when he took a strong and militant stand against the Joplin Unity Forum (and those which followed) in which preachers from the independent Christians Churches and those from liberal churches of Christ met to hold dialogue and attempt to bring about unity. In these efforts, there is no indication of movement away from the use of instrumental music by the Christian Churches. The movement has been on the part of those who have decided that they have practices which stand on the same hermeneutical base as instrumental music and there is no good reason why they can't work together. Guy N. Woods, to his credit, did a very good job in reviewing the matter and was apparently set to guide the so-called "old reliable" in a militant campaign against these unity efforts. But, some of the "powers that be" decided it was time for a change of editors.


Abruptly, it was announced that brother Woods was being replaced as editor by Furman Kearley. What is interesting about that is that Kearley had been one of the participants in the Joplin, Missouri Forum. One of the small group discussions in which he had a part was videotaped and excerpts of what he and others said were printed by some who were greatly alarmed at the sound of compromise. It is significant that in the very first issue of the ADVOCATE edited by brother Kearley, he found it necessary to try to clear himself of the odor of what he said. He claimed he was quoted out of context, avowed his opposition to instrumental music and has carried several articles on the subject since then. But it is still an expressed feeling among many in that camp, who are watching anxiously for future developments, that this change represents a definite swing to the left by the "old reliable."

I am neither a prophet nor the son of one, but from where I sit, it appears that the more conservative element among them is in the minority and has its hands full maintaining the status quo. Already we know of some in several places who have decided to investigate a nearby "anti" church. Some of these have bailed out and taken their stand with folks they would not even have considered before. They have been surprised to find thriving congregations, scripturally organized, engaged in divinely authorized work for the church. Some have been surprised to learn that these folks they had been taught to avoid actually have Bible classes and a plurality of communion cups, and that they even preach on the radio and television and support gospel preachers throughout the country and around the world. The fact that they are surprised to learn this is a commentary on what they have been told and raises serious questions as to the honesty of those who misrepresented the case and created these false impressions.

I can tell these alarmed folks where to go to find some excellent material on authority which will help to defeat those who are determined to run off into denomination-

alism. The first speech of Roy E. Cogdill in the published COGDILL-WOODS DEBATE, the material in WALKING BY FAITH by Roy E. Cogdill, and a good many other tracts, booklets and articles yet available, all published by the maligned "antis" will provide them with many scriptural arguments, clearly illustrated with charts that will give them unanswerable arguments with which to go forth and do battle with the liberals among them. But they are going to have to stop worrying about "where there is no pattern" and recognize that there is a pattern and then insist that it be honored. Of course, if they are consistent on that, they will wind up opposing much more than instrumental music, church gymnasiums and even church supported colleges. And they might as well get ready for it. They are going to be called "antis." In fact, a few of them are already being called that.

Now brethren, before we get too smug, let's look at some of the senseless dividing and sub-dividing taking place among some of US. How many churches have been splintered with a group pulling off to meet across town for no reason except a lack of the fruit of the Spirit and a desire to either run the thing or tear it up! James was right, you know, when he said "bitter envying and strife in your hearts" is not from above, but is "earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work" (Jas. 4:14-16).



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PRECEPTS AND PERCEPTIONS

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MAY CHURCHES OF CHRIST SUPPORT HUMAN INSTITUTIONS?

Much of the disturbance among churches of Christ in the last 40 years has been over the use of the money collected on the Lord's day. For what may these funds be used? May a congregation use its treasury only for those activities the church is authorized to perform? Or may a congregation commit its funds to activities and institutions apart from the work the Lord has commanded His church to do? It is my prayer that the things said in these articles here may help clarify these matters for sincere persons who read them.

What about church donations to self-created, independent enterprises such as schools, hospitals, benevolence homes, religious publishing and advertising businesses? Is the practice scriptural or unscriptural? Have you considered what the Lord says that answers the question?

What is a "church of Christ"?

Without arguing the point in detail, I submit that a church of Christ is an assembly or body (group, collectivity) of Christians voluntarily submissive to the authority of Christ in faith and practice. Every person entitled to membership in such an assembly has complied with the definite requirements set forth in the gospel of Christ, viz., has expressed belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, repented of his sins, and has been baptized for the remission of sins (Mk. 16:15,16; Rom. 10:13-17; Acts 16:31; 2:38; 3:19; Gal. 3:27; 1 Pet. 3:21). By virtue of these actions the baptized, penitent believer enters Christ (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:26, 27) and thereby enters Christ's spiritual family—His spiritual body—a spiritual kinsman of every other redeemed-from-sin person.

All of God's children are not physically located in one geographical area but in various localities. This is why we read of "the churches of Christ" (Rom. 16:16). There was a church in Jerusalem, in Samaria, in Antioch, in Ephesus, in Corinth, and in numerous other places in apostolic days. Each of these assemblies was the body of Christ in that location. To members of the church at Corinth apostle Paul said, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof" (1 Cor. 12:27). Individuals collectively equaled the whole body at Corinth.

This collectivity of spiritual persons is distinguish-

able from every other non-spiritual body of persons anywhere and everywhere and from others of the same nature in other geographical locations. Their distinctive marks are not physical but spiritual except for physical placement. Each particular assembly of Christians is the "house of God," the "household of God," the "household of faith" (1 Tim. 3:15; Eph. 2:19; Gal. 6:10) and Christ is its head, this body being subject to Him. He is also its Savior (Eph. 1:22, 5:23, 24). Christ bought the church with his blood that he might sanctify it, making it holy and without blemish (Eph. 5:27). No other body of people—religious or otherwise—can rightly make the claims which the holy scriptures make for this unique body of believers in Christ.

Regardless of its members, each congregation controlled by Christ as its lawgiver, through the teaching He commanded His apostles to declare, has been instructed to perform certain activities (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:42).

How is Duty Determined?

Only in the apostles teaching—the New Testament—may one learn what Christ wants each congregation to do. We learn this by direct command, by approved apostolic example or by necessary inference.

1. We learn Christ's **will by reading or hearing read commands Christ issued** to a local church to obey. This is called "learning by direct command." An example of this is Paul's "order" to the church at Corinth "concerning the collection for the saints" (1 Cor. 16:1-4).

2. We learn Christ's will by reading or hearing read the account of local church **activity in response** to commands of Christ. This is called "learning from **approved apostolic example.**" A case in point is Luke's account of the Jerusalem church choosing special persons from its own membership to be "appointed over this business" of ministering to the needy members of the congregation (Acts 6:1-6).

3. We also learn Christ's will by reading or hearing read certain accounts of local church activity in connection with some commands of Christ and from this **draw certain necessary conclusions** that other commands, not specifically mentioned, were given by Christ. This is called "learning from **necessary inference.**" An example of this is observance of the Lord's supper by the disciples assembled at Troas on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). Luke makes the statement that it was "upon the first day of the week" that "we were gathered together to break bread." That there was a regular assembly of the saints for the purpose of eating the Lord's supper is clear from Heb. 10:25 and 1 Cor. 11:20-33. Putting all the evidence together we conclude that the Lord has **commanded the disciples to assemble on the first day of the week to eat the Lord's supper.**

What Shall a church of Christ Do?

Without attempting to exhaust the listing of activities in which a local church is to engage as determined from command, example or necessary inference we submit the following list for consideration:

—Assemble on the first day of week—Heb. 10:25, 1

Cor. 11:20-33; Acts 20:7.

—Observe the Lord's supper on first day of week—Acts 20:7.

—Receive the apostles' teaching—Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 7:17; 16:1.

—Pray—Acts 12:5.

—Sing—1 Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:18,19; Col. 3:16.

—Choose qualified ministers of mercy—Acts 6:1-6; Phil. 1:1; 2:25; 4:15-18; 1 Cor. 12:28.

—Recognize qualified pastors to feed and tend it—Acts 14:23; 20:17, 28; Phil. 1:1; Tit. 1:5; 1 Pet. 5:1-4; 1 Tim. 3:1-7.

—Select and direct a messenger or messengers when communicating with others)2 Cor. 8:23; Phil. 2:25; 4:15-18.

—Relieve poor saints—Acts 2:45; 4:32-35; 6:1-6; 11:26-30; 1 Cor. 8, 9; Rom. 15:25, 26.

—Pay a preacher wages—1 Cor. 9:1-14; 2 Cor. 11:8.

This list does not claim to be exhaustive. We know that these things are to be done because there is scriptural authority for them.

Using the

SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

Ken Green

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A MONSTER OF FRIGHTFUL MIEN

"Atlantic City has never been known for its church socials. But in recent years the more than 20 million annual visitors who are drawn here by casino gambling have triggered a vice explosion, luring pushers, pimps, and prostitutes, plus an assortment of pickpockets, muggers and other miscreants." (Wall Street Journal, Aug. 27, 1985)

The casinos in Atlantic City, N. J. opened for business less than ten years ago. The Blackjack tables and roulette wheels were lauded as the golden goose for the state's financial woes and the city's decline. The publishing of some facts regarding that city's dream-turned-nightmare may serve to raise a few voices in the wilderness in other areas where the gambling interests are lobbying to get their foot in the door. (And that is every state in the country!) Much of the following data is from an article by William M. Alnor, *The Gamble That Lost*, *Eternity*, April, 1985.

The casino forces promised that they would remodel Atlantic City, Urban renewal would be a matter of top priority. They promised to help the old and the minorities. Former New Jersey governor Brendon Byrne promised that organized crime would not be welcomed in Atlantic City.

In fact, the only interests which have profited from gambling in Atlantic City are the casinos and organized crime. Former mayor Michael Matthews was sentenced last year to 15 years for accepting a \$10,000 bribe. The government charged that he had sold out to the Mafia and was attempting to obtain a hidden interest in a casino. Several Philadelphia and New York suspected Mafia chief tans have been slain over the past four years in an alleged power struggle over territorial rights to Atlantic City.

Professor George Sternlieb, director of urban policy research at Rutgers University recently published a comprehensive report on the first seven years of Atlantic City gambling and concluded that its costs far out-weigh its virtues. Some of its costs are:

CRIME: "Atlantic City is now the murder and crime capital of the Northeastern United States. And the crime rate keeps soaring." The only four cities with a higher homicide rate are: Miami (1 per 1,924 residents), Gary, Indiana (1 per 1,672), Compton, California in suburban L.A. (1 per 1,514), and East St. Louis (1 per 1,319). Atlantic City with a population of 38,738 has one slaying for every 1,937 residents. (F.B.I. Uniformed Crime Report, 1982).

Infant mortality, lead poisoning, venereal disease, prostitution, drug use, alcoholism, arson, and crime: all have increased in alarming proportions since 1976.

BALLOONED TAXES. Joseph H. Rodriguez, the Public Advocate of New Jersey reports that recent property re-evaluation in the city "resulted in an average proposed tax increase of 500 percent to homeowners throughout the city. Residents are being forced to sell out to make room for more casinos. Housing costs climbed over 200 percent from 1976 to 1982. Small businesses are on the verge of extinction.

RELIGION. Many church buildings have closed their doors. One has been converted into a bar. The former rector of an Episcopal Church told the New York Times, "Since casinos, it's just been horrible. We often have as many as 25 to 30 drunks and prostitutes outside the 8 AM Sunday service. It's not a good atmosphere for children."

MORALITY. The 35,000 casino workers make big money. But is it worth it? The divorce rate of casino marriages is about 80 percent. Wizberto J. Viruet, a former supervisor of blackjack in the tables of one of the major casinos for four years, said of the casino workers, **"They're into drink, use of drugs, immorality, and after one and a half years they're burned out... The bars here are open 24 hours and many can't go into work the next day—they're too hung over.**

"Everyone tries to be part of the high lifestyle. They're all looking for the pot at the end of the rainbow. The coldness of the people there is incredible. They don't care."

Viruet said that while he worked at the casino he began drinking excessively, gambling, and using drugs. He lost his job, wife, family, and self respect.

New Jersey recently opened its first clinic to treat compulsive gamblers. Are the casinos funding this community need? No way! No more so that they are sharing

a heavier burden in maintaining a 534-member police force, more than the size of police forces in many cities 10 times its size in population. The taxpayers are picking up the tab for these services. Estimates of the number of compulsive gamblers in New Jersey range from 65,000 to 375,000. Some say there may be as many as 12 million compulsive gamblers nationwide. Exorbitant amounts of money are embezzled by compulsive gamblers, much of which is paid off by insurance companies, banks, and ultimately by you and me.

Solomon wrote: **"By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted: but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked"** (Provides 11:11). Oh that citizens would awaken to the emptiness of the promises of high-powered public relations campaigns and the nonstop lobbying that is staged by the gambling interests.

They are not our friends.

THE SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER

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Considerable interest has been shown in the matter of spiritual security in the last four years. A series of articles have already appeared in STS but this shall be a little different approach. This approach denies all Calvinism but at the same time allows full assurance and confidence for the faithful child of God.

I have appreciated the way in which this paper has handled other controversial subjects and I am grateful to have been allowed space to present my views on this important subject (with the understanding that there may be a review published with it).

This subject is controversial, emotional (with some), and is confusing to many. But we really should have no difficulty in studying together on this matter because we practice the same thing. I might add that no one who knows the truth on this is going to advocate fellowshipping anyone or any group who does not practice the truth. Since our practice is the same there should be no talk of division or disfellowshipping anyone, or firing a preacher for what he believes and teaches on the matter. Regardless of which way a man believes if he presses this issue to the point of causing factions, he is a heretic. When brethren in a local church can't study this issue without ill feelings, it should be dropped like a hot potato. It is an important subject, but we should never force our opinions on such matters to the point of causing division.

When we talk about the security of the believer we have no reference to the denominational doctrine known by that name, also known as "once saved always saved". We believe this doctrine is one extreme on this issue. This denominational doctrine upholds the idea that children of God cannot fall from grace no matter

what they do or what their attitude or manner of life is. The other extreme upholds the idea that a child of God falls from grace every time he sins, and it matters not whether the sin was committed inadvertently or in ignorance, nor does it matter what the attitude of the child of God is. The truth has got to be between these two extremes because the first gives one a false hope and the second gives him no hope.

We are taught that we can and should have spiritual security. It is evident that the apostle Paul had this security as he said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 3:7-8). He wrote of his confidence and in the same passage teaches that all those "that love his appearing" can also have it.

The writings of the apostle John are just as convincing. He said, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God" (1 Jn. 5:13). From looking at these passages alone we should have no doubts as to whether or not a Christian can know that he is in fellowship with God.

God has promised us (Christians) a place in heaven. If one does not have confidence that he will receive that promise then he displeases God (sins). You see, if one has no confidence he either doesn't believe God will keep his promise or he doesn't believe that he is a faithful servant. Hope plays an important part in our salvation (Rom. 8:24). The word "hope" means: desire plus expectation. One who has confidence that he will receive the promise of heaven, desiring to do so, has hope. One who has hope has security. If one has not all three (confidence, hope, and security), he displeases God.

What Security is Based Upon

There can be no true security without being a believer in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. A true believer is an obedient believer. To put it in a nut shell, our security is based upon God's grace (unmerited favor, Eph. 2:7-9), and our compliance to His conditions for obtaining it. Those conditions are discussed under the next heading.

What is Meant by "Walk in the light"?

John assures us that "if we walk in the light... the blood of Jesus ... cleanseth us from all sin." The word "walk" has to do with manner of life. One is either walking in the light or walking in darkness. Even though the faithful Christian sins from time to time his manner of life doesn't change—he isn't necessarily, by that sin, made to walk in darkness.

Let's study the context of the phrase, "walk in the light" (1 Jn. 1:6-2:1). The theme is fellowship with God and with one another. The eighth verse teaches us that fellowship is not based upon being "without sin". The ninth verse teaches us that, rather than deny the fact of our sins we must confess our sins. Then the next verse, "... these things write I unto you, that ye sin not...", is given to keep the brethren from misunderstanding and

taking what was said in verse seven as an encouragement to sin. That which was being taught in verse seven was just what it says and it is the truth between the extremes. However, some believe that the Christian does not sin while in the light. They believe that when one sins he is at that point, out of the light and thus out of fellowship with God and the brethren. But now there is a big problem with that. If the phrase "walk in the light" means "sinlessness" there wouldn't be any sins to be cleansed by the blood. So if one is walking in the light it would have to be because he is "without sin".

Some make a play on the words, "as He is in the light". Of course when they do, it is tantamount to admitting that perfection is essential to being in a saved condition. The question is not how we walk but where we are walking. Isaiah appealed to the house of Jacob: "Come let us walk in the light of the Lord" (Isa. 2:5). Certainly God is light, but we are merely imperfect humans. We must walk in the light of the Lord, which indicated the place. No man can live in the sun but all can walk in the sunlight. While on earth we cannot attain the same degree of purity, perfection, holiness, honesty and knowledge as God possesses, but we can walk in His light. God's condition for grace is not that we be like Him for His word tells us we all sin. One such passage is Ecc. 7:20: "For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not." (Also 1 Ki. 8:46; and Jas. 3:2, 8).

Then someone says, "The blood is not continuously applied but is continuously available". Now is that what the text says? The text teaches that one who walks in the light has the blood continuously applied. If it is just "available" what are the conditions? Repentance and confession certainly are essential for one to walk in the light. But one says, "Each individual sin must be confessed specifically." Another says, "No, groups or categories of sin will suffice." And another says, "It is when we say the words 'forgive me of all my sins.' Brethren, what does the text say? It says none of the above. It says, 'If we confess our sins God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins . . .'. Although we should confess specific sins, as did Simon (Acts 8), the confession of 1 Jn. 1:9 is a general statement. Rather than deny our sins (vs. 8), we must confess them. Rather than "walk in darkness" we must "walk in the light". The two "walks" are opposites and both have to do with attitude and manner of life. Likewise, denial of sin and confession of sin are opposites and have to do with one's manner of life.

Conclusion

The cleansing for those who "walk in the light" is not "unconditional" and it is not "automatic" (without repentance and confession). Rather, it is conditioned upon one's continually repenting of specific sins, confessing specifically those sins of which he is aware and asking forgiveness for his "secret sins" (Psa. 19:12-13).

This view has not one shade of Calvinism and it lends no encouragement to sin. "These things have I written unto you that you sin not". The charge that this teaching leads to sinful teaching and practices is just as false and ridiculous as to charge that having a preacher leads

to the "pastor system". With this view our spiritual security is not based upon our having perfect knowledge of law and our being absolutely certain that we have recalled and confessed specifically every sin. With this view even the babe in Christ who is honest and diligent in his effort to learn, grow, and do God's will can have confidence that should he be overtaken by death suddenly, he will forever be with the Lord in heaven.

A REVIEW OF "THE SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER"

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The editor has asked that I review the article entitled "The Security Of The Believer" by Robert Waters found elsewhere in this issue. I do not know brother Waters personally, but I intend to treat him with all fairness and kindness in this review. I appreciate the policy of this paper in handling such disagreements as this. While the paper is open to discussion, the editor will call an end to an exchange after both sides have been given ample space and then move on to other matters.

What Is The Real Issue?

The first thing we need to do is to focus upon what the real issue of difference is. (1) This issue is not a question of security or confidence. Brother Waters and I both agree that the Christian has confidence. (2) The question is not whether or not the Christian can or must live perfectly. Neither of us believe that he can. (3) The issue is not a matter of specific confession of every instance of sin. Neither of us believe that is required. Thus we will waste a lot of time and space to deal at length with these points.

The real issue is: are there some sins that separate us from God and some that don't? Robert Waters tells us that there are some sins that do not separate us from God. I say that all sins separate us from God. That is the real difference.

Two Extremes

Our brother suggests that his position is between two extremes with reference to the security of the believer. The first extreme is Calvinism which teaches "once saved always saved." This provides a false hope. Then the other extreme that he gives is "that a child of God falls from grace every time he sins, and it matters not whether the sin was committed inadvertently or in ignorance, nor does it matter what the attitude of the child of God is." This he says provides no hope. Well, I just wonder what sin brother Waters thinks a child of God can commit and not stand condemned before God.

Brother Waters, would you please give us an example of such a sin?

It is interesting to me that this is the same argument that the Baptists have used to try to deny the possibility of apostasy. A. U. Nunnery said in his debate with Guy N. Woods, "According to his proposition (I don't know, whether every Christian that was here yesterday, whether you are a Christian today or not). He might have so lived or so acted last night, that he's a sinner this morning" (Woods-Nunnery Debate, p. 244). Nunnery further said, "They will have their names rubbed out every day and have them rewritten the next day, that will be a mess" (Ibid, p. 302). The charge that brother Waters makes concerning what I and those who agree with me teach is no different than the charge made by the Calvinists through the years.

Confidence, Hope and Security

A lot of space was used by our brother to cite passages that teach we can have confidence. Again I say that is not an issue. I believe that the Christian can and should have confidence, hope and security. We disagree on the basis for the confidence. The basis is not that there are some sins which do not separate us from God. If that were the case, then we would have confidence and security while we continued in sin. I believe that this is what our brother believes. He tells us in this article and in other writings on the subject that the cleansing is "continuously applied." He wrote in *The Expository Review*, "We must not overlook God's dealings with the nation of Israel. They were not rejected until they had demonstrated that they had no intention of repenting and walking again in the old paths (Jeremiah 6)" (August, 1983). I wonder why this works for some sins but not for others. Evidently from what we just saw above, one can have confidence and security even though he continues in that sin and hasn't repented or confessed. If that is not the case, then the blood is not "continuously applied" and God does condemn one before he demonstrates that he is not going to repent. Will that not work on the man who commits adultery? Will that not also work on the man who worships with the instrument ignorantly? If not, I want brother Waters to tell us why not. Why do these people not have the same confidence that he has? It seems to me that they would if the basis for the confidence that he has described be true.

The true basis for confidence is the grace of God (blood of Christ—1 Jno. 1:7) as we repent and confess our sins (1 Jno. 1:9) and serve diligently (2 Pet. 1:5-10).

To be fair to brother Waters, he does believe that a Christian must repent and confess. However he believes that confession is a general acknowledgement that we are not free of sin. If he thinks that any kind of repentance, confession and prayer is essential then he has no more confidence than the rest of us have, for if one sins, he stands condemned until that general repentance, confession and prayer is made.

I really don't understand how a man can contend that some sins do not separate us from God and the blood is "continuously applied" and at the same time say that

repentance and confession is essential. That seems to me to be contradictory. Brother Waters, which way will it be?

Walking In The Light

Our brother tells us, "Even though the faithful Christian sins from time to time his manner of life doesn't change—he isn't necessarily, by that sin, made to walk in darkness." He goes on to say, "However, some believe that when one sins he is, at that point, out of the light and thus out of fellowship with God and the brethren." He has told us before that "some unwillful sins do not cause spiritual death" (Expository Review, August 1983). Brother Waters has written a 36 page booklet also entitled "The Security Of The Believer". In it he says, "some sins result in spiritual death and some do not" (p. 10). "Sins that are committed, 'as we practice the truth', are sins that God does not consider rebellion against him and for which he does not sever fellowship" (p. 11). "Since some sins are an abomination to God, we must deduct that some are not as detestable" (p. 14). In his booklet he takes passages like Ezek. 18:4; Isa. 59:2; Jas. 1:15 and Rom. 6:23 which show that spiritual death is the result of sin and says that these do "not teach that every sin causes spiritual death" (pp. 17-18).

Brother Waters, please tell us **WHAT SIN DOES NOT SEPARATE ONE FROM GOD?** Name one. If it is a sin of ignorance or weakness, name some sins of ignorance and weakness that do not condemn the soul. Will he do it? We shall see. What about the sin of lying, does it separate from God? In a context of telling us that some sins result in spiritual death and others do not, he tells us that the difference in the mind of the judge is influenced by the attitude of the transgressor. "For example, Ananias and Sapphira lied and died (Acts 5); whereas Abraham lied three times (Gen. 12:13; 20:5; & 25:7) and he lived" (Booklet, p. 10). Well, I wonder if we can lie today and not be separated from God. What about adultery, does it separate from God? He said in **The Expository Review** that the sin of David and Bathsheba was one of those that is "not so severely punished" (August, 1983). Does that mean they were not separated from God? What about the fellow who commits adultery in a moment of weakness? Is he separated from God? And then I wonder about the man who ignorantly worships with the instrument. He never really knew that it was wrong. Why does he not have fellowship with God as the Christian who may commit any other sin of ignorance? And if he is in fellowship with God, why should we not also fellowship him? Are we better than God?

If one sin doesn't separate one from God, then just how many does it take? Will two? That's just one more. Three? That's just one more than two. Four? Five? How many does it take? The New Testament is filled with passages and examples that tell us that one sin is all that it takes for one to stand condemned. Will our brother tell us that all of these are willful sins? Will he say that none of these are cases of sins out of ignorance or weakness? Did none of these have an humble attitude? Consider the following: (1) Adam and Eve (Gen.

3); (2) Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10); (3) Achan (Josh 7); (4) Uzzah (2 Sam. 6); (5) David (2 Sam. 11); (6) Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5); (7) Peter (Gal. 2:11—the ASV says that he "stood condemned"); and (8) Simon (Acts 8). Brother Waters tells us that Simon didn't fall when he sinned. "These babes at Corinth, even though said to be carnal, were not fallen, and neither was Simon" (Booklet, p. 19). Nevertheless Peter said, "thy money perish with thee" (Acts 8:20, emphasis mine DVR).

Paul said, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye that are spiritual, restore such an one ..." (Gal. 6:1, emphasis mine DVR). How many sins are involved in "a fault"?

If brother Water's position be true, I just wonder how we are to determine which sins separate and which don't. There is nothing in the context of 1 Jno. 1:7 to limit sins to those of ignorance and weakness. If 1 Jno. 1:7 means that one type of sin doesn't separate from God, it means that no sin separates from God. If it includes sins of ignorance and weakness why will it not also include willful sins?

Whether answering Waters, Ketcherside or a Baptist preacher the point is still the same. Sins of ignorance separate like any other sin. Consider the case of the man of God who believed the lie of the old prophet (1 Kings 13:18-26). Saul persecuted the church ignorantly (1 Tim. 1:13). Jesus will say "depart from me" to many who ignorantly attempted to serve him (Matt. 7:21-ff). Those who crucified the Son of God did so ignorantly (Lk. 23:34).

Brother Waters suggests in his article and in his booklet that to deny his position is to contend for perfection. Such is simply not the case. Imperfection is not necessarily sin. Some areas are relative and thus we will never reach perfection. But, that doesn't mean that we are guilty of sin. A simple misunderstanding is not sin (Rom. 14). However when we do sin, to plead for repentance and confession is not teaching that we must be perfect.

Blood Continuously Applied

Our brother says that 1 Jno. 1:7 says that the blood is continuously applied. The text doesn't say that. That's an assumption of Robert Waters. Look at v. 9. The blood cleanses as we confess.

Specific Confession?

He tells us, "But one says, 'Each individual sin must be confessed specifically.'" Who teaches that? Would you please name a writer or speaker who has taught that. I don't know of anyone. Keep in mind that there is a difference in repentance and confession of what one is guilty and specific confession of every instance of sin.

We are told that the confession of 1 Jno. 1:9 is a general statement of one's manner of life. That's not what the text says. The text says we are to confess our "sins", not the fact that we are sinners.

Questions

1. Why will your position not work on the pious unimmersed? 2. What about the homosexual who doesn't know he is wrong, is he in fellowship with God? 3. What

sin (give some examples) can a child of God commit and not be separated?

Conclusion

"Therefore, thou son of man, say unto the children of thy people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression: as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness; neither shall the righteous be able to live for his righteousness in the day that he sinneth" (Ezek. 33:12).

**MY SERVANTS
THE PROPHETS**



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THE GOD OF ISAIAH

It has been said that there are two major pillars supporting the framework of God's revelation to man. One stands as the central support of the Old Testament and the other as the central support of the New Testament, thereby giving us the skeleton upon which to build the entire gospel system. They represent for us the supreme challenge for our study: one because of the sheer mass of material that it contains (66 chapters), as well as the depth of its meaning, and the other because of its essentiality to the process of justification and sanctification. The Old Testament book is, of course, Isaiah, and the New Testament book is, of course, Romans. Herein lies the heart of what we are and why we are! Thus, any misinterpretation drives us straight into apostasies, such as Premillennialism or salvation by faith only apart from obedience. Such is like walking along a narrow ledge on the side of a mountain and any misstep can be fatal.

It is not our purpose to approach the entire Book of Isaiah, for which there are many reasons. First is simply because I am not qualified to do so. After that, there are many other reasons as well. Rather, our approach here will be to look at some of the great lessons and applications from the Book to our daily concept of Christianity. Herein will be the center of our study. What would Isaiah say if he were to stand in the Par Street pulpit next Sunday and lift up his voice to God's people? What would he have to say if he were to come to "Average Avenue Church of Christ" for a gospel meeting? As we read his Book, given to him by God, there are certain themes that we can well surmise that He would address.

I. First, He would tell us of the indescribable Glory of God.

Isaiah had a vision of the greatness of God that we so desperately need in the 20th Century American church. "I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple" (Isa. 6:1). We will study Chapter 6 in more detail later but for now we will see this great point of Isaiah's reference—the Majesty of God! Brethren, it is not until we see the Majesty of God and understand as best we can with our limited abilities His Greatness, that we will ever know who He is. It has been said that there is only one thought of man that matters at all and it is: what we think of God. Isaiah's view of God was so large that it

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touched every aspect of his life and even the nations of the World.

Our own view of God is so small. We are not living 24 hours a day in a world filled with His Glory. Our worship services are not collective expressions that we have assembled in the presence of the most powerful force in all creation. We sleep and nap. We talk and wander in and out to the rest-room 2 or 3 times, we play with the babies,—our own or one belonging to someone else. We drag our singing, and the preaching has the enthusiasm of a corpse. If a visitor walks in nobody makes an effort to see that he feels comfortable. After all, visitors might be looking for a handout or might be a potential trouble maker wanting to place membership and take over the business meeting. There is such little joy and no enthusiasm. Zeal is reserved for the sales meetings at our businesses or the pep rally for some favorite team. We become a lot more excited about a girls soft ball team or a 12-and under soccer game than we become about our awesome, living God. When was the last time we prayed, "Lord, show us Your glory." Moses saw the glory of God and Jeremiah also. Ezekiel as well was overwhelmed by the glory of God, but to us He is far away, unreal and to be blamed every time something terrible happens.

II. Secondly, Isaiah saw not only God's Glory, but His Ever Present Providential Care.

Isaiah saw not only how great he was, but he saw that He was active in the lives of His subjects; that is, being alive, loving, involved and concerned. He is not "away on a journey" as the priest of Baal found out on top of Mt. Carmel. Rather, He is ruling and governing from His throne. The throne room of God is the busiest place in all the universe. That is where all the prayers in all of the nations from all the people, be they little people or be they kings, be they young or be they old, are being received. All the decisions for every prayer came from the throne room of God which Isaiah had seen in Chapter 6. Isaiah is privileged to be part of the pronouncements of God's providence, and His decrees against Babylon (Chapter 13), Philistia, Moab, Ethiopia, Damascus and Egypt.

Again, we need to see our God not only as powerful and supreme, but active and involved in the affairs of people and nations. A powerful God, but one who is detached from our lives is really no God at all. A God that doesn't answer prayer, that doesn't come to the aid and encouragement of His people, is like a father that will not support his family and especially his children. Even earthly fathers will do that, says Jesus in Matt. 7:11, so "how much more shall your father in Heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!" Such was not only the lesson of Isaiah, but also of my own father, who in his latter years sternly admonished me not to worry about the daily offerings for which he had lost a great deal of interest. "Son," he would say, "just let the Lord take care of it," when at times I would ask "what are we going to do about this or that." Yes, our God is alive and active in the world today. But our faith is built on our correctly viewing both His greatness and His nearness.

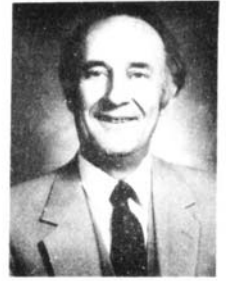
WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

Send all questions to:

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THE RESURRECTED BODY OF JESUS

QUESTION: *I heard a sermon recently in which the evangelist said that Jesus returned to the Father in the same type of body He had when He arose from the grave. What kind of body did Jesus take at His resurrection and did He enter into heaven with this same body?*

ANSWER: The following things we know about the body of Christ after His resurrection.

1. **It was visible to man.** Jesus said to His disciples, "Behold my hands and my feet" (Lk. 24:39). At the garden tomb, Mary saw Jesus standing, although she knew not it was He (Jn. 20:14). Not knowing Jesus' identity was probably because of the shadows of darkness (v. 1). Compare 1 Cor. 15:5-8.

2. **It was tangible.** "Handle me, and see," Jesus said (Lk. 24:39). "And they came, and held him by his feet, and worshipped him" (Mt. 28:9). To Thomas Jesus said, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side" (Jn. 20:27). Hence, Jesus was no phantom or apparition. He was real!

3. **It had flesh and bones.** Jesus said, "for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have" (Lk. 24:39). This was in response to the disciples supposition that they were seeing a spirit.

4. **It consumed food.** "And they gave him a piece of broiled fish, and of honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them" (Lk. 24: 42-43). He also dined with the two disciples at Emmaus (Lk. 24:30) and hosted a fish breakfast at the Sea of Galilee (Jn. 21:12).

5. **It bore the wounds from the crucifixion.** Thomas said, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing" (Jn. 20:25, 27).

On the other hand, the body of Jesus was transcendent, that is, it was beyond the limits of all possible human experience and knowledge. Jesus was not bound by the present conditions of material existence which we observe. He was not subject to time, space, or material objects.

1. **He appeared in a room where the doors were locked.** "Then the same day (resurrection day) at evening . . . when the doors were shut (locked). . . came

Jesus and stood in the midst" (Jn. 20:19). "And after eight days again the disciples were within . . . then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst" (Jn. 20:26).

Some try to explain these appearances, naturally. They say: (a) Jesus climbed up a ladder and through a window, (b) He descended from the roof down a stairway, (c) He sneaked into the house before the doors were locked, or (d) He was allowed to come in through the connivance of the doorkeeper. But there is no logical explanation other than that Jesus miraculously appeared (twice, one week apart) in a locked room in the presence of the disciples.

Jesus also disappeared just as quickly as He appeared. When He was dining with the disciples at Emmaus, Luke states that "he vanished out of their sight" (Lk. 24:31). This, apparently, was a disappearance without physical locomotion. We see, therefore, that Jesus appears where He desires to appear and disappears where He desires to have it so. All of this is wholly supernatural and completely incomprehensible to our finite minds. However, I cannot see any greater miracle in the appearance and disappearance of Jesus' body than I see in the miracle of Jesus walking on the water (Jn. 6:19). All are acts of the power of God.

As to where Jesus stayed during the intervals between His appearances during the forty days (Acts 1:3), we have no way of knowing. Jesus made twelve appearances (Albert Barnes' list) to His disciples before His ascension and one to Paul after His return to heaven. This is all we know about the matter.

2. Furthermore, Jesus ascended up into the air, defying gravity. "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight" (Acts 1:9). Obviously, Jesus did not continue rising into space, hidden by a cloud, but tunelessly, He was received into heaven in a glorified state.

From all of the preceding biblical statements and declarations, we conclude that Jesus was raised with an earthly, human, physical body—the same body that was crucified—and forty days later, at His ascension, His body took on the nature of the heavenly. Paul said that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 15:50), so we know that Jesus did not enter heaven with His human body.

I concur with Charles Erdman who said, "It was therefore at the time of the ascension that Jesus entered 'into his glory.' Then it was that his body was transformed, made deathless, 'spiritual,' celestial, immortal; and then he again began to share the divine glory which he had with the Father" (Gospel of Luke, p. 228).

Some claim that Jesus appropriated to Himself, at certain moments, a sensible, tangible form, which He afterwards laid aside. But this would make the resurrected body nothing more than a disguise. The visible prints were real—proof of a real, fleshly body.

John says "it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 Jn. 3:2). The

immortal nature of the resurrected body cannot be perceived in this life, but when Jesus returns in His heavenly body which he now possesses, the earthly bodies of all the redeemed will be fashioned after His glorious body (Phil. 3:20-21). Yes, we will have new bodies, resurrected bodies, adapted to an heavenly environment.

SIMPLICITY IN CHRIST

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SUPPOSITION AND SCRIPTURE

In the October, 1985 issue of *Searching the Scriptures*, an article of mine was published entitled "Car Wrecks And Orphans." Response to the article has been immediate, and I expect that more will follow, if early returns are any indication. This article which I am writing now is not intended to be a blanket response to the correspondence which I have received regarding the previous article, but rather a follow-up to my first article.

Personally, I appreciate the fact that someone takes the time to write to me, whether they agree or disagree with what I write. Each letter will be answered individually as necessary. That is, except those who won't sign their letters or provide a return address. One such letter was postmarked Sheffield, Alabama. Such anonymous offerings always indicate at least two things: the author has no confidence in his position, and doesn't want to hear the truth on the matter. Generally, those who disagree with me cause me to think and study more than those who agree with me, so I appreciate criticism for that reason.

One common factor among those who disagreed with my article on "Car Wrecks And Orphans," was that they complained because my article contained no scripture references. I'm glad that they noticed that fact, and they are exactly right. You cannot deal in **supposition** and **scripture** at the same time, and I'm glad that people are able to see that. Now, we are getting somewhere!

The very title of my article was based on the **supposition** which was invented years ago by those who were defending their church-supported institutional homes as opposed to individual action. That hypothetical car wreck was also supposed to prove that the collection for the saints (1 Cor. 16:1,2), could be used to make contributions to a human institution and generally provide relief to non-saints. Brother W. L. Totty and others

were the ones who started this supposition business without scripture, not I. (See Indianapolis Debate, p. 94).

In addition to the title of my article, I mentioned the term **suppose** (or a form of it), twelve times, and the term **hypothetical** once. I plainly indicated more than once that since some brethren wanted to deal in supposition, that is what we would do. Anyone who can read can see that. I must have done a good job, and those who started this supposition business must have gotten their fill of it. Now, they are wanting scripture! Well, I warned them in my article "that I can suppose as good as the next one when I take the notion," so they got a taste of their own medicine.

Do these brethren really want scripture, or do they just want someone else to use scripture while they use supposition? We shall see. For beginners, let individual Christians fulfill their opportunities and responsibilities toward the needy (Mt. 25:35, 36; Gal. 6:10; Jas. 1:26, 27). Let the home, a divine institution, fulfill its place in God's order of things (Eph. 5-6; 1 Tim. 5:4,8,16). Then, let the church be and do what God designed it to be and do (1 Tim. 3:15; Eph. 4:16; 2 Cor. 9:1). Leave the church as free as possible to devote her time and energies, and **resources**, to spiritual things (Acts 6:2-4; 1 Tim. 5:16).

Part of the format of this column is to keep it short and simple, so that is enough scripture to keep us all busy for a long time. There is more where that came from. And we can either be satisfied with the scriptures, or we can try to find something wrong with those passages cited, and return to supposing that we are going to be overwhelmed with situations which the scriptures will not cover. Take your pick, but be ready to give account unto God as to why you questioned his "wisdom and prudence" (Eph. 1:8).

When we quit this supposition business, and finding fault with the divine arrangement of things, the gospel will be preached and souls saved; the hungry will be fed and clothed and suffering relieved; God will be glorified through Christ and the church; and, peace and harmony will replace strife and division among brethren. If this is what you want, the scriptures can provide it (2 Tim. 3:16,17); earthly wisdom cannot (Jas. 3:14-18).

Don't say it can't be done, for it was done in the first century (Col. 1:23). A pretty good start was made in the early part of the nineteenth century, until some brethren **supposed** that their human societies and innovations could improve upon the divine arrangement of things. We live in the twentieth century, and that is exactly the time frame wherein our judgment shall be determined, for good or bad. I, for one, don't want to be found looking in the scriptures for something that isn't there, while overlooking something that is there, and all the while "supposing" that the Lord is with me (Mt. 7:21-23; Lk. 2:44). How about you?

THE CHURCH AND ITS ELDERS DEBATED BY HOLT AND SMITH

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The nature of the church and its elders was debated by Charles A. Holt of Chattanooga, Tenn. and J. T. Smith of Lake Jackson, Tex. in Lake Jackson on Sept. 30—Oct. 4, 1985. Terry Gardner of Indianapolis, Ind. moderated for Holt, Darrel Rowell of Dumas, Tex. displayed charts. Smith's moderator was Elmer Moore of Lufkin and Bill Robinson, Jr. of Ft. Worth handled the charts. The conduct of the speakers and the audience alike was exemplary. "The local ecclesia" in Holt's view is nothing but saints in a given area who, whether acting independently or jointly, are never "an organized, functional, institutional entity." Elders are "relatively more mature" members who lead somehow without formal appointment or authority. Smith taught that the local church is a distinct entity with a revealed work and formal organization, and that Christians must be a part of this body. A chart labeled "Others Get the Point" quoted F. Furman Kearley, Editor of the Gospel Advocate:

The upholding of his (Holt's position would basically bring to an end the church of our Lord Jesus Christ, and destroy all of the teaching, role and function of Biblical elders (July 15, 1985 letter).

Defining Terms

Since all duties are individual (Rom. 14:12), Holt objected to making "the local ecclesia" "something more" than saints by using terms such as "church" or "corporate worship." Neither does the Bible use "individually" or several words in Holt's propositions, Smith pointed out, but we may use such expressions to define and amplify our points if we show the concept itself is scriptural. Though Judgment is personal, not collective, we will be judged on our conduct in such functional units as the family (Eph. 6:1-4), the government (Rom. 13:1-5), and the local church (1 Cor. 11:17-34).

Smith defined several terms which bothered Holt. **Organized** is the systematic arrangement of Titus 1:5; **functional**, fulfilling a mission (1 Tim. 3:15); **institutional**, organized for charitable or educational work (1 Cor. 12:28); **entity**, existing independently (1 Cor. 12:27); and **body corporate**, a society capable of conducting business as an individual (1 Tim. 5:16). Smith showed that Holt's "local ecclesia" is an **institution** in the view of "Jesus People," an **organization** because of some systematic arrangement for assemblies, and a **functional unit** if able to work as a body. But no one in Holt's view can "prove that the local ecclesia consti-

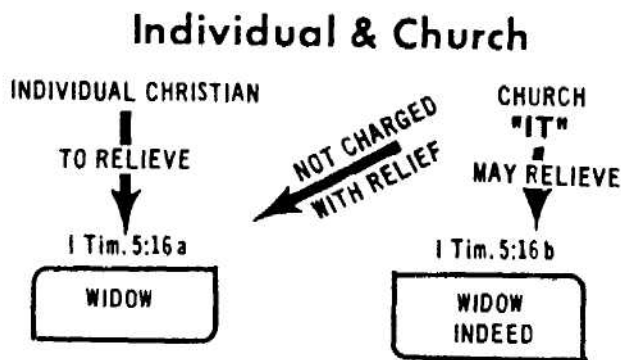
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tutes 'something more' than a group of saints."

No documentation was offered by Holt for his claim that ecclesia was translated "church" under the threat of death by an "edict of King James." The American Standard Version uses "church" and represents 101 of the world's finest Greek Scholars, far removed from King James!

Some Key Passages

Holt often stressed that a local church is "nothing more than disciples/saints" and asked Smith to prove it "something more." 1 Timothy 5:16 became a key passage: "If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed." Smith's "Individual & Church" chart distinguished action by individuals which is not local church action from the local church's work:



Notice that the church is not charged with the relief work performed by certain individuals, in order that "it" may be free to relieve "widows indeed." The church is a distinct entity with formal members and elders. Its mission and organization are clearly set forth in Scripture. But Holt insisted that the "it" here is in no sense "a body corporate or an institution." "It's just disciples together."

The treasury of 1 Corinthians 16:2 shows that the church can function as a distinct entity, but Holt interprets the verse as personal only: "Lay up by yourself somewhere." That contradicts the provision, "that there be no gatherings when I come." Acts 6:1-6 proves the church was organized with special servants, pooled funds, and a work to be done outside the assembly. Holt only said the church here was "not an organization or body corporate."

Smith argued that the three steps required in Matthew 18:15-17 reveal "something more" than individual or even group action. If our brother sins against us, we go to "him alone," then take "one or two more," then "tell it unto the church." Step two has saints acting together, but not as a local church. Step three pictures "something more"—take it to the church! Holt intimated that the "something more" here is just more witnesses and declared that even when saints function

together with "other members in assemblies," the assembly is not a functional unit. Only "individual Christians are the functional units."

The Eldership: What, How, and Who?

Smith's view of the church puts elders between man and God, Holt protested. Elders were compared to the Pope. "You give away all your rights when you submit to elders," said Holt. Smith asked if we should tell wives to get back to God and not have husbands over them. "She is under Christ when under her husband," Holt responded. He sees the principle in the home but not in the local church. Smith used many passages and definitions from Greek lexicons proving that **elders have a legitimate sphere of authority to lead in decision making in judgmental matters in the church, just as husbands do in the home.** "Rule" in that sense is used of elders and of **fathers** (1 Tim. 5:17; 3:4,12). Such authority is "delegated, not primary," and men must use it "as exemplary leaders, not harsh and hypocritical dictators" (1 Pet. 5:3-4), Smith explained.

Holt sees elders as mature brethren who encourage assemblies in "pure unstructured functioning" without the formation of autonomous congregations in various localities around a city. His concept is one "church per city, no matter how many meeting places exist. "Church" in Acts 20:28 and "flock" in 1 Peter 5:2 refer to God's people without limitation "to any segment, 'local church' or functional entity." To tend the flock "**among you**" means to tend "any and all (saints) you can find" from place to place. Smith said such passages limit the role of elders to a local church and observed that Holt was drifting from a city bishopric to a **regional**—or even universal—bishopric.

Anyone who matures is an elder by virtue of attaining the qualification and needs no "claptrap" of formal appointment, said Holt. When Smith argued that Matthias was qualified to be an Apostle but had to be appointed, Holt averred he was no genuine Apostle and his selection in Acts 1:15-26 was a mistake! Since Paul was qualified to be "an elder-bishop-pastor," he **was** one, as were Titus and Timothy. Smith noted that such broad concepts of "elder" must include **women**, and Holt did indeed leave the door open for women. Galatians 6:1 tells of an elders' work, Holt said, and, "If you can do that, you had better get up and do it my brother. Or **sister**, it doesn't make any difference!"

In view of different practices among brethren regarding the church, its eldership, instrumental music, church gyms, and marriage and divorce, Holt embraced unity-in-diversity. "That's what Romans 14 is all about," he added. Smith urged that we must obey "the teaching of Christ" on such matters in order to be united with God as His faithful children (2 Jn. 9-11).

For audio cassette tapes (\$10.00), contact J. T. Smith, P.O. 698, Lake Jackson, TX 77566. For video tapes (\$40,000, contact Chuck Ainsworth, 114 S. Magnolia, Lake Jackson. Charts are available from the disputants (C. A. Holt, P.O. Box 21584, Chattanooga, TN 37421). A repeat debate is set for March 3-7, 1986 in Chattanooga.

WHO THEN CAN BE SAVED?

*A. C. Grider*Rt. 4, 1671 Bill St.
Shepherdsville, KY 40165

Recently wife and I were driving by a large Denomination as the people were gathering for worship. A white haired man got out of his car with his bible in hand and headed for the front door. My wife remarked: Isn't it a shame to think that every last one of those people are going to be eternally lost." Indeed it is a shame. But the fact remains that indeed all of them are yet in their sins. It is hard to contemplate and it is hard for some, even of my brethren, to admit such. But, let's examine the matter.

Jesus (the Saviour) said "he that believeth and is baptized **shall be saved**" (Mark 16:16). But these people do not believe that. Nor does ANY member of ANY Denomination believe that. Everyone of them believe that one is saved BEFORE and WITHOUT water baptism. Peter (guided by the H.S.) said "Repent and be baptized everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). But these people do not believe that. They emphatically DENY that baptism is for the remission of sins! And Paul said we are "baptized INTO Christ" (Rom. 6:3 and Gal. 3:27). But these people do not believe that! Nor does any member of ANY denomination believe that we are baptized into Christ! "Baptism doth also now save us" (1 Pet. 3:21). Not so, say the denominations! We arise from baptism to "walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4). Not so, say the denominations! We are to be baptized to "wash away our sins" (Acts 22:16). Not so, say the denominations! So, anyway you slice it members of denominations DO NOT believe what the Bible says about baptism. But this is just the tip of the ice berg.

The Bible says the Lord adds people to the church as they are being saved (Acts 2:42). But members of denominations DO NOT believe such. They JOIN the church of THEIR choice and completely relegate Christ to the background. If the Lord doesn't add you to the church (and he does NOT add people to denominations) you are not in the Lord's church.

Again, the Bible says for one to enter into the kingdom of heaven, he must do the will of the father (Matt. 7:21). But denominational people do not believe that! The Bible says Christ became the author of eternal salvation to them that obey him (Heb. 5:8-9). But the people who comprise the denominations do not believe any such thing! The Bible says that people who are "servants" of sin" obey the form of doctrine delivered

and then they become "servants of righteousness (Rom. 6:17-18). But members of denominations do not believe any such thing! In other words these people deny everything the Bible says about obeying the Lord or doing his will. Oh, sure, they believe you should do the will of the Father in heaven. But they DO NOT believe that such is necessary to enter into the kingdom of Heaven. Sure, they believe we should obey Christ, but they DO NOT believe that obedience is necessary to becoming servants of righteousness. So, we must face the facts. If the Bible is true, **and it is**, then members of denominations are not in the kingdom of heaven. Christ is not their saviour (author of their salvation), and they have not become servants of righteousness.

We don't need a "dialogue" with these people. We just need to insist that they obey the gospel of God. We need to emphasize that to get into the kingdom of heaven one must DO THE WILL OF GOD. We need to let these people know that we love them and that we are interested in them, but that we DO NOT believe they are saved, short of obedience.

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KEVIN A. SULC, P.O. Box 463, Westfield, IN 46074—For the past five months I have been working with the church in Westfield, Indiana which is ten minutes north of Indianapolis on U.S. 31. Westfield has a population of about 4,000. The church has been meeting here for four years. I am the first full time preacher. We now have 24 members with 12 children and have grown in the past few months. One has been baptized and a family of six has begun working and worshipping with us and we have seen growth in knowledge and spirituality. For the most part, there is an eagerness to learn and become better disciples. While there are individual weaknesses, these can be overcome by patience and solid teaching. Nine other congregations help support us. In addition to public services and home Bible studies, I go every week to the State Reformatory at Pendleton, IN, to teach along with Alan Jones, Phil Morgan, Joe McCameron, Roger Shouse and Mike Scott. Alan Jones has been going since 1980 and Phil Morgan since 1981. The rest of us have joined in recently. There are presently three faithful Christians there. Two more are ready to be baptized. The administration makes baptism a difficult thing to accomplish. The man I am studying with now is also to the point of conversion. We are trying to arrange for the Christians there to meet on Sundays and partake of the Lord's Supper. Please pray for the work here in Westfield and Pendleton. If you are ever in this area, stop and worship with us. We are on State Route 32 (Main St.) at the corner of Cherry St. We meet on Sundays at 9:30, 10:20 and 6 and at 7 on Wednesday nights. My wife and I would love to hear from any of our friends. Our phone number is (317) 896-3897.

CLARENCE W. "BUTCH" FELL, III, 1812 Boston, Ft. Smith, AR 72901—After two years of part time preaching, my family and I decided to leave secular work on Nov. 27, 1985 and devote our full time to the work of the Lord. We will be working with the church on Highway 45 in Midland, Arkansas. Midland is a friendly community with good opportunities for home studies and other personal work and we are optimistic about the work of teaching the saving gospel. We ask for your prayers.

NEEDS CONTACTS IN IZMIR TURKEY

MARY WARD, PSC 3096, APO NY 09224—Since my husband is in the Air Force we have been transferred to Izmir, Turkey and I wish to make contact with any known Christians either already in that area or who might be coming. If there is no faithful church there, I would like to help get one started. I will have to depend on good preaching tapes and tapes of spiritual songs to keep me encouraged and help me grow. (Editor's note: This is the spirit that sparked the early church as "They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:4). Some of you brethren who tape sermons or Bible classes could render a valuable service by sending copies to this sister and to others in similar circumstances).

ANOTHER HOLT-SMITH DEBATE

There is, according to original plans, to be another discussion between brethren Charles A. Holt and J. T. Smith. The first was held in Lake Jackson, Texas, where J. T. Smith lives, Sept. 30-Oct. 4, 1985. The second one is to be held in Chattanooga, Tennessee where Charles A. Holt lives. The propositions will be the same as in Lake Jackson which included a discussion of the church as a "functional unit" and the "eldership." The dates will be March 3, 4, 6 and 7, 1986 nightly at 7:30. The church is North Hixon (Chattanooga area) has offered their facilities for the discussion. For further information regarding the exact location of the building, call Bill Walton at (615) 870-8029.

NEEDS HELP

Due to five years of medical problems and a serious chronic disease, **FRED MCKINNEY**, a gospel preacher in Northwest Indiana is struggling with overwhelming doctor and hospital bills. He does not have enough support to maintain hospitalization insurance. He has been

preaching 23 years. Those contacted thus far have not supplied sufficient help. For more information, contact **BOB STARR**, an elder of the Woodmar, Indiana church at 2330 E. Stager Rd., Crete, IL 60417. Phone (312) 758-2445. Or as a reference, you may contact **Leslie Dieseltkamp**, 1730 W. Galena Blvd. 102 W. Aurora, IL 60506.

PREACHERS NEEDED

BOWLING GREEN, OHIO—The church here needs a full time evangelist with a strong interest in personal evangelism. We are located in a large campus town with good teaching opportunities. Partial support is available. Contact **George W. Lambroff** (419) 352-8842; **Robert McCracken** (419) 352-1724 or write: Central Church of Christ, P.O. Box 82, Bowling Green, Ohio 43402.

NEW CUMBERLAND, WEST VIRGINIA—The New Cumberland Heights church is looking for a preacher. We would prefer a middle-aged man, or older. We are small with some moving away and retiring, but we are able to support a preacher fully for a couple of years before any outside help would be needed. If interested write: Church of Christ, Box 131, New Cumberland, WV 26047, or call evenings the following: **D. B. Wharton** (304) 748-8229; **Lloyd Gamer** (304) 723-1607; or **Robert Ridgeway** (304) 564-3864.

JONESBORO, TENNESSEE—The church here needs a full time preacher. We have about 50 in attendance. Some outside support would be needed but we can help with contacts to secure that. Those interested may call (615) 753-3475, or (615) 753-3540.

RALPH C. SMART, P.O. Box 56, Milbridge, Maine 04658—(From MAINE EVENTS)—At Milbridge, the building site is cleared and ready for construction to begin in the spring. One was baptized here recently. Three have been baptized lately at Ellsworth where **Troy Adams** preaches. There are reports here of growing interest from a mailing program. In Bangor, the work is recovering from a bout with liberalism. The 7th annual lectureship was held in November. Speakers were **Ken Williams**, **Bruce Hudson** and **R. C. Smart, Sr.** Work is progressing on the new building at Pittsfield. The old one was lost by fire. **Bruce Hudson** or I plan to go once a month to Fredrickton where a small group of women have kept a spark alive for several years. In October I was in a gospel meeting with the growing work at Hudson, New York and also in Bristol Vermont to take part in their lectureship along with **Larry Bailey**, **Ed Paquette**, **Rea Pennock** and **John Flannery**.

RUDY GUMPAD, Tuguegarao, Cagayan, Republic of the Philippines—The work here continues to prosper. We have baptisms monthly and are growing spiritually. Most of our men are now trained and can take part in public services in various ways, including some who can deliver sermons. Our radio program continues to make good contacts. Recently we baptized a preacher and his wife from the Christian Church who were reached initially through the radio program. We had some studies on instrumental music and other differences. Our work in the Cagayan Valley is hindered by liberalism, Premillennialism, the one cup theory and other errors. There are some groups which are very loose about smoking, drinking and dancing. Politically, our country today is hot due to the snap election in January, 1986. The insurgency rate is getting higher. There are killings and other crimes committed in every zone and our people are afraid. The military is always on "red alert." Please pray for our peace and order.

(Editor's Note: We are hearing from brethren in various places in the Philippines who report increased political turmoil. Crime appears to be rampant in many places, prices are very unstable and action from the New People's Army (a Communist guerrilla force) is on the rise. Many of the brethren are in fear. Pray for them. Help those who are worthy while you can, for the door of access may close there as it has in other places around the world.)

**EDITORIAL LEFT-OVERS
SOUR PICKLE RELIGION**

Even Christians who were servants, owned as property, in the first century, were instructed to "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things" (Tit. 2:10). Faithfulness with cheerfulness even under that adverse circumstance showed the beauty of the "doctrine of God" in terms of what it did to set free the human spirit. Joseph in Egypt could well have turned bitter, wallowed in self-pity, given up and become a surly, belligerent servant who did no more than he had to do. He did not succumb to the temptation. Peter wrote of Christians under trial of faith and in the same breath spoke of "joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Pet. 1:6-8).

The wise man said "A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken" (Prov. 15:13). Again "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones" (Prov. 17:22). There is a time to weep but it is not all the time. A sullen, morose spirit should not be the prevailing disposition of a Christian. It ill becomes us. Besides that, it certainly does not "adorn the doctrine of God." Come on, brethren, the world is watching us. Who is interested in a religion which produces sour pickle countenances and a bemoaning "poor me" disposition? Paul wrote "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice" (Phil. 4:4). Oh yes, did I mention that when he said that, he was a prisoner in Rome, chained to a guard?

* * * * *

ALMOST PERSUADED

A few years ago, the father of a gospel preacher who is a good friend of mine, was visiting his son while I was there in a meeting. He was invited to eat with us every night. After the second night he said "Boys, almost I am persuaded to be a preacher." After the fourth night he was sick and had to stay home. He said "I don't see how you fellows stand it." Let's do a little figuring on that. If a man conducts 20 meetings a year (average six days per meeting) and eats two meals a day of the culinary delights our sisters prepare so graciously, that is the equivalent of eating Thanksgiving dinner 240 times a year. That is the reason I always ask the brethren to schedule only one meal a day for me during a meeting. You see, that way I get to eat Thanksgiving dinner 120 times a year!

PROSPECTIVE POLITICIAN

One of my favorite humorists is Bob Murphy, the lawyer from Nacogdoches, Texas who stays busy giving speeches around the country. He said once: "Now I don't know nothin' about foreign policy. I don't know nothin' about the balance of payment I don't know nothin' about deficit spending. In fact, I'm a little bit surprised that they ain't asked me to run for Congress." I don't know about you, but I think he would fit right in!

* * * * *

EDITOR'S MEETING SCHEDULE—1986

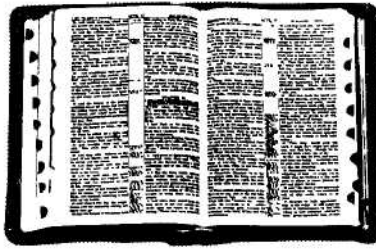
January 24-26—Northeast, Gainesville, Florida
March—Morris Rd., Gulfport, Mississippi (10-16)
West Columbia, Texas (23-28) April—Winchester, Kentucky (first week) Jordan, Ontario, Canada (20-25)
South River, Ontario, Canada (April 27-May 2) May—Lang Rd., Houston, Texas (25-30) June—Southside Lectures, Pasadena, Texas (June 1-5) Longview, Texas (8-13)
Green River Rd., Lincoln County, Kentucky (22-27)
July—Paducah, Kentucky 7-13
Sycamore, Gravel Switch, Kentucky (21-27) August—Eastside, Russellville, Alabama (10-15) September—Hickory Grove (Cumberland County, Kentucky 7-12) Expressway, Louisville, Kentucky 14-19) Lake Jackson, Texas (21-26)
October—Metairie (New Orleans), Louisiana (date to be worked out) Hodgenville, Kentucky (5-10) Marrtown Rd., Parkersburg, West Virginia (26-31) November—Paden City, West Virginia (2-7) Lawrenceburg, Kentucky (17-23)

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS 354
RESTORATIONS 70
(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)

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 XXVII

FEBRUARY, 1986

Number 2

THINK ON THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 1631
Lutz, FL 33549



SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE

"... But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ. . ." (Eph. 4:15). The setting and context of this verse indicates that the "speaking in love" concerns the doctrine of Christ which provides the "Unity of the Spirit" and opposes that state of being carried about with "every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." This speaking in love also concerns the edifying of the body; the putting off of the old man and putting on of the new man. It involves the speech to "neither give place to the devil" (vs. 27).

What does Paul mean by the expression: "speaking the truth in love"? Does he mean that there can be no plain, condemning of sin; no language of rebuke should be used? Does he mean that "name calling" should never be used? How shall we determine what the apostle meant by the expression?

Before we look into the scriptures to determine what this expression means, perhaps it is in order to inquire how one tells when another is not "speaking the truth in love." What standard do men use to decide this? What do those who condemn one for not speaking in love mean by "speaking in love"? I think that some of them mean those who speak "boldly" are not speaking in love. Others mean that strong words of condemnation are not words spoken in love; some mean that when a brother's name is used in connection with a false doctrine or practice, it is not "speaking in love." Just how do we determine when one is "speaking the truth in

love"? Since the apostle Paul was the instrument of the Holy Spirit to pen these words, let us observe how he spoke and we will learn what it means.

It meant to speak boldly the word of God. "Great is my **boldness** of speech toward you. . ." (2 Cor. 7:4). It means to use **plainness** of speech. "Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech" (2 Cor. 3:12). It includes **rude** (unskilled, unpolished) speech. "But though I be **rude** in speech. . ." (2 Cor. 11:6). It means to make **manifest** or to reveal. "That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak" (Col. 4:4). It means to speak to **please** God and not men. "But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as **pleasing** men, but God, which trieth our hearts" (1 Thess. 2:4). "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to **please men?** for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Gal. 1:10). It means to speak the truth **without fear**. "Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace" (Acts 18:9). It means to speak to put another to shame. " "I speak to your shame..." (1 Cor. 6:5). It means to speak the **truth** and only the truth. "Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity" (1 Tim. 2:7)."


It means to speak **sound doctrine**. "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine . . . Sound speech, that cannot be condemned . . ." (Titus 2:1, 8). It means not to speak in the **enticing words** of man's wisdom. "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom . . ." (1 Cor. 2:4). It means to **reprove** the works of darkness. "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11). It means to **rebuke** with all authority, sharply, and before all. "These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority" (Titus, 2:15). "This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith" (Titus 1:13). "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear" (1 Tim. 5:20). It means the **calling of names**. "Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme" (1 Tim. 1:20). "For Demas hath forsaken

me, having loved this present world. . ." (2 Tim. 4:10). "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil:, the Lord reward him according to his works" (2 Tim. 4:14). "But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. Then Saul, (who also is called Paul) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, and said, O full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" (Acts 13:8-10).

What all "speaking the truth is love" means, it certainly includes speaking boldly, plainly, making manifest, speaking to please God rather than men, to speak without fear, to speak to shame evil doers, speaking only the truth, to speak sound doctrine, to reprove with all authority, sharply and before all, and calling names of those in sin.

Most of those who criticize for speaking boldly and plainly, think of the love as applying to that tender emotion toward the individual to whom the preaching is done. They view it as "loving sinners" so as not to hurt their feelings and expose their error too sharply. The real meaning of "speaking the truth in love" is to have that love for Christ, for the truth, for the lost souls of men to hold nothing back that would be profitable for them. True love does not rejoice in iniquity, but does rejoice in the truth (1 Cor. 13:6). I must love men so as to make them know the truth.

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Editorial

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"WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?"

Not long ago I received a notice in the mail of a "Medical Evangelism Seminar" to be conducted January 3 and 4 in Dallas, Texas. The advertising makes it plain that the medical "missions" being conducted by liberal brethren are viewed as an evangelistic outreach. It also showed that churches are involved in sending and supporting doctors, nurses and technicians.

Before someone even asks, let me make it clear that I am not opposed to sick people receiving medical attention in this country or around the world. They that are sick need a physician. But it is not the mission of the church, for which our Lord gave his blood, to build and maintain hospitals, clinics, nor to support doctors and nurses in the practice of medicine anywhere. This practice grows out of the social gospel concept that the church must minister to "the whole man." Jesus said "my kingdom is not of this world" (Jno. 18:36). Paul said "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 14:17).

That Christians have a right to build roads, dig wells, help people with soil conservation, engage in gainful employment, operate gymnasiums for physical fitness, teach school, run day-care centers, or practice medicine is not in dispute. What is in question here is the role of the church as a collective body to underwrite such activities. This is an extension of the same concept set in motion in Japan, Germany and Italy after World War II when efforts were made to convert people with pasta, rice and clothing. The only power God has given us to use in saving the lost is the gospel of Christ. That alone is the "power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16). The use of anything else betrays a lack of confidence in the power of the gospel. The New Testament is silent as to such activities in the methods used by the apostles of our Lord, even though one of the traveling companions and co-laborers with Paul was Luke, the beloved physician. If he set up medical clinics in Philippi, Thessalonica or Corinth in order to reach people with the gospel, then the New Testament says nothing about it.

Back to the advertising of the Dallas seminar, much may be learned from the program arrangement. One man was to discuss "Current Happenings in Medical Evangelism." Another was to discuss "How Medical Practice and Evangelism Fit Together." Reports were

to be heard from Nigerian Christian Hospital, Cap Haitien Clinic, Haiti, Clinica Christiana, Guatemala, Belize, Ghana, Chamala Mission Hospital in Tanzania (given by the elders of the Springtown, Texas church) and other works. One was to speak on "Involving the Church in Your Mission." There were to be group meetings to discuss how colleges could help prepare medical doctors, nurses, dentists, lab and medical technicians and other medical professionals for such mission work. One was to speak on "Psychological Testing." One session was to be devoted to "How Three Churches Are Involved." The closing session was aptly entitled "Where Do We Go From Here?" Indeed, where?

According to the New Testament, local churches are to support the truth (1 Tim. 3:15), edify themselves (Eph. 4:16) and relieve their needy members (1 Tim. 5:16; Acts 6:1-6). From that simple and noble work, brethren have gone far afield in building every conceivable kind of institution standing between the churches and the field of work. There have been missionary societies, church supported colleges, relief societies for children, old folks and unwed mothers, and now for many years in foreign fields, hospitals and clinics all funded by churches. When N.B. Hardeman, in 1947, said the church support of orphan homes and colleges stand or fall together, in an attempt to get churches to accept the principle of church support for the colleges, I am sure he had no idea what tall oaks would grow from such little acorns. Trends, once established, are hard to reverse, or even slow down.

A few of the men are still living who planted these acorns of error three decades ago. Some of them are now standing in a forest of tall trees with a hatchet trying to undo what they have set in motion. It will not work. Let's get back to basics. Let the church be the church. Let it do the work God gave it and be content therewith. Let us all be careful about the trends we set. "They have sown the wind; they shall reap the whirlwind."

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COMMITTEES

QUESTION: *I've heard a lot about churches without elders appointing committees to carry out certain responsibilities. For example, I know of one church that has appointed a preacher-selection committee with it's chairman. Is this scriptural?*

ANSWER: A church cannot function properly unless someone (or ones) is delegated to act on behalf of the church. When a benevolent need arose in the Jerusalem church, the apostles called the church together and told them to select seven men "whom we may appoint over this business" (Acts 6:1-3). These seven servants coordinated the work and saw that distribution was made to the needy widows.

When a benevolent situation arises today, some brethren would have to be chosen (assuming the church is not fully organized with elders and deacons) to look into the matter and make some evaluations and suggestions to the church. Then these men could be authorized to take whatever steps are necessary to alleviate the problem. These men might be called the "benevolent committee."

There is nothing wrong in calling those who act for the church a "committee." Webster defines the word, "a body of persons delegated to consider, investigate, take action on, or report on some matter." Hence, a "committee" in the church is a body of men who have been delegated or authorized by the congregation to consider, investigate, report and to take action. There is no usurpation of authority or no arbitrary function. The committee acts by delegation of the church.

In the selection of a preacher, the whole church cannot get on the phone and inquire as to what preacher is available and interested in locating with them. This work must be done by agents for the church. Two or three brethren may be chosen to make an investigation, and even authorized to invite a man to come for a "try-out." To have a chairman among the group is simply to coordinate its function. The group might be called the "Preacher-selection committee." The church would make the decision as to whether it wanted the preacher to come and work with them.

Many times churches in a building program appoint a "building committee." Men are selected who have experience in finances and building construction. They work toward finalizing the blueprints for the building, contact contractors, receive bids and seek bank financing.

Final approval would be the responsibility of the church in a business meeting.

Whenever a committee's job has finished and the need fulfilled, then the committee is to dissolve. A committee does not (and it must not) take the place of elders. Men cannot be appointed as a committee to rule and oversee the church. A committee acts for the church and is amenable to the wishes of the church.

Sometimes elders, at their discretion, select a committee to expedite a work. The committee would conduct itself the same way in this situation as it would where there are no elders. The only difference here is the committee would report back to the elders instead of the congregation.

Delegation of responsibility is needed for a variety of things in the church, and whether the groups given assignments are called "committees" or not, they certainly function as such.

Leaving God's Presence

QUESTION: *The Bible teaches that God is omnipresent, that is, He is every where (Psa. 139:7-12; Jer. 23:23-24). Yet, we read that Cain went out from the presence of the Lord" (Gen. 4:16). How could Cain go out of God's presence if He is everywhere?*

ANSWER: Cain did not leave God's presence in the sense that he went beyond His jurisdiction or awareness. Rather, Cain was rejected by God because of his sin, and he went out, separated himself, from God's protection and heavenly blessings.

When God was chastising Israel by the Syrian king, Hazael, He preserved them by His grace from annihilation, "and would not destroy them from his presence as yet" (2 Kings 13:23). Ultimately, however, the Assyrians conquered Israel and took people captive, removing them from God's sight (2 Kings 17:18). Being removed from God's sight (presence) was rejection by God, losing His protection, and standing defenseless against their enemies.

Later, God cast Judah out from His presence (2 Kings 24:20), allowing the Babylonians to take them captive. This was called, "removing them out of His sight" (2 Kings 24:3).

Jehovah will punish the disobedient with "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord. ..." (2 Thess. 1:9). This is not only banishment from His immediate presence, but a rejection by God of His blessedness, glory and honor in an eternal fellowship.

Hence, Cain's leaving God's presence is his separation from God's fellowship and His providential care. John W. Haley takes a different view. He states that the "presence of the Lord" from which Adam hid himself, and Cain and Jonah fled, was the "visible and special manifestation of God to them at the time; or else it denotes the place where that manifestation was made" (*Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible*, p. 58).

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ISAIAH SAW IN THE TEMPLE WHO TO TRUST

"In the year of King Uzziah's death, I saw the Lord... with the train of his robe filling the temple." (Isa. 6:1). When Isaiah "saw the Lord" the stage was set for the entire book of Isaiah. Within Chapter 6 there are some of the most powerful lessons for today that could be found anywhere. This was the turning point in the life of Isaiah when he was called from his comfortable surroundings of the palace to the white-hot heat of a spokesman for the eternal God to a wicked and rebellious people.

Uzziah was, next to David and Solomon, the most powerful of the Judian Kings. He had ruled for 52 years when he died, giving the troubled nation a breath of security amidst turmoil. In his 52 years he had been blessed as a successful warrior and been given many victories. He had built a great war machine. He was popular and well thought of by the nation. Yet, amidst his domestic popularity and military strength, the lengthening shadow of Assyria fell over this small Judaic nation. The mighty and dreadful Assyrian giant was about to flex its muscles and overrun Jerusalem. But, as long as the rulership of Uzziah kept Judah at peace with herself and the Egyptians remained a faithful ally, Assyria might be held off.

Yet now for Isaiah, a righteous young man, it was time for a call to a deeper level of commitment than he held prior to Uzziah's death. There were lessons to learn for Isaiah and for us as well.

I. Isaiah had to learn who to trust.

It has often been said, "show who you put your trust in and you will reveal the face of your God." V. 1, "I saw the Lord sitting on the throne." God wanted Isaiah to see that even though his personal friend and his object of national stability was dead, the **THRONE WAS NOT EMPTY**. God is sitting on the throne... that God is still in control! Isaiah had to have the foundation that if Jerusalem was to survive the terrible cruelty of the Assyrians, that the real power was in the king on the throne in Heaven and not in the king on the throne in Jerusalem. Isaiah needed to see the correct object of his trust.

Do not we of today's world need to see the Lord "high and lifted up" or "lofty and exalted" in order to know that our own existence as well as our own success comes

from Him and not our own **programs, pep, and propaganda?** The spiritual growth of individuals and congregations does not come from **OUR** programs of training or gospel meetings, or buildings, bulletins and budgets, but from the **eternal God**. Our feverish activities are **NOT TO BE THE OBJECT** of our trust! If we think we can get the work off the ground by jumping high enough, the only thing we will get is tired or burned out.

There was an entire political party in Jerusalem that said their survival was found in the alliances with Egypt or Babylon. 30:1-2: "Woe to the rebellious children . . . who make alliances . . . who proceed down to Egypt without consulting me, to take refuge in the safety of Pharaoh and to seek shelter in the shadow of Egypt." Again in 31:1: "Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help and rely on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many in horsemen, because they are very strong, **BUT THEY DO NOT LOOK TO THE HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL NOR DO THEY SEEK THE LORD!**" Isaiah could feel what he preached: "On whom do you trust," because he had learned his lesson as well. Both we and Isaiah need to remove our eyes from **WHAT WE CAN SEE**, and focus on **WHAT WE CAN'T SEE!** In II Cor. 4:18: ". . . 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." If we trust in the "seen world" we are in trouble. If we trust in our husbands or wives, or in our children, and then marriage problems occur or the children turn out to be unfaithful, we are left with an empty throne. If we trust in our ability to teach the class or preach the sermon and then everything doesn't turn out successfully in our resources, be they talent or money, one day the throne will be empty.

We must see the unseen throne of God and His greatness, "lofty and exalted." Only then will we never have an empty throne but an eternal, all powerful, loving, glorious God who is the object of our total trust. There is no "back up plan" in case He isn't able to take care of us. It is just **HIS GLORY** that we look upon.

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QUESTIONING THE POPE'S AUTHORITY

The foundation of Roman Catholicism is the contention that the pope is a successor of the apostle Peter and the Vicar of Christ on earth. If that be true (and that's a big IF), it would be reasonable to believe that the pope is infallible in matters of doctrine and has absolute authority over the Catholic Church. That is what Catholics are supposed to believe without question or reservation. But do they?

As I write this (Dec. 2, 1985), a special synod of bishops is assembled in Vatican City to "assess the impact of the reforms of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65)." According to news reports, there is much discussion, disagreement and rebellion in the Catholic Church, even among the bishops and between them and the pope.

Speaking of news, as usual, the news media is covering the actions and decisions of the assembly of bishops. The NBC television network had a special report last week on the synod. In addition to all of this, National Geographic of December 1985 has 56 pages of beautiful color on Vatican City and its treasures. This causes us to feel that our efforts are a drop in the ocean, but we must continue to speak out against this false yet powerful system.

The NBC report focused on the serious and increasing shortage of priests in the United States. They attributed that primarily to celibacy and the life-style demanded for priests. If they would only accept the teaching of the Bible they would understand that all Christians—both men and women—are priests (I Peter 2:5, 9; Rev. 1:6).

The following quotations by the Associated Press in Vatican City will give us a fair representation of the subject under consideration:

"Canadian bishops, adding their voices to Austrian and Japanese prelates, suggested that a way be found to allow divorced and remarried Roman Catholics to receive communion.

"I feel a tremendous sympathy for persons in that situation and I would certainly like to be able to reach out to them and come to their aid," said archbishop James Martin Hayes of Halifax.

"The church does not recognize divorce, and Catholics who marry again without an annulment are excluded from communion.

"What I am asking for is that either the synod or

another group look at the theological principles involved there and see if the discipline we now have really interprets in the best way for the good of the persons concerned and especially the rights of the persons concerned," Hayes told a news conference.

"Hayes spoke a day after prelates from Austria and Japan suggested to the extraordinary synod of bishops that divorced and remarried Catholics be allowed to participate fully in the church."

"Archbishop Karl Berg of Salzburg, called for 'more understanding' for Catholics who are divorced and re-marry.

"Berg suggested that 'perhaps after a period of penance they might be readmitted to the sacraments'."

"A recent poll of American Catholics conducted by the New York Times and CBS News showed 73 percent favor the acceptance of remarriage.

"At a closing session of a 1980 bishops' synod on the family, Pope John Paul II said divorced Catholics who marry outside the church 'can and ought to participate in the life' of the church but cannot receive communion unless they abstain from sexual relations.

"The Austrian prelate also touched on the issue of the Vatican's teaching on birth control. Berg questioned the teaching, which bars artificial contraception, or was asking that it be better explained."

"Bishop Malone (James W. Malone of Youngstown, Ohio) said he was encouraged with the synod, the dominant theme of which appeared to be 'universal support for Vatican II; universal agreement that the council was and remains a great gift of God to the church.'

"That assessment, Bishop Malone said, 'seems to be coupled with realistic recognition of the many questions and problems that we have 20 years after the Council'."

In view of what has been reported, the principle point of this article is: If Catholics truly believe what they teach about the authority of the pope, why don't they ask him for the facts about these controversial matters and then accept what he says? If the system operates like they teach that it should, there should never be any controversy or questions as to what Catholics are to believe and practice.

Have you noticed that in all the reports about the synod of bishops, as well as all such meetings, not one word is said about any reference to or concern for what the Bible teaches? Remember, the Catholic Church teaches that it is responsible for giving the Bible to the world. Why then don't they at least check to see what it teaches about priests, bishops, birth control, divorce and remarriage, etc.?

True Christians accept Christ alone as the head of the church and understand that he governs and guides His people today through His written will, the New Testament. Without any synods, councils or controversy, they know now what to believe and practice and the same will be true next year and for as long as the church is on the earth! They do not merely claim to accept His authority, but they demonstrate that they do by having no creed but Christ and no book but the Bible.

We plead with our Catholic friends to turn from that system of confusion and inconsistency and come into

the true body of Christ where He has all authority. The apostles never one time questioned that, and when there was any doubt about what was right they were concerned only with learning and following that which was the will of the Lord. That will stand the test of time, and guide the people of God unto all good works (2 Timothy 3:16, 17).

"THE SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER" (2) RESPONSE TO RADER

**Robert Waters
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The Jan. issue contained an article entitled "The Security of the Believer" which was written by me and was reviewed by Donnie Rader. If you have not read them please do so before continuing. Elsewhere in this issue is a response to this article. Please study it along with this one. In dealing with his review I shall use the headings as he used them.

WHAT IS THE ISSUE: I must take exception to the wording of some of what Donnie says the issue is not. He said, "This issue is not a question of security or confidence". The Christian should have confidence but the question is does he when he should? My reason for writing is the fact that the confidence of many Christians has been shaken due to the teachings of certain preachers over the last few years.

Then brother Radar said, "The question is not whether or not the Christian can live perfect. Neither of us believe that he can." Even though he admits that a Christian cannot live perfectly (several prominent men of his persuasion are saying one can), his doctrine necessitates that one do so to have confidence and security. You see, he believes that every sin, without qualification, causes God to sever his grace and fellowship, leaving one to walk in darkness. So according to him, if one is in the light he is perfect, in the sense of sinlessness. Therefore, if one has confidence and security he must believe that he is sinless. Thankfully though, they do not practice this doctrine. For example, when they preach a funeral for a faithful Christian they assure the family and friends that their loved one has gone to a better place, regardless of the real possibility that the deceased may have inadvertently sinned and died before wording any kind of confession. Another example is that they wait until a brother refuses to repent, rather than withdraw fellowship from him as soon as his sin becomes known. I wonder if it is alright to practice something the Bible doesn't teach.

Note that my brother didn't deny holding an extreme position. Brother Rader, isn't truth always between extremes? He concluded this section by saying, "The charge that brother Waters makes . . . is no different

than the charge made by Calvinists . . ." Calvinists teach apostasy is impossible; the Bible teaches that it is possible, but Radar teaches that it is inevitable. Incidentally, in the Woods-Nunnery debate that was mentioned, Woods responded by saying that the position that Nunnery was making fun of was "bald legalism". Woods holds the position that I do.

CONFIDENCE, HOPE AND SECURITY: Under this heading brother Rader makes his first of a number of quotes of things I have written elsewhere. I thought he was supposed to review my article, not everything I have ever written on this subject. I would like to reply to everything, especially the quotes he took out of context, but unfortunately space will not allow me to do so at this time.

Donnie implies that I believe a Christian may continue in sin, or practice sin, because I have said that the cleansing of 1 Jn. 1:7 is "continuously applied." But what he apparently failed to notice is that I have consistently taught that the one who has the blood continuously applied is faithful and diligent—a true Christian.

Next he wrote, "However he believes that confession is a general acknowledgement that we are not free of sin." Well that's only partly true. I taught that 1 Jn. 1:9 is a general confession as opposed to a general denial of sin (not necessarily a worded confession), but in the same sentence I made it clear that there is a "specific" confession of known sin (Acts 8). More than that, the Christian should ask forgiveness for sins of which he is unaware (Psa. 19:12). Continual repentance, confession, and prayer on the part of a faithful Christian is essential if he is to "walk in the light". It is something that the Christian does while in the light. My brother's problem is that he thinks repentance and confession of sin is something the Christian does while out of the light. (Really though, and who is not "in the light" is not a Christian, since he would not be Christ-like). Rather, repentance and confession are a practice of the Christian. One brother wrote, "If he is walking in the light, he is not guilty of sin and does not NEED to confess anything" (J.L.Z.). How far from the truth! The Pharisee in the parable in Luke 18 didn't think he needed to confess anything but look what happened to him. This will continue to seem contradictory to men like Rader until they accept that "walk in the light" doesn't mean "sinless living".

My friend next said, "If he thinks that any kind of repentance, confession and prayer is essential then he has no more confidence than the rest of us have, for if one sins, he stands condemned until that general repentance, confession and prayer is made." No, that's not what I believe. That's what you teach, unless you think all sins have to be specifically confessed. Which is it, brother Rader?

WALKING IN THE LIGHT: Note how our brother dealt with this section. He quoted from my article and booklet in the first paragraph, but that was about it. Then, rather than deal objectively with what was said he built a straw man. He wants to know "what sin does not separate one from God", and, "If *one* sin doesn't separate one from God, then just how many does it

take?" I say he built a straw man because I have never said there is a sin, or particular deed, that will not separate one from God, nor have I said that one sin will not do it. His question, "just how many does it take?", is not the issue with Calvinists nor with our discussion. With Calvinists it is not a question of how many, but will any do it. And as far as we are concerned it is not a question of how many, but attitude—what will he do about it when he learns of it.

In using Gal. 6:1 Donnie teaches that "a fault" causes one to fall from grace. He has concluded that the word "restore" has reference to fellowship—that fellowship is lost when one is overtaken in a fault. (We've already seen that he doesn't practice this idea). His exegesis of the passage is that if you have a fault you are lost. But if that is true it is most unfortunate for all of us. What about you brother Rader, do you have a fault? We who are spiritual are to seek to correct the faults of brethren. The fault may be one that has resulted in spiritual death or it might not.

The next point I think worthy of reply is his statement, "Brother Waters suggests in his article and in his booklet that to deny his position is to contend for perfection." Is it not true that if we always fall from grace when we sin then sinlessness is essential to security (or at least thinking that we are sinless)? In view of this theory, we deny our sins if we express confidence of salvation.

BLOOD CONTINUOUSLY APPLIED: In my first article I said, "The text teaches that one who walks in the light has the blood continuously applied." Brother Rader said, "The text doesn't say that." Well then, if my statement was wrong, then one who walks in the light does not have the blood continuously applied. He said, "That's an assumption of Robert Waters." Well I'll let the reader decide who is doing the assuming. Here it is: "But if we walk in the light... the blood ... cleanseth..."

Yes, the blood cleanseth as we confess; the confession being a part of the "walk". But the word "cleanseth" of 1 Jn. 1:7 is continuous. Vincent said, "The cleansing is present and continuous." But, of course verse nine gives a condition, which is that we confess our sins. We are forgiven of sins as we confess, or "if we confess", in the same sense that we are forgiven "as we forgive our debtors" (Mt. 6:11-14). The context of verse nine indicates that this confession is in opposition to denying sin in our lives (or thinking that we are "without sin"). Specific confession of known sin is of course taught in Acts 8.

1 Jn. 1:7 does teach that the blood is continuously applied to those who "walk in the light". That is what it says. Of course confession is essential to that walk, but so is repentance, forgiveness, love, etc.

SPECIFIC CONFESSION: Now he wants to know who teaches that each individual sin must be confessed specifically. I wish he hadn't asked that because I would rather not call names and give quotes of anyone who can't respond. But since he asked I feel obligated to answer. Of course writers have been careful not to come right out and say "all sins must be specifically con-

fessed", nevertheless, it is apparently believed and taught. You judge from the following quotes (emphasis mine): 1) **Marshall Patton**—"When in public prayer we pray 'Forgive us our sin,' such presupposes repentance on the part of **each individual of what he is guilty**. Public prayer is no place to identify each individual's private sin." (GOT, July 4, 85, p. 401). **John Welch**—"When a man does not confess his sin, the guilt of it is still with him and he is walking in darkness." (F&F's, Jan. 81,;10). **Donnie Rader**—implied it when, in ridiculing a Calvinist who asked, "Can a person be in error on simply one point of Bible doctrine and still go to heaven?", he said, "Doesn't that sound like some of our brethren today?" Rader implied that he believed any "one point" must be specifically confessed. If "one point" of Bible doctrine then every sin (F&F's, Jan. 81, p. 30). **James Zachary**—The consequence of sin is spiritual death... The only way to avoid such a consequence is to do something about **that particular sin . . .**" (The Epistle, May 85). "When I commit a sin, I have done an unrighteous act. That makes me unrighteous . . . As long as I have the guilt of **that sin**, I am walking in darkness. **The moment I repent, pray and confess** The Lord forgives me and I once again walk in the light. To be in 'darkness' is to have **sinned and not yet confessed.**" (**Know the Truth**, May 5, 85; published by C of C, Winchester Rd., Memphis, TN). **Mike Willis**—"I believe that any time a Christian commits a sin, he stands condemned (Gal. 2:14) or he dies spiritually (Gen. 3). In order to be forgiven of **that sin**, he must **repent of his sin**, confess it, and pray for forgiveness from the Lord." (GOT, June 6, 85, p. 368). (Mike now denies believing what he said).

Brother Rader, if you believe in confessing categories of sin, what if you did not know of or forgot to specifically confess a certain category? Or do you believe a general confession such as, "forgive me of all past sins", will suffice in such cases.

QUESTIONS (asked by Rader): 1. "Why will your position not work on the pious unimmersed?" Answer: The "Pious unimmersed" have not had the blood of Christ applied and thus are not walking in the light. 2. "What about the homosexual who doesn't know he is wrong, is he in fellowship with God?" Answer: It would be rare indeed that a Christian not know that such was wrong. Our society in general has come to look upon this sin as a great sin. If we were to judge according to human standards and reasoning we would have to say, "that man is definitely in darkness", but we are not the judge. Judgments on hypothetical examples that involve ourselves are necessary (to an extent), to our having confidence. But whether the individual in the "what if" case is in fellowship with God or not in God's business. **IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH US.** Churches no doubt have fellowshiped sexually immoral persons, but if a church is aware of it, it must withdraw fellowship. So really, the question, and others like it, are irrelevant and prejudicial. 3. "What sin (give some examples) can a child of God commit and not be separated?" Answer: A child of God is not permitted to commit any sin willingly. But we all sin as my brother

has admitted.

RADER'S CONCLUSION: He concludes with a quotation of Ezek. 33:12, but why I do not know. All that I wish to say about it is to ask you to read the whole paragraph and any commentary (if you choose), and you will readily see that it lends no support to that which brother Radar is advocating.

QUESTIONS FOR BROTHER RADER: 1. Is a thing sin if the one guilty is ignorant of it (consider Lev. 5:17)? 2. If a man who had been preaching the gospel and serving God faithfully for 40 years inadvertently or ignorantly sins and dies before he becomes aware of it and before any confession can be worded, would he go to hell in every instance? You can answer this one because it may happen to you. 3. Is it not true that "sins of omission", (failure to do, Jas. 4:17), is sin just as sins of commission? If yes, then if I must be without sin to walk in the light and in fellowship with God, that means that I must always do everything I know to do that is good. Do you?

Conclusion

If I believed the way brother Rader believes I would be too scared to open my mouth to teach even after diligent study. You see, if he is teaching error on even one Bible subject, regardless of what it is, he is separated from God and would be eternally lost if he died while teaching it. I once showed a preacher an error that he made in a sermon, thinking that it might help him to see that there was no security in his position. But he said, "that was just unfortunate". It was unfortunate alright. But what is more unfortunate is the fact that brethren are denying their sins rather than confessing them.

If the reader has difficulty understanding what this is all about you can go to Luke 18:9-14 where the Lord summed it up in one short parable. There was a Pharisee who was self-righteous and who denied his sins and there was a tax collector who said, "God be merciful to me a sinner!". Clearly we can see that there is a wrong attitude and a right one here. And surely the lesson is that after we have been diligent in our service to him, we are not perfect or sinless (Ecc. 7:20; 1 Ki. 8:46; Prv. 20:9; Psa. 143:2; 2 Chron. 6:36; Rom. 3:9-19; Jas. 3:2,8), but sinners in need of mercy for sins aside from what we are able to recognize and specifically confess.

Brethren, don't lose sight of the fact that we who "do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the spirit", have been made "free from the law of sin and death" by "the law of the spirit of life" (see Scheme of Redemption, by Wharton pp. 17-23, on Rom. 8:1-4).



A REVIEW OF "THE SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER" (2) RESPONSE TO WATERS

Donnie V. Rader

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I appreciate the good attitude with which brother Waters is carrying on this discussion. When such is the case, the discussion can only be profitable.

Things He Didn't Answer

1. Our brother didn't tell us which sins separate from God and which do not. I think brother Waters will agree that this is the issue. I asked him about the man who may be guilty of lying, adultery or worshipping with the instrument. Do these sins separate from God? He didn't tell us. I'm asking again, brother Waters, please tell us **what sin(s) does not separate from God?**

2. Since he believes that (a) some sins do not separate, (b) the blood is continuously applied, and (c) one is not condemned until he demonstrates that he will not repent—then what about the one who commits adultery in weakness or ignorantly worships with the instrument, why do they not have the same confidence that you have? I've asked that before. Why didn't he deal with it?

3. Though he made reference to it, he really didn't address the point that he has no more confidence than he claims we have if he believes any kind of repentance, confession and prayer is essential, for one would be condemned until that repentance, confession and prayer was made.

4. He didn't really answer the question that I asked about how many sins it takes to separate from God. If one sin committed in ignorance or inadvertence doesn't separate then would two, three, four? Just how many? He didn't tell us.

5. He didn't deal with the eight examples of one sin (some of ignorance, weakness and inadvertence) separating from God.

6. I asked him why 1 Jno. 1:7 included sins of ignorance, weakness and inadvertence (as far as sins that do not put us out of the light) but doesn't include all sins. He didn't tell us.

I plead with our brother to deal with these points as well as those that I shall make in this article.

The Article

What I teach gives no reason for a lack of confidence as brother Waters tried to indicate. I have already shown that his teaching doesn't provide any more confidence. Even if some sins do not separate, we still would have no more security because we would need a list of all the sins that do and don't separate, a perfect knowledge of that list and a perfect knowledge of self.

Brother Waters, just who are the several prominent men who say one can live perfect? We would like proof of his statement.

Our brother said, "So according to him, if one is in the light he is perfect, in the sense of sinlessness." While one is in the light he is without sin, just as one who rises from baptism is sinless at that point, though he is not and will never be perfect (there are many virtues in which he can continue to grow, for example love, knowledge, patience and self control). However, he will sin (1 Jno. 1:8) which is a step out of the light (1 Jno. 1:5). The Christian who asks for forgiveness is then in the light and is sinless at that point. If not, the prayer was ineffective.

He said that I would preach the funeral of a man and give assurance to the family not knowing if he died with a sin of inadvertence unconfessed. Thus he says I don't practice what I preach. Brother Waters, do you preach funerals and give assurance to the families? If so, do you know for sure that they didn't commit a willful sin that was unconfessed. Do you know that any sin they did commit and didn't confess was one of inadvertence? Do you know that they didn't sin in attitude and didn't confess it? Then concerning a church withdrawing fellowship, there is a difference in the point at which a church withdraws from one and the point at which he is separated from God. Withdrawal is the last step, not the first.

He says that I teach that apostasy is inevitable. I do teach that all sin separates (Jas. 1:15). That doesn't mean that when we sin (1 Jno. 1:8) we will become wholesale apostates and be the man of Heb. 6. I'm confused on how he uses the term "apostasy". I generally use it to mean a complete abandonment of the faith. However, if he means that I teach that the Christian will sin (1 Jno. 1:8) and that sin will separate him from God and he denies that such is inevitable, then he is the one that affirms the possibility of sinlessness.

He denies that his teaching that the blood was "continuously applied" means that a Christian may continue in sin without separation. If the Christian who sins ignorantly or inadvertently is not cleansed as long as he may ignorantly or inadvertently sin, then the blood is not continuously applied.

He says that I believe that repentance and confession are done outside the light. If the brother who has sinned is still in the light, then why does he need to repent and confess? Is sin equated with darkness or light in the N.T.? What about the faith, repentance and confession on the part of the alien sinner, are those done outside the light, or is he already in the light as he meets the conditions in God's law of pardon?

