

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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PRACTICE WHAT YOU PREACH

The scriptures say: "Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?" (Romans 2:21, 22), The lesson in these verses is to practice what you preach.

"Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers" (Matthew 23:1-4).

The above passages from the word of God point out that we must practice what we teach and refuse to do what we teach is forbidden by God.

Doctrine is absolutely worthless if not practiced. What one has learned, however good and true it may be, does not benefit him at all unless applied. The scribes and Pharisees were condemned by the Lord for saying and not doing. In the New Testament we have the right book, or we have no guide at all in spiritual things. The apostle Paul makes it plain that no other doctrine can be preached. "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said

before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:8, 9).

We must practice what we learn from the gospel if we are to be blessed by God. "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (James 1:22-

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 who is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

We preach that one must know the will of God to be saved. While we preach this, many members of the church make only a token effort to learn what the Bible teaches. We insist that the following passage is to be obeyed. "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). But many avoid the opportunities to learn in Bible classes and in studying for themselves what the truth really is on a given subject. Unless we begin to practice what we teach in this matter, we will never be able to teach others the truth. We will never know it ourselves.

We preach that the gospel is the power of God to save. We cite Romans 1:16: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Peter 1:22, 23).

While we preach that the gospel is the power of God to save the sinner, we do very little to preach it. One may be close in his association with one who has never

heard the gospel of Christ, and while he preaches the truth above, he never once tries to use this power upon his friend. I wonder if such can really be convinced that he will be saved when he does not do the will of his Father in preaching the truth to those around him.

We preach loud and long that scriptural baptism makes one a new creature in Christ (Romans 6:3-6; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Colossians 2:14; 3:1, 2). But how do most of us practice this? Many who have been baptized into Christ continue to live the same old sinful life that characterized them before they were obedient to the gospel. If they preach that one is a new creature, and that he ought not to continue in sin, why not practice this teaching and try to live in the "newness" of life that we preach? Why not seek the things above and not the things upon earth? Why not practice the good works, "which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10)

I will assure you of this one thing: we will never make headway in preaching the gospel to those who are lost until we begin to practice what we preach. This is a major cause for the decline in congregational membership, and so few baptized now as compared to forty years ago. Failure to practice what one preaches does not apply only to preachers, elders, deacons, teachers and their families; it applies to every Christian alike. We must do what the doctrine says if we expect to go to heaven when we die, and if we expect others to go with us.

JERRY HALE

We were saddened to learn of the death of Jerry Hale, a faithful gospel preacher. He passed away in his sleep in the early morning hours Monday May 11th in Parkersburg, W. Va. at home. He preached for the Marrtown Road church in Parkersburg. He had been with them a year and a half and had previously preached for a number of years for the Rivermont church in Chester, Va. He was sound in the faith and stood firm against all error. He was not only a fellow gospel preacher but a good friend of the family. He will be missed very much. Our sympathy goes out to his wife, two daughters and a son.

Four years ago he had undergone open heart surgery and prior to that his wife had undergone radical surgery on two occasions. The insurance was canceled several years ago leaving them without any coverage. They have done the best they could in hard circumstances. She is in need of assistance from brethren who read this and are in a position to help. Brethren, this is a worthy case. *Please help!*

Her Address is: Mrs. Jerry Hale, Dickel Estates, 8 Brown Street, Parkersburg, W. Va. 26101. Her phone number: 1-304-863-6462.

J. Wiley Adams

Searching The Scriptures

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Editorial

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A CERTAIN SOUND

Luke took it in hand to write of "those things which are most surely believed among us" that his friend, Theophilus, might "know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed" (Lk. 1:1, 4). The word "certainty" suggests the idea of security or safety. To the Philippians Paul wrote "To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe" (Phil. 3:1). Here again the idea is security or that which supplies a safeguard.

Paul argued that speaking in tongues was unprofitable unless what was said was interpreted. Then he illustrated the principle by saying "And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" (1 Cor. 14:7, 8). It would be disastrous on the battle field not to be able to distinguish between the trumpet sounds for "charge" and "retreat."

Paul said he preached a certified gospel (Gal. 1:11). It did not come from men but by revelation from God. Its sound was distinct. It rang with the language of heaven and not of men. It was certified by "signs, wonders and miracles" (Heb. 2:3-4), by eyewitness accounts (2 Pet. 1:16-18), and by prophecy and fulfillment (2 Pet. 1:19-21). Such a message was safe; it offered peace and security to those who accepted it. The end result of it was spiritual health. That is the import of the word "sound." Timothy was charged to "hold fast the form of sound words" (2 Tim. 1:13). Elders were to employ "sound doctrine" to "exhort and convict the gainsayers" (Tit. 1:9). Titus was told to use "sound speech, that cannot be condemned" (Tit. 2:8). The spiritual health of the hearers was directly related to the certainty of what was preached. There is no safeguard in the vagaries of human wisdom.

A Fundamental Principle

Those noble men who sought to break with denominational error and do what they could to restore the New Testament church, soon recognized the urgency of a pure speech. The Ashdodic language of the creeds and church disciplines was not suited to the preaching of the pure gospel of Christ. They knew there could be no return to the purity of faith and practice without speak-

ing "as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11). "Let us speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent" they said. It was "to the law, and to the testimony" and "line upon line and precept upon precept." The apostasy had been marked by a corruption of language. Unscriptural terms had to be invented to describe unscriptural things. God's revelation has its own vocabulary, its own distinctive speech.

Lest We Forget

This paper was born in a time when uncertain sounds had gone forth from many quarters. Error was being preached and practiced touching the nature, work and organization of the church. The periodicals of the day and church bulletins in abundance reflected a changing attitude toward divine authority. Strange sounds began to be heard. For ten years, prior to the beginning of this paper, the battle raged and division ensued from one part of the nation to another. This paper was started to provide a medium for the men who wrote in it to plead for sanity and soundness in faith. Those who wrote columns in this paper were always associated with clarity of sound and purity of life. The sound was certain, distinct.

We must keep it so. The name of this paper is **SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES**. Our writers have placed heavy emphasis on what the Book says. The best kind of article has always been the kind which led the readers to search the Scriptures to know the mind of the Lord. We have not worried as to whether it would be judged "positive" or "negative." We have been concerned with teaching truth. Error has been exposed because a search of the Scriptures showed no basis for what some have taught. Articles have appeared to encourage Christians in the varied areas of life. But always, the underlying appeal has been to what the word of the Lord said.

Every man who writes a column in this paper has been asked to give Bible proof for what he teaches, or not teach it. In times of controversy, where obviously pious men have honestly differed touching some point which was of general interest, we have asked for fairness in treatment of one another. We have tried not to carry vitriolic exchanges nor provide space for personal axes to be ground. We have asked writers to address their material to common men, for that is what most of us are. We have made no pretense of being a paper for those who are spiritual egg heads. Most of our readers are not even preachers. They are simply Christians who confront the world every day at work or play and who strive to serve the Lord the best they can. Some of our readers may feel that at times we have failed in some of these objectives. Maybe so. But we believe the objectives have been right and well worth accomplishing.

As time passes and older men retire from the work of writing, we must then look to younger hands to take hold of such work. Frankly, I am concerned about the uncertain sound coming from some of our young men (and a few of the older ones). This paper was not started to chase rabbits and indulge in theological guesswork. We are firmly persuaded that printers ink is a danger-

ous chemical with which to experiment. We prefer material which comes straight to the point and gives us what the Bible says. While it might be helpful at times to quote from a commentary, word study, or other work to amplify a point, it would help to remember what one simple brother remarked once when he said "the Bible shore do throw a lot of light on them commentaries."

I do not know what the future holds for me or for this paper. But I do know that I would much rather see it die in honor for giving out a certain sound, than to see it gradually become a voice of compromise and filled with unsound speech to the perverting of the hearts of the readers. I ask every man who submits material to this paper to mark well what I have said here. I do not want material from any man who feels uncomfortable with this approach. That it where we have "come from" since H. E. Phillips and James P. Miller gave this paper birth, along with the help of several other good men, and that is where we are still "coming from" now. I ask the readers to consider whether such an approach is worthy of your support. If you do not think so, then don't subscribe. If you do think so, then stay with us and help us get it into the hands of as many people as possible.

**WAKE THE WORLD
AND TELL THE
PEOPLE**

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BACK TO THE BIBLE

Nehemiah chapter 8 presents one of the greatest spiritual revivals of all time. The people of Jerusalem lived in a spiritual vacuum. They had everything (a well-ordered, well-defined, well-governed city with new homes and good jobs) but they had NOTHING! There was something missing and Nehemiah knew what it was. The master bricklayer who had rebuilt the walls was now faced with an even greater challenge — the rebuilding of HUMAN HEARTS and the motivating of people to turn toward God.