Our brother denies that he believes that one stands condemned until a general repentance, confession and prayer is made. Then why does he claim to teach that repentance and confession are essential? If one doesn't stand condemned until he repents and confesses, then these are not essential to forgiveness. I wonder if he doesn't believe that one's past life give future forgiveness. Consider his question about the preacher who faithfully served God for 40 years then inadvertently or

ignorantly sinned and died before confession. Brother Waters, do you think that his 40 years of righteousness granted him forgiveness of these ignorant and inadvertent sins? Suppose the things were turned around and for 40 years he had been a wicked sinner and then the day before he died he was baptized. Do the 40 years of sin mean his baptism is of no avail? Why not, if 40 years of righteousness means that those sins were of no avail?

He said, "I have never said there is a sin, or particular deed, that will not separate one from God, nor have I said that one sin will not do it." He has told us that some sins do not separate (See Searching The Scriptures, Jan., 86; The Expository Review, Aug. 83; his booklet, The Security of the Believer, pp. 8,10,11,12,13,14,16, 18).

We are told that it isn't a question of how many sins, but attitude. Suppose the man is ignorant of the right attitude and sins, is he separated? According to him, one sin in attitude will separate one from God. Now I wonder even more about that preacher who served God for 40 years and then commits one sin (wrong attitude). Does his 40 years of righteousness take care of that sin?

In his reference to Gal. 6:1 he confuses "faults" as we normally use the term today and "sin" as it is used in the passage. He said that the fault may result in spiritual death or it may not. If it doesn't separate from God, then why does he need to be restored?

He says that in 1 Jno. 1:7 that "cleanseth" is continuous. While that is true, it is only as frequent as we confess (1 Jno. 1:9).

I had asked for the names of men who taught that we must specifically confess every instance of sin as brother Waters said some taught. None of the men quoted believe that. He misrepresented every one of them! None of the quotes say what I was asking and he knew it as evidenced in his statement just previous to the quotes.

He asked about confessing categories of sin and what if one forgot to confess a certain category. I pointed out in my first article that 1 Jno. 1:9 says we must confess our sins (of what we are guilty). That doesn't mean every specific instance of sin. If he is guilty of lying, though he may not remember every instance, he must confess that he is guilty of lying.

My Questions

1. He didn't answer the question. If some sins don't separate, then why doesn't that work on the pious un-immersed?

2. It seems that he had trouble answering about the homosexual. He said he would judge from human standards that the homosexual is in darkness. Why? If some sins of ignorance do not separate from God, why will it not work here? He said it would be a rare situation for a Christian not to know it was wrong. Well, tell us about that rare case.

3. He didn't answer this question either. I know you believe that a child of God cannot willfully sin, but I was asking for some examples of those sins that do not separate. Surely, surely you can just name a few.

More Questions

1. If a Christian sins, are there any conditions for forgiveness? 2. Should we fellowship all the saved? 3. Is it possible for a Christian to lie (as Abraham did) and not be separated from God? 4. Is the man who ignorantly worships with the instrument guilty of a sin that separates him from God or is that a sin that doesn't separate?

Questions For Me

1. Yes (1 Tim. 1:12-16). 2. Yes, so far as the word of God teaches (the old prophet—1 Kings 13; Ezek. 33:12). What is the likelihood of a faithful servant of 40 years not knowing that he had sinned? 3. Yes. (Matt. 25:31-46).

Absolute And Relative Matters

It will help in this issue if we better understand that not all of God's requirements are of the same nature. There are some areas that are absolute. In these we must be perfect. There is no room for growth. One is either guilty of adultery or lying or he is not. In this area we can attain unto God's perfect law. There are other areas that are relative. Our obedience to these commands is determined upon our time, opportunity and abilities. There are varying degrees of patience and knowledge. These commands we never keep perfectly. We always fall short of perfection. But, that lack of perfection is not necessarily sin. The key is a "diligent" effort (2 Pet. 1:5). (For more study on this see Marshall E. Patton's excellent articles in *Searching The Scriptures*, Sept., 74 and Jan., 79).

Constantly Sinning?

Underlying this idea that some sins do not separate is the concept that the Christian constantly sins. That's why some have to believe some sins don't separate, for if all sin did separate we would be hopeless because we sin all the time. Where is the passage that shows that the Christian is in and out of sin regularly? Oh, I know he will and does sin (1 Jno. 1:8), but that doesn't say that he can't help but sin every hour of the day. I just don't believe we are all that sinful; do you? If we are, we are a sorry and hopeless bunch! I realize that we all will and do sin, but lack of perfection is not sin. Neither is every misunderstanding a sin (Rom. 14).

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Herschel E. Patton
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WIND AND CLOUD WATCHERS

Nothing keeps people from the Bread Of Life more than neglect or procrastination. There may be a few isolated cases of people neglecting to eat food, because of being too involved in something or because of some emotional or psychological problem. Most people, however, do not look for excuses for not eating to sustain physical life. It is in the spiritual realm, involving the Bread Of Life, that the problem is mountainous.

Failure to do because of neglect and procrastination, and the consequences, are figuratively pictured in Eccles. 11:1-6. "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days." The imagery seems to be that of merchants sending forth their ships with goods and return laden with great profit. There could never be profits if the ships stayed in the harbor. They must venture forth. The next verse is an exhortation to benevolence, "give to seven and also to eight" (fully and then some) without regard for what results or consequences may follow your action. The one who acts-ventures forth-gives, being unhampered by fears of what might happen (over which he has no control) is the one who prospers—"receive bread back after many days". Perhaps this divine principle is the basis for the popular adage "nothing ventured, nothing gained".

Threats

There will always be hazards or possible happenings in any endeavor. It may rain or hail on your sown seed or it may not. The tree will be where it falls and there is nothing you can do about it. One thing is certain, if one never cuts wood because the tree may fall where it shouldn't, damaging some thing or person, he will never have lumber with which to build or wood for warmth in winter. If the farmer fails to plant because he fears it might rain too much, not rain, hail on tender sprouts, enemy sow tares or set fire to his field, he will never reap. The one who allows these unforeseen things, that could or may happen, to keep him from duty-from venturing forth-is the one who "observeth the wind and regardeth the clouds" who never sows or reaps (vs. 4). A man can no more know about these "might happen" things than he can know about the way of the spirit (wind), unseen things, or the growth of the embryo in the womb (vs. 5). Man's duty, in view of all this, is to "sow thy seed in the morning and in the evening withhold not thy hand" without being influenced by "might be" things that you cannot know (vs. 6).

Spiritual Wind and Cloud Watching

We have far too many wind and cloud watchers in the church when it comes to doing those things that constitute feeding upon the Bread of Life." As a consequence, many starve and never reap eternal life. These are the "fearful" of Rev. 21:8 who will "have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone". They failed to do God's bidding because they feared what men might say or do, or what the results might be if they acted.

The need for PERSONAL EVANGELISM is urgent for every child of God (Jno. 9:4-5); Matt. 28:19; Mk. 16:15; 2 Tim. 4:2), but with many it never gets done because "they might resent my efforts," "offend me," "I might be criticized," "conditions might be better later on," "I'm too busy now," etc.

All followers of the Lord know that VISITING those in need (sick, bereaved, fainting) is a must if we please the Lord. In fact, doing this or not doing is a determining factor in our eternal destiny (Matt. 25:32-45; Jas. 1:27; 2:15-16; 1 Jno. 3:17-18; Rom. 12:10, 13-15). If one is not doing this, he is not partaking of the sustaining Bread of Life. Why are you not constantly engaged in this activity? Is it not because "the time is not right" for you? You are too busy with other things? You assume that others will supply enough? You fear they might not appreciate your effort or some might criticize? Because of such cloud and wind watching the work is not done and reaping is made impossible.

PERSONAL EDIFICATION or spiritual growth is a matter of constantly feeding upon the Bread of Life. The necessity of this is emphasized in such passages as 1 Pet. 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:18, 2 Tim. 2:15; Heb. 5:12; 10:24-25. How many times have you promised yourself-made a resolution-to start reading the Bible more; to begin going to Bible classes; to stop forsaking the assembling of saints; to spend more time in prayer; to make greater sacrifices for and in the Lord's work? Why did you not carry through with these noble resolutions and why are you not now engaged in such personal edification? More than likely you have been, and are, cloud and wind watching—looking for the "right time". Right now you don't like the teacher, preacher, or some of the brethren, so you are waiting until things are more to your liking. Too, maybe you are so involved in your work, sports, and other entanglements that you just don't have time. Maybe, later on, there won't be so many demands on your time, then you say, "I will launch forth". Such casting about for excuses for not "sowing thy seed in the morning and withholding not thy hand in the evening" means you never get done what is necessary and, therefore, can never reap eternal life.

It is this folly of being wind and cloud watchers that keep many people from obeying the gospel and confessing their sins. Instead of obeying the Lord or confessing sins as soon as convicted, many begin to look for, or envision, what others may say or do, the things they may have to give up, or a more convenient season. Usually they end up never obeying.

NEW CONCERNS ABOUT AN OLD PROBLEM

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As each new generation arises, young people must be taught and older ones reminded of great Biblical truths. Not only so but special care must be taken to APPLY those truths properly. Sometimes in great zeal to accelerate growth and to excite brethren to stronger commitment and more enthusiastic spirituality, Christians fail to test activities by the Word of God and lose sight of principles clearly taught by the apostles.

No concept is more important to efforts to avoid the ever-present tendency toward denominationalism among brethren than a clear view of God's pattern for the organization of brethren functioning collectively as the church of Christ. No organizational issue lies closer to the heart of potential compromise of New Testament Christianity than the issue of church cooperation. Can churches cooperate with one another. If so, in what and how can they cooperate?

Some in influential positions in churches at the present time have no firsthand experience with specific issues which divided brethren in churches of Christ twenty-five or thirty years ago. Some of them have not studied those issues nor the history of apostasy and divisions caused by misunderstandings concerning cooperation authorized in the Scriptures. As a result, I see what I believe to be compromises and I greatly fear that those compromises will increase in number setting dangerous precedents. The brethren's intentions are good but we are responsible to realize what we are doing when we open doors which lead to apostasy. Our greatest problem may be that we are unwittingly leaving impressions upon younger untaught babes in Christ who may march right on off into institutionalism because they cannot see the difference (if there is any) between what we are practicing and what liberal brethren have done all along!

Some Current Concerns

I travel much each year both in my work as a preacher of the gospel and in my secular work as an educator. I also live in a large city in which there are many congregations which oppose institutionalizing the church. Many brethren are aggressively working to overcome lethargy and to help the kingdom to grow. I have become aware, however, of some recent activities which cause me to be concerned. Two examples should be sufficient to raise the issue and hopefully to cause some to remember and think.

This last year the needs among Ethiopian Christians became widely known among brethren in America. Institutional churches supported the needy in Ethiopia

through sponsoring churches in Louisiana and California. Some of our brethren in congregations which do not support human institutions suggested that we should send aid through those sponsoring churches because of the special political difficulties of getting aid into the country. One brother who preaches even suggested that the church where he worships should send through a denominational church organization which was gathering up funds. Certainly a church in America can send directly to a needy church(es) in Ethiopia. Some in Tampa and elsewhere did. We NEED not DO NOTHING. We MUST not, however, violate New Testament authority and compromise Truth!

I am concerned also about some brethren in metropolitan areas using language which indicates that they view their lectureship programs, gospel meetings, and singings which attract large audiences as "city-wide" or "area-wide" worship services in which churches come together with "sister congregations" to be edified. There is no problem with a church inviting Christians other than the members of that local congregation to worship with it as INDIVIDUALLY they have opportunity, but it is another thing for elders to arrange worship and/or work for many CONGREGATIONS. Would there be a difference in principle in doing that when they meet at the same time in the same building and when they do not? The next step, of course, would be for two sets of elders to jointly plan these meetings. The distinction between a church planning and executing its own work or worship and a church deliberately planning and executing a program for all the churches in its area must be clear in our minds, in what we say, and in what actually happens. Again, it is time for us to go all the way back and review the pattern so that we don't unwittingly get carried away and violate the Lord's will. It is certainly in that spirit that these words are penned.

Biblical Church Cooperation

The purpose of this article is not to argue at length the question of church cooperation. Our purpose is primarily to encourage caution and study before we engage in questionable activities in the name of positive, aggressive, active, enthusiastic effort to cause the church to grow. Some essentials on church cooperation would perhaps be helpful here, nonetheless:

1. God planned the church before the earth was formed (Ephesians 3:8-11).

2. The church must conform itself to God's plan (His will and purposes) and subject itself to Christ in all things (Ephesians 5:24).

3. God's will is stated in the Word inspired by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:9-13) and that Word, revealed in the New Testament, is the pattern or blueprint for all things pertaining to the church (Hebrews 8:5; 1 Corinthians 4:14-17; 14:33-34, 37; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

4. The pattern provides for no organization through which the universal church can function.

5. The pattern does not provide for any collective larger than the local congregation for church activity.

6. The pattern provides only for functioning in local

churches and for the appointment of elders in each church who oversee the work and watch for the souls of the saints who compose that church (Acts 14:23); Hebrews 13:17; Philippians 1:1).

7. The elders are to take heed to the local church in which they have been made bishops and their oversight is limited to that congregation (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2).

8. Nowhere in the Scripture is there authorization for one church to serve as the sponsoring church through which other churches act.

9. When two or more New Testament congregations supported the same preacher out in the field, each sent its contribution for support directly to him (2 Corinthians 11:8; Philippians 1:5; 4:15-17).

10. When another church sent to a church in need, it sent its own contribution by its own messengers to the elders of the receiving church who oversaw distribution of it (Acts 11:27-30; 1 Corinthians 16:1-4; Romans 15:25-26; 2 Corinthians 8, 9).

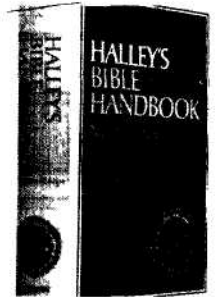
CONCLUSION: NO PASSAGE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT AUTHORIZES TWO OR MORE LOCAL CHURCHES TO FUNCTION TOGETHER AS COLLECTIVE BODIES MERGING OVERSIGHT OR MEMBERSHIP TO DO ANYTHING (WORK OR WORSHIP)! NOR DID ANY CHURCH PLAN OR EXECUTE THE WORK OF OTHER CHURCHES! INVOLVED IN THIS IS THE VERY ESSENCE OF THE NATURE OF CONGREGATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND AUTONOMY. CONCERN ABOUT IT MUST NOT BE NEGLECTED!

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A MORMON CRITICISM OF THE BIBLE

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The late Bruce McConkie, in a fireside satellite transmission, made the following critical remarks about the Bible.

The Bible of the Old World has come to us from the manuscripts of antiquity—manuscripts which passed through the hands of uninspired men who changed many parts to suit their own doctrinal ideas. Deletions were common, and, as it now stands, many plain and precious portions and many covenants of the Lord have been lost. As a consequence, those who rely upon it alone stumble and are confused and divide themselves among churches, all based on this or that interpretation of the Bible. (Ensign, December 1985, p. 55).

While no one will deny the existence of denominational and sectarian division among those who rely on the Bible alone, to charge the Bible as the culprit responsible for such a bad situation is less than honest. It is not the Bible that causes the divisions, but works of men—just about as human as the Mormon "scriptures" (Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price.) The Bible alone will produce unity—it is only the admixture of human interpretations and alleged revelations that produce division.

But the books that Mormons claim are far superior to the Bible have a rather sorry track record in regard to what is produced. The claims that are made for it border on bibliolatry. In the same speech, McConkie said,

On the other hand, the Bible of the New World, as I choose to designate the Book of Mormon, has been preserved for us by a divine providence which kept the ancient record in prophetic hands. Written by inspiration on plates of gold (which were mysteriously pirated away to heaven allegedly, DRS) it was hidden in the soil of Cumorah, to come forth in modern times by angelic ministration and then be translated by the gift and power of God.

After the translation, the voice of God, speaking from heaven to witnesses chosen beforehand by him, declared two things—that the translation was correct and that the book was true. We, of course, believe the Bible as far as it has been translated correctly, but we place no such restriction on the Book of Mormon. And so it is that there has come into our hands a book that is as perfect, or near perfect, as mortal hands can make it. It is a divine book, a book like none other ever written, translated, or published. (Ibid.)

While the Bible can stand the test of manuscript

examination and is overly proven to be true by archaeological findings, no such claims can be truly made for any Mormon document, claiming to be the word of God. The Bible has stood up much better than any other document claiming to have been revealed from the Almighty. But the point here is that the Mormon books have done much more to cause division than the true and living word, the Bible.

Steven L. Shields, is a scholar and fifth-generation Latter Day Saint, of the Salt Lake City variety. His scholastic work has been focused on the history of those who followed the dreams and visions of Joseph Smith, Jr. He is editor of a paper called, "Restoration." He also is author of an extremely accurate book on the history of division among those who follow the Book of Mormon and other Mormon scriptures. His book is called, *Divergent Paths of the Restoration* and is published by Restoration Research, P.O. Box 547, Bountiful, Utah 84010. The book lists well over a hundred factions of Mormonism. His paper continues to update recent divisions among Mormon followers.

The major division in Mormonism is between the "Latter Day Saints" (commonly known as the Utah group) and the "Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints," with headquarters in Independence, Mo. I will not attempt to list all the differing factions. The interested reader can purchase the book and read personally the basic characteristics of each faction. It is of some use, however, to notice that there is even one homosexual group listed among those of the diverging paths of what they call "the Restoration." This group was organized in 1972 in the Denver, Colorado area.

One of the most intriguing groups is called commonly, "the Strangites." James Jesse Strang came forward immediately after the death of Joseph Smith, Jr. with a letter in hand from the prophet personally which named Strang as the next prophet and seer of the saints. He even claimed that he had been shown plates, and when he translated them with the Urim and Thummim, of all things, they named Strang as the successor to Joseph. And, as if that were not enough, he claimed that an angel appeared to him on the very day Smith died, confirming his successorship. With such "incontrovertible" evidence (?) Strang led some of the Mormons away. It is amazing that some Mormons believed his personal testimony of angelic visitations, hidden plates and the letter Smith allegedly wrote, but others rejected it. I have always wondered why they would reject Strang's story, but accept the one Joseph told. It is strange.

Another group, seldom heard from, are called Hedrickites. This is the small group that has title to the "Temple Lot" in Jackson County, Missouri, which had been designated by the prophet Smith as the precise place where the great temple was to be built. Notwithstanding the fact that the original prophecy of this event alleged that it would be accomplished forthwith, it still remains unfulfilled. Smith had claimed that God revealed to him that the temple would be completed in the lifetime of those early saints. (Doc. & Cov. 84:2-5).

But alas, all those have gone to their reward with no fulfillment of this prophecy. The reason that the fulfillment is not likely to take place soon is that the Hedrickites do not have the money to build the temple, and will not sell the deed to the property. But, they adamantly claim to be "a remnant of the Church of 1830, bearing the same name, teaching the same doctrine, believing the same truths, practicing the same virtues, holding the revelations as originally given and enjoying the same spirit(.)" and deny they are a mere faction.

Some honest Mormon may be able to see the folly of the McConkie claim, but those wedded heart, body, soul and pocketbook to Mormonism will likely never change. Honesty is rare among those who are deluded by dreams, visions and angelic visitations. An honest examination of the Bible and the Book of Mormon can produce only one thing. There is no comparison between that which is demonstrably factual and true and that which is patently false. Only those who have a strong delusion will continue to make such baseless charges against the Bible and hold on to that which, by their own scholarship, is obviously the single and only instrument that has caused the rampant division among those claiming that the Holy Spirit has personally shown them the truth about Smith and his books.

The next time you have the opportunity, ask the representatives of the LDS, RLDS, et. al. if, at the time they got their "testimony" about the Book of Mormon, the Holy Spirit also revealed to them which faction of Mormonism they should join. It is important also to remember that this is the way the whole Mormon fantasy began. Smith went to a wooded area to find out which church to join, and the voice told him to join none, but to start his own. Surely, some Mormon should want to know which branch of that one now to join—don't you think?

SIMPLICITY IN CHRIST

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"SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM"

"Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine" (Pr. 3:9, 10). "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mt. 6:33).

These two statements were separated by hundreds of years, and spanned two dispensations of time, but the principle is the same: give God what belongs to him, and

you will receive your share in return. When we rob God, we rob ourselves (Mal. 3:8-10). The first quotation was tried and proven in the land of Canaan; the second has been vindicated by faithful children of God in our time, and will ultimately bear fruit in heaven (Mt. 6:20; Col. 3:1-4).

But, Israel invariably departed from God in the midst of prosperity and plenty, supposing that such prosperity was of their own power (Dt. 8:17,18). So it is today. Some brethren will not even give the Lord their first-fruits, much less anything more.

Besides their first-fruits, which were already the Lord's, the Israelites gave tithes to the poor, dedicated things to the Lord, and divested themselves of sundry offerings and sacrifices. They could not duplicate the first-fruits and other offerings, by lumping them together (Lev. 27:26). Neither could they escape their responsibilities to the Lord or to man by hiding behind the years of release or the year of jubilee (Dt. 15:9). But, they still tried. And, so do we.

We are to present our bodies (Rom. 12:1), our spirits (1 Cor. 6:19, 20), our time (Col. 4:5, 6), and a portion of our material prosperity unto the Lord (1 Cor. 16:1, 2). But we rob God at every turn, keep for ourselves, and give more to the world than we do unto the Lord. If we had authority to build jails for spiritual robbers, they would outnumber our meeting houses.

Brethren could begin by offering the first-fruits of the week unto God—the first day of the week. Assemble with the saints as often as possible, as long as possible. This is the Lord's day. Then, arrange the other six days to the glory of God in honest labor and doing good. Let even acceptable rest and relaxation be in proper proportion to other activities. Be not "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God" (2 Tim. 3:4).

Study your Bible, renew the inward man at every opportunity, and leave time for prayer and meditation. Assemblies of the church at the local place of worship, with other congregations in gospel meetings, and informal gatherings of saints in homes will afford opportunities to do this. Some will miss their assemblies on Sunday or Wednesday to attend a gospel meeting in the area, thus "killing two birds with one stone." Make sure the birds you kill are not the unfeathered kind, without wings. If some did not show up at home or at work any more often than they do at the meetinghouse, they would be guilty of desertion, or added to the rolls of the missing and runaways.

When we fail to "seek first the kingdom" we not only rob God, but we rob ourselves, and rob our families, friends and brethren of needed encouragement, and a good example which would point them to "the Lamb of God" (Jno. 1:29).

WHEN YOU MOVE—Please allow two months for change of address notices. We have a cut-off date for changes each month. *Thanks for your help.*

THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

Send all News Hems to: Connie W. Adams, P.O. Box 69, Brooks, KY40109

J. T. SMITH TO EDIT TORCH

The December, 1985 issue of TORCH announced that J. T. SMITH would become the new editor of the magazine with the January, 1986 edition. We regret that health considerations have caused JAMES P. NEEDHAM to make this decision. Brother Needham is a hard working preacher who speaks and writes out of deep conviction and is totally fearless even in the most heated controversy. His work load for years has been such as would have caused lesser men to collapse. He has not only edited, printed and published TORCH (along with the help of his good wife) but serves as an elder where he preaches, conducts a number of meetings a year and teaches a class at FLORIDA COLLEGE. His research, writing and speaking on Humanism has made a vital contribution to the fight against this Godless philosophy. He has plans to publish some books which he has not had time to write and we look forward to the fruit of his work in that area. His book on PREACHERS AND PREACHING remains a classic in the field. We wish for him better health and success in his work for the Lord.

J. T. SMITH has been a long-time friend. For many years he has written a column for SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES which has contained much valuable material. He has been a writer who would write without having to be coaxed. We have worked together in meetings, debates, traveled to the Philippines together in 1971 and spent many enjoyable hours together usually discussing the Lord's work. He is a tireless worker. He is one of the ablest debaters I know and does his homework carefully. He has notified me that he will not be able to continue his column in STS because of the added work editing TORCH will place on him. We regret this but certainly accept his judgment about it. We have every confidence that his work as editor of TORCH will be well done and that it will be a fair, but militant, instrument for good under his direction. His wife, Brownie, will be an able assistant to him in this work. We wish for them good health and many years of fruitful effort in publishing TORCH. Subscriptions to TORCH are \$6 a year and may be sent to J. T. Smith, P.O. Box 698, Lake Jackson, Texas 77566.

MIKE SCOTT, P.O. Box 53, Middletown, IN 47356—We have been working here since July 1982. The work is slow and hard, partly because the people of the community regard us as some kind of cult. We have about 25 members and have had one baptism and two resto-rations. It would help us greatly if some members could move here and help create more impact in the community. Even one family would help.

MRS. W. C. SAWYER, 132 E. Mason Ave., Danville, KY 40422—Since October 25, 1985, Cecil has been bedfast with Guillian-Barre Syndrome. He is unable to get up or walk. This disease, which usually follows a viral infection, destroys the linings of the nerves and causes paralysis. He will recover but Doctors say it could take from six months to a year. Recovery is very slow as the body must grow the nerve linings back before he can walk and use his arms and hands more freely. He has received so many cards, letters and calls. We appreciate all the kindness and prayers and concern shown from friends far and near.

THOMAS HOGLAND, South "S" and Jenny Lind Sts., Ft. Smith, AR 72901—After about eight years with the Southside church in Sulphur Springs, Texas, I will be working with the Park Hill church in Ft. Smith. My first meeting for 1986 will be in Oklahoma City. Please note my change of address and visit us when in western Arkansas.

MIKE HUGHES, P.O. Box 75, Joaquin, TX 75954—We have been working with the church here since September 1st and enjoy the work. Home studies and a Bible correspondence course are under way. Attendance had picked up from 42 to 55. We still lack about \$700 a month in needed support which has hindered us from getting a tele-

phone and other needed things. One time help would be appreciated, but we also need commitments on a regular basis. For references you may contact: J. T. Smith (409) 265-2191; Eugene Britnell (501) 375-8200; B. J. Thomas (318) 742-4557; Vernon Love (813) 937-6867.

FERNANDO P. VENEGAS, Casilla No. 122 C.C. 5500 Mendoza, Argentina, South America—In October I was in a meeting at "Moreno" in Buenos Aires in which 7 teenagers obeyed the gospel. Their faith was first planted in them by their parents. In a meeting with the "Florida" congregation in Chile, one man obeyed the gospel. There are 25 faithful members at Moreno where Timoteo Guaymes is doing good work. They are in a comfortable building. The men share teaching and preaching responsibilities. At Florida, Ivan Valdes and Sergio Pino are working regularly. However, this year Ivan and family will be moving to La Serena, Chile to start a new work, the first, in the northern part of the country. In Mendoza we recently baptized a man who had visited us often from Chile. Each time he came here we had good discussions and each time I gave him tracts to study when he went back to Chile. We recently had a meeting with Tom Holley of Buenos Aires. He did an overview of the book of Revelation which helped us all.

BRIGHTON, ENGLAND

BONNY L. MELTON, 5643 Newberry Rd., Wayne, MI 48184—Brethren are seeking help in Brighton, England where a congregation has been meeting for over 95 years. Brighton is 55 miles south of London, and has a city population of 150,00 and 200,000 with adjacent towns. The building is in an excellent central location, within walking distance from the city's core, several large shopping centers, bus terminals and the main train station. The church is small but with recent addition of several members, realizes the need for full-time workers. I have been personal friends with these brethren for many years. They have invited me and my family to work full-time with them.

My wife Angela and I have just returned from a three week evaluation trip. We found an active concern toward evangelism and resolving problems, an eagerness to utilize the funds they have and a receptiveness to new converts and new found talents—put plainly, a willingness to "beat the pavement." The churches in London and a congregation of 30 in Bristol are growing. The church in Brighton has seen their progress and wishes to enjoy a similar steady growth.

For the past year, I have been working with Phil Morr in the Detroit, Michigan area. Phil spent several years in Australia and at least two years in England evangelizing London with much success. I plan to implement the same efforts in Brighton. The door is open and I ask congregations or individuals who may wish to help to contact me.

EFRAIN F. PEREZ, Casilla 1317, Valparaiso, Chile, South America—In 1986 we are expecting Glenn Rogers of McAllen, Texas to come and work with us in March in special classes and gospel meetings in both Chile and Argentina. Brother Rogers has more than 40 years experience in the Lord's work with 30 years in the Spanish work. I presented a preacher training class in three congregations in 1985.

REPORT FROM INDIA

JOHN HUMPHRIES, 8705 Wooded Glen Rd., Louisville, KY 40220—Thanks to the Father and to you for prayers and support, Tom Moody, David Watts and I safely completed nearly six weeks of India work. We arrived home in fairly good health and believe much good was done. Tom and David were wonderful co-workers. To cover more territory and do more teaching, we split up at times. For example, David went alone to Kazipet where English was spoken while Tom and I preached in the Secunderabad area. Once I went to Guntar to study with some denominational people who expressed interest in the New Testament church and salvation. I studied with a number of Baptist

preachers and leaders, taught and answered questions concerning the church of the Bible, baptism and other matters. A letter was waiting for me here in the USA from one of the preachers in Gun tar requesting more information and asking me to return there for more teaching.

We preached in the remote village of Julapalem in Andhra Pradesh where there is a congregation of 25-30 Christians. When Tom Moody and I were there last year, we were told that we were the first white men in that village in fifty years. In the evenings several hundred gathered to hear us preach. Due to the help of a number of concerned individuals here in the USA, many Bibles were given to poor saints and we were able to help a number with medical attention and needs. Some typewriters and mimeograph machines were provided for gospel preachers to print gospel messages for distribution. There is a great need for tracts and Bibles. It takes nearly a week's wages to buy a Bible in India. Bibles cost about \$2 in our money. Village Indians only make about 32-644 a day.

I don't know how much longer the door will be open to us in India. We plan, with the Lord's help, to continue going and preaching the gospel in Christ. I plan to go again in 1986 with Bill Beasley and Jerry Parks. Many slides of the work in India were made and I would be glad to show these to those interested in the work in India. We need the prayers and support of faithful brethren here at home to be able to accomplish what needs to be done. We were thankful to see 14 baptized into Christ during the trip.

LESLIE MAYDELL, P.O. Box 12201, Rep. of South Africa—Since the first of the year, I have been allowed to make 10 minute talks each Monday morning in our daughter's school where there are six teachers and 120 students. I have been teaching simple lessons on evidences and the importance of God's word. Also I am going to a school for black children and teaching on Wednesday and Fridays and alternate Mondays. Contacts here have resulted in studies with two teachers, one of whom translates for me. He obeyed the gospel three weeks ago. He has put me in touch with two other black schools and I am now teaching at one on Tuesdays and the other on Thursdays.

When the trouble in the black suburb of Tembisa began hindering me from going there on Sunday mornings, I began teaching at Brixton in Johannesburg on Sunday morning and Wednesday evenings and several are now attending a special training class on Tuesday evenings taught by Ray Votaw, Alan Hadfield and myself. Two strong families

have recently moved to the Briston area, a factious brother has been scripturally dealt with and I feel that much good can be accomplished at Brixton. Now that troubles are settling down, my black brethren at Tembisa are pleading with me to return to work with them again. Truly brethren, there is plenty of work here, but the laborers are few.

PREACHERS NEEDED

PAYETTE, IDAHO—**DANNY F. THOMPSON**, P.O. Box 791, Payette, ID 83661—Since I am to begin working May 1st, 1986 with the church at Blackfoot, Idaho, the church here in Payette will be looking for a faithful preacher of the gospel. The church is small, with about 30, but is comprised of faithful, God-fearing brethren who are a joy to work with. The church can supply only limited support. Those interested should write to the church at: S. 9th and 2nd Ave. S., Payette, ID 83661.

WEATHERFORD, TEXAS—The church here is in need of a gospel preacher. At present only partial support can be provided. If inter-ested, call Dr. Keith Roland at (817) 594-2077.

PREACHER AVAILABLE

DAVID HAWTHORNE, 374 E. Tompkins, Columbus, OH 43202—I am a young preacher 28 years old, married and with 2 children. I have been preaching on a part-time basis for two and a half years and am eager to work on a full time basis as soon as possible. References will be gladly supplied. If interested, you may write me at the above address or call (614) 262-7376.

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IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH	
BAPTISMS	177
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(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)	

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

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THINK ON THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 1631
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HOW DOES THE GRACE OF GOD SAVE?

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:11, 12).

God's grace has been one of the most misunderstood and misapplied words in the Bible. If one did not have a doctrine to protect and support, the popular conclusions that are drawn from this world would never appear. Neither the definition of the word "grace" nor the context where it appears suggests that God saves without any effort on man's part. But if one condition is admitted as essential to salvation, by all logic and scripture, all conditions of salvation that are taught in the word of God are essential to be saved by grace.

Grace means unearned favor, unmerited kindness, unearned blessings. God gives grace, but man must receive it. Grace is not an irresistible force that man cannot reject or receive at his own will. Otherwise, man could not be responsible for not receiving the grace of God, and if all men did not receive God's grace, He would certainly be a respecter of persons. But the Bible says He is not a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34, 35; Rom. 2:17). If man is accountable to God for receiving or rejecting His grace, man must do something to receive it.

Many of the most prominent denominations of our day teach that the grace of God is a gift that comes to man without his consent and without any effort on his part. Conversely, any sort of works by man would be a

rejection of God's grace. The very idea that **works** and grace can be in the same system of salvation is obnoxious to many theologians. It is totally incompatible with their concept of God's scheme of redemption. However, the word of God clearly teaches that the very **nature** of sin, grace, the authority of Christ, repentance and remission of sins makes it impossible for **grace** to exist apart from law and **obedience**. He who denies the necessity of obedience to divine law to receive the grace of God is ignorant of both law and grace.

It is said that works nullify the grace of God. The idea comes in part from Romans 4:4: "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt." The context of Romans 4 shows that the "works" are works of merit by which one earns salvation, and whereby he might boast. Merit works are not possible where grace reigns, but works in "receiving the grace of God" are absolutely essential for grace to work in the heart and life of anyone.

God's grace provides that which man cannot supply for himself in view of his salvation from sin. Let the mind of this scribe be understood on this point. Man is lost because he has sinned. Sin carries the penalty of death (James 1:14, 15), and that sentence of God has passed upon all men because all have sinned (Romans 5:12). How can one extricate himself from this sentence of death? Only pardon from God will make him free from sin and release him from death and separation from God.

If man, who is guilty of sin, must die as the penalty for his sins, he would die away from God and be lost for all of eternity. He can do no works that will earn him the forgiveness of one single sin. That is the reason salvation is "not of works, lest any man should boast." **Forgiveness is an act of mercy**, which results from God's great love. But He is **just** as well as merciful. His word must be kept. When He pronounced death as the penalty for sin, it must stand because God does not lie and His word is always sure. Since man is to die because of his sin, and he cannot develop a system by which he can work his way out of sin; and if God's justice must be kept, how will man be saved from his sins? Justice demands that he die for any sin he has committed. Only mercy and grace can provide a way for man to change

and be forgiven of his sins, and thereby be justified before God.

God's grace must provide the way to be saved from sins. It will cost a life, because the penalty for sin is death. Only one who has lived a perfect life without sin could be such a sacrifice, who would die and not be apart from God in his death. Isaiah 53 tells of the death of Christ and its purpose. God provided what man could not provide to make possible his forgiveness of sins: a **perfect sacrifice**. This would satisfy His justice and also his mercy toward sinful man.

This grace is explained in these words of the Holy Spirit: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the **grace of God** should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9). The blood shed by Christ is called the **grace of God** for every man. The blood of Christ is the only sacrifice that could take away sins, and man himself could not provide it (Heb. 9:22; 10:4). For as much as the grace of God provided the death of Christ for every man, why is it that every man is not saved? There would be no sensible answer if there were no conditions to receiving the grace of God.

The grace of God also provides the **revelation** of His sacrifice for *sins*, and the conditions upon which it may be appropriated to man. This grace of God provides His will which man alone could not obtain. "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 20:32). "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:11, 12). The grace of God teaches!

God's grace provides what man could not provide: a perfect sacrifice and the revelation of His will by which this sacrifice may be applied to man in order to receive remission of sins. It does not mean that grace is without any kind of effort on man's part. Man must **receive** God's grace, whatever that implies. Man is not to receive the grace of God in vain (2 Cor. 6:1). This indicates some effort on man's part to "receive" the grace of God. There are at least three things implied in receiving the grace of God:

1. Man is called by God's grace. The apostle Paul said: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel" (Gal. 1:6). Verse 15: "But it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace." What is the calling? Whatever it is, it is called the "grace of God."

We are called by the gospel of Christ, and it is the gospel that revealed God's grace. "Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Thess. 2:14). "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (I Pet. 2:9).

(Continued on page 4)

Searching The Scriptures

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Editorial

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THE WARNOCK-DEASON EXCHANGE

In this issue you will find an article by Jim Deason of Columbia, Tennessee in which he takes exception to the position taken by Weldon E. Warnock in his question column of November, 1985. We ask the readers to weigh carefully what each had to say on the always explosive issue of divorce and remarriage. The spirit in which each wrote is commendable and illustrative of the attitude which should be maintained when differences must be expressed.

A number have asked me if I agree with the position taken by brother Warnock in his November column. With his answer on the question of whether or not the guilty party in a divorce (guilty by reason of fornication) can scripturally remarry, I am in complete agreement. He said "no" and I would have to say the same thing. However, with the latter part of his response I do have some difference. He brought up a case in which divorce occurred which was not for fornication, then stated that should the one putting the other away remarry, the other party could then put the husband away "in purpose of heart" and be free to remarry. This involves the notion of mental putting away after the fact of actual divorce and termination of anything that might even resemble a marriage.

It is my conviction that there are only three classes of people who have a right to marry: (1) those who have never been married; (2) those whose companions are dead; and (3) those who have put away a companion for the cause of fornication. It appears to me that any attempt to find authority for anyone else to marry, must trade on the silence of the scriptures. I realize that brother Warnock's illustration involves fornication but it is after the fact of divorce and not before. It is very difficult for me to see how this is not in reality the "waiting game" for one waits until the other sins and then claims scriptural cause. I am also made to wonder if we may have the "mental divorce" then why not at the other end of the marriage have a "mental marriage" before the fact of social and legal requirements being met. Indeed, is this not the very thing claimed by those who insist that two people may cohabit as long as they have a "meaningful relationship" and plan to get married anyhow?

Marriage is so lightly treated in our society. We must make room for all that God allows on the subject and then stop right there. We must recognize the one excep-

tion the Lord made and we must not leave the door open for any more. With this sentiment, I am sure Brother Warnock, agrees. I am fully aware that many good and able brethren do not share the view I have expressed here. That is between them and the Lord. I certainly do not feel obligated to count heads on any issue before having my say. I have no better friend on earth than Weldon Warnock. We are as close as brothers could be, not to be family related. We have played together, laughed together, wept together, traveled together and anticipate many more such experiences in life. But I feel strongly on this subject and don't want one single reader to have the impression that the editor of this paper accepts the position mentioned above.

Brother Warnock is at perfect liberty to write his column as he sees fit. He has done an outstanding work with it, in my judgment. It is not an easy assignment, requires much time and careful work. For all of that I am most grateful and am sure that every thoughtful reader shares that sentiment. None of those who write for this paper have to agree with this editor on every point to have his material published. But I have always reserved the right to express my own convictions whenever I thought the question of sufficient importance to do so, and I believe this is one of those times. We ask readers to consider carefully what is said by both brethren Warnock and Deason. Meanwhile, we absolutely **MUST** teach our children that marriage is for life and that it is imperative that they make prudent choices of companions who will help them to go to heaven. This is far better than trying to unravel all the tangles into which people get their lives and over which brethren are apt to differ in trying to resolve them.

THANKS TO BRETHERN WATERS AND RADER

With this issue we conclude a three-part exchange between Robert Waters and Donnie Rader on the question of continuous cleansing. This is another "sticky" subject and one hotly contested in some areas. Both have written with restraint and respect for each other and for the word of God. We believe such a study in profitable. We also believe enough has been said about it for awhile. I have an article by Ken Green in which he summarizes the various positions taken on this question. At the time he sent it, he did not know this exchange was in the works. I told him about it and we decided to wait until the exchange was over and then his article will be published more or less as a summary of views. We have tried to give pertinent issues a hearing without becoming a one-issue paper. And we have tried to do it in a fair and responsible manner. We refuse to give space to character assaults and the venting of personal bitterness. We make no apology for necessary militancy and for dealing with controversial topics as the need arises.

READ YOUR BIBLE TODAY

(From page 2)

"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling..." (Eph. 4:4). There is just one calling. That is the gospel call of grace that will deliver men from sin when they answer that calling. It means that one must hear the gospel of Christ and obey it. Remember, the word of God is His grace which brings salvation. The grace of God also is the sacrifice of Christ by which man is forgiven of his sins, and the gospel is the power of God to save (Rom. 1:16) in that it calls into this grace "to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Thess. 2:14). II Timothy 1:9 shows that this is a holy calling by which we are saved. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16), but it must be heard and obeyed before it will save from sin.

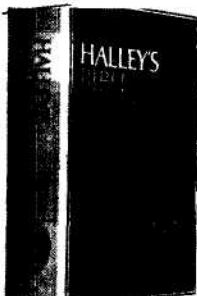
2. Man must believe the gospel to be saved by grace. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8). "There-fore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:1,2). "There-fore it is of faith, that it might be by grace. . ." (Rom. 4:16).

Faith depends upon hearing the gospel of Christ (Rom. 10:17). But hearing only will not avail anything. One must do the will of God to receive the blessing promised. "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (James 1:22). Faith is an action on the part of man that comes as the result of hearing the gospel of Christ. In this way the grace of God that teaches and calls may have its effect.

3. Man must work righteousness to receive the grace of God. At this point most denominations reject what the word of God says. The works of Romans 4 and Titus 3:5 are works of merit whereby man might boast, but there are works of faith that are conditions upon which *the* grace of God is received. "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through right-eousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. 5:21). "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34, 35).

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During the days of the prophet Elisha, Ben-hadad king of Syria besieged Samaria. The vivid narrative of I Kings 6 tells of the gross horror of the ensuing famine in which mothers boiled their own offspring (verse 28-29) and bird droppings were worth more than their weight in silver (verse 25). People were dying. It was a day of terror; a day of nauseating repugnance; a day in which everything that was grim and ghastly and grisly could be seen by those still alive to see it; a day in which the smell of death permeated the nostrils of those still alive to smell it.

In chapter 7:3 we are introduced to four lepers who raised the question: "Why do we sit her (at the city gate until we die? Three choices faced them in verse 4—"We will enter the city, then the famine is in the city and we shall die there; and if we sit here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us go over to the camp of the Syrians. If they spare us we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die." They had no choice. They would plead for mercy at the hands of the enemy.

The succeeding verses inform us of their starting discovery upon entrance to the Syrian camp. The Lord had given the pagans a brief exhibition of divine power causing such wide spread panic that the Syrians "*fled for their life*" (verse 7). The lepers, fully convinced that they were dead men walking into the hands of the feared and dreaded enemy, stood in amazement. The camp was deserted—"for behold no one was there" (verse 5). Quickly they gorged themselves on the remaining food while plundering the Syrian tents. And then it hit them—

"We are not doing right. This day is a day of good news, but we are keeping silent; if we wait until morning light, punishment will overtake us. Now therefore come, let us go and tell the king's household" (verse 9).

Awakened by a guilty conscience which saw them feasting while their brethren famined, they proclaimed: "*This is not right!*" "*This is not patriotic!*" "*What we are doing is not even humane!*" "*We're eating and they are starving!*" "**THIS IS A DAY OF GOOD NEWS BUT WE ARE KEEPING SILENT!**" Thus, fearing the consequences of silence, they made a resolute determination to "go" and "tell" the good news at once.

Brethren, think of the implications of the afore mentioned account in relation to the Gospel. And just what is the Gospel? It is "the" GOOD NEWS. The good news

that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son..." The good news that saw Jesus live, die and arise triumphant over the grave. The good news that heard the angelic announcement— "He is not here, He has risen." It's the good news that answers the questions: "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting"? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law, but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:55-57). It's the good news that heard the Master say: "In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world." It's the good news that heard John the Baptizer proclaim: "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" It's the good news announced by Peter on Pentecost and later by such preachers as Paul and Phillip as they travel abroad telling the old, old story. And it's the good news of Luke 2:10—"I bring you good news of great joy which shall be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."

Has there ever been any better "news" Has there ever been a more meaningful message to "tell" Indeed the four lepers had good news to announce, but our news is far more valuable, more precious and the implication of our information is far greater than just the relief of physical hurt and hunger. We announce to the world Him who is the "Bread of Life," the "Great Physician," and the Savior of all mankind.

Hence it becomes our supreme duty, our ultimate obligation and responsibility to WAKE THE WORLD AND TELL THE PEOPLE. We can ill afford to hold our peace any longer.

"This is a day of good news, but we are keeping silent."
.. "The question is—Why?"

(Note: The title and major points of this material come from the files of my good friend, Bill Fairchild, of Crane, Texas. Together we share the grave concern that our greatest failure in the church today is a failure to do the one thing we must do—teach and tell the good news of Jesus. Next month: Our Challenge.)

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"THE SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER" (3) RESPONSE TO RADER

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This is the third and final part of this discussion on the matter of forgiveness of sin as it pertains to the faithful child of God. It will be of much help if you will have the previous articles before you for reference as you study.

As Christians and preachers of the gospel we are met almost daily with denominational error. It grieves us to see our good friends take extreme positions on Bible matters. We take a stand against these false doctrines, but sometimes our stand is too far in the opposite direction. That is exactly why some of my previous articles charged Donnie with holding an extreme position (that every sin results in death). He has not responded to the charge. The truth is in the middle and that is where we should meet and stand united.

In dealing with his article we shall use his headings which will be in parentheses. "**Things He Didn't Answer**" (See Exchange #2 for his questions)

1. Donnie said, "Our brother didn't tell us which sins separate from God and which do not. I think brother Waters will agree that this is the issue." No, I do not agree that this is the issue. I stated the issue in my first article in discussing the extreme positions. The issue is: DOES THE CHILD OF GOD FALL FROM GRACE EVERY TIME HE SINS REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THE SIN WAS COMMITTED INADVERTENTLY OR IN IGNORANCE, AND REGARDLESS OF THE ATTITUDE. He says yes, I say no. In my second article I said it is a question of "... attitude—what will he do about it when he learns of it." Brother Rader seems to take some comfort in the fact that I haven't answered his question the way he expects me to (and I will not). If I had been told that he had been beating his wife and I asked him, "Have you quit beating you wife?", I'd expect him to say "yes", if he had. But if he was innocent of the charge he would not answer as I expected, If he said, "I have never beat my wife", that would answer my question and I would not ask it again. The point is that all questions can't be answered with a "yes" or "no". Furthermore, I'm innocent of the charge, and I have answered the question. Now it's time for him to quit asking this foolish and irrelevant question. It only clouds the issue.

2. I do not totally agree with what he said I believe. Nevertheless, he wants to know why one who commits certain sins in ignorance (instrument, etc.) does not have as much confidence as I do. They may have as much confidence as I do but I fail to see that, that has anything to do with the issue. A lot of people have

confidence who have not obeyed the gospel, but it is to no avail.

3. Again, how much confidence one may have is beside the point. My brother's problem is that all he can see is SPECIFIC repentance and SPECIFIC confession of KNOWN sin, and a "worded" confession. He therefore, believes that, as he said, "one would be condemned until that repentance, confession and prayer was made", under all circumstances. Apparently he does not believe in a general confession of all sin.

4. My answer was in the first paragraph under "walking in the light". He completely ignored it. My answer to no. two applies here.

5. I'm not going to say none of those he mentioned were separated from God because it is probable that some were. But the fact that God made an example out of someone by causing physical death doesn't necessarily mean they will be eternally lost, does it? Aaron was killed because of sin, and Moses didn't get to enter Canaan because of the same sin. Are they eternally lost (Mk. 9:4)? His question regarding his examples was, "Did none of these have an humble attitude?". Perhaps some did, but I know of no one who says that humility is all that is essential in every case.

6. 1 Jn. 1:7 tells us that those who "walk in the light" are cleansed of "all sin".

"THE ARTICLE"

Can One Live Perfectly?

Donnie wants proof that some are saying that one can live perfectly. Well I have it: Keith Sharp of Mena, Ark. Sharp very definitely took the position that man can live without sinning. (And there is no misrepresentation because that is what perfection is. If living without sin isn't the same as perfection then the Lord wasn't perfect).

I have in my possession a recording of a sermon preached by Keith in Tucson, Arizona. The gist of the sermon was the same as the discussion we had in the meeting. The following are quotes from that sermon: "I can know what sin is and I can avoid it! IT IS POSSIBLE!" "How can I live without sin? Luke 6:40... I just have to do what Jesus did. Brother and sister, if I'll hide the word of God in my heart and always appeal to it in temptation, and if I will always go to my father in prayer for the strength that I need, I'LL OVERCOME SIN. Yes, I CAN DO IT. It is within man."

Specific Confession

In the previous discussion, Donnie asked me to name some who have taught that each individual sin must be specifically confessed. I did that, but now he says none of them believe that. Well maybe they don't now, but surely they believed what they said when they said it. Then he said I misrepresented them all. Perhaps they think so, if so, such was unintentional.

I understand what Donnie's position is. He believes that if a Christian has been telling lies he doesn't have to confess that he had lied to Joe, and Tom, about this and that—just that he had told lies. Thus, such things as lying, cheating, stealing, breaking man's laws, worry, and all sins (and there are many), must be specifi-

cally confessed. He doesn't believe in asking forgiveness for categories of sin such as sins of omission, "secret faults", etc. He tells us there is to be, on the part of the Christian, "repentance and confession of what one is guilty". I think one of our problems is simply a matter of semantics. Writers on both sides of this issue have been guilty of not making themselves clear.

We both believe that specific instances of sin we commit must be specifically repented of and confessed when we become aware of them (Acts 8:22). But Donnie doesn't believe in a general confession which is both worded (Mt. 6:11-14), and is a manner of life (1 Jn. 1:9). He thinks each one of the sins, such as mentioned in the above paragraph, must always be specifically named. But that is nothing but Donnie's opinion. He hasn't proved it.

This doctrine of his, that every sin automatically brings death, leaves faithful Christians with doubts, and the "babe" hopeless. It gets worse when he teaches that you have got to know about a sin and confess it. His doctrine does not take care of hypothetical examples, such as the example of the preacher we gave in exchange #2. Remember, he said if this happened to such a man he would go to hell! Look again at the question and his answer to it. How can any of us have any security if we believe that? Few have been as bold as Donnie in answering such a question. They usually say, "I'll leave that in the hands of God", which is a cop-out. But Donnie and several others who do not understand nor believe in continual cleansing, have decided that all sin just automatically results in death. (Every passage they use is taken out of context and misapplied). They do not allow God to judge. I believe the man would be saved because he did not turn his back on God and he was not walking in darkness. Such belief is necessary to our confidence because of the real possibility of dying under such circumstances.

Some Things to which Rader was Supposed to Respond

1. I said, "1 Jn. 1:9 is a general confession as opposed to a general denial of sin (not necessarily a worded confession)...". Take it in context.

2. I made the statement that, ". . . repentance and confession are a practice of the Christian." He did not reply.

3. I made the statement that Calvinists teach that it is impossible for a child of God to fall but that he teaches it is inevitable. In his answer to this he merely accused me of teaching "the possibility of sinlessness". However, I do not accept the things he takes for granted which necessitate his conclusion. He assumes that every time a Christian sins he falls. I believe that a person can become a Christian and live a long useful life in God's service without ever falling from grace. He will sin and does sin, but his "walk" or manner of life doesn't change.

4. I asked, does one who is walking in the light not need to confess anything, (as the brother I quoted said). Wasn't that the problem the Pharisee had (Lk. 18)?

5. I accused him of building a straw man regarding "one sin" and "how many sins". He responded, but

misrepresented what I actually said.

6. On Gal. 6:1 I said, "Donnie teaches that a fault causes one to fall from grace", and that his conclusion was that "the word 'restore' has reference to fellowship—that fellowship is lost when one is overtaken in a fault". Note his contradictory response and how he changed horses in the middle of the stream. He accused me of confusing "faults" with "sin". I'll let the reader decide who is confused.

7. I asked, "Is it true that if we always fall from grace when we sin then sinlessness is essential to security (or at least thinking that we are sinless)?"

8. I made the statement, "We are forgiven of sins as we confess, or 'if we confess' in the sense that we are forgiven 'as we forgive our debtors' (Mt. 6:11-14). He made no response.

9. I said, "1 Jn. 1:7 does teach that the blood is continuously applied to those who 'walk in the light'. He previously denied it but made no reply this time.

10. In my conclusion I showed that the gospel preacher would be too scared to open his mouth to teach if he really believed what Donnie claims he believes. He made no response.

11. Donnie also did not respond to my use of Rom. 8:1-4.

"My Questions"

Donnie says I didn't answer his questions. I'll let the reader decide if I did or didn't. Certainly I responded to each of them.

"More Questions"

1. There is no "if" about it; he sins and if he is walking in the light he repents and confesses specific instances of sin as he becomes aware of them, makes general confessions, and asks forgiveness of "secret faults". Thus he is cleansed (continuously) of "all sin".

2. We don't know who "all the saved" are, but we know who we can fellowship. When a brother sins we tell him about it. If he is impenitent we cannot fellowship him.

3. It may be possible, but I wouldn't dare try it because a Christian (one who walks in the light), is to "avoid every appearance of evil".

4. Whatever God decides in each particular case, As I have said before, such questions are irrelevant and prejudicial.

"ABSOLUTE AND RELATIVE MATTERS"

Are sins of omission relative or absolute? Can we obtain perfection in the things we are to do, or be? Some say no, but then they say such isn't sin. In G.O.T. Mag., 3-7-85. Herschel Patton said, "Some of us have used the word 'sin' in referring to weakness and failures, involving abilities, opportunities, situations, etc., ..." . The idea he was teaching is a doctrine of men. No scripture! Concerning the "one talent man" (abilities), the Bible says, "Cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness". You can call it absolute or relative or whatever you want to, but our failures or our missing of the mark on anything that we are commanded to do, not do, or be, is sin! Why, failure to use one's abilities is apparently a

sin a Christian "can't commit". But some seem to think that one can get by committing this kind of sin. They deny that some transgressions are sin, but it is simply an effort to get some semblance of security out of a hopeless doctrine.

Regarding "absolute" matters Donnie said, "in these we must be perfect." (I wonder, is teaching the Bible absolute? Must we be right on everything we teach?). But regarding "relative" matters he said, we never keep them perfectly, we always fall short. But the truth of the matter is that SIN IS SIN whether absolute or relative and we fall short in both areas. Therefore Donnie's position is wrong, and continual cleansing is without a satisfactory alternative.

Conclusion

As I expressed in my first article I believe this issue to be important to the confidence and security of individual Christians. Nevertheless, I plead that brethren treat it as a matter of opinion. As long as our beliefs on vital matters are the same, and our practices remain the same, let us work and worship together in peace and harmony and treat one another fairly.

Although faithful Christians do not sin "all the time", as some brethren have wrongly affirmed, we do sin. Such sins, of the one who walks in the light, are not acts of faithfulness (sin being associated with darkness), but his life is a life of faithfulness and God approves of his life. We should and can avoid any sin that we are "tempted" to commit, (1 Cor. 10:13), but brethren, we commit sins without there being a temptation at all. That is, we commit sin ignorantly and especially inadvertently. Thus, for even the faithful Christian to have confidence and security there is ever present the need to be continuously cleansed by the blood of Christ. Thank God (for His mercy and grace), that "if we walk in the light" . . . "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us of all sin."

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**A REVIEW OF "THE SECURITY
OF THE BELIEVER" (3)
RESPONSE TO WATERS**

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As brother Waters has pointed out, this is the final installment in this exchange. I urge the readers to read and reread all three installments. While the very mention of this subject is an immediate "turn off" to some, I believe that it is time for brethren to carefully study the issue with an open mind. I appreciate the kindness that brother Waters has shown in this discussion. Though I disagree with him, I have no ill feelings toward him or any that may agree with him.

Still Wondering

Our brother has been given ample opportunity to deal forthrightly with the issue at hand. However, we are still wondering about a few matters.

1. We are still wondering **WHAT SIN(S) DOES NOT SEPARATE FROM GOD?** He had refused to directly answer that question. 2. Since he says (a) that some sins separate and some do not, (b) the blood is continuously applied and (c) one is not condemned until he demonstrates that he is not going to repent, I'm still wondering about the one who commits adultery in weakness or ignorantly worships with the instrument; why does he not have the same true assurance that he claims to have? 3. I'm still wondering how he can ridicule my teaching saying that it is "hopeless" since he claims to believe that there is some kind of repentance and confession that is essential. If that be true, he has no more confidence than he believes the rest of us have, for if one sins he would stand condemned until that repentance and confession is made. 4. I'm still wondering if he doesn't believe that a past life of righteousness gives future forgiveness. He told us that the preacher who had been righteous for 40 years would be forgiven of that sin he committed (and didn't repent or confess) just before he died. 5. He told us that the thing that really mattered is the attitude of the one who sinned. Well, I'm still wondering about the Christian who may be ignorant of the right attitude as well as the preacher (40 years righteous) who commits a sin (in attitude) and then dies before repentance and confession? His doctrine concerning the attitude is simply the old denominational doctrine (that sincerity is all that matters) that is applied only to Christians. 6. We are still wondering about the homosexual who doesn't know that his practice is wrong. If some sins of ignorance do not separate, why will it not work for him?

Extremes

Brother Waters says it is an extreme to believe that

every sin separates from God. Well, I believe Rom. 6:23 and Jas. 1:15 which teach that the result of sin is death. If that is extreme, then so be it! I still would like to know which sins do not separate.

It seems from the three articles and his booklet (also entitled **The Security of The Believer**) that our brother arrives at what he believes to be the truth by posing what he believes to be two extremes and then assumes that the truth is between them. Brother Waters, I find the truth by first going to the N.T. and then anything to the right or left of that I label as being extreme. I do not know what is extreme until I first know the truth. He has had a lot to say about truth always being between extremes. He then poses his extremes and concludes that the middle is the truth. I have presented the following chart to show that his method of arriving at "truth" would have us accepting all that is in the middle column. Why not? Are not those things in the right and left columns extreme? Is not "truth" between extremes?

EXTREME	IS THIS TRUTH?	EXTREME
No sin separates (Calvinism)	Some sins separate and some do not (Waters)	Every sin separates (Rader)
Cannot worship with the instrument	Instrument not commanded, but can be used as an aid	Use of the instrument commanded (psallo)
Cannot commit adultery	Adultery is not a duty — but neither is it wrong	Adultery is one's civil duty (i.e. temple service in Corinth)
Cannot tell any lie	Can tell some lies	Can tell any lie

Eight Examples

In my first article (Jan., p. 9) I cited eight examples showing that one sin is all that it takes to separate one from God. Those included sins of weakness, ignorance and inadvertence. Brother Waters' response concerning whether they were separated from God was that 'it is probable that some were.' He doesn't know. Yet, Peter "stood condemned" (Gal. 2:11, ASV) and Simon was "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity" and would perish if he didn't repent (Acts 8:20-23). He said that physical death wasn't proof that they were lost. That, however, contradicts his argument about Abraham lying and living (as proof that he wasn't separated) whereas Ananias and Sapphira lied and died (as proof that they were separated) (Booklet, p. 10).

What Sins Are Covered in 1 Jno. 1:7?

I asked him why 1 Jno. 1:7 included sins of ignorance, weakness and inadvertence (as far as sins that do not put us out of the light), but doesn't include all sins. His response was, "1 Jn. 1:7 tells us that those who 'walk in the light' are cleansed of 'all sin.'" That would mean then that presumptuous and willful sins do not put us out of the light. Is that what you believe brother

Waters?

Who Is Teaching Perfection?

I had asked him who are the several prominent men who say that one can live perfect. He replied by accusing Keith Sharp of teaching "that a man can live without sinning." I have talked to Keith and he denies that he took such a position.

Concerning brother Sharp's sermon in Tucson, brother Waters has again misrepresented what was said. The title of the sermon was "Yes We DO, But Do We Have To?" Again the point was that though we do sin, the Christian does not have to sin. I have a copy of the sermon and have listened to it several times. If brother Sharp made anything clear in that sermon it was the fact that he does not believe nor teach that the Christian lives a perfect (flawless) life. If any reader would like to hear the sermon, just send me a blank cassette tape (60 min.) and postage and I will send you a copy. It will speak for itself.

Interesting

I found it interesting that brother Waters said, "We both believe that specific instances of sin we commit must be specifically repented of and confessed when we become aware of them (Acts 8:22)." I do not believe that. While I believe that one must confess his "sins" (1 Jno. 1:9), I do not believe one has to specifically confess every instance of sin. I find that interesting because he is the one who chides me about specific confession and then says he believes one must confess "specific instances" of known sin. If a man is guilty of lying, must he specifically confess every instance of lying? Look out brother Waters, you're going to meet yourself coming back!

Another interesting matter was that he stated that the preacher who was faithful for 40 years and then sinned inadvertently or ignorantly and then died before he was aware of it and could repent and confess "would be saved because he did not turn his back on God..." I say that's interesting because I wonder then about the man who commits adultery in ignorance (not knowing the Bible teaching on divorce and remarriage) or maybe in weakness—has he turned his back on God? Otherwise, he is trying to do right. Would he be saved if he died without becoming aware of his sin and repenting and confessing? What about the man who ignorantly worships with the instrument—has he completely turned his back on God? Would he be saved?

My Four Questions to Waters

1. I asked him if there are any conditions for forgiveness if a Christian sins. His answer indicates that he believes that there are. If so, then when one sins he stands condemned until those conditions are met. That, friend, is the very thing that he ridicules me for believing and calls it a "hopeless doctrine". If one does not stand condemned until those conditions are met, then they are not conditions for forgiveness.

2. I asked him if we should fellowship all the saved. He said, "We don't know who 'all the saved' are, but we know who we can fellowship." That would mean that

there are some who are saved that he excludes from fellowship. God fellowships them, but Waters doesn't. Can we fellowship all whom we know to be saved? Does he fellowship those who according to him are without hope and hold to a "hopeless doctrine"? His answer to my fourth question indicates that there are some who use the instrument that are saved. Can we fellowship them?

3. I asked if a Christian can lie as Abraham did and not be separated. He said, "It may be possible..." Keep in mind that Abraham deliberately told a lie (Gen. 12:3; 20:5; 26:7). Also remember that Rev. 21:8 says "all liars" will have their part in the lake of fire.

4. I asked him if a man who ignorantly worships with the instrument is guilty of a sin that separates or is that a sin that doesn't separate. His answer: "Whatever God decides in each particular case." He doesn't know! Apparently some who ignorantly use the instrument are saved and some are lost. If some are saved, why not all? What makes the difference?

Absolute and Relative

Brother Waters responded to my explanation of absolute and relative matters by asking, "Are sins of omission relative or absolute?" One can sin by violating either absolute or relative commands. However, the point I was making was that a lack of perfection (lack of flawlessness) is not necessarily sin. That was also the very point that Herschel Patton was making in the quotation that brother Waters gave. Sin is a transgression of the law (1 Jno. 3:4), but the law is not transgressed necessarily just because there is still room for growth (in patience, knowledge, temperance, etc.). If that is not true, then we all just live in constant sin; there would never be a moment we are not sinning. Yet, brother Waters stated in his last paragraph that Christians do not sin "all the time".

I believe that all transgression is sin. The point is that a lack of flawlessness is not necessarily a transgression. Apparently brother Waters doesn't see a difference in things absolute and relative. He asked if teaching was absolute. Our knowledge of the word, ability to teach it and our use of our opportunities fall into the relative realm.

Brother Waters said that since we fall short in both areas, this idea of continual cleansing is the only satisfactory alternative. Suppose one falls short in the matter of worship (either uses the instrument or takes the Lord's supper on Saturday); will "continual cleansing" give him confidence? I still wonder about the homosexual who falls short in his knowledge of what is sin.

Opinion

Our brother pleaded in his conclusion for brethren to treat this as a "matter of opinion". He contrasted it to "vital matters". Brother Waters, why have you said and written so much about a subject that to you is not a matter of faith and isn't vital? However, he believes that we must accept his position, which has "no satisfactory alternative," or we will be holding a "doctrine of men" that is a "hopeless doctrine." Friends, that's confusing!

Summary

1. **What Robert Waters has said:** (a) He has told us that some sins (of ignorance, inadvertence and weak-ness) do not separate from God. (b) He believes that the blood is continuously applied, (c) He said that it was not a question of how many sins one committed, but the attitude of the transgressor, (d) He thinks the confession of 1 Jno. 1:9 is simply an acknowledgement that we do sin. (e) He has stated that one isn't condemned until he demonstrates that he is not going to repent, (f) He has charged that to believe as I do would mean one would have to live perfect in order to be saved and thus he has no confidence.

2. **What Donnie Rader has said:** (a) I have pointed out that the issue is not a matter of confidence, hope and security, or specific confession of every instance of sin or whether a Christian can or must live perfect. The issue is whether or not there are some sins that do not separate, (b) I have repeatedly asked what sin(s) does not separate, (c) I have shown that 1 Jno. 1:9 says we must confess our "sins" (that of which we are guilty) and not merely the fact that we do sin. (d) I have asked about the one who commits adultery in weakness, or lies, or ignorantly worships with the instrument—if these are sins that do not separate, (e) I've noted that if he believes any conditions must be met, then he has no more confidence than he attributes to me. (f) I have demonstrated that what I teach does not require "per-fection".

Using the

SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

Ken Green

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WHAT WE NEED

"And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants that with all boldness they may speak they word" (Acts 4:29).

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; and for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak" (Eph. 6:18-20).

The disciples in Jerusalem did not pray that persecution might cease, but that they might preach the word with boldness. Paul did not ask the saints in Ephesus to pray for his release from imprisonment or for the preservation of his life. He requested that they pray that he

might teach boldly the gospel of Christ.

Have you ever heard of anyone praying for persecution? The following article from the "Baptist Bulletin" may interest you:

"Ethiopian Christians are praying that the persecution by the present Marxist government will continue. According to Open Doors News Service, the persecution of Lt. Colonel Mengistu Hile Mariam's government has brought about unparalleled growth in the Ethiopian church.

"The government is closing many of the evangelical churches, so we are being forced to meet in secret,' an Ethiopian Christian told Dan Wooding of Open Doors News Service. 'We already have a thriving underground church and it is growing at an incredible rate. We are praying that the government here continues with its persecution and closures because it is resulting in a much stronger church and much more dedicated christians.'

"Wooding reported that hundreds of Ethiopian Christians have been imprisoned by the government, even while overseas Christians pour famine aid into the country."

I've heard some suggest that while we pray for religious tolerance and freedom, what we really need may well be something quite to the contrary.

Alarms have been sounded concerning the possibility that churches which refuse to ordain women as elders or preachers, and which refuse to accept into their fellowship practicing adulterers and homosexuals may one day be subject to such great financial liability that ownership of church property will become a thing of the past. It may even develop that such "bigoted" and "discriminatory" policies will become unlawful, in which case, our public meetings and use of the media will be eliminated.

While none of us, I suppose, would pray for such situations, it might be just what we need! Like the religious groups in Ethiopia which have found it necessary to go underground and are "growing at an incredible rate," the Lord's church in this land would undoubtedly fare better in an environment in which we had no doubt that we are strangers and pilgrims.

Problems and divisions over what can be done in the church building would no longer occupy our attention. There would be no church buildings. Church support of "our institutions" would not need to be debated, for there would be no institutions. I seriously doubt that supporting fun and games from the church treasury would divide us. Folks are not likely to risk their necks, meeting secretly, for a game of basketball.

All we would have left would be the church, the faithful, who would stand in the face of all opposition and persecution. I submit that that remnant would be a mighty force in this land.

Might it be that we would also pray, "Lord, keep the persecution coming. Just give thy servants boldness to speak as we ought to speak."?

**Restoration
Footnotes**

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NO CRAVING FOR WORSHIP

Fifty years ago Batsell Baxter told the story of an elder many years before who lived several miles from the town where the church met. He missed worship one December Sunday when it was cold and misty and the unpaved roads muddy. But on Monday the preacher met the man in town. "The mist was still falling, the weather was colder, and the roads mudder. He explained to the preacher that he could not come to church Sunday because the weather and roads were too bad. But he could come to town on Monday because he was out of tobacco and had to have it."

Like the elder, some other members of the church can do without communion with the Lord when circumstances make it inconvenient and feel no pang of conscience. But let something turn up that they really crave and the mud could hardly get too deep to keep them away. Appetites are cultivated and the reason most churches have an attendance problem is that many members have not cultivated a taste for spiritual things. They want their religion in small doses and they had as soon skip the worship altogether if the "mist and mud" are a little too heavy.

"STAY OUT OF THE KITCHEN"

One of the prerogatives of older preachers is to give advice to younger preachers. I appreciate this and have always tried to profit by it, even when I was young. The counsel of those who have already trod the road I walk can bolster my spirits, strengthen my resolve, and improve my service to God and man. Of course, some bits of advice are more helpful than others and one has to be selective. The following item is from an old article "To Young Preachers" by Fred Dennis.

"Stay out of the kitchen! The sisters will appreciate that. They will get the meals and wash the dishes. It is not meant for you to leave the word of God to serve tables. Give yourself continually to the ministry of the word and prayer. You can help your own wife in your own kitchen. But do not be too friendly with the women. Be discreet. Give the enemy no room to talk about you."

This may be more curious than helpful, but then it may be right on course for all I know. Besides being in a sister's way in the kitchen, a visiting preacher might be prone to be meddlesome there. Then, too, brother

Dennis may have known some unlicensed romances that bloomed while a preacher cumbered himself about much serving in another man's kitchen. Anyway, a preacher would do well to avoid being "too friendly" with the women in or out of the kitchen and to confine his zeal for housework to his own wife in his own kitchen.

THE INFLUENCE OF A BAD EXAMPLE

Illustrating the power of a preacher's influence, Earl West recalled an event in the life of Robert and James Alexander Haldane, Scottish ministers who Robert Richardson says gave Alexander Campbell his first impulse as a reformer. The Haldane brothers made a journey in their youth with Dr. James Macknight, author of the celebrated commentary on the Apostolic Epistles, and another learned cleric in the Church of Scotland.

"Crossing over from the border of Scotland, Macknight insisted that they continue their journey, even though it was the Lord's day... The Haldane boys had been reared to go to church; and as they traveled along through the country, listening to the church bells call them to worship, they felt ashamed not to go. But Macknight warned them against such 'frigid' teachings and beliefs. This incident weighed heavily on their minds, and after they grew up there was no writer that they regarded as a more dangerous corrupter of the truths of the gospel than Dr. Macknight. . . Robert Haldane... often said that Macknight neither 'intellectually knew, nor experimentally felt,' the things he wrote... Macknight's failure to measure up to a standard of religion which was generally very rigidly followed in that day led him to lose all influence over those young men."

His impious attitude caused the Haldanes in maturity to shun Macknight's scholarly writings, which they might have found profitable. But they saw him as the irreligious churchman they remembered rather than the erudite expositor he was generally presumed to be. Whether they were wise in this is for another to judge, but it is a fact nonetheless that by one ill-conceived act, the eminent scholar closed the minds of two young men to any good he otherwise might have done them. No preacher can expect his words to be respected, no matter how wise they are, when people have doubts about his life. A good example rests in both words and ways (1 Tim. 4:12).

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MENTAL DIVORCE? A REPLY

Jim Deason
1200 Nashville Hwy.
Columbia, TN 38401

In the November issue of STS brother Weldon Warnock wrote an article entitled, "MAY THE GUILTY PARTY REMARRY?" In most of the article brother Warnock did his usual excellent job. However, with part of what he said I want to take exception. Let it be said that I have no personal vendetta nor ax to grind with brother Warnock. He has been a friend of my family for many years and I count him as such. He can fiddle at my fireside anytime he chooses. I do not consider him a false teacher, but I do believe he is wrong on this point.

That with which I take exception is found in the fourth paragraph of his article (I encourage the reader to go back and read his entire article), a part of which I quote here: "But someone asks: 'What about a woman who is PUT AWAY (DIVORCED) by a man simply because the man no longer wanted to be married? Fornication is not involved and the woman repeatedly tried to prevent the divorce to no avail. After a couple years the man marries another woman. Is the 'put away' woman then free to marry?' SHE CERTAINLY IS, if she PUTS AWAY her husband for fornication. She would have to do this before God IN PURPOSE OF HEART since the divorce has already taken place, legally speaking" (emphasis mine—jhd).

I realize that brother Warnock is dealing with a hard question, emotionally speaking. But you will notice that he has given no scriptural reasoning for saying that the woman in his example could remarry? As a matter of fact, while dealing with scripture, brother Warnock had already answered the question in his example in the previous paragraph. He said, "Hence, in Matt. 19:9 Jesus is saying that ALL (emphasis his—jhd) put away persons who remarry are committing adultery. If a person IS PUT AWAY (this emphasis mine—jhd. Notice the similarity between this and brother Warnock's example.) for incompatibility and he/she remarries, that person is committing adultery." It seems to me that brother Warnock has really answered his own question in two different ways and I like his answer from scripture better.

I think the real nuts-and-bolts issue of this disagreement is the definition of "divorce." Brother Warnock uses the term with two different meanings in his illustration: 1) The first time, when the man is divorcing the woman, he is talking of a legal (civil) divorce; 2) The second time, when the woman is divorcing the man, he uses the term in the sense of a mental act. The scriptures do not so equivocate, wherever the terms "di-

vorce" or "put away" are used in reference to a marriage they have a singular meaning. A divorce is a divorce in whatever society one may be. When one has been divorced they can't turn around and divorce the person that has already divorced them as brother Warnock indicates. A person is either the one being divorced or the one doing the divorcing, he/she can't be both at the same time. I would like brother Warnock to give a single definition of the word "divorce" and apply it to both persons in his example. It would be interesting.

Brother Warnock's position with regard to his example implies at least two things: 1) There can be no real divorce unless scriptural grounds are present; 2) One cannot be divorced (put away) unless they mentally agree to it.

First of all, if there can be no real divorce unless scriptural grounds are present, why did Jesus say, "Whoever divorces his wife, EXCEPT for immorality.. ." (Matt. 19:9)? The very fact that the exceptive clause is found in Matt. 19:9 is proof that two people can actually be divorced for unscriptural reasons but, nevertheless, they are divorced.

In the second place, what passage teaches that in order for one to actually be divorced they must agree to it? What passage allows them to reserve themselves mentally from a divorce, claim to still be married, and not be "really" divorced? One may indeed sin against his wife by divorcing her with unscriptural cause against her will but, nevertheless, is it not still a divorce? I know this has hard and unpleasant consequences. It is similar to being shoved off a cliff, there may be no justifiable reason and you may not have agreed to it but the consequences are still the same. Such are merely the facts. Perhaps most of our troubles in the divorce realm are but penalties for failing to recognize the seriousness of the marriage institution and making the proper preparation for it.

In closing let me say that, although brother Warnock surely doesn't uphold what has come to be called the "waiting game," that is exactly what his position allows. It is exactly what the woman in his example did, motive notwithstanding. I agree with brother Warnock's own words found elsewhere in his article, I believe they are in harmony with what the scripture teaches and I am content to leave the matter with that. He said, "Hence, in Matt. 19:9 Jesus is saying that ALL put away persons who remarry are committing adultery," and again, "But whatever procedure, only the party who has put his/her mate away for fornication may scripturally remarry."



WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

Send all questions to:

Weldon E. Warnock

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Xenia, OH 45385



"DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE" RESPONSE

Before I get into my answer to brother Jim Deason's article, I want to say that his kind remarks about me are, indeed, mutual. I appreciate his work of faith and labor of love through the years.

Brother Deason said I had given no scriptural reasoning for saying that the woman who had been divorced, although she did not want a divorce, had a right to remarry when her husband remarried. Well, read the article again and decide for yourself. Jesus said that a person may remarry if his/her mate is guilty of fornication (Mt. 19:9). That sounds like Scripture to me.

We are too restrictive on this issue when we do not allow what Jesus made so definite, viz., that fornication (sexual immorality) gives the innocent party the right to remarry. Notice Mt. 10:11 in this connection. "Who-soever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her." Let us observe: First, the man puts away his wife. Second, he marries another. Third, he commits adultery AGAINST HER. There may be days, weeks, months or years between the putting away and the marrying another, but when the marriage takes place, the man commits adultery against his put away companion. Jesus says she may remarry because of this sin. I believe that settles the matter!

There was nothing stated, nor implied, in my November article about a "waiting game." Certainly, if both parties wanted the divorce, and later one of them commits adultery, the other person could not use fornication as a reason for remarriage. But the woman in my illustration is not playing the "waiting game." She is pleading, hoping, praying and patiently trying to win her husband back. They are still bound in God's sight, although divorced. But her wishes are not realized as her husband marries another woman. She is then free from the bond to marry again.

Brother Deason says she may not, scripturally, remarry because her husband put her away. But in my article I specifically stated that the innocent woman puts her husband away, before God, for adultery. She cannot do it, legally, in the civil court, because her husband had already exhausted that route by a loose divorce law. She has no legal adjudication, but she does have a moral, scriptural choice.

I cannot accept the position that the law of God in

this matter is regulated by and contingent upon the civil laws of fallible man. The woman I used for illustration (typical of many situations today) is trapped, according to brother Deason's position, by human precepts and judgments. What if the husband simply abandoned his wife, no divorce, and two years later he committed adultery? Could she divorce him for fornication and remarry? I do not see a dime's worth of difference in this and what I wrote in the November issue of STS.

Some societies through the years have had no legal ratification of marriage and no recognition of divorce. McClintock and Strong state: "In Congo and Angola... they use no peculiar ceremonies in marriage, nor scarce trouble themselves for consent of friends" (Vol. 5, p. 805). Many other examples are given of various peoples. Also, compare pp. 799-800 in regard to marriage and divorce among the Romans. Marriage was made wholly by consent and commitment among many of the ancient peoples and divorce occurred by cancelling the agreement and commitment. Reckon if an innocent mate was told by his/her marriage partner, "I disown you, I divorce you," that the innocent person would have had no recourse, ever, because he/she was beaten to the phrase? Brother Deason said, "I think the real nuts-and-bolts issue of this disagreement is the definition of 'divorce.'" Let us notice in the Bible that under the term "divorce" there are included separations of married persons which are unlike one another. First, there are separations of persons (divorces) who remain bound together in the sight of God, although not bound in the sight of men. Secondly, there are separations of persons (divorces) who become loosed before God as well as before men. Both of these are plainly taught in Mt. 5:32; 19:9; Mk. 10:10-12; Lk. 16:18; Rom. 7:2-3; 1 Cor. 7:10-17, 39). Obviously, the Bible teaches that God recognizes all divorces, but He does not sanction all divorces, just like He recognizes all marriages, but He does not sanction all marriages.

The Scriptures teach a husband and wife are bound to each other until death do they part (Rom. 7:2; 1 Cor. 7:2; 1 Cor. 7:39). The word "bound" (*deo*) means "put under obligation, sc. of law, duty, etc." (Thayer, p. 131). However, to this law is an exception that Jesus made in Mt. 5:32, 19:9. The exception is "fornication." Hence, if a marriage partner is guilty of sexual immorality, the innocent party may put away the guilty one and remarry. Fornication does not automatically dissolve the marriage bond, but it is a lawful reason for divorce and remarriage when reconciliation is impossible or unfeasible.

If the position that no put away person can remarry, regardless of the circumstances, then it follows: (1) If John divorces Jane and John dies one day later, Jane can never marry again. (2) If Bill secretly flies to Las Vegas with his secretary, gets a "quickie" divorce and marriage, his wife, Sue, has to remain single because she has been put away. The consequences of such a position show its fallacy and untenableness.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that the innocent party in a divorce is not determined by who gets it, or when it

is gotten, but rather on **WHAT GROUNDS**—whether sexual immorality has been committed by one or the other. Only fornication frees the innocent party to marry again.

PRECEPTS AND PERCEPTIONS

James R. Cope

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Temple Terrace, FL 33617



MAY CHURCHES OF CHRIST SUPPORT HUMAN INSTITUTIONS? — II

WHAT IS THE FUSS ABOUT?

Since so much strife, division and heartache have come among God's people over the relationship of churches of Christ to human institutions of various kinds we give attention to some of these matters. It is ridiculous to charge any Christian with being opposed to caring for widows and orphans or preaching the gospel. I have been preaching for over fifty years and have never met the person who opposed caring for the fatherless and widows in their affliction as well as all other poor and sick of earth who are worthy of charity. Some, I understand, have said I was "anti" helping widows, orphans, but those who know me best know this is a false report. I have never made a big display of what charity I have done. God knows about it and the afflicted widows and perhaps a few orphans know: I have never known a person who was the responsibility of the congregation which I served to go without the necessities of life.

What I personally practice and the amount of money or goods that I may give to the poor has nothing whatever to do with what God has taught each local congregation to do and has forbidden it to do. I have never known a Christian who opposed gospel preaching but I know thousands who oppose church subsidized preaching societies. I have never known many persons who opposed schools operated by Christians and in which the Bible is taught daily. I have known thousands, however, who oppose church donations to such schools. It is sometimes difficult for people to distinguish between what the Bible teaches and what some people practice because they do not study the Bible. Certainly all should strive diligently to do everything God says and only that. The fact remains, however, that if a person does nothing God says that disobedience does not change the fact that God has said do it.

For years we have been hearing that all the fuss among brethren is over how the work God has commanded is to be done. **This is simply not true!** The whole

issue turns on the matter of **who** is to do **what God commanded!** This necessarily involves the question of whether or not merely making a donation to a human institution is the action God commanded a local church to perform. The question to be settled is whether a local church shall do the work God commands it to do or surrender its God-appointed obligation to somebody else. And then, while professing to obey God, may that church donate from its treasury to a service institution which was self-created and is self-controlled? May it support an institution completely independent of every local church on earth as regards its managements but which depends upon subsidies from local churches to stay in business? **This is the issue.**

It should be further observed that we are not opposing the moral right of any group of men, saints and/or sinners, to operate any legitimate business. Whether the institution dispenses food, clothing, shelter, nursing service, books, or courses of study in Bible alone with reading, writing and arithmetic, has nothing whatever to do with the scriptural right of local churches to underwrite the financial involvements to these independent, strictly human, institutions. Since no congregation bought or built them, since no local church owns or controls them, what right do these man-made operations have to call upon churches of the Lord Jesus Christ to pay their bills for them? This is the issue. We are interested in discussing no other in this connection.

What is Scriptural and Right?

When each local congregation relieves the needy for whom God has made that congregation responsible it is doing God's will. This is no more or no less than God's will. This is obedience to God. Scriptures teaching this show that when it was able to do so each local church relieved its own needy members; and when a sister congregation had members which it could not relieve, then churches with the ability made contribution to it. Scriptures teaching that each local congregation relieved its own needy members when it had the financial resources to do so follow:

Acts 2:45—

"and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need."

Acts 4:34-35— "For neither was there among them any that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold and laid them at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto each, according as any one had need."

Acts 6:1—6

"Now in these days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a murmuring of the Grecian Jews against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. And the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, it is not fit that we should forsake the

word of God, and serve tables. Look ye out therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will continue steadfastly in prayer, and in the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the multitude: and they chose Stephen, . . . and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas . . . whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands upon them."

1 Tim. 5:16— "If any man or woman that believeth hath widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be burdened; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed."

Scriptures teaching that one congregation contributed to the needy members of a sister congregation:

Rom. 15:25,26— "... but now, I say, I go unto Jerusalem, ministering unto the saints. For it hath been the good pleasure of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints that are at Jerusalem."

1 Cor. 16:1-4— "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I gave order to the churches of Galatia, so also do ye. Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come. And when I arrive, whomsoever ye shall approve, them will I send with letters to carry your bounty unto Jerusalem: and if it be meet for me to go also, they shall go with me."

When each congregation pays wages to a teacher of the word of God it is doing God's will. This is obedience to God. Scriptures teaching this follow:

2 Cor. 11:8,9— "I robbed other churches, taking wages of them that I might minister unto you; and when I was present with you and was in want, I was not a burden on any man; for the brethren, when they came from Macedonia, supplied the measure of my want."

1 Cor. 9:11-14— "If we sowed unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we shall reap your carnal things? . . . even so did the Lord ordain that they proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel."

(To be continued)

A CRISIS OF FAITH WITHOUT CONFUSION

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I was pleasantly surprised to read on the front page of *the Firm Foundation* (Sept. 25, 1984) an article entitled, "Confusion and a Crisis of Faith." The author, Richard Guill, writes his concern for some of the things he is seeing some of his brethren practice. To say that such is a crisis of faith is probably an understatement. Everyone in every place should be alarmed at some of the things the brethren are practicing. They are doing many things without divine authority. They have forsaken the old paths, the good way to walk. They no longer "... endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (II Tim. 3:3-4).

And so, I agree that we are (and have been) experiencing a crisis of faith. However, it should be noted that the author of the above article also wrote about *confusion*. He begins by writing, "Many of the Lord's people are in a state of confusion..." and later, he calls this "brotherhood confusion." But no one should be confused over the present state of many congregations. These problems did not just happen overnight. This is only the result of what began thirty years ago over the "institutional question." It is the result of what happened over the "instrumental music question" as well as the "missionary society question" many years ago. There was a crisis of faith, but no confusion. It simply came down to the matter of respecting, or not respecting, scriptural authority. Some were trying to stretch the scriptures in order to justify their practice. One should keep in mind that such an attitude did not lead them along "the old paths", but into a full-fledged denomination.

He also writes, "It is time for us to educate them as to the work of the church, scriptural worship, respect for and how to establish scriptural authority, and a host of other fundamental subjects." Such writing is very commendable, but again, one should not be confused on these matters. I know of hundreds of brethren who were preaching, teaching, and writing on these very subjects thirty years ago, but were ignored and "quarantined." They were interested in scriptural authority and concerned about the work and worship of the church. They were trying to educate the brethren on these matters, but no one would listen. Many of them are still preaching what they did back then.

One should not be confused to see some of the brethren who want to associate with, and look like, denominational preachers and churches. It is no great wonder

that some are telling us that there are "Christians" in various denominational churches. It is what some of the brethren want to preach and what some of the brethren want to hear. Scriptural authority and a divine pattern no longer matter to them. Therefore, we can eliminate any confusion on these matters during this crisis of faith.


I would close, however, with a little confusion of my own. If we continue to see such "conservative-thinking" articles printed, I am confused as to which direction the writers of the *Firm Foundation* are headed. Back to the Bible, I trust, on such matters as "the work of the church, scriptural worship, respect for and how to establish scriptural authority, and a host of other fundamental subjects."

YOU COULD HELP US

With very little effort, our readers could help us greatly to increase our circulation. All it would take would be for you to show your copy of STS to a friend (perhaps a member of the congregation you attend), or relative and ask that person if he (or she) could afford \$9 a year in order to receive this paper each month. That is not really hard, is it? We have a club rate of \$7.50 a year for new subscriptions sent in clubs of four or more at one time. Why not send a gift subscription to a young married couple (perhaps one of your children) and get them started receiving good reading material in their home?

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DENVER NIEMEIER, 8220 West 82nd St., Indianapolis, IN 46278—Arrangements have been made for Traders Point to underwrite any expenses for four meetings a year to be held for churches that are unable to support such an effort. I would like to limit travel distance to two days driving one way. If the brethren could provide lodging that would be fine, but if not, arrangements can still be made. Contact the elders at the address above.

VIVION ROAD LECTURES

BILL JOHN, N.E. Vivion Road, Kansas City, MO 64118—Paul Earnhart, Ken Green and Jim Poppell will be the speakers June 23-26 in a lecturership at Vivion Road. The theme will be: "Applicable Messages For Today's Committed Christian."

9:30 A.M.—Philippians—The Joy of the Committed Life—Paul Earnhart.

10:15 A.M.—The More Excellent Way—Lessons on Love—Ken Green
11:00 A.M.—The Majesty, Power and Providence of God—Jim Poppell

7:00 P.M.—Congregational Singing 7:30 P.M.—Lessons From the Life of Christ—Paul Earnhart

8:15 P.M.—Winning the Victory—A study of Temptation—Ken Green
9:00 P.M.—Praying in Faith—Jim Poppell
For those wishing information regarding video tapes, audio tapes and housing, please write to: Church of Christ, P.O. Box 28478, Kansas City, MO 64118 or call (816) 452-3684.

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VERNON LOVE, P.O. Box 472, New Port Richey, FL 34291-0472—A new congregation has been recently founded in New Port Richey, Florida. This is one of the fastest growing areas in the state and needs a sound church. If you are retiring to Florida or planning to vacation, come and look this area over and worship with us. We will advertise the Bible correspondence course and contact all who are interested in the truth. If you know of members in this area, let us know and we will contact them. We are meeting in the Civic Club in Sims Park in downtown New Port Richey. I am having to "make tents" for a living, but will be able to conduct home studies. My home address is 993 E. Lake Road, Tarpon Springs, FL 33489. Phone (813) 937-6867.

FRANK INGRAM, 1210 3rd St. SW, Cullman, AL 35055—I am interested in relocating sometime in 1986 in Florida. References will be gladly supplied. I am 60, married and have been preaching 38 years. I am presently preaching on the radio six days a week. You may call me at (205) 734-4708 (home) or 734-6380 (office).

SANTOS BASILIO, Fugu Sur, Tumanini, Isabelo, Philippines 1312—We began the work here with one soul. In 1985, 34 were baptized into Christ for the remission of their sins. I have been working without financial support from the USA. The brethren here supply me only 150 pesos a month. I work as a tricycle driver (motorcycle with side-car—CWA) but I prefer to preach the gospel of Christ. We must work while it is day (Jno. 9:4).

J. B. GRINSTEAD

It is with sadness that we take note of the death of J. B. Grinstead, a faithful preacher of the gospel of Christ. He passed away while visiting in Virginia Beach, Virginia and was taken to eastern North Carolina for burial. His work of preaching took him to many places though his most recent work was in the Birmingham, Alabama area. The editor first became acquainted with him through his work in eastern North Carolina and Virginia. For several years he preached in the Dayton, Ohio area. Much of his work was with struggling churches in hard places. Our deepest sympathy is extended to the family.

PREACHER NEEDED

TRENTON, MISSOURI—The church in Trenton needs a full-time preacher of the gospel. Anyone interested please write us at Box 164, Trenton, MO or call Melvin Loveall at (816) 359-2882.

EDITORIAL LEFT-OVERS AS OTHERS SEE US

It might be helpful (though painful at times) to see ourselves as others see us. A few years ago a preacher's wife viewed the rather loud get-ups some of the preachers wore during the Florida College lectures and said they should change the name of that week to "The Parade of the Peacocks." Ouch!

TIES THAT BIND

Speaking of the Florida College lectures, we have missed very few years and always find it delightful to see so many old friends in one place. I seldom ever finish a conversation during that whole week. It is refreshing to hear about the work in other places, exchange pleasantries about families, sing together, and hear able men discuss timely topics. It is also a source of great joy to see decent looking and respectful acting students. They are learning much to equip them for life and they are doing it in a wholesome setting where every teacher is a Christian and where 90% of their fellow students are also Christians. While no human enterprise is without flaw, we believe Florida College has something worthwhile to offer to young people and urge parents with high school students to give serious thought to sending their young people there. I watched with interest as my younger son, Martin, and his wife, Joanie, greeted their own former school mates with exuberance during their first return for lectures. Good friends are needed and there are blessed ties that bind. No place makes that more evident than lecture week at Florida College.

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IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

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(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)

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 XXVII

APRIL, 1986

Number 4

WAKE THE WORLD
AND TELL THE
PEOPLE

Wilson Adams
891 Autumn Valley Lane
Gambrills, MD 21054



OUR CHALLENGE

What is the New Testament Church and New Testament Christianity? When we look at the church of our Lord portrayed upon the pages of the New Testament we see a growing, living, moving, and vibrant body of believers who went out and turned the world upside down (Acts 6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20). In Acts 8:4 Luke gives his capsule comment on first century discipleship with these words—"Therefore those who had been scattered went about preaching the word."

When will we learn that restoring New Testament Christianity involves much more than having a plurality of elders in every church, eating the Lord's Supper each first day and singing without an instrument? We can do all those things and never touch the heart of New Testament Christianity, for the heart of New Testament Christianity is the human heart! (2 Cor. 3:3). Yes, if we fail to restore the faith and zeal of the early disciples (faith and zeal which sprang from the heart) then what we have restored is only a hollow shell of what ought to be.

What will it take to get us to see that our Lord's religion is more than five acts of worship and mere externalities? *Christianity is a lifestyles.* It is a way of living. It is a daily walk with God—and it is also a sharing experience wherein we attempt to reach out to others and share with them what the Lord has done for us. Truly the church that is not evangelistic, that is not reaching out; a church whose members make no attempt to share the "good news" of Jesus to others—

that church has no right to lay claim to being a New Testament church of Christ.

We must be caught up in the spirit of New Testament evangelism and enthusiasm. Here were people who preached amid persecution, who taught in the face of threats. Here were people who really appreciated the forgiveness of sins and the fact that Jesus died for them. Here were people who were so unselfish with their time that they were willing to TAKE THE TIME to lead others to the Lord. And here were people whose religion was not better felt than told, but better felt BECAUSE it was told!

"So the churches were being strengthened in the faith, and were increasing in number daily" (Acts 16:5)

Why? What was their secret? Simple. Here were folks who just appreciated what they had and were willing to share it with others. They knew the "Old, Old Story," but to them it was the "*Story That Never Grows Old*"—and they never tired of telling it. That's New Testament Christianity and first century discipleship.

Yes, but. . . "*Times have changed. . . Things are different. . . It's just not that way anymore. . .*" May I propose a simplistic question? WHO SAID SO? (The ancient idiom is certainly true that if you say a thing long and loud enough, people will believe it.) We have heard that line of argumentation ("excuse" would be more accurate terminology) for so long that we have become conditioned to accepting it as true, thus excusing our lack of spiritual activity and providing salve for our seared consciences.