"Let's Go Back To The Bible!"

Read Nehemiah 8:1-5 (Go ahead and grab your Bible and look at it). The people gathered at the Water Gate as Ezra the priest-scribe led the way with the reading and exhortation from the Scriptures. The people stood and listened attentively for hours — this was no thirty minute air-conditioned sermon on padded pews — this was genuine appreciation for the divine communique of God!

And what was it that qualified Ezra to lead the people? It was the man's unyielding desire to teach total truth. Ezra 7:10 states:

For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the Lord, and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances. . .

Ezra "set his heart to study the law of the Lord." Without Bible knowledge it matters not how well a man may master the art of communication or how profound his powers of verbal persuasion or how eloquent his oratory may be, for WITHOUT BIBLE KNOWLEDGE HE WILL FAIL as a teacher because he has nothing substantial to teach.

And our preaching and teaching must be substantial i.e., it must be filled with substance. There are too many public proclaimers who haven't learned that the first secret to igniting the fire of spiritual revival is to make a commitment to BIBLE study (2 Tim. 2:15). Too much of our preaching/teaching is nothing more than dusted off, warmed over, run through the same old rehash of left-overs time after time after time. That's not to say that the subject matter discussed is of little importance — it is no doubt of major importance and that is exactly why the teacher in the four and five year old class who has taught the lesson on "The Falling Walls of Jericho" twenty-seven times before, or the preacher who gives

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the oft delivered sermon on "*The Pattern For True Worship In The New Testament Church*" — both have got to give some time, attention and study and then teach it like he/she have never taught it before! In my limited opinion that is the key to successful preaching and teaching.

My wife is a great cook (she'll love me for saying that!) and being from southern California her specialty is Mexican food. Now every now and then we have some of her left overs and a few days later she may serve those enchiladas again (and believe me, I'm not complaining!). Do you know what she DOESN'T do? She doesn't take the dish straight out of the refrigerator and place it cold and lifeless on my plate. No, she adds flavoring. She seasons it. She warms it. She stirs it. Then, and only then, does she serve it piping hot and just as delicious as the very first time.

Brethren, we must preach the same old Bible themes that gospel preachers have dealt with for years. We must preach on Baptism.. We must preach on Grace... We must point out Denominational Error. . . We have got to remind the next generation that there are real Issues That Divide Churches of Christ. . . We face the God-directed duty to WARN against Sin and we must point out the dangers of Immorality and the despicability of Hell... — we must do all of that (and more!) but every time we deal with basic Bible themes and doctrines no matter how many times we have preached it before — we cannot afford to just take it out of the 'fridge and throw it cold on the plate! We must study and re-study, read and re-read and then preach it with a little flavor, fervor and fire like we did the first time.

What I am saying is that spiritual revival must begin with an enthusiastic appeal to Scripture. Look at the apostles who set the pace for the early church and lit a fire in the lives of men and women that could not be quenched. How did they do it? **THEY BURNED THE WORD OF GOD INTO THE HEARTS OF PEOPLE!** They didn't preach politics or social issues, nor did they conduct seminars on physical education, personal finances or good nutrition. They preached the GOSPEL. They stuck with SCRIPTURE. They went BACK TO THE BIBLE! — and so must we.

An Emotional Explosion

"*And all the people answered, 'A-men, A-men!' while lifting up their hands' then they bowed low and worshiped the Lord. . .*" (8:6). In verse 9 they wept aloud. And why? **THEY KNEW THEY WERE GUILTY!** They knew they had not lived up to the standard of Scripture. Ezra's sermon hit home — and hard. This was no fire-side chat, no intellectual "chalk-talk" — this was persuasive preaching (2 Cor. 5:11). The people were pricked to the heart. They were moved. It was an emotional day.

I hear a lot about positive preaching versus negative preaching as if "positiveness" and "negativeness" are always antithetical entities. Do you know that some of the best *positive* preaching I have ever heard was *negative*? (It's sort of like my folks who lived by the rule of child-raising that saw many times the *positive* effects of

negative discipline — ouch!)

Now I consider myself a pretty positive guy. And I enjoy reading after fellows like Chuck Swindol, James Dobson, Arthur Gordon, Josh McDowell and the like. I enjoy reading success stories and hearing about people who *could* when they were told they *couldn't*. I like motivational books and tapes because they make me feel good about myself and, truthfully, I've found a lot of good preaching points and applicable illustrations from their works. But there is a recognizable danger in all of this. I must keep uppermost in my mind that my favorite authors are men and women who have embraced Jesus in name only. While acknowledging Christ they blatantly refuse to preach the entire message of the Savior. Oh, they talk about His love, words of wisdom and kindness... but in their ecumenical spirit and under the disguise of "positive thinking" they refuse to take a stand in many controverted areas of the Lord's teaching. Now isn't that right? And, so, I must exercise care in whatever reading I do — whether it be the words of a Methodist commentator of ages past or a popular "religious" author of the modern day — to not allow myself to be overly influenced by the words of man to the point that I forsake the sacred truths of inspired Scripture. When I've failed in that area I've done a favor to no one.

I talk to a lot of people coming out of liberal churches of Christ. They are used to hearing positive preaching, experiencing enthusiastic worship services and hearing a lot about joy and "let's all love the Lord." But something is missing and that is a resolute appeal to the New Testament as the final authoritative guide in religion. They've heard positive preaching without substance (what good is that?) They have experienced enthusiasm based on emotions alone. **AND THEY WANT MORE!** They want enthusiasm based on Bible! They want to hear about soul winning, love and total commitment to Jesus Christ but they also want someone to tell them "why" instrumental music in corporate worship is unacceptable. They want to hear what the Bible says about *Home and Family* from a teacher who won't be a coward and run from God's law on marriage, divorce and remarriage. They want someone who will not be the least bit embarrassed to tell folks that without baptism they have no hope of heaven.

Brethren, we will never be able to **WAKE THE WORLD AND TELL THE PEOPLE** until we are able to touch the human heart... and we will never be able to touch the heart until we go back to the Bible. There must be a balance in all of this. We must have emotion and we must have truth upon which to base our emotion. We must hear topical sermons and we must hear expository ones. We must preach on Bible principles that touch people where they live and work and we must deal with issues that concern the work and worship of the Lord's church. It's a great responsibility to preach and teach the Gospel. God help me to be faithful!

DON'T FORGET TO PRAY!

ACCEPTED OF HIM

(2 Cor. 5:9)

Donnie V. Rader

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HINDRANCES TO PRAYER

Husbands are instructed to treat their wives properly that their "prayers be not hindered" (1 Pet. 3:7) Obviously there are some things that hinder our prayers. These must be recognized and overcome, for that which hinders our prayers hinders our whole service unto God. Christians are no stronger than their prayers.

An Unforgiving Spirit

Jesus taught his disciples to pray "forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (Matt. 6:12). After concluding the model prayer the Lord said, "For if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespass" (vs. 14-15). If we are unwilling to forgive another when he says he repents (Lk. 17:1-4) then our prayers are hindered and we stand condemned before God (cf. Matt. 18:21-25).

Wandering Attention

It is easy to let our minds begin to wander both in public and private prayers. We may start out with our attention fixed on every word of the prayer, but before we know it we are thinking about something totally unrelated to any part of the prayer. Prayer is an active thing, not passive. We can't just bow our heads while another leads us and be praying with our minds wandering about. We must watch unto prayer (1 Pet. 4:7). Our prayer must be in spirit, i.e. from the heart (John 4:24; 1 Cor. 14:15).

Continuing In Sin

We must be reminded that God doesn't hear the prayer of sinners (Isa. 59:1-2; Prov. 28:9; John 9:31). Rather, his ears are open unto the righteous (1 Pet. 3:12). However, some brethren continue in sin and at the same time continue to pray. Could it be that they really think God will hear and answer those prayers in spite of the sin? They harbor ungodly attitudes, forsake the assembling of the saints, drink socially, smoke, dress immodestly, mistreat their mate or children and live in adulterous marriages. What good do they think their prayers will do? Prayer is not a substitute for righteous living. Without repentance, prayer does not change a wicked man into a righteous one.

Our text (1 Pet. 3:7) again shows that sin hinders prayer. Peter said that God listens to the righteous (1 Pet. 3:22). John said, "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight" (1 Jno. 3:22). Someone once said, "To pray while living in wrongdoing is to spread the sail while leaving the anchor unlifted."