People, Times have NOT changed... Things are NOT different. . . It CAN be that way again! Now it is true that we have faster transportation, greater capabilities in technology and sharper skills in the sciences—but all of that is irrelevant to the point at hand. Consider:

1) Romans 3:23—"For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." HAS THAT CHANGED? Man's problem today is exactly the same as it has always been—SIN!

2) Acts 4:12—"And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved." HAS THAT

CHANGED? The answer to man's sin-problem is the same today as it has always been—JESUS! 3) Matthew 9:37— *"The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few."* HAS THAT CHANGED? The solution is this generation is the same in every generation—ME! Yes, the need of the hour is to get people who love their friend, co-worker and neighbor enough and, because they care, to share the good news about Jesus. The problem is the same—sin. The answer is the same—Jesus. The solution is the same—me. The only thing that has changed is our pessimistic attitude that says: *"It can't be done!"*



Many are searching. If there was ever a time when people needed a Savior, it is now. We live in a world of uncertainty, fear, crisis and confusion and, as a result, people are searching—searching for purpose, direction, peace, tranquillity, answers, and hope. And many who have been searching have been looking the WRONG way. They have pursued materialistic gain and found it lacking. They have pursued humanistic reasoning and found it deluding. And they have pursued sin into the depths of degradation and are now looking for a way out.

Folks, there is only **one** way out! 1 Cor. 6:9-11 is the message we must deliver to the world. We must understand that God loves the sinner just like He loved us when we were in sin. God is willing to forgive them and transform their lives as He did for you and me. The gospel is the solution and the gospel has been committed to us. The question is: Are we committed to it?

We must see the urgency. I am afraid that far too many have allowed their thinking to be unduly influenced by denominational ecumenical theology which says: *"Most all will be saved and only few will be lost..."* *"It doesn't matter what you are as long as you hold to some form of religious conviction..."*

Have you read Matthew 7:13-14 lately? Jesus said that "few" will be saved. Jesus said that the majority will be lost. Jesus said that those in sin stand apart from God and will NOT be saved. Jesus said that every man who refuses to be baptized for the remission of his sins will be condemned.

GET THE PICTURE, PEOPLE! There are thousands who are utterly confused about life, perplexed about religion and, most of all, LOST IN SIN! And. . . we are the hope of those people! Thus we need Christians who, more than ever, will see the urgency, meet the need and accept the challenge. **WILL YOU?**

Searching The Scriptures

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Editorial

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QUIET AND PEACEABLE LIVES

The recent turmoil in the Philippines has been of much interest to me. My concerns have not been entirely political. Having seen first-hand some of the poverty which grips a large part of that nation and having maintained contact with brethren in several parts of the nation for sixteen years now, I have a feeling of sympathy for those caught in the throes of economic woes when they are powerless to do much about it, and that feeling is magnified when it involves my own brethren in the Lord. It is magnified even more when it concerns brethren with whom I have studied the Bible, whose voices have blended with my own in praise to the Almighty and who have opened their hearts and homes to me to share whatever they had and who offered me the best of whatever that was.

Last Monday morning (Feb. 24) I was reading the news at breakfast and devouring every line about the Philippine situation, when suddenly a name stood out from the page: FERNANDO PASTOR. First, the name of his wife, Cristeta, appeared as she was quoted by a reporter. She identified her husband "as a preacher for the Church of Christ." Surely it could not be the man I knew. But I read on, and there was his name. The town and province were identified, Cabarroguis in the province of Quirino. There could be no mistake. According to the press report, he and his 22 year old son, Fernando, Jr., along with another man disappeared on the eve of the national election and were found a few days later shot to death beside a road.

So now, the election turmoil was not just another international crisis involving some far away place. It was real. My brother in the Lord, a fellow preacher of the gospel and his son, were victims of political unrest. They were supporters of Mrs. Aquino and attended a rally that night in which they disappeared.

I met Fernando T. Pastor, Sr. in Manila in 1975 when he came to attend the gospel meeting in which I was one of the speakers. He begged us to come to his province, if not on that trip, at a later time. He was a handsome man, well educated and articulate. At one time he taught in the Philippine Bible College at Baguio City, operated by liberal brethren. They spoke highly of him until he left them because of his conviction that their practices were unscriptural. He then became the victim of attempts to discredit his character. But he persevered. Since 1975, several American brethren have

visited the area where he lived and preached. These include Hiram Hutto, Leo Plyler, Paul Casebolt and perhaps other. Paul was there just last year. Over the past eleven years I have corresponded a great deal with him. Last year the church at Manslick Road in Louisville, Kentucky printed 5,000 copies of a tract he wrote in Tagalog in which he reviewed the errors of the militant sect Iglesia Ni Cristo, 1914.

Letters from other areas of the country before the election told me of fears of civil chaos, vote-rigging, threats and intimidations. All of this has caused me to reflect a great deal lately on the great blessings we have enjoyed in the United States in the peaceful transfer of power from one party to another and the simple blessing of being able to express a choice without fear or murder or mayhem. Other nations besides the Philippines have experienced similar circumstances in which the lives of innocent citizens have been in jeopardy, including the lives of our own brethren. What can Christians do?

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (1 Tim. 2:1-2). Human governments do not always function as they should. Some are oppressive and care little for injustices perpetrated upon the citizenry. Political power, long extended in single hands, tends to corruption. The rulers of Rome, in which time Paul penned these words, were not exactly paragons of virtue. The roads and show places of the empire were largely built with slave labor. What, then, could Christians do? They could do two things: (1) they could conduct themselves according to the gospel and thus be a blessing to society around them; and (2) they could pray, as this passage enjoins.

Paul asked the Thessalonians to pray for him "that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you" (2 Thes. 3:1). The greatest blessing in a nation is not that "our party" won an election, or Congress passed a bill we wanted, or that the whales are saved from extinction, or forests are preserved, or that industry must clean up the air we breathe. The greatest blessing to all mankind is that the gospel "run and be glorified." In describing the mistreatment of the prophets and apostles by unbelieving Jews, Paul said "they please not God, and are contrary to all men" (1 Thes. 2:15). Those who impede the progress of the gospel render a disservice to all men. It is in the best interests of any government to allow Christians the free exercise of the gospel in preaching and in personal life. The gospel changes the hearts of people. It makes better husbands and fathers, better wives and mothers, better parents and children. It makes better employers and employees, better neighbors and better citizens. It sparks benevolence toward the poor and deprived. Any nation which hinders the spread of the gospel is its own worst enemy. It is sad to know that in several places in the world now the Lord's people cannot lead quiet and peaceable lives. Many are fearful, hungry, distressed and apprehensive for the fate of their

own children.

Let us join with the prayers of our brethren in the Philippines for the government of Mrs. Corazon Aquino. She is now without question the ruler of that nation. Her task is not easy. The woes of the people are not over. There will be years of struggle and crisis. It is a time for brethren there to remember who they are and to live as becomes the gospel. Dear brethren, pray fervently, live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. Be honest. Put away strife and bitterness. Let your light shine. Let your salt work. Spread the leaven of righteousness. Worship the Lord faithfully. Teach your children to love the Lord and his church. Instill in them the principles of godliness by which they can bless another generation after you are gone. Please don't forget that you are strangers and pilgrims in the earth and that here we have no continuing city. We seek one to come in a land that is fairer than day; a place where injustices, intimidations, intrigues, murder and mayhem will be unknown. We have a number of readers of this paper in the Philippines. Brethren there are sweet singers. So, then, in the language of a familiar hymn "When we all see Jesus, we'll sing and shout the victory."

Should any wish to express sympathy to Cristeta Pastor, her address is:

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VEILS AND BLINDFOLDS

It has been said that the fossilized language of Latin had only one true standard and that was Cicero. Any locution without his approbation could not be considered correct. The English language seemed to have a standard, at least for a short time in Henry the VIII, who ruled from 1509 to 1547. The phrase "the king's English" obviously came into use during his tenure. However, Henry has been dead a number of years and since that time the king's English has groped for a standard. Perhaps, Noah Webster came as close as anyone but even he did not become the linguistic king. Webster was astonishingly liberal in his acceptance of popular usage of words. He once said, "It is better to be vulgarly right than politely wrong." He gave his approval to such expressions as, "them horses are mine" and "who is she married to?" Well, this may be a deviation from the expected course but it will serve to enhance the fact that we must have a standard in all things. This is especially true with reference to our spiritual welfare.

Years ago God said through the sweet singer of Israel, "Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever" (Psa. 119:160). Our standard in service to God is not Cicero, Webster, the church or even the restoration movement. Our standard is the inerrant scriptures, a book without contradictions or inconsistencies. Without question this book contains the mind of God as revealed by the Holy Spirit.

Kind friend, I am as gregarious as any man on earth. I love to get along with my brethren. However one does not have to be astute to understand that truth is not compatible with error! I say this kindly but any man who has the propensity to harmonize truth with error might as well try to fit a round peg in a square hole. But someone is ready to say, "How can the Bible be our standard when it is subject to so many interpretations?" The answer to that question is in the grand old book itself. The peerless apostle Paul tells us that multiple interpretations are caused by spiritual blindfolds. In 2 Cor. 2, Paul calls to our attention the illuminated face of Moses as he came down from the mount and talked with the people of God. As a matter of fact, he put a veil on his face so the children of Israel could steadfastly look on him. Now, Paul took that veil and converted it into a blindfold and placed it on the children of Israel.

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Please note verse 15, which says, "But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their hearts." Kind friend, with that blindfold on their hearts the children of Israel could never understand the word of God, but would interpret it any way they desired. This is what the Lord told these same Jews in Jno. 5:46, 47. The Lord in talking to these people who were at this time wearing the blindfold, "Ye do search the scriptures" (verse 39), but they could not find the true Christ. He went on to say, "For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" The Lord talked about some folks who "hearing cannot hear" and "seeing cannot see." This means their minds are blinded from the truth. Not because of a lack of intelligence but because of a lack of integrity. One of the most difficult tasks of this life is to cast aside the blindfolds of dishonesty and prejudice and be completely objective in a study of the word of God. Very few people do this and that is why the Lord said only a few will enter the portals of heaven (Matt. 7:13,14).

The Bible is replete with examples of men and women, who under this blindfold interpreted the Bible to suit their fancy and suffered accordingly. A case in point would be Eve who heard God say, "Ye shall not eat lest ye die" but Eve interpreted the text to say, "ye shall not surely die." It is true she had some help from the devil but after all he is always around to furnish us with the blindfold if we will wear it. We do not have to be reminded of the tragic consequence of this sin. Then, there was old Saul, who heard God say, "Go and smite Amalek and utterly destroy all that they have" (1 Sam. 15). But when Saul pulled his blindfold out of his bag and put it on, the text read like this: "You may spare Amalek and the best of the flocks." Saul's duplicity was laid bare by Samuel who charged the king with stubbornness. Another example of the "blindfold" interpretation syndrome is found in Acts 5, when Ananias and Sapphira heard God say, "Lie not to one another" (Col. 3:9) but when they slipped into their blindfolds the text read, "You may lie under certain circumstances." Needless to say both were killed by the Lord in the presence of both God and man (Acts 5). Then there was that fellow who came to the preacher and said, "I don't believe baptism is essential to my salvation, would you mind giving me a scripture which says I must be baptized in order to be saved." The preacher handed him a Bible open to Mk. 16:15,16 and told him to go home and read those verses six times and meet him the next week. They met the following week and the preacher inquired, "Did you read the verses?" He replied, "I read them six times but I don't see it that way." A blindfold indeed! Then there was the man who read Col. 3:16 "Singing with grace in your hearts unto the Lord" and Eph. 5:19, "Singing and making melody in your hearts unto the Lord." But after putting on the blindfold it read, "Singing and playing unto the Lord." Others will read, "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread." but after the veil is put on this text reads, "Upon any day of the week you may come together to break bread."

Kind friend, the story goes on like a broken record. The Bible does indeed tell us why people interpret the scriptures in so many different ways. Like Israel of old they are wearing the veil unto this present time. How about the brethren back in 1849 who read where Paul said, "I robbed other churches, taking wages of them to do you service" (2 Cor. 11:18). But when they all got together and put on their veils this text seemed to read, "I robbed the American Christian Missionary Society taking my salary from it to do you service." But our own brethren in this age have not escaped the blindfold. In the fifties the hue and cry was for more organization. We were introduced to a new concept called the sponsoring church. This innovation was found on the same page of your Bible as the missionary society, the blank page. They read, Phil. 4:15,16 which says, "Ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again to my necessity." After the blindfolds were placed on this text read, "Ye Philippians know, that in the beginning of the gospel you collected money from many churches, keeping debits and receipts from them so you could supply my need." Then there was the fellow who thought all the Bible was written in literal language. He read Matt. 26:27 where the Lord "Took the cup, gave thanks and gave it to them saying: Drink ye all of it." When he put on his blindfold it read, "And he took the container and gave thanks, and gave to them saying: Drink ye all of it." When the Lord used metonymy he expected us to accept it. When he used his parabolic teaching he expected us to accept it exactly that way. The Bible is filled with metaphors, similes and apocalyptic language. Especially in books like Revelation and Ezekiel. We can't afford to wear a veil when we study these great texts. Last but not least there is the fellow who sees more in the text than appears. In Acts 15, the false teachers who had a confrontation with Paul knew the teaching of the apostles who said, "Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, ye must be circumcised and keep the law; to whom we gave no such commandment." However, after these false teachers put on the blindfold the text read, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses ye cannot be saved."

Much to the chagrin of people both in and out of the body of Christ we have people who wear the veil. This may be done by adding to the word or subtracting from it. It may be done by mutilation or failing to differentiate between the literal and figurative. May the Lord help all of us to be as pragmatic as possible in studying the sacred scriptures which are able to make us wise unto salvation.

READ YOUR BIBLE TODAY

ACCEPTED OF HIM

(2 Cor. 5:9)

Donnie V. Raden

4724 E. Manslick Rd.
Louisville, KY 40219



ACCEPTED OF HIM

With this issue I accept the responsibility of writing a regular column. I am grateful to the editor for the opportunity to teach through this medium. In this article I want to introduce the above column heading which is taken from 2 Cor. 5:9.

The Context

First of all let's view our text in its context. Paul begins the chapter by writing of his confidence of a heavenly home (vs. 1-8). He is assured that "if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (v. 1). His second major point in the chapter is that his whole aim is to be accepted of God (vs. 9-10). The apostle writes in view of his hope, "Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him" (v. 9). His next point is that he endeavors to reach others with the gospel of Christ (vs. 11-15). This section begins, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men" (v. 11). Paul then concludes the chapter by showing that reconciliation is accomplished through Jesus Christ (vs. 16-21). God "hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation." (v. 18).

The Text

Our text begins with the word "wherefore" which tells us that the following statement is based upon the thought of the previous verses (i.e. confidence of a heavenly home). Because of that hope, "we labour" or strive. By this Paul indicates what his ambition, sole aim or only desire is. Bengel comments that "we labour" "denotes the striving, in which the end aimed at is regarded as a matter of honour" (Meyer's Commentary On the New Testament, Vol. VI, p. 520).

Paul's goal is the same "whether present or absent". Whether at home or far from that home (Macknight). So, whether at home in the body (v. 8) or away from the body in heaven (v. 6) his purpose is still the same. It made no difference to him whether he lived or died; either way he didn't want to be separated from Christ. The point is not that Paul thinks he will soon die, rather this is a fixed principle of the soul.

What was his goal? What was his sole aim? For what did he labour and strive? It was to be "accepted of him." The ASV and NKJV use the expression "well pleasing". The only thing that really interested the apostle Paul was to please God and stand right before him. That's all

that mattered! "What the Lord thinks of him is the main thing" (Lutheran Commentary, p. 216).

The reason given for his purpose is "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (v. 10).

Basic Principle Taught Elsewhere

The same principle that Paul states in our text is found in numerous places in the Bible. Jesus said, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matt. 5:6). Here Jesus pictures one who is craving to be in a right relationship with God. That was Paul's desire. Solomon summed up man's purpose in life as being to fear God and keep his commandments (Ecc. 12:13). The Christian is to grow "in grace" (ever strive to be more and more pleasing to God) (2 Pet. 3:18). Passage after passage could be cited which demonstrates that if we do the will of God, we thus please him and stand approved in his sight (cf. Rom. 12:1; 14:18, Eph. 5:10; Phil. 4:18).

Sums Up Our Whole Aim and Purpose

If we have the same purpose that the apostle expressed in our text, it doesn't matter how much money we have or how nice our house is or if we drive a late model car or if our clothes are in style or whether we went to college or not or how good looking or ugly we may be. After all, these pertain to this life which is not permanent. This same writer said, "For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come" (Heb. 13:14).

If our aim is "that we may be accepted of him", it will not be important whether or not we are popular. So what if no one likes us? That's not our goal. Our only concern is whether or not God likes what we do. It will not make any difference about how well our teaching will be received. It doesn't really matter what men may think about us or that for which we stand. It won't even be all that important what our brethren may think. All that really matters is whether or not God is pleased. Are we "accepted of him"? And if we are, who cares about anything else? We serve no one else but our God!

When we accomplish our goal, then my friend we are a success. "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success" (Josh. 1:8).

Reason I Write This Column

I accept the task of writing this column in order to teach the truth that men and women might be accepted of God. Many will appreciate what is written. Yet, there will be some who will not like what we say. Some will disagree. A few may even get upset. However, all of that really won't matter. The only thing that will concern me will be, is it pleasing to God.

Whether we deal with evidence of the existence of God, baptism, instrumental music, faith, zeal, personal evangelism, divorce and remarriage, sin or the plan of salvation, all will be said in an effort "that we may be accepted of him".

WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

Send all questions to:

Weldon E. Warnock

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HELPING WIDOWS AND ORPHANS

QUESTION: *Why is it wrong to help widows and orphans by taking money from the church treasury'?*

ANSWER' To my knowledge there is nobody who opposes helping widows and orphans from the church treasury, providing they come within the scope of the church's responsibility. The church is not obligated to help, financially, all widows and orphans, but just certain ones.

The Word of God teaches to "Honor widows that are widows indeed" (1 Tim. 5:3). W. E. Vine states that "honor" means "the respect and material assistance to be given to widows." Concerning the word, "indeed" (*ontos*), Vine says it "denotes really, actually." Hence, the meaning of the passage is "to care for those women who are really, actually, widows." (The principle also applies to widowers). Williams' translation is clear: "Always care for the widows who are really dependent."

In 1 Tim. 5:16 Paul states the limitations of church assistance to widows very succinctly. He says, "If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed." Children should take care of their own mother or grandmother, that the church be not burdened in order that the church may be able to relieve those saintly widows who are dependent and destitute. This dependency may be as a result of not having any family or the children are so sorry that they will not help. Albert Barnes wrote, "To require or expect the church, therefore, to support those women *we* ought ourselves to support, is, in fact, to rob the poor and friendless."

The Jerusalem church supplied the needs for its widows by selecting seven men to expedite the church's responsibility toward those worthy saints. We must not be any less concerned for our widows, and widowers, today.

As to orphans, I have never seen a single orphan who became the responsibility of the church. This does not mean there has not been any. It simply means I have not seen one. Someone says, "There are orphans, or homeless children, all over the world." This is true! But are they the obligation of the church? Certainly not! God never gave the church the chore of taking care of all the orphans any more than He gave the church the job of relieving all the widows, or caring for all the sick, or

all the hungry and naked. The governments of the world have not been able to alleviate the benevolent needs of all the people, and it is certain the church cannot.

The Bible teaches that the church is to provide for its own—the needy saints (Acts 2:44, 45; 4:32; 6:1-3; 11:27-30; Rom. 15:25, 26; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 8:4; 2 Cor. 9:1, 12,13). A good example of this practice was at Jerusalem. None of the saints lacked as stated in Acts 2:44 and Acts 4:32. However, in Acts 3, the beggar at the gate Beautiful, asked alms of Peter and John. Peter said, "Silver and gold have I none ___ " The church had funds, but Peter did not refer him to the church. Wonder why? Because the church had no responsibility. Brethren, the church's obligation to the world is to try to save souls through preaching the gospel.

Now then, if there are orphans who are Christians, then the church may relieve their needs. But as I said before, I have never known of a situation where a child was orphaned or left homeless with no one to care for it, other than the church. Either grandparents or an aunt or an uncle would take such a child, and this is the way it ought to be.

Our hypothetical cases about children being abandoned on the doorstep of the church building overlook the civil laws that regulate such incidents, if they ever happened. The first thing the church would do, and must do, is call the police and they would handle the matter from there.

However, the crux of this issue is not so much whether the church may care for widows and orphans, but whether the church may make contributions from its treasury to human benevolent institutions in order for them to care for widows and orphans. This, the Bible does not authorize. The church may not, scripturally, subsidize any human organization. If so, where is the passage that authorizes it, either generically or specifically? The reasoning that allows the church to include in its budget allocations for widowages and orphanages, also allows the church to allocate money for hospitals, publishing houses, sanctorums, Bible colleges, etc. If not, why not?

Although the church is limited in its benevolent work, there is a need in the world for general benevolence toward orphans and homeless children, the elderly, the infirm and the sick. Institutional homes for children and nursing homes for the elderly and infirm serve a useful purpose for the indigent. All of us, individually, may contribute to any deserving benevolent organization to help provide food, shelter and clothing for homeless children, the elderly and the infirm. If circumstances permit, we could adopt one or more of these children or act as foster parents. Pure religion is "To visit the fatherless and the widows" (Jas. 1:27).

Brother Foy E. Wallace jotted down the following diagram for me several years ago as to what the church may and may not do with its money. It shows the difference of the church doing its work and subsidizing human organizations.

• CHURCH

MAY		MAY NOT	
1	<input type="checkbox"/> HUNGRY YES FEED	<input type="checkbox"/> GROCERY STORE NO BUDGET	
2	<input type="checkbox"/> NAKED YES CLOTHE	<input type="checkbox"/> MERCANTILE CO. NO	
3	<input type="checkbox"/> SICK YES HELP	<input type="checkbox"/> HOSPITAL-CLINIC NO DRUG STORE	
4	<input type="checkbox"/> INFIRM YES PROVIDE	<input type="checkbox"/> SANITORIUM NO	
5	<input type="checkbox"/> WAYFARER YES SHELTER	<input type="checkbox"/> HOTEL-INN NO	
6	<input type="checkbox"/> MEETING HOUSE YES MATERIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> LUMBER CO. NO	
7	<input type="checkbox"/> PREACHER YES TRAIN	<input type="checkbox"/> COLLEGE NO	
8	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE YES BIBLES/SONG BOOKS	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLISHING HOUSE NO	
9	<input type="checkbox"/> ORPHAN YES	<input type="checkbox"/> INSTITUTIONAL ORPHANAGE NO	

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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WORSHIP—SERVICE

There is confusion in the minds of many regarding what is worship and what is not worship, and the distinction, if any, between worship and service. Both terms express something important in the life of a Christian. Two separate functions are involved. By a careful study, we can see that all worship is service, but not all service is worship. An individual who serves God (is a true servant of God) will be found offering specified items in worship of God, in addition to numerous services performed in daily walking before God. Performing services in submission to one's Master, while neglecting to offer specified acts of worship, will not suffice, nor will offering specified acts of worship, while neglecting to serve in other matters. Both are necessary to being a true servant (worshiper) of God. They are very closely related. They go hand in hand, but are different.

To help us see and understand this matter, I want to quote from EXPOSITORY DICTIONARY OF NEW TESTAMENT WORDS, by W. E. Vine, the meaning he gives to the words worship and service.

WORSHIP (verb) WORSHIPPING

"1. PROSKUNEO, to make obeisance, do reverence to (from pros, towards, and kuneo, to kiss), is the most frequent word rendered to worship. It is used of an act of homage or reverence (a) to God, e.g., Matt. 4:10; John 4:21-24; 1 Cor. 14:25; Rev. 4:10; 5:14; 7:11; 11:16; 19:10 (2nd part) and 22:9; (b) to Christ, e.g., Matt. 2:2, 8, 11; 8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 20:20; 28:9, 17; Jno. 9:38; Heb. 1:6, in a quotation from the Sept. of Deut. 32:43, referring to Christ's Second Advent; (c) to a man, Matt. 18:26; (d) to the Dragon, by men Rev. 13:4; (e) to the Beast, his human instrument, Rev. 13:4,8,12; 14:9,11; (f) the image of the Beast, 13:15; 14:11; 16:2; (g) to demons, Rev. 9:20; (h) to idols, Acts 7:43. —p. 235.

"4. LATREUO, to serve, to render religious service or homage, is translated to worship in Phil. 3:3, "(who) worship (by the Spirit of God)," R.V., A.V., "(which) worship (God in the spirit)"; the R.V. renders it to serve (for A.V., to worship) in Acts 7:42; 24:14; A.V. and R.V., "(the) worshippers" in Heb. 10:2, present participle, lit., '(the ones) worshipping.' See SERVE, —p. 236.

SERVE. "3. LATREUO, primarily to work for hire (akin to latris, a hired servant), signifies (1) to worship, (2) to serve; in the latter sense it is used of service (a) to God, Matt. 4:10; Luke 1:74 ("without fear"); 4:8; Acts

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7:7; 24:14, R.V., "serve" (A.V., "worship"); 26:7; 27:23; Rom. 1:9 ("with my spirit"); 2 Tim. 1:3; Heb. 9:14; 12:28, A.V., "we may serve," R.V., "we may offer service;" Rev. 7:15; (b) to God and Christ ("the Lamb"), Rev. 22:3; (c) to "the creature," instead of the Creator, Rom. 1:25, of idolatry: see WORSHIP.

Note: In Luke 2:37 the R.V. has "worshipping," for A.V., "served;" in Heb. 9:9, "the worshipper," for A.V., "that did the service." —p. 349."

From these definitions and usages of words, it seems that worship involves particular things done in paying homage or reverence to an object. Worship unto God would involve particular things done in paying homage, praise, and adoration unto Him. Service unto God involves the activities of one in obeying and submitting himself to His will in the whole of his walk before God, including certain specified acts of worship.

There are things that may be done by a God-serving person that may not be done in worship ("proskuneo") unto God. Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10) were servants (worshippers) of God who, evidently, used "strange" fire (not from the altar) in preparation for cooking in their daily lives without impunity, but they could not use it in the matter of burning incense, for God had specified a certain fire for that item of worship. It was something they could use in their homes in serving or worshipping (latreuo) God, but they could not use it in worship (proskuneo) in burning incense.

It is right and good for Christians to eat and drink in social meals in their homes, but this must not be done in connection with observing the Lord's Supper—a specified item of worship (1 Cor. 11:17-22,34). This is another example of something servers (worshippers) of God may and should do in their daily lives, but must not combine with the specified worship of observing the Lord's Supper. The first was a matter of serving God; the latter, worship.

But, someone asks, when you have a social meal in your home, which is sanctioned and commanded by the God we serve, is this not worship? It is something we do in serving our God and fellowman and because of our relationship with God, but it is not the same as some specified thing we are instructed to do in paying homage and reverence to God. The former is service (latreuo); the latter is worship (proskuneo).

Abraham was a worshipful, God-serving man who was called upon to do a very difficult thing—offer his son as a burnt offering to God. He immediately got together the necessary equipment and set out for the designated place. When he arrived at the Mount, he said to the young men with them "abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you" (Gen. 22:5). The gathering of the wood, fire, servants to go with them, the three day journey to the designated place were actions of a God-serving, worshipping man, but all this was not worship in the sense that what Abraham and the lad, leaving the young men with the ass, were "to go yonder and do (worship)." Abraham was serving-obeying God in all he did pertaining to this incident, but what he actually did in offering Isaac is called "worship" and the other

things are not. This shows how closely related service and worship really are, but there is a difference.

Some consider everything the Christian does as a servant of God to be "worship", even to diapering babies or cutting one's toe-nails. This thinking has led some to conclude that if God accepts banqueting in the home as worship, he would also accept it as such when provided by the church in a "fellowship hall," and if playing upon an instrument of music in the home is "worship", then it surely would not be rejected by God when combined with "singing Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs" with "one another" as specified in Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19. In the Crowder-Puckett debate, conducted a number of years ago in Atlanta, Ga., Crowder, of the Christian Church, argued for the instrument in singing praise to God on the basis that everything a Christian (God-serving, worshipping person) does is "worship", even to cutting one's toe-nails.

I readily admit that a Christian may serve a master, rear children, minister to babies, cut toe-nails, etc. "as unto the Lord" (as a God-serving, worshipping individual), but this is different from rendering a specified homage (worship) unto God.

Sometimes, Rom. 12:1 is cited to support the idea that everything a Christian does is "worship". "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service (worship-NASB, R.V.). The word is "latría", akin to "latreua", defined elsewhere in this article, and simply refers to the intelligent service of believers in presenting their bodies in service to God. The passage teaches that such is our "reasonable" KJV) or "spiritual service" (A.S.V.). It is "reasonable" because it involves that part of man with which he reasons (his mind or the inner man). It is "spiritual" because it involves his spirit, which is the same as his Bible heart. No other service would be acceptable unto God. The passage is far from suggesting everything a Christian does is "worship".

In being a worshipper of God (servant of God), many detailed things are involved; some have to do with the way we treat our neighbor, wife, children, conduct our business, relate to government, etc., often referred to as service, conduct, or action, and some have to do with spiritual endeavors that give praise and homage to God, edifying and strengthening the spiritual man, referred to as "worship or spiritual endeavors".

This difference in service and worship is somewhat like the difference the Lord makes with money. The Bible teaches that "all" is the Lord's and we are responsible for all that comes under our control, yet some is specially the Lord's (tenth under the law—"as prospered" under N.C.). Thus, we often speak of "our" money and "The Lord's money". Yet, the servant of God (worshipper) is responsible and accountable for both.

In the New Testament, we learn that there are some things the Lord wants His servants (worshippers) to do together, as a body or jointly, established by the fact that the local congregation exists by divine authority,

and by the specific things the saints are told to do together and exemplified in New Testament churches. We have such specific authority for assembling, on the first day of the week, observing the Lord's Supper, praying, singing, teaching-preaching, and "laying by in store". These are spiritual endeavors and constitute "worship". Some of these items may be done privately—apart from the specified assembling (e.g. Prayer) and it would still be "worship": Others (e.g., observing the Lord's Supper-laying by in store) are directly connected with the assembly.

Regardless of what a true Christian may do in his home in feeding, entertaining, and providing recreation for his family and others, all in harmony with God's instructions, he may not add these things to the actions specified for worship, any more than Nadab and Abihu could bring fire from home with which to burn incense before God, when God had specified "from the altar" at that time and place. Their action constituted "vain worship" then and the same kind of thing will now.

When the word "latreuo" (Gk.) service is translated "worshipping"—"worshippers", the reference is to the general actions of devotees of God, but when "proskuneo" (Gk.) worship is used, it refers to some specified thing offered or done in paying homage in God.

When a (God-serving, worshipping) family is preparing to assemble with saints on the Lord's day, their actions (preparing a lesson, dressing themselves and children, polishing shoes, driving to the place of assembly, etc.) reveal them to be servers (worshippers) of God (latreuo), but when they offer up the spiritual sacrifices of praise, Lord's Supper observance, laying by in store, (specified things), it is "worship" (proskuneo).

True, all SERVERS of God will WORSHIP Him in every designated thing, and those who worship Him will in all that they do, be faithful servants, but "worship" and "service" are not the same so that the terms can be used interchangeably. Understanding the distinction the Scriptures make in these will guard against trying to justify something in "worship" that is not specified for worship.

BOB CRAWLEY AT REST

On March 10, my good friend and brother, Bob Crawley, changed worlds. He had suffered declining health for about 10 years as he battled leukemia. He preached for the last 23 years in Lexington, KY where he was instrumental in establishing a number of congregations in the heart of bluegrass country. He was possessed of a brilliant mind and was an able expositor of the scriptures.

A more extended notice will appear later. For now, we offer our kindest wishes to his wife, Leta and children, Bruce, Brian and Laura.

MY SERVANTS THE PROPHETS

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I. ISAIAH SAW IN THE TEMPLE LESSONS FROM CIRCUMSTANCES

In Chapter 6 Isaiah saw God sitting on the throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of his robe filling the temple. He saw and heard the Seraphim, not praying, but rather PROCLAIMING: "Holy, Holy, Holy!" All of the earth trembled, the temple was filled with smoke, and the whole earth was filled with His glory. When Daniel saw the heavenly being in Daniel 10:6-9, he passed out and fell "with his face to the ground." Consider what Isaiah must have felt to see and hear the glory of God! Verse 5 says: "Woe is me, for I am ruined." Our words are helpless to describe the emotions, and our thoughts are futile to grasp the understanding of seeing this vision of God.

As we considered in our last study, Isaiah learned whom to trust. It was not the King of Jerusalem, Uzziah, but rather it was Jehovah whose throne is never empty. Now we need to see that this trust in Jehovah is not bounded by the condition of the circumstances existing around about us, but that God's rule is to be trusted no matter how dismal the situation looks or how distressing the circumstances.

II. ISAIAH LEARNED THAT CIRCUMSTANCES OFTEN TEACH SUPERIOR LESSONS FROM GOD.

Circumstances got Isaiah's attention. Notice the first words of Verse 1: "In the year of King Uzziah's death." When did God get the door open to Isaiah's mind and heart? In the year of his good friend and trusted leader's death and when God broke through. It was in the year that the "roof fell in" that God got my attention. While we all understand that God speaks only through His inspired Book, we also need to see, as did Isaiah, that circumstances become powerful teachers each day in our lives. Oftentimes it is the presence of circumstances, mostly unpleasant ones, that awaken us to the need for the presence of God in our lives. One book entitled: "Crowded To Christ" bespeaks the thought in its title alone. In the day the king died. In the day my world fell in, I saw the Lord **SITTING** on His throne. Notice what God was doing. He was not pacing to and fro with anxiety. He was not wringing His hands or saying, "What am I going to do for a King?" He was simply sitting! He was in **TOTAL** control!

We need to see in our own circumstances the vision of

the Lord sitting in total control when everything in our lives is out of control. In the day that my mate dies HE is in control. In the day when I lose my job and my wife is expecting another child HE is in control. In the day when I'm having financial problems, He is in control. In the day when our precious child runs away from home or is caught in the trap of drug addiction, He is in control. Isaiah is being told that it doesn't matter what the circumstances seem to be, because God is in control.

As human beings we want to fight back with rebellion and bitterness, by shaking our fists in the face of God and blaming Him for our failures, hurts, disappointments and disasters. By what right do we question, "does this have to be happening to me?" Even Job wanted to know where God was during his terrible affliction, Job 23:1-4: "Even today my complaint is rebellion, his hand is heavy despite my groaning, O THAT I KNOW WHERE I MIGHT FIND HIM, THAT I MIGHT COME TO HIS SEAT!" Job wanted to question God. Job wanted to find out why he was having to suffer. The desire to know why is so strong in each one of us! As we read the book of Job and we turn page after page, we discover that God never tells Job at all. Job is just made aware of the greatness of God's power in the whirlwind and wisdom by the questions; and when Job sees how great God is, he forgets about the questions. Why? Because the circumstances no longer matter when we see our magnificent God! We realize that He is in control no matter what our present situation might be. Adverse circumstances do not mean the Lord has lost the handle on the situation. In Luke 21:10, the Lord begins to describe all manner of terrible things, wars of nation with nation, plagues, famines, terrors, persecutions and prisons, but Verse 28 says when you see these things, realize redemption is near. God is in control and we must have the faith to endure and not throw in the towel. It is not ours to question; it is ours to trust.

The real question, however, still remains. Are we willing to trust Him when our world is falling apart? Can we still see God sitting on the throne when the men of the business meeting will have just fired you? Can we see God in control when our own business is falling apart? Can we see God in control when our loved one is taken to the silent city of the dead? Can we see God in control when the church splits right down the middle and everything you have worked for appears lost?

God is saying to Isaiah, "It doesn't matter who lives or who dies, I AM LORD ..., it doesn't matter how it looks or how it appears to look, I AM LORD." We who stumble here below need that message so much, even today.



Using the SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

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WHERE'S THE ANSWER?

A basic issue currently receiving a lot of coverage is the question of assurance for a child of God who is doing the best he knows how to do. He is walking in the light, or doing his best to. He is walking after the spirit, not the flesh. At least he's giving it his best shot. He is striving to serve and obey the Lord. And that includes a regular study of God's will, as well as regular prayer and confession of sins. Still he realizes that he is weak and deficient in knowledge.

With Paul he can say, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:12).

What about this fellow? Does he sing in vain, "Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine. Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine?" And if he has no real basis for confidence short of perfection in knowledge and deeds, what about you and me? We all, who are interested in doing God's will, are either the publican or the Pharisee of our Lord's parable (Luke 18:9-14). If we are the publican, what basis for assurance do we have?

At least five distinct approaches to this question have been submitted by brethren who reject the doctrine of the imputation of Christ's personal righteousness, along with the logical implications of that doctrine. It's my feeling that each is worthy of further study and discussion.

1. **God will judge.** "We are exercising ourselves into a heated frenzy, and possibly even further splintering, over a question that's none of our business. Let's get to work with the task God has given us and 'quit whittling on His end of the stick.' "

Indeed, it seems that some brethren would relieve the Lord of a tremendous responsibility. They would like to have all the judging done and everything neatly sorted out when Jesus comes again.

While I believe this response is all truth, it doesn't appear to me to be all the truth. That the Lord will do the judging, no one would challenge. But if there is a strong basis for hope and assurance for the striving, but weak and faltering child, fellows like me would like to know it.

I heard one brother remark that if the Lord would not let him into heaven because he had ignorantly run a stop sign several years ago, or had even run it intentionally and forgotten about it, he would just go on to hell and not argue about it.

What kind of assurance is that?

Paul indicated that God is for us (Rom. 8:31-34; 5:6-10). If I accepted what this brother was saying, I would have to wonder about that.

2. **Constant cleansing.** This concept is based primarily upon the present tense of the Greek verbs, "walketh" and "cleanseth" in 1 John 1:7-9. By common consent, the present tense denotes continuous or linear action.

Differences of interpretation center primarily around the questions of what conditions are antecedent to this continual cleansing and whether said cleansing is continuous or merely continual. The first would denote constant forgiveness, even as one in the very process of transgressing God's law. The latter would refer to repeated cleansing as one meets whatever conditions are required.

Some say the conditions are specific repentance and confession of every sin. How specific one must be is also a matter of disagreement. Others aver that walking in the light is itself the condition and that this includes specific repentance and confession of every known sin and a general cry for forgiveness for those sins one may be unaware of. Whatever else this walking in the light may embrace, it seems to be a consensus among those who hold the "constant cleansing" view that a "penitent attitude" is a prerequisite.

David's plea in Psalms 139:23, 24 has been offered as an example of such an attitude: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Ps. 139:23, 24).

It certainly seems that David's words would reflect an attitude of humility and it is said that "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (1 Peter 5:5).

For my part, I have serious problems with the concept of Christ's blood cleansing one even as he is in the very act of sin. I don't believe this is what 1 John 1:7-9 is teaching. Yet, the statement is obviously one that should build our confidence rather than lending to our defeat.

3. **Mercy in the Judgment.** "This is the day of grace. The day of Judgment will be a day of justice." I've heard that statement many times and I've made it many times. After all, the Bible teaches that today is the day of salvation (2 Cor. 6:2; Heb. 3:7,15).

Still, Paul entertained the hope that his friend and brother, Onesiphorus, might find something more than justice at the bar. He said, "The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day. . ." (2 Tim. 1:18).

When I received the Son of God (John 1:2) and obeyed His gospel, I found mercy. If I never again sinned, I would not again need His mercy so far as my salvation would be concerned. The fact that Paul would desire for Onesiphorus the mercy of the Lord "in that day" would imply that he might well stand in need of such mercy in that day. And the fact that Paul felt his friend could receive mercy in that day should give confidence to all servants of God like Onesiphorus.

It has been countered that "mercy" is used here as a metonymical expression wherein the basis of the

eternal reward stands for the reward itself. Such is possible but by no means certain.

4. **Absolute vs Relative.** Some requirements of God's are absolute. One either does them or he does not. One is either scripturally baptized or he is not. One either tells a lie or he tells the truth. The church is either organized after the scriptural order or it is not.

Then, some things are relative. The Hebrew letter states, "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers. . ." (Heb. 5:12). No one is born full-grown. God expects us to mature and to increase. He knows where we should be "for the time." Opportunity increases responsibility. Conduct that would be sinful for one might not be sinful for another. Some things are contingent upon other circumstances and therefore are not absolutely right or wrong for every person.

Perhaps some would challenge the reasonableness and scripturalness of this view, but I do not. I'm persuaded there's just a whole lot of truth here. It does not answer all the problems and questions for me. But at least, the proponents of this view recognize the problem and are trying to grapple with it in a reasonable and scriptural way.

5. **God's providence.** It has been said by several that God's providence would overrule in these areas. God will see that one of honest of good heart who is seeking after God and hungering and thirsting for righteousness will not be removed from this world unprepared to face judgment. A sincere and dedicated Christian who sins ignorantly or rashly will not be permitted to die in that state of sin.

Again, I would not question the working of God's providence. But to make such a blanket rule carries implications at which most of us would shudder.

The logical end of this proposal is that everyone who is honest in religion will finally be saved. God will see that he hears the truth and, being honest, he will believe and obey the truth and will continue faithful unto death. This covers the "pious unimmersed", as well as every sincere Christian. If one dies unsaved, it simply means he was dishonest and did not truly desire salvation.

One is made to wonder why some nations are populated with so many millions of insincere and dishonest people!

The same line of rebuttal we have brought against the doctrine of Calvinistic predestination can just as effectively be directed against this proposal. Why should we bother to go to our neighbors across the street or across the sea if this be true. If they are predestined to salvation (as possessed of an honest heart), God will see that they are saved or come to a knowledge of the truth.

Perhaps more of us are accepting such a conclusion than others of us would like to think. Otherwise, we would be doing more going. One brother said publicly he did not believe there were honest souls, unsaved, in Nigeria. If there were, they would be saved.

CONCLUSION: I'm persuaded there are elements of truth in all those proposals. One encouraging thing to me is that the great majority of brethren are dismayed and disgusted over efforts to vilify and castigate those

who disagree on this issue.

I haven't talked with anybody who thinks walking in the light necessitates either perfect knowledge or perfect obedience.

One thing of which we may be confident: The question of how the Lord will take care of His affairs is a sphere of knowledge in which we are all deficient. This being true, tolerance of one another's convictions on such questions as these would surely be in order.

It would appear that truth on this matter may be acknowledged through striving for balance amidst such revealed truths as these:

"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (Rom. 5:10).

"For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified; but he that judgeth me is the Lord" (1 Cor. 4:4).

Restoration Footnotes

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A MAN WHO DIED WITH CHRIST

Many people witnessed the crucifixion of Christ, some as spectators and others as participants. His disciples watched the scene with sorrow, the rulers in empty triumph, the mob as mockers, the soldiers as cruel executioners, and his mother in deep maternal grief. Two other witnesses shared the agony of the cross. They were the robbers who were crucified with him. One is better known than the other because he repented.

What Kind of Man Was He? He was a robber (Matt. 27:38). Luke calls him a criminal (Luke 23:32). A robber is "one who plunders openly by violence." A criminal is literally "an evil doer." Both robbers had done deeds worthy of death (Luke 23:41). The violence by which they plundered may have included murder (cf. John 18:40; Luke 23:19). But these men had not always been criminals. At one time they were innocent children. Yet somewhere along the way they turned to crime. What went wrong? Mental disorder sometimes leads to criminality and environment contributes to it. Responsible individuals choose the way they live and must account for it (Ezek. 18:20). The robber chose the way of transgression.

Even though the man lived in sin, he believed God (Luke 23:40). He was evidently a Jew, a child of God under the Mosaic law (Luke 19:9). He may have learned of God in the home or synagogue. But in becoming a criminal he turned away from God and the law (John 8:39). The Pharisees classed him with the outcasts of Israel, the "publicans and sinners" whom Christ came to save (Matt. 9:10-13). Men tend to grade sinners by human standards, arbitrarily placing some beyond redemption (Luke 13:2-5). They forget that all sin and come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23), and that none are beyond the pale of redemption (Acts 10:34-35). The robber's belief in God was a spark of truth that could renew righteousness in his life.

What Did the Man See that Day? He saw events leading up to the cross (Luke 23:32). He may have watched the soldiers in the Praetorium when they mockingly hailed Jesus "King of the Jews" (Mark 15:16-20). He very likely saw Simon bearing the Lord's cross (Luke 23:26; John 19:17). He could have heard Jesus' words to the weeping women of Jerusalem (Luke 23:27-31). He certainly witnessed Jesus going willingly "as a sheep to the slaughter" and refusing the stupefying drink perhaps intended to lessen his suffering (Matt. 27:33-34). He was dying with Christ, but he for his own sins and Christ for the sins of others. He surely read the inscription: "THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS" (Luke 23:38).

The words of Jesus on the cross unfolded in the robber's hearing. Did the conversation with John regarding Mary (John 19:25-27) touch a chord of his own happier days of childhood? Did he think of an old mother somewhere whose cheeks were often wet with tears for his waywardness? Did he remember a mother's prayers to God for his sinful soul? Surely the Lord's prayer for the forgiveness of his murderers touched his heart (Luke 23:34). "What manner of man is this" must have crossed his mind. A darkness fell over the land about the sixth hour (noon) and it was about this time that the robber began with godly sorrow to change his mind about the way he had lived (Luke 23:44).

He also heard the unintentional testimony of Christ's enemies. The jeering of the rulers and mob rang in his ears: "He saved others; let Him save Himself, if He is the Christ, the chosen of God" (John 19:36-37; Matt. 27:39-44). These unwittingly told the truth about Christ, that he is the Son of God, the King of Israel, and the Savior of the world. This must have made an impression on the robber. Had he been taught as a child about the coming Messiah? Had he heard the stories that filled Jerusalem and Judea about the deeds and claims of the Nazarene?

What Were His Reactions to the Events? Both robbers at first joined in the mockery of Jesus (Matt. 27:44). But at some point during the first three hours on the cross, one repented (Luke 23:39-44). The testimony of the Lord's enemies, the words and manner of Jesus, his own belief in God, his conviction that Jesus had done nothing worthy of death, and perhaps Bible lessons as a boy all may have contributed to his repent-

ance. Never underestimate the power of truth taught to a child. The penitent robber now rebuked his fellow criminal who continued to revile the Lord. The fear of God arose in his heart. Death was at hand and the judgment ahead. He began to think beyond his own time. A sinner might be defiant in the face of death, but even an evil man who believes in God, immortality, heaven, and hell must have second thoughts when death approaches.

The sorrowful robber said, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom" (Luke 23:42). His confession implies that he believed Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of God, and the Savior of his people. He believed Christ was King and about to enter into his kingdom. He may have seen the kingdom more clearly than the apostles at the time. The materialism that blinded them did not block his vision. The nearness of death often brings truth into sharper focus. However weak his understanding of the kingdom, he could not have viewed it as earthly for he was even then dying, but he knew enough to see the kingdom as spiritual and eternal. He believed in a future life and longed to be with Christ when he entered into it.

The Lord's answer to the man is one of the most comforting promises in the Bible: "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43). It is true that we today are not saved like this man (cf. Heb. 9:15-16; Mark 16:15-16). But in stressing how he was not saved, we sometimes lose sight of how he was saved, and fail to see some important lessons. We see in his salvation the compassion of Christ for one sinner who repents (cf. Luke 15:4-7). We see that salvation is conditional. The man believed, repented, and confessed Christ as Lord. He was not saved by works of merit (cf. Titus 3:5; Matt. 20:8-10), nor did the Lord demand perfect knowledge. But he had to meet the demands of Christ's will under the law, even as sinners this side of the cross must obey the gospel to be saved (Rom. 1:16-17; 6:4-6). We see that peace with the Lord immediately awaits the righteous after death (cf. Phil. 1:23). And we see that circumstances may affect one's salvation. The robber may not have repented had the tragedy of his crucifixion not brought him into contact with the Savior.

We do not doubt that the penitent robber found salvation from sin and everlasting rest with God through the death of Christ. We fully expect to see him among the redeemed of all ages when we cross over the Great Divide. The same Christ who saved that sinful man will also save all today who will believe and obey his word (Mark 16:15-16; Rev. 2:10).

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PARTIES AND FACTIONS

Dorris V. Rader
729 Westside Dr.
Tullahoma, TN 37388

Parties and factions have plagued the church from Apostolic times (1 Cor. 3:3-5). A number of years ago a prominent promoter of Institutionalism warned conservative brethren that they would divide and subdivide and splinter into one faction after another. He thought this would be due to their opposition to Institutionalism. His prediction has in part come to pass. However, it has not happened because brethren were asking for Bible authority for all we do and teach (Col. 3:17). He and those aligned with him are neck-deep in a sea of confusion and parties also. I take no comfort in either case. However, I am sure the answer is not in abandoning the plea for Bible authority. I am also sure the type of "unity in diversity" some brethren are advocating does not hold the answer.

Powerful Instrument of Satan

Factions and parties are condemned as works of the flesh (Gal. 5:20). It is a sad situation when so many churches have been paralyzed by parties and factions. Souls are lost, and those who might otherwise be won to Christ, are made to turn away in disgust as they witness jealousies and childish capers among "Christians". As you take a look at churches where members are unable to get along with each other, and business meetings that have become a tug-of-war between two or more sides, ask yourself what has produced this? Was it really anything doctrinal? Has the "parting of ways" become necessary because someone would have to violate honest convictions concerning the faith? Or, has it not more often been plain self-will and stubbornness? Has it not many times been someone who simply would not give in on some personal opinion, or a pet project. So many times doctrinal matters are not involved at all, at least on the surface. Sometimes a factious person pays lip service to the faith, while not being fully committed to it. In fact, if it were the case that one is fully committed to the Lord and His teaching he could not become and be a factious person. This leads to the question of identifying a factious individual.

How The Factious Act

These are the type who seek through every means to intimidate and to bully their way through every situation. They will threaten to "walk out" if things are not done their way. They have been considering going elsewhere, and furthermore have "heard" some others who feel the way they do. Usually, they have been making a

poll, especially among the unstable souls. They either never read, or disregard the admonition: "Let nothing be done through strife and vainglory; ___" (Phil. 1:2-3) Inadvertently, the cat is out of the bag when one talks so much about how long it has been since I have been able "to get my way" about things. This observation is not meant to countenance any lack of due consideration for everyone in the body (1 Cor. 12:25). But a factious spirit is manifest when one threatens and sometimes carries out such threats to walk out, in the hope of forcing his personal preferences.

Does It Favor My Party

The party person looks at every situation, sermon, and action in light of whether it will aid his side. A factious person is not a truth lover since he is willing to let truth suffer and be sacrificed in a stubborn and arrogant determination to have his own way. He will cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine... and serves his own belly rather than the Lord (See Rom. 16:17-8).

In the midst of the factious spirit there is nearly always a nest of hissing half-truths. This means that factious brethren will not always tell the truth. James said, "But if ye have bitter jealousies and factions in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth ___ for where jealousies and factions are, there is confusion and every vile deed" (Jas. 3:14). When church problems arise, especially where doctrinal issues are not involved, conflicting reports come from those involved. When emotions and personal feelings get involved, it seems hard for brethren not to let this slant and warp the report so that it puts one in the very best light. Men who may be careful to tell the truth at other times get careless with facts, when it involves their party.

The factious may be most indifferent regarding church work, but suddenly become quite zealous for a party. One who would not turn the proverbial tap before will be quite willing to operate the whole machine, if it is done "my way". Men who have been known as tight-wads with the Lord's money in supporting gospel meetings and other evangelistic efforts are ready to spend lavishly on their own pet projects and personal comforts, if they can direct it.

The party spirit makes people sour, and sullen toward those who seem to not cater to their side. They dislike having to speak and will avoid such if at all possible. They are sometimes less considerate of politeness and kindness than people of the world. I have always felt that I should be considerate and polite because I am a Christian and not because I approve all to whom I speak. But the factious seem to have a different view.

How To Deal With The Factious

In Titus 3:10 Paul urged that a "factious" (ASV) man be rejected after the first and second admonition. I believe this term does not necessarily mean that one has to advocate false doctrine to be factious. As brother Ferrell Jenkins points out this seems to be an applied meaning. (See GUARDIAN OF TRUTH, Sept. 2, 1982. Pg. 13). Churches have often made serious mistakes in

not dealing more forth rightly and sternly with the factious spirit in their midst. After admonishing such a second time, they should be rejected and labeled in no uncertain terms even when threatened with a lawsuit if you do.

NO SECRET DISCIPLES

Don Givens
411 Hobron Lane
Apt. 3511
Honolulu, Hawaii 96815

Nicodemus went out to Jesus "by night" (John 3:2). The fact that he went to the Lord by nighttime may have been a mere circumstance, but two later references are made to this fact (John 7:50 and 19:39). Nicodemus was convinced as to who Jesus was ("Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God" 3:2) but did he lack the courage to declare himself openly in behalf of Jesus? John 7:48 says that his colleagues claimed that none of the rulers nor Pharisees had believed on Jesus.

After the day of Pentecost did Nicodemus publicly declare himself a disciple of Jesus and take an open stand with the church? He may have, for even among the leaders of the Jews there were many who became obedient to the faith (Acts 6:7). One thing is for certain: if he did become a Christian, he had to come out into the open, for Jesus has no secret disciples.

The plan of salvation includes confession in our initial obedience, and it also commands us to let our light shine before men after becoming Christians, and this eliminates any possibility of "secret discipleship." Whoever would be ashamed of Christ and refuse to confess Him boldly before men is bound to be excluded from the realm of the faithful saints (Mark 8:38; Matt. 10:32,33).

There are many spiritual benefits that come to a person from making the good confession before men in addition to the fact that it is one of those requirements that lead to our salvation (Romans 10:9, 10). It is a serious, solemn and public committal to the will of God before witnesses (1 Tim. 6:12) to which a person may always look thereafter as indication of his having pledged allegiance to the Divine will. As a result, one can thereafter claim for sure: "It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me." (Gal. 2:20).

Having named the name of Christ, one is called on to depart from and abhor all iniquity (2 Tim. 2:19). Therefore, in our continual confession of Him, we are publicly pledging ourselves to lives of holiness. No room, here, for any secret discipleship.

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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

BLACKFORD-EPLEY DEBATE

There will be a three night debate on Holy Spirit baptism and miracles, June 9,10 and 12 in Owensboro, Kentucky. Speeches will be shortened the third night to allow for a one hour question-answer session. The entire discussion will be conducted at the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, 5691 W. 5th St. Rd. Steve Epley preaches for this church and Dick Blackford preaches for the Westside Church of Christ in that city.

NEW CONGREGATION

REY O. UGALE, Roadside Church of Christ, Lingu, Selana, Cagayan 1116, Philippines—It is my joy to tell you of a newly established congregation in this area. The work was begun here in 1985 with Rody Gumpad and Meises Arquero. This place is full of denominational groups, such as: Charismatics, Roman Catholic Church, Jehovah's Witnesses and others. I encountered one of the well known Charismatics with many people attending our discussion. From August-November I held home studies which resulted in nine baptisms. In November we began regular services on Sundays with nine members with attendance 15 and above. As of February membership is 24 with 28 attending. The church is in spiritual babyhood. Remember us in your prayers. I am working full-time in preaching the gospel and thankful to a sister in Georgia who is helping to make that possible. Could you add me to your bulletin mailing list?

MIKE HUGHES, P.O. Box 75, Joaquin, Texas 75954—Recently a 21 year old brother here preached his first sermon. Soon his brother will make his first attempt at preaching. In June, J. T. Smith of Lake Jackson, Texas will be here to preach in a gospel meeting.

A LETTER OF INTEREST FROM TURKEY

MARY WARD, PSC 3096, APO NY 09224—"Dear brother Adams, Thank you for printing my name in the January issue of Searching the Scriptures. I'd like to update you on the situation here in Izmir. We have been here for approximately two months. Unfortunately I have not been able to locate other faithful Christians. I have posted several signs in different places to let others know there is a faithful Christian in Izmir, Turkey.

I have received a great amount of tapes from several preachers and I thank them for their time and care in sending them. The preaching is excellent. I especially enjoy the singing tapes. I find singing so beautiful and uplifting. I use these tapes every day, several times a day. I am learning much and growing from them.

I especially miss contact with other Christians, their friendship and fellowship. I cannot tell you enough how much I appreciate and enjoy the letters. They are special and important to me. I feel that I am a part of your congregation by hearing tapes of your worship and singing along with you. Please pray for me that I might contact others here with the gospel. The people here are 99% Muslim. But there are Protestants (including Mormons, Lutherans), Catholics and Jews here. I have planted the seed in teaching one girl. I am trying to teach my children. I thank you again for the encouragement and prayers."—Mary Ward.

PREACHER NEEDED

NEWPORT NEWS, VIRGINIA—The church here is seeking a full time preacher. Only partial support is available. Those interested may write: Church of Christ, 315 Harpersville Rd., Newport News, Virginia 23601. It would be helpful if a sermon cassette could be included. This is possibly ideal for a retired military man.

PREACHER AVAILABLE

JACK E. TURNER, 1015 S. Silver, Deming, New Mexico 88030— After two and a half years with the church here we are anticipating a move this summer. We are leaving under amicable circumstances, having thoroughly enjoyed our work and having a great love for the brethren here who treated us well. While I do the necessary amount of study, I am not an office bound preacher. I prefer to be out making contacts, conducting home studies and visiting a good part of the time. I am looking for a work which needs an evangelist and will work with him. I am 39 years old, married with a son living at home and have been preaching for ten years. Dee Bowman knows me. Those interested may write me at the above address or call (505) 546-2001.

* * * * *

EDITORIAL LEFT-OVERS

My friend, Cecil Belcher of Kokomo, Indiana sent me the following item from the liberal Lindberg Road church in Anderson, Indiana.

"We are contacting you early to enable your congregation to attend our gospel singing concert and youth rally scheduled for the middle of June, 1986. Perhaps you would like to plan your vacation Bible school or other events so they will not be in conflict. Full details will be sent to you early in 1986. By 'singing' we do not mean that it will be participatory in nature. There will be professional singing groups here as well as speakers for the youth rally."

That is interesting, is it not? That is one of the ways the high flying independent churches of our day are gaining large audiences. It is entertainment, pure and simple.

* * * * *

HARD TO PLEASE

There have been times when some congregations have used very poor judgment in allowing about anyone to preach regardless of ability, soundness in the faith or uprightness in life. I think it was James W. Adams who related to me an incident involving C. R. Nichol. He went to a place for a meeting where one of the brethren was insistent on filling the pulpit most of the time to the disappointment of brethren who did not quite know how to handle the matter. Attendance continued to drop off. Some of the brethren explained the situation to brother Nichol and asked him if he would talk to the man and let him down easy. Brother Nichol diplomatically explained to him that we do

not all have the same talent and some can serve God in one way while others are better suited for other things. When the brother caught the drift of what Nichol was saying, he drew himself up indignantly and said "Charlie Nichol, the trouble with you is that you are just jealous of me!"

But, as James P. Needham observed a few months ago, we have come from a time when everybody could preach to a time when almost nobody seems to suit some of the brethren. If a preacher is too studious, he will be over the heads of the people. If he spends too much time visiting and conducting home studies, he is a gadfly. So, I guess what the brethren need is a man who can spell-bind the people with brilliant oratory, while being as logical as Paul, as impassioned as Peter, as tender as John, unfettered by a family, like Paul, but having his wife and children in subjection; one who is not too short and not too tall; handsome but in a plain sort of way so the brethren won't be jealous. He must have the right amount of education but should not be a college-trained man lest the common folk turn away from him. Really, brethren, is it not time to stop such foolishness. Every preacher can't be young, middle-aged and "mature" in years all at the same time. Some of the brethren have such arbitrary requirements for a gospel preacher that neither the Lord nor any of the apostles would suit them. The books of 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, much of 1 Thessalonians and 2 Corinthians shed abundant light on the matter, as inspiration views it. That ought to be good enough for all of us.

* * * * *

SOUTHSIDE LECTURES

The editor looks forward to being at Southside in Pasadena, Texas June 2-5 for a lectureship along with Harry Pickup, Jr., Paul Earnhart and a young preacher named Homer Hailey. R. J. Stevens will again lead the singing. This will make the fourth time to work with this church on this type program and it is always an edifying week. Theme for the week is: "The Fight Is On."

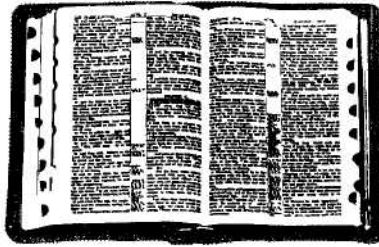
IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

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RESTORATIONS	78
(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)	



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 XXVII

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Number 5

THINK ON
THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 1631
Lutz, FL 33549



THE LAW AND GRACE

There are many who cannot conceive of grace existing where law is. The two are not compatible in their view of scripture. However, when one understands the meaning of grace and law in the word of God, the two cease to be incompatible and become essentially related to each other. God's grace and God's law are given to the same person, and both are for his salvation.

God Requires Obedience Always

It would be incredible for any man who claims to honor and respect the Bible at all to say that God will bless and save one who disobeys Him. Passages are too numerous and plain to argue that point. God will take vengeance on all those who do not know Him and who "obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thessalonians 1:8). This has to do with everlasting punishment from the presence of the Lord (v. 9). Jesus said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

Adam and Eve disobeyed God and were driven from the presence of the Lord because they sinned: they did not obey the word of God. 1 Samuel 15 contains a good lesson on what constitutes genuine obedience to God. King Saul was told explicitly what to do with the Amalekites and their cattle. He decided to save the king alive and some of the best cattle. When Samuel heard the bleating of the sheep, and the lowing of the oxen, he knew that Saul had not obeyed the voice of the Lord.

Saul claimed to have obeyed the command, but God said he had rejected the voice of the Lord, and for that he was rejected as king of Israel. He did not obey the voice of the Lord because he did what he wanted to do instead. Saul finally confessed, "I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord. . ." Disobedience is sin!

All obedience requires law. Call it what you will, it is law when one who has the authority to command, does so and requires obedience. The dispensing of any favor that rests upon obeying any condition that God gives, amounts to a condition to that grace. That condition **MUST** be obeyed or the grace will not be received. The conditions which are to be obeyed equal to nothing less than **LAW**.

The Law Of Christ

The word of Christ is called his law. Isaiah 2:1-3 is a prophecy of the kingdom of Christ, and it says that all people shall flow into his kingdom which will be established in the top of the mountains, "for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." The law of the Lord began in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost when the apostles were endued with power from on high—they were baptized with the Holy Spirit—and began to speak the truth as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:4). This was the promise of Christ fulfilled to them (John 14:23; 16:13). It is the gospel of Christ, which is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16).

The law of Christ is fulfilled when one obeys what Christ tells him to do (Galatians 6:1, 2). Paul explains that he desired to gain some who were "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 Corinthians 9:21). The law of the Lord, the law of Christ, and the law to Christ, all refer to the same things. They refer to the gospel of Christ, which is the word of God.

If we deny that we are under law now, we deny that we sin, and that puts us in a dilemma with 1 John 1:8-10. The scriptures define "sin" as: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4). "Because the law worketh

wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression" (Romans 4:15). It is not difficult to see that law is necessary to identify sin. If then we say we have no law, we must conclude that we cannot sin, because where no law is, there is no transgression.

James teaches us that whosoever looks into the perfect law of liberty, not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, he is the one who is blessed in his deeds (James 1:22-25). This perfect law of liberty is the law of Christ, the gospel of our salvation.

The Word of Grace is The Law We Must Obey

"The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:11, 12). The grace of God that saves TEACHES. It teaches how to live so as to receive that blessed hope. "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 20:32).

It has already been observed that the word of God is the law of the Lord. The word of his grace is the law of the Lord. It has also been observed that without law there is no sin (1 John 3:4; Romans 4:15). "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us... If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (1 John 1:8, 10). If we say there is no law to which we must submit, we say we have no sin and do not sin; but as we say that, we deceive ourselves, the truth is not in us, we make Christ a liar, and his word is not in us. Which horn of that dilemma do you want to take?

The gospel is the law of the Lord. If one does not obey the law, he is a transgressor: a sinner. If he obeys the law, he is blessed of God. This law contains in part the conditions for the forgiveness of sins. Without submitting to the conditions, or obeying that law, God's grace of forgiveness of sins will never be granted to man. This is why some people will be lost and some will be saved. God loved the world and gave His Son to die for every man, but every man will not receive the grace of God whereby he can be saved, because he will not accept the conditions of the word of His grace (Acts 20:32), which is the law of the Lord.

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the men of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:16, 17).

"Iniquity" means without law. "Workers of iniquity" would be those who work without law. I suppose those who insist that grace and law are totally incompatible in God's plan would contend that we receive salvation by grace without any kind of work. That would have to include faith because faith is a work (John 6:28). It is the work of God that we believe (John 6:29). The people asked Jesus what they must DO that they might WORK the WORKS OF GOD. "Jesus answered and

(Continued on page 4)

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READY TO PREACH THE GOSPEL

When Paul wrote the church at Rome that he was "ready to preach the gospel" to them, I am sure he meant that he was eager to fulfill his "debt" and anxious to have part with them in the work of Christ (Rom. 1:14-15). In this article, I am concerned about readiness to preach from a different standpoint.

Faithful and Able

Paul said to Timothy "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2). Faithful and able—these are the two basic qualifications for preachers. All who are able are not faithful. Those who preach ought to be "examples of the believers" (1 Tim. 4:12). But it also needs to be said that all men who are faithful to the Lord are not able to publicly proclaim the gospel effectively. There are some who earnestly want to do the work of public preaching who are not really ready to do it.

Prerequisites to Preaching

Before one can successfully preach, he must genuinely love souls. Paul said his heart's "desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved" (Rom. 10:1). Paul also said he would have given his life for the Thessalonians "because ye (they) were dear unto us" (1 Thes. 2:8). John said he had no greater joy than to know that his children walked in truth (3 Jno. 4). One must see the need to recover souls out of the "snare of the devil" (2 Tim. 2:26). He must see preaching, not as a means of elevating himself, but as a means of enabling others to "walk worthy of God" (1 Thes. 2:12) and he must see these as his "hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing" (1 Thes. 2:19).

To preach, a man must know the truth. It is impossible to preach what one does not know. The age of inspiration is over. Any man who claims that he has direct revelation from God stands in direct conflict with what the word of God teaches. The faith has been "Once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3) and admits of no appendages. It is full and final. Our charge is to preach only that which is included in "the faith once delivered." This body of truth is to be studied day and night. It is praiseworthy to see a man gather a respectable library and to use these tools to better equip himself for the work of the gospel. But it must never be forgotten that reading what men have said about the Bible is no sub-

stitute for reading the Bible itself. It is one thing to recognize our need for help from scholars who have devoted lifetimes of research, and quite another for us to let them do our thinking for us. Many errors have been taught with consequent divisions because of inordinate respect for the works of uninspired men. I may be a little old-fashioned (some think I am a LOT that way), but it is my firm conviction that there is great value in committing as much of the Bible to memory as possible. Learn precisely what the text says without addition or subtraction. Study the context. Study other passages which treat the same thought, or where similar expressions are used, but only after you have a clear understanding of the context of the passage first under study. Let God speak through his word, and you just listen. Then, when you get up to speak, "speak as the oracles of God." As much as possible say what you want to say in the language of inspiration itself.

If you would be a good preacher, know yourself. What are your real strengths? Capitalize on them. What are your weaknesses as a speaker? Work on them. Do not be arrogant and full of pompous esteem for yourself. On the other hand, do not belittle yourself. You are made in the image of God. He made you with the power to think, to decide and to act. If you are deficient in some areas, then resolve to improve.

It is at this point that I feel compelled to say some things which I hope will be taken in the spirit in which they are intended. It appears to me that there is a tendency these days to be almost anti-education when it comes to preachers. Some are short-changing themselves in preparation to preach. You do not have to have a degree from a college or university in order to preach the gospel and brethren are mistaken in demanding such. On the other hand, there are far too many brethren trying to preach who have not learned the most basic things about communication. Preaching is communication of ideas from one mind to another. I see preachers with little or no eye contact with an audience. Brother, if you want the audience to give you their attention, then would you please give them your attention? Look at them. Don't pick out a spot on the wall, or glance at only two or three spots in the house. Look the people right in their eyes and they will come nearer giving you their attention.

Don't be afraid or ashamed to **preach**. Preaching is a proclamation. Lift up your voice. Look with suspicion upon any speech book or teacher who tries to tell you that preaching is a "conversation." It is not. It some-times is a cry. Sometimes it must plead. It must ex-plain. It must confide. It must challenge. It must re-prove and rebuke. It must demand. But please don't develop an artificial tone so that you sound like you have a mouth full of either marbles or mush. Why should you say the word "God" any differently in the pulpit than you do out of the pulpit? Be genuine, be impassioned. Let your hearers know that they are lis-tening to a man who really cares about their lives, their burdens, their eternal destiny. Who wants to listen to a 45 minute lecture in a monotone which requires nothing more than sheer endurance? Let your preaching give

much, but also let it ask much in return. Don't leave it so people can take it or leave it. If you do, then I can tell you they are going to leave it!

Brethren, it is not impossible to learn to speak and/or write grammatically. Put the "g" on the end of words which end with that letter. The common people will still understand you. It is just as easy to say "get" as it is to say "git." Double negatives in reality have you saying the very opposite of what you mean to say. Verb forms are important in language. It is just as easy to say "when he had gone" as to say "when he had went." The first is correct and the second is otherwise. It compounds the problem for men to tell us about the Greek when they have not bothered to learn the most basic elements of our own language.

It helps, too, if one is going to refer to historical matters, the world of science, medicine, or some other branch of learning, to have the facts. Those in your audience who know about these matters will tend to discount what you say on other things when you have not done your homework in the area they know best.

It would also help to use common sense. Every preacher cannot hold an audience for an hour every time he speaks. If all the excess baggage were eliminated, repetitions avoided, and over-kill ruled out, many sermons would not only be shorter, but much more effective. "As the peerless and beloved Apostle Paul said in his first letter to the great church at Corinth, in chapter one and down about verse 10" could just as well be shortened to "Paul said in 1 Cor. 1:10." Does that not say as much? In preaching and writing, it helps to choose the most effective words to say a thing, rather than framing four different sentences to say the same thing using different synonyms.

Brother, if you want to preach the gospel and bring lost souls to the Lord, it would be time well spent for you to grasp the basic elements of communication in our own language. If you want to be "ready to preach the gospel" then don't short-change yourself (or your hearers) by failing to make the best preparation possible. Good books are available on grammar and composition and many community colleges offer adult classes in these fields. The gospel is the most important message in the world. It deserves the best presentation we can give it. Are you ready?

(Continued from page 2)

said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (John 6:28). Belief is something that man does with his heart (Romans 10:17). Jesus said they would die in their sins if they did not believe he was the Son of God (John 8:24). That is a condition of salvation that cannot be denied. In verse 21 Jesus said, "... whither I go, ye cannot go."

Repentance is a command. God commands all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30, 31). A command must be obeyed. A promise is received; a fact is believed, but a command is obeyed. Jesus said, "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). God is not willing that any should perish, "but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

Unless one believes and repents, he is not working the works of God: not obeying the law of the Lord. That means he would be working without law so far as God is concerned. Jesus spoke plainly to this point: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthews 7:21-23).

Men must do something to be accepted by God, contrary to some popular concepts. To be blessed of God we must be doers of the word, and not hearers only. He must look into the perfect law of liberty, and continue therein to be blessed in his deed. (James 1:22-25). Man's eternal judgment and destiny will be based upon his deeds and works according to the law of the Lord. Jesus said, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28, 29). They that have DONE good versus they that have DONE evil. The good and evil is determined by what the word of God says. Revelation 20:11, 12 says the dead were judged out of the things written in the books (Bible) according to their WORKS. The same is taught in 2 Corinthians 5:10.

In view of all of this, how can one conclude that man has no obligation to law of any kind in order to receive the remission of sins? If we do not obey this law, we are WORKERS of INIQUITY. Workers of iniquity cannot be saved by grace, and I pity the man who undertakes to prove that proposition from the Bible.

The charge of Legalism has no merit against the things presented in this article. Legalism is salvation by works ONLY—**works of merit!** Legalism is a system that earns salvation by a perfect keeping of the law, so that there is no infraction or transgression of the law at all. After the law has been violated, a system of grace and mercy must provide forgiveness or the just penalty of the law will come upon the transgressor. That system of grace and mercy has conditions, which must be obeyed if the grace is to be obtained. As soon as the law is once transgressed, legalism is no longer possible.

Every man who is saved by Grace, is saved by grace through faith. And every man who is saved by faith is saved by repentance and response to the will of God to receive His salvation. That is what grace means!

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OUR COMMISSION

In no uncertain terms the Great Commander has issued the Christian his marching orders. They are clear, concise and militarily to the point. We are to *stand firm* in the Cause; we are to *hold fast* our conviction; we are to be *steadfast* and *unmoveable*, bravely and with determinant courage, holding the line against all forces that oppose.

And why? Because the Christian is a soldier, but not just *any* soldier—he is a soldier of the King. As a result, we must press on in battle. We must contend. We must fight. We dare not retreat. We dare not go on furlough or become battle fatigued. We can't afford to give in to sin ... we can't afford to lay down for the devil... We can't afford to raise the white flag of compromise and join ranks with the very one who stands opposed to all that is good and godly. We have no choice but to proudly raise up the ensign fair and march under the banner of the Cross till such a time as our faith produces victory. We must not fail.

Yes, the Christian is a soldier and as a soldier he has been commissioned not only to fight but to RECRUIT. Hear Paul in 2 Timothy 2:3— "*Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.*" And what does a good soldier do? Note the previous verse in the passage: *And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also* (2 Tim. 2:2). Brethren, God's army is shrinking in number and the reason is that we have become "*so entangled in the affairs of everyday life*" (2 Tim. 2:4) that we have failed to fulfill our commission. God's army has no compulsory draft. He asks for volunteers.—*And anyone willing to yield allegiance to Christ as King can join!* We must get back to "basic training" as soldiers of the Cross. We've got to begin again to preach the salvation story. And we must now, more than ever, renew our recruiting zeal and point people to Jesus.

In 1 Timothy 3:15 Paul affirmed the church to be the "*pillar and support of the truth.*" Question: Is he saying that the church is the support of the inspiration and authenticity of the truth? Obviously not, for irrespective of what the church does the truth will still be inspired and remain authentic.

How, then, is the church the pillar and support of the truth? The church supports and upholds the truth as far as the **proclamation** of the truth is concerned. AND IF

MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST DO NOT PROCLAIM THE TRUTH—THE TRUTH WILL NOT BE PROCLAIMED!

All over our land there are congregations which are NOT marching for the Master, are not living for the lost and are not recruiting and telling the Good News to anyone. They do nothing but keep house for the Lord, glory in their illustrious past, and sing so proudly—"I Shall Not Be . . . I Shall Not Be Moved . . ."—and tragically, they mean every word.

Folks, it's time to stop arguing for hours over how much water to keep in the baptistery or what kind of nails to use on the new paneling in the church basement and time to start doing what the church is in business to do and for which purpose the Savior died—TO SAVE THE SOULS OF LOST MEN AND WOMEN! We so desperately need to stop counting all we've gained in the past and start seeing how many are left in the world! Let's put "GO" back in GOSPEL and adopt the attitude of the apostle who said, "*Woe is me if I preach not the gospel*" (1 Cor. 9:16). And let's view again those first century saints who went out and "*turned the world upside down*" for Jesus. And it didn't happen by accident. Acts 8:4 tells the "how"—"*They went everywhere preaching the word.*"

Here were Christians who had received their marching orders to "GO"—and, praise God, they went! Now, then, what's stopping us from doing the same?

*Onward, then ye people, Join our happy throng;
Blend with ours your voices In the triumph song;
Glory, laud and honor Unto Christ the King,
This thro' countless ages Men and angels sing.
Onward Christian Soldiers! Marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus going on before.*

Arthur Sullivan

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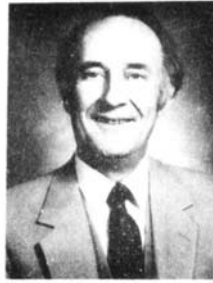
WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

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THE BAPTISM OF 1 COR. 12:13

QUESTION: *Would you comment on 1 Cor. 12:13. Denominational preachers and some commentaries interpret this passage to teach Holy Spirit baptism. It does appear, at least on the surface, that this Scripture could so be understood*

ANSWER: The verse states, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." This text is an elucidation upon the immediate context. The same Spirit who endowed the Corinthians with different gifts (vv. 4, 7-11), has also brought together diversities of people—people of different religions (Jews and Gentiles), and people of different social standing (bond and free), and made them into one body. In the spiritual body, the church, they drink of one Spirit. Let's analyze the passage and make some observations.

"For by one Spirit." The Holy Spirit is the agent by which we are led to be baptized into the one body. We could say, "For under the influence and guidance of the Holy Spirit, we were all baptized into one body," and the meaning would be reflected, precisely. The preposition "by" is from the Greek preposition "en." It could be translated either "by" or "in," or even "with" in the passage under study, depending on whether the translator feels Paul is referring to instrumentality, sphere or the element of the Spirit. The KJV, RSV and NIV, and other versions, selected "by" in their translations. The ASV chose "in." Many commentaries have decided with the ASV.

But let's look at the context of 1 Cor. 12:13 and notice how "en" is used. Verse 3 states, "Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by (en) the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed." Verse 9 reads, "to another faith by (en) the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by (en) the same Spirit." In both passages "en" can be rendered "by" or "in." But in these verses we can readily see that the influence and power of the Spirit is indicated and not the element of the Spirit. The Spirit is working through means—inspiration and gifts.

Turning to Mk. 12:36 we observe, "For David himself said by (en) the Holy Ghost---- " Here, the Holy Spirit is the guide, operating through David, as the agent who enabled David to speak by inspiration. Hence, we are of the persuasion that the Holy Spirit is acting as agency or means in 1 Cor. 12:13, and "by one Spirit" is preferable over "in one Spirit."

"all baptized into one body." Through the leading of the Spirit, i.e., the teaching of the Spirit through the inspired Scriptures, are we all baptized in water into the one body. Many denominationalists perceive this as Holy Spirit baptism by making, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized," to mean, "For with the element of the Spirit are we all baptized." The reasons that this cannot be Holy Spirit baptism are as follows:

(1) There is only one baptism (Eph. 4:5). This means there is only one baptism that saves and puts us into Christ. The "one baptism" of Eph. 4:5 is the same baptism of Eph. 5:26, and that is water baptism. Through water baptism we are saved (Mk. 16:16; 1 Pet. 3:21), have our sins remitted (Acts 2:38) have our sins washed away (Acts 22:16), get into Christ (Gal. 3:27) and in which we reach the blood of Christ (Rom. 6:3-4). This one baptism was in effect on Pentecost and it will continue until the end of the world (Mt. 28:19-20). The baptism of 1 Cor. 12:13 puts us into the body of Christ, hence it is the same baptism as in Acts 2:38, viz., water baptism. Those who were baptized on Pentecost were added to the church, the one body (Acts 2:47).

(2) Holy Spirit baptism was special and not general. There are only two cases of Holy Spirit baptism in the Bible—the apostles on Pentecost (Acts 1:5; 2:1-4), and the house of Cornelius (Acts 10:44; 11:15-17). Holy Spirit baptism was a promise and not a command. There are no instructions in the Bible how we are to receive Spirit baptism. Since we do not know how to receive it, then we must conclude that we are not to be recipients of it.

(3) If 1 Cor. 12:13 is Holy Spirit baptism, then only alien sinners receive the baptism because the baptism of this text is what puts one into the spiritual body. A person is baptized before he gets into the body, therefore, he is baptized while an alien. Baptist preachers are going to have to concede that Cornelius was an alien sinner when the Spirit fell on him and not a saved man before water baptism. They cannot have Holy Spirit baptism in 1 Cor. 12:13 putting us into the body, and Holy Spirit baptism on Cornelius as a manifestation or result that he was already in the body, and therefore, saved before water baptism. But Holy Spirit baptism did not put Cornelius into the one body, but obedience to what Peter preached through the Spirit did (cf. Acts 11:14, 15; 10:47, 48). Hence, 1 Cor. 12:13 is not Holy Spirit baptism.

(4) 1 Cor. 12:13 cannot be Holy Spirit baptism because speaking in tongues accompanied Holy Spirit baptism (Acts 2:4; 10:46), but all the Corinthians, who had been baptized "by the Spirit into the one body," could not speak in tongues. Paul asked a rhetorical question, "do all speak in tongues" (1 Cor. 12:30)? Of course, they did not! Therefore, 1 Cor. 12:13 is not Holy Spirit baptism, or else, all the Corinthian Christians could have spoken in tongues.

(5) 1 Cor. 12:13 is not Holy Spirit baptism for after they were baptized, then they would drink into one Spirit. But Spirit baptism is a filling of the Spirit (Acts 2:4). Hence, it would have been impossible for them to have drunk of the Spirit when they were already full.

But someone says, "Why did not Paul say, 'water baptism,' if he meant 'water baptism?'" The answer is that Paul did not say "baptism by water" in 1 Cor. 12:13 for the same reason he did not say it in other places. It was understood. Kittel said, "Naturally water is needed when baptism is administered. This is so self-evident that Paul does not even mention water explicitly in R. 6:3f; 1 C. 1:13ff; 12:13; 15:29; Gal. 3:27" (*Theological Diet of the N.T.*, Vol. 6, p. 619). You will notice that Kittel classifies 1 Cor. 12:13 as water baptism. E. Y. Mullins in the I.S.B.E. says on 1 Cor. 12:13, "But here the inference is not to the baptism of the Spirit, but rather to a baptism into the church which is the body of Christ" (Vol. 1, p. 401).

When we read Luke's inspired record of the conversion of the Corinthians, he says nothing in Acts about their being baptized with the Holy Spirit. Surely such an important event would not have been overlooked. Luke simply says, "and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized" (Acts 18:8). Here is 1 Cor. 12:13 exemplified. Paul preached by the Spirit and the Corinthians being brought to conviction through preaching, they were baptized into the one body. They were born anew of "water and of the Spirit" (Jn. 3:5).

"drink into one Spirit." This is a figurative expression perhaps referring to the bestowal of the Spirit under the figure of the living water used by Jesus (Jn. 7:37). This involves all the provisions of the Spirit for man who comes in humble obedience. He drinks of the cup of the Spirit, i.e., the cup of miraculous endowments in the first century church, and the cup of blessings revealed by the Spirit in the Word of God for then and now.

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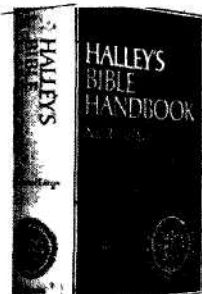
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"I MARRIED A CATHOLIC"

(This letter was written by a Christian in California. Her identity is not revealed for obvious reasons. It is a letter of advice to a girl contemplating marriage to a Roman Catholic. It was first published by the *20th Century Christian* and later reprinted in the **Voice of Freedom**. We sincerely hope that it will be profitable for our readers in **Searching the Scriptures**. E. B.)

Some friends of yours have asked me to write you concerning your approaching marriage to a Catholic. I, myself, married a Catholic, so I can tell you firsthand what it involves.

I was "raised" in the church of Christ. We accepted the fact without question that on Sundays we attended Bible classes and church twice a day. We also were present each night throughout meetings, sometimes driving many miles. Many of the best-known preachers have I heard. Bible discussions have always been freely held in my parents' home. Christian papers were in abundance.

It was therefore quite a shock to my parents to learn I was dating a Catholic boy. At that time I lived away from home. Acting on their wishes I quit my job and returned home. They told me their feelings about marriage out of the church. Then, as it was my decision, they left it up to me to work out my answer.

Advice was sorely needed, for I was deeply mixed up. I desired the minister there to talk with me, for his sister was married to a Catholic. But being quite reticent I couldn't approach him with questions. In search of answers I read many library books but none contained the knowledge that was needed. Then I obtained a job in the same city as this boy in order to be near him, hoping this situation could be worked out.

Face The Facts

There was never any question that we deeply loved each other, then or now. We had a wonderful courtship. We enjoyed with few exceptions the same things; hours were spent in conversation on endless subjects—except religion. Neither of us faced the facts. This boy had been raised by Catholic parents, attended all Catholic schools, knew why and what he believed, and lived up to the Catholic ideal of life.

We had already started the necessary procedures in order to be married by a priest when I made an attempt to talk with a minister. Inside I was sick with wanting this person so much. I wanted to be his wife, have his

children. But was I doing what was right before God? Then it seemed if only we could get married all would be well. (Instead marriage has only intensified the feelings of conflict I had then.)

Ante-Nuptial Agreement

I know you must be very much in love to consider marrying a boy of the Catholic religion, but would you like to know how my marriage has worked out? At first we attended our own church, sometimes accompanying the other. Before I continue this letter I'd like to quote the ante-nuptial agreement:

"I, the undersigned, not a member of the Catholic Church, propose to do so with the understanding that the marriage bond thus contracted is indissoluble, except by death. I promise on my word of honor that I will not in any way hinder or obstruct the said John Doe in the exercise of his religion, and that all the children of either sex, born of our marriage shall be baptized and educated in the Catholic faith and according to the teaching of the Catholic Church, even though the said John Doe should be taken by death. I further promise I will marry John Doe only according to the marriage rites of the Catholic Church and that I will not, either before or after the Catholic ceremony, present myself before a Civil Magistrate or Minister of the Gospel."

The Catholic attitude toward this is that inasmuch as the Catholic is convinced that his religion alone is the true one, while the average non-Catholic usually believes in the principle that one religion is as good as another, the non-Catholic does not sacrifice a religious principle. The fact that non-Catholics sign these promises so readily proves that their faith is not very strong.

Infant Baptism

What a wonderful, glorious experience to have a baby! But my joy was short-lived. Do you know what is said and done in "christening"? In infant baptism, after questioning the sponsors, the priest breathes upon the baby's face, saying "Depart from him, thou unclean spirit and give place to the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete." Then he makes the sign of the cross upon the baby's head and breast. Blessed salt is put into the child's mouth. The priest again bids the unclean spirit come out of the child, repeating the sign of the cross. Continuing, he lays hand upon the child's head and holding hand extended prays again. The Apostle's Creed and the Lord's Prayer are repeated. Again the priest bids the unclean spirit be gone. Then taking a little saliva on his thumb, he touches ears and nostrils of the baby. The baby is questioned, with sponsors answering the questions. The child is anointed with oil on breast and shoulders. Then with sponsors again answering questions, the priest pours water three times on the baby's head saying, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." The baby is anointed on the head, the sponsors give a candle, and then dismissal. By that time, the baby is half undressed, and either crying from the salt put in his mouth, or water poured on his head. I've witnessed this scene several times. The agony inside me was almost unbearable. I've wanted to snatch my baby and run out of there—their

saying my baby is "unclean," and what a mockery of baptism!

Slowly things started to change between my husband and myself. Without realizing it, we started a vicious circle—he, drinking and I, nagging. By this time, we had three small children. Where was the love that was going to work out all things? We both wanted the children to attend church with us. There is no room for love if one is filled with hate, for as misery increases, happiness decreases. Fortunately, we both realized what we were doing to ourselves and our children, but unfortunately not before doing much emotional harm to our children (the results of which are still obvious).

Catholic Schools

My husband before marriage promised me our children would attend public school. They attend parochial schools! Catholic teaching is included in all subjects. Church attendance at a specified Mass is required on Sundays. They are told what to wear, what to do, and what to think. Now my eldest is preparing for his first holy communion. (Sometimes I feel as if I cannot possibly stand to see him do it.) This is copied from his paper which he has to memorize. "Form of Confession. Sign of the Cross, Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. I am seven years old. These are my sins (name and number of sins). For these and all my sins I beg pardon of God and penance and absolution from you, Father (the priest). (Listen to what Father will say and to the penance he gives. After Father speaks say act of contrition.) Before leaving say, 'Thank you,' Father."

Recently while helping the children with their lessons, one lesson included these words, "Honor thy Father and thy Mother." For the first time it struck me that I had not honored my parents with respect to their wishes. I knew then and now all they wanted was my happiness.

Religion Colors Everything

With the exception of our religious difference, which colors everything (even what you serve for dinner), I could ask for nothing more in a husband. He is kind, considerate, helpful with the children, happiest when with the children and me. He has taken care of me when I was sick. He has done whatever was necessary, sometimes having to do all the work in the home including care of the children. He has quite a happy disposition, and we have lots of good times together. But when Sundays come and I sit alone in church, and see children a little older than my own being baptized as the Scriptures teach, well? Do you know what my children want to be when they grow up? The girl, a sister (nun) and the boys, priests!

Yes, we have each other, but I can never give my husband all I'd like to be able to give. A man needs a wife who can back him up in all things important to him. He would like me by his side at church, kneeling together, saying the same prayers. We disagree about money given to church. Why should I like our money donated to build Catholic churches, convents and schools? How do you think my husband would feel

about me contributing to help our missionaries in Germany, Japan and especially Italy?

Another Case

A neighbor lady who married a Catholic thought she would remedy the situation by joining the Catholic Church, but she is of all people most miserable. Although she did not have the good church training that you and I have had, she at least knows enough about the Bible to know that much of their teaching is wrong and not according to Scripture, and she lives in constant conflict.

So many conflicts come between my husband and me day by day that we've had little inclinations for friends. I've grown quite sensitive to what other people may say to my husband or myself. My husband would not enjoy the same things my Christian friends do, and my friends are unsure of their welcome in my home. No, we didn't intend it to be that way, it just happened—but it is a nightmare from which I never awaken.

This has been an extremely hard letter for me to write for I've had to face again many things. It would be comforting if I could blame someone else for having permitted me to make a marriage with so many obstacles to happiness, but I know it was my own willful doing. I failed to meet the responsibility that is irrevocably attached to the formation and maintenance of a Christian home. How can I properly train up my children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?

Make The Right Decision

Yours is one of the hardest decisions any girl could make. I know. May God in his divine wisdom guide you to make the right one. One may marry for love, but marriage is composed of everyday living together, which love can enrich but cannot overcome insurmountable obstacles.

Not long ago I almost lost my little boy. He spent hours in an oxygen tent fighting for his very existence. He is up playing now, but time after time in the night I've gone in to see if he is covered. Can't you see that if his physical well-being means that much to me, how much more his spiritual welfare means to me? It is breaking my heart what is happening to my children.

And so, if possibly your parents' idea seem contrary to your own, remember it is because they love you so very, very much. They have reared you, fed you, clothed you, taken care of you when you were sick, and tried to teach you what is right since you were born. Isn't it natural they are deeply concerned now?

What Does God Think?

Actually what has troubled me more than anything else is, what does God think? God is a jealous God. I have read in the Old Testament what happened to those who intermarried with the other faiths. Are you aware that many of the objects in the Catholic Church, and their "Ember Days," are derived from pagan customs? I've heard lots of things in Catholic Churches—laughter of the whole congregation because some people today still believe in immersion as the only form of baptism, glorying that each mass is again an unbloody crucifix-

ion of Jesus Christ; the priest who said quite vehemently that he could spit on people who don't believe on Mary as the Mother of God.

Dear friend, it is a high price to pay for love. I urge you to stop and count the cost. Don't sell your children's birthright as I did.

I trust that in some measure this letter is helpful to you in determining what your own duty to God and yourself is. It has not been my intention to tell you what to do, only show you what it is like. And it is not only what you do to yourself, but what you do to the one you love, that makes it doubly tragic!

PRECEPTS AND PERCEPTIONS

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MAY CHURCHES OF CHRIST SUPPORT HUMAN INSTITUTIONS?—IV

It is unscriptural and wrong for a church to donate funds to human institutions because the very nature of human service institutions is commercial, whether or not technically and legally classified as profit or non-profit businesses. Each of these self-created bodies of men is a purely private business enterprise. The fact that the institution is a non-profit organization (members of the legal governing board do not draw salaries or profits from the operation) does not change the non-church nature of the operation. Employees of these "Christian" enterprises make their livelihood out of them and each enterprise is constantly enlarging and expanding. Unlike the poor saint and the gospel preacher who are both God-appointed recipients of church funds and who eventually pass from the scene, these human institutions are composed of self-appointed boards which continue indefinitely. The Bible nowhere authorizes church subsidies for non-church enterprises, profit or non-profit.

It is unscriptural and wrong for a church to make donations to human institutions because the claim that these institutions are merely "methods" by which a congregation obeys God is false and misleading. The term "method" has to do with action. In fact, "method" is a form of action, a form of performance. It is defined as "a way or order of doing anything."

According to their own testimony in 1909 five men "created" themselves "a body politic by the name and style of the Tennessee Orphan Home." We ask: if these five men or their successors by the same "name and style" be a "method," whose "method" are they? They

were not a "method" of any local church when they appointed and named themselves because no local congregation on earth had anything to do with their creation. These five men said, "We are the Tennessee Orphan Home!" It was not any local church's "method" of caring for the needy then; it is none now. This body of men—this benevolence society—was no more a "method" of local church activity than a local church itself is a "method" of that benevolence society's activity. Just as each local church uses "methods," so does this self-created, self-governed, independent "body politic by the name and style of The Tennessee Orphan Home" use its own "methods" in caring for fatherless children. For a church to make a donation to a group of men who have appointed themselves guardians of children is no more "visiting" the fatherless in their affliction than if Noah had made a donation to Ark-builders, Inc., and claimed that he was obeying God's command, "Make thee an ark of gopher wood."

The same is true of teaching. When a church makes a donation to David Lipscomb College the school does not thereby become that congregation's "method" of teaching the gospel or of training its elders. Nothing can be a "method" of any individual group (church or otherwise) unless it "methodizes" some action performed by that individual group.

Neither a school nor a benevolence society can "methodize" a church's teaching or benevolence because neither institution is any **form of any performance**—any action—God commanded of any local church. Whether the term "relieve" or the term "visit" be used, each of these words sets forth an action—a **general action**. "Feed," "clothe," "shelter," and "nurse." are all **specifics** of the generic action "relieve" or "visit" but the term "Tennessee Orphan Home" is no more a specific action than the term "John Doe" is a specific action. These latter terms are nouns—the name of some person or thing—**not verbs**—expressions of action! It is a perversion of scripture, logic and grammar to claim that human institutions are congregational "methods" of doing anything God told a local church to do!

Walking and riding are "methods" of **going** or **traveling** but no individual or congregation will ever "travel" or "go" anywhere merely by making a donation to Grey-hound Bus Company or American Airlines. These business enterprises are not "methods" by which anybody does anything. **Writing** and **speaking** the gospel are "methods" of **teaching** or **declaring** the gospel but no individual or congregation will ever "teach" or "declare" the word of God by merely making a donation to Alabama Christian University, Christian Missionary Society or Gospel Press. These institutions are not "methods" of teaching. Each has its own "methods" of teaching. Institutions are never "methods" of any action God commanded any individual or local church to perform! **Feeding, clothing and making donations to widows indeed** are "methods" of **relieving** widows indeed (1 Tim. 5:16) but no individual will ever "relieve" his own widowed mother and no congregation will ever "relieve" its widow indeed or any fatherless child for whom it is responsible merely by making a donation to

Lakeshore Estates or Childhaven. Those who think they can are simply not thinking straight.

An elder of a church who thinks he can please God by committing church funds to these benevolence societies and thereby lead the church in the doing of its duty should at least practice the same principles toward his own wife, children and widowed mother. He should send all of them to one of these societies or to some hospital and discharge his duty to his own loved ones by making a donation to the human institution receiving them. Why should he try to justify the church practice by the Bible and not follow the same Bible authority for his own practice? Human institutions are not "methods" by which any local church can obey any command of God.

Commending you to

THE WORD OF HIS GRACE

Marshall E. Patton

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Huntsville, Alabama 35802



AUTHORITY FOR CONGREGATIONAL SINGING (NO. 1)

The subject of this article has received much attention of late in the Unity Forums involving some of the Christian Church and some of the church of Christ. There have been three such forums to date: Joplin, Missouri, Tulsa, Oklahoma, and Malibu, California with still another planned for the last of April in Milligan, Tennessee. A number of religious papers have also given attention to this issue of late: One Body, Joplin Missouri with Don DeWalt as publisher, **Christian Standard** of Cincinnati, Ohio, **Gospel Advocate** of Nashville, Tennessee, **Searching The Scriptures**, et. al. All of this demands that further honest, objective study be made of this matter.

Perhaps the issue is most clearly set forth by Don DeWalt in these words: "There is no command, apostolic example or necessary inference in the New Testament for congregational singing with or without an instrument" (**One Body**, Vol. 2, No. 2, p. 4). If this proposition be true, then it follows that neither congregational singing nor instrumental music with congregational singing is authorized! This, according to DeWalt, puts us in the same boat with him and others of the Christian Church.

Evidently he makes a distinction between that which is authorized and that which is permitted. Christian Church preachers have made this distinction throughout the years. Here is how they reason. They put a peculiar twist on the word "silence" in the Restoration motto "We speak where the Scriptures speak and we are

silent where the Scriptures are silent." They argue that he who speaks out to condemn a practice on which the Scriptures are silent violates the motto by speaking where the Scriptures are silent. Thus, they insist that silence gives permission for these things which in their judgment are aids. On this basis DeWelt claims divine right for the instrumental music in question and accuses us of inconsistency by condemning his practice while accepting our practice (congregational singing) on the same basis—the silence of the Scriptures. Of course, we deny that instrumental music in worship and congregational singing are in the same class. Neither is justified by the silence of the Scriptures. If we cannot find authority for congregational singing on the basis of the voice of the Scriptures, then it follows that both are wrong.

Obviously, the issue is one of authority. A failure to understand how to establish authority, the different kinds of authority, and the nature of each accounts for much of the extremism, division and all of its attendant evils among us today. It is, therefore, imperative that we understand these matters, if we are to understand each other, come to a knowledge of truth, and attain unto that unity for which Jesus prayed (Jno. 17:20, 21).

Fundamentals Of Authority

Before giving attention to the issue of "Congregational Singing," let us look first at some fundamentals with respect to authority. Since DeWelt's statement (already quoted) shows agreement between us on the three ways by which authority is established, I shall not labor that point in this article.

The Silence Of The Scriptures

In the first place we must learn that the cliché "Silence gives consent" is not so in determining one's acceptability with God. We must have authority for all that we do whether at work or at play, at home or anywhere else. Paul said, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Col. 3:17). While, contextually, this verse applies in particular to singing praise unto God, Paul makes it general in its application when he by the Holy Spirit used the word "whatsoever." This covers the whole of one's life. Everything one does must be "from the heart" and "as to the Lord... whether he be bond or free" (Eph. 6:5-8; Col. 3:23). However, let no one think that "All of life is an expression of worship," as DeWelt affirms (One Body, Vol. 2, No. 2, p. 6). However close worship and service may be related, there is a difference! There are two Greek words in the original text that make clear this distinction, namely, "proskuneo," which involves an act of homage, and "latreuo," which involves the idea of service. While both are sometimes translated "worship" in our versions, there is a difference. A failure to distinguish between the two leads to "vain worship"—offering as an act of homage unto God that which is unauthorized.

That the silence of the Scriptures does not give permission or make anything a matter of choice is evident

from the following: "And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord" (Lev. 10:1, 2). Authorities agree that the expression "which he commanded them not" means that they offered fire not commanded in the law. They did not have commandment or authority for it. God's voice was silent concerning the fire they offered. Thus, we see clearly God's attitude toward those who presume upon the silence of His word.

Again, "For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood" (Heb. 7:14). The argument here is Jesus could not be a priest on earth because He was of the tribe of Juda, and there was no authority—no voice from the Scriptures—for one of this tribe to be a priest. If this verse teaches anything at all, it means that the silence of the Scripture is prohibitive!

Look again, in the letter from the Jerusalem conference (Acts 15), we find that certain brethren had gone from Jerusalem to Antioch and were "subverting souls" by teaching that circumcision was necessary to salvation. Their teaching was a perversion of truth not because they were commanded not to teach it, but rather because they had no commandment (authority) for it—"to whom we gave no such commandment" (v. 24).

The Restoration motto, "We speak where the Scriptures speak and we are silent where the Scriptures are silent" is justified, if justified at all, by the statement in 1 Pet. 4:11 which says, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." One cannot go beyond the oracles of God and still speak as the oracles of God. One cannot come short of the oracles of God and still speak as the oracles of God. This divine truth demands respect for both the voice and the silence of the Scriptures. The former authorizes and the latter prohibits.

Generic And Specific

Authority may be either generic or specific. Webster defines "generic" to mean "1. Pertaining to, or having the rank of, a genus; as, a generic name. 2. General, adj." Webster defines "genus" to mean "1. **Logic**, a class of objects divided into several subordinate species." Webster also defines the word "general" to mean "2. Pertaining to, affecting, or applicable to, each and all of a class, kind, or order; as, a general law."

In the light of these definitions we learn that generic authority includes all of the subordinate species of a genus—it includes "all of a class, kind, or order." Generic authority, therefore, authorize some things, though they may not be specified. They are within the **genus** that is authorized.

The church building, seats, lights, rest rooms, water fountain, etc., are all authorized generically by **place** which is necessarily implied in Heb. 10:25: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." Saints cannot

assemble without a **place!** The kind of place, whether a tent, the shade of a tree, a building (owned, rented, leased, etc.) together with facilities to accommodate the physical needs of people assembled for **divinely autho-rized purposes**, is a matter of judgment or choice—All are within the genus "place" which is authorized by necessary inference.

The same thing is true of song books. The command to sing necessarily infers that in obeying the command one will sing from memory or from a song book or its equivalent. There is no other way. Which of the two becomes a matter of choice—both are authorized by the genus "sing." Hence, both are authorized though not specified.

Specific authority on the other hand excludes everything except that which is precisely stated or revealed. Note Webster's definition of the word "specific". "Precisely formulated or restricted; specifying; explicit; as, a specific statement." There is a fundamental difference in the **nature** of generic and specific authority. The former is **inclusive** and the latter is **exclusive**. That specific authority is exclusive is evident from the fact that its nature cannot be described without the use of some negative term. Try it! Specific authority negates everything except that identified, or, which is the same, it authorizes only that which is named.

All of this harmonizes with Paul's teaching on expediency: "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not" (1 Cor. 10:23). A careful exegesis of this verse and its context shows that all things lawful (within an authorized genus) may not be expedient. However, one thing is certain: All expediencies are first lawful—they are within an authorized genus.

A Fundamental Difference

There is a fundamental difference between DeWalt and us on the issue of instrumental music in worship. He has neither generic nor specific authority for instrumental music in worship. In the statement quoted earlier from his pen, he has admitted that there is no authority for such with congregational singing. We, however, are able to show generic authority for congregational singing. This I propose to do in article No. 2 on this subject.

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ISAIAH SAW IN THE TEMPLE WHO HE WAS WHEN HE SAW WHO GOD WAS

In Isaiah 6, Isaiah's trusted king, Uzziah, had died and the Lord has demonstrated two fundamental truths to him: (1) He saw in whom to place his trust, and (2) that the Lord is in control no matter what the circumstances appear to be.

Now Isaiah must learn who he really is and to do that he must first learn who God really is. There is a fundamental premise at stake here. It is that, as men, we will never know who we are until we learn who God is! Our own identity is not residing within ourselves, but is bound up completely with the nature of our God.

God will reveal His character to Isaiah so that Isaiah might see his own personal need. Isaiah listens to the Seraphim calling to each other, "Holy, Holy, Holy." Notice that they repeat it 3 times: the perfect number, the number of Divinity: Then they add "the earth is full of His Glory." Where can one go to escape His glory? "If descended into the pit, He is there." Jonah found Him in the belly of the great fish. Moses found Him in a bush that was burning in the isolated desert of Midian. Even "the foundations of the earth trembled." How can human words, finite minds, visualize what Isaiah saw?

Notice his reaction, "Woe is me, for I AM ruined." The majesty of the greatness of God makes man totally aware of his sinfulness. Remember what happens to Uzziah, who as a sinful man, went into the presence of God, in the Temple, to offer incense? He was stricken with leprosy! Did this flash through Isaiah's mind? Did he remember what struck the king and did he suppose the same fate was now to befall him? At least it is a reasonable assumption that this could have gone through his mind and now he too would be stricken for his contact with Divinity. "I AM RUINED." Peter's reaction was exactly the same in Luke 5:8 when they pulled in at his command a catch of fish so large that the boats were beginning to sink. "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" Peter knew there was a vast eternity of difference between his own sinful condition and the Divinity of the Son of God.

Yes, for all of us there are times when we feel so unclean and "ruined" before the presence of God. "I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among people of unclean lips." With these words Isaiah was confessing what God had known, but what had not been burned into the heart of Isaiah was his utter worthlessness!

"Me? Yes, me! I am the one who is totally unclean." 1 John 1:9: "If we say we don't sin we make Him a liar." Still, too often we get to feeling rather righteous. We devise our own creed of righteousness. Like the fellow who says he didn't sin because he partook of the Lord's Supper on Sunday and sung without an organ. Of course those things are right, but who gives us the right to determine that is the ONLY deciding factor? What's the problem? We are comparing ourselves to the wrong standard. The right standard is the infinite Holiness of the Eternal, Omnipotent, Omniscient and Omnipresent God! When we fix our eyes on that as the standard, we DO NOT walk away, we DO NOT crawl away, we simply slither away in shame.

Thankfully, the account doesn't end there. Verse 6: "One of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal in his hand . . . and he touched my mouth with it and he said . . . your iniquity is taken away and your sin is forgiven." What does God want from us? One basic factor. The humility to admit that at our best "we are ruined." Also, that we must come to Him on His terms and not on our own. A popular religious song several years ago spoke it so clearly: "Shackled by a heavenly burden neath a load of guilt and shame. Then the hand of Jesus touched me, and I am no longer the same." God, by the power of Jesus' blood in baptism can still burn away the uncleanness of our lips, our hearts, our feet. All He asks us to do is to admit the NEED in our lives for His cleansing plan.

After Isaiah is cleansed he is now ready to be used. Verse 8: "Whom shall I send? is the question from the throne. When Isaiah trusted in his righteousness, in his heritage which had placed him in the palace, the answer was, "no one." No one could go, but now that he is cleansed, the answer is: "Here am I send me!" God's plan is to take people and break them that He might make them. His plan is far greater than our limited scope or vision. By comparison, we have only little ant hills built and planned. Our own world is so small and our goals are so limited until God steps in and shows us who HE is and what we are. Only then are we ready to go. Why? Because we need to see that we are not launching out on our own strength or power, but solely on that power which comes from His throne.

There are three words implanted in our minds in Isaiah 6: **CLEANSING, CALLING and COMMIT-MENT!** Now, isn't that the correct order? First, Isaiah needed to be cleansed, then He was called by God, and finally it resulted in a commitment. This commitment was so deep that he would wait until the enemy destroyed the nation and none would hear and none would obey! To really be cleansed we must see our total need, our sin, which sin we committed ourselves and was not some sin committed by Adam such as the Calvinists have chosen to teach. Then we need to hear the call of the Lord in Matt. 11:28. "Come unto me." Also the calling through the gospel in II Thess. 2:14, and not some mystical calling such as the Pentecostals proclaim to produce a commitment. The commitment is to go to the lost of the human race. A commitment to go to

every creature and not the kind of commitment that Crossroads asks for, but a commitment to deny self and carry His cross.

SIMPLICITY IN CHRIST

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PREACHING: PART-TIME/FULL-TIME

We have all heard or used the above terms with reference to preachers and preaching. I'm satisfied that sometimes these terms described a certain situation fairly and fully. I'm just as convinced that there are times when these catch-all phrases not only fail to portray the situations properly, but may even do damage to the preacher or congregation involved in particular, and to the cause of Christ in general.

If our sole intent is to convey the idea that a certain preacher is being either partially or fully supported by the church, there would be no problem. However, I think there are times when more than just the matter of support is involved. I have known preachers whose hearts and energies were fully devoted to "the work of an evangelist," and yet were consigned to the realm of "part-time preachers." I have also seen those who were regarded by many to be "full-time" preachers, placing the work of an evangelist on the back burner while devoting their time and energies to purely personal or secular pursuits.'

I'm afraid that we sometimes display a different set of standards for what constitutes part or full-time preaching, and that standard is influenced by who the preacher happens to be, and what he happens to be doing. I doubt that the apostle Paul would be classified by some standards as a full-time preacher, primarily because the profession which he chose on occasion to help support himself is not in the "blue or white-collar" class. Others would expel him from the ranks of full-time preachers simply because he did obtain part of his support from manual labor.

If the reader will permit, I think I can use a personal example without prejudice or pomp. When I made the decision to devote my life to the work of an evangelist, I kept my hand on the plow without looking back. In order to preach where and when I thought it was needed, I have been fully supported by the church at times, and I have also helped to support myself. This method has enabled me to work with large congregations, small congregations, engage in meeting work at home and abroad, and write for such publications as the old **Apostolic Times**, **Searching the Scriptures**, and sev-

eral in between. To paraphrase Mark Twain, I have been amused at times to hear of my demise as a "full-time" preacher.

There are countless other preachers who have chosen to direct their energies toward working with small congregations, or establishing new ones. Sometimes this means salvaging a work which has been left to flounder by some "full-time" preacher who has moved on to greener fields and plusher offices. Granted, the ideal situation is for evangelists to go where they are needed while being fully supported by the church, but if we spent all of our time trying to convince brethren of this fact, the gospel would not get preached anywhere. My eternal thanks to those faithful men, from the first century until now, who continue to preach the gospel under adverse conditions. May the crown be yours (2 Tim. 4:5-8).

No one should expect a preacher to spend twenty-four hours a day preaching or studying. The mind and body need rest, and nourishment. Jesus realized this (Mk. 6:31), and encouraged his disciples to keep themselves fit to preach another day. Some preachers have compromised their effectiveness by not taking care of their bodies. On the other hand, some preachers take advantage of the church by not giving themselves "wholly to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine" (1 Tim. 4:13-16). The ramifications are endless, but in keeping with this column's penchant for simplicity, we rest the matter.

I just talked with an old preacher yesterday who must sit quietly in the assembly, and neither sing nor preach, because his heart is too weak. I'm sure his Bible heart, the mind (Rom. 10:10), is in both. I'm persuaded more and more that full or part-time preaching is indeed more a condition of the heart than of outward appearances.

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POLITICS AND RELIGION: CAUTION!

**Warren E. Berkley
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I know that Christians are alarmed over the sins of our generation; and, that concern is warranted and legitimate. The legalization of abortion; the spread of humanism; the doctrines, movements and influences which have threatened the home—we agonize over these conditions, worry about our children and grandchildren, and seize opportunities to preach against these iniquities. This is good and right! We must abhor what is evil, reprove the unfruitful works of darkness and earnestly contend for the faith (Rom. 12:9; Eph. 5:11 and Jude 3).

Concerned over the moral degeneration we have observed, we are naturally appreciative when somebody, ANYBODY, takes a public stand for what is right. It may be a political candidate; a "man on the street" interviewed on the evening news; OR, a television preacher. Yes, even though we may disagree with the crusader, if he or she is holding up the banner of Bible morality, we appreciate it and applaud it. But sometimes, in our zeal to fight national sin, we do not exercise the objectivity and care that ought to characterize every aspect of our lives. Hence, these words of caution.

Hasty Political Entanglements

Good intentions and pure motives do not justify hasty entanglements and ill-conceived methods. And, this is more than just "good sense," THIS IS A BIBLE PRINCIPLE. "It is not good for a soul to be without knowledge, and he sins who hastens with his feet," (Prov. 19:2, see also—Prov. 21:5; 25:8; Rom. 3:8 and Eph. 5:15). So, regardless of how urgent and just the cause, there is never a time when we can "throw caution to the wind," and let the end justify the means.

So, STOP, THINK AND INVESTIGATE before you send in a contribution to a "political ministry." Before you join organizations, send in contributions or otherwise involve yourself in the various "ministries" and methods of men, BE CAUTIOUS. You can abhor what is evil; you can speak out against sin and make a difference WITHOUT JUMPING ON ONE OF THE POLITICAL BANDWAGONS.

In urging this caution, something else needs to be said. Most of the popular personalities identified with these political/religious issues ARE ACTIVE FALSE TEACHERS, who stand on a theological platform of CALVINISM, PENTECOSTALISM and PREMILLENIALISM. I mean, they are not just against abor-

tion, **THEY ARE FOR SALVATION BY FAITH ALONE.** They are not just preachers against humanism, **THEY ARE PREACHERS FOR PREMILLENNIALISM.** Some of them claim to have "the gift of healing" and "the word of wisdom." Let us beware of hasty political entanglements.

Subtle Binding & Judging

Whether hasty or carefully, some Christians have become involved in various political action groups. Some of them use every opportunity to promote and talk about their involvements. And, the impression is sometimes communicated: "If you are not engaged in these battles like I am; if you are not on the 'right' bandwagon, you are weak, uninformed and **NOT DOING YOUR PART!**" In the minds of some, if you are not fighting school officials over text book selection (like Mel and Norma Gabler) . . . If you are not a subscriber to **EAGLE FORUM** (Phyllis Schlafly) . . . you are just not what you "ought" to be, as a Christian. Movements, methods that get a lot of attention and crusade personalities are being held up as creeds, or right-wing conservative shibboleths. My point is—you can be against text book propaganda **WITHOUT EVEN KNOWING WHO THE GABLERS ARE.** You can be against abortion without absorbing everything that's written in **THE EAGLE FORUM.**

Lest anyone misunderstand, I am opposed to the tenets of humanism on biblical grounds. On the same grounds, I object to homosexuality, sexually explicit music, abortion and anything else "contrary to the doctrine." But in our zeal to reprove and expose—let us not dictate to others the methods they "must" use. We simply have no right to tell others which methods, which bandwagons and which organizations they ought to partake in. In methods and matters of personal choice, I am pleading for the kind of cordial forbearance that shines through, in Romans 14; in 1 Corinthians 8, 9 and 10.

If we start judging one another on the basis of bandwagons and political methods; if we harbor suspicions about one another due to differing personal preferences, we will launch ourselves into endless and deadly turmoil (Gal. 5:15).

Having entered my warnings, I pray we will not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh; but "through love," we will serve one another under the reign of our King (Gal. 5:13; Jas. 4:12).

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THE WRONG PLACE AT THE WRONG TIME

Anyone who has found himself in a place where he had rather not be can appreciate the story F.B. Srygley told about Sam Crutcher, "one of the good preachers in Kentucky in his day." Crutcher loved horses and loved to watch them race, but he rarely attended races because of the gambling and other things of "the baser sort" that went on there. On one occasion he was in Louisville the day before races were to begin and noticed in the papers that there would be a try-out with some of the horses on that day. Supposing that only a few people, mostly owners and riders, would be there, he thought he would go out and have a look.

But when he reached the track, he was greeted by several thousand people. "Brother Crutcher began to feel uncomfortable, but he decided to walk around a little and see what was going on; whereupon he met a man from his neighborhood so drunk that he could hardly walk. The drunken man looked at Brother Crutcher in great surprise and started to walk away the best he could. He got only a few yards when he staggered back toward Brother Crutcher and said, with a drunken drawl: 'Oh, Brother Crutcher, have you quit the church?' Brother Crutcher replied: 'No, not exactly; but I am going to quit this place as quickly as possible.'

"Seeing Brother Crutcher there, no doubt, was some comfort to the wayward man," Srygley observed. This may be true. Being in a place where evil is going on, even though we are not there to participate in it, can encourage those who are weak to the temptations afforded. When one finds himself in such a place, he should follow Crutcher's example and "quit" the place as quickly as possible.

It has been said, "You might find a perfectly good biscuit in a garbage can, but no one would want to eat it after he had fished it out of such a place."

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THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

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ELMER MOORE, 302 Spring Branch, Lufkin, Texas 75901—On the nights of September 30 thru October 4, 1985 and March 3, 4, 6, 7, of 1986, I was privileged to moderate for J. T. Smith in his debates with Charles A. Holt. The propositions of these debates involved the "local church" and the "eldership." The first debate was held in Lake Jackson, Texas and the second in Chattanooga, Tennessee. I do not intend to present a review of the debate as such, but simply state my personal appraisal of it.

First, let me assure everyone that I have no ill will toward brother Holt; neither do I have a personal ax to grind with him. I firmly believe that he espoused false positions in the debates, and failed miserably as a debater.

It was a disappointment to me that brother Holt DID NOT DEBATE THE ISSUE AT ALL. Fact of the matter is, he did not DEBATE—period. I know that he understands what a debate is supposed to be. He knows that arguments of the opposition are to be examined with fairness and candor; yet he completely ignored the major portion of brother Smith's arguments, choosing rather to devote most of his time in A TIRADE AGAINST HIS BRETHREN. I don't recall ever hearing a more bitter, vindictive, castigation of the church of the Lord in terms as severe, in my life. My judgment is that I listened to nine nights of a man who has become so bitter against his brethren that he seeks opportunity to brow-beat them. Nine times in his last speech in Chattanooga, he compared the church of Christ to the Roman Catholic church. Brother Holt stated in the debate that he had no intention of answering brother Smith's arguments (referring to them as "quibbles"); but intended to teach the people. Yet brother Holt advertised the affair in his paper. The EXAMINER, as a debate.

My judgment is that brethren OUGHT NOT TO PROVIDE HIM ANY FURTHER AUDIENCE where he can further his tirade against God's people.

The church of the Lord is indebted to brother J. T. Smith for bringing these matters into the open. Many felt that brother Holt had abandoned the views he held in the 60's. The debates have certainly been eye-openers.

Also it is well to note that in January of 1985 the charter for Holt Ministry, Inc. was filed for record. This was done for the express purpose of making possible the advocacy of brother Holt's position, either through his paper, or a number of other ways that were mentioned in the charter. This was almost a year before the debate in Lake Jackson. The debate was well timed. Surely NOW all know that the only change that brother Holt has made regarding his position on the church and the eldership has been from BAD TO WORSE.

I believe that brother J. T. Smith not only did a thorough job in defense of the truth, but was kind and courteous toward brother Holt throughout.

WAYNE S. WALKER, 5170 Chippewa Rd., Medina, OH 44256—Things continue to go well at Medina. Attendance dropped somewhat during the winter but has now picked up again. We hope to begin construction of our new building in late spring or early summer this

year. I will be in meetings this year at Wheelersburg, Cambridge and Alliance (all in Ohio), a summer vacation Bible school in Ft. Wayne, Indiana and a fall meeting in Covina, California. When you are in the Akron-Cleveland area, please stop and worship with us at 120 N. Elmwood St. in Medina. On Sundays we have Bible study at 9:30 A.M., and worship at 10:30 A.M. and 6:30 P.M.

RAY GOFF, 124 Boone Drive, Summerville, SC 29483—A new congregation has been started in Summerville, SC which meets presently in the Gazebo School at 1264 Bacon Bridge Rd. John Evertt from Columbia preached for us the first Sunday. The Carolinas are crying for the gospel. It is over 100 miles in different directions to reach other sound congregations. Write me if you know of other faithful Christians in this area, or others we might contact. My phone is (803) 875-3842.

MICHAEL GARRISON, P.O. Box 1281, Franklin, NC 28734—After more than 7 years with the church in Andalusia, AL, I have moved to work with the brethren in Franklin, NC. We meet at 156 Old Murphy Road which is old 64 west. This is a beautiful, resort area. Visitors to our mountainous area are invited to worship with us. We are about 30 miles south of Cherokee, NC in the foothills of the Great Smokey Mountains. Call us for information at (704) 369-5186 or (704) 369-8216).

NEW PUBLICATION

BETTY HAYNES, P.O. Box 2503, Columbus, MS 39704—In late spring, a new publication called "Bible Talk Times" will appear. It will have a small newspaper format and will be printed quarterly. It is designed for home Bible study with children. Each issue will contain lessons from the Bible with high interest activities to reinforce desired learning for children from kindergarten through sixth grade. Although the major thrust will be home teaching, it could be used in a class setting. Teaching tips for parents and teachers will be included and a special column will be open for readers to share ideas they have found successful in their own teaching. In addition, regular features will emphasize the Biblical model of family relationships, seasonal interests designed to contrast creation with evolutionary theory, and appreciation of our bodies to anticipate later peer pressure to use harmful substances. Carla Miller, Jane Britnell, Shirley Holt, Shirley Mohon, Flora Tant, Crystal Hunter, Kathy White and Janie Hollis have agreed to make contributions from time to time and others will be contacted to help. Subscriptions are \$6 a year and may be sent to Betty Haynes at the above address.

RICHARD C. SIMS, P.O. Box 539, Gatesville, TX 76528—We have made a start in this central Texas town. Attendance now averages 15, we often have visitors. We have a weekly radio program and a monthly bulletin. I could get much more done if I could quit my secular job and work full-time. With the support I have now plus what is promised when I can work full-time, I am still short \$1050 to provide what is needed for my family of five. Every year, thousands of National Guard

Troops from across the country come to North Ft. Hood for summer camp. Some of these men are members of the church. We are only four miles from the camp and would be glad to furnish transportation to services. Guardsmen may call me at (817) 865-6965 or call Paul Stringer at (817) 865-2330.

CARLOS CAPELLI of Buenos Aires, Argentina reports on an extended preaching trip into Panama, El Salvador, Venezuela, Chile and Argentina. Three were baptized in Panama. In El Salvador one congregation (Santa Ana) numbers 50-65 and Col Libertad 90-110. Four were baptized and two restored. At Barinas, Venezuela five were baptized and one restored. He reports four baptisms in Argentina at three different locations.

EFRAIN PEREZ of Valparaiso, Chile reports a new congregation in San Roque, Valparaiso. Two have been baptized there since the beginning of that work. 28 were present recently. Glenn Rogers and wife have been there for a month of work. Brother Rogers, of McAllen, Texas has devoted many years to Spanish speaking work.

ROYCE CHANDLER and **RANDY REYNOLDS** of Lebanon, Ohio have just returned from a successful preaching trip to Columbia in South America. They preached in Cali, Manizales and Bogota. Progress is reported in all these places and native preachers are commended for their continuing faithful efforts.

* * * * *

PREACHERS NEEDED

ANTIGO, WISCONSIN—This town of 10,000 needs a full time preacher. There are 60 members with 99% regular attendance. Those interested may call Gary Monnot at (715) 627-4278, or write N697 Hwy D, Antigo, Wisconsin 54409.

SMYRNA, TENNESSEE—The Southside church at 1167 S. Lowery St. is looking for a full time preacher. We have about 45 members and should be able to provide full support. Smyrna is a growing community about 20 miles southeast of Nashville. Please write the church c/o Louis E. Mullen, 104 Hankins Dr., Smyrna, TN 37167, or call (615) 355-0381 or 459-8171.

MARION, INDIANA—A small congregation needs an enthusiastic full time preacher. At present we can supply \$200 a week plus housing. Would consider a young man starting to preach or a semi-retired man.

Send resume to Ed Lyons, 3675 N.W. Shadeland Rd., Marion, IN 46902 or call evenings (317) 662-7426 or 662-3768.

* * * * *

EDITORIAL LEFT-OVERS

EVOLUTION AT ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

Many of our liberal brethren are understandably up in arms over the teaching of theistic evolution being taught at ACU. Two professors have evidently been teaching it as fact for some time. Past efforts to do something about it have been stone-walled by the administration. Now, the cat is out of the bag and the furor is huge. A new book has been published entitled **IS GENESIS MYTH**. It exposes the whole mess. You may have a copy free by writing to:

Apologetics Press, Inc.
230 Landmark Dr.
Montgomery, AL 36117

At last report, the administration and board are supporting the teachers in question. I have had occasion to examine some of the materials involved and it looks pretty convincing to me that there is substance to the charges. How many of the liberals will accept theistic evolution along with everything else they have gagged and swallowed?

* * * * *

PURELY PERSONAL

On March 3, at a small family gathering, with ceremony said by my son, Wilson Adams, the editor was married to the former Bobby Hughes of Louisville, Kentucky. Both of us lost our first companions to cancer. Her first husband, Thomas Hughes, was a long time personal friend and for awhile wrote a column in this paper called "Able To Teach Others." I spoke at his funeral in December, 1983. Bobby will handle the business work for the paper except when she is traveling with me in gospel meetings, which we hope will be often. Joan Rader will continue to help with the office work as she is able. Many friends have called or written to express their good wishes and we appreciate all such expressions.

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	271
RESTORATIONS	109
(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)	



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 XXVII

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Number 6

THINK ON THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 1631
Lutz, FL 33549



THE CHURCH BUILT BY JESUS CHRIST

One of the most tormenting questions of our times is the question of the many, many churches, all claiming to be from God, and promising salvation to the lost souls who seek the way of truth. What are their claims? What credentials do they offer that they are of God and have heaven's right to exist? Is there some way that an honest and good heart can know whether or not there is just one church approved by God? And if so, can one know from the Bible which church is from heaven?

The first time the word "church" appears in the New Testament is in Matthew 16:18. It says: "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The context of that statement shows that Peter has confessed that Christ was the Son of God. Upon this fact (rock) Christ said he would build HIS church (Matthew 16:13-20). The apostle Paul said there was just one foundation laid, and that was Christ: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:11).

If Christ was the builder, and he built the church upon the truth that he is the Christ the Son of God, it must follow that every church that he did not build is not authorized by God.

A Question Of Prejudice

"Do you believe one must be a member of your church in order to go to heaven?" "Don't you believe all other churches are wrong and will be lost?" These questions

are not usually asked for the purpose of ascertaining the truth. They are asked in ridicule for the purpose of exciting prejudice and promoting rejection of any who would dare to nod an agreement with the thought expressed in the questions. If the truth is really desired the questions would be: "Do you believe one must be a member of the church Christ built in order to go to heaven?" "Don't you believe all churches and religions not built and authorized by Christ will be lost?" Now, how would you answer these questions?

It seems appropriate to me to ask two questions at this point: "Are there any churches today wrong and sinful in the sight of God?" "If so, what is the standard by which we can determine when one is right and when it is wrong?" "If not, can any religion be rejected as unauthorized by God today?" I do not believe it takes a Solomon to decide where the truth is on these questions.

Some Pertinent Facts About The Church

First, the church is not some hasty arrangement of God to provide facilities for man to fulfill his religious desires. The church is the result of the eternal purpose of God. It has to do with man's salvation and his relation to God. The letter to the Ephesians tells us something of this eternal purpose of God. I underscore some words to emphasize the points being made.

"That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might *gather together in one all things in Christ*, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ" (Ephesians 1:10-12).

Then in Ephesians 3:8-12 the apostle Paul speaks of his mission in preaching the gospel (the grace of God—vs 2) that the eternal purpose of God might be known: "Unto me, who as less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ; to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly

places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: in whom we have boldness and access with confidence by faith on him."

That eternal purpose of God was predicted by the prophets long before Christ came in the flesh. About 650 years before Christ Isaiah prophesied: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isaiah 2:2, 3).

The term "mountain" indicates rule or government. It is higher or above the common standing of men, thus "hills" or "mountains". It was the "mountain" of the Lord's house. The "Lord's house" is used to refer to God's people. (Hebrews 3:4-6; 10:21; 1 Peter 2:5-9; 4:17). It indicates that relationship to God as His family. The house of God is plainly called the church of the living God in 1 Timothy 3:15.

Daniel prophesied of the eternal purpose of God in explaining the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. He said of the fourth part of the image the king saw: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall stand for ever" (Daniel 2:44).

"In the days of these kings" refers to the Roman kings who ruled at the time of Christ. We can know this because Daniel said Nebuchadnezzar was the first king in the dream (Daniel 2:37, 38). After him would follow another kingdom, which was the Medo-Persian. And a third would follow, which was the Grecian kingdom, which influence existed at the time of Christ, especially the Greek language. The fourth kingdom was the Roman kings who followed, and it was "in the days of these kings" that God would establish a kingdom which would never be destroyed.

The kingdom of God and the church refer to the same body of people. When Jesus said he would build his church, he said: "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Furthermore, when one gets into the church, he gets into the kingdom at the same time. Paul explains this in Colossians 1:12-14: "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."

In Joel 2:28-32 a prophecy is made which is quoted by Peter on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2:16-21. Peter says the fulfillment of Joel 2 took place on that day, therefore, we do not look for its fulfillment at any time

(Continued on page 4)

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Editorial

Connie W. Adams

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WE NEED YOUR HELP

During the twenty-six and a half years **SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES** has been published, we have made very few appeals to our readers to help us. Over the years many have helped us in various ways to either increase or maintain our circulation. All of this has been appreciated. The time has come to call some things to the attention of our readers and ask for your help.

We still have a number of readers who have subscribed to the paper since it began in 1960. Many of these are now aged and on fixed incomes. A number of our long-time readers have now passed on. Every now and then we hear from some aged subscriber who advises us that it is best to stop his or her subscription because of failing vision. Our basic readership is aging.

Not only does that gradually reduce our subscriptions where these are personally concerned, but that contributes to another problem. Many of these older readers have also paid for lists of friends or relatives, some from the beginning in 1960. Some have regularly paid for bundles which they have personally distributed each month. With increasing age and reduced income, more and more are finding it necessary to discontinue this work. Every time that happens, we stand to lose not only the revenue involved, but from 10 to 25 in total circulation. Add to that the continuing problem all subscription papers face in maintaining a constant level of renewal from readers and you have the stage set for a losing battle in maintaining our circulation. We add a number of new subscribers every month. In the past we have added more than we have had to take off. But we are seeing a change in that, we think largely because of the aging of many readers and supporters.

We have a good base of younger readers now. Some of them were introduced to the paper by their parents or grandparents, and some by a friend who paid for them for a year to get them started reading the paper. But the younger set, as a whole, has not been as interested in introducing the paper to others as the older set was.

There are some who have a strong aversion to religious papers. The reasons given have never sounded convincing to me. Some think it costs too much. Yet, many who would balk at \$9 a year for a paper such as **SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES**, think nothing of spending over \$100 a year for a daily newspaper. I am regularly in the homes of brethren whose tables are stacked with secular magazines which cost much more

per year. Televisions, radios, tape recorders, VCR's abound. There are conveniences and gadgets of every description.

Some feel that religious papers contain too much controversy. It is certainly possible for controversy to get out of hand and we have tried very hard not to let that happen. There are issues and questions which gain enough attention to merit study and even to open the columns of a paper to an exchange of views for the study of readers. I do not believe this paper can justly be charged with excess in this regard. We have kept out personality attacks. I have consistently refused articles which attacked men rather than doctrinal positions advocated by men. It is not wrong to identify those who advocate views causing disturbance. There is New Testament precedent for that. But I have regularly asked writers to be fair and to treat the other fellow as he would want to be treated if the situation were reversed. Some may think we have failed in this regard, but God knows that we have honestly tried.

But the same ones who object to religious controversy do not stop reading the editorial pages of daily newspapers or sound off columns in secular magazines. They will argue with you that it is wrong to argue. In balance, **SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES** carries a wide range of spiritual subject matter. That is the reason for the column headings under which several men regularly write. Other articles are chosen for timeliness and ability of written expression. The **NEWSLETTER REPORTS** contain information on the work of brethren in various parts of the world. We would carry more such news, if it were sent to us. This is usually the first thing read each month. We have received letters from readers in areas where congregations are few and far between telling us how much it means to them to hear of the struggles and triumphs of brethren in other places. Many readers utilize the church ads to locate a place to worship when they travel. We have had many reports of this both from churches which placed ads and from individuals who used them. We hear often from native preachers in other countries who write to thank us for the paper and to tell us that they receive much help in their personal study and sermon preparations from the many good articles. The evidences of good being done are too many to be ignored and to allow ourselves to be tempted to let the paper go out of business yet.

How Can You Help

1. Renew your own subscription promptly. This will save a second notice having to be sent. That will save us time and money. We send all notices by first class mail.
2. When you move, please allow two months notice so we can make the necessary changes and conform to our mandatory cut-off date with our printer.
3. Show your paper to friends and relatives where you worship. Perhaps some particular article has been helpful to you or there is one which seems ideal to meet some need with that friend or relative. Suggest to them that you get much good from the paper and ask them if they would like to subscribe.
4. Pick out some young families in the congregation where you worship, and tell them you will subscribe for

the paper for them for a year to get them started. You might use our club rates of \$7.50 a year in clubs of four or more sent at the same time.

5. Make up a list of 12 people you think would benefit from the paper and pay for them annually, if you are able to do so. For \$6 a month (\$72 a year) you can send the paper to a list of 12. We have a number of readers who could do this if they so desired. Many have done it for years and some continue it even though they are aging, as we indicated before.

6. Some of our readers are in contact with native preachers (or even American preachers) who are laboring around the world. They have reduced incomes and would be hard pressed financially to subscribe to any paper. Why not send gift subscriptions to help them. I have been in other countries and have seen copies of this paper and others with the covers worn off from being passed through so many hands. We lose money on our papers sent overseas. We have never advertised a foreign subscription rate but send it for the same rate as domestic subscriptions. We are interested in these works and, as long as we can afford to do it, we shall not change our policy on that. But you could help our circulation and a grateful family in some other land by subscribing for them.

7. When your own children marry and establish homes of their own, start them right away with a gift subscription to this paper. You will do them good. Is that worth \$9 a year to you? It will be to them.

8. Order a bundle of 12 a month (or 24, or however many you can use) and hand them out to friends. A bundle of 12 costs \$6. That is 50c apiece. We think that is a bargain.

There are other good papers being published by faithful brethren in the Lord. We wish them all well and rejoice in whatever good they may do. We do not feel that we are in competition with them. It is good to read more than one paper, if you can afford it. That will broaden the number of writers whose works you consider in your own Bible study. Do not accept what any writer says when his material does not square with the word of God.

We are working hard to keep the paper in the mail on time each month and to operate in as business-like manner as possible. We have recently added a computer to our office equipment which will save a great deal of time and reduce the number of errors which normally occur in processing the number of accounts we have. But we still need your help to build our circulation to what it ought to be. We hear many encouraging comments about the paper everywhere we go. But the time has come that we need more than words if we are to do as much good as we hope to do. We need SUBSCRIPTIONS and we need your help to obtain them. How about it? Can YOU help? WILL you help? Please let us hear from you.

When you renew, why not subscribe for a friend? All new subscriptions are \$9.

(Continued from page 2)

subsequent to that date. Joel said: "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call."

Observe what Isaiah, Daniel and Joel said in their prophecies that help identify the time WHEN, the place WHERE, and the person WHO built the church that was the eternal purpose of God from the foundation of the world.

1. It would come to pass in the last days that the government of God's house would be established.

2. Many people would willingly enter into it.

3. Out of Zion (mount in Jerusalem) would go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

4. It would be in the days of "these kings"—the Roman kings.

5. God would establish a kingdom which would never be destroyed. It would stand forever.

6. God said He would pour out His Spirit upon all flesh—Jew and Gentile. Obviously every individual did not receive such a gift.

7. The signs describe the complete fall of the system that preceded the establishment of the church. Judaism as a religion is no longer authorized by God. Jew and Gentile are saved exactly alike and both are reconciled unto God in one body. (Acts 15:9; Romans 1:16, 17; Ephesians 2:16, 17).

8. Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. Calling upon the name of the Lord means to submit to his will to be saved. (Romans 10:12-21; Acts 22:16).

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AUTHORITY FOR CONGREGATIONAL SINGING (NO. 2)

In our former article we clearly established the need for divine authority for all things which Christians do. This authority is either generic or specific. We also pointed out a fundamental difference between the two in nature. Emphasis was placed upon the need for respect for both the voice and the silence of the Scriptures; that the former authorizes and the latter prohibits.

The issue of this article is clearly identified in the statement of Don DeWelt (quoted in Article No. 1): "There is no command, apostolic example or necessary inference in the New Testament for congregational singing with or without an instrument" (*One Body*, Vol. 2, No. 2, p. 4). I take sharp issue with his statement concerning congregational singing. This article is designed to establish authority for such.

Historical Information

One other matter needs attention before we come to the real burden of this article. A clear picture of what history reveals concerning the early church and singing is of value. This history shows that different types of singing have been used by saints through the centuries in their worship unto God.

From the viewpoint of melody, monophonic singing was quite common in the Jewish services and in the early church. This involved a one line melody or a chant. Homophonic singing, which involved all of the voice parts, did not come into use until several centuries later. The following historical excerpts are interesting:

"Sacred music must, in the primitive church, have consisted only of a few simple airs which could easily be learned, and which, by frequent repetition, became familiar to all. An ornate and complicated style of music would have been alike incompatible with the circumstances of these Christian worshippers and uncongenial with the simplicity of their primitive forms ... In their songs of Zion, both old and young, men and women, bore a part. Their psalmody was the joint act of the whole assembly in unison. ... The authority of Chrysostom is also to the same effect 'It was the ancient custom, as it is still with us, for all to come together, and unitedly to join in singing. The young and the old, rich and poor, male and female, bond and free, all join in one song... All worldly distinc-

tions here cease, and the whole congregation form one general chorus' " (McClintock and Strong, *Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, Vol. VI, pp. 757, 758).

It also appears, based upon 1 Cor. 14:26, that at times there was a form of individual or solo singing. While this psalm was inspired and sung monophonically by an individual, it may have been with a view to teaching others or leading them in the singing of it. Still, history confirms monophonic singing by individuals in the early church:

"Each member was invited, at pleasure and according to his ability, to lead their devotions in a sacred song indicated by himself. Such was the custom in the Corinthian church. Such was still the custom in the age of Tertullian, to which reference has already been made. Augustine also refers to the same usage, and ascribes to divine inspiration the talent which was manifested in this extemporaneous psalmody" (Ibid, p. 758).

History further reveals that responsive and antiphonal psalmody were found in the early church:

"Among the Hebrews, psalms were sung in alternation between a soloist and the congregation; in one form of alternation, which later became important in Christian liturgy under the name of **responsorial psalmody**, the leader sang the first line of each psalm verse and the congregation responded by singing the second line. Such a method is particularly appropriate to the psalms, in which many of the verses have two parallel phrases, the second restating or continuing or amplifying the thought expressed in the first.... A related form of singing was **antiphonal psalmody**, in which the two parts of the verse, or alternate verses, were sung by two choruses" (Donald Jay Grout, *A History of Western Music*, Revised Edition, p. 12).

McClintock and Strong continue in their treatise on **Music** under the heading of **Innovations** to point out that in the third and fourth centuries a special class called **Singers** were appointed to sing in the church; that such gradually supplanted the former practice of all singing together; that "an artificial, theatrical style of music "took the place of the former, and that this "converted the house of God into a pagan theatre.... Thus, it soon came about that the many, instead of uniting their hearts and their voices in the songs of Zion, could only sit coldly by as spectators" (McClintock and Strong, *Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, p. 758).

I think it well to observe just here that in view of the more ornate and artistic type of singing with which we are accustomed, solo singing must be ruled out in our worship today. It would be next to impossible to keep such from converting the worship into a theatrical performance. History does repeat itself! This is not to say under no conditions and at no time could one person come before the congregation and present a spiritual message in song, being truly motivated by that which is spiritual, and which song was received by the congrega-

tion in the same spirit. However lawful such may be, remember that history shows that the regular practice of such makes it highly inexpedient.

Congregational singing is authorized by generic authority. Who can deny that Christians are authorized to sing in worship unto God? (Cf. Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 2:12; Jas. 5:13). The type of singing becomes a matter of choice, which choice must be determined and governed by all else revealed. It may be monophonic or homo-phonic; it may involve a soloist leading a monophonic psalm; it may involve responsive or antiphonal singing, or it may involve the whole congregation singing simultaneously the same melody and words. That singing by saints was done in an assembly is evident from 1 Cor. 14:26. Whether this was an inspired or uninspired song, it was still singing, and it was in an assembly. Eph. 5:19 and Col. 3:16 obviously demand more than one person in order to do the type of singing here commanded. If more than one, then two, and if two, then any number. Thus, we have generic authority for singing in an assembly. The latter involves corporate singing, and this is congregational singing.

DeWalt has a hard time seeing congregational singing in these verses—simply because of his arbitrary definition of such. His idea would involve all singing simultaneously the same words. Such is only one type of congregational singing. Even antiphonal singing may involve participation on the part of all. Some of our songs involve responsive singing—one part of the audience singing a separate voice part at a different time from the others, and then the rest of the audience making response with other voice parts. A good example of this is the familiar song "What Did He Do?" Though all do not sing the same words simultaneously, all participate in singing the song—the whole congregation is involved and this is congregational singing!

Furthermore, Eph. 5:19 and Col. 3:16 may involve the whole congregation singing simultaneously the same words. Yes, we may "teach and admonish one another" in so doing, DeWalt to the contrary, notwithstanding. There is power in music. No wonder God authorized some singing as a means of teaching. When saints join their hearts and voices in praise, in exhortations, in petitions, in resolve, and in thanksgiving, a deeper impression is made upon every soul. Each thereby has an influence one upon the other and the spiritual benefit is intensified. To deny this is to deny the factual and that which is known experimentally. There is more than one way for the congregation to fulfill the command "Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19).

Generic authority is hereby established for congregational singing. Generic authority makes the type of singing a matter of choice so long as the choice is governed by all else revealed. Therefore, it is not necessary to find a specific example of any one type of singing. To insist upon specific authority is to exclude all other types. This would likely put one at variance with his own practice.

This is the error of our no Bible class brethren. They

fail to recognize the generic authority in the command to "teach" and insist on specific authority for the Bible class arrangement. In so doing they contradict their own practice by using other arrangements for teaching that are not specified, e.g., radio, TV, tracts, home studies, etc.

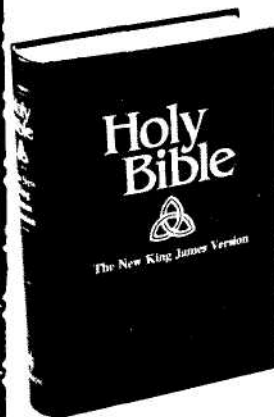
No Authority For the Instrument

While there is generic authority for congregational singing, let it be observed that "there is no command, apostolic example or necessary inference in the New Testament" for instrumental music in worship—either generic or specific. In fact, in relation to the kind of music used in worship, we find only nine verses in the New Testament, and they all involve singing (Matt. 26:30; Mk. 14:26; Acts 16:25; 1 Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 2:12; 13:15; Jas. 5:13). This is the sum total of divine revelation on the kind of music in worship. This makes the authority for vocal music specific, and, therefore, exclusive.

Truly, the issue of authority is one of great magnitude. Let us continue to study what the Bible teaches on this vital subject, make proper application, and thereby resolve differences, understand each other better, and bring about the unity for which Jesus prayed (John 17:20, 21).

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ROBERT CRAWLEY

Early on Monday morning, March 10th, ranks among the faithful of God were decreased. Bob Crawley lost his battle with lymphatic leukemia and his spirit departed the body in death. To Lexington and the Central Kentucky region generally, a faithful and effective gospel preacher will no long answer the call to "preach the word, reprove, rebuke and exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."

Bob was fifty seven years old and had preached the gospel since September 1944. He had continuously engaged in "local work" for the past thirty five years, working with churches in Indianapolis, Indiana, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, Mt. Airy, Tennessee and Birmingham, Alabama, before moving to Lexington, Kentucky in 1962. He worked with the University Heights church in Lexington for twenty three years. While not limited to Central Kentucky, it was here that his greatest influence developed. A number of churches benefited from his unselfish efforts as their beginning and struggling years enjoyed his preaching and counseling. The history of many of these will complement the fact that initial efforts in preaching were those of Crawley. His services were used quite extensively in meeting work and even in the earlier years of his illness he was involved with others in gospel work in Columbia. This necessitated cram courses in Spanish as he and his good wife, Leta, along with Royce Chandler and others, went to South America to take advantage of this opportunity.

Bob's work and association with University Heights was terminated October 1, 1985. Curtailment of support, necessity of vacating the residence, along with continuing medical expenses created unprecedented anxiety and emotional trauma. However, when brethren far and wide learned of the situation and need they rallied to the occasion and in a short time there was an outpouring of love and concern relieving the acute pressure of these mundane needs. Several thousand dollars were received from loving and compassionate brethren. Social security was applied for and approved, although he never lived to receive it, and commitments were made to provide support on a continuing basis. Faith in Christ on the part of our brother never wavered even during these trying and difficult hours and confidence in the brethren and their care and concern was vindicated as these needs were provided. Such was a thrill to

this humble hearted man and a joy to those aware of these developments. Indeed, to be a child of God is a wonderful thing as provisions of His grace and providence are experienced and witnessed.

On the Lord's Day before his death Bob attended services at Nicholasville where he was a member, participated in class discussion, and obviously worshipped in "spirit and truth." He was buried on the Wednesday following, March 12th, in Lexington Cemetery. Earlier visits to the grave sites of many of the Restoration leaders had prompted Bob to remark what an honor it would be to be buried among these. How fitting that one of our generation should be laid to rest among some of the giants of yesteryear. Adjacent to the grave of Robert Milligan, author of the commentary on Hebrews, Gospel Advocate series, there is now a marker, Robert Crawley. Thus, those with whom religious history has dealt so kindly have been joined by another who enjoyed the plaudits of his own generation. We are convinced Bob Crawley deserved such a place among the honored dead having proven himself worthy of our respect and honor in the varied relationships of life.

The statement of David as he mourned the death of Abner seems to me especially fitting, "There is a prince and great man fallen this day." Bob Crawley was a great man, not necessarily by the world's standards of greatness, but because he was one of God's chosen and elect. Great because of his commitment to the Lord and His cause. Thus with Paul Bob is able to say, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing."

Bob leaves a wife, Oleta, whom he affectionately called "Leta" and to hear him roll her name off his tongue was to know of his love for her, to observe her tender loving care of Bob was to see qualities of devotion and true strength. There are three children, objects of great pride and justifiably so, Laura Lee, Bruce and Bryan. Bob's father, A. Bruce Crawley still lives, a resident of Birmingham. We with confidence join our hearts and hands in faith as we are comforted by "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."

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IS THE CHURCH OF CHRIST A DENOMINATION?

It is rather obvious that the world has a different concept of the church than we have. It is also obvious that some who are members of the church have some erroneous concepts of the church. One popular concept is that the church of Christ is a denomination.

What Would This Imply?

"Denomination" indicates division or dividing into units. Denominate means "made up of units of a designated kind" (*Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary*, p. 342). Denomination means "sect" (*ibid*, p. 343). Thus to say that the church of Christ is a denomination is to say that it is one of many sects. The idea of division can be seen in that we use this term "denomination" to refer to the divisions or units of money. If the Lord's church is a denomination, then the Lord approves of dividing into sects.

Another thing implied is that one church is as good as another. Back to the illustration of money, two tens are just as good as four fives or one twenty. If the church of my Lord is a denomination, then another denomination is just as good as his.

That being true, you then have a choice of which denomination you want. It becomes a matter of personal preference like choosing between four fives, two tens or one twenty. You could then choose to be a member of the church of Christ or any other church. There would be no wrong decisions.

One Church

The Bible plainly teaches that there is only one church. Paul wrote, "there is one body" (Eph. 4:4, emphasis mine DVR). Now what is the body? The same writer defines the body as the church (Col. 1:18). Thus the passage that says there is one body means that there is one church. The context clearly shows that this means only one church. The same passage says there is "one Lord" and "one God" and "one Spirit". Though there may be many Lords, Gods and Spirits, there is only one Lord, one God and one Spirit that is right. Likewise there is only one body (church) that is right in the sight of God. Jesus taught about one fold (John 10:16).

Unity

God's plan is for his people to be united. Jesus prayed that we all would be "one" as he and the Father are "one" (John 17:20-21). Did the Father and Son believe, teach and practice different things? Absolutely not! How can we be one as they are one and have denominationalism? One church believes one thing; another church teaches something different and another practices something even different.

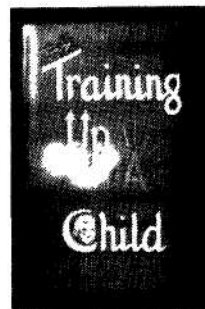
Paul said, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you: but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10). That is much contrasted with churches believing, teaching and practicing different things.

The Church Of Christ Is The One Of The New Testament

The church of Christ is scriptural in name, organization, origin, teaching and practice. That being true, it is not a denomination. It is the church of Christ. It is the one that belongs to him. No other church with a human name, creed and practice is just as good. Really, we have no choice. Jesus said, "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (Matt. 15:13).

The Church Is The Saved

The term "church" is translated from the Greek work "ekklesia" which means the "called out". It is those who are saved (Acts 2:47). The church is not merely an organization or institution which has a work to do. It is a relationship to Christ. The very steps to be saved (Mark 16:16) are the very same ones to be a member of the church (1 Cor. 12:13).



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GOD'S HOUSE

Our terminology usually reflects our thinking. A bulletin before me reads: "Why do we worship God? We do not come to God's house merely to entertain ourselves..

Just what is this "God's house" that we come to?

Most of us have traditionally spurned the phraseology of "going to church" or referring to the place of assembly as "the church". How much allowance should be given to the accommodative use of such phrases, I am unsure. I recognize that there are examples of accommodation in the scriptures. But to say the least, we are on safe ground when we strive for scriptural terms.

Just what should we call the place where a local church assembles? We opt for "church building" or "church house" rather than "church", "Christians are the church" it is often observed, and correctly so. But didn't the apostle declare: "Ye are God's building" (1 Cor. 3:9) and "whose house are we" (Heb. 3:6)? So I'm not sure we improve things with our corrections to such verbal abuses.

It appears to me that the most scriptural term to describe a place of assembly for the church may be "synagogue". The word is used in James 2:2 where it is translated "assembly" in the KJV and NASB. The NEB renders it "place of assembly". The ASV uses the Greek word "synagoge" (SUNAGOGE).

W. E. Vine defines the term first as "an assembling" and then "by metonymy, the building in which the gathering is held." The Expositor's Greek New Testament comments: "**This... may well refer to a place of worship in which converted Gentiles and Jewish Christians met together.**" H. A. W. Meyer says: "The whole description . . . shows that **SUNAGOGE** denotes the place where the Christian congregation assembled for worship."

The thing which alarms me is not what the place of assembling is called, but the disproportionate emphasis that is given to material buildings. I've rejected the notion that "We have no scriptural authority for church buildings". This observation is usually made, not to get rid of our meeting places, but to argue from a basis of consistency that if we can have these without New Testament authority, then we can have whatever else may please us without such authority. I believe that it can be reasonably and logically demonstrated that the demand to assemble makes imperative a place of assem-

bling. Thus a meeting place is inherent in what God has authorized.

But that hasn't settled the problem in my mind. It is obvious that the occasions wherein the place of assembly for the church is specified, it was in private houses (Acts 12:12; Romans 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15). Even if special houses were erected for the purpose, there was little cost involved in that day and time. Overhead was negligible. The bulk, if not all, of contributions could be applied to the real work of the Kingdom.

Consider the millions upon millions of dollars that have been spent on temples made with hands. Throughout Europe, costly cathedrals are deteriorating because there is not enough religious interest to appropriate the vast sums required to restore them.

More millions have been expended by the Lord's church in the past thirty years on brick and stone than anything else. We conservatives criticize the liberals for their extravagance, yet we have probably done as badly or worse in proportion to our more limited means and needs.

There are cities where as many as ten, fifteen, twenty, or more fine "synagogues" are located in which "our bunch" assemble for worship. Most of them exist because brethren couldn't get along with each other. Much of the money we've given for the "Lord's work" since most of us have been Christians has gone to pay for these structures.

A church is established in a given location, and for a time assembles in a home or rented facility. Unless that church decides "we can't grow until we get a building" they usually experience their greatest growth during that time. But they cannot wait to construct a house of worship that will seat 150-200 people and tie themselves to a 30 year mortgage. They'll likely stagnate at about 90 people and have a fuss a few years down the line that will necessitate another "church building" for the "faithful" group.

Meanwhile, churches all over the country are called upon to "support our evangelist" while we pay for the new building.

The popular concept of personal work is inviting someone "to church". If he declines, well, we've done our job. Who really believes that such a concept prevailed among first century saints?

Then many have decided that we must have a dress code for "attending church". I'm confident that the first century church had their "Sunday-go to meetin'-clothes", aren't you?

Likely ninety percent of our time in church "business meetings" is spent discussing the physical property of the congregation. Yet we couldn't prove to save our lives that any congregation of which we read in the Bible ever owned an inch of property. Our emphasis is misplaced.

Brethren, let us learn that we are God's building; we are His house. God does not dwell in temples made with hands. Our costly edifices do not impress Him who made the worlds. Our valuable property does not gratify Him who owns the cattle upon the hills and the hills beneath the cattle.

May we get busy with King's business. It has to do with the hearts and souls of men; not the wood, hay, and stubble of our passing vanities.

PRECEPTS AND PERCEPTIONS

James R. Cope

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MAY CHURCHES OF CHRIST SUPPORT HUMAN INSTITUTIONS—V

It is wrong for a church to make donations to human institutions because the claim that these institutions are merely "aids" of a congregation in obeying God is false and misleading. The term "aid" is used of any person or thing not essential in obeying a command of God but which may expedite the obedience. A legitimate "aid" can never change any part of any action God requires of any sinner, Christian or congregation of Christians. Legitimate "aids" are allowable i.e., permissible, whether persons or things. "Aids" are never specified in a command yet they never change any aspect of a command. If a person or thing is specified it necessarily becomes a part of the command, not an "aid." This means that no person or group can obey a command unless it be the subject of the command, i.e., **the person or group addressed by the commander.** For example, none except Noah could "make the ark of gopher wood" for the saving of Noah's house. The **goods or services** of others might "aid" Noah but only Noah could obey God for only Noah was commanded. Only believers can be baptized for remission of sins because only believers are told to be baptized. Neither infants nor infidels are told to be baptized to be saved. For an infidel to profess obedience while remaining an infidel is to disobey God. He who baptizes infants disobeys God.

Further, any **primary** "aid" must be controlled by the will of the individual or congregation using it as that individual or congregation's will is controlled by the will of God. The case of Noah again serves as an illustration. Whatever tools or persons Noah used in building the ark were necessarily subject to Noah's will **in the specific service Noah required of them.** Noah's will acting in subjection to God's will was the obedience God required. Therefore, every service rendered to Noah by an animate or inanimate being—tool or person—was necessarily subject to Noah's will. If this were not true God could not have obeyed God. This would not mean that Gopher Wood Company was owned and controlled by

Noah or that Pitchblenders, Inc., was owned or controlled by Noah. It would mean that any services or materials obtained from these companies and used by Noah in the making of the ark would necessarily have been subject to Noah's will. No axe, rope or tar bucket was any part of the ark Noah prepared for the saving of his house. These items may have "aided" Noah in his obedience but they were not obedience.

A Christian is commanded to teach God's word. Writing is a "method" of teaching and a typewriter is the teacher's "aid" in writing. Who believes that any Christian can make a donation to IBM (International Business Machines Corporation) which deals in typewriters and thereby discharge his responsibility to teach God's word? This being true, why should one have difficulty in seeing that no parent discharges his duty to "nurture" his children "in the chastening and admonition of the Lord" by making a donation to Tennessee Christian College which deals in educational services and no congregation discharges its obligation in the realm of teaching by making a donation to any "Christian" school?

It is unscriptural and wrong for a church to make donations to human institutions because making a donation to any body of persons except the body of Christ is definitely and distinctly another action than the action God requires of a congregation. Sprinkling or pouring water on a penitent sinner is not the same action as baptizing (immersing) him. Sprinkling is not pouring, pouring is not sprinkling and neither action is immersing. Each is a distinct action. Baptizing an infant or infidel is not the same as baptizing a penitent believer. The former is an act of disobedience; the latter an act of obedience. Had Noah built a wagon instead of an ark for the saving of his house he would have disobeyed God. Had he made a donation to Ark-builders, Inc., in alleged obedience to God he would have disobeyed God. Likewise making a donation of money to a self-appointed body of non-needy saints, such as Widowcare, Inc., is not the same action as relieving the poor saints. Making a donation to Tennessee Christian College is not the same action as teaching the Bible. These two actions are not synonymous; they are not the same in principle. They are different actions. A congregation does what God commands when it acts in the same fashion as the Jerusalem church acted in Acts 6:1-16, but disobeys God when it shifts its responsibility to another body of Christians or non-Christians.

Noah might have grown his own gopher-wood or purchased it. He may have mined his own pitch or purchased it. In neither event, however, could he have made a donation to Gopher Wood Company or to Pitchblenders, Inc., and by virtue of that contribution made the ark God commanded him to prepare. His contribution would have been disobedience to God had he done this while affirming this action to be the making of the ark God commanded him to make. This would have been a completely different action than the action God commanded. In reality it would have been a substitution for the commanded action as much as pouring and sprinkling are substitutions for baptizing or as eat-

ing potatoes and drinking buttermilk would be substitutes for eating the bread and drinking the fruit of the vine on the Lord's table or as instrumental music as an act of worship would be a substitute for singing.

If Noah, professing to make the ark, had donated money to Pitchblenders, Inc., instead, he would have disobeyed God. If a father, admonished to "nurture" his children "in the chastening and admonition of the Lord," makes a donation to Tennessee Christian College and professes thereby to obey God's command in Eph. 6:4 he actually disobeys God. Both would be substitutions for the action God commanded. A congregation is told to "relieve them that are widows indeed" (1 Tim. 5:16). It makes a donation to Widowcare, Inc., and says, "We have obeyed God's command to relieve widows indeed." This reasoning, of course, is simply erroneous. It may be a cover-up for the obedience that congregation should have rendered. If not, even though done sincerely, it is wrong. A gift to a service organization completely separated from a local church in creation and control is not obedience to God. It is an action other than the action God commands a local church to perform. Each local church should learn the difference between making a donation to a human benevolence society for which there is no authority and relieving poor saints for which there is abundant authority.

Restoration Footnotes

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PROVING DOCTRINE BY THE DEAD

The art of writing can preserve the words of men for hundreds of years after their death. Thus things written long ago may be profitably studied today. This is especially beneficial in the church where history appears to repeat itself. The record of issues discussed in the past often casts light on similar questions in the present. But it is wrong to use uninspired dead men to establish faith and practice because they carry no authority in such matters. Trying to prove doctrine by the dead is also risky because it is not easy to fit a comment lifted from one age to conditions that exist in another. This is evident in an incident that rose in the 1930s in the controversy over "the one-man missionary society."

As the plan worked, a generally self-appointed brother, who placed himself "under" and obtained support from a willing eldership, traveled as an "agent" among the churches to stir up interest and collect money for missionaries. One of the most vocal oppo-

nents of this forerunner of the "sponsoring church" of the 1950s was F. B. Srygley, senior "editor" of the Gospel Advocate. He challenged the promoters to "find an instance from the teachings of the apostles where one church... supported a man to go among the churches to stir up zeal on mission work and to collect money for missionary purposes."

Feeling the sting of Srygley's pen, Batsell Baxter, a supporter of the system, quoted respected preachers then dead to prove they favored "church cooperation." tie believed this put them on his side. One of the quotations came from "The New Testament Church," which F. B. Srygley compiled from the editorials of his brother, F. D. Srygley. Baxter went out of his way, Srygley thought, to quote an unrelated statement from the preface of the book. Srygley asked: "Was there any reason for quoting from the preface except that I wrote the preface? Was there any reason for bringing that fact into it, except that he (Baxter) and I disagreed about the subject, and that it apparently places me in the position of editing a book in which my brother expresses views contradictory to the position which I have recently set forth in the Advocate?"

Srygley explained the quotation from his brother, who was a relentless foe of the missionary society: "The society people had accused him of being against church cooperation in missionary work, and the quotation from him ... was in answer to that charge. I do not know of any brother who would not endorse the answer which F. D. Srygley made to the charge ... I believe in church cooperation, but about a peculiar kind of church cooperation I have my serious doubts—say, for instance, the one-man missionary society."

He then gave Baxter a lesson in quoting the dead. "Dead men cannot explain their position on something about which they did not express themselves . . . The one-man missionary society idea did not exist then, and how does Brother Baxter know that they would not object to such now? This is one trouble in quoting from dead men. Why not try to settle this matter, then, by the teaching of the apostles? In their teaching they are still living. . . . (The men quoted) are all dead now, but they fought for the truth as they saw it, and that is exactly what we ought to do... Conditions change, but let us live in the present and meet the conditions we have now."

Wisdom may be gleaned, parallels drawn, and lessons learned from the words of the righteous dead, but it dishonors the dead and misleads the living to try to prove doctrine by what good men of the past said while they were struggling with the problems of their day. Instead of abusing their words to line them up with a peculiar idea, Srygley pleaded, "Suppose we let their ashes rest in peace."

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ARE THERE MIRACLES TODAY?

Truman Smith
115 West F St.
La Porte, TX 77571

What is a miracle? There is a need for the average member of the church of our Lord today to consider the question, "Are there miracles today?" It seems that there are many indications of this need as we listen to the kind of language used among the saints.

There are generally three words used in the New Testament that have to do with a "miracle." By use of these words the idea of the miraculous is set forth. 1) SEMEION; 2) TERAS and 3) DUNAMIS. Let us look at each of these words.

Vincent says of the word SEMEION: "Pointing to something beyond itself, a mark of the power or grace of the doer or of his connection with the supernatural world" (VINCENT'S WORD STUDIES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, Vol. 1, p. 66). W. E. Vine says, "Tokens of divine authority and power." In the Authorized Version, this word is translated "signs." One of the places where it is found is Heb. 2:4.

Of the word TERAS, Vincent says, "A portent or prodigy" (op. cit.). Vine says, "Something strange, causing the beholder to marvel, is always used in the plural, always rendered 'wonders,' and generally follows SEMEION, 'signs,' the opposite order occurs in Acts 2:22-23; 6-8; R.V.; 7:36; in Acts 2:19 'wonders' occurs alone" (W. E. Vine, EXPOSITORY DICTIONARY OF NEW TESTAMENT WORDS, Vol. 4, p. 228).

The final word, DUNAMIS, "Power, inherent ability, is used of works of a supernatural origin and character, such as could not be produced by natural agents and means" (W. E. Vine, EXPOSITORY DICTIONARY OF NEW TESTAMENT WORDS, Vol. 3, p. 75). While discussing the word TERAS ("wonders"), Vine makes a very fine statement: "A sign is intended to appeal to the understanding, a wonder appeals to the imagination, a power (dunamis) indicates its source as supernatural (Vol. 4, p. 228).

I used to marvel back a few years ago at the great military, prop-driven, cargo planes, some of which were half the length of a football field, that could fly 300 MPH with nearly 118,000 pounds of cargo plus a crew of men. Someone says, "Why, it was a miracle that the thing could fly at all!" No, dear friend, that was no miracle! Such a ship was the Douglas Cargo-Master. Now let me tell you why it was no miracle that this plane was able to fly. With a wing span of nearly 200 feet, it was powered by four huge gasoline engines, each equipped with a large 3-blade propeller. That's how it

flew! There is a law of physics known as "Bernoulli's law," called by this name only because a man by that name discovered it. It is the application of this law that gives any airplane lift to enable it to take off, fly, and even land properly. Such a law acted upon the propellers of the plane under discussion, giving it sufficient speed, which also enabled the huge wings to give the ship enough lift to keep it in the air. The same thing also is true when a baseball pitcher is able to put the proper spin on a ball, it is the principle that causes the ball to curve. No, there is no miracle involved in such things. All such things act according to the well defined laws of nature.

We hear a song on the radio that says, "It's gonna take a miracle to make me love someone new ___ for I'm crazy for you!" But some of our own folk have started using the word "miracle" even more flippantly than that. We hear them speak of "miracle drugs," "miracle foods," "the miracle of childbirth," etc.

No, we believe that the age of miracles ended with the first century. But the miracles recorded in the New Testament were truly miracles for they were characterized by actions which were supernatural in that they defied all laws of nature. And, friends, since their purpose was to confirm that the things those "holy men of God" spoke were true, and we now have that Word in its completeness, we are not going to see any miracles today (Please go back and study Mk. 16:17-20; Heb. 2:1-4; 1 Cor. 13:8-13; Jas. 1:25).

Remember, just because something appears to be unusual or out of the ordinary, and we cannot explain or understand it, such does not constitute it miraculous; it is nothing more than phenomenal or astonishing.

Brethren, let's watch our language!

OBSERVATIONS UPON 20 YEARS OF PREACHING (1)

Dick Blackford

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 Owensboro, KY 42302



After preaching 10 years I wrote a piece on "Advice To Young Preachers." It is debatable whether I was qualified, but it had a better reception than anything I had written up to that time. I hadn't planned to do this every decade. However, here I am writing about preaching again. This treatise contains no "new revelations" on the subject. It is merely one man's viewpoint on several random topics that pertain to preaching.

"Apollos Age" Vs. "Paul Age"

There is a story about a famous preacher of the fourth century, named John Chrysostom. He was the best

preacher of his day, which earned him the title of "the golden mouth." He was dedicated and took his sermons seriously. But he was disturbed because believers, at the end of a sermon, would often applaud. He found this totally unacceptable in worship services. To correct this abuse he preached a sermon titled "The Pulpit Is Not A Stage." He rebuked the congregation for their flippant way of listening. He drew a distinction between the theatre where actors spoke for entertainment and the pulpit where the speaker was leading people in worship. The audience was impressed with his sermon—and they gave him a standing ovation!

Some have it and others don't. This illustration seemed like a fitting way to introduce the observation that we have surpassed the "Paul Age" in the church and are now in the "Apollos Age." Paul's "bodily presence was weak, and his speech of no account" (2 Cor. 10:10). Apollos was dynamic and eloquent. There is nothing wrong with eloquence. It should not be the primary factor in hiring a preacher. Eloquence is no guarantee of anything, except that one is a gifted speaker. One may be eloquent but deficient in knowledge, as was Apollos. There are a number of "Pauls" among us (both young and old) who have good Bible knowledge and a love for the word, who are being overlooked because they are not eloquent. These men could do a good work but our desire to hear an orator often causes us to make some unwise, unsound, and unfair judgments.

The Preacher Parade

If you haven't heard this expression, it refers to the practice of a church parading a string of preachers across the pulpit to let the congregation see what they have to pick from in hiring a preacher. Several may "try out" in the process.

This practice has several harmful possibilities. It can cause dissension when one segment is pulling for their favorite while another pulls for theirs. It puts preachers in competition with each other and may create strained relationships. It prolongs the process, making preaching brethren wait about making other plans till they find out how the competition went.

The "preacher parade" seems like a "necessary evil." Surely there is a better way. Why not make a definite decision on one man at a time instead of putting brethren "on hold?" By the same token, preachers should practice the golden rule and not lead a string of churches on to see which one makes the best offer.

Should Preachers Specialize?

We live in an age of specialization. Two medical interns were discussing their professions. One said he was an eye specialist. The other inquired, "Which one?" I have benefited from the in-depth study of others and have found it difficult to refrain from devoting full time to a few of my favorite topics. But this raises the question of balance and moderation. In short, I have concluded that a preacher should try to learn everything he can about everything.

The Preacher's Wardrobe

Not much is said about the preacher's attire in Scripture. John the Baptist wore "raiment of camel's hair and a leather girdle" (Mt. 3:4). Vine says *enduma* (raiment) "was used of the clothing of ancient prophets in token of their contempt of earthly splendor, Zech. 13:4," p. 199.

Occasionally we hear "oohs" and "ahhs" over how some preacher dresses. The principles of humility and modesty should apply to his appearance. The message should be remembered more than the man. As one oldtimer expressed it, "God's not interested in 'show horses.' He's interested in pack mules."

A Plea For Balance

Positive Or Negative Preaching? We should not insist that it be "either/or." The Bible contains both constructive, positive teaching as well as negative instruction. We should maintain the balance. In avoiding one extreme we must be careful not to back off the cliff in the other direction. Extremes can be dangerous and consequential. Neither extreme is a true representation of the gospel.

Issues Vs. The Gentler Graces, When I began preaching I remember making light of denominational preachers who only preached on "love and mercy." I don't believe they taught the whole truth on these topics, but I had gone to another extreme. A look at my records shows that I was preaching only on issues and "isms."

A friend who works in a bookstore expressed concern that books on counseling sell well but books on doctrinal topics do not. This is an extreme that is cause for concern, but it is probably a reaction to another extreme. When we preach only on technical issues and neglect the fact that people have personal problems which are very real (depression, grief, loss of confidence, etc.) we are not proclaiming the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27). We need lessons on practical daily living of the Christian life and we also need grounding in great Biblical doctrines that men have so often perverted. When we proclaim only half the message, people will either turn elsewhere to have their needs met or they will be unbalanced Christians. Some may be harsh and unfeeling, wanting only to argue technicalities while leaving weightier matters undone. Others may develop a better self-image but are soft on knowledge and conviction of doctrinal truths. Love and mercy are great Bible principles that we should not neglect. So is obedience, whether to the plan of salvation or the work and worship of the church.

Disposition In Preaching. In preaching and debating, uncalled for treatment may throw a stumbling-block in the way of those who might obey the gospel. Deliberately insulting and smart-aleckness are always out of place (Col. 4:6). We can be firm and deliver rebuke when necessary without getting nasty or reflecting on the person(s) whose soul we are trying to save. We should not do anything to give honorable controversy a bad name, especially if we expect men to defend what they

teach. On the other hand, we must not soft soap the gospel. Vague generalities, "good words and fair speeches," and such like will not result in genuine conversion or encourage those already converted to be total Christians. *(The second part of this article will appear next month).*

FOLLOWING THINGS THAT MAKE FOR PEACE

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The disciple of the Lord needs to pursue those things that will contribute to peaceful relations in the Lord's body, according to Romans 14:19. Both 1 Peter 3:11,12 and Ephesians 4:4 also emphasize the obligation to establish and maintain peace, with the latter passage viewing peace as a bond that ties one Christian to another as they endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit. This very passage would indicate the futility of trying to keep any unity based upon the wishes and plans of men; but the effort to keep the unity prescribed and provided here, when carried out in peaceful ways, meets God's approval.

The kingdom which the prophets foresaw was a peaceable one—peace would be enjoyed with God and among fellow-citizens (Isa. 2:2-4; Zech. 9:9,10; Isa. 59:2). It is truly wonderful when the peace which Christ established with God through his death guides and permeates the dealings of Christians with each other. On the other hand, how tragic it is to observe brothers and sisters in Christ mar that peace through the development of sinful attitudes toward each other. Because of their carping criticism, objecting disposition, and "picky" ways, they have fomented friction, factionalism and obvious fracture over insignificant matters that ought never to divide churches. God has sought to guide in these matters by His presentation of attitudes and actions guaranteed to contribute to peace and edification in a local church. Notice the link between peace and edification in Rom. 14:19: whatever produces peace will also make edification possible, for such is the environment necessary for spiritual growth to flourish. The effort being considered here is essential while we seek to uphold truth and contend for the faith. These very attitudes also make it easier to deal with matters of congregational purity and practice.

Lowliness

The place to begin is the attitude of lowliness, according to Eph. 4:2 and Phil. 2:3-6. This attitude is a low estimate of self in comparison with others, a sense of littleness which has arrogance as its opposite. Jesus taught that there would be no "big I's" and little you's" in his kingdom in Matt. 20:26-28. The "rule-or-ruin"

disposition of many is foreign to the spirit of Christ and Christians. There is no room for the self-will that insists upon having one's own way, but rather there should be humble submission to God's will and to one another in seeking ways of reconciling differences and solving problems (1 Pet. 5:5). Stubborn haughtiness will pursue the course of destructiveness, even to the point of crucifying Christ's spiritual body before an unbelieving world; but lowliness will pursue peace and edification.

Meekness

Eph. 4:2 next mentions meekness, the gentleness that makes one teachable and the mildness that quietly goes about removing differences and soothing injured feelings. We do not refer to the weakness leading one to believe or accept whatever he is told or the passiveness that permits evil to flourish. Call to mind Moses in his valiant opposition to error. He was the meekest of all in God's classification. Christians must learn to deal with each other in gentleness, not displaying the harsh attitudes that so often have been defended as "holding to sound doctrine." Instead of the abusive speech used to "get somebody told," we must learn to substitute the power of the gospel: here God exerts His divine power and light. More light and less heat are needed; lower voices and calmer spirits must prevail. Battles for truth are never won by carnal weaponry; they are gained through teaching truth and that alone!

Longsuffering

The same passage in Ephesians includes this quality, which means "long-tempered." In the midst of spiritual conflict, many a battle has been lost by shortness of temper. In its stead there needs to be self-restraint in the face of provocation, making impossible a hasty retaliation or prompt punishment. Remember that God's longsuffering means salvation (2 Pet. 3:9,15). Ought we not to be as longsuffering as He in our dealings with one another. Longsuffering is the key to long-lasting marriages, not an absolute agreement by husband and wife on every little matter; and it will also sustain us in our dealings with Christians. When you are tempted to give up on that weak brother, remember thankfully that someone did not give up on you. Remember his spiritual welfare instead of our own convenience.

Forbearance

Forbearing one another in love also appears in Eph. 4:2. It means bearing with, holding up, enduring each other. In love for that brother or sister forbearance becomes easier. This quality is necessary because no one of us does everything to the liking of all others. Each of us could sooner or later discover some quality or habit or mannerism in another that he does not like. Bearing with one another in love will cause us to leave private opinions where they belong, instead of magnifying them, emphasizing them, taking sides over them, and finally dividing over them.

Self-Control

Self-control is mentioned in 2 Pet. 1:6 and implied in Rom. 12:18. Self-mastery is the guidance system that

integrates and governs all powers given to man, even those capable of abuse, so that one's life manifests the very attitudes and qualities composing this article. Self-control will temper our speech for the work of edification, that we might minister favor to those who hear us, even as it helps us know how to answer each one (Eph. 4:29; Col. 4:6). It also will help us to eliminate all abusive speech (Gal. 5:14,15).

Forgiveness

An enumeration similar to that of Ephesians 4:2 is found in Colossians 3:11-14. An addition in the Colossian passage is forgiveness, the willingness to count one as if he never committed the wrong. A refusal to forgive has often nursed old grudges and resurrected the problems of yesteryear to the division of God's people. We must be reminded that a readiness to forgive is essential if we expect to receive forgiveness from God (Matt. 6:15).

Love

Colossians 3:14 places love at the end of the list but says that it tops the list in importance. "Above all these things, put on love ___" The list headed by love is quite formidable, but the priority of love is seen and explained in the very passage. Love is here viewed as a bond, that which cements or ties together. It is here described as the perfect bond: it serves to bind together all of the other marvelous qualities in the context. Without love they become disjointed and ineffective; with love joining them, however, they become one mighty chain. Friend, check your life. Are these qualities missing? If so, it is because you do not have the kind of love required. Love will cause us to act in all of the ways denoted by the words of the context.

In view of the importance of peace as a bond joining our efforts to keep the unity of the Spirit, let each remove all attitudes that would disturb that peace, that we might not mar that unity which we ought to be keeping.

A WORTHY WOMAN

By Darlene Craig

This is a well-written book with a chapter on each verse of Proverbs 31:10-31. The author is the wife of a faithful gospel preacher, a mother, homemaker, and grandmother. Her writing style is fresh and her research is extensive. Her applications are alive to the needs of godly women today. This 220 page paperback book is attractively bound, the layout is neat and the printing is excellent.

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SIMPLICITY IN CHRIST

P. J. Casbolt

P.O. Box 1487
Chiefland, FL 32626



"THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT"

Nowhere is the inconsistency and disobedience of man more apparent than in the areas of unity and division. Both Old and New Testaments are plain in their condemnation of division, and exhortation to unity among God's people (Ps. 133:1; 1 Cor. 1:10). Israel experienced a major division between the Northern and Southern tribes in Old Testament times, and the church has seen its share of division in the New Testament dispensation. Yet, the Bible is plain in identifying those things which make for unity, and contribute to division.

We should not expect man to attain to any degree of unity when "every way of man is right in his own eyes" (Pr. 21:2). There was division and confusion among God's people when this course was followed (Judges 17:6; 21:25), and we should expect nothing better when the religious world practices and upholds division, refusing to acknowledge the purity of the wisdom from above as a prerequisite to unity and peace (Jas. 3:17). But, as I said in the beginning, man is inconsistent because he admits on the one hand that unity is pleasing to God, while on the other hand he will not leave off those things which cause division.

The kind of unity which is taught by the Spirit is set forth in Eph. 4:1-6, and it is to this passage that we turn.

The Right Attitude

In verses one and two, the apostle emphasizes the need to exercise "lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love." Man doesn't exhibit much meekness, when he elevates his own wisdom, ways and creeds above those of God. And, when we have more affection for our traditions and institutions than we have for Christ, the truth, or the church, we display a haughty attitude toward things divine, and toward those who plead for "the unity of the Spirit."

David and Abner had been reconciled to each other, and David had made peace with the house of Saul, yet others kept the fires of division alive (2 Sam. 3-4). All too often the old Hatfield-McCoy type of feuding is handed down from generation to generation, which precludes any progress toward unity.

The Right Effort

Some people manifest a commendable attitude toward unity, but are weak on effort. Endeavour means to

try, and man could meet this requirement if he would display as much zeal in the direction of unity as he does in the area of division. More diligence would complement the right effort, not neutralize it.

The Right Plan

Neither will the right attitude, nor the right effort avail anything without the right plan. This plan is comprised of forty-one words, counting those in italics. There are thirty-three one syllable words, and eight two syllable words in verses 4-6. How can man expect to improve on that?

Think of all the ecumenical counsels that have convened, all the plans that have been presented and consi-

dered, then take another look at this plan presented by the Holy Spirit: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

Man rejects the very first point in this divine plan, and then tries to arrange the rest to fit his own likes or dislikes. He may cover his failures in a multitude of words and theological maneuverings now, but he will be hard pressed to explain to the Lord why he couldn't understand such plain, simple language, and why he didn't manifest a better attitude and make a better effort toward "the unity of the Spirit."

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

PREACHER TAKES STAND

MICHAEL S. SCOTT, P.O. Box 53, Middletown, IN 47356—Wayne Goforth of Jadwin, Missouri, who formerly preached among churches which support human institutions and engage in centralized control and oversight operations, has taken a stand for the whole truth. We carried on a lengthy correspondence for the past two years on the issues. His attitude throughout has been excellent. He is a man who loves the truth and is not ashamed of it. His wife stands with him in the truth. He is ready to preach the whole counsel of God. For refer-ence, you might contact L. A. Stauffer of St. Louis, MO and Luther W. Martin of Rolla, MO. Should any brethren wish to contact brother Wayne Goforth, his address is Cedar Grove, Rt., Box 75, Salem, MO 65560.

NEW PUBLICATION

JUSTICE is the name of a new bi-monthly magazine edited by Allan Turner of Louisville, Kentucky. It is published by the Committee For Justice in Government. It is designed to combat secular humanism in law, philosophy, medicine, the media and education. This publication affords a forum through which to oppose such evil without being identified with the Moral Majority and other such groups which foster much false doctrine while opposing other errors. Allan Turner, Gene Frost, John Humphries and others involved in this venture are well informed on these issues. Subscription price is \$12.00 a year. Write: Justice, P.O. Box 33201, Louisville, KY 40232.

NEW CONGREGATION

JOHN H. COPELAND, 580 Maddox Lane, Powell, Wyoming—A new congregation has been established in Powell, Wyoming. We have been meeting since the first Sunday of January, 1986. Two families are meeting together to worship the Lord and work jointly to carry out New Testament teaching. If you are planning a visit to Yellowstone Park this year, we extend to you a hearty welcome. We meet in my residence at the above address. After you arrive in Powell, you may call us at 754-5973 or 754)7141. I get much enjoyment out of reading **SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES**.

CHURCH NEEDS PEWS

The Crandall, Indiana congregation is moving its location to New Salsbury and needs pews. Please contact **BRUCE SHEARER**, Rt. 2, Box 92A, Depauw, IN 47115. Call (812) 347-2557. Reggie Robarts is now preaching for this congregation.

A TWO-WEEKS MEETING

The Expressway congregation in Louisville, Kentucky has just concluded a two-weeks gospel meeting in which Dee Bowman did the preaching. Singing was led the first week by Rollin Morris and the second week by R. J. Stevens who also offered singing instruction to song leaders before the evening services and then led about 30 minutes of congregational singing. Since few churches have meetings this long any more, a number of brethren have been anxious to know about the meeting. Attendance was good throughout with better support from local members than in most one week meetings. Although there were several other meetings in progress in the area both weeks, there was still good support from other places. The members worked hard and from the first brought many visitors to the services. Six were baptized and one restored. The interest and attendance grew during the second week with 320 on Sunday night and closing with 380 the last night which well fills the building. Good preaching and good singing are a powerful combination and still do good in these modern times. We thought our readers would like to know that people will still attend a two weeks gospel meeting.

PREACHERS NEEDED

MIDDLEBOURNE, WEST VIRGINIA—A full-time gospel preacher is needed for a well established congregation of 155 members. Outstanding opportunity for a working preacher to labor with us. Modern brick, three bedroom house, provided adjacent to the church building. Middlebourne has a population of 1,000 but is the county seat. We are located only a few miles from Paden City and New Martinsville. Write, giving full information to: Elders, Church of Christ, Middlebourne, WV 26149.

CONYERS, GEORGIA—The church meeting at 1695 Flat Shoals Road needs a full-time preacher. Attendance runs 40-50. This is the former Snapfinger Road church. Some outside support will be needed. Located between Atlanta and Covington, Georgia in a rapidly expanding area. Call **HOLLIS COLLIER** (404) 483-0390; or **PAUL LOOPER** (404) 241-5112.

SALEM, OHIO—The Salem church needs a full-time preacher. Those interested may write the church at: P.O. Box 446, Salem, Ohio 44460; or call **WAYNE HAMILTON** (216) 821-1152; or **REX TEAGARDEN** (216) 424-7010.

CLEVELAND, MISSISSIPPI—The North Cleveland church is looking for a full time preacher. About 40 in attendance. Partial support is available. Contact Randy Andrews, Rt. 1, Box 112, Merigold, MS 38759, Phone (601) 745-6180; or call William Sheady (601) 756-2502; or call Harold Hurst (601) 686-4589.

HUMBOLDT, TENNESSEE—The Elliott Street church in Humboldt needs a full time preacher. Jim Allen, who has been here for three years is moving. Those interested may write Clarence Spain, 1606 Poplar, Humboldt, TN 38343, or call (901) 784-6595.

PEKIN, INDIANA—The church in Pekin is looking for a young man for preacher training to work about 10 weeks this summer with the local preacher, Darrell Haub. He will help with sermons, classes, visitation, call-in-radio programs. We will provide room and board and some support. He will need an automobile.

PREACHER WANTS TO RE-LOCATE

MIKE HUGHES, P.O. Box 75, Joaquin, Texas 75954—As of June 1, I will be looking for a place to preach. I prefer a self-supporting work. Write me at the above address or call after 5 P.M. central time (409) 598-9789.

NEW CONGREGATION

McCOMB, MISSISSIPPI—In October three families (six adults and three children) started meeting. On April 13 we began renting a building at 430 Georgia Avenue. Exit I-55 at Smithdale exit, go to U.S. 51, turn right and go one mile to the building on the left. Allan Smith is the preacher. For information call (601) 276-3046 or 276-7580.

GLENN SEATON, 1814 Buchanan, Wichita Falls, Texas 76309—A few weeks ago the leaders of the Floral Heights church in Wichita Falls learned that two members of this congregation were supporting the work of Charles A. Holt by (1) being on the board of trustees of the TRUTH AND FREEDOM MINISTRY, INC. (formerly HOLT MINISTRIES, INC.) and (2) spreading the false doctrine of Charles Holt through the EXAMINER (published by TRUTH AND FREEDOM MINISTRIES, INC. and edited by Charles Holt. After meeting with these two men, the leaders made known to the congregation what was going on, in keeping with Rom. 16:17; 2 Jno. 11 and 1 Cor. 5:6. Before this information was made known to the congregation the men involved withdrew their membership from Floral Heights. It is our

prayer that others will take appropriate action to stop the spread of this doctrine which undermines the local church and the Biblical role of elders. It is encouraging to know that there are still godly elders who will defend the truth.

* * * * *

EDITORIAL LEFT-OVERS

PREACHING IN CANADA—For the past two weeks my wife and I have been in meetings in Ontario, Canada. The first meeting was at Jordan in the Niagara peninsula, not far from Niagara Falls. The church at Jordan has a long history of good works. It was established in the days of Alexander Campbell and he preached there on occasion. Over the years many good men have worked locally and in meetings there. Bill Hall is presently preaching at Jordan and doing excellent work. In spite of giving up several families to start congregations at Wellandport and St. Catherines, the church is now about the size it was before those works began. There is an impressive group of young people who take an active role in the work. Two were baptized and one restored. This good congregation has supported faithful men throughout the province to preach the gospel.

The second meeting (still in progress at this writing) is in South River, Ontario, 230 miles north of Jordan. This is in the heart of a beautiful hilly area where lakes abound. It is excellent for fishing and hunting and many tourists come here. South River is about 50 miles south of North Bay. The church here has a very attractive meeting house. Attendance on Sundays runs about 40. Jim Nicholson has been the preacher here since the work began. Three families from here moved up to Timmins (240 miles north) to establish a congregation where John Hains is the preacher. John was converted at South River and is married to the daughter of Jim and Joan Nicholson. Some have been baptized there since the work began, mostly from French background.

There is much work yet to be done in this great country. There are many cities and towns where works could be started. The laborers are few.

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	170
RESTORATIONS	48
(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)	

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 XXVII

JULY, 1986

Number 7

THINK ON
THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 1631
Lutz, FL 33549



THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH

The prophecies in Isaiah 2: 2, 3, Daniel 2: 44 and Joel 2: 28-32 pinpoint the time when and place where the church Christ promised was to be established. There are four identifying marks that everyone looks for in establishing the true identity of a person or thing. These are:

1. The **PLACE** where one is born or a thing begins.
2. The **TIME** when one is born or a thing begins.
3. The **NAME** given to the person or thing.
4. The **PARENTS** of the person or **CREATOR** of a thing.

I propose to look at the **PLACE** and **TIME** in this article to show that the church of the Lord can be identified by these marks, and all other churches must be excluded because they are not genuine.

The **PLACE** could be no other than Jerusalem. The prophets said the kingdom or church would be established in Jerusalem and the word of the Lord would go forth from Zion. Jesus told his apostles to wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father, and when they received **POWER** they were to bear witness of him. (Luke 24: 47-49; Acts 1: 4-8). On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles and they began to reveal the message of salvation (Acts 2). Luke 24: 47 says: "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, **beginning at Jerusalem.**"

We must conclude that any church that did not have its origin in Jerusalem on Pentecost cannot be the church that Christ established. Is that not a scriptural

and logical conclusion?

The **TIME** when the church began had to depend upon several events. It is certain that the church could not have begun before these important events because they are related to the establishment of the kingdom.

1. The church could not begin before the "fullness of time" spoken of in Galatians 4: 4, 5. The fullness of time had to do with the birth of Christ, and that was essential to everything related to remission of sins and eternal salvation in heaven. Acts 1: 6, 7 reveals that the times and seasons are in the power of the Father. Jesus said, "**The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand:** repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1: 15).

2. The church could not have been established until after the death of Christ. His blood had to be shed because the church was purchased with his blood. Until the blood was shed no price was available to purchase the church. Acts 20: 28 says: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath **purchased with his own blood.**"

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1: 18, 19).

3. The kingdom or church could not have been established until Christ **ascended to the right hand of God** to receive "all power" which he now has (Matthew 28: 18). Peter declared him to be by the right hand of God exalted, and that he had been made both Lord and Christ (Acts 2: 33, 36).

Daniel saw the future in a vision which is a prophecy of Christ ascending to God to receive a kingdom. Daniel 7: 13, 14 says: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an ever-lasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

4. The church or kingdom could not **come until the power came.** The power is the Holy Spirit on the day of

Pentecost. Jesus said the kingdom of God would come during the life time of some of those to whom he was talking at the time (Mark 9: 1). He told the apostles that they would be "endued with power from on high" when the promise of the Father came upon them (Luke 24: 49). The context shows this to be the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Again, Jesus said they would "receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you..." (Acts 1: 8). They were endued with the power on Pentecost and began to speak as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2: 4).

5. The church could not come into existence until the foundation was laid. Jesus said he would build his church, and he said he would build it upon the rock: the fact that he is the Son of God. He said "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it"—the building of his church. This expression simply means death would not hold him; he would arise from the dead, thereby being declared to be the Son of God (Romans 1: 4).

The foundation was laid by the apostles and prophets (Ephesians 2: 19-22). This was done by their prophecy and preaching of Christ as the Son of God. When this fact is preached and believed, the foundation is laid in the heart of the believer for his obedience and salvation. All those who are being saved are added to the Lord's church (Acts 2: 47). Christ could not be preached in fullness until he arose from the dead and ascended to the right hand of God. The apostles were not permitted to preach Christ until they were endued with power (Acts 1: 8). He was declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection of the dead (Romans 1: 4).

Isaiah foretold of the foundation in these words: "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste."

Peter refers to this passage from Isaiah and applies it to Christ as the foundation upon which Christians as "lively stones" are built up a spiritual house. This is the church (1 Peter 2: 4-8).

The apostle Paul says he laid the foundation and another builds upon it. As an apostle this was his work to reveal Christ, thus laying the foundation for the church. Christ said he would build his church upon the rock—the fact that he was the Christ the Son of the living God (Matthew 16: 16-18). Paul revealed this fact and thus laid the foundation upon which the "living stones" would be built. He says of this foundation: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3: 11).

From all this evidence it is impossible for one to claim a date for the beginning of the church prior to the day of Pentecost following the resurrection and ascension of Christ. Not one of these facts can be dismissed as not being essential to the establishment of the church. This date being established, no other date in all of history will be accepted as the time of the beginning of the church of the Lord. All that began at another time cannot be the one Christ promised to build, and did subsequently build on Pentecost following his ascension to the right hand of the Father.

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6. The church is spoken of as being in existence from Pentecost, and saved people were being added to it as they were being saved. The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved (Acts 2: 47). Paul said to the church at Colosse: "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints of light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Colossians 1: 12, 13).

The kingdom, which is the church, is spoken of as being in existence, and those at Colosse had already been translated into it. The birthday of the church Christ built was A. D. 33 in the city of Jerusalem. A church that began at any other time and place is a counterfeit.

Editorial

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PENTECOSTALISM AND FINAL REVELATION

In my lifetime the Pentecostal movement has forged into the mainstream of popular religion in America and around the world. David Edwin Harrell, Jr's new book: **ORAL ROBERTS, AN AMERICAN LIFE** is, to this date, the definitive history not just of Oral Roberts and his unquestioned leadership of the modern charismatic world, but of the maturity of that movement into a major force in the religious world. Harrell writes as an historian with restraint and objectivity. The well-documented work stands apart in this field of study. While it is not written as an expose, or an attempt at doctrinal refutation, the facts, objectively told, speak for themselves. Every preacher or teacher who has to deal with people of charismatic persuasion would do well to read this book. It will give you a comprehensive insight into this whole movement and help you understand the presuppositions which underlie the various arguments made in defense of modern-day belief in the continued operation of miraculous spiritual gifts.

I first heard Oral Roberts under his huge tent in early 1949 when he came to Tampa, Florida for one of his early healing crusades. Earl Kimbrough, a few others and myself learned quickly the danger of questioning what was taking place, at least on their turf. In the early days of that movement there was a thin line between an "usher" and a "bouncer." Roberts was not the suave, polished figure he became later as the head of a vast religious empire. But even then, he was a compelling speaker and was able to carry most of his audience wherever he wanted them to go. Over the years since, I have attended and observed a number of others who made essentially the same claims as Oral Roberts but I have not heard, among Pentecostals, his equal in ability to move an audience.

Had someone told me in those days that Roberts would eventually have the effect on the entire religious community in this country and around the world which he has attained, I would not have believed it. But I believed then and now that Pentecostalism rests upon several false premises. It is a subjective form of religion. The gospel of Christ is an objective message. The "faith once delivered to the saints" is a definitive standard by which all religious claims may be measured. The so-called pentecostal experience asks you to simply take their word for it that they had an experience with God outside of that which can be measured and substanti-

ated by the word of God. In 1956, in Decatur, Georgia, I held my first of several public debates with Pentecostal preachers. I still believe what I charged then that these people are lacking in respect for the word of God. At whatever point their human testimony conflicts with the word of God, they will hold to their story and reject the word of the Lord.

The crux of the whole controversy is whether or not the scriptures constitute God's final revelation to man. Harrell quotes Oral Roberts as saying "I think in a sense the Word is still being revealed." Again he is quoted as saying "I reject anything, any denominational viewpoint that says it's all been revealed." Folks, that is the essence of our whole dispute with these folks whether you call them "pentecostals", "charismatics" or whatever. They do not believe the Bible as we have it is the full, final and complete revelation of the mind of God. That is true whether we are speaking of Oral Roberts, Jimmy Swaggart, those on the PTL Club or the 700 Club, of some charismatic Episcopalian or Roman Catholic caught up in this movement. **When push comes to shove they just do not believe the Bible is the final revelation of God to man.** Never mind the fact that Jude said the faith was "once" (one time for all time) delivered to the saints (Jude 3). Forget the fact that Peter said "According as his divine power hath given us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called you unto glory and virtue" (2 Pet. 1: 3). Just ignore Paul's warning that we must not think of men "above that which is written" (1 Cor. 4: 6), or John's warning about "abiding not in the doctrine of Christ" (2 Jno. 9), these folks have had an experience with the Holy Spirit. That's what they tell us.

It makes no difference to them that Jesus promised that the Spirit would guide the apostles "into all truth" (Jno. 16: 13-14) and that Jesus said "thy word is truth" (Jno. 17: 17). Never mind that Paul said that what he received by revelation from God he had "written in few words whereby when ye read ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ" (Eph. 3: 1-3). The Holy Spirit revealed truth as Jesus promised in understandable propositions which are found on the pages of the word of God.

Catholicism does not accept this truth. It wants the scriptures plus the voice of tradition, plus the "living voice of the living church." It does not believe that final divine revelation is in the scriptures. Mormonism has the same problem. They ask for the Bible plus the writings of Joseph Smith. Adventism claims the Bible plus the "testimonies" of Ellen G. White. Christian Science relies of the visions of Mary Baker Eddy. The Jehovah's Witnesses must have the inspired utterances of Russell and Rutherford. And the Pentecostals must have the Bible plus their "experience."

Oral Roberts and other charismatics claim over and over again that "Gold told me" to do whatever it is they decide to ask other people to help them do. Roberts even claimed that he saw a 900 foot Jesus hovering over the City of Faith and that Jesus told him to build that hospital and research center. A few years ago in Ontario, Canada, a young man was invited by the local

preacher and myself to attend the meeting in which I was preaching. He first said he would come to hear me speak on the work of the Holy Spirit. Then later he called and said he could not attend because he had asked the Lord about it and the Lord told him not to go. I asked him if he would inquire of the Lord as to what we would be doing or teaching that would be displeasing to the Lord and to please let me know. He said he would but we heard no more from him. I would believe that fellow as quickly as I would Oral Roberts. The truth is, I don't believe either one of them. Don't tell me I don't have faith in God. That is not the case. What I lack is faith in these men who are making claims inconsistent with the word of God.

Many have been swept up in the television preaching of such men as Swaggart and others like him who have some strong things to say about moral issues. While I would not be disposed to deny any truth they might utter, I must protest vigorously their false teaching on the Holy Spirit which contradicts exactly what the word of God teaches and offers no higher proof that their own testimony about an "experience." They do not tell sinners what to do to be saved in language the apostles preached. They have their modes of "accepting Christ", their "point of contact", their instruction on how to "claim your miracle" but they would not dare tell an audience what Peter preached on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2: 38 or what Jesus commanded the apostles to preach in all the world to the end of time as recorded in Mark 16: 15-16. They do not believe that and they do not preach it except to pervert it. They are dangerous purveyors of error leading multitudes astray. Jesus we know and Paul we know, "but who are you"? The issue is simple. These men say divine revelation is not complete in the scriptures. The scriptures state that these divine writings are full, final and complete. Now then, "to whom shall we go"?

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ACCEPTED OF HIM

(2 Cor. 5:9)

Donnie V. Rader

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HOW TO FACE TEMPTATION

Temptation is common to man (1 Cor. 10: 13). Even the Lord himself faced great temptation (Matt. 4; Heb. 4: 15). Temptation itself is not a sin, but is an occasion to sin. It is that which leads us to evil or entices to wrong doing. (Jas. 1: 14). It is when we yield to the temptation that we sin (Jas. 1: 15).

Like it or not, temptations will come. The Devil will see that that is done. He is constantly seeking to destroy the children of God. Our question then is "How can we better face these temptations?"

Remember The Word

In the moment of temptation the word of God is most likely the farthest thing from our minds. One who is proceeding into sin isn't thinking "What does the Bible teach on this subject?" or "What would God want me to do?" If it is a point of real weakness, we are without doubt pushing those thoughts back.

The apostle Paul warns that we need to put on the armour of God so that we may do battle with Satan and his forces. The Devil must be resisted (Jas. 4: 17). Thus, in preparing to fight we must be "girt about with truth.

... taking the shield of faith, _ and take ___ the sword of the spirit which is the word of God" (Eph. 6: 10-17, emphasis mine DVR). When Joseph was tempted to lay with Potiphar's wife, he remembered the Lord's will and said, "... how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God" (Gen. 39: 9)? Jesus responded to each temptation by saying "it is written" (Matt. 4: 1-11). David kept a straight path by thinking upon the words of the Lord (Psa. 119: 153, 157, 176).

Pray

1 Tim. 2 lists four elements of prayer, one of which is "supplication". That refers to the request for the averting of evil. We can and should pray that we would not be led into temptation (Matt. 6: 9-13). We should pray for strength to overcome our trials. Jesus told his disciples, who were at times weak, to pray "that ye enter not into temptation" (Matt. 26: 41). It is interesting that in the context where Paul discusses putting on the armour of God to fight against the wiles of the Devil, he says, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication "that ye enter not into temptation" (Matt. 26: 41). It is interesting that in the context where Paul discusses putting on the armour of God to fight against the wiles of the Devil, he says, "Praying always with all prayer and

supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (Eph. 6: 18).

We must remember that "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man *availeth much*" (Jas. 5: 16, emphasis mine DVR). God will help us with the strength and faith to overcome.

Shun Evil Companions

Obviously friends have a great deal of influence on us. Godly and moral companions will have good influence, for they encourage us to do right. On the other hand, evil or ungodly friends have a bad influence, for they encourage us to do wrong. Those who have little or no respect for the Bible will advise and motivate us to sin.

We may think we are so strong that we will not be affected. Paul warns that we can easily be deceived, "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners" (1 Cor. 15: 33). It can happen to any one of us! No one is so strong that association with sin and ungodliness will not have any affect upon them.

David describes how people progress into sin. It starts by "walking in the counsel of the ungodly", listening to them and investigating their way of life. Then, the next thing you know you are "standing in the way of sinners". You are looking and liking what you see while all the time becoming more and more familiar with sin. All of this is breaking down your resistance so that next you're "sitting in the seat of the scornful" which is simply being a part of them, doing the things they do (Psa. 1: 1-3). By avoiding such relationships we remove a lot of temptations that we would otherwise face.

Learn From Experience

The examples that others have set should serve as a lesson to us. We can learn much from their mistakes. When we see that their yielding to temptation only brought on more problems and temptations, we ought to learn that resistance is the best course (cf. 2 Pet. 3: 17).

We can also learn from our own experiences with previous temptations. When we have yielded, we remember the consequences. When we overcame, we remember that we were made stronger (Jas. 1: 2-3; 1 Pet. 1: 6-7; Rom. 5: 3-4).

Look For the Way of Escape

We must not think that the temptation has us trapped with no alternative but to give in. God has provided a way to escape (1 Cor. 10: 13). That is true with every temptation. Our problem most of the time is that in the midst of the temptation we're not really looking for the way out. There is that door of escape and that's what makes yielding a sin (Jas. 1: 13-15). The reason we don't see it is we don't try.

Substitute Righteous Living

It is not enough to empty our lives of evil, but we must fill it with things that are good. We are free moral agents which means that we can choose to do wrong or choose to do righteously (Rom. 6: 13). If we will fill our lives with righteous and moral activities, we won't have time to yield to temptation.

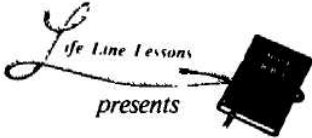
Paul writes to Timothy telling him to "flee" evil things. But, that isn't sufficient within itself. He was then to "follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness" (1 Tim. 6: 11).

Be Reminded Of Your Commitment

Remember who you are. You are a Christian, a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 11: 26). A Christian is one who glorifies God (1 Pet. 4: 16). You are a child of God (Rom. 8: 16), so act like one.

Joseph remembered who he was when Potiphar's wife tempted him and thus he "fled, and got him out" (Gen. 39: 12). Paul urged the Hebrews to remember who they professed to be (Heb. 3: 1; 4: 14; 10: 23). They had confessed Christ, become his disciples in obedience and claimed to be his servants. Therefore they ought to act according to their claim.

Ready or not, the temptations will come. However, if we just follow these simple guidelines, we can overcome.



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THE ONE BAPTISM

QUESTION: *Some preachers say that when Paul wrote, "one baptism" (Eph. 4: 5), he showed that Holy Spirit baptism was a thing of the past. They contend that in Acts, chapter 2 (33 A. D.) there were Holy Spirit baptism and water baptism; that in Acts, chapter 10 (41 A. D.) there were two baptisms (Spirit and water), but in 64A. D., when Paul wrote the Ephesian letter, there was just one baptism, namely, water baptism. Is this a valid argument?*

ANSWER: The "one baptism" of Eph. 4: 5 was instituted by Jesus in the Great Commission (Mt. 28: 19; Mk. 16: 16), and it was preached by Peter on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2: 38). The "one baptism" of Eph. 4: 5 is the same baptism of Eph. 5: 26, and that is water baptism. Paul said in Eph. 5: 26, "That he might sanctify and cleanse it (church) with the washing of water (baptism) by the word." There is only ONE baptism that will do this, and, of course, that is water baptism.

The Bible teaches that baptism saves (Mk. 16: 16; 1 Pet. 3: 21), remits sins (Acts 2: 38), washes away sins (Acts 22: 16) and puts one into Christ (Gal. 3: 27). This is why Paul said there is "one baptism." Holy Spirit baptism never did these things, but rather it was a manifestation of God's approval and sanction. On Pentecost the outpouring of the Spirit demonstrated that the apostles were God's spokesmen (Acts 2: 16-18, 33), and at the household of Cornelius He witnessed to the Jews the acceptance of the Gentiles by God (Acts 10: 47; 11: 17; 15: 8). Holy Spirit baptism did not pardon or save from sin, but water baptism surely does (1 Pet. 3: 21). In other words, God saves us when we obey Him in water baptism.

As one of the planks of unity listed in Eph. 4: 4-6 we must accept water baptism as the only means to get into Christ. Hence, the "one baptism" was as much a necessity in 33 A. D. as it was in 64 A. D. The argument that there were two baptisms in 33 A. D., and one in 64 A. D., proving that Holy Spirit baptism had ceased, is a fallacious argument. Holy Spirit baptism had ceased alright, but Eph. 4: 5 does not prove it.

THE GREEN AND DRY TREE

QUESTION: Would you explain Luke 23: 31? What did Jesus mean by the green tree and the dry?

ANSWER: The verse states, "For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" This was said by Jesus on the way to Calvary. It is

seemingly a proverbial expression. The "green tree" would represent Jesus and the "dry tree" would depict the Jewish nation. Jesus, in the context, speaks of the destruction of the Jewish state (vv. 28-30) which happened about 40 years later. The meaning apparently would be: If the Romans put Jesus to death, the Innocent and Holy One, they certainly would not spare the corrupt and rebellious Jewish nation.

Jesus was as a succulent tree with beautiful foliage, and abundant and excellent fruit. Such a tree should be preserved. But if it (Jesus) was not spared, certainly the dry and withered tree (Jewish nation) would be cut down.

Alfred Plummer said the statement may be applied in more than one sense. "(1) If the Romans treat Me, whom they admit to be innocent, in this manner, how will they treat those who are rebellious and guilty? (2) If the Jews deal thus with One who has come to save them, what treatment shall they receive themselves for destroying Him? (3) If they behave thus before their cup of wickedness is full, what will they commit when it overflows" (*St. Luke*, pp. 529-30)? But Plummer, in my estimation, is too broad in his application, and, the weight of the context favors number one of the three senses he gave.

WAKE THE WORLD AND TELL THE PEOPLE

Wilson Adams

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OUR COMPULSION

Simply stated, the #1 need of God's people is to reach out and bring the lost to Jesus. Truly there are other needs to be met—Christian edification, rebuke against sin, exposing of false doctrine, etc. —**BUT OUR GREATEST NEED AND NECESSITY INVOLVES TRUMPETING FORTH THE GOOD NEWS MESSAGE OF JESUS TO A LOST AND DYING WORLD.** Sadly, in many places, the clarion call of the herald is scarcely heard.

We must understand that in our desire to restore the New Testament church and first century Christianity we must also reestablish the *evangelism* and *enthusiasm* of those early disciples. So often we argue with those who seek to pervert the church's mission (by turning it into a social organization to meet the needs of the "whole" man) that the church's God-given assignment is spiritual—to preach the *saving* gospel and not the *social* gospel—and then we turn around and the evangelism and enthusiasm that we need to do the thing just affirmed is virtually non-existent.

We **must** restore the level of spiritual enthusiasm held by those first century saints. We **must** capture their

zeal, their faith and their fire. We **must** WAKE THE WORLD AND TELL THE PEOPLE about Jesus like they did. And if we don't—what have we really restored?

We Must Have Tender Hearts That Care

One of the saddest of all scriptures is in Psalms 142: 4—*"No one cares for my soul."* We must care. We must learn to be anxious over the souls of others just like we are anxious over our own. Look at Paul. He cared so much that he affirmed a willingness to die and go to hell if that act could somehow save his kinsmen (Rom. 9: 1-3). Look at **Jeremiah**—the weeping prophet. And do you know why he wept? Souls were being lost AND HE CARED! (By-the-way, when was the last time you wept over a lost soul?) Look at **David**, whose eyes *"shed streams of water"* over the spiritual plight of his people (Psa. 119: 136). And, while you're at it, take a good long look at **Jesus**.

"And seeing the multitudes, He felt compassion for them..." (Matt. 9: 36). *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem... How often I wanted to gather your children together the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling"* (Matt. 23: 37).

We must learn to love people like Jesus did. We must be motivated like He was, feel what He felt and see what He saw. Yes, Jesus cared! When we care, certain things will characterize us:

1. *We will seek opportunities.* Remember when you were dating? Surely you didn't wait for an opportunity to knock you over before you were willing to spend time with your sweetheart. Chances are you **CREATED OPPORTUNITIES**, sought after and pursued every occasion to be together. And why? Because you cared! Could it be that in our failure to seek spiritual opportunities there resides a greater failure to care?

2. *We will see the lost and not the cost.* When our child becomes ill, is it the cost of recovery that immediately concerns us? Absolutely not. We would spend every dollar we had (and, if need be, borrow more) to ensure the welfare of that child and do it all without complaint. And why? Because we care!

I've known of churches who would think nothing of spending \$10,000 to repave a parking lot but would never remotely consider spending an equivalent amount in some effort to reach out for the lost. This is **NOT** to suggest that we should be frivolous with the Lord's money. This **IS** to suggest that the mission of the church is to save souls, and every dime spent to accomplish that purpose is money well spent and divinely authorized.

3. *We will be willing to be inconvenienced.* Why does a mother sit and lovingly wipe the fevered brow of a child in the predawn darkness? Simple: She cares! Do you like to be inconvenienced? Not I. Sometimes I think that if I have to miss my supper or favorite television program in order to put my long legs under someone's kitchen table in an effort to lead one to Jesus—that such

is being inconvenienced for the Lord. We don't know what *inconvenience* is. Inconvenience is when the authorities threaten: *"If you preach—we'll beat you..."* *"If you preach we'll put you in jail..."* *"If you preach we'll kill you!"* Friend, that's inconvenience. And do you know how the early disciples faced inconvenience? *"They kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ"* (Acts 5: 42).

4. *We will pray.* In Matthew 9: 37-38 when Jesus announced the willingness of the harvest in contrast to the unwillingness of the workers, He said: *"Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers..."* *The Master said—PRAY! In 1 Cor. 3 Paul affirmed that men plant and water the gospel seed but it is God who gives the increase. We need to be praying that God will give the increase!*

"Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation" (Rom. 10: 1).

Have you been praying for another's salvation? A friend, a neighbor, a coworker, an unbelieving spouse of a Christian brother or sister, a young person at a critical age—? Brethren, God does not answer a prayer that has not been prayed!

5. *We will share.* There are too many selfish, stingy Christians (I don't know how else to say it). I cite, as proof of that accusation, the lack of personal evangelism carried on by most Christians. Let's quit being selfish with God's gospel. Jesus said, *"It's more blessed to give than to receive,"—and the thing we need to be giving and sharing is the GOSPEL. If we care we will share. It's as simple as that.*

We Must Have Eager Ears That Hear

"We have heard the Macedonian call today..." is a popular stanza of a popular hymn. However, in reality, far too many are failing to respond to, not only, the *Macedonian Call* but to ANY call. We must again tune our ears to hear the call and cry of the lost.

We Must Have Alert Eyes To See

That was the point of John 4: 35. Pointing to the fields of grain, Jesus said, *"Do you not say, 'There are yet four months and then comes the harvest?'"* Then pointing toward the people he added—*"Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest"* Yes, the soul harvest was at hand!

We Must Have Willing Feet To Go

ALL must go. Some can go across the state, while others can cross the country and still others can span the seas... But that isn't the case with most of us. In fact, for most, the **ONLY** "crossing" there ever needs to be is the street, the hall, the cafeteria at work. Indeed it is said, *"How beautiful are the feet of those who bring the glad tidings of good things."*

Please...open your heart to care, your ears to hear and your eyes to see. And then, most of all, pick up those beautiful feet, "crossover," and tell a friend about Jesus.

**OBSERVATIONS UPON
20 YEARS OF PREACHING
(2)**

Dick Blackford

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The Number One Problem In The Church

I don't know if my experience has differed much from others, but from 20 years experience I have observed that the greatest problem in the church is people "wearing their feelings on their sleeve." This has also been described as "a chip on the shoulder," "thin skinned," and "touchy." Whatever expression is used, it refers to people who are too easy to get their feelings hurt. Many instances are not real offenses but are the result of misunderstanding. Some are only imagined by the extra-sensitive. The real damage comes when one who thinks he (or she) has been wronged, yields to the temptation to tell others about it before and without going to the accused. The church becomes the owner of a full-blown problem with all of its emotions.

When one allows a personal offense (whether real or imagined) to divide the body of Christ, stifle the church's work, and nullify its influence, he is viewing himself through the wrong end of the telescope. He suffers nothing compared to what Christ chose to undergo for us. The pride and arrogance of this generation hinders one from doing the humble thing—being willing to take wrong on behalf of the greater cause of our mission (1 Cor. 6: 7).

These kinds of problems seem to increase when the church is not working. Feeling the need for some activity, brethren may begin looking for faults and soon wage a full scale battle within the congregation. They hinder the gospel "in the name of the Lord." God forbid! No personal offense is that important.

Elder/Preacher Relationships

Only 6 of my 20 years have been spent working with an eldership. (Three of those I also served as an elder, having the privilege of seeing things from both views). I suspect there are more congregations without elders than there are with them. This is a tragedy and a hindrance. We should be overwhelmed with the wisdom of God's plan! We must never become complacent about this. One of the dangers is that preachers will end up functioning as elders without wearing the name or being qualified. God wants churches to have elders! Many problems can be avoided (or easily handled) that often get out of hand otherwise. This topic should not be neglected.

A preacher should be an example to other Christians in his support and submission to the elders. This does

not mean that he should be a "yes" man. He may need to make suggestions, urge elders on (encouraging them to go forward), but it should always be with respect.

Elders should not make unreasonable demands on the preacher or lord it over him. Many years ago I considered moving to a church in which one of the elders thought the preacher should keep a daily log book of all his activities (because his boss required this of him). It seemed unreasonable and a waste of time. I was afraid he was more interested in being my boss than my elder. Of course, I could have been mistaken or misread the situation. Ideally, the elders and preacher are a team whose works should complement each other's. They should always be mindful of the highest purpose in the world. Nothing should interfere with that purpose.

Pulpit Abuse

Preachers should avoid taking personal, private differences to the pulpit. A preacher may seek to identify his opponent(s) through insinuations, innuendoes, and inferences without calling names. He is asking for trouble and is a big part of the problem. If a brother inquires if the preacher is talking about him, the preacher should answer forthrightly. When Nathan told the parable to David, he didn't say "if the shoe fits, wear it." He said, "Thou art the man." When Judas asked, "Lord, is it I?" Jesus did not beat around the bush. He answered forth-rightly. It is no sign of bravery to play guessing games. Such action manifests all the courage of a "hit n' run" driver and should not be confused with standing for the truth. The preacher does not own the pulpit, and a church should not feel helpless when he abuses it. He is not immune to correction.

A preacher may also cause or enlarge a problem on the basis of hearsay. Such phrases as "I overheard," "it has come to me," "one brother said," and "They say," can often magnify or manufacture a problem. The audience has no way of knowing who "they" are or whether "they" said it. Unless he is willing to identify who said it, he will only create suspicion. Paul wrote Corinth about things that "had been reported" to him, but he wasn't afraid to identify the source as "the house of Chloe" (1 Cor. 1: 11). Preachers do not live above the gospel which they preach.

Preachers and Counseling

I have mellowed a little on this. Counseling falls more under the work of elders. However, because he is a concerned Christian a preacher may find himself giving personal help to someone with problems. There are situations he should avoid and others which deserve great caution. Private counseling with younger women is very unwise and is a work for older women (Tit. 2: 3-5). He may also fall into the snare of listening to gossip and/or spreading it. He may neglect weightier matters. There is much to consider. (We need to remember that people look at preachers out of the pulpit to know what they mean when in it). I do not advocate advertising formal or regular counseling hours, as do some sectarians.

Preachers and Insurance

In the civilized world medical insurance is no longer a luxury. It is a necessity and should be a priority for a preacher's family. This is involved in "providing for one's household" (1 Tim. 5: 8). Some have discovered too late how easy it is to get financially wiped out. I don't sell insurance. You will need to do your own shopping.

Outside Support

Much of my preaching life I have worked with churches which were not self-supporting. Raising support is no fun and is more difficult than it was a few years ago. While we must trust God's providence for our needs, uncertainty (or undependability from supporting churches) can make for difficult times. The \$500 monthly I was receiving when I began would be hardly enough today for a man with a family, even if it were \$500 weekly. A church sending \$100 per month used to be a goodly sum. It is a token amount today. If a preacher had several churches sending \$100 monthly much of his time would be spent writing reports and much of his money on postage and stationery. My suggestion to churches is (with the advent of the copy machine), that they not expect a personally typed report from each man they support. Allow him the same breaks that others use. I also suggest that churches answer all requests for support, even if they have to send a form letter saying they are unable to support at this time. Due to the number of requests we receive, we have had to do that in order to keep the local preacher from becoming a full-time secretary. But we always try to respond. One more thing, preachers who receive out-side support rarely get a raise, unless they ask. It would be great if a congregation would voluntarily increase support to him, as a raise. Of course, when another congregation finds out about it they may decrease theirs! However, preachers should give a full report.

Conclusion: I have had a few raw deals in my preaching life. Otherwise, I have been treated so much better than I deserve that those raw deals are not worth writing about. However, this article has a more pessimistic tone than the one 10 years ago. The pessimism is over the past, not the future. I have always believed conservative brethren have the potential to evangelize the world. We need to live up to it.

I wish to thank the reader for considering these random thoughts and would like to read what others have to say along these lines. You may hear from me again in 10 years. In the meantime, "preach the word."

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THE POPE VISITS THE JEWS

John Paul II, the charismatic pope who has done more than any of his predecessors to keep Catholicism in the news, made a recent visit to a Jewish synagogue in Rome. We quote from an article by the Associated Press:

"Pope John Paul II and Rome's leading rabbi embraced, read from the Psalms and prayed together in silence Sunday during the first recorded visit by a pope to a synagogue.

"The pope deplored the 'hatred and persecution' of the Jews throughout the centuries.

" 'You are our dearly beloved brothers and, in a certain way, it could be said that you are our elder brothers, ' he said to resounding applause from the crowd of about 1, 000 people.

"Speaking in Rome's monumental main synagogue facing the Tiber River, spiritual center of what is believed to be the oldest Jewish community in the West, the pope pledged the Roman Catholic Church would further its efforts to remove all forms of prejudice.

"He did not address the thorny issue of Vatican refusal to establish diplomatic relations with Israel...

"The pope, speaking in Italian, said: 'Certainly, we cannot and should not forget that the historical circumstances of the past were very different from those that have laboriously matured over the centuries.

"He quoted from Second Vatican Council's revolutionary 1965 document on non-Christian religions, 'Nostra Aetate' (In Our Times), which officially rescinded the accusation the Jews killed Christ.

"That from the document, John Paul said the church 'deplores the hatred, persecutions and displays of anti-Semitism directed against the Jews at any time and by anyone'."

That visit marks a new low in compromise, and should be an affront to Catholics and all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is amazing what politics and power will cause men to do! That's not the first time that religious leaders have denied the Lord.

The primary issue between Catholics and Jews is whether Jesus was conceived in the womb of Mary by the Holy Spirit and was the divine Son of God, or the deceived, unfortunate, illegitimate son of a harlot mother! He was one or the other, and the pope is supposed to hold one position and the rabbi the other.

No wonder they prayed in silence. To have prayed

aloud would have been an embarrassment to both and demonstrated the inconsistency of their meeting. If the pope knows how to pray, he had to pray through or in the name of Christ in order to reach God. Jesus said, "And whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (John 14: 13). The apostle Paul wrote, "For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2: 5). Does the pope believe that? Does the rabbi believe it?

Let it be understood that we are not anti-Semitic, nor do we believe in hatred or persecution of Jews or any other people because of their race or religion. No Christian should hate anyone, but we can and should reject some things which others believe.

The pope spoke of the old and troublesome question of the role of the Jews in the rejection and crucifixion of Jesus Christ. The Vatican Council may absolve them of any guilt, but that does not change the facts of history and the scriptures.

According to Catholic tradition (and that's all the authority there is), the apostle Peter was the first pope. There certainly has been a change in the popes from first to last. The report said that John Paul and the rabbi read from the Psalms. We can name parts of the Psalms which they did not read, nor did they make the same application of the Psalms which concern Christ that Peter made in the sermon on Pentecost. Peter proved his point from the Psalms, and it was that the Jews had rejected the Christ! Consider what he said, as recorded in Acts 2, and remember that he was speaking to Jews (verse 5):

"Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—Him, being delivered by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it. For David says concerning Him: 'I foresaw the Lord always before my face, For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken; Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; Moreover my flesh will also rest in hope, Because You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence'" (Acts 2: 22-28 NKJ).

Peter quoted from Psalm 16, and made application of it to the Jews' rejection of the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth. That rabbi doesn't believe a word of that! Does the pope? It seems to us that there was a meeting of two hypocrites.


But that's not all that Peter said. Verse 36 records that he said: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ. " Notice that phrase, "whom you have crucified. " To whom was he speaking? The Jews; the "house of Israel. " For all who believe the Bible, that settles that, regardless of what

any Vatican Council may decree.

Anyone who is thinking straight knows that sin and guilt cannot be inherited. Thinking that to be true has been the root of much religious error and confusion. We are not charging that Jews living today are guilty of the crucifixion of Christ. But their ancestors who were living at the time of Christ on earth were guilty. On another occasion, Peter told the Jews. "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you killed by hanging on a tree" (Acts 5: 30).

Had the pope been a true disciple of Christ, he would have tried, as did Peter, to persuade the rabbi and other Jews that Jesus was both Lord and Christ and then admonished those who did believe to, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2: 38).

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. " (John 14: 6).



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INTRODUCTION TO INDIVIDUALISM Part One

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Introduction

Individualism is a doctrine which exalts the role of the individual's service to God to the point that it denies the collective a role. Individualists teach that "the only 'functional unit' that the Lord has is the individual";¹ therefore, the local church has no duties or responsibilities. As a result of this position, they deny that men are appointed as elders to oversee the local church, and they maintain it is unscriptural for a local church to have a treasury.

In this series of articles I will examine each of these positions in the light of God's word. But before I do that, it will be helpful to the reader to learn a little about the history of the movement, and to come to understand why it is growing among God's people.

Basic History of the Movement

The movement's founder and primary propagator is Charles Holt. Brother Holt stood for the truth against institutionalism in the 1950s, but drifted into his current position during the 1960s. He published a magazine, *Sentinel of Truth*, which had as its primary purpose the propagation of the Individualist position.

During the 1960s he was challenged by brother J. T. Smith to defend his views in public debate. Brother Holt signed propositions, but backed out at the last moment. He ceased publication of his magazine, and virtually dropped out of sight during the 1970s.

In this decade, brother Holt published a very fine book on baptism, and began to be received again by many churches. Brother Smith again challenged him to debate his position. They met on five successive evenings between September 30 and October 4, 1985, in Lake Jackson, Texas. At this writing, they are scheduled to meet again in March of 1986, in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

In January of 1986 brother Holt began distributing another magazine, the *Examiner*. With this publication, it became clear that he was not only meeting with success in converting Christians to his view, but that he intended to embark upon a nation-wide tour to spread the doctrine.²

Possible Reasons the Movement is Having Some Success

Four things occurred in the 1970s which have contributed to the rise of Individualism in this decade.

First, several brethren began running around the brotherhood promoting the idea that "we should preach Christ, and not the church." Their aim in doing this was

to correct what they saw as an overemphasis placed on the local church by Christians. Brother Holt doesn't believe there is any such thing as the local church, so when he promotes this idea he is not trying to correct an overemphasis; he is using it to destroy the local church.

The fact of the matter is, one cannot preach Christ without preaching His church. Whether one is using that word in its universal sense, or in its local sense, Christ purchased the church with His blood (Acts 20: 28). This is true of the universal church inasmuch as each member of it is washed with the blood of Christ (Revelation 1: 5), and it applies to the organized, functional, local church inasmuch as it is a part of the New Covenant which He ratified with His blood (see Hebrews chapter 9, and 13: 20). To "preach Christ, and not His church," is to preach a gospel which brings the curse of Galatians 1: 8, 9.

The second reason Individualists are meeting with success is related to the perception of many Christians that the "brotherhood" is in deep trouble. Seizing upon this apprehension, brother Holt and those with him have pointed to the organized, functioning, local church as the source of all problems. He paints a picture which characterizes preachers as a domineering clergy class, elders as totally inept or overbearing, and saints in general as being largely of the "Sunday morning" type who attend once a week, make a contribution, and consider these duties the extent of their obligation.

I am convinced of better things concerning brethren. We need to learn the lesson which God taught Elijah when he lamented that he alone remained faithful in Israel (1 Kings 19: 9-18). The divine response was, "I will leave 7000 in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal and every mouth that has not kissed him"³. We must take heart. When we give into feelings of hopelessness and despair because of the unfaithfulness of a few, we open ourselves up to false teachers.

The third reason this position is making progress has to do with the rise of the "unity in diversity" concept. Some brethren have grown weary of the battle, and are telling us that we must be more "tolerant" of others. As a result of this attitude, some brethren welcome brother Holt back with open arms in the early 1980s. He was invited to hold meetings, and given other opportunities to spread his doctrine. When brother Smith suggested in the May, 1985, issue of *Searching the Scriptures* that brother Holt needed to repent or tell brethren he continued to hold the same position he did in the 1960s, he came under a sea of criticism. 2 John 8-11 warns us of the danger of allowing false teachers an opportunity. If brethren had applied the passage to brother Holt, matters might not be as they are.

Finally, there is a cultural explanation for the movement's resurgence. We are living in a time when the individual is being exalted at the expense of "the group." We see this in government, in families, and in the religious world. In the civil realm, many are arguing that we need to "get the government off the back of the working man." In the family, ERA forces are arguing that the woman (the individual) needs to be free of the family (the group). And in the religious world, the de-

cline of "organized religion" is everywhere being heralded.

The Individualists have used this cultural phenomenon to push their cause. They are urging the "man in the pew" to throw off "the elder and preacher 'clergy' system. They are offering leadership roles to women in their movement, and are suggesting that New Testament women had such. And they are urging democracy among believers as an alternative to the organized, functional, local church.

Democratic principles are deeply imbedded in Americans, and some are convinced this system should rule in churches. But God never intended for churches to be democracies. They are theocracies, ruled through the medium of Jesus' word, and overseen by duly appointed elders (Acts 20: 28; Hebrews 13: 17).


¹ *The Examiner*, Truth and Freedom Ministries, Inc., P. O. Box 21584, Chattanooga, TN, 37421; Vol. 1, No. 1, page 30. ¹ *The Examiner*, page 15.

³ All quotations in this booklet from the Bible are from the New American Standard Version, unless otherwise noted.

Using the
**SWORD OF
THE SPIRIT**

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AN EX-CRITIC SPEAKS

"... the more movies I saw, the more I changed. It took progressively longer to rid my mind of disturbing images, language and emotions. I was often depressed and reacted angrily to the slightest provocation from my wife and children. Finally, I had to quit... in the areas of language, violence and the graphic portrayal of sex (including homosexuality) on the screen, I believe there is worth in old-fashioned values."

No, those are not the rantings of a wild-eyed, fanatical, Bible-thumping preacher (as all who teach Biblical moral values are often caricatured). Neither are those words a testimonial at a backwoods prayer-meeting' service.

They are the words of John Culea whose movie reviews aired twice a week on the evening news of KFMB-TV in San Diego for 3 1/2 years. Film studios flew him across the country, first-class, to interview movie stars and directors. He stayed in the finest hotels and got all the popcorn and other goodies he wanted, free.

The November 1985 issue of Reader's Digest includes a condensed version of his story as originally published in the San Diego Magazine. Mr. Culea states that most

of his readers "welcomed my honesty and criticism of the ever-present violence, sex and profanity on the screen. Occasionally, viewers objected, and I was pressured by some co-workers to tone down my comments. One viewer was upset with my objections to a scene implied in the movie National Lampoon's Vacation.' He reasoned that incest happens all the time, and it isn't that big a deal.' To my chagrin, "Vacation" was one of the top moneymakers for Warner Brothers in the summer of 1983."

"Still, I continued to speak my mind. I believed that I could be of service by not accepting the barrage of filth and junk from Hollywood. For a while, it worked. I was able to watch a movie, write my critique and seemingly wipe the memory from my mind. I believed I wasn't affected by what I was watching."

Culea learned that he couldn't feed on filth without becoming ill. So he decided to change his diet. He states: "My last appearance as a film critic was in August 1984. I have not been to a movie since." He does not claim that all movies are rotten. Just the vast majority of them. He names a few, such as "E. T.," "The Fox and the Hound," "Never Cry Wolf," "Greystoke: The Legend of Tarzan," and "Chariots of Fire" as favorites of his.

It is not the object of this writer to encourage people to never take in a movie. It is my purpose to motivate some serious thought on the kind of entertainment that is generally available at the movie house. As I write this article, of 25 movies advertised in the theaters of Huntsville, 19 of them are rated "R."

We often watch an old movie on TV and wonder why that kind of creativity and humor is not being produced today. The main reason is the kind of people who are making the movies today.

From 1934-1966, the production code maintained by the film industry stressed three general principles: (1) no picture was to be produced that would tend to lower the moral standards of those watching it; (2) only correct standards of life, subject to the needs of drama and entertainment, were to be presented; and (3) the forces of law and order were never to be ridiculed and evil was never to be made attractive.

Note these excerpts from this Motion Picture Production code: "No film or episode may throw ridicule on any religious faith... pictures shall not imply that low forms of sex relations are the accepted or common thing ... Brutal killings are not to be presented in detail... complete nudity is never permitted."

Jack Valenti became President of the Motion Picture Association of America in 1966 and established the present rating system. The situation has steadily deteriorated since then.

Our God demands that we think soberly. As one TV commercial expressed it: "A mind is too precious a thing to waste." Let us be selective in the area of our entertainment. Jesus said: "The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light" (Lk. 16: 8). It may be that some of us can learn a valuable lesson from an ex-movie critic who's still criticizing.

PRECEPTS AND PERCEPTIONS

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MAY CHURCHES OF CHRIST

SUPPORT HUMAN INSTITUTIONS⁷—VI

Whom Shall We Please?

More than a hundred years ago churches of Christ began dividing because there were those who argued that missionary societies supported from church treasuries were merely "methods" whereby churches carried out the charge to "go... teach." Others said they were "aids" to the churches and as such should be supported by the churches. The promoters of this great program of human invention wrought havoc among churches everywhere they pushed them upon the churches. Today the story is being repeated among the very churches which have refused to support missionary societies dedicated to the mission of evangelism. The modern societies are dedicated to other missions. The benevolence societies are dedicated to the mission of orphan and old folk's care and the educational societies are dedicated to the mission of training elders, teachers and other church leaders. One wonders whom or what local churches are supposed to train! Are they merely to become money-raisers for human institutions?

As we said early in these articles, there is nothing wrong per se with men forming themselves into service organizations to sell food, clothing and shelter, reading, writing, arithmetic and Bibles or Bible courses. Few people have ever found fault with this. The stir starts, however, and the stir will continue as long as self-appointed institutional promoters continue to call upon the Lord's churches to underwrite benevolence and educational enterprises that none of the Lord's churches started or have one word of say regarding their operations. They are not "church schools" or "church homes." To call them such is to mis-call them.

In hundreds of congregations over the land there are men and women who attend worship and make regular contributions into the church treasury. They are not the type that have a lot to say in public. They know, however, that a school is not the church and a benevolence society is not the church. They conscientiously believe that a church has no right to support these human institutions. Elders, without regard to the consciences of these quiet souls, have been known to go before the congregation and urge the church to give freely to these institutions. Sometimes, without consulting or informing the church, they order the treasurer to write checks

to these institutions. The result is that in many locations there is unrest, suspicion and, not infrequently, downright distrust of an eldership which acts with such "high and mighty" tactics. When somebody dares question this practice elders and preachers proceed to brand the questioner as an "anti" which, in many instances, means the loss of favor, if not friendship, of those who think more of the human institutions than they do of the peace among and fellowship of their own brethren for whom Christ died.

To call a man an "anti" is to label him as a bad, bad person in the eyes of many people. The word "anti" simply means "against" or "opposed." The impression that some of these name-callers apparently want to leave is that those who oppose church donations to human institutions are against orphans and widows. This, of course, is not true and to leave such impression is basically dishonest. To speak such as true without knowledge is to deal in destructive gossip. To speak such knowing it is untrue is to deal in malicious falsehoods. A Christian will do neither. The very persons who brand others as "anti" are opposed to some things, aren't they? Don't they oppose "instrumental music"? They are against lying, stealing, adultery, and drunkenness, are they not? You see, dear brother, it all depends on what you oppose as to whether you are called an ugly name. Calling names is no rightful substitute for scripture or legitimate argument. Honest brethren want scripture instead of name calling.

Those who are concerned only about pleasing God will not be unduly upset at the nasty things said about them. They know that they are pleasing God even though they displease men. They also know that they are looking to their heavenly Father for their eternal reward, not to those who call them names and seek to destroy their influence. They know that Jesus said:

"Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you."
(Matt. 5: 11, 12).

Faithful Christians know that when men begin calling their brethren ugly names and slurring them, this does not answer the truth of God's word regarding the all-sufficiency of the Lord's local church to do everything God wanted it to do without underwriting human institutions to do the very work God commands His church to do in the first place. If there were scriptural authority for church support of these institutions, it would not take sixty years to produce the scripture authorizing it. Brethren need to listen to the Lord's word instead of the word of institutional promoters. When these promoters cease calling upon churches to do something for which there is no authority in God's word, trouble will cease, division will end, and brethren will again be at peace. As long as they continue to call upon the divine institution to underwrite the expenses of human institutions spiritual war will continue. Hostilities will not

cease as long as men who ought to know better continue to disobey God! Let us fervently pray that those who are using churches and urging churches to raise money for their human schemes may return to the simple work which Christ commissioned His churches to perform when He fully equipped them to do all things He commanded them to do.

SIMPLICITY IN CHRIST

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ACCOMPLISHING DEATH

"And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias; who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem" (Lk. 9: 30, 31).

Few of us regard death as an accomplishment; something to be spoken of in a matter-of-fact way. Death is one of the most inevitable experiences we will ever encounter, yet we steadfastly refuse to think about it, or prepare for it. We wait until it happens, and then we are forced to deal with events which are not easily handled under the best of conditions. I think we can learn to discuss death, including our own, calmly and forthrightly.

The young man lay in the coronary care unit of a large, metropolitan hospital. He had already faced and made decisions which would overwhelm most people. His heart had stopped beating several times, and he was surrounded by a literal forest of IV's, tubes and monitors. Death was not only possible, but probable. He had just decided to undergo a heart transplant, but had to wait until a suitable organ could be located, if at all. He had received little rest due to the constant medical attention which he required, and had to remain in a sitting position in order to breathe.

One night, around two or three o'clock in the morning, I decided to try something. The CCU ward was quiet, and competent nurses were watching his monitors at their station. I stood at the foot of his bed where I could observe the monitors above his head, and discussed the Bible with him. He was also a gospel preacher, and could hold his own on any Bible subject. We talked of life, death, his family, the church, and preaching. His blood pressure had been low, and his pulse high, accompanied by irregular heart rhythm patterns.

Within fifteen minutes, his blood pressure had risen about six points, his pulse dropped ten points, and his monitor indicated a more regular heartbeat pattern. The nurse noticed the change in his condition, and

asked what had happened. I told her we had tried a new medication, but I wanted more evidence. The following night, we followed the same procedure, with almost identical results. This young man wanted to live, be with his family, and take his place once again in the church and in the community as much as anyone. Yet, his courage and faith caused those around him to marvel.

Brethren, it is high time we began to discuss the reality of death. Some of us know that "it is appointed unto man once to die", but it just isn't something you talk about. I don't mean that we should just joke about it, or pass it off lightly, but we need to regard it as an accomplishment—a passage to better things in a better world.

Maybe we need to preach more about death outside the funeral parlors and cemeteries. Maybe we should sing more "funeral" songs in the public assemblies. Maybe we could begin to give more flowers and "bouquets" to the living. Maybe then we could accomplish death with more dignity and purpose; accomplish a victory through Christ.

THE FRUITFUL VINE

Dene Ward
Rt. 3 Box 1559
Lake Butler, FL 32054

In Psalm 128: 3 the woman is called "the fruitful vine." In the Psalm this refers primarily to childbearing, but it can also be true in other areas where the woman acts as a "producer" for her husband.

The most important thing a home-maker produces is exactly what her title says—a home. Unfortunately, home-making has gotten a bad name lately. The woman at home is portrayed as a leech on her husband's arm— always a consumer, and never a producer. In this portrait she sits in her easy chair, a television in front of her, a telephone on one side, romance novels and sales catalogues on the other. On the one day a week she is not reading, gossiping or staring, she is out spending his hard-earned income on more clothes, a shampoo and set, and a basketful of overpriced convenience food. The beds are never made. The clothes may be washed, but one always has to pick through the laundry basket for clean underwear. Dinner varies from Chef-Boy-Ar-Dee to Stouffer's, depending upon the occasion. The children care for themselves, coming and going as they please. She does not know if they have done their home-work or their Bible lessons; she has no idea if they are being taught evolution, situation ethics, or any other atheisticism. If her children were kidnapped, she would not know what they were wearing (she sleeps in, you see) or the schedules they kept.

That is our image, ladies, and some of it is our fault. We have started believing our detractors when they tell us how unfulfilling our lives are. They ask us if we work, and instead of proudly saying, "Of course I work. I'm a home-maker," we hang our heads and mutter an apology about "being just a housewife." Titus 2: 4 calls the woman a "worker at home." We have been so busy emphasizing the "at home" that we have forgotten to emphasize the "worker." No, we do not punch a time-clock, but that makes it more difficult, not less. We have to MAKE ourselves take the time and do the work. We are on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, NO holidays! It takes as many hours to stretch a dollar (gardening, canning, sewing, coupon-clipping, comparison shopping, baking from scratch) as it does to earn one. It takes more hours to read and discuss a Bible story than it does to plop a child in front of a television. It takes extra hours to read up on humanism and monitor a child's school-work for its insidious signs; then it takes good old-fashion nerve to speak up about it. No one gives us a neat, typewritten job description. We, ourselves, must organize dozens of chores involving almost as many different skills. It takes more self-discipline and creativity to be a good home-maker than any other career in the world!

But it is the most rewarding calling if it is handled as God intended. When one truly produces a home, people notice, not just because the housework is done, but

because the atmosphere of the home is carried with the family members. A haven, peaceful, secure—the place you run to not from—that is a home.

The fruitful vine lives to produce. She is never resentful or regretful. When we do as Titus 2: 4 says and learn to love our husbands and children, the homes we produce for them will show it, because all the work we do is for them. The fruitful vine asks nothing in return from those who pick her grapes, but because her fruit is so plenteous and sweet, they shower her with extra care and attention. What kind of fruit are you producing, ladies? Is it scarce? Tough? Undersized? Seedy? Sour? Does it come like a fortune cookie with a little message tucked inside that says, "... and after all I've done for you?"

It takes effort to be a fruitful vine. If you feel unfulfilled at home, maybe it is because you do not put forth enough of it. Let us get to work and change our image to what it used to be. "Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates" (Prov. 31: 31).

WHEN YOU MOVE—Please allow two months for change of address notices. We have a cut-off date for changes each month. *Thanks for your help.*

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, KY40109*

WILLIE OPAL CHAFFIN AT REST

MARSHALL E. PATTON—After a brief vacation in Florida with relatives and friends, Vestal and his beloved, Willie were brought back to their home in Charleston, West Virginia on April 1. On Friday night of that week, just past midnight, Willie quietly and apparently with ease departed this life—April 5, 1986. She is survived by her husband, Otha Vestal Chaffin, a faithful gospel preacher of some fifty years; by two daughters, Mrs. Carolyn Linville of Charleston, WV and Mrs. Kathleen Paschall of Miami, FL; by three sons, Guilford of Hermitage, TN, Ronald of Charleston, WV and Larry of Mineral City, OH; by three sisters, fifteen grandchildren and nine great grandchildren.

Lowell Kibler and this writer conducted the memorial service at the Barlett-Burdett-Cox Funeral Home in Charleston on April 7, 1986 after which her body was laid to rest in the beautiful Tyler Mountain Memorial Gardens near Charleston.

Sister Chaffin possessed those virtues that make one an ideal preacher's wife. She was devoted first to God and then to her family. Some of us know personally something of Vestal's strength of character, his wisdom in resolving problems in harmony with the will of God, and his patient persistence in contending earnestly for the faith (Jude 3). Through both mountain tops of joy and deep valleys of sorrow sister Chaffin has walked faithfully by his side and contributed greatly to his success. Her godliness is reflected not only in her husband and his accomplishments but also in the lives of her children and in the lives of many others. Truly, her ornament was that of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (1 Pet. 3: 4). She adorned herself "in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety" and "with good works (which becometh women professing godliness" (1 Tim. 2: 9, 10). It was both timely and fitting that Prov. 31: 10-31 was read at the beginning of the memorial service.

While the loss is great and the sorrow heavy, we "sorrow not as others which have no hope" (1 Thess. 4: 13). We praise God for this hope which saints have "as an anchor of the soul" (Heb. 6: 19) which enables us through such trying experiences to ever "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3: 14).

We pray for Vestal, the children and their families, all the relatives, and those who mourn the passing of this godly woman. May God's grace sustain them now and through all time that may remain this side of the Jordan of death.

HAROLD SHARP, 7408 W. Markham St., Little Rock, AR 72205— James L. Davis has been an outstanding man in the church of the Lord in southeast Georgia for a long time. He served as an elder at Gordon, Georgia and has preached for the church in Oglethorpe, Georgia. Every preacher who has been in that section of the country knows brother Davis and likely has eaten as his guest. He has always been a hospitable man. He is now in need of financial help. He recently had heart bypass surgery in Atlanta, Georgia. Since returning to his home he has been in the hospital in Albany for a time, then in the hospital in Americus and recently returned for a week's stay in the hospital in Atlanta. As all know, the constantly mounting cost of Doctors and hospital care is extreme. Brother Davis, at this time, owes a bill of \$34,000. It will take a long time to be able to pay this. Maybe some of you who have been in his home, or eaten in his restaurant and received his warm hospitality, would like to send him a gift at this time. I know it would be greatly appreciated. His address is: James L. Davis, Rt. 3, Box 29A, Americus, GA 31709.

FRANK INGRAM, 9960 37th St., N. Pinellas Park, FL 33565—As of July 29 I will be at the above address and will be available for either full or part time work and for meetings. I can be reached through the 14th Ave. congregation in St. Pete.

ARRIGO CORAZZA, Via Alessandro III, 47, 15100 Alessandria Italy—I'd like to inform the American brethren about the work being done in Alessandria. This city is located in north Italy, between Genova, Milan and Turin. It is a quiet city of 100,000 people. Patrizia, Deborah, Simona and myself moved here from Rome after seven years of work with the Via Sannio church there. We moved to help brethren heavily vexed in the past with doctrinal and practical errors. At present the church is composed of 15 members. Due to the influence of SENTIERI DIRITTI, a monthly magazine edited by my father, Alessandro Corazza, the brethren in Alessandria came to ask my brother Stefano (who preaches in Udine), Gianni Berdini (who preaches in Trieste), Rodolfo Berdini (preacher in Aprilia), Roberto Tondelli (preacher in Pomezia) and Valerio Marchi (a preacher from Udine) to visit them to discuss doctrinal issues. These faithful men did excellent work. Thus, the church here repented of their liberal standings of the past and sent out a circular letter to brethren in this country (mailed July 21, 1985) explaining their action. Last September I was invited, along with Valerio Marchi, to preach for them and moved here in December. We thank the brethren who faithfully supported the truth. We ask brethren everywhere to pray for us and for the results of our efforts. The work is slow and difficult, but God will give the increase. We meet on Sundays at 9: 30 A. M. and on Thursdays at 9 P. M. All interested in walking by faith are invited to meet with us.

EFRAIN PEREZ, Casilla 1317, Valparaiso, Chile, South America—I am teaching three preacher training programs invited by local churches in El Progreso, Quilpue and Puente Alto (metro Santiago). I am teaching Harmony of the Gospels, New Testament Epistles, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Evidences of Christianity, the book of Acts, Minor Prophets and Church Music. Am also teaching a course in Homiletics and Hermeneutics. More than 30 persons are taking these classes. There are 15 congregations now in Chile and we need this kind of study to develop men in the congregations for leadership.

PAUL K. WILLIAMS, 18 Fairlie Rd., Eshowe, 3815 South Africa— As a result of a correspondence course study with a 22-year-old man of the college of agriculture near Empangeni, I baptized him in a nearby river the same day. Through the 28-year-old son of the preacher of a congregation about ten miles from Ingwavuma, I was able to visit and preach. About 100 assembled in a rondavel for service Saturday night and about that many Sunday morning. The preacher, brother Mafuleka, is 51 and was converted in 1979 by a black brother in another town where he was working. He and the church are associated with liberal brethren though I am sure they know almost nothing about the division over institutionalism. They gave me a wonderful welcome and invited me back. I am praying for wisdom in dealing with this situation. GENE AND BETTY TOPE will be spending a month in South Africa and will be with us for a series in the Eshowe Town Hall July 2-4.

RAY VOTAW, P. O. Box 801, Springs, Transval, South Africa—About two years ago while in a meeting with the Ndebele native black brethren I met some Pentecostal people who called themselves "Church of Christ." They asked me to preach for them in the Natalspruit township near here. I did, but about this time the riots started and I was not able to go into Natalspruit. But they found a relatively safe meeting place at the recreation hall of the old and historic Simmer and Jack Gold Mine in Germiston—about 35 kms. west of Springs. There were 14 in this little group. Since last report we have baptized the last six of these 14. The other baptisms were scattered through the last two years. We had a successful meeting in Lebo wa with 8 white preachers

and 9 black and coloured speakers. The church in Driekop, Lebowe was greatly edified and 8 were baptized. Although we have been able to establish churches in the national states of Transkei, Ciskei, Venda, Gazankulu, Swaziland, Kwandebele, Lebowe and Kangwane, there has been no church established in the country near the "Mountain Kingdom" of Lesotho. Week before last it was my thrill to baptize two men from that national state. Already they are making plans for me to accompany them to Basotho Qwa-Qwa to preach the gospel to their people. Pray for us. On the political scene, the government is passing measures to reform but not nearly fast enough for the revolutionary factions. Thus the unrest is in no sense abating. But the work of preaching the gospel goes on. I continually have to move very carefully but must at times take selected and calculated risks, and I am not all that brave! •

WILBERT GARINGO ENOSTACION, Estrada Apt., Gov. Ortega St. San Fernando, La Union, Republic of the Philippines 0501—Since last report we have baptized two here and had six restored from institutionalism. In January of this year we were able to rent a new building for services and classes. In the past, we met in our two bedroom apartment and that became too crowded. On April 6 we baptized a former Mormon bishop. Also, we have a class in Sevilla attended by some 20 Mormons. Our class at Wallace Air Station, a US military base here in La Union, has been cancelled due to the present problems with Muslims and with relations between Libya and the USA. Now, U. S. bases in the Philippines are off limits to Filipino visitors. But we have transferred classes to a house located adjacent to the main gate of the base. Attendance is 20-30, mostly US servicemen.

Another newly established congregation of 27 members is located in Luna, La Union. Esmín Villanueva is laboring to help the work to maturity. La Union province is a vast place with 29 towns. Work has been started in several of these towns but I need help with other workers.

RUBEN C. AMADOR, P. O. Box 7274, Houston, Texas 77248—The work goes well at Judway. Attendance runs in the 40's at both services and we have a good many visitors. Jose Soto was with us in a good meeting in May. In April I preached in a meeting in Reynosa (Mexico) with good interest and attendance. Brethren came from several congregations in the Rio Grande Valley and Mexico. One young man was baptized. Also in April I was in a meeting in San Antonio in which four were baptized. Wayne Partain is working hard with this good church

and also in other places such as Central America. Some brethren came from as far away as Monterrey, Mexico and Corpus Christi, Texas. Plans are set for me to spend about a month in Argentina working with Carlos Capelli and others.

PREACHERS NEEDED

GORDON, GEORGIA—The Hardie's Chapel church is looking for a preacher for full-time work beginning the first of July. The church is fully self-supporting and furnishes a three bedroom house. Gordon is located about 20 miles east of Macon. Those interested may write the church at: P. O. Box 409, Gordon, GA 31031. Or you may call Fred LaPlante at 912-628-2854, or Ray Watson at 912-628-2824.

* * * * *

EDITORIAL LEFT-OVERS

I see where the Letoli Christian Family Center of St. Jo, Texas has advertised a "Sounds of Joy Concert" "featuring the finest in Acapella Gospel Singing, Bluegrass, Country and Western and Classical Guitar. " Among those performing will be choruses from seven Texas churches of Christ. Question: What are churches of Christ doing with such things? Where did they get the authority from the word of God? There will also be singing groups from some of the schools and Blue-grass and Country and Western bands. What is even more interesting about this event is that their printed advertising says "Supported by members and congregations of the Church of Christ. " So, this is a church affair. Is it too much to ask for Bible authority? Note also the unscriptural concept of "congregations of the Church of Christ. " While the New Testament uses the term "church" in the universal sense to include all the saved, each local church is autonomous and not interrelated to other congregations in some sort of hierarchy. If it is not truly "of Christ, " I wonder why someone does not write an article about this to publish in the GOSPEL ADVOCATE or FIRM FOUNDATION. Maybe even THE SPIRITUAL SWORD? Our liberal brethren need to understand that the floodgates are wide open and the few feeble voices being heard now and then from a few men with occasional attacks of conscience will not stop this on-rushing torrent.

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	385
RESTORATIONS	108

(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)

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 XXVII

AUGUST, 1986

Number 8

THINK ON THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

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Lutz, FL 33549



WALKING IN LOVE

"Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour" (Ephesians 5: 1, 2).

It is quite obvious from both language and attitude of the masses today that they have no true understanding about the scriptural teaching of the word of God concerning the love of God and the love of one's fellowman. The Bible contains much teaching on the subject of love and the object of man's love. The denominational world and many unlearned brethren are trying to disguise sin under a perverted definition of love.

The American Standard Version makes the thought in this passage even plainer: "Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, even as Christ also loved you, and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odor of a sweet smell."

I should like to briefly call attention to three points in these verses. First, we are instructed to be followers or imitators of God as dear or beloved children. In the verses going before this passage we are instructed in the proper relationship that should exist between brethren. All forms of evil and immoral conduct are forbidden. Instead, we are to imitate God as His children and deal with each other as God deals with us. The last verse of chapter 4 states that God also in Christ forgave you, hence, to imitate or follow God we must have that ready mind to forgive each other. While we are certainly to

follow God in every thing required of us, I understand this verse to particularly relate to our dealings with each other, because of the context. Both before and after these two verses in Ephesians 5, the subject matter deals with human relationship.

God does not tolerate such sins in the lives of His children as are mentioned here. He does not ignore such conduct and allow it to continue without a just condemnation of it. If I follow God as a beloved child, I will have the same attitude toward such sins. If this is not what is meant, what does the language mean?

Second, we are to **walk** in love. "Walk" signifies the manner of life one lives. His manner of life is governed by love. This brings two questions to mind: (1) **What** is one to love? and (2) what does love do?

The New Testament clearly teaches that we are to love God (Matthew 22: 37), Christ (John 14: 21), the truth (2 Thessalonians 2: 10), enemies (Matthew 5: 44), neighbors (James 2: 8), and the brotherhood (1 Peter 2: 17; 3: 8). We are also taught not to love the world (1 John 2: 15), iniquity (1 Corinthians 13: 6) and evil (Romans 12: 9).

Since we are to walk in love, following God as beloved children; and since God loves even sinners (Rom. 5: 8), but hates every evil way, it follows that we must love the truth and the souls of men, but we must hate every evil way. Walking in love would mean that we follow or imitate God in all that we do. We must learn to separate the person from the sin of which he may be guilty. This does not mean that we must deal with him as if he had not sinned. When one is guilty of sin he must bear the consequences of his sin. However, love for the guilty person will lead us to try to persuade him to forsake his sin and obey the truth that he may be made free. We cannot condone the person in sin and follow God because He does not do so.

But what does love do? Most people today have the mistaken idea that love forbids any attempt to expose one's sins or to take any action to correct him. If God's love is our pattern the very opposite is true. The Old Testament is full of God's dealing with men in sin and it established beyond doubt that "every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward"

(Hebrews 2: 2). God punished those who sinned. He does so now; and He does so without partiality or respect of persons. Is this love?

If a young girl fell into a deep hole filled with water and you could only reach the hair on her head, would you hesitate for a second to think not to grab her hair because it might not be an act of love, inasmuch as it would hurt and you would be abusive? If an old man stepped in front of an automobile and your only chance to save him would be to grab him by the collar and pull him backward to the ground, would you hesitate to question this as an act of love? You know it would not be love to allow a little girl to drown because you might hurt her by pulling her hair, or allow an old man to be killed because you did not want to jerk him backward to the ground to save his life. This is not love in any Bible sense of the word.

When one is lost in sin and we do not expose his error and try to get him to repent, we do not love that person as God loves him.

Third, our love is to be the kind that Christ had. We must be willing to die if necessary to uphold the truth that frees men from sin. We cannot expect to be appreciated by all when we stand firmly against sin in any form. But if you love as Christ loved, you will be willing to suffer for the truth.

True scriptural love is described by the Holy Spirit as: "...taketh not account of evil: rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth" (1 Corinthians 13: 5, 6).

The Rader-Polk Debate on "Limited Benevolence"

This is a written debate between Donnie Rader of Louisville, Kentucky and John T. Polk, II of Cornersville, Tennessee. There are 12 articles contained in the debate with extensive use of charts. This is a book which you will want to study in your home and keep as a reference book. The book is well bound in plastic comb binding, so that all the material may be easily referenced.

Proposition 1: "Resolved the Scriptures teach that in benevolence, Churches of Christ may relieve only saints from their treasuries. "

Affirm: Donnie Rader Deny: John T. Polk

Proposition 2: "Resolved the Scriptures teach that the local congregation as directed and overseen by its elders (Phil. 1: 1), is obligated in benevolence to saints and non-saints. "

Affirm: John T. Polk II Deny: Donnie V. Rader

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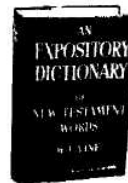
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Editorial

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MEETINGS—LONG OR SHORT?

Churches continue to have gospel meetings. They must think that some good is being done or else they would stop having them. Most congregations in my acquaintance have at least two such efforts a year and some have three or four. Some of these meetings appear to do great good while others leave questions as to the value of what is accomplished. Since 1950, I have preached in 412 such efforts covering 40 states and a few other countries. Since 1975, I have spent nine months each year (March-November) in such work about every other week. Records have been kept as to places, dates, subjects presented, the number of baptisms, restorations and any occurrence which seemed out of the ordinary. I have also noted what the brethren paid me for the work so I might honestly "render to Caesar" what is his. These meetings have been with congregations of varying sizes and circumstances. I have preached under tents, in yards, in courthouses, in renovated dwelling houses, in store-front buildings, in Grange and Legion Halls, Libraries and in meeting houses owned by the brethren ranging from frame structures in rural areas to beautifully furnished houses in major cities. The brethren who have made up these churches have spanned the economic and educational spectrum, though the greater bulk have been brethren of only modest attainments educationally and among the laboring folk economically.

There have been meetings which were poorly attended. Others have seen the houses packed and with extra chairs to seat the overflow. Many meetings close with no "responses" down the aisle. Others have seen from one to 40 respond in a single week or ten days. Unusually encouraging meetings have taken place at the most unexpected locations. A good many times, even in meetings where there are "no responses" that come down the aisle, there is a gathering of strength and a developing enthusiasm which seems to reach a crescendo the last two or three days. There have been times when it appeared that the brethren had a meeting because it was scheduled and there seemed to be an attitude of enduring it until it could end.

Some churches go to great lengths to prepare for such an endeavor. The physical premises are made to sparkle. Members have made plans to minimize other activities and give as much attention to the meeting as possible. The Southside lectures in Pasadena, Texas in

June found over half the members there taking vacation time that week so they could attend all of the meeting—morning and night. They heard 16 sermons and participated in over 3 hours of hymn singing in four days. Some brethren seem to know how to get the most out of advertising. Then there are places where it appears they would rather keep it a secret that a meeting is going on. When grass is knee deep around the building, the place needs painting, cleaning, and when nobody is even there to open the door until five minutes before starting time, then you know the work is not very important to the people there and, should visitors come, they will get that same impression and may never come again.

How Long Should a Meeting Last?

Meetings are sometimes designed to meet different needs. Some churches have had good success with weekend meetings in which a theme was chosen and developed to meet a special need of the congregation. Sometimes a longer meeting might serve the same purpose. When I first began to preach in meetings, we still had two weeks meetings now and then. Then the average dropped to ten days. Then to eight days. For a long time most of the meetings started on Monday night and ended on the following Sunday night. In the last few years more and more churches have opted for a Sunday through Friday effort. A variety of reasons have been given for this change. Some of the preachers much prefer it. Some of the congregations like it better. It avoids having to get people out on Saturday night. It is one day shorter than the former seven day meeting. The most frequent explanation I have heard is that by starting on Sunday, if the preacher can do a pretty good job, the appetites of members may be sufficiently whetted to keep them coming through Friday night. May I suggest that if that is what it is all about, then something is wrong, badly wrong. Do the members lack such spirituality that they have to be manipulated into attendance? Or is the preacher to be viewed as a performer who opens with rave reviews from his audience? If so, we are in trouble.

All brethren do not view the matter from the same vantage point, but after talking with a number of brethren over the last few years, several have suggested that I write something of my view for whatever good it will do. It has been my opinion for sometime now that brethren would be well advised to consider longer meetings again and not shorter ones. I have never preached in a two weeks meeting that some did not obey the gospel. When they got even shorter, I have never preached in a ten day meeting that some did not obey the gospel. A seven day meeting (Monday through Sunday) seldom closes without someone obeying the Lord. But I seldom see anyone respond in a weekend or Sunday through Friday meeting. Other preachers who do a great deal of meeting work have told me the same thing.

I hold my share of Sunday through Friday meetings, but I always prefer to start Monday night and close Sunday night, if we cannot go longer. When you start on Sunday morning, most of the time you speak to

combined youth and adult classes at a Bible study period. You nearly always start with some sort of motivational type material which would have common interest. The sermon at the morning worship usually follows the same plan. Then Sunday night, or possibly Monday night, you have to get back to basic material to lay groundwork for leading people to the Lord. By then, you are pushed for time to lay groundwork upon which faith rests, develop conviction and then you are short-changed in time for motivational type material at the end of the meeting to move people to do what they have learned to be right and necessary. It takes time to establish that. Usually, on Monday nights we can begin with an overview of scripture, or something about the proper division of the word of God, followed by some approach to the issue of authority, Christ, the church, conversion, refuting of local denominational error and related subjects. These are basic. By Friday night we can move into trying to motivate people to act while building on the foundation already laid. You have Friday night, Saturday night, and three times on Sunday—five sermons in just a few hours. The effect is often cumulative. People of religious background are going to be somewhere else on Sunday. You won't have them to reach, usually, until Monday night. But if their interest is gained and they continue to come, it is very hard for an honest person to attend a whole gospel meeting without learning the will of God and feeling the pressure of truth to do something about it. Don't tell me it does not work that way. I have seen it work that way for 36 years in gospel meetings. I repeat, I seldom ever see a Monday through Sunday meeting end without someone obeying the gospel, but I seldom ever see anyone obey the gospel in a Sunday through Friday meeting. Could it be that we have inverted the order of what it takes to reach people? We have to teach first and then motivate them to come. Jesus said "No man can come to me, except the Father which sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (Jno. 6: 44-45).

Brethren, there must be enough time for foundational truth to be taught and then it must soak in. Perhaps we would do well to take another look at the content of meeting sermons. While each lesson should stand on its own, should there not be some sense of motion from the lesser to the greater in terms of building strength of faith and conviction?

I shall continue to try to fit my schedule to meet the requirements of the brethren who are good enough to invite me to come. I believe that gospel preaching does good. If I did not, I would never preach again. I have lived long enough to see lives completely turned around by the influence of truth in those lives. As long as brethren call for me to preach, or will support me to go to a place to preach just because someone ought to go and try, or, even if I must go at my own charges, then just that long I intend to preach the gospel until my race is run and the victory is won. If gospel meetings are worth having, and they are, then we ought to keep

working to make them better. I would be glad to hear from others about this. "Preach the word."

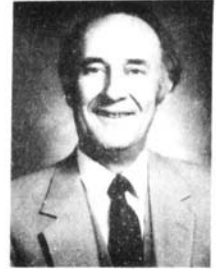
WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

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BIBLE CLASSES AND THE ASSEMBLY

QUESTION: *Several passages in the New Testament state the church came TOGETHER In the assembly for worship and edification (Acts 10: 7; 1 Cor. 11: 17, 18, 20, 33; 1 Cor. 14: 23, 26). Hebrews 10: 25 says, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together...." My question is: Since these verses show the church coming together into one place, do they prohibit Bible classes or dividing into groups for Bible study?*

ANSWER: No, they do not prohibit dividing into groups for Bible study. Because the church came together into one place for certain activities does not mean it must come together into one place or an assembly for all activities. Older women are given the responsibility of teaching the younger women (Tit. 2: 3-5), but they cannot do this in the assembly of the church wherein men are present (1 Tim. 2: 11-12). There would have to be a separate arrangement for the ladies.

Paul called the elders of the church at Ephesus together at Miletus and instructed them (Acts 20: 17-38). If the elders can have a special study, so may the children, teenagers, young married people and the older adults. To follow the reasoning of some brethren, Paul would have had to have called the whole Ephesian church together and taught the elders in the presence of the church. Such convoluted logic would necessitate the whole church assembling into one place for teachers' training studies, new converts' class, prospective preachers' training, elders' meetings, song leaders' training and any other needed program of study and training in the church. The entire concept is on the very surface a *reductio ad absurdum*, a Latin phrase meaning, "disproof of a proposition by showing an absurdity to which it leads when carried to its logical conclusion.

How would a congregation conduct a radio program unless it broadcasted the service when the church was assembled? How could a church have home Bible studies? These are classes! If a church may have such studies in the home, it can have such studies in the meeting-house on Sunday morning and Wednesday night. These organized (systematically arranged) studies do not take the place of the whole church assembling together for worship. Certainly, the church must come together in an assembly, but this does not disallow or prohibit private and limited meetings at other times.

Bible classes, like on Sunday morning, and public assemblies of the church into one place for worship are two different things. To impose on Bible classes what God says about the public assemblies is a miss-fire, completely. Such brethren are not comparing apples with apples. This is like saying that Noah had to have tools of gopher wood because God told him to build the ark out of gopher wood.

The Bible states the church is to teach (1 Tim. 3: 15; Mt. 28: 19; Eph. 4: 11-12). It is at liberty to choose any lawful expediency or arrangement it desires that edifies and builds up. Obviously, separating the classes of people into homogeneous groups has proven advantageous over the years. To try to teach children and adults all in one group is an impossibility. (Maybe I should say, "Trying to teach is not an impossibility; doing it is.") If you teach the adults on their level, the children learn nothing because they cannot understand. If you teach the children, the adults learn nothing because they already know it, and have for years.

Actually,, God has already made the class division for us and we ought to recognize it. We read in the Bible of the babes and the full-grown (Heb. 5: 13-14), the weak and the strong (Rom. 14; 1 Cor. 8), the men and women, fathers, mothers and children, and the young and the old. These different classes at times have different needs and the teaching should be adapted to their special needs, this can be expeditiously done through various group studies.

Our secular school system has recognized the advantage of segregating classes of people and has grouped them together by age and levels of learning. What a mess our educators would make of things if they would lump them together in one big assembly-hall and try to teach them all at once. We parents would yell and scream in opposition until changes came about. People have more sense toward that sort of thing than they do religion.

I go into homes during gospel meetings for dinner where there are 3 or 4 children of different ages. One little toddler nurses a bottle, but I have noticed the others do not get a bottle. They get meat and vegetables. Wonder why all the children were not put around the table and given a bottle? For that matter, why did not all of us just have a bottle? The answer is obvious! Yet, the "no-separate-class" brethren have everybody to line up together in the assembly for the "spiritual bottle, " or else they try to feed everybody "meat. " It will not work at home and it will not work in the church.

These brethren who oppose group arrangements to teach the Bible are reactionaries and factionalists who have never built great churches for the Lord, but have met in minuscule buildings through the years because their approach is counter-productive. Extremism destroys the joy of Christian living and paralyzes the church of the vibrancy and vitality that must characterize the New Testament church. The Lords says to "go, teach, baptize and teach. " Let's use, therefore, every scriptural means at our disposal to execute this Great Commission.

THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH..... ARE RESERVED FOR FIRE!

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The Apostle Peter's last Epistle, reminds mankind of the world that once was, and then foretells the destiny of the world that is! Notice please:

" __ by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. But the heavens and the earth which now exist are kept in store by the same word, reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (2 Peter 3: 5-7).

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat. Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells" (2 Peter 3: 10-13). By inspiration, the Apostle Peter informs us that the heavens and the earth we now know, will be burned up; intense heat will be the cause; the heavens will pass away with a great noise. Some scientists have arrived at a "big bang" theory for the creation of God's universe. But, here, the Bible tells us of a "big bang" that will destroy the heavens that are at least in proximity to the earth. Peter further admonished his readers that in view of this ultimate end of the heavens and the earth, what kind of people should we be in thought, disposition and conduct?

The Jews' First, Second and Third Heavens!

The ancient Jews, in their thinking, divided the 'heavens' into three parts: (1) The 'upper' heaven, which was the abode of God and His angels. (2) The 'firmament' wherein the sun, moon and stars are stationed. And (3) The atmosphere immediately surrounding the earth, where the clouds form and where the birds fly.

The writer of the Psalms, referred several times to the birds or fowls of heaven (Psalms 79: 2; 104: 12). This obviously refers to the atmosphere adjacent to the earth's surface.

The Psalmist also refers to the 'firmament' which displays the sun, moon and stars. Such as Psalms 19: 1-"... the firmament shows His handiwork... " Daniel writes of the "... brightness of the firmament... "

(12: 3). This deals with the 'heaven' above the birds and clouds, but below the abode of God.

Finally, the 'third heaven' is referred to by the Apostle Paul:

"I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter" (2 Cor. 12: 2-4).

Paul indicates that a revelation was given him in this instance. This could only have emanated from the heaven, which is God's dwelling place.

The heaven(s) that will pass away with a great noise, would not include the abode of God Himself, but the atmosphere near the earth, and possibly the heavenly bodies in the firmament.

Paul Writes of Christ's Coming In Flaming Fire!

"... you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ....." (2 Thess. 1: 7-8).

Here, the Apostle Paul provides additional evidence of the termination of the earth as we know it, at Christ's coming.

The Apostle John Writes of A New Heaven and New Earth!

"... And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (Rev. 21: 1-2). The foregoing passages of Scripture, list Peter, Paul and John, all testifying to the termination, the ending of the earth... this first earth.

Summary

If you are a person who thinks the present earth will continue to exist after Christ's coming, just notice how many plain Scripture statements you are ignoring:

1. Heavens and earth reserved for fire! (Peter).
2. This holocaust will come unexpectedly, as a thief. (Peter).
3. Heaven will pass away with a great noise. (Peter).
4. The elements will melt with fervent (intense) heat. (Peter).
5. The earth and the works in it will be burned. (Peter).
6. All these things will be dissolved. (Peter).
7. Heavens will be dissolved, being on fire. (Peter).
8. Elements will melt with fervent heat. (Peter).
9. We, according to His promise, look for new heavens and new earth. (Peter).
10. The Lord Jesus from heaven, in flaming fire, taking vengeance upon those who do not obey the gospel. (Does your religious persuasion teach you to obey the gospel?) (Paul).
11. John prophesies about seeing a new heaven and

new earth.

12. The first heaven and the first earth had passed away. (John).

13. There was no more sea. (John).

14. The new Jerusalem, the holy city, coming down from God out of heaven. (John).

Conclusion

The Jehovah's Witness doctrine that the present earth shall continue forever, is just plain false.... it's wrong! You must either accept the truth of God's Word, and therefore reject the J-W falsehood, OR, reject the Bible in order to believe the J-W doctrine.

Restoration Footnotes

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GOOD RELIGIOUS LITERATURE

Not many people outside of Franklin County, Alabama, ever heard of L. N. Sparks. There are probably few there now, other than descendants, who remember that he once served the Lord in that region. We recall him only because he wrote to F. B. Srygley when both men, friends for half a century, were nearing the end of life. His letter was not intended for publication, but Srygley thought it said some things that should be made public.

Sparks lived in a day of large families and his clan was no exception. Srygley said, "Brother Sparks reared a family—not one child and a poodle dog, but a real family in size. " He had eleven children, all of whom had obeyed the gospel. Four of his five sons-in-law were not Christians when they entered the family, but they also obeyed the gospel. He said he had "forty-five or fifty grandchildren, " all but two of whom had become Christians. Srygley was "a little amused that the brother has lost count of the exact number of grandchildren, but he knows exactly how many have not obeyed the gospel. " His emphasis was in the right place.

Red Bay was Sparks' home at the time, but earlier in life he lived near Rock Creek, where Srygley held gospel meetings in the latter part of the nineteenth century. "It used to be a great pleasure to me, " Srygley wrote, "to go back to old Rock Creek Church, the church of my childhood, and see Brother and Sister Sparks with six or eight children come trooping into church. The preacher would know that father and mother with every child that was old enough would give good attention to the sermon, and the little ones would behave themselves, because they were taught to do so. "

In his letter, Sparks said, "If I have ever done any

good, it was by scattering good books and tracts, and the Gospel Advocate was a lot of help to me and my family." (That was back when the Advocate was a citadel for strength for the old paths.) He attributed the conversion of his sons-in-law to his furnishing them with good literature. He knew that papers, tracts, and books cannot replace the Scriptures, but he also knew that God wants the gospel preached and that the printed page can do it effectively, even reaching places where the spoken word may not go. It did then and it does now.

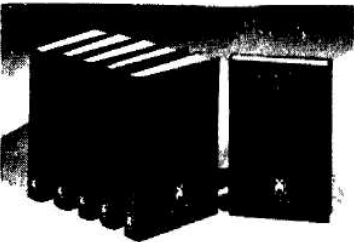
The fact that you are reading Searching the Scriptures testifies to somebody's continued interest in good literature. I know the fear some have of religious papers, and I share it to some extent. Too many have abused the freedom to edit and publish. But this paper has been proved by the critical times through which it has passed. It stands today as a voice of soundness without radicalism, moderation without compromise, and conviction without rancor. It rides no hobby, seeks no financial gain, and glorifies no man.

I have never edited a religious journal, have no desire to, and sometimes wonder why anyone else does. But I appreciate men like the editor of this paper who are willing to make the personal sacrifices and shoulder the primary burdens necessary to keep publishing through the years. I have profited immeasurably by reading its pages and many others have. That's why I try to make sure my children have it in their homes and to encourage others to take and read it. I can share this good work by sending it to a son-in-law, or some other relative or friend.

You can do this, too, and years from now you may be able to look back from the twilight time of life and, like L. N. Sparks, rejoice to see blessings that have come to others because you cared enough to "scatter" some good religious literature along the way.

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SIXTEEN QUESTIONS FOR THE PREMILLENNIALIST

It takes six syllables and sixteen letters to spell or pronounce the term "Premillennialism." That is a general characteristic of most "isms" which are produced by the doctrines of men—completely contrary to "the simplicity that is in Christ" (2 Cor. 11: 3). By contrast, the seven-point plan for unity given by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4: 4-6), contains thirty-three words of one syllable, and eight words of two syllables, for a total of forty-one words.

When the Israelites rebelled against God, they were penalized a year for every day that it took them to spy out the land, for a total of forty years (Num. 14: 34). At the least, the premillennialist should have to answer a question for each letter it takes to spell the term. If the burden is too great, renounce the error of that system and embrace the truth as it is in Christ.

1. What did Philip preach "concerning the kingdom of God," and into what were the Samaritans baptized (Acts 8: 12)?
2. Can we be "born again" (Jno. 3: 5; 1 Pet. 1: 23)?
3. Can we be translated "into the kingdom" (Col. 1: 13)?
4. Can we serve God acceptably (Heb. 12: 28)?
5. Can we be brothers with John (Rev. 1: 9)?
6. Did Jesus break his promise to the disciples (Mt. 16: 19; Mk. 9: 1)?
7. Can we have righteousness, peace, etc. (Rom. 14: 17)?
8. If political events forced God to change his plans once concerning the kingdom, could it happen twice? Three times?
9. Are the clouds and the kingdom of Dan. 7: 13, 14 the same as those of Acts 1: 9; 2: 30-36?
10. Are the parables of the kingdom worthless, and will we need a new set of parables for Christ's second coming? (Actually two questions in one; consider it a "bonus" question)
11. Should we observe the Lord's supper (Mt. 26: 29)?
12. Could Paul demonstrate the "power" of the kingdom (1 Cor. 4: 20; 1 Thes. 1: 5)?
13. Is it possible to have "regeneration" now (Mt. 19: 28; Lk. 22: 29, 30; Titus 3: 5)?
14. Did Christ "cast out devils by the Spirit of God" (Mt. 12: 28, 29)?

15. If Christ is going to reign a literal 1000 years when he returns, from whence cometh the third, sixth, and eleventh-hour laborers? (By my calculations, an "hour" would be about eighty-three and one-third years, the length of time spent in the kingdom by the eleventh-hour workers)

16. If the premillennialist is not "shutting up the kingdom of heaven against men" (Mt. 23: 13), then who is doing it today?

Instead of allowing the premillennialist to act like an expert at interpreting the symbolic language of Rev. 20, we need to keep him busy answering these simple questions, based on plain, non-figurative language. And, there are many other questions besides these which need to be answered before the Lord comes to deliver up the kingdom (1 Cor. 15: 24).

MICAHIAH'S GOOD ATTITUDE

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When we study Bible characters, we notice various attitudes—some good and some bad. The prophet Micaiah is an example of a good attitude displayed by a servant of God. He lived and prophesied during the time of the weak and wicked king Ahab.

On one occasion when Ahab was trying to persuade Jehoshaphat to go with him into battle against the Syrians to take Ramoth in Gilead, Jehoshaphat asked Ahab to first inquire of the Lord, Ahab then gathered about 400 of his prophets together and inquired of them concerning the matter. All of the prophets said, "Go up, for the Lord will give it unto the hand of the king" (1 Kings 22: 6). It seems that the leader of these false prophets was one by the name of Zedekiah, and the rest were "yes-men", who went along in order to please the king, knowing Ahab's inclination to engage in the battle anyway (vs. 11, 12). But Jehoshaphat didn't buy what he saw and heard and asked if there was not a prophet of the Lord there. Ahab responded: "There is yet one man by whom we may inquire of the Lord, but I hate him, because he does not prophesy good concerning me, but evil" (v. 8).

When people do not want to hear unpleasant truth, they dislike the man who might give them such. This is not an isolated case nor a minority principle. Isaiah spoke of those who did not want to hear God's truth. "That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord: Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy

deceits" (Isa. 30: 9-10). Jeremiah also spoke of false prophets and greed and then added, "and my people love to have it so" (Jer. 5: 31). And remember Amos? "They hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly" (Amos 5: 10). This very attitude is seen when Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, told king Jeroboam that Amos "hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel: the land is not able to bear all his words" (Amos 7: 10). Then the wicked Amaziah said to the prophet Amos: "O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there: but prophesy not again anymore at Bethel: for it is the king's chapel, and it is the king's court" (Amos 7: 12-13). (I suppose the cry today would be "don't mix religion with politics"). And in the New Testament, the Holy Spirit, through Paul, said: "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Tim. 4: 3-4).

Although he hated Micaiah, Ahab finally sent a messenger to bring him before the two kings. When the messenger arrived, he said to Micaiah: "Behold now, the words of the prophets are uniformly favorable to the king. Please let your word be like the word of one of them, and speak favorably" (1 Kings 5: 13). In other words, "Now Micaiah, don't make waves by rocking the boat. Just go along and everything will be okay." Micaiah's response was: "As the Lord lives, what the Lord says to me, that I will speak" (verse 14). Those who aspire to preach the Word of God should let these words sink deeply into their hearts and make it their clarion call.

Dear reader, it would have been much easier to have gone along with the four-hundred lying, deceiving prophets in order to receive the approbation and good pleasure of the king, but, in spite of the pressure brought upon him, Micaiah spoke what the Lord said to him. He disagreed with those four-hundred men and exposed their lie. For his plainness of speech and faith-fullness to God Ahab commanded him to be thrown in prison and fed with the bread and water of affliction (verse 27). He certainly was not the last to be persecuted for speaking the truth. (Consider the Lord and his apostles, and many faithful Christians since).

Today, those who are faithful to God will have this same attitude and will stand firmly for the truth and will proclaim it regardless of the opposition and persecution. When one speaks the truth there is no room for compromise with error. The faithful man of God will expose the lies of the teachers of errors whether they be denominational preachers or erring brethren. He will not be a seeker of the popularity of the masses nor of those who are in high places among men. He will not "just go along" with error, and he will "rock the boat" and "make waves" if such is necessary. His desire will be to please the Lord by speaking His truth. His sentiments are voiced by the apostle Paul when he said: "For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please

men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ" (Gal. 1: 10). So, with this in mind, my preacher friend: "preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4: 2).

Faithful Christians will appreciate such a servant of the Lord and will encourage and support him. They will also have the same attitude of great love and respect for the Word of the Lord. To such people the Bible is indeed the Word of God and they seek to conduct themselves "worthy of the gospel of Christ'.... "standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" (Phil. 1: 27).

What is your attitude toward the truth and those who will faithfully proclaim it?

INDIVIDUALISM VS. THE LOCAL CHURCH Part Two

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What the Bible Teaches

In Matthew 18: 15-17, Jesus instructs, "And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. But if he does not listen to you, take one or two with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed. And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer. "

This passage teaches very clearly that there are things God wants individuals to do alone; things He wants Christians to do together, each acting in his/her own capacity; and things which He wants Christians to do together, acting as a collective. When I notice a Christian living in sin and make an attempt to restore him, this is individual action. If he refuses to repent, Jesus instructs me to take two or more with me. Together, we will try to restore our fallen brother. This is concurrent action. The word "concurrent" means, "occurring at the same time. "1 Concurrent action takes place when two or more work together toward the same end, each acting in his/her own capacity. If my brother still continues in sin, Jesus instructs me to "tell it to the church. " Here is something that is more than an individual acting alone, or several individuals acting concurrently; it is church, or collective action. The word "collective" means, "formed by collecting; gathered into a whole. " Collective action takes place when two or more work toward the same end by acting as one.

In speaking of collective action, Jesus used the word "church. " This word comes from the Greek word "ekklesia, " which means "a calling out. "1 The Bible uses the

term in two primary ways: (1) to designate all of God's people (Ephesians 2: 12-23—we sometimes call this the "universal church"); and, (2) to designate God's people in a given area who have pooled their resources under a common oversight for the purpose of doing the things God has commanded them to do together (1 Corinthians 1: 1, 2—we sometimes call this the "local church"). The local church is the only organization God has authorized Christians to form for the purpose of doing things which He has commanded Christians to do together.

There are three ways in which a local church may act as a collective.

1. A local church acts as a collective when it expends funds which are under the oversight of the church in order to accomplish duties of the church (1 Timothy 5: 16 establishes that churches have duties; Acts 4: 33:4).

2. A local church acts as a collective when it acts through appointed representatives (Acts 6: 1-6).

3. A local church acts as a collective when the entire group makes a decision (hence, the church chooses its servants, Acts 6: 1-6; its elders, 1 Timothy 3: 1-7; and decides whom it will discipline, 1 Corinthians 5: 1-5).

The following chart illustrates some activities in which local churches engage, and draws a distinction between the actions which are the responsibility of each saint to do with other saints, and which therefore constitute individual and/or concurrent action; and those which are the church's as a unit, and which therefore constitute collective action.

Saint with Saint	Saints Acting as One
Assemble	Provide Place, Time
Take Lord's Supper	Provide Elements
Receive Apostles	Provide Teacher,
Teaching	Place, Time
Pray	Provide Place, Time
Sing	Provide Place, Time,
	Book, Leader, etc.

What the Individualist Teaches

(1) In his debate with brother Smith, brother Holt affirmed the following proposition:

The scriptures teach that the local ecclesia of Christ has reference to nothing more than disciples or saints in a given area or context, who may act individually and/or together with others in carrying out the Lord's will; and there is no requirement (pattern) from God that they form or constitute themselves into an organic institutional body corporate (functional unit) for doing any work ordained by God.

There are two problems with this proposition. First, it teaches that the church is nothing more than disciples or saints who may act individually and/or together (concurrently). Its author denies that a church may act as a body corporate. But in Matthew 18 we saw (1) individ-

ual action, (2) concurrent action, and (3) collective action. The third type of action, collective action, involves the church acting as a body corporate. The term "body corporate" simply means, "a society having the capacity of transacting business as an individual." 1 Timothy 5: 16 proves conclusively that a church may act as a body corporate: "If any woman who is a believer has dependent widows, let her assist them, and let not the church be burdened, so that it may assist those who are widows indeed." When this passage speaks of the church it is not speaking of an individual, nor is it speaking of several Christians acting concurrently, for then Paul would have had to say, "and let not the church be burdened so that they may assist those who are widows indeed"; it is speaking of the church acting as a unit to fulfill a responsibility which it has.

The second problem with brother Holt's proposition is that it makes the local church an optional arrangement. Note that it says there is "no requirement from God" for any unit action on the part of saints. In light of passages like Acts 4: 33-37; 6: 1-6; 14: 23; 1 Corinthians 16: 1, 2; 2 Corinthians 8, 9; and many others, such a position is shown to be absurd.

(2) The basic argument used by the Individualist to establish that a church is not a body corporate, states:

1. Without judgment day accountability, there is no responsibility.
2. Churches will not be judged as corporate bodies.
3. Therefore, churches have not been assigned any responsibility.

The argument is shown to be preposterous by simply inserting the word "government" where it uses the word "church." It is true that governments will not be judged as corporate bodies, but is it true that they have not been assigned any responsibilities? Romans 13 teaches that they have, and 1 Timothy 5: 16 (along with many other passages) establishes that churches have been assigned responsibilities as well.

We will be judged as individuals. In that judgment we will have to give account for our activities as members of society (Luke 10: 25-37), members of the government (Romans 13: 1-5), members in the family (Ephesians 6: 1-6), and yes, as members of a local church (1 Corinthians 3: 16, 17).

(3) During the debate, brother Holt affirmed several times, "the terms 'local church' and 'universal church' do not appear in the Bible." This is true, but do these ideas appear there? Words represent ideas. If an idea is in the Bible, and by the use of a term we mean nothing more than the Bible idea it represents, then we are at perfect liberty to use it.

(4) Brother Holt also argued that we never read of a plurality of churches in a single city. He is simply mistaken about this. In Romans 16: 3-5, the church at Rome is told to greet the church in Priscilla's and Aquila's house. Here is one church in Rome (the one Paul was writing to), being instructed to greet another (the one which met in Priscilla's and Aquila's house). We know Priscilla and Aquila lived in Rome, because Acts 18: 2 tells us that at one point they had to leave "because

Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome." (5) Finally, the Individualist affirms that if a body corporate exists (a local church), individual duty is done away with. Here is where they spend most of their time. It is an argument drawn from abuses, and, in light of Matthew 18: 15-17, it is evidently not so. Here is an example of how brother Holt uses this argument to advance the Individualist's position:

In the debate I presented a chart designed to show what happens when an individual "joins" "the local church" institution. It covers the following points.

1. He/she loses—gives up—personal/individual responsibility as far as anything that "the local church" does. Remember, you are "to serve under the control of the formal organization." Your will, voice, or vote mean nothing. It is the will of The Eldership that rules. They are the official rulers with "divine authority" to make all the final decisions for the corporate body. You decide nothing! Your role is to attend the corporate meetings at the appointed times, at the appointed place, to engage in the appointed activities arranged for you. You have no voice—no vote—in anything.⁵

Beside the fact that several of the statements made here are untrue, this charge is a slap in the face of most Christians. As Paul says in 2 Corinthians 11: 3, 20, "But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ... For you bear with anyone if he enslaves you, if he devours you, if he takes advantage of you, if he exalts himself, if he hits you in the face" (emphasis mine, jhj). Chapter 2

¹ New World Dictionary, Simon and Schuster, 1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020.

² Holman's Exhaustive Concordance of the New American Standard Version, Holman Bible Publishers, Nashville, TN.

³ The Examiner, page 27.

⁴ The Examiner, page 25.

⁵ The Examiner, page 29.

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MINISTERING TO THE TERMINALLY ILL

Richard W. Terry
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How do you talk to someone who has an irreversible illness? What do you say to them, what do you say to their family? These were the questions that I had to face in 1976 when we learned that my wife's father had cancer. Up until that time I had been acquainted with numerous people who were terminally ill and had attempted to speak words of comfort to others who had lost their loved ones, but now it was different. It was my family that was being touched by this cruel twist of fate and I felt so helpless and ill prepared. In a few short months my father-in-law was gone and we moved our family south to Alabama to be with my wife's mother. In the months that were to follow I would leave located work and enter nursing school where I was destined to learn some of the most important lessons of my life about dealing with people with irreversible illnesses as well as dealing with the families of those with terminal illnesses. Over the past few years I have thought a great deal about sharing my insights with others and would like to do so at this time.

Elizabeth Kubler Ross in her poignant book "On Death and Dying" points out that the terminally ill patient and in some cases their families as well, will go through 6 stages; denial and isolation, bargaining, depression, acceptance and peace, and decathesis. Each of these stages play a significant role in the final days of the terminally ill and their families. It is important, if we are to provide the support and comfort to them, that we familiarize ourselves with these terms and how to react to the patient and their family as they progress through these stages.

It is not uncommon for patients, who have been told that they have a terminal illness, to deny that the disorder even exists. Nor is it uncommon for them to want to visit several physicians, hoping against hope that they will tell them that the other physician was wrong. Eventually, after numerous visits to various physicians the truth begins to settle in and the individual may display anger and rage. "Why me?" seems to be one of the most common questions that they ask. Their best interest, however, is not served by such statements as "It's the Lord's will..." or "Things will get better...". The fact of the matter is that things usually don't get better, but rather worse and building up false hopes is not in their best interest. It has been my observation that the best comments that one can make in such circumstances would be simply to sit with them, without raising any false hopes and to provide them with comfort from God's word, prayer and your ever present concern.

Sometimes the denial process will take the form of fantasizing of some "miracle cure" that will be available any day. I have observed that often the realization of the inevitable causes some to attempt to bargain with God, "If you'll just let me see my son marry..." or "If I can only live to see my grandchild...", of course we cannot encourage such behavior, but we must nonetheless be aware that this is a natural consequence of the reality that one's time is limited.

It is my personal belief that if individuals are willing to talk about their condition that we should be open and not attempt to hide the truth from them. After all it is their body and their life and they have a right to know what is going on. It is important for the patients that they be able, if they choose to do so, to talk openly about their fears, their apprehensions, their hopes, etc. regarding death. You would be surprised how many people steer away from any conversations with their loved ones about death, for fear of upsetting the terminally ill patient. If only they had taken the time to talk with their loved one they might have discovered that the terminally ill patient could have provided them with a sense of comfort they might not otherwise know.

It is not uncommon for the irreversibly ill to fall victim to periods of depression. By this time they have come to the full realization that they are going to die and yet there is still the uncertainty as to when. The outgrowth of this uncertainty is depression. During these periods sitting with the patient and their family means a great deal, even if you say nothing.

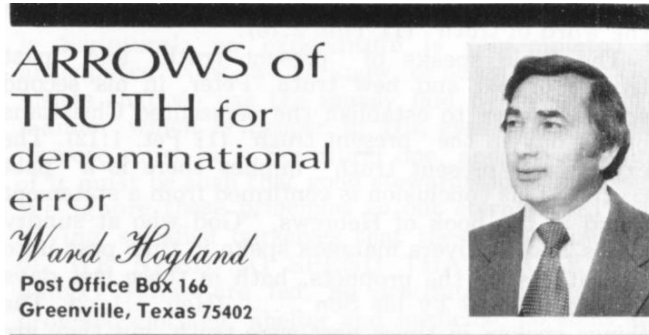
Eventually patients will come to accept the inevitable and if they are Christians will be enveloped with a sense of peace and acceptance. It is then that we can provide the much needed moral and spiritual support that they need. Again, if they want to talk about dying, don't shrink away, it's important to them to talk about it as they search for peace of mind, as they prepare for the journey beyond.

Death, for the Christians, is a bittersweet experience. While we know that God has prepared a most beautiful place for us beyond this veil of tears, we are nonetheless saddened by the thought of leaving behind those who are dearest and most precious to us. I have observed that the eminent death of a loved one often causes greater pain for the family. By this time the patient has come to accept the fact that he or she will soon die, but the family on the other hand has not yet learned to accept the inevitable. Here again, it is important for us to assist them through prayer and reading of God's message and through quiet meditation.

Toward the end it is not uncommon for the terminally ill patient to become totally withdrawn. They will spend much time alone, meditating, at this point communication becomes difficult as they attempt to mentally prepare themselves for the journey beyond. It is important that we simply are there to let them know that they are important to us. If the patient is comatose we must not equate comatose with dead. While their senses may be failing and the end appears near we need to understand that the last sense to go is hearing. Even though they cannot communicate with us they are aware of every-

thing we say. So as we talk with family while visiting in the room of a comatose patient be aware and speak words of love and encouragement and comfort both to the patient and to the family.

I hope that I have helped someone with this information, to be a better servant in ministering to the needs of the terminally ill.



"THE LORD REWARD HIM"

When Paul wrote his final letter to Timothy, he talked about an evil man by the name of Alexander. He said, "Alexander, the coppersmith, did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his own works" (2 Tim. 4: 14). Obviously, Paul meant the Lord would take care of Alexander on the great day of judgement. However, sometimes people reap some of their reward here on earth. Haman is a case in point. He built his gallows fifty cubits high on which he hoped to hang Mordecai but because of his plebeian attitude was hung himself. We use all kinds of cliches to express this phenomenon such as boomerang or the "the chickens have come home to roost", etc.

Some forty years ago certain brethren opposed the new sponsoring church concept and the benevolent organizations which were dipping their hands deep into the church treasuries. The brethren who were trying to support these new innovations decided to brand their opponents with the name "anti". Everyone understood this appellation was not given as a descriptive term but as a stigmatization. That is, to brand as disgraceful or ignominious. One does not have to be astute to know that the antithesis of liberal is not anti but conservative. Any dictionary would tell one that the name anti simply means against. Since everyone is "against" something, we knew the name was given in derision.

If these liberal brethren had wanted to describe our opposition to their encroachments, they could have called us conservatives. However, they chose to use an insidious type of rhetoric and came up with the name anti. Would you believe that after forty years their chickens have come home to roost? I picked up a publication called *The Spiritual Sword* and ran across an article titled "The new anti-ism." Well, to my surprise Garland Elkins, the writer, freely admitted they had been branded with the name anti! It goes without saying he did not like it. On page 19 of the October issue of the paper he said, "My reply to all such charges is the

same as Paul's when some of the enemies of the Lord accused him of being a member of a sect. His reply was 'neither can they prove to thee the things whereof they now accuse me' (Acts 24: 13). "I wonder why brother Elkins has gotten so worked up about being called an anti? He has dished it out for decades. Does he not know that the reason he had been called anti is that he is opposing the Joplin summit meetings and instrumental music in worship? His opponents say, "He has made a law where God has not." Is that not justification for calling one an anti? In the famous metaphor of Tom Warren about the cow being tied with the rope, brother Elkins you need to know that according to some the rope is too short! As I recall, Tom said the men who make laws where God has not made them are guilty of staking the cow on a rope that is too short. Well, bless your life that is exactly what the Joplin brethren say you are doing. You can plead innocent all you want to but they say this qualifies you for the name anti. When we opposed the sponsoring church, which by the way is found on the same page of your Bible as instrumental music, these brethren with much elation called us anti. Now the shoe is on the other foot and these brethren are crying crocodile tears. Would Tom Warren, Roy Deaver, Garland Elkins and the Memphis crowd deny that they are AGAINST certain things in the church? Kind friend, that is all we did forty years ago. We stood opposed to the innovations and as a result received the ignominious appellation. On page 19 brother Elkins talks about the "Joplin Summit" and the "Tulsa restoration Forum". He refers to them as "summiteers." What has happened is the "Joplin Summiteers" have called the "Memphis Crowd" a bunch of antis! You see all of this started when the brethren who now make up the "Memphis Crowd" started calling us antis. Now the "Joplin Summiteers" are calling the "Memphis Crowd" antis. Well, brethren just hang around and it could be in a few years that some wild, classical liberal will brand the "Joplin Summiteers" or the "Tulsa Forum" as antis. They have a saying down here in Arkansas that if you don't like the weather just hang around for a few hours. The same can be said about the word "anti." If you don't like your present name just hang around and someone might call you an anti! Kind friend isn't this ridiculous? Brethren in the Lord trying to gain an advantage by stigmatization.

I receive papers every day and the hue and cry is against liberalism. And the sad thing about it is the very men who are crying tears over liberalism are engaged in liberalism and don't know it. They have sown to the wind and reaped the whirlwind. Back forty years ago, it was not uncommon to read an ad in the paper from a church who wanted a preacher. They would say, "No anti wanted" or "anti need not apply." This seemed to be funny to the innovators of that day. I suspect it is getting less funny all the time. Another common occurrence in that day was for people to request that their names be taken off the mailing list of a publication. Well, history is repeating itself because I noticed in **Contending for The Faith**, published by Ira Y. Rice that this is happening today. In that paper I read this state-

ment, "Please take us off your mailing list" and it was signed by the Church of Christ in Granite, Oklahoma. This means they will refuse to read the publication. So much prejudice is built up within the heart by name calling that many people will not read a publication. We are reading in some of the publications today the very same thing we endured forty years ago. I do not resent someone calling me a conservative; because I am indeed more conservative than many in the body of Christ. When I call someone liberal, I am trying to describe his position and not brand him with a nebulous name. When people do ugly things sometimes they reap some of the reward on this earth. History seems to be repeating itself over and over again. The call of God is for his people to stand for truth and take whatever vilification may come their way.

DREAMS

**Keith Ward
Rt. 2 Box 790B
Lake Butler, FL 32054**

God fully intended that our ability to dream profit us in some manner. Every faculty He created within man was designed to contribute to our ability to glorify Him. At the same time, we recognize that, since the fall, Satan has corrupted every good gift God gave us. Every ability God gave for the growth of our spirits Satan has degraded for the fulfilling of the lusts of our flesh. God gave man the mental faculty to imagine things which have only a partial basis in reality, to dream. We rightfully employ this ability to wonder at the hoped for beauties of heaven, to discover the relationships taught by a figure of speech, and to dream of what we can become through Christ Jesus so we may work to make that ideal a reality. As always, unless we are on our guard, Satan will turn this gift against us.

Daydreams

Evidently we have only partial control over what we dream while asleep. But asleep, as in all our speech and actions, our dreams proceed from our hearts (Mt. 15: 19). What we are, do, and think in the day, we dream in the night. For example, now that it has been fifteen years since I have been scuba diving, I no longer dream of being trapped just under the surface, and awoken struggling for breath because my face was smothered in the pillow.

On the other hand, we have total control over our waking dreams. Satan attacks us through these in two basic ways—foolish dreams and evil dreamings.

Foolish Dreams

Foolish dreams can be divided by their harm to our

hope of eternal life into two groups—time wasters and goal-diluters.

To destroy our souls, Satan need not engage us in great evil; he needs only to prevent us from doing good. We give much of our thinking time to "harmless" foolishness. Harmless, that is, until we realize we could have and should have been meditating on God's work, or praying to Him. James Thurber touched a responsive chord in most people when he described Walter Mitty's sequence of heroic daydream escapades as this mild character walked down the street. He stopped bank robbers, rescued maidens and received glory. Mitty was not satisfied with reality and so he escaped into a fantasy world. How many of us have our fantasy worlds? We wish, but working with patience is too slow, so we fantasize of being rich, heroic, or even great Bible scholars. Girls dream of meeting Prince Charming or of being movie stars. A boy fantasizes of being a hero in war or on the football field. We become all things in our dreams, but the dream time is wasted time insofar as producing any progress towards our wishes. While we wish and dream of being looked up to for our Bible knowledge, we cannot be meditating which leads to the wisdom we say we desire. But dreaming is easier than studying or reasoning, and Satan is pleased for us to dream on.

Many of our dreams are incompatible with our spiritual goals. We set goals that lead to spiritual maturity—greater knowledge, helping others, becoming elders or teachers. Then we dream of new homes, new cars, or new fishing boats. And when we soberly reflect on the recent past, more effort was given to realizing those dreams than to developing our souls. Instead of being realistic and worked for, our goals serve little more than as salves to our consciences. We call ourselves Christians and join boldly in "Sing To Me of Heaven", but our dreams are of earthly and corruptible things. Satan diluted our goal and our hope by making us desire the pleasures men have. I suppose he would prefer to engage us in immoral activities, but Satan is satisfied to keep us so busy dreaming of things that are not wrong in themselves that we cannot use our mental faculties for meditation, prayer, and transforming ourselves by remaking our minds (Rom. 12: 1-2).

Filthy Dreamings

If locker-room and barracks conversations give a true indication, lustful and lewd dreams occupy a fairly large percentage of a young man's thoughts. Perhaps some justify themselves by a truthful declaration that they would never actually do these things, and are not actually under the condemnation, "Whoso looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Mt. 5: 28). Such would be a mighty weak argument to depend upon before the great Judge of hearts. But, more, Jude specifically condemns such dreamings. "These also in their dreamings defile the flesh, and set at nought dominion, and rail at dignities" (Jude 8). Some have always been too cowardly to risk the consequences of the sin in which they long to take pleasure. So, in their daydreams, they boldly, "tell

off" the boss, or the preacher, change the rules or set aside restraints to their lusts, and they partake of flesh-defiling fomications and perversions they are too timid to attempt in reality. Jude's inspired words cut right to the heart of the filthy dreamings provoked by pornography; they strike home upon the vicarious thrills offered by the adulterous soap operas; they hit hard upon the enjoyment we dare not even admit to ourselves that is given by explicit bedroom scenes in movies and novels. We may deny these have such an impact on us and accuse preachers and elders who warn against them of having dirty minds, but advertisers know! Cynically, they use whatever will sell their product. The responsive lust that titillates our carnal minds sells novels, movies, soaps, and a wide variety of products. If it were not so, these practical men would use another means. Be not deceived. Guard your minds.

God's Plan for Dreams

We ought to use our ability to dream to change what we are. Maxwell Malz said in Psychocybernetics that imaginary practicing would improve one's abilities as much as real encounters, that imaginary "walk-throughs" of a desired behaviour change could lead one to that change as effectively as live situations. God taught the same lesson 1900 years before Malz, "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). The more we turn our minds to these things, the more like Christ we will be since "as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23: 7). But, because Satan has corrupted our minds with the desire for things and honor, with evil dreamings, and with time-wasting imaginations, we must wage a deadly warfare to "cast down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10: 5). It will be a hard battle, but we can win... through Christ. We must win, for we cannot know God while our minds serve his enemy. Satan has entrenched himself subtly into our minds and so craftily that many defend their right to use their minds in these ways. If we will see the green fields of Eden, we must begin to dream of them. If we would be spiritual men, we must imagine, dream, meditate, use our minds to transform ourselves. Children dream of fairies, wishes, superpowers. Bigger, older children dream of riches (Reader's Digest contest), glory, fancy homes. Adults dream of Jesus, Heaven, spiritual attributes and meditate to reach them. Isn't it time you grew up?

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More than one hundred years ago faithful brethren were telling the saints that adding the instrument was adding an unauthorized music to the worship. Singing was commanded by the apostles, but playing an instrument has no hint of authority in the New Testament (Eph. 5: 19; Col. 3: 16). Teaching and admonishing were emphasized, but entertainment was not authorized. One form of music was commanded and that was singing.

The more digressive churches among us (liberal, if you prefer) of the 1950s and the digressive churches (Christian churches) of the last half of the last century are talking unity, and it seems that they are happy together. Both have their kitchens and other facilities for entertainment, and both have a careless attitude toward a "thus saith the Lord." If churches can go into the social gospel and entertainment business they can support human institutions such as a missionary society, sponsoring churches, colleges, benevolent societies, and Herald of Truth. If it is all right for them to support recreation and the institutions that collect money from the local churches and spend it, they can add the instrument. If authority can be found for one of these the same passages will authorize the others. I see no reason why the more liberal churches of Christ cannot become one with the Christian churches. They look like identical twins now, and they are coming to the realization of this fact. Their preachers will be able to preach at either place. The instrument will be no real problem to them.

If the message of history can be relied upon, modernism will come into this combined movement. To illustrate this, the colleges which these people support will before long (if not now) have teachers that question the Genesis story of creation, the miracles, the accuracy of the scriptures, and ultimately the deity of Christ. The Disciples church with its ultra modernism is the full blown institutional movement. They were the ones who came up with the American Christian Missionary Society, the instrument in worship, and the support of schools such as Butler University, Texas Christian University, and Drake University. Is Pepperdine University only one short step behind them?

The growing spirit of liberalism is causing many members of these institutional "Churches of Christ" to become restless. A few are visiting meetings among us now and showing interest in the narrow way of truth. By 1940 the stricter element among the Christian

churches returned to the churches their parents had called "antis." We can not expect a "unity movement" with our liberal brethren, but there are some fine people among them that are walking up to the seriousness of the apostasy. These unity meetings with the Christian church will sound an alarm for them.

The situation at Fifth and Highland in Abilene and its Herald of Truth and the far out digressiveness of other big sponsoring churches which have taken so many millions of dollars from local churches to build powerful and influential denominational machines ought to awaken many to the dangers of this centralization of power in the hands of a few in their "chief seats." In some ways they are farther out in "left field" than the conservative Christian church which split off from the Disciples church in 1968. Preachers of the two groups that are working toward uniting will be able to be happy members of the Ministerial Associations with the preachers of the protestant churches which no longer protest much against Catholicism, worldliness, or modernism.

When any unscriptural innovation is added the flood gate of digression is opened toward complete apostasy. Such movement is back to denominationalism. Faithful men earlier were involved in a "back to the Bible" movement. Apostasy is the very reverse of the "back to the Bible" movement. It is a step by step journey back to the human wisdom of the days before the "restoration." The worthy efforts to please God made by the pioneer preachers we have respected are rejected by the digressives as they turn back toward the goal of pleasing their religious neighbors rather than pleasing God.

Wise Christians are willing to use aids such as projectors, well-lighted and comfortable buildings, the modern printing facilities so that we may teach by written sermons, etc. When these things are used we still do the very thing that is commanded. We teach and worship. We, by the use of these things, are not changing the pattern of worship, or putting the church in some unauthorized work such as entertainment or general benevolence, or putting some big denominational machine above the local church. There is a

big difference between an aid and an addition. We need to be able to discern this difference.

The pattern for the Lord's church is all the New Testament says about the mission, worship, and organization of the church and the conduct and attitudes of its members. We are to accept the promises of the word along with the precepts and negative commands. We have no right to take away any rule or restriction given by inspiration. It is also very important to understand that we are not to add any restrictions not found in the sacred writings.

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JAMES TRIGG

W. R. JONES, Conroe, TX—James Trigg preacher for the Highland Blvd. church in San Antonio, Texas, has lost his long battle with cancer. He was buried on June 3rd in Longview. James was a faithful husband, father and Christian. As a preacher, he did much good in God's kingdom. His work will bear fruit for generations to come. The Highland church stayed by him all the way through and they are to be commended for their loyalty. Vernell, his faithful wife, gave him "tender loving care" through the long ordeal. Our loving sympathy is extended to Vernell and the children in their loss which is shared to some degree by many of us.

MARK L. CASEY, 2578 Camino San Patricio, Santa Fe, NM 87505— I have been working with the Capitol City church in Santa Fe since June, 1985. The church is composed of five families and a couple of individuals. Santa Fe is one of the most popular tourist spots in the Southwest and we invite you to worship with us when in the area. Dee Bowman will conduct a gospel meeting for us July 20-25. For more information on our work, call (505) 471-6801 or 983-6675.

NORMAN E. FULTZ, P. O. Box 423, Raymore, MO 64083—After nearly nine years with the church in Raymore, May 25 was my last Sunday here. On June 1, I began with the Nashua church near KCI

Airport. My wife and I will be commuting until we can get a house built; therefore our mailing address will remain the same for a few months. Those needing to correspond with the Raymore church will need to use 107 Woodson St. as the address. Nashua's meeting house is located at 11425 N. Main St., Kansas City, MO 64155. Four have recently been baptized here at Raymore, two of them children of members, the other two being fiancées of two of our young men and both of them from denominational background. Harry Osborne of Baytown, TX is now working with the Raymore church. If visiting in, or passing through, the Kansas City area, we invite you to visit with either Raymore or Nashua. Raymore is on the southeast perimeter of the city, Nashua on the north.

BILL SEXTON, 4400 N. W. Gleason, Kansas City, MO 64151—I have been working with the church meeting at 6403 N. W. Roanridge Road in Kansas City since July, 1985. Two have been baptized, four restored and a family identified with us. Wayne Goff of Kilgore, TX held us a good meeting in June. We have a new building that will seat about 150. We are located at 64th St. N. W. at I-29 about 8 miles south of KCI airport. We invite those moving to this area to work and worship with us. We are small enough that you can get involved easily, with plenty of room to grow and make your contribution. If you are driving through Kansas City, stop and visit. If you have friends or relatives we could contact, please let us know. Ed Dye will be with us in September (22-28) and Keith Sharp in the spring of 1987.

JACK HOLT, Rt. 1, Box 409. Logansport, LA 71049—I have just completed three years and eight months with the Highway Nine church in Corpus Christi, TX. I am now preaching for the Stanley church in Stanley, LA. The work at Highway Nine went well. 14 were baptized. The church grew from 32 to 41 (in spite of the peaceful departure of 13 to begin a new work in Portland, Texas), two elders were appointed, a two-night open forum type discussion was held with a Baptist group, and I conducted two written discussions concerning the institutional question. Allen Dworack will be moving from Ohio to Highway Nine.

STAUFFER-RAMSEY DEBATE IN KNOXVILLE, TN

GREG GWIN, 9048 Middlebrook Pike, Knoxville, TN 37923—A debate will be held August 18, 29, 21 and 22 at the building of the church in Lenoir City, TN. Lenoir City is about 15 miles southwest of Knoxville, about one and a half miles south of I-75 on Highway 95. L. A. Stauffer of St. Louis, MO will represent the West Knoxville church in a discussion with Glen Ramsey of Cookeville, TN who will represent the Lenoir City church. Stauffer preaches for the Kirkwood church in the St. Louis area and Ramsey is vice president of Tennessee Bible College in Cookeville. The first two nights will concern the sponsoring church arrangement. The last two nights will deal with the role of the church in benevolence. This discussion is unique in that the liberal between first approached us about the matter. We are encouraged by their openness and the fact that this church is more conservative than many others in the area. We hope for much good to be done.

FRY ROAD LECTURES

FRY ROAD CHURCH, 2510 Fry Road, Houston, Texas 77084—Bob F. Owen, Temple Terrace, Florida and James W. Ward, San Antonio, Texas will be with us at Fry Road August 11-13. Theme for the morning lectures will be "God Is Able." The evening theme will be "God's Abundant Grace." Glenn Tomblin will direct singing each night from 7-7:30.

PAUL K. WILLIAMS, 18 Fairlie Rd., Eshowe, 3815 South Africa—The church in Eshowe is paying the expenses and salary for David Ngonyama to spend a month working with a small, spiritually weak church in Ingwavuma. Four have recently been baptized here. We run a tight schedule on Sundays with four services and three hours of driving. Gene Tope is to conduct a meeting July 2-4 in the Town Hall in Eshowe.

CARLOS CAPELLI, Casilla #83, 1665 Jose C. Paz, Buenos Aires, Argentina—In late March I had a one night debate with a "Jesus Only" Pentecostal. In a short gospel meeting at Boulogne in late April, two were baptized. Luis Riffo made a trip in May to visit the poor brethren in San Cristobal and took clothes and food. While there for one week, one married woman was baptized.

PREACHERS NEEDED

VALPARAISO, FLORIDA—Wanted: An energetic person to preach the gospel for a small congregation in Northwest Florida. Attendance is about 20. We are able to supply \$160 a week support. Please write Twin Cities Church of Christ, 92 Eastview Ave., Valparaiso, FL 32580 or call Wayne Bolin at (904) 892-4736 for further information.

PONTIAC, ILLINOIS—The church at 935 N. Main St. is looking for a full time preacher. We have about 27 members with attendance between 40-50. We are able to provide partial support. For more information please call (815) 842-2993 or (815) 844-7287.

KISSIMMEE, FLORIDA—The brethren in Kissimmee, Florida are searching for a full time preacher. We can provide partial support. For information write: Church of Christ, 2461 Fortune road, Kissimmee, FL 32743 or contact John Dubose at (305) 846-1563.

VERNON, TEXAS—After four years with the church here, Roy S. Bradshaw is moving to Alamogordo, NM. The church here is therefore in need of a full-time preacher. We need an experienced man who is a good personal worker. With 22 members, the church can supply \$400 a month with the rest raised elsewhere. We would prefer a man between 30-60 years of age. The building is free of debt. Those interested may write: Church of Christ, P. O. Box 867, Vernon, TX 76384.

REPUBLIC, MISSOURI—The Eastside church meeting at 1421 E. Logan St. in Republic, MO needs a full time preacher. We are a congregation of 40 members in a town of 5,000. A man must be able to bring some support with him. Write: Clyde A. Eubanks, 702 E. Harrison St., Republic, MO 65738 or phone (417) 732-2039.

* * * * *

CORRECTION

A news item in the May, 1986, issue concerning a new congregation now meeting in Summerville, SC, states that it is over 100 miles in different directions to reach other sound congregations. Since Ashley Heights in Charleston Heights, SC is only 12 miles away from this new work and since Ray Goff, who started that work with the goodwill of the Ashley Heights church where he formerly worshipped, the impression was inadvertently left that Ashley Heights was not a sound work. This is a mistake and we apologize to Ashley Heights and to the work in Summerville. The news item was condensed by the editor from an item sent out by brother Goff and the editor accepts the blame for this poor editing of the item. *Mia culpa!*

FRUIT OF HOLT DOCTRINE

A little more than half of the number which comprised the Ocean Springs, Mississippi church either taught or were sympathetic toward those who did teach the doctrine of Charles A. Holt which essentially argues that the local church is nothing more than saints in a given area who act individually or together at times but are not an organized, functional entity. Among those involved were two of the three trustees of the property and the treasurer. Those familiar with the doctrine and its consequences will realize the irony of the situation. They continue to meet in the building and have a common treasury. Because of this situation those opposed to this doctrine are meeting at 44 Pitman Rd., Ocean Springs. We meet on Sundays from 8-11 A. M. and on Tuesdays from 7-8: 15 P. M. Ron Washburn preacher of the Morris Rd. church in Gulfport will preach for us at 8: 00 A. M. on Sundays and Jimmy Jenkins, preacher for the Chico Road church in Pascagoula, has agreed to teach the adult class on Tuesday nights. We hope to find a preacher who will be willing and able, under these difficult circumstances, to come and work with us. Christians coming to Keesler AFB or the Biloxi area need to know about this and either meet with us or with the Morris Board church in Gulfport, or with Chico Road in Pascagoula.

(Editor's Note: This trouble has been brewing ever since Charles A. Holt revived his error of the late 1960's and started publishing his paper, THE EXAMINER. That paper and its influence is in the middle of this trouble. We report this only because brethren need to know the end result of this doctrine. This is probably not the last church to experience great difficulty over these views. It is indeed ironic that those who oppose a church treasury (except for emergen-

cies) and who make such a fuss about church property and "functional entity" are the ones here with two out of three trustees of property and who have control of the common treasury If this doctrine is allowed free reign it would destroy congregations everywhere Brethren, be alert CWA)

* * * * *

EDITORIAL LEFT-OVERS TO FILIPINO BRETHREN

Ever since 1970 the editor has received a large volume of mail from preachers in the Philippines. We have now over 100 Filipino preachers on the mailing list for this paper. Preaching trips there in 1971 and 1975 greatly added to this mail. For a long time I tried to answer every letter, but even with a secretary for a few years, it got to be more than I could do and still maintain my own work in teaching, preaching in meetings and keeping the paper on schedule. The volume has tapered off somewhat since I have not been able to carry my end of the correspondence. But I still get second and third letters from brethren who are indignant because they have not heard from me. I would personally like to be able to carry on extensive correspondence with every brother there. Circumstances are such that it is impossible. Also, some seem to be under the impression that I own a bookstore and am able to send any book advertised in the paper to anyone who requests it, free. Brethren, I do not own or run a book store. I own no stock in one. I have to pay for every book or tract I order. Religious Supply Center is a private business which buys advertising space in STS. The paper and the bookstore are not inter-related. I simply sell advertising space to them. I certainly do recommend their products and services to those in need of them. But it is not possible to send every book or tract requested. We have had many similar requests from brethren in Nigeria.

* * * * *

TELEVISION TRASH

About the only time my wife and I have to watch a little TV is when we are traveling and try to watch an hour or so at bedtime. We have been appalled the last few weeks at how little there is to see which is not too violent, sexy or filled with humor spiced with double meanings, or outright crudity. We turned on Benson which we thought was fairly innocent, only to find ourselves subjected to a story about dog breeding laced with innuendoes and outright off-color humor. Then we turned on a show called 227, another comedy. The story involved one of the principals pondering whether to go to New York City for a weekend with a man. They were not married. She decided to go and the star of the show ended up apologizing for being judgmental. We didn't stay to the end.

On another comedy show recently the mother was in law school and had a fit of conscience about neglecting her family. Her effort to become a home maker resulted in her being made to look silly and her family encouraging her to go back to her career. The Bill Cosby show recently ridiculed a young man for being a "chauvinist" because he made remarks about cooking and home-making being a woman's work. He was made to look like a fool and the career-oriented mother and her career-minded elder daughter were glamorized. But there may be hope. The average time a TV set is on in a house to day has DROPPED to just 7 1/2 hours!

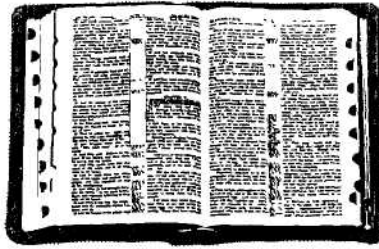
IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	186
RESTORATIONS	110

(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)

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 XXVII

SEPTEMBER, 1986

Number 9

THINK ON THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 1631
Lutz, FL 33549



UNIQUE CLAIMS OF THE BIBLE

Characteristics of the Book called the Bible are so unique and bold that the reader is at once aware that he is reading something that penetrates the very heart of man, and at the same time the bold claims of the Book far surpass anything else known to man. The Bible makes certain claims that are completely absurd to the human race if it is not the Book of God. These claims excel any claims for other writings, and the Book makes no apology for the claims.

It claims to be indestructible. The Bible claims to be a volume that cannot be destroyed in time or eternity, it submits to no power, but claims to survive all its enemies. Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35). Peter asserts that the word of God will live and abide for ever, and that the word of the Lord will endure for ever (1 Peter 1:23,25). Every tool of opposition and destruction known has been hurled against the Bible with all its power, but this book has come out victorious over all.

It claims to be all-sufficient. The Bible claims, "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 perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:16,17). It claims to *perfect* man unto *all good works*. It says it contains everything that pertains unto life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). It contains all truth delivered from God to man (John 16:13). It has been

once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3). The Bible will do for mankind all that God wants done. It is the final authority in all matters. It is perfectly adaptable to all men of all ages. No other book can serve all generations of men as does the Bible. It lacks nothing and supplies all things for all men of all nations and times.

It claims to be perfect literature. The Bible claims perfection in literature. It possesses certain qualities that distinguish it from all other writings known. It contains every type of literature known to man. It was reported that Benjamin Franklin, who was one time the ambassador to France, was invited to a French Literary Society of Infidels. It was also reported that it was a rule of this society that each member would write an original story and submit it to the criticism of the other members. When Mr. Franklin's time came he copied by hand the entire book of Ruth and read it to the assembly. When he finished they applauded his great work and pronounced it a master-piece. They asked for permission to publish it to the world. Ben Franklin replied that he could not grant such permission because it was already in print; it was in the Bible. Before they learned that it came from the Bible, they called it the "best love story in the world."

The Bible contains poetry, biography, law, history, prophecy, and love stories. It is at the same time the most profound and yet the simplest of all writings. It never grows old with the passing of time.

It claims to contain the highest purpose. The Bible serves a different purpose to the books composed by men. Most other books are given to gratify the passions of men, either for knowledge or entertainment, but the Bible is given to curb and control these passions and to prepare the soul for eternity.

The Bible presents man as a sinner and unfit for his entrance into heaven. Other books tell of man's virtues and accomplishments, but the Bible points out the weaknesses of all men alike, even the greatest men of the world. Noah's intoxication is recorded with the sins of his daughters; Abraham's weakness in lying to Pharaoh that Sarah was his sister to avoid punishment; David's adultery with the wife of Uriah is recorded; Peter's denial of the Lord is given in detail. The Bible is

completely impartial in the account of the history of mankind. No ethnic group, no racial or social groups are depicted as inferior to others.

It is also a purpose of the Bible to give the promise of rewards and punishments to those who keep or do not keep its laws. No man can promise rewards beyond his own imaginations and expectations. Neither could this be so in punishments. Its purpose is to guide mankind into a righteous way of living to avoid the punishments stated and to gain the rewards promised.

The demands and claims of the Bible show its purpose. It claims to control the hearts and lives of all men and of all nations without a single apology. No branch of human philosophy has ever thought of such a demand.

It claims to be the foundation of the Religion of Christ. Nothing can survive if the foundation is destroyed. The Bible is the foundation of Christianity because it gives the laws and rules for such. Without the Bible the work of Christ could not exist. No other book has such an influence on the spiritual nature and welfare of all men. They are either saved by its power, or they are hardened in their rebellion against the truth.

The religion of Christ is dependent upon the revelation of God for its nature and working. Christ must be preached before men can believe. The Bible serves this purpose, as John states in John 20:30,31. The Christ must be known. The four gospel records are designed to do this. Some claim that Jesus was a pure moral man of the highest standing, but they deny that he is divine. This claim is absolutely impossible. How could a man be pure morally and be the greatest impostor of all history? Christ claims to be the Son of God and eternal with the Father. If he is not what he claims to be he is a deceiver and does not deserve to be the Saviour and the foundation of the church. But if Christ is what he claims to be, his word, the Bible, is everything it claims to be.

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Editorial

Connie W. Adams

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STATEMENT FROM CECIL WILLIS

The following statement was made before the church at Groveton, Texas on Wednesday night, July 23, 1986:

"My purpose in coming before you at this time is to make acknowledgement of each and every sin of which I have been guilty. I am sorry for whatever reproach might have come upon the name of Christ as a result of my sins. I ask your forgiveness, and your prayers that God might forgive me. I will be willing to serve the church in any way you request, and whenever you think appropriate.

My work schedule, at present, hinders me in attending many services of this congregation, but I do worship each Lord's Day with a small church in Trinity, Texas.

My marriage to _____ is ending; divorce proceedings are underway at present.

This statement is made to renew my relationship with this church. A copy thereof will be sent to the church in Huntsville for them to use as they see fit. Any additional questions you may have regarding my circumstances, feel free to ask."

Brotherly,

Cecil Willis

Ordinarily, we would not publish such acknowledgements made before local churches, though we rejoice anytime a brother seeks to correct wrongs in life. Because so many brethren have known Cecil Willis, appreciated his work in the kingdom in days gone by, and have agonized so much over events in his life in recent years, I thought it would bring great joy to the hearts of many to know of this recent event. A copy of this statement was sent to the church at Huntsville, Texas where he was living at the time he entered what many, this editor included, considered an unscriptural marriage. He has also sent copies to Woodland Hills and Southside in Marion, Indiana where he was living at the time his first marriage deteriorated.

The church at Huntsville, Texas took disciplinary measures. Following that, he began working at the Texas State Penitentiary in Huntsville as a guard where

he continues to work operating an electronic gate.

For a long time there was little contact between him and those of us who worked so closely with him in the past. More recent events have caused him to look more objectively at his situation and have opened the door for visits with several of us. I spent the day with him back in June and we forthrightly discussed many things. The influence of family, brethren, the force of traumatic circumstances and a conscience educated for many years by a close acquaintance with the word of God have all had a part in the statement quoted above.

Many people in many countries are in the kingdom now through the tireless work of Cecil Willis over many years. In the Ohio Valley and throughout the country, there are churches standing for the truth today which would have gone into liberalism had it not been for his dedicated work. Cecil and I have been friends since 1949 and worked together with the Brown Street church in Akron, Ohio during critical years in that area. We have traveled together, laughed, wept, prayed and preached together. I, along with many others, have wept much over what happened to his life. Brethren in many places ask me "What has become of Cecil Willis." It gives me much joy to report his repentance. Cecil knows I am publicizing his statement and gave his consent. It is painful to him. Any brother or sister who has ever had to make such a statement knows the agony of soul this involves.

I hope that many brethren will write to him and let him know that they still love him and that their prayers have been answered. He must not "be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him" (2 Cor. 2:7-8). This statement does not remove all the heartache and trauma of personal tragedy to which he is heir. The after-effects will long endure. But he is our brother and needs our encouragement. He certainly has mine. As long as he is striving to do what is right, he deserves the compassion, forgiveness and support of all who know him. Those who might wish to write him a note may reach him at: P.O. Box 15, Woodlake, Texas 75865.

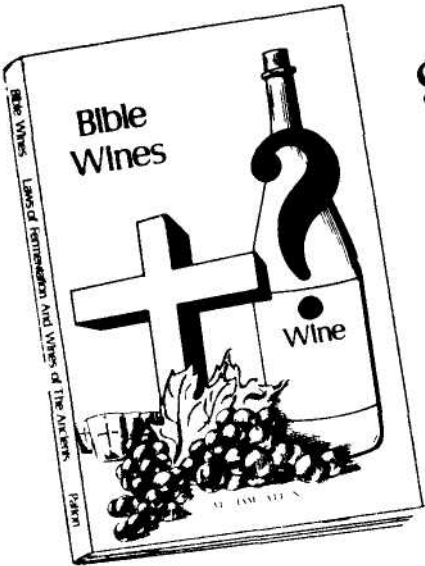
PATTON-PHILLIPS EXCHANGE

The January, February and March, 1987 issues of this paper will carry an exchange of three articles apiece by Marshall E. Patton and H.E. Phillips on whether persons "put away" may scripturally remarry. Both of them believe that fornication is the only scriptural ground for divorce and remarriage. Both believe that the guilty party cannot remarry. Both believe that fornication frees the innocent party to remarry. Brother Patton believes that after a divorce for causes other than fornication, that when one party remarries, the remaining party may then put the other away mentally and then be free to marry, certain conditions prevailing. Brother Phillips does not believe this.

In the March, 1986 edition of this paper, there was an exchange of articles on this subject between Jim Deason of Columbia, Tennessee and Weldon E. Warnock. This was in response to an article by brother Warnock in

his question and answer column which appeared in November, 1985. In the March issue, I also expressed my own view of the matter and differed with what brother Warnock had said. Brother Phillips was to have debated that, along with other aspects of the matter, with Jack Gibbert in Virginia several years ago, but was unable even to attend the debate due to sickness. J.T. Smith appeared in his place. Brother Smith has expressed his views on this matter in at least three articles in STS over the last ten years. Brother Patton spoke, by invitation, on the subject at the High School Road Lectures in Indianapolis, Indiana in July of this year. His outline clearly sets forth his views.

Both of these men are eminently qualified to address the subject, we hope to the benefit of all readers. They are also personal friends of many years and have been congenial co-workers in the publication of this paper ever since 1960. Their love for truth, for each other and for the readers of this paper cannot be doubted. That they will treat each other as brethren should in presenting and pressing different views, I have no doubt. We look forward to the benefits of their study. Watch for it.



Bible Wines

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THE FAMILY TABLE

J. Wiley Adams

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The family meal is an occasion that can help to unify the family. Memories of pleasant times around the table for me are very pronounced. This is true whether I look back to my own boyhood days or whether I consider the matter in terms of my own family, children and grandchildren.

I grew up in different times that included the great depression and World War II. Breakfast was a main event at our house. Everyone had to work and thus everyone needed to eat a substantial meal. Diets and various food restrictions were unheard of. We all worked so hard nobody in the family was "fat." Everyone came to the table at meal time and no one dared say "I don't like" this, that, or the other which was on the table. We could not afford to be "picky" about our food. Whatever was on the table you were glad to have it, and you asked for more. You knew it had to last until the next mealtime. Eating between meals was not a well known practice in those days.

Since we lived in the country we always had plenty to eat. We raised our own hogs, chickens, had our own milk cows. Thus, eggs and butter were always in abundance with plenty of "clabber" to make biscuits. Vegetables were in abundance while jelly, jam preserves, molasses and various kinds of fruit were plentiful.

The abundant table, the family gathered around that table, my father's fervent prayers of thanksgiving before we ate, the warmth and security of family togetherness all combined to create something most wholesome and memorable. I remember such times now with pleasure and nostalgia.

We lived in the times of three meals a day. In Virginia we called them breakfast, dinner and supper. I still call them that in the absence of any good reason to change.

We learned a certain discipline at the table. You waited for things to be passed to you or if the bowl was too hot you were told to "pass your plate." Many an unnecessary spill was avoided by such a practice. There was order. Children were allowed to speak when they wanted something to be passed or an extra helping. Otherwise, they ate and listened to the conversation. In this arrangement good manners were learned without the aid of an etiquette book.

So the two things that were outstanding was the food and the talk. Both were involved in the family meal and as far as I was concerned essential the one to the other. The children were not allowed to dominate the scene. Such presumption would result in a hard look and gave

much promise of a hard lick should breach of conduct continue. I learned many things around the table. I doubt if I would have learned very much if I had been allowed to run my mouth all the time.

I just know that the prayers three times a day helped me. Even twice a day, when school and work schedules prevented a mid-day meal together, was a great uplift. Billboards and various advertisements sometimes set forth the idea "the family that prays together stays together." There is much truth in this but it might be even more emphatic to say "the family that prays and eats together stays together."

Contrast the foregoing things with some typical current practices. Moms and Dads often skip breakfast, leave at different times for different jobs. The children are told to "get yourself some cereal and a glass of milk and don't be late for school." They eat, if at all, one at a time, maybe a rote prayer is recited in an unintelligible and hurried manner, the kids leave an empty house (with their own key, of course) they eat lunch in the school cafeteria hurriedly, come home to an empty house. Mom and Dad arrive home from work late, send out for hamburgers, pizza, or some other calorie-laden, greasy fast food or perhaps a frozen dinner. They eat the evening meal with haste nervously. The children are so glad to be home and are so starved for some kind of family togetherness that they talk incessantly, all at the same time, as if they must hang on to this rare occasion for dear life.

Then the children are driven to their rooms to study their lessons, allowed an hour of TV (much of which is unsuitable), drive them to bed after a "quick prayer," so the parents can relax and watch TV before retiring. So goes many days in our modern society. Is it any wonder that families break up? There are no guideline memories or secure times for them to draw on. A popular country music song today tells quite a story. It is entitled, "Grandpa, Tell Us Of The Good Old Days" and goes on to emphasize a deep longing in the hearts of many young people for a return to grass roots values and a slower but more meaningful life.

A special meal time for me was always Sunday morning. Then we had "cheese biscuits." My mother is the world's champion at this delicious mealtime achievement. We all got up early enough to eat at the same time. The meal consisted of Mama's famed cheese biscuits, ham, red-eye gravy, scrambled eggs, with butter and jelly or preserves of some kind. My Daddy did not think the table was set unless there was something "sweet" on the table to finish off the biscuits. Then we all got up and got ready to go to worship services and we arrived on time. This was possible because we took our baths on Saturday night as well as shinned our shoes. Bible lessons were done on Saturday evenings and we still had time to listen to the Grand Ole Opry on the radio.

Brethren, have we lost something that should be revived? The family circle, the family prayers, around the family table? Will your children and grandchildren have such pleasant memories to sustain them in the days and years ahead? Are they being cheated from an invaluable

heritage? Think about it!

Using the SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

Ken Green

2212 Jordan Lane, S.W.
Huntsville, Alabama 35805



USELESS BONES

R.L. Whiteside once closed his brief response to a foolish question with the words: "Some people can drag in more useless bones to chew on than a hound pup."

I heard of one congregation that divided over the momentous issue of whether or not non-Christians marooned on a desolate island could scripturally baptize each other if they learned the truth from a New Testament. The church was located over a thousand miles from the ocean!

I wonder what A.C. Grider would have said had he been there. A lady once called on our question and answer T.V. program when Brother Grider was my guest. She asked what the situation would be if a person were 500 miles away from the water and wished to be baptized.

In confusion and perplexity I turned to Brother A.C. who calmly suggested to the caller, "If you're planning on getting that far away from the water, you ought to be baptized before you go."

I've been in classes where brethren would argue for weeks over whether the apostles and all of John's disciples had to be re-baptized and any other useless bone someone drug in. When I'm teaching a class, I nip such fruitless discussions in the bud. If a subject is: 1) not answered in the Scriptures; and 2) of no possible relevance to us today, it is useless.

When Bible classes are allowed to continue on such a level, a number of things result:

1. **The class becomes negative in its outlook.** The primary motive of study quickly evolves into a search for something to quibble and argue over. Those who remain in the class soon learn the rules of the game. "Bible study in this class is not designed to aid me and build me up, but to tear at someone or something." Bro. Jim Ward tells of setting forth some positive instruction in a class when a brother interrupted and asked, "Who can I use that on?" After a few seconds of awkward silence, Jim replied, "Why not try yourself?"

2. **Members become calloused in their dispositions.** Some brother (and sisters, too) forget their religion when they get into a hot discussion. They throw all restraint to the winds. It doesn't matter if they are replying to a "grizzled old warrior" of a thousand like skirmishes, or a newcomer to the class, and perhaps a

new convert, the name of the game is "win the argument." (In the name of truth, of course.)

3. **The class gets a reputation.** No one wants to try to teach such a group except possibly a champion debater. There are at least a couple of reasons for this. For one, they know such a group cannot be taught much of anything. For another, they don't like to have their hide nailed to the wall every time they say something. It hurts!

It might be wise to hang a sign in every classroom with the inspired warning: "But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes" (2 Timothy 2:23).

WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

Send all questions to:

Weldon E. Warnock

1021 Welford Dr.
Xenia, OH 45385



WOMEN TEACHING BAPTIZED BOYS

QUESTION: *May a woman teach a boy who has been baptized, even though he is only 10, 11 or 12 years old? Some brethren transfer a baptized boy into a class taught by a man, believing that women may not teach male members of the church. Please comment.*

ANSWER: Yes, a woman may scripturally teach a boy who has been baptized. Those who prohibit it have an erroneous view of the Scriptures and they do a disservice to the boy(s) who is removed from the class. The students the man teaches are older and the subject material is perhaps too advanced. We would not allow our youngsters being placed in classes beyond their mental and emotional levels in the public school system, but for some strange reason it is all right in the church.

The verse used to try to prove that women may not teach baptized boys is 1 Tim. 2:12. Paul wrote, "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." Here, the apostle is saying that a woman may not teach OVER MAN, nor usurp authority OVER MAN. By what stretch of the imagination, therefore, does this scripture prohibit a woman from teaching a boy, even though he has been baptized? The passage would have to read: "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man and baptized boys, but to be in silence." The passage simply does not say what some brethren try to make it say.

The word, "man," in 1 Tim. 2:12 is from the Greek word *aner*, and is defined by Thayer, p. 45, "with reference to sex, and so to distinguish a man from a woman. . . with a reference to age, and to distinguish an adult man from a boy." W.E. Vine says that *aner* "stands (a) in distinction from a woman . . . (b) as distinct from a boy

or infant." *The Analytical Greek Lexicon*, p. 29, states, "A male person of full age and stature, as opposed to a child or female."

We conclude from the preceding definitions of these reputable sources that a boy in no way fits into the scope of the apostle Paul's limitations and prohibitions placed on women in the text under discussion. One who so advocates such a notion is doing it arbitrarily, without any scriptural basis whatsoever.

Let us observe that at the age of 12 Jesus is called a child. Luke 2:42 gives the age of Jesus as 12 when he went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. Verse 43 calls Jesus a child—"the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem." The word "child" in v. 43 is from the Greek word, *pais*." It means in this passage, as defined by Thayer, p. 473, "A child, boy, or girl." *The Analytical Greek Lexicon*, p. 298 states, "A child in respect of age, either male or female, and of all ages from infancy up to manhood, a boy, young, girl, maiden." Hence, at the age of 12 Jesus was not yet a man. He was still a child.

In view of the above declarations and deductions, the inevitable conclusion would be that a woman may teach boys in a Bible class. We have seen that there would be no conflict with 1 Tim. 2:12 as the apostle prohibits only the women from teaching over men. Since boys are not men, and "man" in 1 Tim. 2:12 excludes boys, as seen by the authoritative definitions, the theory under consideration falls "flat on its face" because it has no biblical support on which to stand.

The fact that the boy has been baptized does not alter the situation one iota. Baptism does not make a man out of a boy. Baptism simply changes the spiritual relationship. We had just as well argue that no male becomes a man until he is baptized as to argue that a boy becomes a man after he is baptized. Such is absurd. The implication of such fallacious reasoning is that a woman may teach men if they have not been baptized. On this basis a woman could buy a tent and conduct gospel meetings if the brothers in Christ would stay away.

Really, what is the difference between having a baptized 12-year old boy in a class taught by a woman, and having an unbaptized 12-year old boy in the same class? Not a bit of difference. Neither one is a man. Both are boys, although one has been baptized and the other one has not. Furthermore, how long could the woman continue to teach the unbaptized boys? Till they are 14? 15? Truthfully, is not this a matter of common sense and good judgment?

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INDIVIDUALISM VS. THE FUNDS OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

Part Three

Jack Holt
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Introduction

In speaking of the churches described in the New Testament, one of this movement's adherents said, "They did not have a 'corporate treasury' because there was no corporation."¹ This position is exceedingly interesting since the movement has formed its own corporation, Truth and Freedom Ministries, Inc., and is appealing for Christians to donate funds to it!² So, the essence of their objection is, it is wrong for Christians to form an organization, a local church of Christ, which maintains a treasury, but it's all right to do this if the organization is one like Truth and Freedom Ministries, Inc.!

I believe the New Testament plainly reveals that churches maintained treasuries, and that they spent treasury funds to perform divinely authorized duties.

What the Bible Teaches

Acts 4:34-37 records: "For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales, and lay them at the apostles' feet and they would be distributed to each, as any had need."³ If this passage doesn't show that the Jerusalem church maintained a treasury of contributed funds for the relief of needy saints, I'm at a loss to tell you what the Bible would have to say to teach it.

What The Individualist Teaches

(1) In trying to push the idea that local churches should not maintain treasuries, Individualists have attacked 1 Corinthians 16:2 with all their might. That passage reads, "On the first day of every week let each of you put aside and save, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come." According to the Individualist, "This is a plan for each person to budget or save on a regular basis for this great need. The teaching is that it was to be put aside *at home* on a regular basis"(emphasis mine, jhj)⁴

Admittedly, some commentators have taken this view of the passage, but to do so is to ignore the context. Why would Paul set aside a special day for giving, instructing all the churches to do the same (verse 1), if it was simply something done by oneself? And if Paul wanted to avoid a collection when he came ("...that no collections be made when I come."), why did he instruct them to prepare the gift in such a way that would require collecting those funds from each household when he came?

In 1 Corinthians 16:2, the word translated "put" comes from the Greek word TITHEMI, which means

"to place, lay, set."⁵ The word translated "aside" comes from the Greek word PARA, which means "by the side of." The New American Standard leaves the Greek word HEAUTOU, meaning "himself, herself, or itself," untranslated. The word translated "save" is the Greek word THESAURIZO, and means to treasure up. So, literally, the passage is: "On the first day of the week let each one of you **put by himself and treasure up**, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come." It is evident that Paul is commanding each Christian to decide for himself what he ought to give (to "put by himself"), and then he is to treasure that with the other saints. Any other view would require a collection when Paul came.

In commenting on this passage, Barnes expresses the following view: "The Greek phrase, 'by himself,' means, probably, the same as at home. Let him set it apart; let him designate a certain portion; let him do this by himself, when he is at home, when he can calmly look at the evidence of his prosperity. Let him do it not under the influence of pathetic appeals, or for the sake of display when he is with others; but let him do it as a matter of principle, and when he is by himself. The phrase in Greek, 'treasuring up,' may mean that each one was to put the part which he had designated into the common treasury. This interpretation seems to be demanded by the latter part of the verse. They were to lay it by, and to put it into the common treasury, that there might be no trouble collecting it when he should come."⁶

(2) Another argument which has been used to discredit the idea of churches maintaining treasured funds was stated like this, "There is no such thing in the New Testament as 'the Lord's money' or 'the Lord's treasury.' The pooled or collected money from the disciples of Christ is not sacred or holy money."⁷

I agree that the New Testament does not use the terms "the Lord's money," or "the Lord's treasury," but the ideas are there nevertheless. Words represent ideas. If an idea is in the Bible, and by the use of a term we mean nothing more than the Bible idea it represents, then we are at perfect liberty to use it.

The dictionary has many definitions for the word "sacred." One of those definitions is, "set apart for, and dedicated to some person, place, purpose, sentiment, etc."⁸ I maintain without fear of being successfully disproven, that monies contributed to the local church are "sacred," and it is "the Lord's money" in the sense of the definition I have just cited.

(3) Individualists have also argued, "There is no instance in the New Testament of disciples giving into a general fund for general purposes." This is an argument drawn from abuse, and does not argue for the elimination of the church treasury. If Christians are not aware of what they are giving for, they ought to be. The institutional question divided churches in the 1950s and 1960s because brethren were convinced that the things they were being urged to give for were not scriptural. This illustrates that brethren are very much aware of what they are giving for.

(4) Perhaps most disturbing about the Individualists' efforts to impose this doctrine upon the people of God

are the statements they have made impugning preacher's motives in encouraging God's people to give. One of them has said, "... the preachers have a strong vested interest in 'the corporate treasury,' because that is the source of their livelihood! As an employee of the corporate church their wages, Social Security, 'hospitalization insurance,' house payment, living expenses, car expenses, and vacation come from this source! Every really successful 'Minister' deserves a really first-class 'Compensation Package,' as it is called! One can understand why they are so concerned with a large, and increasingly larger, financial income for 'the corporate church.' True, in our day, this is a mark of success in the ministry of the 'Pulpit Minister,' but of greater importance, it is his source of income."¹⁰

As Paul lamented in Romans 3:8, "... we are slanderously reported . . . their condemnation is just."

¹ The Examiner, page 15.

² The Examiner, page 15.

³ All Bible quotes from the New American Standard Version.

⁴ The Examiner, page 8.

⁵ All quotations in this paragraph are from *Holman's Exhaustive Concordance of the New American Standard Version*.

⁶ Barnes Notes: 1 Corinthians to Galatians, Baker's Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 49506. ⁷ The Examiner, pages 7, 8.

⁸ New World Dictionary.

⁹ The Examiner, page 8.

¹⁰ The Examiner, page 8.

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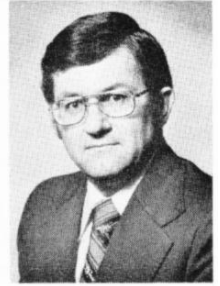
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HARDEST COMMAND OF GOD

Faith is unmistakably set forth as the foundation to the gospel. It is projected as a way of life for the Christian described as "by faith". Significantly, within Hebrews chapter 11, the great honor roll of faithful is introduced by this expression. Remember, "by faith Abel, Enoch, Noah," et. al., acted to the approval of God and their lives are held forth as examples of doing what God said in the way he said do it. However, man frequently fails in this and by that failure is irrevocably lost or he has an avenue of correction and restitution open to him. How thankful we ought to be it is the latter.

Repentance is as essential and vital to a desirable relation with God as is faith. True, faith is the foundation of that relationship and "without faith it is impossible to please him" (Heb. 11:6). But Jesus also said, "I tell you, nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Lk. 13:3, 5). Repentance seems to be an almost forgotten part of what it takes to be saved. Many seem to pay little attention to it, ignoring the fact its working and demands are vital to salvation: Salvation from the standpoint of procuring as well as maintaining a saved relationship with our God.

Repentance has been referred to as the hardest command of God. This suggestion does not presume to reflect upon the other requirements of God by way of either minimizing or slighting in any way. The reason for the difficulty of repentance attaches to the fact human will is so directly involved. It must be admitted that the obstinacy of the human will is the most formidable barrier to favor with God through the ages. It was Stephen who charged the Jews, "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye" (Acts 7:51). This is to charge them with being "stiff-hearted", unwilling to bend, bow in submission. Thus, with being impenitent, unrepentant, "resisting the influence and direction of the Holy Ghost. This is pure and simple stubbornness, the most difficult issue any has to cope with. It represents the basic problem to proper relationships, to ongoing faithfulness to the Lord.

I want us to consider two classic examples of repentance given by the Lord. Evidence points to the fact our problem was basic to Jesus' day as well as our own. The entire mission of John the baptist in preparing the Jewish heart for the coming of the Lord can be compre-

hended in repentance as we remember, "John did baptize in the wilderness and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins" (Mark 1:4).

"But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work today in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you" (Matt. 21:28-31). Special reference is made to the Pharisees and religious leaders among the Jews as these are represented in the number two son. He exemplifies their saying and doing not. Others, publicans and harlots, are represented in the first of the two sons, at first open rejection, outward rebellion. The change of heart in the first becomes representative of a great host of the Jews of Jesus' day and gives meaning to "the first shall be last and the last first" (Matt. 20:16). Those last by reason of their rebellion, sinful life, become first by repentance. Those professing and doing not, thus presuming prominence and first in their own eyes and profession are in fact last with God.

In application the primary bearing is upon repentance. We must take note of the initial action, only in so doing do we appreciate "repented". The rebellion and refusal of this son is calloused and obvious, "I will not". Here is epitomized the obstinacy of the human will, resentment at being told what to do. But, "afterward he repented" giving assurance that one does not have to be a slave to the past. A wrong start does not commit one to an irreversible course. Change in this son showed a number of things, among the first of which was reflection, he looked at himself, at his own attitude. The reflection produced a degree of humility causing him to admit wrong. Then desire for a better future is evident as these qualities blend to make us hopeful for him.

Progressively, take note of his obedient action, he "went". I impress upon us that this was everything, everything associated within the hopeful qualities mentioned accounts for nothing until now. He may not have said a word, yet there was, there is, no real repentance without obedient action which produces improved conduct. His direction is changed, the wrong for the right. May we suggest in a very simple way that the difference between repentance and impenitence is in the word "not". This continues to be the difference between rebellion and submission, between obedience and disobedience to God. When one says "I will quit sin, I will sin no more" and thus changes his course, this is repentance.

In Luke (15:11-21) we have the parable of the prodigal son. Again basic reference is to the Pharisees and the scribes as represented in the arrogant older brother. Those under obvious condemnation because of sin are represented in the younger. The action of this younger son pays complement to repentance. He, as was the case in our first example, reflected upon his position in that pig sty in a foreign land. Realizing it did not have to be so, he determined to do something about it and acted

upon his determination, "came to the father". With a confession of his failures there is implied the resolve to improvement. His action was accepted and he was restored while the attitude of the older brother was just the reverse.

Repentance cannot be equated with sorrow. "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death" (2 Cor. 7:10). Sorrow is the cause, repentance is the effect within this passage. "I'm sorry" is always a proper sentiment but it is not enough within itself. What kind of sorrow produces repentance? Not the "sorrow of the world," mundane sorrow, sadness because of reverses and disappointments of life brought on by an acknowledged course of sin or sorrow at being found out. A deep seated sadness or regret that sees self as God sees, a sinner doomed and damned, a rebel to God, disobedient to his will and purposes, hopeless and helpless. Unless hearts can be touched and tendered by this repentance will not result. When regret for our sin produces a touch of the sadness of God within us then we become tender, receptive and responsible, we will repent. Our mind, heart and way, will change. May such tenderness ever attend each and willingness to repent be the continuing disposition of our heart.

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LIBERTY

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It is 9:30 p.m., July 4, 1986. The Washington fireworks are about over, while the New York Statue of Liberty fireworks celebration is soon to begin.

The words, "freedom" and "liberty," have been spoken and heard often today. It would be interesting to know how many times the words have been used in the last twelve hours. It is doubtful if any person in the United States has not used the word, liberty or freedom, today! What are my rights or liberties? "Rights" are frequently claimed which are based upon selfish "license" rather than proper liberty. The word "liberty" is often mis-used by selfish interests. What is liberty? How would you define the word?

One hundred and twenty-two years ago Abraham Lincoln commented, "The world has never had a good definition of the word liberty, and the American people, just now, are much in want of one." The "reasoning" of the worldly-minded demonstrates that the true definition of liberty is rejected in favor of a selfish concept. Daniel Webster said, "Liberty exists in proportion to wholesome restraint." There is no such thing as true liberty, where there is no restraint.

The practice of substituting licentiousness for "liberty" has been around a long time. Over nineteen hundred years ago, Jude wrote, "For there are certain men crept in privily, even they who were of old, written of beforehand unto this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ" (Jude 4). This language shows that such practice is not just 1900 years old, but was "of old written of before!" Long before Jude's time, men were abusing the grace of God, by claiming "rights" entirely foreign to the provisions of grace. Ungodly men, then and now, presume on the grace of God. Their attempt, then and now, is to stretch the grace of God to include what they want, irrespective of the will of God and the rights of their fellow men.

Brother H. Leo Boles, in preaching on liberty, would swing his arm around, saying, "I have the right to swing my arm around, but my right ends where the other person's nose begins." The person who contends for certain things as his rights, without considering the rights of others, is ignorant or utterly indifferent to what constitutes true liberty.

Article one of the amendments to the Constitution of the United States of America forbids Congress making laws which denies freedom in certain areas of human activities. The Article states, "Congress shall make no laws respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of people peace-

ably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances."

Frequent attempts have been made to prostitute each of these freedoms to serve selfish interests and lusts. Space limitations will not permit a detailed discussion of each, so this paper will deal briefly with the "freedom of speech."

How should a Christian talk? The answer to this cannot be learned from the Constitution of the United States of America, nor from the interpretation of that Constitution made by the Supreme court of the United States. The bounds of freedom for the child of God are found in the Scriptures. Not all the passages bearing specifically on the freedom allowed the Christian can be examined, so the reader is urged to look up and examine all the passages that prescribe the kind of speech approved for the child of God by our heavenly Father.

The name of God is bandied about on TV, radio and in conversation. Characters on various shows seem to go out of the way to use the name of God in vain. Profanity is popular with those who "fear not God and regard not man." And sad to say, there are some who claim to be Christians who will take the name of God in vain.

But what is the law of God here?

Exodus 20:7 "Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain..."

Matthew 5:34-37 "... but I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by the heaven, for it is the throne of God; nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of his feet; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, for thou canst not make one hair white or black, but let your speech be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay; and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one."

Not only is the name of God blasphemed on TV, radio, press and in many conversations, but lying, vulgarity and other speech styles reflect a lack of refinement and utter disregard for the rights and feelings of others.

One of the characteristics of the unrighteous is, "With their tongues they have used deceit" (Romans 3:13). Jesus identifies liars as children of the devil. "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do . . . when he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father thereof" (John 8:44). God through John declared that for "all liars, their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death" (Revelation 21:8). Note also some other passages which limits our speech to truth. "Wherefore, putting away falsehood, speak ye truth each one with his neighbor" (Ephesians 4:25). "All liars" surely include lying advertising.

Corrupt speech, filthiness, foolish talking, jesting, etc., are prohibited. "Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for edifying. . ." (Ephesians 4:29). Corrupt speech does not become pure speech by reason of being used on TV, radio or magazines.

"He that would love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile" (1 Pet. 3:10).

David prayed, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Jehovah my rock, and my redeemer" (Psalms 19:14).

Another passage of scripture which is a restraint imposed upon our speech by God is Colossians 4:6: "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one." It makes no difference that society tolerates lewd, profane, and lying speech, the Christian must obey God rather than man.

CHRIST IS THE ANSWER, BUT WHAT IS THE QUESTION

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A popular slogan heard for several years asserts, "Christ is the answer." No Bible believer would be disposed to contradict a statement so obviously true, but an astute student of the Bible ought to question the application of this claim. To what question is He the answer? For what problem is He the solution? It should be immediately clear that Christ is not the answer to every Bible question or to every spiritual problem. It was not He, for instance, who revealed the mind of God to the apostles and prophets, but the Holy Spirit (Eph. 3:1-6). Furthermore, He is not the solution to the problem of a closed mind or dishonest heart. Honesty and a love of the truth are necessary in such a situation. Although we admit a limited application of the claim, such limitation should not prevent us from a beneficial consideration of the matter.

Some Questions To Which Christ Is the Answer

The first question to which Christ is the scriptural answer follows: **How can a holy God justify sinful man?** Given man's own sinfulness—a self-generated condition, not an inherited one—the question of the ages concerns the divine dilemma of God's finding a way to make man right and, at the same time, maintain His own honorable justice. This concern is the content of a wonderful passage of scripture, Romans 3:23-25. Paul's explanation of God's plan for man's justification includes grace, the basis; redemption in Christ, the means; propitiation, the effect; and God's righteousness, the demonstration. Upon no other basis than His gracious favor did God propose to make men righteous, utilizing no other means than purchase by blood. In consequence of this purpose it became possible for sin to be covered and God's demands to be satisfied, so that God's righteous character and plan became the focus of the entire scheme. The appropriation of such a blessing is then considered in the following verses (27-31), where the principle of faith is set forth as the means by which man actually becomes justified before God.

A second question to which Christ is the only answer asks, "What name shall we wear in religion?" In view of Christ's central role in the scheme of redemption, it should not surprise us that following His exaltation at God's right hand His power is celebrated in Acts 4:9-12 as Peter explained the healing of the lame man. After all, it was God's plan to give Him position of prominence and preeminence in the building of the spiritual temple (church), as the quotation from Psalms 118:22 shows. In a rather dogmatic claim, the apostle then added that salvation was not possible in another. He does not share His authority or His honor, two attributes of His name, with any other. It was Christ whom the Father suffered to be crucified! It was Christ whom the Father raised from the dead! It was Christ who was seated in honor at the Father's own right hand! It is Christ who presently carries out His unfinished work! To wear another's name is to deny Christ's authority and to honor another not nearly so deserving.

Question three with which we deal asks **how a Christian can overcome sin.** It should not surprise us to learn that such victory is possible in Christ, the very one through whom God proposed to save us and justify us. Romans 8:1-4 shows that the Christian, in walking according to the Spirit, is free from the law of sin and death. This achievement was not possible under the Law, nor is it possible under any system of law (legal justification). This same victory over sin after initial forgiveness is the subject of 1 John 1:7-9. By means of a continuing life of walking in light, fellowship with God and forgiveness of sins can be maintained. The maintenance of such blessedness, however, depends upon penitent confession of sins.

Yet another query that challenges our attention wonders **whether there is a clearly defined way to live to please God.** Here also, Christ is the answer. It is His example held forth for our adherence, in such passages as 1 Peter 2:21-24 and John 14:6. No other example so perfectly demonstrates the purpose and attitude necessary to gain God's favor. The purpose and attitude necessary to gain God's favor. The purpose of example is to clarify through demonstration. The math example shows mathematical principles at work. Jesus' example shows all principles of right and truth embodied in one person's effort to accomplish God's will. Just as the math example encourages a student by showing him how to work the problem, Christ's example serves to encourage Christians by showing them the relevance and application of the divine will to life.

The final question for our present consideration asks, **Can God really sympathize with one so wretched as I?** After Paul's lengthy description of a similar condition in his own life, he seemed to despair of success in serving God. "O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (Rom. 7:24). From the depth of despair the apostle then climbed the mountain of rejoicing, where he exulted, "I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!" Because of Jesus' acquaintance with earthly life and all of its temptations, He understands and sympathizes with us in our weaknesses (Heb. 4:15). Christ's earthly sojourn is God's assurance

to us that our needs do not escape His attention or our infirmities, His sympathetic care. In this boldness we need to pray to Him, for He gives mercy and favor in our time of need. Such assurance of an understanding ear is truly consoling to those admitting their weaknesses.

Some Problems to Which Christ Is the Solution

Christ came to solve the problem of truth for man. Sages and philosophers have pondered the enigma of what constitutes truth, while poets have filled the volumes of earth with their ideas and suppositions. Only Christ has given to man the authoritative solution; for He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." (Jn. 14:6). Notice the exclusiveness of that declaration, and then read further in the same verse to have the point made even more emphatic. "No one comes to the Father except by me." Not only is Jesus the way to God, but He also brought to the earth the truth whereby men might make that spiritual journey to God and enjoy that life Jesus offers. All other claimants to the status of truth in the spiritual realm are hereby relegated to the realm of falsehood. No teaching except that sanctioned by Jesus and given by Him or His apostles qualifies as truth. The long quest for truth can end in this consolation.

Because Jesus brought the truth of God's word to men, the **problem of enlightenment** is also solved. The Age of Enlightenment in the history of Europe and the United States was a fruitless fishing expedition: men were seeking enlightenment in a world of darkness, while the light was nearby all of the time. Jesus is the light of the world (Jn. 1: 4-9). As "God with us" (Matt. 1:23), He is "light, in whom is no darkness at all" (1 Jn. 1:5). His word partakes of that quality of light: it is the word of light (Psm. 119:105). His followers become the children of light as they walk in light (Eph. 5; 1 Jn. 1:7). There is no excuse for anyone remaining in spiritual darkness.

When one's sins are forgiven and he is walking in the light of truth, he is not alone. God is also there, as well as other children of light. The **problem of companionship** thus finds its solution in Christ. The Lord has promised, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5). When the disciple quits following, he leaves Christ through his own unbelief. Multitudes may and will oppose right and truth, but Christ and his "three hundred" enjoy the spiritual comradeship that will encourage faithfulness in spite of opposition.

There also is the solution for the **problem of human weakness**. Muscular strength will not win spiritual battles. Human will power by itself will sooner or later weaken. The Christian soldier needs to "stand fast" and to "be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might" (Eph. 6:10). Even as the Lord told the apostle Paul, in our weakness His strength is made perfect. It is for this reason that God's favor is sufficient to see the Christian through the conflict to a victorious end. There is no battle too arduous or foe too powerful for this Divine power available to the Christian. He need fear nothing as long as he continues his resolve to avail himself of this might, which exists in abundance.

In respect to God's redemptive plan, Christ is truly

God's "man for all seasons." Combining both divine and human natures (Phil. 2:5-8), he is competent to understand God's righteous demands and man's human needs and to meditate the difference existing between God and man. There is truly no spiritual problem which the Savior cannot help one solve.

The Savior's invitation of Matthew 11:28-30 beckons, "Come unto me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. . . ." Man's weakness is the occasion for God's power to be demonstrated. Man's extremity is God's opportunity.

Bring Christ your broken life,
So marred by sin;
He will create anew,
Make whole again.

Your empty, wasted years
He will restore, And your
iniquities Remember no
more.

WHERE ART THOU?

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Hollywood, Florida 33024

The Lord God had planted a beautiful garden in Eden and there he had placed the first man and woman. Adam and Eve were given only one law of restraint, "of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17). Satan came and deceived Eve by twisting God's Word. Eve broke God's law and sinned by eating the fruit of the forbidden tree. Then she gave the fruit to Adam and he also sinned and ate of the tree. Upon eating the fruit, they realized their nakedness and covered themselves, then they heard the Lord walking in the garden and in their shame and sin they tried to hide themselves from God. "And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, 'Where art thou?'" (Gen. 3:9).

God's question to Adam is the first recorded question in the Bible. It was a relevant question of tremendous importance. The question was asked by the God who had walked and talked with Adam and Eve before and from whom they now shamefully hid. He was their Creator, the all-knowing and all-seeing Jehovah (Ps. 139:1-10). Try as they might, they could not hide from God, he knew where they were.

If the Lord knew where Adam and Eve were, why did he ask? God did not ask the question for his sake, but for Adam and Eve's sake. He wanted them to realize where they were and why they were there. They were separated and hiding from the fellowship of God in shame because of their sin!

The first question recorded in the Bible is still a relevant and important question today. God is still asking "Where art thou? He asks the question of you and me. He knows the answer. How will you respond?"

With Respect To Salvation

If you are of the age to know right from wrong then you have transgressed the law of God and sinned. "Where art thou?", God asks. Are you trying to hide from God behind your sin and shame? Try as you might you will never hide from God, just as Adam and Eve could not hide from God in Eden. Do you really understand just where you are as a sinner? You are not really hiding, you are lost and headed for eternal destruction.

Jesus declared, "the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Lk. 19:10). He gave up everything to look for you. He "made himself of no reputation, taking the form of a servant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:6-8). If you understand where you are as a sinner, it is time to come out from hiding, be found by Jesus Christ and become obedient to him in faith and baptism.

When The Saints Assemble

When the saints assemble together on Sunday morning, Sunday evening, Wednesday evening and during Gospel meetings to worship God and study his word, "Where art thou?" God knows where you are when you are not meeting with other saints. He sees each and every person who professes to be a Christian who is sitting home watching TV, or out bowling or playing golf when the saints are assembled to worship God. As David asks, "Where can I go from your Spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence?" (Ps. 139:7).

In John 20:19-20, the disciples were assembled together on Sunday evening, except for Thomas. We do not know where Thomas was, but we know where he was not. In his absence, he missed the fellowship of the other disciples, the encouragement and shared faith and above all he missed having fellowship with the Lord. Fortunately the next Sunday, Thomas came out from hiding from the assembly of the disciples and was present with the disciples when Jesus appeared again. Will you come out of your hiding place this next Sunday and Wednesday evening?

When There Is Work To Be Done?

The Lord told the prophet Jonah that he had some work for him to do. The work was to go and preach to the city of Nineveh. "But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. He went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare, and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord" (Jonah 1:3). Jonah tried to pull the old Adam and Eve disappearing act on the Lord and he was just as unsuccessful as Adam and Eve. Jonah learned a hard lesson that he could not run away from the Lord and the work the Lord had for him to do?

"Where art thou" when there is work to be done for

the Lord? Are you running and hiding as Jonah and Adam and Eve had done before him? When the building needs to be cleaned or repair needs to be done, where art thou? When it comes time to make a contribution for the work of the Lord, where art thou? When visiting and teaching needs to be done, where art thou? It is truly amazing how quickly people disappear when the Lord's work needs to be done. You may hide from the elders, the preacher and even yourself, but you will never be able to run away from God when his work needs to be done.

On The Day Of Judgment

"Where art thou" when the day of judgment comes? Will you be on the left hand of the Lord ready to go into everlasting fire or on the right hand of the Lord ready to go into heaven? Where you were with respect to salvation, when the saints assembled and when there was work to be done, will determine where you will be on the day of judgment. Sadly, many will be in the same place they have always been—hiding from God. Those who spent this life hiding from God in sin and darkness will spend an eternity hidden away from God in shame in the farthest reaches of darkness.

It is time to stop hiding from God. It cannot be done. All one ends up doing is hiding from himself and reality. Come out into the light of God's salvation, be present when the saints assemble, be present when the Lord's work needs to be done and you will be on the Lord's right hand ready to inherit heaven on the day of judgment.

ACCEPTED OF HIM

(2 Cor. 5:9)

Donnie V. Rader

4724 E. Manslick Rd.
Louisville, KY 40219



"LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY"

"And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him. Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples" (Lk. 11:1). The disciples were desiring to learn **about** prayer and how to pray. Our attitude should be the same as theirs. I want to study about prayer and improve my praying. Do you feel the same way?

I'm afraid that we all neglect prayer. We are not as concerned about it as we should be. We don't pray as much or as often as we should or even could. It becomes much of a ritual of reciting words and phrases which have come to have no meaning to us. Care is not always taken to do it right. We do not always pray for things or people as we ought. Thus we, along with the disciples, must say, "Lord, teach us to pray."

Praying is something that we must learn to do. We

ask to be taught so many things (e.g. how to sew, speak, sing, play an instrument, type, speed read, et. al.). Why don't we ask how to pray or to be taught to pray? How many of us would make such a request? Is it that we feel that prayer is automatic or spontaneous? Do we think that we have some natural instinct about prayer that the disciples didn't have? Could it be that we do not have as great a desire to pray as the disciples had? Do we not care to pray properly?"

There are a few things that are indicated in the request that the disciples made of the Lord.

1. Indicates A DESIRE To Know How

I want to know how the Lord wants me to pray. I believe that was the very notion of each of these followers of Christ. The dedicated Christian whose soul "panteth . . . after . . . God" (Psa. 42:1), longs to come into his presence in request and thanksgiving.

If I had the opportunity to talk with the President or some king, I would make all the preparation I possibly could. I would read books, and ask hundreds of questions about how you talk to such an honorable person. I would want to know the proper way to address such an one. Certainly we should be no less considerate and careful in addressing the creator of the universe.

The request, "teach us to pray", says we want to know how to do it.

2. Indicates That We NEED To Be Taught How

Knowing how to pray properly doesn't come naturally. I think that we many times fail to observe this point in teaching the young and new converts. They learn how to pray by listening to the brethren who lead public prayers. While there is much good in that, there is more to learn about praying.

The fact that we need to be taught is seen in Matt. 6:9-13 when Jesus took the time to give his disciples a sample prayer and teach them how to do it. This fact is also seen in the realization that there can be and needs to be improvements in our praying. Oh yes, "Lord, teach us" for we need to be taught.

3. Indicates A WILLINGNESS To Be Taught

Many people desire to know more, but are not willing to let someone teach them. They simply are not eager enough to learn. They must be willing to let someone teach them. They simply are not eager enough to learn. We must be willing to learn and make any corrections that are demanded by the Lord's teaching. This, of course, requires a degree of humility. When we humble ourselves as a child (Matt. 18:1-4), who asks questions and opens his ears realizing that someone must teach him, our readiness to learn will be evident.

We must put forth great effort to improve our praying and overcome any and all hindrances (1 Pet. 3:7) that we may have. Our willingness to be taught means that we will not be offended by the suggestions made for our improvement.

4. Indicates A Realization Of Its IMPORTANCE

Prayer is not a matter about which we are to be casual or careless. The disciples realized that prayer was of such importance that they must learn how it is to be

done. Is not talking to our creator important? Is it not worthy of the time and effort it takes to be taught? After all, remember that our spiritual life and salvation are dependent upon your prayers.

SIMPLICITY IN CHRIST

P. J. Casebolt

P.O. Box 1487
Chiefland, FL 32626



IGNORANCE, INCREASE, AND LEADERSHIP

The above mentioned ingredients are a sure recipe for destruction, shame, and rejection. Many of God's people have experienced such adversity, never knowing what caused their predicament. For others, the truth dawned too late to do them any good. A few learned their lesson, have tried to warn others. Where do you fit into the picture?

It may not always be clear which of these ingredients is first placed in the mixing bowl, or in what proportion, but where one is, the others are, have been, or soon will be. Even those who reject the idea that the destiny of God's people is determined by any kind of pattern, are destined to become a part of the very pattern which they repudiate.

Ignorance

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee..." (Hos. 4:6).

There may be several reasons for ignorance, including willingness on the part of those so afflicted (2 Pet. 3:5). As terrible as it is to see someone perish through ignorance, the fact remains that we are still accountable to God (Acts 17:30). There certainly is no excuse for ignorance of God's will in a land so abundantly blessed with Bibles and education.

And, just as Israel had access to the law and the prophets which were read in their synagogues, many of God's people today are able to sit in Bible classes and still not see and hear what they are reading. They allow their minds to be manipulated, and their positions assigned to them without ever investigating the truthfulness or the logic of such positions.

Increase

"As they were increased, so they sinned against me: therefore will I change their glory into shame" (Hos. 4:7). It is ironic and tragic that God's people tend to get weaker as they multiply. This need not be the case, and for a time may not be the case, but eventually the pattern falls into place.

Like Israel, we become lifted up with pride, overestimate our own power, and forsake the very principles

which gave us our increase. We then turn to the world to boast and to compare with human accomplishment, and become lost in the hordes of others who travel the broad way (Ex. 23:2; Mt. 7:13,14).

Leadership

"... O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths" (Isa. 3:12). It is no small wonder that so much is said about the qualifications and responsibility of those who lead the people of God, in both Old and New Testaments. Surely, irresponsible leadership can only account for so much ignorance among so many people.

Jeroboam knew that if the people were to continue following him, he would have to keep them away from Jerusalem, away from the source of knowledge (1 Ki. 12:26,27). And, though the majority followed him, "... this thing became a sin..." (v.30).

Catholicism thrives where ignorance of God's word prevails. It is no secret that the Catholic church does not want the Bible in the hands of the "laity," and history is replete with incidents which resulted from efforts of the clergy to keep the Bible from even being printed "in the vernacular" (native language). And, in those countries where Catholicism is in control, ignorance, superstition and idolatry abound.

To a lesser degree, it has also been the course of modern Protestantism to substitute human creeds and

knowledge for the Bible. While lip-service is paid to the Bible, the people are nearly totally ignorant of what the Bible teaches, and their leaders are determined to keep it that way. Their doctrines and practices will wilt under the searching light of God's word.

Sadly, many are the instances among God's people where their leaders (elders and preachers), are determined to keep their followers ignorant of the real issues which trouble them. Those preachers and elders who promote the innovations which divide the body of Christ are experts in avoiding situations where their positions can be examined in open, fair discussion. They are not going to tell their brethren the truth, and will do their best to see that no one else does. They can't afford to let their sheep get the scent of fresh water and green pastures if their meager fare is to be the menu of the day. Yet, in view of the judgment, and the reward for leaders, they can't afford not to.

BOUND VOLUME 25-26 (1984-85)

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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

T.T. CARNEY

We are saddened to learn of the death of brother Truman T. Carney. Brother Carney preached in the St. Louis area for many years. For the past several years he had lived in Mayfield, Kentucky. I have heard many fine comments from others about his love and dedication to God and his word. We extend our deepest sympathy to sister Carney and all his many friends and loved ones.
James Hahn, Hazelwood, Missouri.

OLEN HOLDERBY, 2010 N. Sierra Vista, Fresno, CA 93703 — Several years have passed since last report from Fresno. There are several encouraging signs in the work here. As of last year, all our facilities are free of debt, new seating has been installed and paid for and all necessary equipment bought and paid for. We are now assisting in the support of two preachers in other areas, regularly, and have given temporary help to several more. We have had a fluctuating membership, due to employment (or lack of it). Several stable families have placed membership with us this year. We have recently baptized 15, all adults but one. Attendance has stabilized to 90-110. Several classes are under way at any given time with members and non-members. We use in our adult classes a modified version of the "Round-Robin" type of teaching, and it is working very well for us. We do not have elders yet but are looking in that direction. We are working peacefully and in harmony. We have a considerable number of out-of-town visitors. Should you come our way, please visit us. Should you have anyone in this area you would like for us to visit, please let us know.

PAUL K. WILLIAMS, 18 Fairlie Rd., Eshowe, 3815 South Africa — David Nkonyama reports four baptized at Ingwavuma and the church strengthened. Two others were baptized here. Gene Tope was here is a

gospel meeting in July.

RUBEN C. AMADOR, P.O. Box 7274, Houston, TX 77248, reports a safe and profitable trip to Argentina in July. He visited congregations in five cities, preached much and reports three baptisms on the trip. His report indicates much progress in the work in that country.

NEW BUILDING IN BUENOS AIRES

CARLOS A. CAPELLI, Casilla #83, 1665 Jose C. Paz, Buenos Aires, Argentina, reports that the Jose C. Paz church is now in their new building. Ruben Amador conducted the first meeting in this facility. While the building still lacks some things on the interior, it will seat 100 persons and has three classrooms. They still need pews. 110 attended the first service in the new building. Two were recently baptized in Mendoza, Argentina where Fernando P. Venegas preaches.

OSCAR ELLISON AVAILABLE FOR MEETINGS

OSCAR ELLISON, 1426 E. Glenwood, Springfield, MO 65804 — We have moved to Springfield to spend the rest of our lives and are doing what we can to help the new congregation which purchased choice ground at 216 E. Walnut Lawn in S.W. Springfield. It has a small house on it where we are meeting until other plans can materialize. We are remodeling it to make it as attractive and practical as possible. Brother Tom Shiflett, a retired math teacher from SMSU, is doing most of the preaching as a labor of love. I am available for gospel meetings wherever I am needed and plan to donate whatever I am paid to help retire the debt on the property. But I am available for such work whether or not brethren can support me. I hope to spend the final years of my active life doing this. (Editor's note: Brother Oscar Ellison is a most able student of the

word and has much to offer. His preaching is excellent and he would do brethren good anywhere. Brethren need to hear what men of his knowledge and experience have to say. I am honored to count him among my friends. His writings in THE PRECEPTOR for many years did much good. He has been a great help to the work in earlier years in southwest Missouri, and more recently in Oregon and Arizona. He loves the cause of truth and is unselfishly devoted to it. CWA)

PREACHERS NEEDED

WAVERLY, TENNESSEE — The East Side church in Waverly needs a full time preacher. Attendance runs 40-50. Some outside support will be needed. We are located 65 miles west of Nashville near Kentucky Lake. Call Ray Gentry (615) 582-3806 or Robert Paschall (615) 582-3033; or write the congregation at: P.O. Box 207, Waverly, TN 37185.

ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA —Our preacher is moving and we are presently looking for a preacher to work with us. We would prefer an older man. Anyone interested should write to the church at: 892 Haywood Rd., Asheville, NC 28806.

PREACHER AVAILABLE

JOHN BERLIN, 5396 Winchester Ave., Sciotoville, OH 45662 — Having resigned our work with the Sciotoville, Ohio congregation, I am now looking for work with another congregation. I have been preaching fourteen years now. I would like to relocate as soon as possible. Write me at the above address, or call (614) 776-2239.

SEEKS CONTACTS

JAMES H. BAKER, JR., P.O. Box 44012, Philadelphia, PA 19144 —I am interested in making contacts with all faithful black preachers of the gospel whom I do not already know. I am a young black preacher (29 years old). (Editor's note: Brother Baker is doing a fine work in Philadelphia, from all reports. A.C. Grider was there with him in a meeting a few months ago and was much impressed with the work being done. CWA)

IN NEW BUILDING

JERRY ACCETTURA, 7479 Moon Road, Columbus, GA 31909 — After 55 years of meeting at 2216 Hamilton Road in Columbus, the Rose Hill congregation met on August 31, 1986 in its new location at 7479 Moon Road. This is north of the Airport from exit 6 off of I-185. We welcome all visitors to this area or those moving into this area.

JIM ALLEN, 2101 King St., Beaufort, SC 29902— In late May, 1986, I began work with the church in Beaufort, SC, a lovely town of 30,000 located near the Atlantic Ocean in the southern part of the state. We are near several resort areas to which many visitors come each summer. Hilton Head is one of these. Every Sunday, a group of men from the congregation holds services for Marine recruits at Parris Island. This has been done for many years and has helped many young men and women to obey the gospel. If you know of anyone stationed at Parris Island or the Marine Air Station, please let us know. You may want to write us at P.O. Box 4, Beaufort, SC 29902. We invite you to meet with us when visiting or vacationing in the area. We meet at 2107 King St. For more information you may call (803) 524-4400 or 524-4652.

MIKE SCOTT, P.O. Box 53, Middletown, IN 47356 — For the past four years we have worked with the small, rural church here. We have 30-35 in attendance. We need "brave volunteers" to come and work with us. Your services can be utilized almost immediately. We have a challenge in this community. Since coming here in 1982, several have been baptized, a few restored and numerous home Bible studies have been conducted. We have more work than able bodied members to do it. Write me at the above address or call me at (317) 354-4361 or 354-4776.

WAYNE S. WALKER, 5170 Chippewa Rd., Medina, OH 44256 —I was involved in four gospel meetings this past spring. April 14-18 I led singing and taught singing classes while Jeff Smelser preached each evening at 7th and Parish in Uhrichsville, Ohio. Mike Reidelbach preaches there regularly. April 20-25 I was with the church at Wheelersburg (near Portsmouth), Ohio. Danny Holton has moved

there since the meeting. May 5-11 I was in Cambridge, Ohio where Mike Vierheller is located. May 18-23 I was with Silver Park in Alliance, Ohio where Jack Jones preaches. I will be in a vacation Bible school in Ft. Wayne, Indiana in July and in a meeting in Covina, California in October.

At Medina, our spring meeting was with Mike Reidelbach. An architect is currently working on plans for our new building. We are losing two families this summer, but have recently baptized one and had a family of three place membership with us. I will lose \$200 a month in support in October and need to replace it.

MIKE HUGHES, 530 N. Bayou, Cleveland, MS 38732 — On July 18, we began work with the church meeting on Rosemary Road in Cleveland, MS. The brethren have a good attitude toward upholding the truth. We will yet need some outside support.

KEVIN A. SULC, P.O. Box 463, Westfield, IN 46704 — Since coming here we have had some growth. Three have been baptized and two restored. Two families have begun to work and worship with us. We now have 29 members with 42, counting children, in attendance. We have marked one who fell away. We have started a local bulletin called The Water. We are striving to read through the Bible this year. We have tried to better organize Bible classes and have added a class. Several home studies have been conducted. We have had three well attended gospel meetings the past year with Alan Jones, myself, and Robert Speer doing the speaking. We plan a meeting this fall with different speakers on the book of Hebrews. Alan Jones, Phil Morgan, Joe McCameron and myself are still going to the State Reformatory in Pendleton, IN to study the Bible with a few of the inmates. During this past year I was married to Lauri, a wonderful co-worker and thank her for her support and help. Visit us when in the area. We meet at the corner of Main St. and Cherry St. in Westfield (Main St is S.R. 32).

BOUND VOLUMES FOR SALE

ART ADAMS, 2805 Russell St., Portage, IN 46368 —I have Volumes 5-26 of SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES for sale at a reasonable price. Purchaser must pay the shipping. I am not interested in splitting the set. I also have bound volumes of other periodicals for sale plus some commentaries and other books. Anyone interested may send for a list of these books.

SUTTON-FROST DEBATES

Carrol R. Sutton and Jack L. Frost (of the "Corona End Time Tabernacle of True Holiness Church" of Berry, Alabama) have signed an agreement to have several public debates. The first one is scheduled for Sept. 8,9,11 and 12,1986 at the South Tuscaloosa church of Christ, 501 37th St. East, in Tuscaloosa. Time will be 7:30 p.m. The first two nights Carrol R. Sutton will affirm water baptism is essential to obtain the forgiveness of sins by an alien sinner. The last two nights, Jack L. Frost will affirm that water baptism is NOT essential to obtain forgiveness of sins by the alien sinner.

A second debate is scheduled for Nov. 10,11,13and14,1986at7:30 p.m. at a place in Tuscaloosa to be provided by Mr. Frost. At that time Mr. Frost will affirm that "The scriptures teach that the only scriptural mode of baptism ordained of God is sprinkling and pouring." Carrol R. Sutton will affirm that "The scriptures teach that immersion (a burial in water) is the only proper action of baptism." For more information regarding these debates, please contact either Bob Mitchell at (205) 752-9000 or Bob Smith at (205) 345-2378.

**POET'S CORNER
WEEP NO MORE**

Isaiah wrote of one great age to be
With mercy, justice, and God's grace in store.
"When He shall hear He then will answer thee."
God promised that His saints would weep no more.

Refrain:

Weep no more. Weep no more.
After tears are wiped away In
that glorious happy day God's
people shall weep no more.

He bindeth up the hurt of all His own.
The stroke of grievous wounds He healeth, Too.
The Lord will be exalted on His throne
So that he may have mercy unto you.

How blessed are the ones who wait for Him!
How clearly rings their laughter's cheerful sound!
He surely will be gracious unto them
In fruitful Zion where true joy is found.

O.E. Watts

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EDITORIAL LEFT-OVERS

* * * * *

FORKLAND HERITAGE

One of the fringe benefits of the work I do includes meeting interesting people in interesting places. I was recently in my second meeting with the Sycamore church near Gravel Switch, Kentucky (about 18 miles from Danville, KY, in the heart of Blue Grass Country). The church there dates back to 1840. They have been meeting in the present building since 1890 (except for a recent classroom addition to one side). The church is served by three good elders. Larry Barker, one of the elders, preaches for them. Attendance runs about 100. The building is well kept and has a certain elegance about it. The community, situated in a valley along the North Rolling Fork River, is unique. Several years ago, when schools in that county consolidated, community residents bought the old school property for the community. It has become a center for wholesome community activity. Each year on the second Friday and Saturday of October (Oct. 10 and 11

this year) they hold the FORKLAND HERITAGE FESTIVAL on the premises of the old school. Only community people participate and all crafts and items for sale or on display at this event, are made by people in that community. For two nights there is a pageant presented in the old gym-auditorium using community people. The play is built around events which have happened there over the years. It is written and directed by the former principal of the school (for 40 years). She is also a member of the Sycamore church. Quilts, sorghum molasses, woodcrafts, ham biscuits, folk entertainment, hay rides, and other pleasantries which bring back yesteryear are in abundance. Last year over 22,000 people attended. I was there one day year before last for a memorable few hours. I just thought our readers might like to read a little bit of good neighborhood news for a change.

* * * * *

CAUGHT IN COUP ATTEMPT

Levy Maravilla, one of the elders of the Hazelwood, MO church, his wife Connie and son Mike, were staying in Manila, Philippines at the Manila Hotel in July, during the time of the attempted coup by one of Marcos' supporters. The hotel was the nerve center of the attempted governmental takeover. As you know, it ended without bloodshed after a few hours. The Maravillas were not harmed, but had an experience I am sure they would not like to repeat anytime soon!

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	396
RESTORATIONS	141
(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)	

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 XXVII

OCTOBER, 1986

Number 10

THINK ON THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 1631
Lutz, FL 33549



KEEPING THE HEART WITH DILIGENCE

The Holy Spirit said, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23). This is a vital charge to every man and woman of responsibility who walks the path of life, and who must come before the judgment bar of God. No greater charge has been given to humanity.

The heart is that part of man from which flows his convictions, affections and will, and it determines his course of life. W. E. Vine describes the use of this word in the Bible as meaning man's entire mental and moral activity, "both the rational and the emotional elements." The heart includes the intellect, emotion and volition of man. The functions of the heart, as described by the word of God, include: the understanding, the perceptions, the determinations, the reasoning, the desires, joys, sorrows, and griefs, the thoughts, the intentions and purposes, and the conscience.

The "issues of life" indicate all elements of life: the thoughts, words and deeds. The heart is the center of man's life, and his life will show the state of his heart. Jesus said, "A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things" (Matthew 12:35).

Jesus gave a parable, recorded in Matthew 13 and Luke 8, that presented the state of the heart as the soils into which the seed, which is the word of God, was sown. Jesus depicted these soils as different conditions of the heart to which the word of God was preached. The only

soil that produced the acceptable harvest in the sight of the Master was that "honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience" (Luke 8:15). But who makes that heart honest and good? The word of God produces acceptable obedience only in the honest and good heart. The person himself makes the heart honest and good, or deceitful and evil. Jesus taught that when he said: "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: these are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man" (Matt. 15:18-20).

The gospel of Christ is addressed to the heart of man, not to his belly or social needs. "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14:17). Man is changed from the inside—from his heart. That is why the social gospel has failed to convert man to serve the Lord; it appeals to the appetites and not to the heart of man.

Salvation from sins does not occur until man turns from his sins and to the Lord. This is accomplished by repentance, which necessitates faith. Faith comes by hearing the word of God, and from no other source (Romans 10:17). Genuine faith produces repentance which results in the cessation from sin and the reformation of life. All this comes from the heart. If the heart is not honest and good, faith and repentance will not follow. "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:9, 10).

The gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16), is addressed to the heart to produce faith (10:17), and obedience comes from the heart (6:17). Unless the heart is honest and good, it will not receive the gospel by which that person can be saved. This makes the man responsible for the integrity of his heart.

This thought is further emphasized by the teaching of Jesus regarding an evil heart. He said one commits adultery in his heart by looking on a woman to lust after

her (Matthew 5:28). That is sin, yet it is only in the heart. Jesus describes the heart condition of the scribes and Pharisees and many who followed them as "This people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them" (Matthew 13:15). By refusing to hear and see and understand with their heart, they could not be converted that Jesus might heal them. These were responsible for the condition of their hearts, and their salvation depended upon how their hearts received the truth which Jesus taught. This same lesson is taught in Acts 28:27).

Simon the sorcerer was a deceiver and bewitched many people in Samaria. But when he heard the gospel preached by Philip he believed also and was baptized. He continued with Philip, observing the miracles which he did, but when Peter and John came down and imparted spiritual gifts unto them, Simon saw this and offered them money for this gift. Peter said to Simon: "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity" (Acts 8:20-23). Simon asked Peter to pray for him that "none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me" (vs. 24). Even if one's heart is right to receive the word to be saved, he must guard his heart lest it become "not right in the sight of God." The Holy Spirit said, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (Hebrews 3:12).

When the heart will allow it, Satan will enter and lead one into all kinds of evil, in thought, word and deed. Satan entered the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray Jesus (John 13:2). Ananias with his wife Sapphira lied about his gift to the work of the Lord. Peter asked, "Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back a part of the price?" (Acts 5:3). Satan enters the heart and fills it to do evil. The question by Peter to Ananias indicated that he could know why Satan filled his heart. He had to give consent. Satan can not get into the heart unless that person allows it. That makes him responsible for the condition of his heart in the area of honesty and goodness.

But the Lord "opens" the heart with the power of the gospel. Those on Pentecost were "pricked" in their heart by the gospel which Peter and the other apostles preached. They were convicted by the gospel which they allowed to enter their hearts. Others on that same occasion rejected the gospel because they did not allow the truth to enter their hearts. The Lord opened the heart of Lydia by the things which were spoken by Paul, and she was baptized and her household (Acts 16:14, 15). Without hearing the gospel, the Lord would not have opened her heart. This simply means that as Satan "entered" and "filled" the heart by temptations to be-

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tray Christ and lie to the Holy Ghost, so the Lord "opened" the heart of Lydia by the leading of the Spirit through the gospel which was preached to her. The hearts had to be ready to receive what was proclaimed to them.

"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23).

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Editorial

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"WHAT SHALL A MAN GIVE IN EXCHANGE FOR HIS SOUL?"

Jesus raised questions which got to the very heart of things. "What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he?" "The baptism of John, was it of heaven, or of men?" "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" In Matthew 16:24-26, he dealt with the crux of discipleship in a few words and then raised the penetrating question which heads this article. "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" This has proved to be a "hard saying" to many. The first rule of discipleship is self-denial. Contrary to humanistic philosophy, you are not first! If you think you are first, you cannot serve the Lord. Self-fulfillment comes only in a life of complete surrender to the majestic authority of Jesus Christ. That is what it means to accept him as "Lord." "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness . . ." (Mt. 6:33). In fact, we cannot even be second and serve the Lord. "But in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Phil. 2:3-4). The Lord must be first, others come next and we come in third! That is a far cry from the petty selfishness of the "me" generation.

The next rule of discipleship is "take up his cross." Luke's account adds "daily" indicating this to be a continual acceptance of the responsibilities associated with serving the Lord. "And follow me" indicates a daily continuance in all that phrase includes. Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice and they follow me."

One who seeks to secure the interests of life to the neglect of his soul, "shall lose it." That is, he loses the only life that really matters. One who loses his life, not just in martyrdom, but in total surrender in service, making his body "a living sacrifice" shall find it. That is, he secures the only life that counts.

In verse 26, Jesus raised the profound question about the profit of gaining all the world and losing one's soul. That would be "saving his life" while losing it. What would really be a fair exchange for the soul? These questions raise at least three fundamental considerations.

We Have Souls

Man is composed of "spirit, soul and body" (1 Thes. 5:23). "Body" (SOMA) is the house in which we dwell. "Soul (PSUCHE) has to do with the animate part of our existence. We have a life principle, breath. We hold this in common with the animal creation and some passages mean nothing more than this when using this word. The context determines this. "Spirit" (PNEUMA) is the rational part of our existence. It is man's spirit which is fashioned in the image of God. It is to this "spirit" that God addressed his revelation. Through this "spirit" we understand the things of God and hold our communion with him. "Spirit" is the vital link between God and man. But sometimes the word "soul" is used to mean the same thing as "spirit." In Mt. 16:24, the context shows clearly that Jesus has in mind the soul-life. Losing one's life here is not just equated with shortness of breath.

There is a part of us that will never die. In Mt. 17:3, Jesus, on the mount of Transfiguration, met and talked with Moses and Elijah, both of whom had left earthly existence hundreds of years before that time. They had not been annihilated. They had form, consciousness and rationality. In Mt. 22:32, Jesus rebuked the Sadducees, who did not believe in a resurrection or after-life, by quoting Exodus 3:6 where God said "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Then Jesus clinched it when he said "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." When God first made that statement in Exodus 3:6, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had all been dead a long time. Yet, God was the God of the living, not the dead. The conclusion was inescapable: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were yet alive. Something about them did not die.

Jesus emphasized the **great value of a soul** when he placed the whole world and its contents in contrast to just one soul. If you owned every piece of real estate on every continent on earth, if all the jewels and precious substances of earth were heaped together until they constituted a mountain range of glittering wealth, and if every imposing structure erected through the ingenuity of man were yours, and you then died and went to Hell, the Lord's question stands. What did it profit you? You would have died a pauper.

The true value of a soul can best be understood when we contemplate what God and Christ did to save a soul from eternal punishment. God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love, wherewith he loved us, manifested his amazing grace in emptying Heaven of Him who thought it not robbery to be equal with God. Jesus, emptied himself of the exalted rank he held in Heaven to take upon himself the form of a servant, to be spit upon, denied, and rejected by the very nation whose greatest nobility was in providing the lineage for the Messiah. He was betrayed by a friend, mocked in a trial, made the object of ridicule by crude soldiers, and finally delivered to be crucified after the Roman procurator three times proclaimed him innocent of any charge worthy of death. He was nailed to a cross and died between two thieves. His agony was intense. Even nature rebelled for it turned dark at midday and there was an earthquake. If

you ever wonder how precious your soul really is, then please think of these events. All of that happened because we have souls for which God cared. The salvation of your soul is the most important issue with which you have to deal.

Exchanging Souls for Unworthy Objects

How foolish to see so many exchanging their souls for wealth. Money takes on the character of its owner. It is neither right nor wrong within itself. But the quest for it at the expense of the needs of the soul has destroyed many. The love of it is the root of all kinds of evil, Paul said.

Some are trading their souls for what is called a "living." We must eat, sleep, be clothed and housed. We have been made with the capacity for work so that we might provide for ourselves and our own families. It is sad that so many have confused a "living" with true life. That is a foolish trade-off.

Some are trading their souls for pleasure. All pleasure is not wrong, although there is pleasure in sin (Heb. 11:25). Much pleasure may be derived from family and social ties and from recreational activities. But none of these should displace the interests of the soul. "For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. 4:8). Some of the brethren do not believe this to be true. They teach their I children that athletic activities are of greater value than 'worshipping the Lord. If that is not true, how do you account for the fact that when there is a choice to be made and a time conflict, the worship of God comes in second? Is this the meaning of self-denial? Is a family reunion, a ball-game, a fishing trip to an area where it is too far to meet with saints on the Lord's day, better than being at the table of the Lord at the appointed time? Are boats, campers, fishing gear, golfing and tennis gear, TV's, VCR's and the popular magazines of the day, important items for the family budget, while support for the Lord's work, and useful books and supplies to help develop our spiritual needs of only questionable value?

I have known several in my lifetime who have traded their souls for **fame**. Young people with great musical talent, are sometimes bitten by this bug. It is extremely difficult to maintain one's balance in the heady world of entertainment without giving in to the temptations and pressures associated with "paying your dues." The call to political office has led some good people to compro-mise values. I have seen some lives wrecked by this. To be idolized as a star athlete is pretty heady stuff. Some have lost their way while climbing the corporate ladder. It is not wrong to be well-known for whatever you do. If you do it very well, the chances are good that others will find out about it. Just don't wind up trading your soul for fame. Preachers are not immune to this disease. We are servants and we ought to be that whether anyone notices or not.

We have souls which are precious in the sight of God and nothing in all the world is of greater value than saving them. What would you give in exchange for yours?

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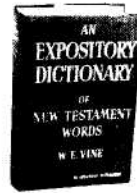
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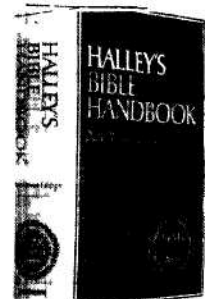
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HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

I've been involved in Bible call—in radio and T.V. programs for over sixteen years now. I am constantly amazed at the variety and nature of the questions we receive.

I have found it preferable to not deal with questions which are written in, unless there are no calls on the line. This rule encourages people to call, and live calls are one of the primary attention getters of this type of format.

Sometimes I make exceptions to this rule, and such an exception was made recently when I received the following letter from a concerned mother: Dear Brother Green,

My husband and I are members of the church and watch your program as often as possible. We are impressed by your knowledge of the scriptures and your quick replies to callers. I have a question that I hope and pray that you can answer on your next program. It is hard for me to call in at that time so I hope you can answer this on your program or write an answer back to me.

I need to give you a little detail concerning this question, please bear with me while I explain.

About a year and a half ago my husband made some unfatherly advances to our daughter (she had just turned 12). To make a long story short—he says that he later realized what he was doing was sin, prayed, asked forgiveness and "poured his heart out" to her and asked her to keep it "our little secret." He said that she promised to do so. Having all of this on her conscience and feeling confused and guilty, she told me (her mother) about it. Well, when I confronted him, he became angry at her, said she lied to him, and therefore, according to the Bible, said he should treat her as an erring Christian (she is a member of the church, too) until she truly repents and apologizes to him for lying.

Since then he has treated her badly, gives favors to our other two children, and practically refuses to have much to do with her because she will not repent and apologize. Brother Green, this has broken her heart and torn our family apart also. She feels that he hates her and he says it would be giving in to "situation ethics" to forgive her when she hasn't repented of her sin of lying. We have talked with counselors (not necessarily Christians) about this and they believe he is wrong and doing great emotional harm to her. I would like to know what your view is on this and what the Bible says he should do. Could you please answer this on your program? My

husband watches your program every week and he suggested that I call in and ask about this, but I felt the need to give you the background (which would have been hard to do over the phone). My husband really respects your knowledge of God's Word and he said that if it could be shown to him that he was wrong, he would change his treatment of her. Or should she really repent of telling me about this situation? Please answer this as soon as possible as I love both of them and I feel very crushed between them. Thank you.

How would you have answered?

I'm not at all sure that I answered as I should have, but here is essentially my reply:

1. The father is the sinner and guilty party in this matter. He has sinned against the child. He has not been the kind of father or this could never have occurred. As a father of four children, three of them daughters, I just cannot imagine such unnatural feelings and lusts arising. I'm convinced that such is impossible when one is living a decent life and being a loving and dedicated daddy. His sin, therefore, goes beyond this specific deed. That such a thing could happen demonstrates that he has not established and developed a proper relationship with this child.

Furthermore, his present disposition demonstrates this very fact. His attitude and demands are not indicative of the proper love and concern for the child.

2. He is an adult and she is a child. Becoming a Christian does not change a child into an adult. He is an adult who is refusing to accept the responsibilities of adulthood and fatherhood while expecting his little daughter to act like an adult. As a result, he is disobeying Eph. 6:4: "Fathers provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

3. This father asked his daughter to do something that he had no right to ask. He had no valid basis upon which to expect her to keep such a secret. And if she, in her confusion and fear, promised to do so, it was a promise she ought not to have kept. Some promises should not be kept. Herod's promise to his step daughter (Matt. 14:7) should not have been kept.

The wife and mother in this family had every right to know what had happened. The daughter needed to tell for her own emotional well-being.

This father needs to repent and start trying to be a father, though he has likely lost his chance with this child.

4. This wife, I believe, has Scriptural grounds for divorce (Matt. 19:9). Fornication is sexual immorality, and there is certainly evidence of such in his life.

If this wife is willing to give him another chance, then he should count himself fortunate and clean up his act.

If I were this mother, I would keep a close eye on this situation and try to be as certain as possible that my children were not subjected to any further pain and trauma because of this kind of problem. (End of comments.)

I have not heard again from this family. I have prayed and continue to pray for this child and others who are victims of such abuse.

WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

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ENGAGED OR MARRIED TO CHRIST?

QUESTION: *Brother _____ teaches that the second coming of Christ will marry the church. He said the church and Christ are not yet married and that is why we are waiting on the second coming of Christ in order for Christ to marry the church. What can you say about this statement of bro. _____?*

ANSWER: Several entertain the position of the above brother. E. M. Zerr, commenting on 2 Cor. 11:2, said: "Paul had led the Corinthians in obedience to Christ, which was the time they became engaged to Him, the marriage to be celebrated when the bridegroom comes for that purpose" (*Bible Commentary*, Vol. 6, p. 63). Macknight wrote: "The betrothing of persons to Christ is accomplished in the present life; but their marriage is to happen in the life to come; when they shall be brought home to their husband's house, to live with him for ever" (*Apostolical Epistles*, p. 241). Others of like persuasion could be cited but to quote them would be redundant and space is limited.

The notion that the church is not married to Christ is based on the metaphorical figure of the church being espoused or betrothed to Christ. Paul said to the Corinthians: ". . . for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Cor. 11:2). The argument is made that "espousal" was comparable to "engagement" today, and since Paul said, "I have espoused you to one husband," he was simply stating that "I have engaged you to Christ."

The basic fallacy in the preceding reasoning is that "espoused" is not the same as "marital engagement." The word, "espoused," in 2 Cor. 11:2 denotes a much stronger and a more sacred bond than "engagement" does in our vernacular as the following statements and declarations show. We read:

"From the time of espousal, however, the woman was considered as the lawful wife of the man to whom she was betrothed: the engagement could not be ended by the man without a bill of divorcement; nor could she be unfaithful without being considered an adulteress" (McClintock & Strong, Vol. 1, p. 792).

"Betrothal with the ancient Hebrews was of a more formal and far more binding nature than the 'engagement' is with us. Indeed, it was esteemed a part of the transaction of marriage, and that the most binding part . . . The betrothed parties were legally in the position of a married couple, and unfaithfulness was 'adultery' (Dt. 22:23; Mt. 1:19)" (I.S.B.E., Vol. 3, pp. 1997-98).

"*Espoused* does not mean necessarily *married*; but when joined with the word *husband*, it means *married*. The church certainly has as close a union with God as did the Jews. Then the church is bearing and nurturing children to God. Certainly the church is not bearing children before she is married. I know of no single passage of scripture that intimates that anything like a marriage is to take place at the resurrection" (*Questions Answered*, Lipscomb & Sewell, p. 431).

"As here (2 Cor. 11:2, WEW), of betrothing, or taking to wife" (*Word Studies in the New Testament*, Vincent, Vol. 3, p. 345).

"The word here used (*harmozo*) means properly to adapt, to fit, to join together. Hence to join in wedlock, to marry. Here it means to marry to another" (2 *Corinthians-Galatians*, Barnes, p. 222).

Finally, we read: "to join, unite in marriage, espouse, betroth, 2 Cor. 11:2" (*The Analytical Greek Lexicon*, p. 51). And, "to betroth, to give one in marriage to any one" (Thayer, p. 74).

From the preceding definitions and quotations, I think we can confidently say that the church is married to Christ, now. There is nothing else to finalize, legitimize or consummate. The redeemed are now members of Jesus' body, of his flesh, and of his bones (Eph. 5:30), and they sustain, spiritually, the same relationship as a husband-wife sustain, physically (cf. Eph. 5:22-33). Paul also wrote: "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God" (Rom. 7:4). The word, "married," in the text is from the Greek word, *ginomai*, and it means, "to become a man's wife" (Thayer, p. 116). The NASB translates the verse, "that ye might be joined to another." Hence, the church is married to Christ.

Some use the Parable of the Ten Virgins in Matt. 25:1-13 as a proof-text that the church is not now the bride of Christ. But in that story Jesus was simply using an ancient marriage custom to teach preparation for His second coming. The five wise virgins would be the faithful, prepared members of the church, and they went to the marriage in the parable as assistants and guests of the bridegroom, not as the bride. To make this parable represent the church's marriage to Christ has the church left out of the marriage, altogether.

Used in conjunction with Matt. 20:1-13 is Rev. 19:7-9. Here we are told the "marriage supper of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready... Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." The thinking is that the passage shows the church at home with God where the marriage to Christ is finalized, with the marriage feast and festivities accompanying it.

Foy E. Wallace, commenting on Rev. 19:7-9, stated: "The symbolism expressed in *the marriage of the Lamb of verse seven*, signified the blessed union of the church with Christ, the Head . . . This marriage occurs every time one is baptized into Christ, and it is therefore always in process and is continuous . . . As the marriage itself is continuous, so must be the marriage supper,

and it symbolized the continuous fellowship of all who are united to Christ, and it is as continuous as the baptism of believers and of the church itself" *Book of Revelation*, p. 388). Hence, we conclude that marriage to Christ is now going on and the marriage supper, figuratively speaking is now being eaten.

One final observation on 2 Cor. 11:2. Some contend that Paul engaged the church at Corinth to Christ through conversion, and he desired to present the church to Christ at the judgment for marriage as a chaste virgin. But this is reading into the text what is not there.

The word, "present," is a translation of *paristemi* which means, "to present or show, *tina* or *ti* with the ace. of the quality which the person or thing exhibits" (Thayer, p. 489). I understand Paul to mean he wanted to show the moral and spiritual qualities of the church then; not necessarily at the judgment. Paul wanted the church of Corinth to be as a chaste virgin and not corrupted by false teaching from the simplicity (singleness of mind) that is in Christ (2 Cor. 11:3). We are to show (*paristemi*) ourselves approved to God now (2 Tim. 2:15) and yield (*paristemi*), present our members servants to righteousness now (Rom. 6:13,16, 19).

The church, the bride of Christ, lives in a world of evil allurements. She is to be holy, unblemished and undefiled (Eph. 5:27). She is to abstain from spiritual adultery (Jas. 4:4). This was Paul's main concern in 2 Cor. 11:2.

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Louis L'Amour is a western novelist, and a very talented one. About a year ago, I got hooked on his stories and now I read probably two per week. They are adventurous and sometimes humorous and always educational. With every new story I gain some little bit of information which helps me to be a better hunter or outdoorsman or camper, or even a better Christian. The stories always address the fallacies of some people and the dignity of others.

In one of his collections of short stories, entitled "Riding for the Brand", Mr. L'Amour makes the following statement, "The term 'riding for the brand' was an expression of loyalty to a man's employer or the particular outfit he rode for. It was considered a compliment of the highest order in an almost feudal society. If a man did not like a ranch or the way they conducted their affairs he was free to quit, and many did, but if he stayed on he gave loyalty and expected it."

Loyalty is a trait long admired, respected, and expected in the relationships into which a man enters. It is another way of describing faithfulness to commitments or obligations. It speaks of adherence to a sovereign, a government, or a cause. It is the bond of friendships, marriages, and families, patriots, employees, and citizens. Moreover, in its purest form, it is Christianity itself.

Upon the mount of temptation, Satan offered the Christ all of the kingdoms of the world upon the condition that Jesus deny His loyalties to God, to which he responded, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." While that statement was made some 2000 years ago, the sentiment has not lost its significance. God demands loyalty of His people. Jesus quoted from Deu. 6:13 wherein God instructs His people to fear and serve only him. Of course, man is free to serve and worship whomever he chooses, and most folks are quick to emphasize our free moral agency. What they overlook is that God rewards the loyal and obedient and punishes those whose freedom leads them into false self-sufficiency and sin.

Men committed to self-service are a pitiful sight. They become atheists, agnostics, hedonists, humanists, and materialists. They are lovers of their own selves, and manifest the characteristics which Paul describes in 11 Tim. 3:2-5. Accordingly, they are referred to as reprobates and men of corrupt minds (v. 8). However, one can at least see where their loyalties lie. I am sorry that I cannot say that about some of my brethren.

The fact of the matter is, I have more respect for those reprobates than for so-called Christians who claim loyalty to God yet worship Satan. If we want to

receive our reward, we must be loyal to our God. Paul says, in Gal. 3:27, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." We have taken upon us the name of God's anointed, and are thus described, "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people" (1 Pet. 2:9). We hired on all by ourselves, folks. Now its time to ride for the brand. We have made a commitment in our obedience to God, and He demands our devotion and loyalty. So why then, do we think that we can follow our own desires and still be accepted by God? "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Mt. 16:24).

What we need today is more loyalty. If the church is to survive in this world, its members are going to have to take a stand against sin and that stand must begin in ourselves. Self-sacrifice is the foundation of godliness. It began with God's love manifested in the sacrifice of His son, was personified in the life and death of Christ, and is become our spiritual heritage. We must live it, brethren, regardless of the sacrifice or opposition. We have responsibilities which must be fulfilled if we are to be loyal, even though we may not like the job. Riding for the brand may require us to clean out the stables at times, but it is our job and must be done. Similarly, loving your enemies is hard, but loyalty demands it. Teaching the gospel is not easy, but loyalty demands it. Withdrawing from the disorderly, warning the unruly, comforting the feeble-minded, and supporting the weak are not done without a certain amount of difficulty, but loyalty demands it. And even more difficult are the admonitions concerning immodesty, drinking, chastity, temperance, attendance, etc. But, loyalty demands it.

In Joshua 24:15, Joshua asks the children of Israel to make a choice of servitude. To whom, he asks, will you be loyal? The question is ours to consider also. "The first of all commandments is, Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment" (Mark 12:29-30). And that, my friends, is riding for the brand!

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WHAT A PRIVILEGE TO PRAY

When we realize what a privilege prayer is, we like the disciples of old will plead, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1). I am afraid that many of us take prayer for granted. We are not as prayerful as we ought to be simply because we have forgotten what a grand liberty it is.

What is Prayer?

Prayer is not merely wishing for something. Nor is it simply thinking about something or reciting some lines. Prayer is our means of speaking to God (Luke 18:10-14). It is the act of communicating the thoughts of man to the infinite mind of God. From Rom. 10:1 we learn that it is the heart's desire expressed to God. It is making our request and thanksgiving known unto God.

Consider the following quotes that I have gathered from various sources that help us better understand and appreciate prayer. "Prayer is the avenue through which one approaches the Almighty." It is "making personal contact with power that transcends time, space and matter", and the "reach of man after the Absolute Reality." "Prayer is the voice of faith" (Thomas Home). "Prayer is a correspondence fixed in heaven" (Robert Burns). And then my favorite, "Prayer is so simple; It is like quietly opening a door and slipping into the very presence of God."

May I say what a privilege that is? What a privilege to have access to our God (cf. 1 John 3:1). Can you imagine what it would be like to be invited into the oval office for a private discussion with the president? If I could tell you that I could go in and talk with the president at any time, you would think that was a special favor unlike any other. You might even ask how I got such a privilege. Yet, we are invited to open up our hearts to the Creator and Ruler of the universe! Oh, what a privilege that is.

The Need For Praying

We can better appreciate the privilege of prayer when we consider its necessity. Yes, we need to pray. It is not just a liberty. Several reasons can be given for this need.

1. **It is a command** (1 Thess. 5:17; 1 Tim. 2:8; Luke 18:1; Matt. 6:9-13).

2. **Children want to talk with their Father;** a natural desire. Can you imagine never talking to your father? Can you imagine your children never or very seldom talking to you?

3. **God is concerned with our wants and needs** (Matt. 7:9-11; Luke 12:7).

4. **We need to find grace to help** (Heb. 4:16). Because we as humans are weak and frail we are dependent upon the assistance of Divine power. I realize more and more every day my need for the help of God. I continually stand in need of God's care and protection. We simply cannot make it without God's help (John 15:5; Phil. 4:13).

5. **God is the Almighty** (Matt. 19:26; Eph. 3:20-21; Rev. 4:8). He has the power to grant and do something about matters. He is in control. The reason I pray for world problems, peace and rulers is that God is able to do something about those things. The reason I pray for those with cancer, heart problems and other diseases is that God is in control.

6. **God is willing to grant us good things** (Matt. 7:7-8). God gives us what is best for us, even when his answer is "no".

7. **We need to express our love and adoration** (Matt. 6:9; 1 Tim. 2:1). Prayer is an opportunity to express our appreciation to God. It is an act of worship, a time to praise God.

8. **We need forgiveness** (Acts 8:22:24). What a privilege to be able to turn to God and start your life over. What if you couldn't do that?

9. **We must pray to follow the example of Christ** (1 Pet. 2:21).

10. **Prayer does good** (Jas. 5:16). It is effective.

We pray because we need to pray, not because that is our routine or it satisfies our conscience.

Who Should Pray?

Not everyone has that grand privilege to approach the Almighty, for God does not hear the prayer of sinners. When the man whom Jesus had healed of his blindness was questioned he replied, "Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth" (John 9:31). Though this man was not inspired, he stated a truth. Note that he did not say "I think" or "we think" or even "I know", rather he said "we know". It wasn't denied. His statement was based upon some Old Testament passages (cf. Isa. 59:1-2; Psa. 34:15-16; 66:18; Prov. 28:9).

The children of God have that privilege. Notice again John 9:31. God hears one that is "a worshipper of God, and doeth his will". This is descriptive of a Christian. Prayer must be offered in faith (Jas. 1:16) and addressed to "our Father" (Matt. 6:9-13) by a righteous man (Jas. 5:16). We are assured that God hears our prayers when we "keep his commandments and do those things that are pleasing in his sight" (1 John 3:22). Peter said, "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil" (1 Pet. 3:12, emphasis mine DVR). Consider other passages such as Prov. 15:29; Rom. 8:14-15 and 1 Tim. 2:8.

What About Cornelius and Saul and Other Alien Sinners?

Did not God hear and answer the prayers of Cornelius

and Saul (Acts 10:31; 9:11)? The argument is sometimes made from John 9:31 that this text is not dealing with alien sinners. It is true that it deals with rebellious covenant people (as it is based upon Old Testament passages). However, why would this principle not also apply to the alien? Would you say that God will not hear a covenant sinner, but will hear an alien sinner?

God may "hear" the prayer. That we wouldn't argue. I'm sure that God is aware of what the alien says. God may even respond somehow as he did in the case of Cornelius and Saul. But that is not answering the prayer. His ears are not open unto their prayers (1 Pet. 3:12). If a sinner (alien or otherwise) has the privilege to pray, it seems that all of the passages mentioned earlier are meaningless.

Certainly the alien could not pray for salvation and obtain it by prayer (e.g. at the mourner's bench). In the case of Saul he was told to quit praying and arise and be baptised (Acts 9:11; 22:16). Cornelius was to hear words that instructed him in things he must do to be saved (Acts 10:6; 11:14).

There is not a passage telling the alien sinner to pray. For what could he pray? Who ever heard of a convicted sinner praying for anything but pardon anyway?

Indeed, as we sing, "what a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer."

INDIVIDUALISM VS. ELDERS

Part Four

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What the Bible Teaches

Romans 12:3-8 reads:

For through the grace given to me I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted each a measure of faith. For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly; if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness (emphasis mine, jhj). This passage plainly teaches that there are many func-

tions which Christians can perform. One of those functions is that of leading. The word "lead" comes from the Greek word "proistemi," and means, "to put before, or set over, to rule"¹ According to this passage, there is a place among Christians for those who lead.

1 Corinthians 12:14, and 27-30 are very similar to Romans 12:3-8. Paul again compares the church to the human body. He argues that each member is as necessary to the church as each part of the human body is for its proper functioning. One function he lists in 1 Corinthians 12 is that of "administrations." This word comes from the Greek work "kubernesis." It means: "(to steer); a steersman." Obviously it is a naval term, and refers to the pilot of a ship. According to this passage, there is a need for "pilots" among God's people.

Ephesians 4:7-12 reveals that along with "apostles, prophets, evangelist, and teachers," Jesus gave "pastors." The word "pastor" comes from the Greek word "poimen," and means, "a shepherd"¹ Just as sheep need a shepherd, Christians need spiritual shepherds to guide, feed, and protect them. According to this passage, Jesus made provisions for "shepherds" to be among His people.

The New Testament uses several terms to describe pastors. In James 5:14 the text uses the word "elder": Is anyone among you sick? Let him call **for the elders of the church**, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord." This word comes from the Greek word "presbuteros." While it sometimes merely has reference to an older man, it is often used to describe those who function as leaders among Christians.

Another word used to describe pastors is the word "overseer." In Philippians 1:1 Paul stated he was writing to the saints in Philippi "including the overseers and deacons." This word comes from the Greek word "episkopos." Thayer says it refers to "a man charged with the duty of seeing that things are done rightly, any curator, guardian, or superintendent."²

Pastors have authority. This is seen by making the following observations:

1. Terms used to designate them (like "shepherd" and "overseer"—see the references above) inherently carry the idea of authority.
2. The terms used to describe their work (leaders, administrators, pastors—see the references above) indicate they have authority.
3. Christians are commanded to "obey" and "submit" to them (Hebrews 13:17).
4. Funds designated for the relief of needy Christians were given over into their hands, and they oversaw the distribution of them (Acts 11:27-30).
5. The Bible expressly teaches it: "Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor" (emphasis mine, jhj, 1 Timothy 5:17).

The authority of pastors is limited. It is limited, first of all, "to the flock of God among them" (1 Peter 5:2).

"The flock," is a term which has a reference to a local church (Acts 20:17, 28). Pastors only have authority within the local church over which they have been appointed (Acts 14:21-23). Second, pastors' authority is limited to options under generic authority.

It is outside of the scope of this series of articles to go into a detailed study of types of authority. But briefly, there are two types of Bible authority: specific and generic. Specific authority limits practice to that which is specified in the Bible. In matters of specific authority, elders can only lead (set an example). They must not become guilty of "lording it over those allotted" to their charge by attempting to add to, set aside, or otherwise tamper with matters of specific authority (1 Peter 5:2). Generic authority allows options (expedients) in carrying out the duty authorized. For example, Christians are commanded to assemble (Hebrews 10:25), but the place is an option under generic authority. They may rent, buy, or simply meet in someone's home, but they must have a place to assemble if they are to carry out the command.

The Bible teaches that scripturally organized churches depend upon pastors to make decisions relating to options of generic authority, just as the family depends upon the head of the house (the husband, father) to lead it (1 Timothy 3:5). Therefore, in Acts 11:27-30, when Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem carrying the gift from the saints in Antioch, they gave those funds to the pastors of the church who oversaw their distribution.

Pastors must not be guilty of "lording it over those allotted" to their charge in making these kinds of decisions. They are to set a good example, showing themselves to be considerate, understanding leaders, just as husbands/fathers are to do in the home (1 Peter 3:7; 5:2; 1 Timothy 3:5).

Finally, we need to understand that pastors are appointed (Titus 1:5) as a result of having a desire for the work (1 Timothy 3:1), and as a result of meeting certain Bible qualification (1 Timothy 3:1-7).

What the Individualist Teaches

(1) Individualists hold that Matthew 20:25-28 teaches that no disciple has authority of any kind. We have amply shown above that pastors do have a certain kind of authority. Matthew 20:25-28 condemns overruling ("not lording it over those allotted to your charge," 1 Peter 5:2), not ruling over ("Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor," 1 Timothy 5:17).

(2) During the debate brother Holt quibbled, "Brother Smith teaches that elders have the authority of Christ, and that when members obey elders they are obeying Christ." Brother Smith responded by referring to Romans 13:1-7, and making the point that the civil government has the authority of God behind it, and that by obeying it we are obeying God. This completely took the matter away from brother Holt.

(3) Another point brother Holt made often during the debate was, "The scriptures teach that elders watch souls, not buildings, treasuries, or a corporate body." Elders do watch for souls, but they are also concerned with things such as the church treasury (Acts 11:30).

(4) In order to prove something scriptural, one must use scriptures. To simply question another's position will not prove one's own position to be true. Yet, most of brother Holt's efforts when debating the eldership centered around questions which he asked, and which he felt posed problems for brother Smith's position. The reader needs to be aware of some of these questions:

(a) How are pastors appointed? In the debate, brother Holt wanted to know what kind of "ceremony" it took to make a man a pastor. The Bible teaches that pastors are selected by the church they are to serve according to certain qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1-7). They are then "appointed" to the office by an evangelist (Titus 1:5). Hence, the Bible specifies (1) the qualifications, (2) who is to select, and (3) who is to appoint pastors, and leaves the rest as options of generic authority. We have an example of the apostle Paul appointing elders with prayers and fasting (Acts 14:23). I believe this example falls under generic authority ("appoint," Titus 1:5), and therefore it illustrates one way that this can be done.

(b) Can the local church put the pastors out? The Bible does not make specific provisions for removing pastors from service. The Bible does, however, charge the evangelist with publicly rebuking pastors who continue in sin (1 Timothy 5:19, 20). Pastors who continue in sin after a public rebuke should be treated like any other Christian who is living in sin; they should be withdrawn from (2 Thessalonians 3:6-15).

(c) Are pastors authorized to hire and fire preachers at will? When a church needs servants (elders, deacons, preachers, teachers, etc.), the general rule is that it should select its own. In Acts 6 the apostles (who were overseeing the church in Jerusalem at this time) pointed to the need for servants, set forth their qualifications, allowed the members to select the servants, and then they (the apostles) appointed them to the task. The church and the apostles worked together to put its servants in place, and, in the matter of preachers, I believe this ought to be true of churches and pastors as well. Those who select and appoint servants have the power to remove them. If a church selects a man to teach and preach on a full-time basis (i.e., he is supported by the church), it has the power to remove him.

Under unusual circumstances pastors might act without the consent or knowledge of the church to remove a teacher or preacher. They have this power because they are charged with guarding and overseeing the flock (Acts 20:28), and the flock is charged with obeying them (Hebrews 13:17). The members may not be mature enough to know the danger that is facing them, or it simply may be that the members are divided, some wanting to remove a teacher whom they believe is teaching wrongly, and others, not seeing the danger, not wanting to.

Elders must exercise authority with care, realizing that they will be called to account for every decision made (Hebrews 13:17).

¹ *Holman's Exhaustive Concordance of the New American Standard Version.*

² *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon*, page 243.

EXEGESIS, HERMENEUTICS, AND CATHOLICISM

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When we use exegesis and hermeneutics properly, we can come to a correct understanding of God's will in the Bible. The word, 'exegesis', means, "explanation, critical analysis, or interpretation of a word, literary passage, etc., esp. of the Bible." (Webster's New World Dictionary, Second College Edition.) The word, 'hermeneutics', means, "The science of interpretation; esp. the study of the principles of Biblical exegesis." (Ibid.)

God expects people to understand "what the will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5:17). So, the Bible is understandable. It is not a mystery which mere mortals can not decipher. We do recognize, that there are some things which are "hard to be understood" (2 Peter 3:16), but we will need to study harder on these things before we fully understand them. As D. R. Dungan has written:

"There is no essential difference between the study of the scriptures and the study of any other subjects, respecting the mental outlay necessary to success. An occasional hour or lesson may accomplish something toward learning, but not much. With all the advantages given Timothy through the early instruction received from his mother and grandmother, and the assistance of the apostle Paul, still it was necessary for him to 'study to show himself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed: rightly setting forth the word of truth.' So we find in the efforts essential to a knowledge of the word of God, that, like obtaining knowledge of other things, the mind must be employed intently and continuously. There can be no substitute for mental industry. We must apply the mind and heart, or not know the things of God."

Hermeneutics, page 16.

But, problems arise when exegesis and hermeneutics are not used or are misused. An example of this error is seen in the way the Roman Catholic Church uses God's word. I quote from the Jerome Biblical Commentary, *Imprimatur* by Lawrence Cardinal Shehan, Archbishop of Baltimore, page 627:

"... The encyclical [*Providentissimus Deus*] teaches that a biblical text cannot be interpreted against a sense determined by the Church or supported by the unanimous consent of the Fathers... In his interpretation of difficult passages, the exegete must follow the analogy of faith, i.e., he cannot come to an

interpretation of the inspired author's meaning that would be a direct and formal contradiction of a dogma taught by the Church... He must remember that the supreme law is Catholic doctrine as authoritatively proposed by the Church...".

From this, we can see why Catholics think Peter was a pope. Even though Paul clearly states, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11), the Catholic exegete must insist that the church was built on Peter. And even though we can read in the scriptures that we 'are built upon the foundation of the apostles (not one of them but all and that means their inspired teaching M.G.) and prophets Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone . . ." (Eph. 2:20), yet, the Catholic must reject this Truth of God because it does not align with the Roman Catholic Church's interpretation.

But, when we use exegesis and hermeneutics unfettered by Catholic dogmas and interpretation, we can understand that what Jesus said in Matthew 16:18 was not that Peter was the foundation of the church, but that what Peter confessed, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God", was the foundation. And this agrees with the rest of Holy Writ. So simple, isn't it? Another example of Catholic interpretation standing in the way of a correct understanding of God's Truth is baptism. Catholic doctrine is:

"Christ commanded Baptism by water. He did not prescribe the manner of applying water but left its administration to the prudent judgment of the Church. The present law for Catholics makes Baptism by pouring obligatory. Immersion and sprinkling, though valid, are forbidden".

The Question Box,
by Bertrand L. Conway, page 153.)

So, the Catholic exegete's hands are tied—"he cannot come to an interpretation of the inspired author's meaning that would be a direct and formal contradiction of dogma taught by the church . . . He must remember that the supreme law is Catholic doctrine as authoritatively proposed by the church . . .". So, when he reads, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism . . ." (Romans 6:4) and "Buried with him in baptism..." (Col. 2:12) the Catholic exegete cannot teach this Truth! How sad!

If we will use proper exegesis and hermeneutics, and even plain common sense, we can clearly see what God commands for us, today.

There are numerous other examples of Catholic lack of proper scriptural exegesis that could be given, but these will suffice to show some of their problems. The problem is not theirs alone and we need to be always on the alert that we do not decide beforehand what is right or wrong until we really study God's Holy Will, then rightly divide or handle it as we should, (see 2 Timothy 2:15).

THE TELEVISION EVANGELISTS

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A lull in my meeting schedule for a few weeks has given me time to do a little "television watching." Naturally I was attracted to the "Evangelists" who ply their trade and thus prey upon the people from day to day. There is Oral Roberts, Richard Roberts, Bob Tilton, Jim Baaker, Jimmy Swaggart, Billy Graham, Jim Whittington, and James Robison, to name several, who may be seen regularly on television. To say it is a shame what these men say and do on these programs is to put it mildly. Some of the most unreasonable, and thus ungodly, tales are told. You talk about a bunch of con men, these and others like them take the cake.

I grant that some good comes to some people with these "begging campaigns." Many people are fed when they would otherwise go hungry. But there is no way to estimate the harm that is done daily by these men who pose as preachers of the gospel. Think of the millions of people who have "prayed the sinners prayer" whatever that means, and think they are saved when the BIBLE says, "Now we know that God heareth not sinners" (John 9:31). Jesus said go preach the gospel, "he that believeth **and is baptized shall be saved**" (Mark 16:16). But none of these men EVER tell anybody what the Lord said. Peter said "repent and be baptized EVERY ONE of you... **for the remission of sins** (Acts 2:38). But none of these men EVER tell anybody what Peter said. Paul said we are "**baptized into Christ**" (Romans 6:3 and Galatians 3:27). But none of these men EVER tell anybody what Paul said.

Now, since "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," and since baptism is "for the remission of sins," and since one is baptized "into Christ," it follows that if one is not baptized he is not saved, he does not have his sins remitted, and he is not in Christ. But, since none of the evangelists named ever tell anybody these things it follows that the efforts of all of them put together **never led a soul to Christ in their lives.**

I wrote a piece like this some time ago for one of the papers and as a result received a letter from a lady who said she was a member of the church and that what I said was the truth. But she said we ought to love these people. I suppose she meant that we should never let them know they were lost. But that is not the way I love them. I love them enough that I want them to be saved. The only way they will ever try to learn what to do to be saved is first to know that they are lost.

So, let's consider the matter again. Is it necessary to do what the Lord said to? If it is, since he said be

baptized, it follows that unless and until we are baptized we have not done what he said. Again, is it necessary to have our sins remitted? If it is, since the Bible says be baptized for the remission of sins, it follows that the sins are not remitted unless and until we are baptized. Once more, is it necessary to get into Christ to be saved? If it is, since the Bible says we are baptized into Christ (there is no other way to get into Christ), it follows that unless and until we are baptized we are not in Christ.

I love the souls of men and women and boys and girls. And, as the Bible says, "I hate every false way" (Psalms 119:128). I cannot sit idly by and see these Television Evangelists exploit the situation and get filthy rich themselves and NEVER TELL ANYBODY what the Bible says to do to be saved. I hope I do not become your enemy by telling you the truth. I hope you will "search the scriptures" to "see if these things are so" (Acts 17:11). I hope you will just be as honest as I am in this matter. These men are false teachers and they are NOT leading people to Christ. They are actually fixing people so they will never even try to learn what to do to be saved. I cannot afford to let them pass without at least making an effort to help the people.

REAPING ADAM'S WHIRLWIND

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As I sit writing this, Hurricane Elena is stationary, building up power only two hours away. We own a mobile home, so mandatory evacuation sent us a dozen miles away to our local high school, praying, wondering if we had seen our home for the last time, asking God, "Why me? Haven't we been faithful, sacrificing much for the gospel and for others' sakes?" Lately, it seemed one calamity followed another, and good things happened only to give us something to lose. We did not want a lot, just a little peace to serve our God. But we found ourselves laughing at most peoples' "disasters," for to us they would appear a blessing. Perhaps, then, it was providential that last night as I sat at a high school desk with our sleeping bags unrolled in the corner, I opened my Bible to begin reading where I had left off, and found myself in the book of Lamentations. If you have ever felt, justly or not, that everything was against you, that God had quit listening to you, that the future held only bad for you, then the answers I found in Chapter 3 may help you, too. Oh, I learned little that was new, but Chapter 3 concentrated many things I had believed, and clarified others about BIBLE teaching on why bad things happen to good people.

Jeremiah

"I am the man that hath seen affliction" (3:1). Most of his lamentations are for Jerusalem being carried away to Babylonian captivity, but in this passage, Jeremiah focuses on his personal disasters as a part of that greater one. Seeking answers, he names God the cause of his troubles because service to God has occasioned them. Jeremiah stood out in his day because he would not, could not, tone down the voice of God's reproof (Jer 19:19). Having never read Dale Carnegie, he drew bolts of affliction from the people of God he loved and tried to save: "I am become a derision to all my people" (3:14; 2 Tim 4:1-4). They tried to kill him; they imprisoned him, dumped him in a pit of mud, and burned his writings. And, of all, his greatest calamity was to be right, to be able to say, "I told you so," when the Babylonians came. Never once in his life did anything good happen to Jeremiah. His only blessings were the removal of some curse—being lifted from the miry pit, being spared when King Jehoiakim killed other prophets, etc. Now, as he observes the worst—Jerusalem and God's temple destroyed—as his life nears its end, he cries in despair, "Yea when I cry and call for help, He shutteth out my prayer," and "My strength is perished, and mine expectations from Jehovah" (3:8:18). No answer; no help; no hope; Jeremiah weeps in their ashes.

Has Grace Fled?

When we confront a sensitive atheist with evidence that God exists, he may well reply, "I refuse to believe in a God so cruel He will allow innocent children to die of starvation and disease." Indeed, many of the most faithful cannot deal with apparently unjust suffering. The wicked prosper in health. The righteous starve and die of agonizing illnesses. The whirlwind of sickness, suffering and death that result from sin touches all men. In this life trouble and trials, bounty and blessings often come without regard for the recipient's morality. That pain, sickness, and dying occur without moral discrimination is a necessary corollary to God "maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth his rain on the just and the unjust" (Mt 5:45). We praise God for the blessings. Does it follow that we ought to curse him when evil befalls us?

No Variation

When things seem as bad as they can get, remember Jeremiah. Standing amidst the rubble of the holy city, watching vultures feed on thousands of God's chosen, seeing looting, raping, and the carrying away, Jeremiah wrote, "This I recall to my mind; therefore have I hope. It is of Jehovah's loving kindness that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not" (3:21-22). God made the world and "saw that it was good." No evil, sickness, pain, cancer, malnutrition existed in the world God made. MAN sinned. MAN rebelled. Were justice strictly served, there would be no good, no beauty, no hope in the world at all. Were justice meted, every day would bring only despair, pain, ugliness. But, because God is merciful, there remains a bird's song to cheer the lonely heart, a bee's industry to sweeten our lives, and hope for eternal life to make tolerable our burdens and

lighten our way. Blame not God for suffering and evil, for man authored it through sin. Man, not god, kills the babies who starve; MAN, not God, brought cancer, muscular dystrophy, Alzheimer's, and death to being; MAN, not God, created a world where nature rampages and destroys by hurricane, by drought, by hail and lightning and flood. And who is the man who has not sinned? "Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins" (3:39). Succinctly, the worst that can happen is too good for the best of us, so stop whining!

God is good (Lk 18:19). Only "good and perfect gifts" come from our Father (Jas 1:17). We ought not to condemn our God as so many do: "Why did God let this happen?" or "God took my mother (or wife or child)." God is without variation in blessing us with good. Sin is the killer. Sin brings sorrow and sickness.

Most of us need only to stop dwelling on the negative and count our many blessings to overcome the depression brought by some disaster. But even when blessings are few, and especially when sin's curse lies heavy upon us because we are standing for the right, we have Jesus and eternal life. "Rejoice in the Lord always, again I will say, rejoice" (Phil 4:4). How can I count the bad things and clutch them to my heart with constant questionings when "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Tim 1:12)? The problem with our worries, fears, and whinings in the face of trouble and trials is the same one the apostles had when Jesus slept on their ship during the storm. "Master, we perish!" they cried. "Where is your faith?" Jesus replied. (Lk 8:24, 25). More confidence in God's unchanging goodness, more faith in the armor of God that we may overcome sin, more surety of hope in the resurrection, more wrestling in study and prayer and we could find our faith, even in life's severest storm.

Elena has passed; the master has said, "Peace, be still." When another storm comes, whether temporal or spiritual, will we set our anchor with confidence "within the veil," or will we again go whining in faithless fear, "Master, we perish?"

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"THE END OF ALL THINGS IS AT HAND"

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The apostle Peter with great urgency wrote the following to the early Christians in these words: "But the end of all things is at hand; be ye therefore sober and watch unto prayer" (1 Pet. 4:7).

His admonition: "Be sober and watch unto prayer" implies that something of great magnitude was about to happen by his use of the term, "the end of all things is at hand". Question: Does "the end of all things" include the coming of Christ and the end of time? Our answer is no when we consider the meaning of at "hand". John the Baptist used the term in announcing the kingdom of Christ. "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mat. 3:1, 2). Jesus also when he began his personal ministry preached the same. "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mat. 4:17). The Phrase "at hand" is explained by Luke in these words: "And say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you" (Lk. 10:9).

It follows therefore as it must, that Peter's "The end of all things is at hand" meant that whatever was included in the "all things" would soon come to pass. As to the second coming of Christ at the end of this earth we know from what Paul wrote to the Thessalonians that the day (Coming of Christ) was not at hand. "Now we beseech you, brethren by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. 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" (2 Thess. 2:1-3).

Now I believe that Peter's, The end of all things is at hand" included a coming of Christ but not the time when the judgment day will be set and all the dead be raised. In connection with 1 Pet. 4:7 let us notice some scriptures of like import to his: "The end of all things". To the Philippians Paul wrote: "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand" (Phil. 4:5). Does this mean the personal coming of the Lord at the last day? The answer is no, because as already noted he said the coming of the Lord was not at hand. I think that all will agree that "at hand" means impending. Another Scripture that ties in with these two is Paul's advice when he wrote the Corinthians that it would be better not to marry in view of what was about to happen. "But this I say brethren, the time is short: it re-

maineth (The time, that is) that both they that have wives be as though they had none" (1 Cor. 7:29). Also we have recorded Paul's admonition to the Hebrews: "Not forsaking the assembling of our selves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more as you see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:25) It was not the first day of the week upon which they assembled. They knew that every week had a first day. It was a day of upheaval including persecution of the worst sort which was plainly implied by the scriptures as cited above.

The End of all Things

Question: Just what did the Holy Spirit have in mind when He caused Peter to write: "The end of all things is at hand"? In answer to this question let us call Jesus Christ, our Lord and master to the stand. In Matthew 23:33-38 he was speaking to the unbelieving Jews and said to them: "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can you escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall you scourge in your synagogues and persecute them from city to city" (Vs. 33:34). Now listen to him in verses 35-36. "That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom you slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, all these things shall be required of this generation". Now verses 37 to 38. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate".

Christ in these verses is announcing the end of the Jewish State, including the temple and all that it stood for. Peter by inspiration of the Spirit wrote of it as being "the end of all things" which brought an end to the Jewish persecutions. Keep in mind that until A.D. 70 the temple was still standing and the Jewish persecutions continued unabated until it was destroyed by the Romans.

The overthrow of the Jewish State was the "day" that the Hebrew Christians could "see approaching" in Heb. 10:25, When Jesus made his statement to his disciples in Matthew 24:2, that not one stone of the temple would be left standing, they thought such a great event as this would indicate the end of this mundane system. In Matthew 24:3 they asked him: "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and the end of the world?" He told them plainly that there would be no signs to indicate his coming in the end of the world (Matt. 24:36). "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only". Now read verses 37 through 39. "But as the days of Noah were, so shall the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and

took them all away; so shall the coming of the Son of man be". He make it plain that there will be no signs that will precede his coming. As to his coming in the destruction of Jerusalem he taught his disciples that there would be signs which would **warn them** of the coming destruction. When the Christians saw these signs, they knew it was time for them to flee the city. They would know that "the end of all things" concerning the old Jewish system and state was at hand.

One of the signs would be the "abomination of desolation" spoken of by Daniel the prophet. Hear the Lord speak on the subject of signs: "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (Whose readeth let him understand:) Then let them (Christians) which be in Judea flee into the mountains" (Matt. 24:15-16). There is no question that the "abomination of desolation" was the encirclement of Jerusalem by the Roman Army.

Now let us drop back to verses 13 and 14. "But he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come". The end of time and this earth? No—the end of the Jewish State, when Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed by the Roman Army, in A.D. 70.

Was the gospel preached to all nations before A.D. 70? Let Paul answer in Col. 1:23. To them he wrote. "If you continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister". Colossians was written around A.D. 64, and the end of which Jesus spoke was not the end of time, but **the end of the power** of the unbelieving Jews over the Christians. Yes, Matthew 24 up to and including verse 34 was all fulfilled upon that generation. Jesus said: "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled".

In the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish power, God bruised Satan. Of such Paul wrote to the Roman Christians. "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" (Rom. 16:20). The use of the phrase "end of all things" as employed by the Holy Spirit in Peter means the same as "shortly," as used by Paul. The "end of all things" and "shortly" did not mean five hundred or two thousand years in the future.

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MARY SLOAN DEPARTS THIS LIFE

We are saddened to report that Mary Sloan, beloved wife of faithful gospel preacher L.E. Sloan of Brandon, Mississippi, passed from this life in the evening of September 15 following open heart surgery in Houston, Texas. They were in Houston visiting with their son, Jamie L. Sloan who preaches at Kleinwood in Houston, when she had to be hospitalized and where she remained in intensive care for three weeks before surgery was done. Funeral services were conducted in Goodlettsville, Tennessee on Sept. 17. You may write brother Sloan at 90 Woodgate Dr., Brandon, MS 39042.

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

GEORGE W. LAMBROFF, 629 Ordway Avenue, Bowling Green, OH 43402—If you have a son or daughter attending Bowling Green University, Bowling Green, Ohio, we would appreciate hearing from you. We will make contact with all who are referred to us and attend to their needs while attending the university. Write: Central Church of Christ, P.O. Box 82, Bowling Green, Ohio 43402.

ROBERT T. CREWS, Box 451, Clarksville, TN 37040—The University church of Christ is temporarily meeting in the International Machinist Union Hall off US 79 in the St. Bethlehem area. We have purchased property and are moving forward toward a permanent meeting place on Warfield Blvd. (State Highway 374) just off US 79, also in the St. Bethlehem area. Projected completion date for the building is November or December, 1986. Beginning October 1, 1986, Alan Yeater, previously of Greenwood, Indiana, will begin working with the congregation. Christians traveling through this area, students attending Austin Peay State University, or military personnel assigned to Fort Campbell are urged to make contact and worship with us. For information, interested persons should call: (615) 385-2657; 358-3192; or 358-2085.

RALPH C. SMART, SR., P.O. Box 822, Portland, Maine 04104—Sometime ago the church in Scarborough, Maine disbanded. The preacher and his family went to the liberal church in South Portland. One family moved to Texas. Some are drifting around in the area. I am in touch with them. Two are worshipping with us. We had hoped to have the use of the old building owned by the premillennial brethren, but for the time being we are meeting at the Howard Johnson Motor Lodge, Exit 8, I-95, in the Cove Room. My phone number is (207) 799-0720. Contact me if we can help.

BONNY MELTON IN BRIGHTON, ENGLAND

FRED MELTON, 19511 Tomball Parkway, Houston, TX 77070—Bonny Melton is now working with the Oxford Street church of Christ in Brighton, England. Bonny and his family, Angela, Zantea and Zane, would be happy to welcome any brethren who happen to be visiting in that part of the world. His address is: 6, Portsmouth Wood Close, Lindfield, West Sussex RH16 2dQ, ENGLAND, Phone: (0444) 456689.

MAINE NEWS

RALPH C. SMART, SR. Work has started on the new building for the church at Milbridge. Three were baptized there last month ... Bruce Hudson and I held a gospel meeting in Riverview, New Brunswick, Canada in May. We knocked doors and gave out 1,000 invitations. We had four visitors. The church here is small but determined to grow ... Two were baptized at Bangor recently as a result of home studies taught by Earl Metcalf. James P. Needham was in a meeting there in August. ... Jeff Kingry was in a meeting at Dexter in August ...

Harry Pickup, Jr. was at Pittsfield in June.

JOHN W. PITMAN, Rt. 1, Box 73, Springfield, TN 38256—The work with the Kentucky Lake Road congregation continues to go well. In July one was baptized and one restored. Three new members have moved into the area. Attendance is in the 30's on Sunday and at times the lower 40's. Denver Neimier was with us in a meeting in June. Eugene Crawley was here in September in a meeting. Two churches are trying to stand in a county where there are 17 liberal churches. Call me if we can be of help. (901) 644-9107 or 642-8619.

ROBERTO TONDELLI, Via Roscioni, 69 00129 Rome, Italy—At Pomezia, near Rome, the church where I work had a special preaching effort in April with Stefano Corazza of Udine, Italy preaching. In three lessons he contrasted Catholic doctrines with the New Testament and in one lesson he dealt with the Watchtower falsities in the light of Christ's law. Brethren distributed 10,000 invitation cards and used 200 small posters in shops and public places to advertise the meeting. While we did not have as many visitors as hoped, we did have some and believe much good was done.

April 25-27, Francesco Fosci of Latina and I were with the brethren at Poggiomarino, between Salerno and Naples. We were guests in the home of Vincenzo Ruggiero who preaches there. The church there has several youngsters. Non-members attended the public services and we used extra time answering questions. The meeting place is in the center of the small town. They have enlarged their facilities for Bible classes.

PREACHERS NEEDED

DAYTONA BEACH, FLORIDA—The church meeting at 1234 Flomich Avenue, Holly Hill, Florida (Daytona Beach subd.) needs a new preacher. Luke Flynn is leaving soon to go to a new work in South Carolina. We want a man who is a worker and dedicated to preaching and teaching the word of God. We are a small congregation of 35 with no elders yet. We can only provide \$275 per week, but do have the promise of support from several larger congregations. There are three liberal churches in the greater Daytona Beach area. The nearest faithful churches are in Deland and New Smyrna, about 25 miles away. Those interested may contact O. Kim Vandagriff, 11 Autumnwood Trail, Ormond, FL 32074. Call (904) 673-5394.

MONCTON, NEW BRUNSWICK, CANADA—A small group of Christians are meeting near Moncton, New Brunswick. The greater Moncton area has a population of about 130,000 people. We are looking for a man to work full time with us. He would have to secure support elsewhere. We need much individual teaching here. This is a challenging work for a dedicated man. Those interested please contact: Bob Rubel, R.R. 3, Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada E1C 8J7. Phone (506) 386-1523.

PREACHER AVAILABLE

JAMES H. SHEWMAKER, 1029 Ellsworth Ave., Columbus, OH 43206-1711—I am seeking a congregation with which to work. I am 28 years old, married and have no children I have 3 1/2 years experience as a full time evangelist. If interested, please write to me at the above address.

* * * * *

EDITORIAL LEFT-OVERS

SONG IMPEDERS

To "impede" something means to hinder its progress. The practice of congregational singing is authorized in the New Testament. A song leader is expedient in pitching, starting and keeping the congregation together while the song flows. Anyone who purports to be a song leader, but who hinders the progress of the singing is therefore a song impeder rather than a song leader. Here are some simple rules for being a song impeder. (1) Sing so slowly that the congregation is exhausted and out of breath. (2) Lead so quietly that very few can get the pitch and so that you have very little control over keeping the congregation together. If you are going to lead, then please lead. (3) Pitch the song so low or so high than only a very few can reach the notes. (4) If you lead with our hand, make motions that are confusing and which do not synchronize with your voice. Or, you could hide your hand direction altogether by obscuring your hand behind the speakers stand so nobody can see it. (5) In a gospel meeting, be sure to select songs which only you know. That way, others cannot worship in song. (6) In a gospel meeting, NEVER ask the preacher if there are songs which would blend well with a sermon, or which might be fitting for an invitation. (7) NEVER prepare your song selection ahead of time so you can give careful thought to your selection. Always wait until three minutes before starting time and do it on the front row. (8) In leading

an invitation song, be sure to sit near the back, take your own good time about getting to the front, kill more time in getting the pitch, and be sure that a full two minutes has passed between the time the congregation stands to sing and the time you start the song. This will destroy the most urgent moment one may have to respond to the gospel and is guaranteed to make you a successful song impeder. If you will follow these simple rules, they will make you a good song impeder and you will be doing your part to hinder scriptural worship of others.

* * * * *

DOLLAR DEVALUATION

Some of the brethren being supported in foreign lands are now in a serious financial crunch because of the devaluation of the dollar in their country. The problem may vary from country to country, but has reached serious dimensions in some places. For instance, brethren in Italy supported from the States have lost 25% of their income due to this problem. This is a sizeable cut. What would it do to YOUR family budget? If you support men in other countries, it might be good to inquire about this matter and help these folks who are already giving so much of themselves in order to preach the gospel throughout the world.

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	204
RESTORATIONS	83
(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)	

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 XXVII

NOVEMBER, 1986

Number 11

THINK ON THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 1631
Lutz, FL 33549



SALVATION AT THE POINT OF FAITH

Albert Garner, a Baptist preacher, authored a little booklet entitled, *A Few Aspirins for Campbellism*. In 1974 I wrote an article in which I examined one particular point made by Mil. Garner. I herein give a review of the point made at that time.

Albert Garner calls the church "Campbellism." Whether he knows it or not, he is more nearly a Campbellite than I. He uses Alexander Campbell for proof of some positions he holds far more than I would ever dream of doing. Alexander Campbell was baptized by Mathias Luce, a Baptist preacher, which would make him a Baptist, according to Baptist doctrine. He was associated with a Baptist Association and according to Baptist doctrine he could not be lost even if he did leave and repudiate the Baptist Association.

With particular attention to the doctrine of Garner, that one is saved *at the point of faith*, I quote from chapter two, page five of the above mentioned booklet: "When you hear the charge that there are those who teach that one is saved by 'faith only,' you should take special notice. They make such claims either through ignorance or dishonesty. This you will find to be true: the fellow who makes such a claim will cite no representative man of *any* faith as having ever made such a claim. So far as I have been able to find there has never been any recognized minister of ANY RELIGIOUS FAITH OR GROUP who has ever taught that one is saved by 'faith only.'" On page seven Garner says, "No Baptists or any other group of Christians, to my knowledge, preaches that one can be saved by 'faith only.'"

"Ye see how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (James 2: 24). Albert Garner knows that verse is in the Bible, and in order to avoid direct conflict with the verse, he simply changes the wording to say, "at the point of faith one is saved." There is not any real difference between "faith only" and "at the point of faith" when Garner explains his position. It would be quite interesting for him to give a detailed definition of what he means by "at the point of faith." Does he mean "before and without any works"?

But this is not the point of this article. He says that he knows of no "recognized minister of ANY RELIGIOUS FAITH OR GROUP" who has ever taught that one is saved by 'faith only.'" Garner is either entirely too uninformed to be writing on this subject, or he is deliberately trying to deceive and subvert people from the truth.

Let us see if "ANY RELIGIOUS FAITH OR GROUP" teaches that salvation is by "faith only."

"Wherefore, that we are justified by *faith only* is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort." (*Discipline of The Methodist Church*, 1960, The Articles of Religion, Article IX, sec. 69). The Methodists teach it! Did Garner know about this? or does he not consider Methodist Christians?

"... that justification includes the pardon of sin, and the promise of eternal life on principles of righteousness; that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any work of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the redeemer's blood..." (*McConnell's Manual for Baptist Churches*, Declaration of Faith, Article V, page 18). *Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary* defines "solely" as: "alone, only, without another..." *The Standard Manual for Baptist Churches* by Edward T. Hiscox says the same thing on page 62. *Church Manual of Baptist Churches* by J. M. Pendleton says the same thing on page 48.

In order to find out what Baptists believe, one must go to the creeds of the Baptist Church. To find out what Methodists believe, one must go to the Discipline of the Methodist Church. This is true of all human denominations. Garner's claim that no religious faith or group has ever claimed that one is saved by *faith only* is shown to be completely false.

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In speaking of faith in Christ for salvation, E. Y. Mullins in *Baptist Beliefs* says, "It is *the condition* of all God's gifts to us in Jesus Christ. It is *the condition* of justification and pardon, adoption" can mean nothing but that faith alone is the condition of "justification and pardon, adoption and regeneration."

The Confession of Faith of The Presbyterian Church, chapter XI, Sec. 2, page 48, "Faith thus receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness, is the *alone instrument* of justification..." Thus the Presbyterians believe in justification by faith only. I wonder if Dr. Garner knew this when he wrote his booklet.

Glenn V. Tingley of the Christian Missionary Alliance Church debated W. Curtis Porter in Birmingham, Alabama in 1947 and the proposition which Tingley affirmed was, "The scriptures teach that alien sinners are saved by faith alone before and without water baptism." (*Porter-Tingley Debate*, page 180). In his affirmative speeches, Tingley made almost the same arguments Garner makes in his effort to prove his claim for salvation "at the point of faith."

On page 7 of his booklet Garner says, "Next time you hear the chant of 'faith only' charged against Baptists, (*Continued on Page 4*)

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(Both works are classics—Editor)

Editorial

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A TIME TO WATCH

The people of the Lord must always "watch and pray." Our adversary, the Devil, walks about "seeking whom he may devour." He is tireless in his attempts to pervert the right ways of the Lord and ingenious in his methods. He leaves us little time to relax between one round of battle and the next. In fact, it is often in those moments when we think a battle is over and the victory decisively won, when we are battle weary and our spirits long for peace and serenity, that Satan does some of his most destructive work. Often, through the avenues of wounded pride, or unrecognized ambition, our enemy makes his greatest progress.

As I view the passing scene and witness what is taking place among the people of the Lord, I am thankful for every sign of progress which appears. And I do see many. But I also see reason for deep concern in several areas. I speak for nobody but myself. I represent no school of thought nor brotherhood power structure, real or imagined. I am one man, pouring out the genuine concerns of my own heart. Some will appreciate what I have to say and others will not. Frankly, I have never thought it necessary for a faithful servant of God to feel the "pulse of the brethren" on any subject before speaking out. Truth is of much greater concern than polls and popularity. Now, with all that said, I will point out some areas in which there appears to me to be a great need for watching and praying.

The *Feminist movement* affects more Christians than some may want to admit. Every time I deal with it, whether in connection with sermons on the family, or the threat of humanism, I draw fire from career oriented women and sometimes from their husbands. If I am not teaching the truth, then I ought to expect fire. But, it is evident that some of the sisters aspire to realms of activity, even in the church, which are completely contrary to sound doctrine. I am hearing some strange sounding things from women (and from some men) about voting rights in congregational business decisions. There have always been problems from some women who sought to rule by proxy, but they always denied it. Now, the attitude seems to be "What is wrong with it?" Watch!

I am hearing some strange sounds about the *nature of man*. Calvinism is a serious error. Great care must be exercised when charging any brother with any degree of sympathy with this false system. Some have used the term carelessly and applied it to those who would repu-

diate every major tenet of the system. But when a brother publishes a syllabus to be used in private or public class study and says "Man, in his normal, unregenerated state, cannot know God (1 Cor. 2: 14) nor please (Rom. 8: 8) God" then that strikes at the very heart of the matter of corrupted human nature and that is where Calvinism starts. Here is more: "Then in simple terms, what is the plan of salvation? First, the regeneration (palingenesia) of the old, natural man who cannot please God (Rom. 8: 8) nor understand his word (1 Cor. 2: 14)." Did you agree with that? The "old, natural man" cannot please God "nor understand his word." Well, if this "natural man" "cannot understand his word" in his natural state, then something must happen to him to change him so that he *can* understand and we are ready then for a direct operation of the spirit upon his heart to equip him to understand. Some need to go back and read such things as *THE GOSPEL PREACHER* by Benjamin Franklin and his sermon on "The Adaptation of the Bible to Man" (Vol. 1, page 153). His thesis was true then and now when he argued that "the Bible as it is, is adapted to man as he is." Watch, Brethren!

Some sounds are being heard these days from unexpected sources which leave the door open for solos, duets and other *special singers in congregational worship*. According to some, the only impediment is the motive of entertainment. Well then, if some insisted that such motive was not present, then we could have it. And put it down, it will be done, if this kind of loose thinking prevails! To argue for a general practice based on a passage regulating special circumstances where spiritual gifts were in use in order to teach in an era of incomplete revelation, which gifts ceased when full revelation came, is not a valid reason for the contention being made by some. I am just one, *but I am one*, and I want to serve notice right here and now that I am set to oppose, with every ounce of strength in me, any movement in that direction. It was just such practices as that (together with many other things) which caused my family to leave the Christian Church many years ago. I have no intention of going back and plan to resist any efforts to open the door to pervert the faith and practice of any of my brethren in that direction. Watch!

We are hearing strange rumblings about *divorce and remarriage*. There have always been some problems in this area and brethren have not always agreed. But time and study have clarified many things for all of us. We must do everything we can to keep the "lock" in "wedlock." God made his law strict on purpose. We ought to allow whatever God allowed in his word and no more. If we are not careful we can spend so much time arguing about "exceptions" to the rule, that we forget *there is a rule*. Watch!

I do not advocate that we become reactionaries with itchy trigger fingers ready to fire every time someone says a thing a little differently than the way we might choose to say it. We have tried to follow a course of restraint and moderation in this paper when dealing with highly volatile issues. Most of our readers have recognized this and many have expressed appreciation for it time and again. But let none mistake that for

timidity or lack of resolve where grave issues with far reaching consequences are at stake. The following excerpt from Foy E. Wallace, Jr. summarizes my own feelings:

"To the Corinthians the apostle said: 'Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit ye like men, be strong.' " (1 Cor. 16: 13.)

"Here is the imagery of battle. The association of war and the issues of battle vibrate in every word of this exhortation. It is an appeal to the heart as stirring as the call of a commander to comrades in a critical period of battle. The opposing army gathers for battle in the distance, but the foe is hidden. His movements are concealed. From what quarter the attack may come is doubtful. So the commander's voice calls for vigilance — 'watch ye.' Watch for the hidden foe. But as the threatening masses form into the grim and ominous lines of attack, as the columns of the foe advance, in the moment of suspense before the storm of the conflict begins, the firm voice of the leader is heard to exhort — 'stand fast.'

"When the assault has begun, and the opposing lines bend to the shock of battle, like the meeting of angry tides, amid the storm and tumult the familiar voice of the captain is heard again to command — 'quit ye like men' — perform like soldiers worthy of the rank. And finally, when in the crisis of the imagery, it is the scene of doubtful outcome, when the ebbing and the flowing of the tide of battle is uncertain, we can see in this graphic language, the figure of a dauntless leader, lifting his banner and shouting — 'be strong' — do not waver; hold the line!

"This passage is Paul's graphic picture of surging issues in the church. Often the foe is hidden. Error is crouched in countless forms concealed. Christ calls for vigilance — 'watch ye.' But when error has been flushed out of the hiding, and forms into advancing columns against the church, Christ calls for courage — 'stand fast in the faith.' Then — when the lines are drawn tight, surging issues of truth and error are locked in the grim struggle for mastery — Christ calls for valor — 'quit ye like men.' Perform like a soldier of Christ, worthy of the name. Finally, when the crisis has come in the conflict of the faith, when men are seen to weaken and waver — Christ calls for heroism, the heroism of faith — 'be strong' and hold the line!

"The imagery thrills me. If it does not stir you as a member of the church to an earnest contention for the faith, your love for the truth has waxed cold. The famous general who made the stand at the battle of Thermoplae coined the warrior phrase: They shall not pass! Such scenes must have been present in the mind of Paul when he wrote this command to the Christian: 'Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit ye like men, be strong.' " (GOD'S PROPHETIC WORD, pps. 54-55).

To change the imagery, do I hear already the sound of hammers and saws building the props and setting the stage for another departure from the faith? Surely, I must be mistaken. I pray that I am mistaken. But, I think I'll just watch a little while longer. What about you, brother?

(Continued from Page 2)

stick this article under their noses; ask them if they can produce any authoritative evidence that *any one* believes he can be saved by 'faith only.' Thus you can help stop the mouth of these religious racketeers and promoters of the witch doctor chant that all except their little group are going to hell. Use this article and it will soon stop their lying and seeking followers by peddling the faith only falsehood."

I knew the "faith only" doctrine was a falsehood, but I never thought I would hear Garner admit it. Garner, like all Baptist preachers, needs to study his lesson before he rushes into print with these ridiculous misleading and inaccurate charges. It is so obvious that he is either grossly ignorant of what Baptists and other denominations believe and teach, or he is so deliberately dishonest in his statements that he will use any extreme to beguile the unlearned. The truth of the matter is, Albert Garner knows what the Bible teaches on this subject and what members of churches of Christ believe and practice, and he has to use this radical dishonesty to persuade his own people. He knows the Bible says we are NOT justified by *faith only* (James 2: 24), and he wishes to change his language somewhat to avoid the impact of this scripture. Let me suggest that the reader stick some of this information under the nose of Albert Garner and his cohorts and stop their mouths from these false and deceiving charges.

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Huntsville, Alabama 35805**THE AUTHORITY OF ELDERS**

Two members had been approved to serve as elders by the small congregation, said approval was given reluctantly by some. A few well chosen and appropriate remarks were made by the preacher as the assembly recognized these brethren as "officially appointed" bishops. On cue, each was asked to address the church as to his own aspirations and estimations. The first strode forward, hooked his thumbs in his belt, rocked back on his heels, and said, "I just want to say, if there's anyone that thinks we don't have elders now, just let him try to start something!"

Lloyd Nash related that incident to me. I forget whether he said he was that preacher or if he was just an innocent observer.

A lot has been said and written the past few years about the authority of elders. I was in a meeting with a church recently in which there were some members (including the elders) who felt the elders practically had carte blanche authority. There were others in this group who questioned the right of elders to even give a couple hundred dollars to a faithful preacher in need without calling a general business meeting.

It appears to me that men who would even nominally possess the qualities of character which are laid down for elders (or deacons) in God's word would be trusted with that kind of decision-making. If they are not, then there is either something wrong with their lives, or there is something wrong with the thinking of those who would challenge them.

M. Scott Peck, in the book *"The Road Less Traveled"*, expresses what I consider to be a deep and powerful insight on this question of authority. He writes of "the nature of power" (and I paraphrase) that there are two kinds of power. There is political power and there is spiritual power. Political power is the ability to coerce others to do as you will them to. It is power that comes by virtue of an official position, or by wealth. This kind of authority is totally unrelated to goodness or wisdom. One may be an ignoramus, a weakling, or evil incarnate and wield great power by virtue of office.

Spiritual power resides in the person, not the office. It is unrelated to any capacity to coerce anybody. It is earned by virtue of wisdom, integrity, and service.

Was it not political power that Satan offered our Lord when he tempted Him with "all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them?" But Christ rejected this

kind of authority and spent the next three years earning by love and service true and lasting power.

The one kind of power does not necessarily contradict the other. One may have spiritual power and also occupy political office or have great wealth. But more often he will have neither.

Jesus now reigns as Lord of lords and King of kings. But before He entered into His present office, He taught his disciples the meaning of true power:

"You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave —just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Matt. 20: 25-28).

Isn't it rather obvious that it is spiritual power, not political power, that bishops must possess.

"This wisdom I have also seen under the sun, and it seemed great to me: There was a little city with few men in it; and a great king came against it, besieged it, and built great snares around it. Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city. Yet no one remembered that same poor man."

"Then I said: Wisdom is better than strength. Nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard. Words of the wise, spoken quietly, should be heard rather than the shout of a ruler of fools..." (Eccl 9: 13-17).

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FAITH ON THE ROCKS

When writing to Timothy, Paul said that "some... concerning faith have made shipwreck" (1 Tim. 1: 19, 20). He also mentioned some who were guilty of over-throwing the faith of others (2 Tim. 2: 18). Like a ship, our faith is designed to withstand the storms of life, but it will flounder upon the rocks.

Paul had been shipwrecked three times, and had spent "a night and a day... in the deep" (2 Cor. 11: 25). I spent one night in a small boat, stranded on a South Pacific reef in the face of a gathering tropical storm, and it was an unpleasant experience. I'm persuaded that the shipwreck of one's faith would be fraught with even greater consequences.

Many circumstances may surround the shipwreck of our faith, but there is one basic, underlying cause. Since our faith comes by hearing the word of God (Rom. 1: 17; 10: 17), then our faith heads for the rocks when we cease to hear the word of God. It's that simple, and even the devil knows it. I'm surprised that more people don't know it too.

Jesus taught that when the devil succeeds in taking away the word from one's heart, it is like seed sown by the wayside (Lk. 8: 12). The devil knows that if he can hide the gospel from people, that they will be blind to the truth, and be lost (2 Cor. 4: 3, 4). The devil has more respect for the power of God's word than do some preachers. Satan may not like the truth, but he knows what it did to him, and what it can do for others.

There have always been efforts to destroy faith in the word of God, and we expect such efforts from the enemies of the truth. But, there are other disguised attempts to question the credibility of God's word, and will propel our faith toward the rocks just as surely as the calculated efforts of an avowed atheist or infidel.

I have just read where a group of scholars, by a vote of 16 to 10, have decided that the story of the Good Samaritan is true, but the one about the rich man and Lazarus is not authentic. Yet, it seemed to make no difference to these critics that Luke was inspired to write both accounts (Luke 10-16). The fact is, there are some who refuse to contemplate the reality of a place called hell, where the disobedient are tormented after death.

Others, under the cloak of theology or "science" (falsely so called), attempt to disprove the Bible account of creation, the birth, death, burial and resurrection of

Christ, and life after death. One article, no doubt with good intentions, endeavored to provide medical support for the Bible account of Christ's death, as opposed to the claim that he did not really die, but was only "resuscitated" after a period of semi-consciousness. This report was partially based on a pathological analysis of a shroud that reputedly belonged to the Lord. The word of God needs no such support based on tradition and relics of questionable authenticity. Too many such pronouncements are merely the shallow conclusions of some thesis written to procure a higher degree of human wisdom, or some paper presented by a degreed professor as a condition of continued employment.

But, such efforts as we have mentioned do not concern me nearly as much as those which originate within the body of Christ, which body is designated as "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3: 15). It is not enough that we be on the watch for outside attempts to scuttle the ship of faith, but now we must face the reality that there are those of our own company trying to make shipwreck of our faith.

What other conclusions can we reach, when preachers among us contend that Jesus came the second time (Heb. 9: 28), at the destruction of Jerusalem in the year A. D. 70? And, influential teachers in colleges supported and attended by members of the church openly advocate the theory of evolution, and students are pressured into accepting such faith-wrecking doctrines. Others in the same institution have produced a hymnal for churches of Christ which deletes reference to "rural imagery" such as contained in the song "Bringing in the Sheaves." This idea would eliminate reference to the parable of the sower, the parable of the tares, the vine-yard parables, and the church as a sheepfold. How can we possibly avoid shipwreck of our faith, when portions of the word from which our faith is gleaned are deleted from our singing and teaching?

And while we are about it, those preachers who advertise sermons "without any scripture" are bidding God speed to the shipwreck of someone's faith. Faith doesn't come by the silence of the word, but by the hearing of the word (Rom. 10: 17). Others who aid and abet the cause of shipwreck are those who espouse the doctrines of Calvinism, or scoff at the idea of needing scriptural authority for the things which we do and say (Col. 3: 17). Close behind (or abreast), are their shipmates who deny that there is any divine pattern for the work, worship, organization or mission of the church.

Preachers need to get back to Bible preaching, including rural or "countrified" parables, and contend for the faith which begets faith (Jude 3). Only then can we avoid the rocks which cause shipwreck.

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PROBLEMS OF BREAKERS OF THE BREAD OF LIFE

Recently, I was on a lecture program with the assigned subject — "Problems of Preachers". This article is principally that lecture. I think, as others have suggested, that a wider distribution of this subject matter will be helpful.

It is axiomatic that problems will be faced by all who live here on this earth. (Job 14: 1; 1 Cor. 10: 13). People in various situations, places, and avocations tend to think their problems are greater than others. This, however, is doubtful. Every avocation in life has it's own peculiar problems. A doctor will have some problems he would not have if her were not a doctor. The same may be said of a school teacher, lawyer, craftsman, mechanic, manager, laborer, even a preacher. Some problems are the same in numerous realms. But, there are problems peculiar to, and come because of, preaching the gospel of Christ. These we refer to as problems of preachers or preaching. A knowledge of these and successfully meeting, overcoming, and solving them is the purpose of this study.

The apostle Paul was one of the greatest and most extensive preachers of all time. When he was being opposed and downgraded by false teachers in Corinth, he was forced into talking about his authority and activities as an apostle of Christ, though he felt foolish in doing so. In his writing of these matters he set forth some of the problems (perils of preaching). I have emphasized these with capital letters in the following verses.

"Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft: Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, — PERSECUTION — thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; IN JOURNEYINGS OFTEN, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, IN PERILS AMONG FALSE BRETHREN; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, IN HUNGER AND THIRST — (FINANCES), in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the CARE OF ALL THE CHURCHES (CONCERN). Who is weak, and I am not weak?

Who is offended, and I burn not?" (2 Cor. 11: 23-29).

Problem of Persecution

Anyone who proclaims truth by word or example can expect persecution from the teachers and practitioners of evil (2 Tim. 3: 12). Jesus warned His disciples, in sending out both the seventy and the twelve, that they would go forth "as sheep in the midst of wolves" (Matt. 10: 16-18; Lk. 10: 3). He assured them that the world would hate them as it did him and would persecute them as it did him (Jno. 15: 18-20). They would make enemies by speaking truth (Gal. 4: 16).

Today, thanks be unto God for the liberty and freedom granted citizens of our country and others, preachers of the Word are spared the persecution that the apostles and early saints had to endure. None of us can speak of the times we have had "stripes" laid on us, been beaten with rods, stoned, or even imprisoned. Preaching the Word does not bring this kind of persecution in a free country.

There are, however¹, various forms of persecution that must be suffered by the godly. Contending for truth and standing for righteousness may, and often does, bring on slights, insults, false accusations, discriminations in schools and business, and various other injuries. These must be faced with wisdom, patience, and fervent prayer.

Contenders for truth need to be careful not to deliberately provoke opposition and persecution, as a sign of soundness on their part. "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves" (2 Tim. 2: 24-25).

Problem of "Journeying Often"

Evangelizing the world involves "going". The apostles, prophets, and evangelists of the New Testament journeyed often. The Jerusalem saints, when scattered because of persecution, "went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8: 4). Most every preacher is found "journeying often", some more than others; some a greater distance than others, but all often "go". It is something that brings on numerous problems.

There are the natural hazards of traveling. Paul was often in perils of shipwreck, robbers, etc. Even today traveling about exposes one to such hazards as car or plane crashes, disease, robbers, etc. More than a few preachers have lost their lives while traveling to or from preaching journeys.

Another threat "in journeyings often" is of a domestic nature. Frequent or prolonged absence from wife and family often makes one susceptible to temptation. The apostle Paul sounded a warning about this when he said to husband and wife "defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time... that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency" (1 Cor. 7: 5). There are too many cases of wife or husband becoming immoral while one is away. Not only is there a threat to marriage, but frequent and extended absence is also a threat to proper child upbringing, where a dual responsibility is often left to one.

Some preachers speak of a "a problem" in being frequently tempted to be immoral because of their often travels, placing them in numerous homes and situations of private contact with numerous women. I suppose it is possible for a preacher to have temptation placed before him from this standpoint. It happened to Joseph at Potiphar's house in Egypt. However, I think this would be a very rare thing, considering the type people with whom a preacher associates in his traveling about. During a half century of preaching, involving a great deal of "journeyings often", I am not aware of a single instance of "a pass" being made at me, or facing such a problem. Maybe I am too naive to recognize such a thing, or not as good looking as some preachers, but I just can't believe that this is a problem, unless a preacher allows himself to become too friendly or close to someone, making unguarded remarks of a suggestive nature, smiling or laughing at an immodest situation or shady joke. Such careless talk or actions may suggest that one would be open to further exploration. I believe preachers who claim to have a problem of this kind need to examine their own conduct, speech, and demeanor when in the presence of other women. Here may be found the springboard for a problem becoming more than a potential.

Connected with the problem area of "journeying often" are the frequent moves characteristic of preachers. Their wives and children certainly know this to be a problem. Often it is an unnecessary and even foolish problem one that could be avoided. I realize there may be times when a preacher is only at a place six months and it is too long. Others may preach in a place twenty years and it not be too long for he is still effective and productive. Some brethren, with a "hired hand" rather than "co-worker" concept of preachers, like the denominational practice of moving preachers about every two or three years. They tell us that "a new broom sweeps clean", so get a new one often. This may be true of a broom, but it is not true of a preacher. That new preacher may be faulty (in character and/or ability) and not nearly as dedicated and effective as the former one. Too, there are some preachers who are too lazy to continually work up sermons, so when they have used up the ones they have, it's moving time. There are many and various reasons for "making a change" and each must be evaluated on the basis of it's own nature and circumstances, but this matter of moving preachers about just for the sake of "change", "shopping about", of "pleasing some brother's whim" is a divisive and money wasting thing. Besides being expensive, there is the trauma of uprooting children's school program and personal ties. Truly there are problems in this area, some avoidable, some not; some self induced, some forced upon. The problem is not going to vanish away, but there are things that preachers and brethren can do to lessen the problems and help in avoiding them.

What does a church that often changes preachers get? If lucky, maybe they will get one as good as they had (assuming they are sound in the faith, dedicated, apt to teach, and behave themselves). A brother and friend called me the other day from another State, seek-

ing information about a preacher they were considering. In the course of our conversation, the brother said "You know, a church takes a great chance when obtaining a new preacher." I agreed that such is the case with both the church and the preacher. Frequent changes have within them the seeds of division and discontent (Some will be hurt about the preacher leaving. When trying out others, some will prefer one and some another, etc.). I am convinced that problems in this realm are often needlessly brought upon themselves by both preachers and churches.

TO BE CONTINUED.

"KEEPIN' HOUSE FOR THE LORD"

**Truman Smith
115 West "F" Street
La Porte, TX 77571**

Several years ago, I met an old friend, a fellow Christian, whom I had not seen for quite some time. After we had shared with each other the usual "How have you been?" and "How about the family?" etc., etc. I then asked him how the church was doing where he worshipped. His reply was, "Oh, we're keepin' house for the Lord." The thing that really got my attention was that he did not say this with tongue in cheek, nor was he being facetious. No, he was dead serious! More than that, he was even boasting! To him, any time a congregation is able to conduct their regular Sunday and Wednesday services in peace and harmony, and none of them is an "agitator" or "rocks the boat" by suggesting ways and means to generate more interest and zeal in the Lord's work, then what more could one want?

My friend is not alone in this concept of the work of the church. Indeed, such an attitude has given rise to all kinds of problems which do hinder the very purpose of the Lord's collective from being fulfilled in many places throughout this good land. You know, brethren, in spite of literally volumes which have been written and the many, many sermons that have been preached in recent years concerning the divine mission of the church, it is almost unthinkable that there is yet such a host in God's great family who believe that all there is for the church to do is to just meet for Bible study, worship—and then go home!

Frankly, I do believe that a vast segment in the Lord's church today would likely just give up and "quit the church" if they ever came to realize that they were falling so far short in their duty as members of a local fellowship.

What other conclusion can we reach when we see such

a large number who when it comes to their secular employment or business are ever so diligent and even aggressive; but in service to their Great God are timid, tongue-tied, and/or just plain unconcerned? We see on every hand those who are only nominal church members. Is there any wonder to you that there are so many capable preachers of the gospel who have given up full-time work in that which was always their first love and gone into the secular field completely?

Would it be too redundant of us just here if we took some space to refer to the Laodiceans in Rev. 3: 14-19? Read it: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. " Is it not just amazing how perfectly this describes so many church members today? To the church in Sardis the Lord said: "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead" (Rev. 3: 1). In another time, the apostle Paul wrote, "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things)" (Phil. 3: 17-19). And I don't hesitate to say that I also have shed many tears over these very matters, brethren.

Tell me, dear reader, what is my duty as an evangelist? Am I being too harsh? Was Paul sarcastic when he said what he did in the above passage? Was Jesus being cynical when He wrote the church at Laodicea? Was it caustic of Him to say what He did to the church at Sardis? Is it not our duty to "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4: 2)?

Let me ask you in all candor, dear brother or sister: Are you really involved in the Lord's work? or, are you just "keepin' house for the Lord"?

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REARING A GODLY FAMILY IN AN UNGODLY SOCIETY

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Pornography, sexual promiscuity, homosexuality, rape, child abuse, drugs, alcohol, and the list could go on and on. All of these and more are having a devastating effect on the American family. Such problems, however, are not new. Each generation is faced with its own unusual set of circumstances, its own moral dilemmas.

Raising our children in these "perilous times" is no easy task. The wide eyed optimism of the childless couple soon turns to apprehension and despair. What seemed so easy in theory in reality is a genuine challenge. I am sure that I am not alone in my apprehension of parenthood. As I look at the world into which we must bring our children I wonder "How am I to rear my children to grow up to be responsible husbands and wives, mothers and fathers and above all else faithful Christians?" I know that I have laid awake nights wondering if I am doing all that I can, wondering if I am rearing my children right, wondering how they will turn out.

I don't consider myself an expert in the field of child rearing, at best I am a struggling father trying to follow God's word and raise a Godly family in an ungodly society. As such I would like to share with you some of my insights, gleaned from prayer, meditation and study regarding our awesome responsibility as parents.

Enemies of the Godly Home

John in his first epistle (1 Jn. 2: 15-17) admonishes us to "Love not the world... ". Perhaps, no single problem so profoundly affects our homes as does *MATERIALISM*. It is not uncommon for parents to want better for their children than they had growing up. At the same time, however, if we take this practice to its logical end then we will have nurtured a generation of men and women who think the world owes them something. In our effort to provide the very best for our children we may be depriving them of something very important, the experience of learning what it means to do without and earning it.

Giving our children an ALLOWANCE is almost a universal practice, but what is the purpose behind such a practice? What is the allowance for, for being a member of our family, for being good, just exactly why do we give our children allowances? Let me suggest that if you are simply giving your child an allowance for being your child then you are doing them a decided injustice. You are teaching them something that just is not so. I know of no business that will reward you for simply coming to

work, they as well as you, know that if you are to receive any pay you will have to do more than just show up for work. Yet, we inadvertently teach our children that you can get something for nothing, would it not be better to attach to that weekly stipend some reasonable responsibilities? If the responsibilities are not fulfilled then the stipend is reduced accordingly? After all, is that not what happens if you miss a day at work? They reduce your salary accordingly. If our children are old enough to merit an "allowance" then they are old enough to begin being taught the meaning of responsibility.

When John in his first epistle enumerated the "love of the world" he wrote of the "lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life" such qualities as these are readily seen in the entertainment industry in the 80's. You turn on the television and you are assaulted by such shows as "Three's company", "The Love Boat", "Dynasty", "Knots Landing" and the like. Each filled with suggestive cinematography and language. Our children are subtly told that it's permissible to live together without the benefit of marriage or that it is perfectly acceptable to act and talk in certain ways as long as everyone else is doing it. Much of the material that is presented either on television or in the motion pictures paints a distorted picture of what "Love" really is. Our children are subliminally told that gambling, dancing, drinking and drugs are socially acceptable and that to behave otherwise is not socially acceptable.

Paul wrote in I Cor. 15: 33 of the devastating effects of improper companionship. As parents we must keep a constant watch over our children's friends. We must be aware that in many quarters peer pressure to conform is so strong that our children may be unduly influenced to behave and dress in a manner that is totally unacceptable to the conscientious parent. Here is where we "pay for our raising" when we must tell our son or daughter that they can no longer associate with that friend because of the adverse affect they are having on them.

Another enemy of the Godly home is *permissive parenting*. The concept of permissive parenting is that "corporal punishment only teaches the child to strike back when something doesn't please him." Nothing could be farther from the truth. The Bible clearly teaches that discipline is an invaluable tool in dealing with an unruly child (Prov. 22: 15). Yet, we must be cautious as we administer discipline to be sure that it is the proper kind of discipline for the individual and the offense. In disciplining our children we must keep one thing paramount in our minds, the purpose of discipline is not simply to punish but to instruct and correct. Any discipline that does not meet that criteria is destined to fail. We must remember that our children are not miniature adults and consequently will not respond as you or I might. Children by their very nature are irresponsible and forgetful. Can we in good conscience punish them for being children? Before we administer discipline it is important to ascertain that our children understand what they are being punished for and why. It would be both unjust and terribly cruel to punish a child for something he is incapable of being or doing or for some-

thing he did not even know was wrong. How often have we struck out at our children in anger, rather than love, in frustration rather than in an effort to correct.

Still another enemy of the Godly home is *divorce*. According to Dr. James Dobson over half the children under the age of 18 today are living in homes where either one or both of their parents are absent. Over half of the fathers of a divorce, after three years, never see their children again. While I recognize the scriptural provisions for divorce I am not convinced that where there is infidelity that divorce must be the natural out-growth. If that husband or wife were a drunkard or gambler and repented would the spouse not forgive him? Then why not forgive the sin of infidelity? Such circumstances as these lead to yet another enemy of the Godly home, *sexual promiscuity*.

In writing to the saints at Corinth Paul touches on the responsibilities that a husband and wife sustain toward one another. Paul tells them (I Cor. 7: 3-5) that marriage consists of body ownership and that each one is responsible to the other to fulfill their physical needs. When this is not done then sexual promiscuity could well be the ultimate outcome. It is difficult enough to rear our children to honor God's law regarding marriage in a society that revels in immorality, let alone attempting to instill in them values that emanate from a high plain when they live in a home where one of their parents is involved in a promiscuous relationship.

Dr. James Dobson in his outstanding book "THE STRONG WILLED CHILD" notes that the most formative years of a child's life are between the ages of birth to 3 years old. Further, from the time a child enters junior high school he is entering a phase of his life that is most critical to his future well being and it is imperative that he have proper adult guidance and supervision. This leads us to conclude that another enemy to the Godly home is the *working mother*. Now let me hasten to add that I am not opposed to mothers working per se, but only to mothers working during those periods in their children's development that are most critical. I believe that every mother and father needs to reappraise their priorities. Which is more important? A new car or a spiritually and emotionally sound child? No one said the decision would be easy, but for the dedicated parent the choice is evident.

Building a Godly Family

In writing to the saints at Corinth Paul outlined in I Cor. 13: 4-8 the character of love. Love is the cornerstone upon which a Godly family is built. Everything that occurs in the framework of a home must emanate from love. When this occurs then we will be able to discipline our children, separating the displeasing actions from the personal worth of the child. How many children have had their spirits quenched and crushed by a father or mother who was not able to separate their child's wrong doing from his personal worth. Such statements at "You idiot, you're always doing stupid things" serves no useful purpose except to send a message to your child that he is lacking in intellect. Would it not have been better to have told the child "Now (name) I don't

like what you are doing and I will not allow you to continue to act this way. "? Thus dealing with the offense rather than the person.

There used to be a saying that went something like this, "The family that prays together stays together. " As antiquated as that may sound there is a great deal of truth in it. When a family takes time out of a busy schedule to spend a few moments with God in prayer and in searching His word then the family will be a closer knit unit.

Parenthood is a mixed blessing and a responsibility not to be taken lightly. May God grant each of us as parents the wisdom to rear our children in a way that is acceptable to our Father in Heaven.

DAD IS GONE

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The telephone rang; I answered it; mother said, "Your Dad is gone. " Lattie Glover Shewmaker, who was called Glover or L. G., was born July 7, 1900 in Arkansas. He departed from life August 14, 1986 at Long Beach, California, having lived 86 years 1 month and 7 days. He is survived by his wife, Grace, whom he married at Alton, Illinois August 10, 1929; a son Fred; a daughter, Marcella Bethel; 3 brothers, Troy, Otto and Aubrey; 7 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren.

Dad had limited formal education, but he was well acquainted with the contents of the Bible. Nearly every day of his adult life he took time to read the word of God. It was a settled matter in his home that before bed time there would be a Bible reading and the offering of prayer.

Dad never was active in politics. One person told me that he was not interested in education. Nevertheless, he was the one who told residents of Stanford, Arkansas, about 45 years ago, "If you do not want to send your high school students to Beach Grove, now is the time to work to get a high school here. It can be done while "Doc" Self is the County judge. " Stanford High School opened for the fall term in 1941. As long as I can remember, Dad encouraged my sister and me to obtain a college education. As we grew up, one of his top priorities was to save enough to pay our college tuition. When circumstances required him to move to obtain work, during a school term, mother, sister and I would be left behind until that school term ended. Others also received his assistance in their efforts to obtain a college education.

I am altogether convinced that L. G. Shewmaker

loved the Lord, the truth, the church and the brethren. He was a friend to preachers. He enjoyed the preaching of the pure gospel. He also appreciated those who defended the truth in honorable debate. He enjoyed telling about various debates he had attended and the debaters he had heard explaining how a debater had used a certain passage to expose some error.

When I was a boy and we lived in Greene County, Arkansas, preachers who came for meetings at Croft College always stayed with us. Dad was not a preacher. Probably the longest speech he ever made to an assembly was delivered at Delaplane, Arkansas in 1939 or '40. Dad had been asked to "wait on the Lord's table" that Sunday morning. False doctrine regarding punishment after death was advocated by the preacher in his sermon. After serving the Lord's supper, Dad picked up his Bible and said, "There are some things I must say. " Then he began reading passage after passage from the New Testament regarding hell and punishment of the wicked. Having finished reading, he said, "These things force me to disagree with that which was taught in the sermon this morning. " The preacher arose and said, "When brother Shewmaker becomes as old as I am and has studied as long and as hard as I have, he will change his mind. " Immediately Dad responded, "I hope to God I will not live that long. "

Although Dad was not a preacher, he did baptize two people. Two young ladies requested baptism at Croft College on a Sunday morning. There was not a preacher present. Dad set out to find a preacher, driving around to the various meeting houses, but arrived at the appointed place for the baptisms without a preacher. One of the young ladies asked, "Why can't Glover do it?" Being unable to give a reason why he could not, he baptized them.

Dad was a man of convictions. He could stand on his convictions when no other man stood with him. At one place where he was a member of the church, it appeared that a brother, who had not attended services for an extended period, would be received back into full fellowship without making any acknowledgment of error nor expressing any repentance. Dad took his stand with firm and open opposition to that. The brother had a son who was a gospel preacher. He consulted his son and was told to repent and make acknowledgments of his error. He did and Dad welcomed him into the local fellowship.

It was during that same period of his life that Dad put his job on the line. As he and his fellow workers were in line to clock out on Saturday evening, their foreman came down the line saying, "Everybody back tomorrow. " Dad stopped him and said that he would not work on Sunday and miss worship. The foreman said that if he did not work the next day, he would not have a job on Monday. After attending worship on Sunday, Dad went to work Monday morning not knowing whether or not he still was employed. His time card was in the rack. He clocked in. Nothing was said about him missing work on Sunday until the workers lined up to clock out Saturday evening. Their foreman came down the line saying, "Everybody back tomorrow. " When he saw

Dad, he said, "Every body back tomorrow, except Glover."

During the years that I was growing up, Dad was a Bible class teacher. In later years it seems that he was content to have those with more formal education teach the classes. In the last two churches with which he was identified, it was his responsibility to select those who participated in the services. He used that position to encourage young men to take part in the services. He was motivated by his own experience as a young man to encourage them. He said that when he grew up, the older men did everything. Then the day came when all the older men had passed on and everything fell on the young men's shoulders. They were untrained and did not know how to carry on. Dad said, "We just had to do the best we could and there are those who lived all their lives without ever participating in a public way."

Zeal for encouraging the development of young men once led him to ask two service men to assist with the serving of the Lord's supper. They consented to help and did. When services ended that morning some one questioned Dad about the wisdom of using persons "who are not members of the church." The two young men had been regularly attending services and Dad had assumed that even though they had not identified with the local church, they must be members back where they came from. That did not dampen Dad's zeal for encouraging young men to participate in the public services. After that, he just made certain that a young man was a member of the church, before asking him to participate.

Dad often seemed gruff. He was not one to waste words. At times his manner caused people to think he was angry. An elder where Dad was a deacon once told me, "Fred, when I first met your Dad, I thought he had about the sourest disposition of anyone I ever came across, but, you know, as I came to know him, I began to realize that he has about the driest sense of humor a man could have." That is very close to the fact, but Dad also was tender-hearted, hospitable and generous.

Although I did not realize all that I am about to write at the time it happened, Dad revealed to me and others his tender heart one Sunday morning when I was still a small boy. He stood before the church with tears flowing down his cheeks asking forgiveness for his involvement in an incident that had resulted in talk against the church by residents of the community. I have never figured out how he could have avoided that incident, but that is of no consequence. His tears taught me the dignity of tears shed in concern for the cause of Christ.

Dad's hospitality was seen in his keeping preachers who came for meetings, which was mentioned earlier, but it went beyond that. He delighted in having guests. Many times his desire to show hospitality moved him to extend an invitation, before learning from mother that really she was unprepared to receive guests, but would honor his will.

The scope of Dad's generosity probably is unknown to any one outside of his immediate family. There was never fanfare about it. By American standards he was not exceptionally wealthy. Nevertheless, even after he

retired, he and mother supplied gospel preachers and struggling churches in the United States and across the seas with thousands of dollars in assistance. Neither Dad nor mother have been what could be called "an easy touch." They answered one request for a contribution, "We feel that what we can contribute to the work of the Lord should be given to directly assist the work of a local church or to directly support gospel preaching."

Dad never seemed to need the praise of men. I believe he was at peace with himself and our Lord. His trial by life on earth has ended. He will no longer be standing at the door of the Spring and Delta meeting house to greet you or help you find a seat when the crowd is large. "Dad is gone." His eternal destiny is sealed. We have full assurance in hope of his eternal welfare.

Lattie Glover Shewmaker's earthly remains were buried August 18, 1986 at Sunnyside Memorial Park in Long Beach, California. Speakers at the memorial service were Fred A. Shewmaker, son; P. S. Bethel, son-in-law and Don Wright, local minister at Spring and Delta. Don is a young man in his first located work. This was his first funeral. Mother viewed it as an opportunity for him to gain experience. Dad would have liked that.

TWIN BROTHERS

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When one thinks of Bible twins he usually thinks first of Jacob and Esau (Gen. 25: 24-26). As far as I know they are the only twins specifically named in the Bible. This lesson is about twins. It is not about physical characteristics, but spiritual qualities that are of the same seed. They are not identical, but like twins, have similar identifying marks. These twins are ENVY and STRIFE.

Recently I heard a preacher refer to these two iniquities as "twin brothers." This aroused my curiosity and I began a study of the two words. I have learned that usually strife ensues envy or envy precedes strife. Granted, this is not true in every case of reference, but there are some "twin passages" that alarm us of danger.

Definition

ENVY is defined by Vine as,

"... the feeling of displeasure produced by witnessing or hearing of the advantage or prosperity of others; this evil sense always attaches to this word, Matt. 27: 18; Mk. 15: 10; Rom. 1: 29; Gal. 5: 21; Phil. 1: 15; 1 Tim. 6: 4; Tit. 3: 3; 1 Pet. 2: 1..."

Some translations use envy and jealousy interchangeably. Jealousy is used in Acts 13: 45; Rom. 13: 13; 1 Cor. 3: 3; 2 Cor. 12: 20; Jas. 3: 14-16 to distinguish from envy in that the latter does not want the advantageous to enjoy any of his property. The former desires to enjoy

the same advantages as his peer.

STRIFE is defined as the expression of enmity or contention. Synonyms here are such words as "contentious," 1 Cor. 1: 11; "debate" (A. V.), Rom. 1: 29; "variance," (A. V.), Gal. 5: 20.

From the Greek ERITHIA, "faction" is another proper usage of the word. In Heb. 6: 16 of the A. V. a "dispute" is given. In 2 Tim. 2: 23 Paul warned Timothy of "fightings" or "quarrels" (NASV) resulting from "foolish and ignorant speculations. "

The Heel

While we see similarities between these two, i. e., envy and strife, are they really "twins?" The Bible says Esau came forth first and hanging on to his heel was Jacob his brother. These boys were not identical twins as noted in their descriptions. They were, however, brothers, quite different, yet, nonetheless, twins (Gen. 25: 27-34).

Certainly this is not an intended allegory in these two representing two evils such as envy and strife. I do mention them as a parallel to the words in their close relationship. One "hangs on to the heel" of the other.

The Relationship

As mentioned previously it is not always true that one precedes or ensues the other. There are some places, however, that they do and the results are always devastating.

1) PROVERBS 17: 14—

"The beginning of strife is like letting out water, So abandon the quarrel before it breaks out. "

There you have it. Quarreling (envy) as used here and in 2 Tim. 2: 23 is the start of divisions and factions.

My grandfather did not believe in Bible classes. While I agree that they are an expedient method of teaching, and are thus scriptural, I also agree with grandpa who said:

"Church problems usually start in Bible classes. "

Perhaps that was his opinion, but I have seen it come so true among brethren. Like twin brothers, envy and strife, are soon born out of a class where "the beginning was like letting water out. " The "quarrel was not abandoned, " and strife ensued from envy!

2) ROMANS 13: 13—Paul speaks of the nearness of salvation, vs. 11, and warns to stay away from "deeds of darkness, " vs. 12. The Christian's behavior is then addressed, vs. 13, and three sets of "twins" are mentioned:

- * carousing & drunkenness
- * sexual promiscuity & sensuality
- * JEALOUSY AND STRIFE

He concludes the thought by mentioning THE ONE we are to "put on, " Christ Jesus. We are to have no relationships with fleshly lusts. In fact we are to make "no provision, " i. e., do not even allow it to be born into your life. Your brother is Jesus, not any of the aforementioned "twins. " This same problem was prevalent among the Corinthians and Paul writes them saying,

"You are still fleshly. For since there is JEALOUSY and STRIFE among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?"—1 Cor. 3: 3

3) PHILIPPIANS 1: 15—Preacher friend, wake up! Hear Paul's questioning of why certain men preach:

"Some to be sure are preaching Christ even from ENVY and STRIFE, but some also from good will, the latter do it out of love... the former... out of selfish ambition... "

Why are you preaching? Is it because you love the Lord and His truth? Is it for glory, popularity and "selfish ambition?" Paul says, "either way Jesus is preached and I am happy about that. " Are we who are preaching joined to our "twin brother" Jesus in manifesting His characteristics or are we related to the "twins: " Envy and Strife?

Many preachers have left the impression that their work is hampered by jealousy of other preachers. Brother, never lose sight of the fact that we are working for the Lord! A "Big Preacher" in the brotherhood may earn, yes, EARN, more notoriety, but his work is no more or less important than your own. Carefully consider Paul's culmination of this thought in the very next chapter:

"Do nothing from selfishness or empty deceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. "—Phil. 2: 3-4

Isn't it interesting that he chose these words in the same context of 1: 15, i. e., why some preach?

4) 1 TIMOTHY 6: 3-10—In this text we have again the "twin brothers" listed not with the copulative conjunction "and, " but, one following the other in a list of iniquities. Consider verse five:

"... and constant FRICTION between men of depraved mind... "

This is the result, FRICTION, of those related to the "brothers" in verse four:

"... morbid interest in CONTROVERSIAL questions and DISPUTES about words, out of which arise ENVY, STRIFE... " In many of "our periodicals" I have read wrangling after wrangling over "controversial questions. " You see, the Bible acknowledges the fact that there IS ROOM for unsettled questions. Some, however, think they have to have an answer for any Bible question that might arise; and they will argue long and hard over it. While one must stand firm on the truth, he must also realize that some things do not have black and white answers. Squabbling over such issues and words alienate more sinners, weak brethren (and sometimes strong ones), than most anything else. Admit it. No one has all the answers, and arguing out of jealousy and envy brings no peace, only faction and friction!

Conclusion

James has summed it well:

"But if you have bitter JEALOUSY and STRIFE in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth... For where JEALOUSY and STRIFE exist, there is disorder and every evil thing."—Jas. 3: 14, 16 (NASV)

ENVY and STRIFE have similar characteristics. They are indeed twin brothers. They are not identical, but they are certainly from the same seed!

GENESIS IN THE "BIBLE" OF JOSEPH SMITH

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In the year 1833, the Mormon 'prophet' Joseph Smith announced his "New Translation" of the Bible. Other than a few brief excerpts, this 'translation' was not published until 1867; some twenty-three years after Smith's death.

Smith took great liberties with the King James Version, which served as his source Bible. This was especially true in his mishandling of the Book of Genesis. Incidentally, it ultimately became known among the Reorganized Latter Day Saint people as the "Inspired Version." But among the Utah Mormons, it is not recognized at either 'inspired' or 'authoritative.'

Genesis Chapter 1 Smith's version has thirty-three verses compared to the KJV's thirty-one verses. The KJV has the personal pronoun "I" only two times in Chapter 1. The Smith version uses "I", fifty-three times. In fact, the expression "And I, God,... " is used by Smith a total of thirty times in this one chapter. This same rather odd expression is used by Smith in a number of his other writings that are accepted as 'inspired' by both the Utah and Missouri Mormons.

Genesis Chapter 2 Smith's version has thirty-one verses, while the KJV has only twenty-five. In this chapter, Smith has God saying: "And I, the Lord God, said unto mine Only Begotten, that it was not good that the man should be alone." (v. 23). Therefore, Smith has the "Only Begotten" being spoken to by His Father, before the "Only Begotten" was born. Christ as "the Word" was with God in creation.... but NOT as the "Only Begotten."

Genesis Chapter 3 In this chapter, Smith expands upon the "Only Begotten," by referring to "my beloved Son" in verse 3. Smith has God mentioning His "Only Begotten" three times in this chapter. The KJV has twenty-four verses, while Smith's version has thirty-three.

Genesis Chapter 4 The KJV has twenty-six verses, while Smith's version has only thirteen. Smith has the "Holy Ghost" falling upon Adam in this chapter. (Verse 9).

Genesis Chapter 5 Smith begins this chapter: "and the Lord God called upon men, by the Holy Ghost, everywhere, and commanded them that they should repent;..." (Verse 1). "And as many as believed in the Son, and repented their sins, should be saved..." (Verse 2). So Smith has the plan of salvation of the New Testament age, introduced early in Genesis. The most unusual, and totally non-Biblical, insertion by Smith, occurs in this chapter in verses sixteen and thirty five. We copy as follows:

"And Cain said, Truly I am Mahan, the master of this great secret, that I may murder and get gain. Wherefore Cain was called Master Mahan; and he gloried in his wickedness." (Verse 16).

"For, Lamech having entered into a covenant with Satan, after the manner of Cain, wherein he became Master Mahan, master of that great secret which was administered unto Cain by Satan;..." (Verse 35).

Have you ever encountered such wild and imaginary expressions as the above? Think of it! Smith has inserted material in his version that is completely foreign to the Holy Scriptures. Smith has forty-five verses in this chapter, while the KJV has thirty-two.

Genesis Chapter 6 The KJV has twenty-two verses in this chapter, while Smith's version has seventy-one. In verse 6, Smith has the children being taught to read and write a pure and undefiled language. He has the people of God dwelling "in a land of promise." (Verse 15). In verse 53, Smith introduces "be baptized, even in water." Smith has men asking: "Why is it that men must repent, and be baptized in water?" (Verse 54). The "Only Begotten," the "Holy Ghost," the "Comforter," and the "Spirit of God"; are all mentioned in this chapter.

Genesis Chapter 7 The KJV has twenty-four verses, while Smith's version has eighty-five. "And he gave unto me a commandment, that I should baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, who is full of grace and truth, and the Holy Ghost which bareth record of the Father and the Son," (Verse 13). If this was true, then John the Baptizer would never have been the one to introduce the act of baptism, and thus be termed 'John who baptizes.' Further, if Smith was right, then the comforter had been given centuries before Christ promised Him to His apostles. (John 14: 26; 15: 26; and 16: 13). This chapter also mentions the "Only Begotten", the "Son of Man," and "Jesus Christ."

Conclusion

The further one goes into Genesis, the more Smith rambles in his 'version.' Smith was NOT a 'prophet'; nor did he possess the knowledge of the Scriptures to even intelligently teach them, let alone 'translate' them. Isn't it a shame that so many good people have been hoodwinked and deceived by such false teaching?

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SUBTLE EVIL INFLUENCES

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Our great adversary, Satan, is the master deceiver of the human race. He attempted to thwart God's plan for man's salvation through Christ in the temptation in the wilderness (Mt. 4: 1-11).

Satan will appear at the most opportune time for him and when he is more likely to be successful in leading us away from God's will for us. I suppose our greatest problem in dealing with the devil is the different forms he takes many times as he appears to us. We tend to have in the back of our minds this sinister looking monster in a red suit carrying a pitchfork and having a pointed tail, etc. Surely we would always be able to recognize the devil if he looked like that. If he does, then none of us mortals have ever seen him! But brethren and friends, he doesn't! He appears in very appealing garb! Paul said even as an "angel of light" (2 Cor. 11: 14). He went on to say that "his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness" (2 Cor. 11: 15). Peter depicts a figure of Satan as a "roaring lion" walking about seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5: 8). That is something we all would recognize. Don't you suppose what Peter had in mind was the effect of Satan's work rather than how he looks as he goes about his dastardly work? I do.

The Devil In Blue Jeans

Who among us hasn't heard Miss Gibbs sing her popular song, "The Devil In Blue Jeans"? I'm not recommending it as required or even desired listening for that matter, but for those who take little thought as to how they dress perhaps you'd do well to listen to Terry's song and think a little bit. Men can entice women too, you know! Matthew 5: 28 isn't exclusively for men. Neither is 1 Tim. 2: 8-9 exclusively for women! While you're doing your research into these matters, listen to the one that goes something like this, "heaven help us, baby's got her blue jeans on!", by a popular male singer, Mel McDaniel. The language of the above mentioned songs aren't so subtle, they spell it out in plain language. If we aren't careful, however, we will soon cease to see anything wrong with a constant diet of such lyrics into our minds and soon we will be singing right along with them.

Recently I was shocked to listen to my son Jason's fifth grade graduating class singing a song with many subtle humanistic thoughts dispersed in among some great thoughts and philosophies for living. I recognized in this a very subtle thread of thought which suggests that man depend on himself for direction and motivation for living. The prophet said however in the long

ago, "Oh Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself, it is not in man that walketh to direct his (own) steps" (Jer. 10: 23). This same song I speak of suggested that there was no hero or anyone suitable to look up to so one should learn to depend on self (me). So subtle is this song that even faithful, mature Christians missed its significance. The following are some of the words to this song.

I believe the children are our future. Teach them well and let them lead the way. Show them all the beauty they possess inside. Give them a sense of pride to make it easier. Let the children's laughter remind us how we used to be.

Everybody's searching for a hero. People need someone to look up to. I never found anyone who fulfilled my needs. A lonely place to be so I learned to depend on me.

I decided long ago never to walk in anyone's shadow; if I fail, if I succeed at least I live as I believe. No matter what they take from me they can't take away my dignity.

Because the greatest love of all is happening to me. I found the greatest love of all inside of me. The greatest love is easy to achieve. Learning to love yourself, it is the greatest love around.

I believe the children are our future. Teach them well and let them lead the way. Show them all the beauty they possess inside. Give them a sense of pride to make it easier. Let the children's laughter remind us how we used to be.

And if by chance that special place that you've been dreaming of leads you to a lonely place, find your strength in love.

This song is as Jason and his 5th grade class learned and sang at graduation at Ballard Elementary School, June, 1986 here in Bradenton, FL.

As Christians we should teach our children dignity as well as self respect and give them confidence not to be mere followers of their peer group. But we have the book and the perfect example to follow, the Bible and the Son of the living God. We are to love self, and our neighbor as self, but the greatest love of all was that which Jesus showed in giving himself for us. (John 15: 13 and Matthew 22: 39).

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THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

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WRITTEN DISCUSSION

Agreement has been reached between H. E. Phillips and Marshall E. Patton for the forthcoming written exchange on one aspect of the divorce and remarriage question. They have both signed the following proposition:

RESOLVED: The Scriptures teach that the innocent person (free of fornication) who has been put away without Gods or his/her approval and against whom adultery has been committed may remarry. Affirmative M. E. Patton Negative H. E. Phillips

It is our present intention to begin this exchange of three articles from each man with the January issue. It will appear in January, February and March. None of the exchange will be started until the editor has in hand all of the articles. Should there be a delay, we will begin with the February issue. More time was spent than anticipated in working out a proposition that was acceptable to both men. Be watching for it.

GAILEN E. EVANS, 2118 Airdale Ave., Ventura, CA 93003—In August, 1984 I began working with the Buenaventura church in Ventura, CA. The facility we were meeting in was adequate, but the rent was burdensome. As of September 1, this year, we have moved to a less expensive facility. We now meet at 10730 Henderson Road in the Satcoy area of Ventura. We meet in the Easter Seal society building, located on the south side of the Santa Paula Freeway, mid-way between Wells Road and Satcoy Ave. We meet on Sundays at 10 A. M., 11 A. M. and 6 P. M. and on Wed. nights at 7:30. Phone (805) 647-9837.

DENNIS E. ADAMS, Rt. 5, Box 427, Carlisle, PA 17013—A year has passed since I began working with the Walnut Bottom church. Although eight individuals left because of our stand for the truth, we pray the year ahead will be more encouraging. With our efforts in seeking the lost through use of home Bible studies correspondence courses and newspaper articles, we hope hearts will be receptive to the gospel. Among the 35 who remain, there are those who have a stronger faith and maturity which will be a key to the growth of the church in the future. The church has also been benefited in the past two years by gospel meetings with Wilson Adams, Raymond Harris, Guy Roberson and Hubert Showalter. We welcome you to visit with us. We are located approximately 40 miles south of Harrisburg, exit 11 off of I-81.

ANDY DIESTEL KAMP, 812 W. Reynolds, Pontiac, IL 61764—On August 1st my wife Karen and I moved to Pontiac to work with the church here. Pontiac is a town of about 11,000 in the central part of the state, about 60 miles northeast of Peoria. There are 27 members with total attendance of about 45. Support has been slow in coming and any help would be appreciated. Phone (815) 844-5100.

CORRESPONDENCE COURSE FOR PRISON INMATES

Two prison inmates, who are faithful Christians, have recently written a 12 lesson Bible correspondence course especially for prison inmates. This course deals with the special problems faced by prison inmates who want to follow Christ.

The authors of this course have been collectively incarcerated for more than 8 years in prisons ranging from minimum to maximum security and can relate well to the special problems of prisoners. The course is expected to be ready for use and in print by November 15, 1986. If you are a prison inmate (or know someone who is) and would like to take this course, please write to: Lockland Church of Christ, 419 W. Wyoming Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45215.

PLEASE SEND DAVID HURST TO SOUTH AFRICA

PAUL K. WILLIAMS, 18 Fairlie Rd., Eshowe, 3815 South Africa—The David V. Hurst family of 2712 Byron Dr., N. W., Roanoke, VA 24019, has made the wonderful decision to move to Johannesburg, South Africa in June-July where he visited with gospel preachers and several congregations and had a very careful look at the security situation in the country. The Johannesburg brethren had in-depth discussions with him about moving to work with them at the Brixton congregation and discussed at length with him the matter of safety of people in this country.

On returning to the states he discussed his impressions with his wife. She made some telephone calls to preachers' wives in South Africa for more details. Together they decided they can best serve the Lord by coming to this country. David will be working not only with the Brixton congregation in Johannesburg, but with the four black churches in Soweto, the Coloured church in Eldorado Park, and will do much preaching in the rural areas of Venda and the Transvaal.

The Brixton church helped David decide how much support he will need and they are helping him with settling-in money and probably will help on his salary. David is 32 years old. He has a reputation as a faithful, earnest Christian. He impressed me with his preaching ability and careful scriptural reasoning. I think he is a good man for this work. He does not appear to be an "adventurer" but a man who wants to come because he loves the Lord.

Brethren, support this man. He thinks that churches may be reluctant to help because they think South Africa is blowing up. I was in the United States in August and understand the sensational reports which you are getting on TV. I beg you to listen to those of us who are here and to brother Hurst who made a careful investigation of the situation. No faithful preacher is planning to leave South Africa because of the "unrest situation." Nor are we reluctant to advise others to come here to preach. We believe the risks are minimal and the opportunities to do good are great.

Suppose churches told Paul, the apostle, that it was not safe for him to go into Galatia or Macedonia. Suppose they stopped his support because he ran into trouble in Lystra or Ephesus. Imagine that, if you can! Then parallel that with the attitude of churches which are afraid that maybe a preacher might get into physical trouble somewhere and have to leave. Such churches are counting their dollars of greater worth than the souls that can be saved. Suppose a preacher does have to leave after a year or so. What has been lost? Money has been spent, but has it been lost. Not so! It has been invested in souls who have heard the gospel. Brethren, it is an investment which is for heaven. Don't let earthly considerations rob you of the heavenly returns of such an investment.

ARLOS CAPELLI, Buenos Aires, Argentina—I was in a meeting July 19-27 in Barinas, Venezuela in which 3 were baptized and one restored. There are now 30 members here. On July 29 I arrived in Bogota, Columbia. Seven were baptized during this trip to Columbia. I was also invited to speak to two congregations associated with the liberal element in the U. S. At one place 150 people attended. I spoke on Bible Authority, The Silence of God and Congregational Autonomy. This resulted in an 8 hour debate on the autonomy of the local church. Santiago Castro and Nestor Bermudez did good work fighting for the faith. Back in Argentina at Jose C. Paz church, Gardner Hall from W. Patterson, NY visited August 21-24.

PREACHERS NEEDED

BROCKWELL, ARKANSAS—The church here needs a full-time preacher who can bring support with him. Randall Elrod, who was here for two years, has moved to Catoosa, Oklahoma. Those interested may write to the church in Brockwell, AR 72517 or call Louie Barnes (501) 258-7721 or 258-3103.

MANY, LOUISIANA—The Toledo Bend church needs a full-time preacher effective immediately. The congregation is young with attendance of 20-25. We are in a new building in a fast growing area of Toledo Bend Lake, west of Many. Our new building is paid for. We can only supply partial support. This area has a great potential for the teaching of the gospel. Anyone interested may call Bob Rushing (318) 256-9396 or write the church at HC 63, Box 538, Many LA 71449. You may also write Andrew Addison at 118 S. 3rd St., Leesville, LA 71446.

SCIOTOVILLE, OHIO—Self-supporting congregation of 50-60 needs a full-time preacher. We supply a house for the preacher. Contact William Lewis (614) 776-7527 or Gordon Hagerman 776-2019.

LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA—The Westside church is seeking a full-time preacher to work with us. We are small congregation with two families meeting in a home in central Virginia where a congregation is so badly needed. Most support will have to be obtained from outside sources. If interested, please call Larry Powell at (804) 237-3445 or write: 1203 Westridge Cir., Lynchburg, VA 24502.

EDITORIAL LEFT-OVERS BAPTIST HOG DAY

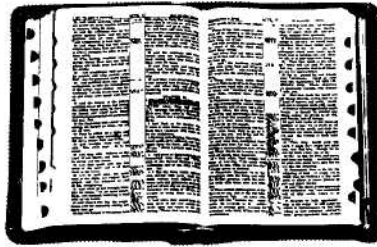
I love my work. Preaching the gospel is my first love in life and I get to do a lot of that in many different places. An added blessing is getting to meet some of the finest people on earth. We are all unique. But some of us are "uniquer" than others. I have never known anyone quite like my friend of many years, R. E. Corns, of Gibsonburg, Ohio. Every year he makes it a special point to write and inform me as to when "Baptist Hog Day" will be in West Virginia. According to a recent notice from him, it was in October this year. Now how many of you knew that? Don't ask me what "Baptist Hog Day" in West Virginia is. I don't know. Brother Corns has never filled me in on that. But he never fails to let me know when it will be. I have come to expect his notice every year and he never lets me down. Oh yes, he is a fine Christian and has maintained his unusual sense of humor amid serious physical problems dating back several years. He has also done much to help circulate STS in northwestern Ohio. We thank him for that and for keeping us posted on "Baptist Hog Day", whatever that is.

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	218
RESTORATIONS	89
(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)	

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 XXVII

DECEMBER, 1986

Number 12

ACCEPTED OF HIM

(2 Cor. 5:9)

Donnie V. Rader

4724 E. Manslick Rd.
Louisville, KY 40219



THE WAY TO PRAY (Part 1)

When the disciples pleaded, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1) they were wanting to be shown the way to do it. Thus Jesus said, "After this manner therefore pray ye" (Matt. 6:9). In other words, Jesus said "This is the way to pray."

It is not prayer per se that is acceptable to God, but prayer that is offered as the Lord teaches. Hopefully, with a little study our prayer service will become more meaningful.

Characteristics (How)

1. **With a prepared mind.** Prayer is something we must prepare our minds to do. We must be in the proper frame of mind. Our minds need to be free from all distraction. Worldly cares and concerns need to be pushed aside for the moment. Tune everything else out. It is hard, if not impossible, to pray with a lot of noise—e.g. the television blaring or with a lot of activity around the house. If we are not careful, we will find ourselves in the middle of a prayer suddenly thinking about that letter we forgot to mail or the phone call we need to make. If possible, we need to picture ourselves as being enclosed in a circle where nothing can get through to disturb us while we talk to God Almighty.

2. **According to God's will.** If God is to be pleased we must pray in harmony with God's revelation. John speaks of the confidence that the Christian has saying, "if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us" (1 Jno. 4:14). Jesus set an example of requesting "thy will be done" (Matt. 26:39, 42).

It is possible to teach error, sing error and yes, even pray error. That is why "Lord, teach us to pray" is so important to us.

3. **Ask in faith.** James said that one needs to ask for wisdom especially in the midst of trials and temptations. However, when he asks let him do so in faith (Jas. 1:5-6). He further shows that the man who is unstable and has a wavering faith need not expect anything that he asks of the Lord (vs 6-8). Jesus said, "All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matt. 21:22; cf. 1 Tim. 2:8; Mark 11:23-24).

4. **With humility.** The Pharisees had a problem with praying on the street corners to be seen of men (Matt. 6:5). Jesus told of a Pharisee who boasted in prayer of being much better than the publican (Luke 18:10-14). Obviously, the only way to approach the creator of the universe is in humility.

5. **In the name of Christ.** The Lord taught His disciples to ask "in my name" (John 14:13-14; 15:15). Paul urged that we do all things "in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col. 3:17). While this does involve Christ being our mediator, it also involves praying by his authority (cf. Acts 4:7).

6. **In spirit.** All of our worship is to be in spirit as well as in truth (John 4:24; cf. 1 Cor. 14:15). To pray in spirit simply means to do so sincerely and from the heart. Paul defines "in spirit" in Rom. 2:28-29 as meaning "of the heart". It is possible to say words that would be acceptable unto God but our heart be far from him (Matt. 15:8). Our prayers must be fervent, striving, agonizing with strenuous zeal (Jas. 5:16).

7. **Not: (a) Fixed expressions.** Compare Matt. 6:9-15 and Luke 11:2-4 and you will see that Jesus did not use the exact same expressions. Certainly there is nothing wrong with using familiar phrases again and again. However, merely "saying your prayers" is not praying! The point is that there are no standard words or phrases that we **have** to use. I sometimes wonder what a new convert thinks as he listens to our prayers when it seems like phrases are used over and over to the point of becoming meaningless.

(b) **Much words.** Prayers do not have to be long or filled with a lot of words. It seems that the Pharisees thought that their prayers would be heard for their

much speaking (Matt. 6:7). Consider the prayers of Jesus in Gethsemane which contain only 20-22 words each (Matt. 26:39, 42). Augustine said, "We pray most when we say least, and we pray least when we say most." Martin Luther said, "Few words and much meaning is Christian; many words and little meaning is heathenish." Longer prayers have their place (Luke 6:12), but all prayers do not have to have a lot of words.

Elements (What)

We have a lot for which to pray and that demands that we spend some time in prayer. We sometimes pray in very general terms whether making a request or giving thanks or praying for others. One thing I learn from looking at the prayers given in the Bible is that we need to pray for definite things (Cf. Luke 11:11-12; Jas. 5:17-18).

The apostle Paul instructs that "first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men" (1 Tim. 2:1). There are four elements of prayer mentioned in this text.

1. **Supplication.** This refers to asking for a need, an entreaty. Clarke says this refers to a request for the averting of evil. Thus our prayers should consist of asking for some things (1 Jno. 5:15). We should ask not to be led into temptation (Matt. 6:13; Mark 14:38). There are times we need to ask for strength to overcome weaknesses (Heb. 4:16). We must ask for God's help to make it through trials and temptations (Jas. 1:5-8). We often face physical problems for which we need God's help (Jas. 5:13; Acts 12:5). We are constantly in need of God's protection and care (Matt. 24:20). In fact, we can ask for anything that is right within itself (Phil. 4:6).

2. **Prayers.** This refers to any discourse with God (petitions, praise, thanksgiving, et. al.) Clarke says this refers to a request for the obtaining of good. Our prayers should be filled with **praise**. Notice that in the model prayer Jesus gave it began and ended with praise (Matt. 6:9-13). God should be recognized as the Almighty, the creator of all things and the giver of every good and perfect gift.

Our prayers do and should contain request. We ought to ask for wisdom (Jas. 1:5), the furtherance of the gospel (2 Thess. 3:1; Col. 4:3), forgiveness of sins (Acts 8:22), temporal needs (Matt. 6:9-13), church growth and that God's will be done (Matt. 6:10).

We will give consideration to intercessions and thanksgiving in part 2.

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Editorial

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EDITORIAL STEW COLUMN BY COLLY CALDWELL

With this issue of SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES, we begin a regular column by C. G. "Colly" Caldwell of Temple Terrace, Florida. In addition to his administrative work at Florida College, Colly is one of the best preachers to be found. His writing is interesting, instructive and highly readable. He always does his homework. We believe his contributions to the paper will add a much needed dimension which our readers will appreciate.

* * * * *

VOLUME 27 CLOSES

With the issue you hold in your hand, Volume 27 closes. When this paper began in 1960 under the editorship of H. E. Phillips and with the considerable help of James P. Miller, none could foresee how long the paper would be in business nor the influence for good it would wield. In that length of time, many papers have started and folded. From the beginning, we have enjoyed a large readership, many of whom have introduced the paper to friends and family. We have been blessed with the writing of a number of good men who have worked voluntarily and only for the good their writing would do. No writer has ever been paid, except in the personal satisfaction he has derived. This editor has been on the job since June, 1973, almost as long as H. E. Phillips edited the paper.

It is not always easy to meet deadlines and keep a paper operating smoothly, especially with the press of other work. Since 1975, I have been engaged in gospel meeting work nine months each year. I have had to write articles, compose news columns, carry on correspondence and other things essential to the paper, while on the road. (I am writing this column from a kitchen table in the home of my friend, Jerry Hale, in Parkersburg, West Virginia.) I do not take golf clubs or tennis rackets with me to meetings, and am not criticizing those who can do that. I do take a typewriter, and a brief case full of work. Sometimes a writer will tell me he cannot get an article done because he is in a meeting. I am always a little amused by that, for most of my work has to be done that way.

During the past year, we made one change in operation which has proved to be a great help to my wife and

me. In July, Jane Ashbrook went to work full time for the paper. That has made it much easier for my wife, Bobby, to travel with me in the meetings without being swamped with work on the paper before and after each meeting. Jane is efficient and has quickly grasped the day-to-day work which must be done to keep the business part of the work flowing smoothly. She is the wife of Lee Ashbrook, one of the elders at Manslick Rd. church in Louisville, and also the daughter of our good friend and brother, A. C. Grider. We owe a debt of thanks to Joan and Donnie Rader for helping us so ably during the critical months in 1985.

* * * * *

PREACHERS, MEETINGS AND TEMPERANCE

It comes as a surprise to some that the greatest difficulty I face in meetings is the meal list. Quickly, let all understand that my wife and I appreciate every act of hospitality shown to us. It not only involves extra work, but extra expense to entertain company. But there is a problem here. Gospel preachers (and their wives) are as obligated to practice self-control as all other Christians. Let's face it, folks, intemperance is a sin! It is wrong for a preacher to yield to it and it is equally wrong for sisters to insist that we over-indulge.

Think a little, now. This year we were in 23 gospel meetings. The average length was six days. If you have one meal a day in the homes of brethren, that equals having Thanksgiving dinner 138 times in a year. Add to that the fact that in a few instances, against my strong protest, some brethren scheduled two such meals a day, and the problem is compounded. Then some want you to come home with them after services every night and EAT. Do you have any idea what it is like to get up from a seven course meal at about 2 P.M. when you are scheduled to sit down at another table equally loaded at 5 P.M. the same day? In many places you will find three kinds of meats, three breads, twelve vegetables and three desserts, sometimes with pointed reminders that "I like to see a man eat"; or "you don't eat enough to keep a bird alive"; or "it won't hurt you just this once." With all due respect to the culinary talents of my good sisters, I insist on making one thing clear — I reserve the right to decide my own capacity!

Those who travel much soon learn that routine is absolutely essential to good health. Upon Doctors advice, I try to maintain the same eating habits away from home which I observe at home. I always eat a good breakfast, light lunch and a pretty good supper. For that reason, I have tried to limit meal appointments in meetings to the evening meal. Not only does that enable one to use some restraint about the amount of food, but it also means there are not as many deadlines in the day. As indicated before, this preacher has to take work along to do. There are always letters to write, reading to

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do for sermons, and to make preparations for classes and other teaching commitments. All of us should be ready and willing to put the needs of the meeting first in terms of personal teaching and visiting of those who need us.

A brother, just recently, met me for the first time. After exchanging a few pleasantries he surprised me by saying "you don't have a big belly like most preachers." Thanks, brother, I think. I suppose that is better than the comment of one sister in Kentucky, who told one preacher he had "Dunlap's disease." He said, "What do you mean, Dunlap's disease?" She said "Your stomach dun' lapped over your belt buckle." Preachers, beware of "Dunlap's disease."

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Once more, we need to remind readers that the paper and book store are two separate businesses. Do not order books from the paper, nor papers from the bookstore. Sometimes, a reader will send in a subscription and also include funds for a book. Please don't do that. That goofs up book keeping for both of us.

PATTON-PHILLIPS EXCHANGE

The written exchange between Marshall E. Patton and H. E. Phillips on the remarriage of a "put away" person will be delayed until the February, 1987 issue. Brother Phillips had a severe reaction to a flu shot and this has hindered some of his work. At this writing, I have in hand the first article from each of them and anticipate receiving the second articles soon. We believe our readers will benefit from the study of these two men.

WINTER CLASSES

As you read this, the editor should be well under way with winter classes at Manslick Road in Louisville. In addition to a Sunday morning class on "Dangers We Face" and a Wed. night class on 1 Peter, there is also a Monday night class on "Developing Congregational Leadership" and a Friday morning class on "Between the Testaments." We hope to find a few evenings to

watch the fire crackle in the fireplace while the snow blankets the ground.



DIVINE COMMUNIQUES

C. G. "Cotty" Caldwell

Florida College
Temple Terrace, FL 33617



"UNTO THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORY"

GOD'S MESSAGE: "WE WERE MADE A HERITAGE, HAVING BEEN FOREORDAINED ACCORDING TO THE PURPOSE OF HIM WHO WORKETH ALL THINGS AFTER THE COUNSEL OF HIS WILL; TO THE END THAT WE SHOULD BE UNTO THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORY" (EPH. 1:11-12).

A "communiqué" is a message or piece of information given out officially. The New Testament is the government approved record of the "communiqués" issued by the Divine King of heaven and earth to citizens in His kingdom and to foreigners through His authorized ambassadors (2 Cor. 5:20; Eph. 6:20). A "communiqué" may be informative or directive. When the President of the United States issues a "communiqué," he intends either to provide important information or to issue a command. In either case, no "communiqué" from a head of state may be disregarded or taken lightly with impunity.

God's Purposes In Us

One such "communiqué" is the message delivered through Ambassador Paul to the citizens of Christ's kingdom in the first major paragraph of the document we identify as Ephesians. In it the Lord gave public notice concerning the ultimate, higher purposes behind our being adopted as sons unto Himself (Eph. 1:5) and our being made His heritage (Eph. 1:11). All such spiritual blessings are certainly given with beneficent intent but they are not provided just to benefit us. They are bestowed "according to the good pleasure of His will" (not ours) and they are intended to produce praise from us which will make known God's glory (see also Eph. 1:9, 14).

I am afraid that most of us at times allow ourselves the misguided privilege of supposing that since God is love and has done so many loving things in our behalf, that we are created for God to bless. Do we imagine that we were made so that the Almighty would have something to pamper, humor, and spoil? Do we suppose that it is all here for us? Certainly not! God created us in His image to glorify Him and He redeemed us to be His part out of the creation because we worship and serve Him rather than ourselves.

A Reasonable Perspective

That is not unreasonable. It does not diminish from the exalted image of a good God who truly loves mankind. It simply calls us back to who we are. When I make something I do it "according to the good pleasure of my will." If I plant a garden, I place the plot, design the rows, and choose the vegetables according to my own decision. If I build a house, I make it like I want it to serve the purposes I have for it. God made the world according to his own will to please Himself. He did not make it to please IT... and we are part of it. He did not make us to please us!

We have had tropical fish at our house. Lynda and I decided to set up a tank, so I went down to Fin City (good name, don't you think) to purchase what we needed. When I walked in, I learned that you do not just buy a fish tank. You must choose the size and shape you like. You then must select a system to pump oxygen into the water, a decor or motif, a stand, and on and on. I was all decisioned out when I carried it home, and I still did not have any fish. When we had set up the tank and let it run a couple of days, I went back to Fin City. The tank was pretty, but I wanted something moving around with life in it. I chose several beautiful fish.. all different kinds and colors. Whatever pleased me, I put in the tank. I did that according to the good pleasure of my will. I also bought food, chemical treatments, and other items the fish needed to do well. I was kind and loving to those fish, but I did not set up the tank for the fish. I set it up for me and my family.

After a while, some of our fish died, so I went back to Fin City. I looked around this time for some colorful fish which would complement two angel fish and two "silver dollars" which had grown to pretty good size. As I walked along, I was struck by a tank of pink "kissing gouramies." They were beautiful. They looked as if they were puckered up to kiss one another all day long. Now, I am basically a pretty romantic fellow, so I decided I just had to have a pair of them (notice I said, "a pair"). I took them home, put them into the tank, and gloried in how beautiful it all looked. But the next day, I went into the den and one of my "silver dollars" was floating belly-up on the top of the water. Upon examination, I saw that the other one was missing skin on its side and the angel fish were missing some of their fins. Those "kissing gouramies" were kissing my other fish to death. Well, I studied and labored and sweated over what to do and finally came to only one conclusion. You guessed it! I flushed those "kissing gouramies." Please do not send the S.P.C.A. after me. I am certain that those fish went out into the Hillsborough River and into the Gulf of Mexico and are today better off than before. I was not, however, going to let those fish mess up my tank!

You know, we read the Old Testament and sometimes think that God was just terrible to open the ground and swallow up Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Listen, folks. Those people were messing up God's tank! If God created the world for them, it would be a different matter. But God made them for Him. They were not serving

and glorifying the Lord. They were destroying others and abusing the very purpose of their existence. Actually, it is a mark of the wonderful grace and mercy of God that He flushed only a few.

Some Spiritual Applications

Not only did God create us for His glory, but He also "chose us in Christ," "foreordained us," "freely bestowed grace upon us," "redeemed us," "forgave us," "made known his mystery to us," and "made us a heritage" unto himself TO THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORY. By what egotistical presumption do we assume that we may worship by our own will to our own satisfaction? Why do we assume that we may choose "spiritual work" which satisfies ourselves but which has no authorization from the King? How on earth do we reason that we may establish our own lifestyles which conform to the god of this world and at the same time please the God who created us to glorify Him? And on what basis can we believe that we can be saved by some means other than total compliance with the terms of salvation set down in the gospel of Jesus Christ? Surely we are not so naive nor stupid that having thoughtfully considered this Divine Communiqué, we should exalt ourselves above that which God intended.



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THE ELECT LADY

QUESTION: *The second epistle of John was written to the elect lady and her children. Who was the elect lady? Was she the church or some sister in the Lord?*

ANSWER: It is not possible to say with certainty who the lady was—whether the church or an actual woman. It is my persuasion that John is addressing a church under the figure of a woman.

The Bible depicts the church in several places as a woman. John wrote, "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars" (Rev. 12:1). This woman is repeatedly mentioned in Rev. 12. The beloved apostle John further writes in apocalyptic imagery, "Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God" (Rev. 21:9-10).

Paul wrote that the Corinthian church had been espoused to Christ as a bride to her husband (2 Cor. 11:2), and Peter said, "She that is in Babylon, elect together with you, saluteth you" (1 Pet. 5:13, ASV). The King James Version has, "The Church that is at Babylon, elected together with you." If the church at Babylon could have been likened to a lady, "elect" like the churches to whom Peter was writing (1 Pet. 1:1-2), the "elect lady" of 2 John could well be a local church to whom John wrote.

In the Old Testament Israel was personified as a woman. She was spoken of as "the daughter of Zion" (Isa. 52:2), married (Isa. 54:4, 5; Jer. 2:2), a mother (Isa. 54:1ff) and a widow (Isa. 54:4; Lam. 1:1). This same figure is carried over into the New Testament in reference to the church.

But if the "lady" was a local church, who were "her children?" Do not the children compose the church? Yes, but the "lady" would be the church collectively and the "children" would be the church distributely or separately. Matthew 13:38 refers to "children of the kingdom." The kingdom, collectively, as a whole, comprises all of the redeemed, but separately or individually, children of the kingdom.

In Hebrews 12:23 we read of "the general assembly and church of the firstborn." "Firstborn" is plural in the Greek, meaning "firstborn ones." The general assembly (the church) is collective, but the firstborn ones are the

children of it. John stated, "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 12:17). The "woman" is the church and "her seed" are her children.

Jeremiah 31:5 states that "Rachel (nation of Israel) wept for her children." Rachel is the nation, collectively, while the children are Israel, separately. Daniel 12:1 refers to Israel as a people and children of thy people. Hosea 4:6 addresses Israel as a people with children.

We conclude, therefore, that the "lady" of 2 John could very well be the church and "her children" the individual members. In other words, the "lady" would be the church collectively and "her children" the church, distributively. Her elect sister (v. 13) would be a neighboring congregation and her sister's children (v. 13) would be its members.

Having established that the "lady" could scripturally and logically be used as a figure for the church, I suggest further some plausible reasons why the church is addressed rather than an individual.

(1) The general character of the epistle is such that affects a church more so than an individual.

(2) The language in vv. 1-3 suits a congregation better than an individual.

(3) Verse 5, with its clear reference to the Lord's "new commandment" given to His disciples, suggests a church, perhaps, rather than an individual.

(4) The substance of vv. 6, 8, 10, 12 is clearly not addressed to physical children, but to those who have reached the age of spiritual maturity.

(5) The message of vv. 7-11 about treatment of itinerant false teachers is more likely to have been addressed to a congregation than to a single home, though it is certainly applicable to a family or an individual.

(6) The more decisive objection that the letter was written to an individual is that the "elect lady" is addressed sometimes in the singular and sometimes in the plural. The singular occurs in vv. 4, 5 and 13; and the plural occurs in vv. 6, 8, 10, 12. It seems to me that an individual would not be so addressed.


* * * * *

JESUS BREATHED ON THEM

QUESTION: *What is meant in John 20:22 where it says that Jesus "breathed on them," and then said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost?"*

ANSWER: Thayer states "where Jesus, after the manner of the Hebrew prophets, expresses by the symbolic act of breathing upon the apostles the communication of the Holy Spirit to them" (*Greek-English Lexicon*, p. 209). The breathing transferred nothing from Jesus to the apostles, but only symbolically foreshadowed the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles at Pentecost. There is no indication that any gift of the Spirit was imparted to the apostles when Jesus appeared to them between His resurrection and ascension. They were told to tarry in Jerusalem until they be endued with power from on high (Lk. 24:49; cf. Acts 1:4, 5, 8; 2:1-4).

Receiving the Spirit in John 20:22 was to be in conjunction with the remitting and retaining of sins in John 20:23. The Spirit would teach them all things (Jn. 14:26), guide them into all truth (Jn. 16:13) and convict the world of sin (Jn. 16:8). The apostles would bind and loose (Matt. 16:19; 18:20) heaven's will through the revelation of the Holy Spirit. The conditions of forgiveness are set forth after the Holy Spirit, i.e., His power, is received by the apostles in Acts 2. Cf. Acts 2:36-38. Here, and subsequent thereto, sins were remitted and retained by whether the gospel was obeyed or not.



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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.



Herschel E. Patton

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PROBLEMS OF BREAKERS OF THE BREAD OF LIFE—(2)

(We are studying the problems (perils) of preachers of the Word, suggested by Paul in 2 Cor. 11:23-29. A former article dealt with the problem of persecution and the problem of "In Journeys Often".)

The Problem Of False Brethren

It is a sad fact that many perils of preachers do not come from the heathen, or world, but from "brethren". Paul had serious problems from Judaizers (Acts 21:20-21, 27-30; 2 Cor. 10:3-11, 15; Phil. 1:15-18). John and others had a problem with Diotrophes (3 Jno. 9-10), and there are still many Diotropheses among brethren today. Other brethren, though not a Diotrophes, often are jealous of, or become peaved at the preacher and begin to gossip, make cutting remarks, slander, "prating against" that one. Everyone "who would live godly in Christ Jesus" will have problems of this nature. It is to be dealt with by rebuke, forgiveness (Lk. 17:3), doing good to, praying for, and manifesting love for them (Matt. 5:44).

Brethren sometimes invent or espouse false doctrine, causing divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine divinely revealed (Rom. 16:17; 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 4:1-4). Paul warned the Ephesian elders "even of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:30). Some may want to "set apart their brother" because of different private opinions (Rom. 14). Scripture is very clear in pointing out what should be done with those causing such problems. It takes knowledge, courage, patience, kindness, coupled with prayer, to properly deal with such problems.

The Problem Of Finances

The apostle Paul knew what it was to be "in hunger and thirst"; to be in want and to abound. Sometimes he suffered because brethren wouldn't, couldn't or lacked opportunity to send to his necessities. Dedicated preachers have generally suffered much, practicing great self-denial, because of a lack of support, especially in days past. Thanks be unto God that most brethren today have a better understanding of supporting preachers, what the Bible teaches (1 Cor. 9:4, 7-14) and what the needs are, so that most are adequately supported.

However, many still have a problem because of various reasons. Maybe the brethren are stingy with their support, conditions or circumstances arise that demand more, or some great loss has placed them in debt. Think of that evangelist who has support promised for a work in some foreign country (Africa, China, Germany, etc.) and after leaving the sources of support and establishing himself in his chosen field, he begins to get letters from his supporters saying, "we can no longer send" because we have decided to build, take on some other project, or maybe no reason at all is given!

Some preachers may bring on themselves financial problems by mismanagement. Regardless of the reason, or reasons, every breaker of the bread of life is likely to face this problem at times. It may be resolved by increased support, the preacher "makes some tents" on the side, his wife gets a job, or maybe better planning and management. Whatever is done to solve the problem, should be done so as not to jeopardize the main work of sounding out the Word—saving souls. Brethren could contribute much to solving this problem by understanding the needs of an affluent society (cost of housing, automobiles, food, clothing, educating children, books, etc.) and support accordingly. If they are unwilling to pay "that much" they should be sympathetic and non-critical of the preacher's efforts to meet the problem with other legitimate means.

The Problem Of Concern

Besides all the other perils Paul faced, he mentioned is "care of all the churches that cometh upon me daily" and asked "Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?" Every dedicated, faithful preacher is greatly concerned about the brethren where he preaches or where he has gone preaching the Word. Their problems, sorrows, tragedies, spiritual conditions, etc. concern him and often become his own. These have become so numerous and burdensome to some preachers that their health, physically and mentally, is threatened, and sometimes destroyed.

Some preachers, in an effort to help brethren, (turn them from a course that they know is destructive, or lead them in a good way that they are reluctant to go) being unsuccessful, become so upset, disappointed, and sometimes angry, that they do and say things that hurt more than help, as well as injure themselves emotionally and physically. This "concern", good and right within itself, can become a destructive problem. It must be tempered with patience, moderation, understanding, and much prayer.

The problems connected with preaching the Word or breaking the bread of life should not cause one to refrain from this work. There is great reward in facing and enduring these problems. Paul said, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18).

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SIMPLICITY IN CHRIST

P. J. Casbolt

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JEREMIAH 50:7

"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver" (Pr. 25:11). Surely the words of the prophet Jeremiah in the passage cited fall into that category praised by Solomon. "All that found them have devoured them: and their adversaries said, We offend not, because they have sinned against the Lord, the habitation of justice, even the Lord, the hope of their fathers" (Jer. 50:7).

This verse is typical of inspiration, showing how much higher the ways and thoughts of God are above those of men; how much deeper is divine wisdom compared to the shallow verbosity of men. Since the underlying theme of this column is simplicity, we will use Jeremiah 50:7 to illustrate that theme. I pray that preachers and all others will be more encouraged to "speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11).

This statement from Jeremiah illustrates the dependability of divine prophecy (Josh. 23:13; Jer. 25:11,12); it shows that God is capable of "declaring the end from the beginning," in this case the punishment of Israel by Babylon (Isa. 46:9-11). Still, the false prophets of Premillennialism want us to doubt God's ability to foresee a political problem and His ability to execute His will. And, having attempted to cast doubt upon God's prophetic ability through His prophets, the false prophet expects us to have confidence in the prophetic failures of men!

Jeremiah 50:7 also adds credence to the Bible principle of God ruling in the kingdom of men (Dan. 5:21), for God not only charted the course of Babylon, a heathen nation, but also the courses of Israel and Judah. And, with the ultimate punishment of Babylon and the return of God's people to Jerusalem after seventy years, we see that God does not reckon time as does man, nor is God influenced by man's impatience in His divine timetable (2 Pet. 3:8).

Another lesson from our text is that God's people sometimes cause the enemy to blaspheme (Rom. 2:24). Babylon and other heathen nations knew that Israel was sinning "against the Lord." And, the fact that God punished Babylon illustrates that the Gentiles were accountable to God, and could not escape His wrath just because they were not signatory to the law of Moses (Rom. 2:14, 15). Some today think that they can escape the wrath of God by not submitting themselves

to the law of Christ, claiming that it has no jurisdiction over them (1 Cor. 9:21; Acts 17:30, 31).

Another false notion destroyed by Jer. 50:7 is the persistent, perennial "hypocrite" argument—that one is justified in his or her sin because someone else is a hypocrite. Babylon tried to use this dodge, but it didn't work with God. And, in addition, we see in this passage the "let us do evil that good may come" philosophy. Babylon claimed she was doing a good deed by meeting out punishment to a disobedient Israel. The principle of hardened hearts and the possibility of apostasy are seen in this verse, as well as returning to God's favor through repentance.

I do not claim to have exhausted the storehouse of truth and wisdom contained in Jer. 50:7. On the contrary, I know that I have not. I also know that there are literally hundreds of such passages in the Bible just waiting to be tapped for the unlimited source of spiritual energy which they hold.

Some preachers will waste hours, months, and years looking for new sermon material—in the wrong places. I have known them to start and promote chain letters in order to get a few sermon outlines. Some may be captivated by the mysterious, the profound, the sensational. The sooner we get into the word of God, stay in it, and stay out of worldly wisdom, the better off we will be.

PRECEPTS AND PERCEPTIONS

James R. Cope
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THIS BLESSING CAN BE YOURS!

He has baptized many more people at 11 PM than at 11 AM—and 6 PM on Sundays.

The physical setting for his teaching is usually a breakfast table with an open Bible or Bibles easily available to both teacher and prospect. On the table are a few sheets of writing paper, a pencil or pen and at hand is a stack of denominational books—creeds, catechisms, manual, discipline, prayer book, and perhaps a few other uninspired works.

If you are disposed to see and hear a demonstration of truly interesting and effective teaching in this man's particular field of expertise—the simple New Testament story of "the first principles" of the gospel, you should see and hear his methods of converting people in their own homes "the same hour of the night" he instructs them.

If you desire to see and hear a teacher who preaches and a preacher who teaches so effectively that a ten-year old child can follow every point and if you want to

catch afire with a zeal to reach honest truth-seeking souls, give yourself a treat by hearing this man.

The teacher is not a Demosthenes. He is no popular orator. He speaks rapidly, clearly and convincingly. He sometimes splits infinitives, dangles participles and, occasionally uses a singular noun with a plural verb—(Don't we all?)—even though he holds a Ph.D. in mathematics. As a teacher of honest hearts he never ridicules yet never compromises. God's will is both his seed and his sword, religious error his foe, kindness his manner. He wears a subdued smile all the while he speaks, often chuckling as he talks. He is well versed in his material, speaks rapidly and unhesitatingly. He hates sin in every form but loves the sinner. He moves his listeners by his sincere confidence that the Bible is God's word, that the spiritual body of Christ is composed of sinners saved by God's grace only as they believe and obey the gospel expression of that grace. Yes, you will be blessed to let this man tell you how, when and where you can convert people "the same hour of the night".

Having sat with rapt attention through his lessons on how he does this work I said to this brother, "If I had the money and you had the time I would support you in your travel to visit every church in the world that would open its meeting house doors to your five lesson series." He can often do it all between Friday and Sunday evenings.

This brother, now a couple of years short of fifty, is optimistic and confident when he leaves his own house for a one-on-one study appointment in another's house. It is not uncommon for him to go by the meeting house, turn on lights and see that the baptistry is ready. He expects to use it before returning to his own house the same night!

If you want to be "turned on" to the "know how" of reaching lost souls in a "one-on-one" study situation and you want those with whom you regularly worship to share such a heart-warming and spiritually stimulating experience the brethren with whom you regularly worship will not make a mistake by contacting Charles Goodall, 8701 North 34th Street, Tampa, Florida 33604. His evening and week-end phone number is (813) 988-2861. You are "in for" a spiritual uplift relatively few Christians have experienced. "Try it. You'll like it!"

Note: Our brother does not know what I have written about him.

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THE INGREDIENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL GOSPEL MEETING

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In the tenth chapter of Acts, as a result of God's purpose to "gather together in one all things in Christ" and to "reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross," there occurred one of the most important gatherings of all time. It was a meeting planned in the precincts of heaven at the highest level of the divine kingdom. Its importance is seen in the introduction of the gospel of Christ to Gentiles, but its significance extends to other considerations that will become clear in this study.

The convergence of the principle characters in the sea-coast town of Caesarea resulted from the providential working of God in bringing about a series of events—the angel's appearance to Cornelius in a vision, God's clarification of His will to Peter in another vision, and Peter's summons to Caesarea by the delegation from Cornelius (Acts 10:1-23).

"And the following day they entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them, and had called together his relatives and close friends" (Acts 10:24).

After Cornelius explained some of the events leading to Peter's arrival, he then introduced the apostle to a tailor-made audience, "Now therefore, we are all present before God, to hear all things commanded you by God" (Acts 10:33).

Recognition Of God's Providence

Peter said "Therefore we are all present. . . ." In this very word of summary, he alluded to the series of events wrought of God to make possible the reception of the gospel by these first Gentiles. We do not here discount the importance of Cornelius' godwardness, Peter's willingness to go to teach, or the human instrumentality involved in this case. Nor do we stress the role of the miraculous as a model for future conversions. In this case both miracle and free will combined to achieve the purpose of God, with God's providence making use of both elements. The miraculous element was useful only under the arrangement of miraculous measures, which God planned to have a definite duration to serve as definite purpose (1 Cor. 13:8-10; Heb. 1:3, 4). Although similar conversions occur today as a result of divine providence, we must understand that the miraculous element is missing. Honest hearts will gain opportunities to hear the gospel, as happened in the cases of Cornelius and the Ethiopian treasurer. Whenever the saving gospel of Christ is proclaimed to sinful people, we should understand that such is the consequence of

God's providence.

Accountable People

In Peter's statement the "we" refers to individuals capable of understanding and responding to the gospel. Such is necessarily implied in this context: (1) They heard; (2) they were charged to fear God and work righteousness; (3) they were called upon to believe in Christ to receive remission of their sins; (4) they were commanded to be baptized. Surely this picture does not portray innocent children, incapable of the mental and intellectual activities of these people.

Personal accountability is underscored throughout the preaching of Peter and the response of the Gentiles. The accountability of each person is such that "each of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:12). Parents will not give account of their children, nor children for their parents. Neither the faithfulness nor the wretchedness of one person shall be considered in respect to the judgment of another. When children of God are mightily impressed with their own accountability and that of others, they will work diligently to persuade men to consider the gospel of Christ. There is no thought so sobering as that of my certain appearance before the judge of all the earth.

Present Before God

All people live in the presence of God at all times. "There is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account" (Heb. 4:13). In another sense Christians come into God's presence in worship as they draw near to Him. It was the evident purpose of Jehovah to make Moses aware of his being in the divine presence in a special sense when He instructed the man to remove his shoes, as he was "on holy ground" (Ex. 3:5). All who live in the presence of God during life and appear in His presence in worship will make yet another appearance before God in the final judgment: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ ____" (2 Cor. 5:10).

When people understand that they live in the presence of God, with no thought or act or motive being hidden, and that they shall render their own account in His presence on the last day, they will be motivated to live before Him in an acceptable manner. It is the dismissing of this thought from their minds in an effort to eliminate a troubling conscience that produces practical atheists. When accountable individuals hear the gospel, they do so in God's presence. How they hear will determine what they will hear on that last day in His presence.

All

Peter said that all of the people were present before God. When the gospel is being presented, how concerned are we that all be invited and urged to hear it? How diligent are we to contact those who never heard it, those who have failed to obey it, and those who have departed from it? What urgency do we Christians feel and demonstrate in the interest of lost souls? Oh, for the zeal of Christ who wept over lost ones! May God hasten

the day when we watch for the slightest indication of interest from the lost, as did the prodigal's father, so that we might encourage that interest. Shepherds are needed who will go find the lost and straying sheep. Let us never be content to "have a meeting, "invite some prominent teacher, tell neighboring churches about it, and then wonder why the lost are not being saved! Such limited vision, well paid preachers, and dependence upon other Christians to "fill the building" will not impress God with our interest in seeking the lost.

Present To Hear

Those present with Cornelius knew why they were there. They had not come to see and be seen, to socialize, to placate insistent neighbors, or to pass time on a night of boring television programs. No, they were present to hear all that God had commanded Peter to teach.

Observe that these people were not selective in their hearing. Their purpose was to hear "all things commanded you by God." They were not trying to eliminate the unappealing, the controversial, or the condemning parts of Peter's preaching. They wanted it all. It is imperative that each accountable person be willing to consider all of God's will.

Notice also that these people were purposeful in their hearing. They heard to obey, as we can learn from their response to the command of baptism (v. 48). Only when people hear to obey the Lord do they hear properly (Jas. 1:21-25). Only when they believe it to be divine in origin do they welcome it, allowing it to effectively work in them through faith (1 Thes. 2:13).

The only appeal that Christians can properly make to others whom they hope to interest in the gospel is one spiritual in nature. The only motive that can properly lead people to be present for gospel preaching is a spiritual one.

Successful gospel meetings, like that one in Acts 10, always are the result of a recognition of God's providence, the presence of all accountable people possible, and an eagerness to hear "wonderful words of life." Those of us responsible for planning such efforts, encouraging other to attend them, or participating in them in one way or another would do well to take these matters into account.

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JESUS TO BE BORN IN JERUSALEM—"And behold, he shall be born of Mary, at Jerusalem...." (Alma 7:10).

(NOTE: "Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king...." (Matt. 2:1).

CHRISTIANS 73 YEARS BEFORE CHRIST—"And those who did belong to the church were faithful; yea, all those who were true believers in Christ took upon them, gladly, the name of Christ, or Christians as they were called, because of their belief in Christ who should come." (Alma 46:15).

(NOTE: Luke wrote in the New Testament: "And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (Acts 11:26).

THREE DAYS OF DARKNESS AT CHRIST'S DEATH—".. and there shall be no light upon the face of this land even from the time that he shall suffer death, for the space of three days, to the time that he shall rise again from the dead" (Helaman 14:20).

(NOTE: Matthew wrote in the New Testament: "Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land" (Matthew 27:45).

ABOMINABLE CHURCH FIRST MENTIONED—"Behold the foundation of a church which is most abominable above all other churches, which slayeth the saints of God . . ." (1 Nephi 13:5—Dated between 600 B.C. and 592 B.C.)

CHURCH ESTABLISHED ABOUT 147 B.C.—"And they were called the church of God, or the church of Christ, from that time forward. And it came to pass that whatsoever was baptized by the power and authority of God was added to the church" (Mosiah 18:17). (NOTE: The Book of Mormon has the church established before Christ was born, and baptism being practiced before John the Baptizer was born.)

THE WORD "BIBLE" USED 559 B.C.—"Thou fool, that shall say: A Bible, we have got a Bible, and we need no more Bible. Have ye obtained a Bible save it were by the Jews?" (2 Nephi 29:6).

(NOTE: The writer of the Book of Mormon expected to have the Bible called to his attention, as he touted the B. of M. The term "Bible" did not come into general use until the 5th century. A.D.)

BOOK OF MORMON, AN IMPERFECT RECORD—

"... and if we could have written in Hebrew, behold, ye would have had no imperfection in our record." (Mormon 9:33).

BOOK OF MORMON WRITTEN IN CHARACTERS OF "REFORMED EGYPTIAN"—"And now, behold, we have written this record according to our knowledge, in the characters which are called among us the reformed Egyptian. . ." (Mormon 9:22).

(NOTE: One of the "three witnesses" to the Book of Mormon, made a trip to New York City, and there contacted a Professor Charles Anthon, who reportedly stated that the sample of hieroglyphics that had been sketched from the 'golden plates' was 'reformed Egyptian'. Only, no linguist before or since is aware of 'reformed Egyptian'.)

JESUS AS REDEEMER IN 545 B.C.—" . . . I glory in my Jesus, for he hath redeemed my soul from hell" (2 Nephi 33:6).

(NOTE: Jesus became our Redeemer at his death and resurrection in 33 A.D. Yet in 545 B.C., the Book of Mormon uses "hath redeemed" (past tense) as if it had already happened at that early date!)

JESUS IS BOTH THE FATHER AND THE SON—"Behold, I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people. Behold, I am Jesus Christ. I am the Father and the Son" (Ether 3:14).

(NOTE: Christ was on earth, but God spoke from heaven. "This is My beloved Son" (See Matt. 3:17; 17:5; and 2 Pet. 1:17).

BIBLE DOES NOT CONTAIN "ALL MY WORDS" — "Wherefore, because that ye have a Bible ye need not suppose that it contains all my words; neither need ye suppose that I have not caused more to be written" (2 Nephi 29:10).

(NOTE: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him Godspeed: For he that biddeth him Godspeed is a partaker of his evil deeds" (2 John 9-11).

WRITING UPON A RENT' IN A GARMENT—"And when Moroni had said these words, he went forth among the people, waving the rent of his garment in the air, that all might see the writing which he had wrote upon the rent;.. ." (Alma 46:19).

ORAL ROBERTS—AN AMERICAN LIFE
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**IS CONSCIENCE A SAFE GUIDE
IN RELIGION?**

**IS IT POSSIBLE TO BE SINCERE
AND YET BE WRONG?**

David Pratte
7021 Omaha Ct.
Ft. Wayne, IN 46804

Frequently religious people say, "Just let your conscience be your guide." or "It doesn't matter what you believe or what church you attend as long as you worship God sincerely." Are these ideas really true?

Conscience can be defined as that part of the mind which distinguishes whether or not a person's actions harmonize with his beliefs. It is that inner voice that approves when you do what you believe to be right, or that makes you feel guilty when you do what you believe to be wrong.

Without question, Christians must live sincerely with a clear conscience. It is always wrong to violate your conscience (Rom. 14:23; Acts 24:16). But is having a clear conscience the only thing necessary to be pleasing to God? Can we be sure we will receive eternal life just because we are sincere, or is more required? Please consider the following evidence.

I. IF CONSCIENCE IS A SAFE GUIDE, THEN RE-LIGION MUST BE THE ONLY AREA OF LIFE WHERE IT IS!

In all areas of life that we know of, it is possible to be sincere and act in good conscience and yet be wrong and suffer tragic consequences.

In traveling, a person in all good conscience and sincerity can make a wrong turn and go in a wrong direction. And he still ends up in the wrong place in spite of his sincerity. What if he insists, "I didn't mean to make a wrong turn and I really thought I was right, would that make him right? No, he becomes right only when he learns his mistake and corrects his direction.

In medicine, people have taken wrong treatments in all good conscience sincerely thinking they were right. Maybe the doctor or the pharmacist made a mistake, or maybe the patient took pills from the wrong bottle. But the wrong medication taken accidentally will have the same effect on the body as if it had been taken deliberately.

A relative once visited us and when she went to brush her teeth, she squeezed the paste on her brush and started brushing—until she realized she had gotten our daughter's tube of diaper rash medication instead of toothpaste! Another friend thought he was spraying on underarm deodorant, till he realized it was spray starch instead! They acted in all good conscience and sincerity, but they were still wrong and they suffered the consequences.

The story is told of two trains that collided head-on

because they were traveling in opposite directions on the same track. With his dying words, one engineer handed a piece of paper to a bystander and said, "This will show I was on the track I was told to take." He had acted in all good conscience and sincerity, thinking he was right. Be he and many passengers on his train died in spite of his sincerity.

In all areas of life, a person can be wrong even when he sincerely thinks he is right. Why should we expect religion to be any different?

II. IF CONSCIENCE IS A SAFE GUIDE, THEN THE BIBLE WOULD BE WORTHLESS.

The Bible instructs men how to live for God and know right from wrong. But if conscience is a safe guide, then why not just ignore the Bible and follow our conscience? If it does not matter what you believe as long as you are sincere, then it would not matter whether or not you believe the Bible. You could believe anything else, as long as you were sincere!

But the problem is that the Bible contradicts all this, for it plainly says that we must know and obey the Bible.

2 Timothy 3:16, 17—The scriptures instruct us and provide us to all good works.

Psalms 119:105—God's word is a light to our path.

Romans 1:16—The gospel is God's power to save men.

John 12:48—Jesus' words will judge us.

Now read Matthew 7:21-23. These people were completely sincere—they believed in Jesus as Lord, they thought they were right, and they were surprised when Jesus was not pleased with them. But their sincerity was not enough. They were rejected. What was lacking? They had to do the will of the Father—which is revealed in the Bible.

If conscience is a safe guide, then the Bible would be unnecessary. But following the Bible is essential; therefore, simply being sincere and having a good conscience must not be enough.

III. IF CONSCIENCE IS A SAFE GUIDE, THEN HUMAN AUTHORITY WOULD BE AS GOOD AS DIVINE AUTHORITY.

If it does not matter what we believe as long as we are sincere, then it would not matter whether we believe what God revealed or what man invented. If a person sincerely accepted man-made doctrines, he would be as well off as the person who believe what God revealed. But the Bible clearly contradicts this idea. It says we must follow God's will, not man's ideas.

Isaiah 55:8, 9—God's ways are not man's ways, but His thoughts are higher than ours. That is why we need revelation from God in order to know how to please Him.

Jeremiah 10:23—It is not in man to direct his steps.

Matthew 15:9—Following human doctrine makes our worship empty or worthless.

Galatians 1:8, 9—Those who teach other gospels are cursed.

2 John 9—Whoever fails to abide in Jesus' teaching, does not have God.

Proverbs 14:12—A way may really seem right to people (we may be sincere), yet it leads to death!

2 Corinthians 10:18—Not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends. We may think we are right, yet God may still not approve our lives.

When you think about it, the whole concept of just following your conscience, simply amounts to following a human standard—your own human conscience becomes your standard. Many oriental religions (such as forms of Hinduism) teach that truth is inherent in the heart of man, so to learn God's will you simply search the inner recesses of your mind. Some professing Christians have adopted a similar idea by saying God will accept your service as long as you follow the dictates of your inner man (conscience or sincerely-held beliefs). The Bible, however, denies this, for it clearly shows that man cannot know truth by searching within himself; rather, he needs a revelation from outside himself—from the God who made him.

IV. IF CONSCIENCE IS A SAFE GUIDE, THEN FALSE AND DECEITFUL DOCTRINE WOULD BE AS GOOD AS TRUTH.

If it does not matter what you believe as long as you are sincere, then a lie, sincerely believed, would be just as good as accepting truth. There are many people who sincerely believe in false religions, or in no religion—are they all acceptable? There are sincere atheists, Moslems, Hindus, Jews, Catholics, Mormons, Protestants, etc. If sincerity and good conscience are all it takes, then these people are all right.

But the Bible warns that, to be saved, we must follow the truth in religion.

Proverbs 23:23—Buy the truth and sell it not

John 8:31, 32—To be free from sin, know the truth.

John 4:23, 24—For God to accept our worship, we need not only a right spirit, but also the truth, (cf. Jude 3).

1 Peter 1:22—We purify our souls by obeying truth.

Clearly, we must follow truth, not error, to be saved.

In fact, the Bible often warns us to make sure we are not deceived into following false teaching.

Matthew 7:15—Beware of false prophets who are wolves in sheep's clothing.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15—There are false apostles, deceitful workers, who, like Satan, pretend to be angels of light and ministers of righteousness.

1 Timothy 4:1-3—The Spirit expressly warns that some will fall away from truth and follow lies instead.

1 John 4:1—Believe not every spirit because many false prophets are in the world. (See also 2 Pet. chapter 2; Rom. 16:17, 18; 2 Tim. 4:2-4; 1 Tim. 2:14).

Please notice that, while the false teacher himself may or may not be sincere, the people he deceives may definitely be sincere. A deceived person is a person who really believes something is true even though it is not true. Such a person would be sincere and have a good conscience. If this is all that matters, why all the warnings against error and deceit?

In fact, the Bible expressly tells about a man who was

deceived by false teaching. He was sincere and had a good conscience. But he was still lost. This man was Saul of Tarsus. Saul was a devoted Jew who rejected Jesus as the Savior and he persecuted Christians. Note:

Acts 23:1—He did this in "all good conscience."

Acts 26:9—He really believed he ought to oppose Jesus.

1 Timothy 1:13-15—Yet in doing this, he was still condemned as "the chief of sinners." Clearly, people can be lost even though they are sincere and have a clear conscience. Saul was saved only when he learned the truth and obeyed it (Acts 22:1-16).

Only truth saves. Error condemns. But people can and often do follow error sincerely and in good conscience believing it to be true. Therefore, good conscience and sincerity alone are not enough. One must also search the scriptures to know the truth (Acts 17:11).

V. IF CONSCIENCE IS A SAFE GUIDE, THEN IGNORANCE WOULD BE AS GOOD AS KNOWLEDGE.

If it does not matter what one believes as long as he is sincere, then no one needs to bother to learn the truth or to teach the truth to others. In fact, if sincere ignorance is a valid excuse, then we are better off being ignorant! It would be dangerous to learn or teach the truth, for someone who learns it might refuse to obey it and be lost (since they would be violating their conscience).

Yet the Bible clearly demands that we all learn God's will and teach it to others.

1 Timothy 2:4—God wants all men to know the truth.

Mark 16:15—Preach the gospel to every creature.

John 8:32—Jesus' followers should know the truth.

Acts 17:11—Bereans were noble for searching the Scriptures. (See also Psa. 1:2; 119:47, 48, 97-99).

1 Peter 2:2—We should long for God's word like a baby longs for milk. (See also 2 Tim. 2:15; Josh. 1:8; Deut. 6:6-9; Heb. 5:12; 2 Tim. 2:2).

If all we have to do is follow our conscience, then why is it so important to learn God's word and teach others? In fact, the Bible plainly teaches that ignorance is not an excuse for disobeying God.

Leviticus 5:17—A person who violated God's law was still guilty, even if he did not know it.

Hosea 4:6—God's people were destroyed (not excused) for lack of knowledge.

Luke 12:47, 48—One who disobeys his master's will, even if he did not know it, is still beaten—yes, with only a few stripes, but still he is beaten.

Romans 10:1-3—Jews were zealous religious people. But they were ignorant of God's way and established their own instead. As a result, they needed salvation. Ignorance was not an excuse.

Acts 17:23, 30—Athenian idolaters were ignorant of the true God. They could, therefore, have been sincere and had a good conscience. But God does not overlook this ignorance. He demands repentance. (See also Matt. 22:29; Acts 3:14-17; 13:27; 1 Cor. 4:3, 4; Eph. 4:18)

One of the main reasons people argue that we will be saved simply by sincerely following our conscience, is so

they can justify their loved ones who disobey God's will out of ignorance. God's word, however, teaches that, whenever we disobey God's will, we sin whether we are aware of it or not. Instead of trying to excuse such people, we should try to teach them so they will no longer be ignorant!

VI. IF CONSCIENCE IS A SAFE GUIDE, THEN DIVISION WOULD BE AS GOOD AS UNITY.

Another reason people argue that sincere people of all beliefs will be saved, is so they can justify people of different beliefs who clearly contradict one another. But the Bible condemns division and demands unity.

John 17:20, 21—Jesus prayed for all who believe in Him to be one as He and His Father are one.

1 Cor. 1:10-13—There should be no division among us. Christ is not divided, so neither should His followers be.

Galatians 5:19-21—Those who are guilty of causing strife and faction will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Ephesians 4:3-6—We should strive for unity based on one body (the church—1:22, 23) and one faith, just as there is only one God. (cf. 1 Cor. 12:20).

If conscience were a safe guide, then sincere people would be safe in spite of their divisions. Yet the Bible clearly shows that division is not safe at all. Therefore, conscience is not a safe guide.

Conclusion

Your conscience is like a clock. It is not enough just for it to be working right. It must also be set right or it will not tell you the right time. So your conscience only tells you whether or not you are doing what you believe to be right. If you follow your beliefs, your conscience will not bother you. But if your beliefs are contrary to God's will, you will still be wrong (just like following a clock that is set wrong). A person, for example, may sincerely believe the doctrines of Hinduism, Judaism, or any other false religion, and he can follow those doctrines in all good conscience. But he will still be disobeying God.

The solution to the problem is to diligently study the Bible and obey only what it teaches, without any human doctrines. Then your conscience will be "set" right, and when you follow it your life will be right, (cf. 1 Tim. 1:3-7; 3:9).

What does God's word say you should sincerely do to receive eternal life?

Hear the gospel—Romans 10:17; Acts 17:11

Believe it—Romans 1:16; Mark 16:16.

Repent of sin—Acts 2:38; 17:30; 2 Peter 3:9.

Confess Christ—Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37.

Be baptized for the forgiveness of sins—Acts 2:38; 22:16; Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3, 4.

Live a faithful life—1 Corinthians 15:58; Matthew 6:33; Rom. 12-1, 2; 2 Corinthians 6:17-7:1.

WHEN YOU MOVE—Please allow two months for change of address notices. We have a cut-off date for changes each month. *Thanks for your help.*

THERE'S STILL TREES

**Stanley W. Adams
P.O. Box 698
Lake Jackson, TX 77566**

I am certain that everyone has heard, from the mouths of children, some innocent statements which are full of sage wisdom. We have three sons and they are a joy to be around and are always coming up with things which make us think.

I was talking with my middle child, who just turned 4, about being thankful for the blessings we have. I was afraid that he was growing to expect all of the toys and gadgets he has, as the normal manner of life. I was talking with him about this subject, and he was telling me he loved me because of all the clothes he has and his toys and his bunk beds, etc. I asked him if he would still love me if he were unable to have all those things and he said yes. I then asked him why he would still love me if I could not buy him things, and his reply was: "Well, Daddy, there's still trees!" I immediately hugged him and told him how proud I was of him and he ran off to play, little knowing that he had taught his Daddy a valuable lesson.

I at times am much like my son. I gauge happiness by the material things of life and not so much by the natural things which God has given us. I do not believe that I am alone in this. We tend to judge our happiness on the amount of things we have and not on the real substances of life.

I cannot think when was the last time I really gave any thought to a tree. The beauties of God's creation go unnoticed so often by those of us who claim to love Him so much. We become so enamoured with the trappings of the materialism of this world that we fail to realize that God has provided us a vast storehouse of pleasures to be enjoyed. When was the last time you really took time to appreciate the simple pleasures of this life, with your family? While I realize that we must not become as those who worship the creation, instead of the Creator, I do think that we have lost sight of the many simple pleasures which make life so rich and meaningful.

We too often equate love and happiness, with what we have and are able to amass. Anyone can provide things for his own, but it takes time and love to provide yourself and to teach appreciation for the many natural things God has provided. Let us look for a time at some things we have a material concept of:

SUCCESSFUL CONGREGATIONS—What thoughts does this bring to mind? To many it means a congregation which has a nice building, with padded pews, a paved parking lot, and air conditioning, with plenty of room. To others it means having members who

are prestigious, while to others it means a congregation which keeps peace at any price. These are content to go along any old way as long as the "boat is not rocked". They become dull and lifeless, while considering themselves to be "on the move". I get the impression from many brethren, that a congregation is not pleasing to God unless it has a building. We have made the arguments for years, that it would be all right to meet in a rented place, or under the trees, and that the place we meet is not as important as what is done there. If the congregation, where you attend, met in a rented hall, or under the trees, would you still attend there? Have you ever shunned worshipping with a congregation, on a regular basis, simply because they did not have the facilities that a more prosperous group had? If so, may we ask, "What is your concept of serving God?"

SUCCESSFUL RELATIONSHIPS—To those who are in the dating ages, "What gauge do you use to determine a successful relationship?" Do you look for the wealthiest, most popular person, to date: Do you judge people on the basis of appearance alone? Often times the people we admire so much are the most inwardly unhappy of all. They do not know the simple joys of life. They are unable to find what true happiness and stability consists of. They are given everything and appreciate nothing, because they have never been taught to labor for the things they possess. They take their parents for granted, their teachers, and they will take you for granted, also, if you are unfortunate enough to choose them as partners. Look for substance in your relationships.

Husbands and wives also need to understand that often the most precious thing that can be given is time. Talking and being together is often time longed for by one or both partners in marriage. Some give one another everything but time. It is past time for marriage partners to realize that the TV. can stay off, the dishes can wait, and the world won't end if we take time for one another.

SUCCESSFUL SERVICE TO GOD—In Colossians 3:23, we are told "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not unto men." We should be trying to please God and not impress men. I am afraid that many are not so much concerned with whether truth is victorious, as they are whether they will be mentioned in the historical accounts of the church. A very wise man, when asked what he thought made great men, replied: "They never entertain, aspire to, nor realize their own greatness." Those who are trying to make a name for themselves, at the expense of Truth are headed for disappointment. Humble service and dedicated desire to serve no matter what the cost, is what God desires of all of us. One humble servant, when approached about his prejudiced attitude toward black brethren, and shown by the scriptures where he was wrong, replied, "Well, it will take some getting used to, but if that is what God wants, then that is what I am gonna do."

How reliant are we upon the Lord? Do you trust in uncertain riches, and place undo importance upon the material? Can you remember when people really loved to attend services and would support gospel meetings

and had little regard for how much time was taken, or how comfortable the pews were? If we are not careful, we are going to be quickly on the way to taking the heart out of serving God and consequently assassinate our zeal for service. Some of the most memorable times and most successful times that congregations have enjoyed, was when they did not have so much, materially, and they realized that in spite of all the problems and discomfort, "there's still trees", and a loving God who made them as well as us.

POET'S CORNER

Brown leaves tumbling
in the air! Brown
leaves flying
everywhere!

Leaves held captive
throughout the summer's green,
Now are free to wander
on the autumn scene.

Tumbling & twirling
up, up out of sight— Now
the unchained prisoners
have taken flight!

So it is with mortals
throughout this earthly life:
Our souls are kept imprisoned
in tents of pain and strife

Until death's icy fingers
release our captive souls And
we are free to fly away
towards our Heavenly goal!

—Betty Tope

DON'T FORGET TO PRAY!

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*

L. E. SLOAN, Brandon MS—On September 15, 1986, I lost my good wife of 44 years. Mary Sloan died on that day in a Houston, Texas hospital following by-pass heart surgery. After all efforts and procedures known to modern medical science were employed, she yielded her spirit to the grim reaper and departed to be with the Lord.

The funeral was held on September 17 in Goodlettsville, TN. Many friends and faithful brethren came from many places. Music took the form of congregational singing directed by Frank Fox of Millersville, TN. Ed Byers, a long-time friend and dear brother, read from Psalm 23 and directed our thoughts in a beautiful prayer. James Hahn, a dear friend of the family for many years, gave the funeral address. He began by reminiscing of old times and associations with the Sloan family, giving quotations from Mary Sloan which he remembered from the late 1950's. Then he devoted the remainder of the address to the living, giving timely admonition to all.

The Sloan family would like to thank everyone for their expressions of sympathy, kindness and concern in whatever form it came. Our burden is great and our heart is heavy, but "we sorrow not as others who have no hope."

BERT G. ENOSTACION, #2 Estrada Apt., Ortega St., San Fernando, La Union 0501, Philippines—I am now publishing an 8 page, monthly paper called **SPEAKING THE TRUTH**. It contains teaching articles to edify brethren here and will carry a small news column to encourage brethren with what is going on elsewhere. At present we are only able to publish 500 of these a month.

PRISONER BAPTIZED AFTER LONG DELAY

PATRICK L. GAMPP, 54400 Memorial Drive, Apt. 23-N, Stone Mountain, GA 30083—Victor Amashta was baptized on August 29, 1986. He is a prisoner in the Cobb County jail in Marietta, GA and will likely be deported to Columbia when his sentence is completed. I had

met him before he was arrested and convicted and he remembered me and made contact. On May 19, Barney Keith, who was with us at Eastside in a meeting, and I went to see Victor in jail and studied with him for almost two hours after which he decided he wanted to be baptized. It was to take 15 weeks before we could baptize him. We were hindered by various officials of the Douglas County jail. Eventually we were to contact various officials in the United States Marshall's office, Victor's attorney, Judge Robert L. Vining and Senator Mack Mattingly, among others, before the matter could be resolved. He has continued to study and shows much growth. He still has two and a half years remaining to be served with the state of Georgia before he will be deported to Columbia. He needs the prayers and encouragement of faithful Christians. Could you write him? Victor Amashta, c/o Cobb County Jail, P.O. Box 649, Marietta, GA 30090-9650. (The preceding was condensed from a most interesting letter from brother Gampp. We have known of many instances now in which jail or prison officials, aided and abetted by denominational chaplains who oppose God's plan of salvation, have interfered with prisoners obeying the gospel. Brother Gampp even offered to buy and set up a portable baptistery and was refused. He spent countless hours and money of his own to secure this man's right to be baptized into Christ.—Editor).

EFRAIN F. PEREZ, Casilla 1317, Valparaiso, Chile—A report from this brother contains a picture of brother Perez along with 14 other men who are studying with him in a preacher training course at Puente Alto congregation. He is also conducting two other courses in other places. One was baptized Sept. 28 at Quilpue congregation.

DEBATE

The Shenandoah church of Christ in San Antonio, Texas has invited Jack Holt of Stanley, LA to debate Mac Deaver of Clarksville, TX on

the limited benevolence issue. The Shenandoah church will be holding a lecture series on "Liberalism" concurrently with the debate, and will be endorsing Mac. Jack will be endorsed by the West Avenue church. The discussion will take place on Monday, February 16, 1987 between 7 and 9 P.M. and on Tuesday, Feb. 17, between 1:30 and 3:30 P.M.

NEW WORK IN FAYETTEVILLE, NC

JOHN GRAHAM, 7002 Lamure Dr., Fayetteville, NC 29301—We are starting a work in Fayetteville, a city of over 50,000 which has no sound church within 30 miles. Our present meeting place is 5322 Yadkin Road. We meet Sunday mornings at 9:30 and 10:30, Sunday evenings at 6:30 and Tuesdays for Bible study at 7:30 P.M. We are known as the North Fayetteville Church of Christ. Fort Bragg and Pope Air Force Base are nearby. The area offers excellent potential for the Lord's work. If you know someone in the area who should be contacted, please contact me at the above address or phone (919) 488-5296; or contact Tom Dickerson, 2437 Torcross, Fayetteville, NC 28304—phone (919) 483-5723.

OAK PEWS AVAILABLE

The Mooresville church of Christ in Mooresville, IN has 13 solid oak pews they no longer need. They have been used in class rooms that now have individual desks for the students. The pews are curved in style and range in length from seven feet, eight inches to ten feet, five inches. Each one is about two to three inches longer than the one in front of it. They were designed for a semicircular auditorium. Any church that can use them and pick them up may have them at no cost. Contact the church at 720 North Indianapolis Rd., Mooresville, IN 46158. Phone (317) 831-2663 or 342-0112.

JAMAICA WORK

JERRY ANGELO, P.O. Box 7171, Klamath Falls, OR 97602—During 1986 visits to Jamaica by the writer, Willie Muse, Robert Bunting, Rodney Pitts, David Arnold and wife, Janice, daughter Mary Lee and Mildred Dark have opened many doors of opportunity. Robert Hartian and George Medley have been laboring in Catadupa without any regular source of income, until Broodmore church of Nashville, TN agreed to support Robert and Kemper Heights of Madison, TN has agreed to support George. Pray for this work right under our noses. It has been neglected far too long.

PREACHERS NEEDED

METAIRIE, LOUISIANA—A 35 member congregation in Metairie (New Orleans suburb) seeks a full-time preacher. The church is self-supporting, without elders and needs a mature preacher for full time work immediately. Contact Church of Christ, 3000 Lake Villa Dr., Metairie, LA 70002.

DAYTON, OHIO—The Northern Heights church in Dayton seeks a full time or part-time preacher. This is a young congregation established two years ago. Partial support is available. We are the only conservative congregation in a community of about 10,000 families. Contact Abe Martin, 5911 Bramblewood Ct., Dayton, OH 45424. Phone (513) 236-6894. Or Duane Jenkins, 926 Firwood Dr., New Carlisle, OH 45344.

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