Lack Of Interest In Spiritual Matters

There is, without a question a lack of spirituality with some of us. Other matters occupy our time and interest. I believe that the contrast in Rom. 2 (walking after the flesh — vs — walking after the spirit) is one between those who do what is best for their flesh, pleasing the outer man and those who do what is best for the soul. Consequently those who are more interested in the outer man have filled their time and interest with sports, their job, fashion, television, entertainment, et. al. When this is done, little time is left for spiritual things. Many Christians spend little time reading the Bible and religious materials. We spend dollars upon dollars on entertainment, fashionable clothes, fine furniture, vacations, magazines, newspapers, books and television sets and spend considerably less on Bible study aids such as commentaries, concordances, Bible dictionaries, Bible encyclopedias, other tracts and journals. We think nothing of spending \$15,000 on a car, \$50,000 to \$90,000 for a good house, \$500 for a television set, but think it too much to pay anywhere from \$5.00 to \$15.00 a year to have a good religious paper, with edifying material, to be mailed into our home.

With some, spiritual things are just not the primary things in their minds. Such a one is less apt to pray as he ought.

Self Righteousness

The Pharisee in Lk. 18:9-14 was an arrogant, self-righteous person. He thought he was far superior to the lowly publican. The text clearly shows that it was the humble publican and not the Pharisee that was justified. It is easy to let ourselves become spiritually proud and think ourselves to be something when we are not (1 Cor. 10:12; Gal. 6:3). When we do, our prayers are hindered.

No Time

We have allowed our jobs and social pleasures to rob us of time and quiet hours to pray. We have made such a rat race for ourselves to live in that it is hard for some to find just a few minutes a day to stop and talk to God. We must learn to make time. If it involves getting up a little earlier, staying up a little later or quitting something we are doing, we must *make* the time. Jesus rose a great while before day so that he could go to a solitary place and pray to his Father (Mk. 1:35).

Just because you pray doesn't mean that your prayer is acceptable to god. It could be that you hinder your own prayers. Examine your life and diligently serve God "that your prayers be not hindered."

LOUIS EARL FLY CHANGES WORLD

Feb. 17, 1924 — March 15, 1987

James P. Needham
106 Foxwood Dr.
Brandon, FL 33511

It is with a sense of great personal loss that I report the death of one of the dearest friends I ever had in this life, brother Louis Earl Fly, of Jackson, TN. He died, appropriately, at church time Sunday morning, March 15, 1987, after several years of failing health. He was a gospel preacher of uncommon ability.

Early Life and Conversion to Christ

Earl was born on Feb. 17, 1924 at Stika, TN (Near Milan). He was a member of a prominent family in that community. A cousin of his became Governor of the State (Browning). Other members of his family (including his parents) were/are members of the business community in that area. He joined the Missionary Baptist church as a young man. For many years he struggled to convert his parents to Christ. His father died without becoming a Christian, but his mother, though harder against the truth than his father, and probably kept him from obeying the gospel, finally became a Christian before she died!

Earl, his wife Laverne, and Earl's brother-in-law, Orlan Hogue, and Bernice, Orlan's wife (Earl's only sister) and Dan, Orlan's brother, were all converted during a gospel meeting at Sitka, TN held by Loyce L. Pearce in 1947. They were all staunch Baptists. Someone invited Earl and Orlan, who were partners in a small garage at Sitka, to attend. They were curious, and decided to go. After hearing Loyce preach, they were pretty upset, and decided to study up on their Baptist doctrine and prove Loyce wrong. They continued to attend the meeting to get all the ammunition possible. The result was that they were converted to Christ!

Earl, Orlan Hogue, and Orlan's brother Dan, all entered Freed-Hardeman College in the fall of 1947, a few days following conversion, determined to preach the gospel. I entered Freed-Hardeman in the fall of 1948, and my friendship with all these brethren dates from that time. The Needham and Fly families particularly formed a bond of friendship that has lasted almost 40 years. Our last year in college, we lived and preached for churches that were about 5 miles apart (He at Tigrett, and I at Maury City) and commuted to Freed-Hardeman 4 days a week. We became like flesh and blood brothers.

Effectiveness as a Gospel Preacher

Earl Fly and Orlan Hogue became two of the most effective gospel preachers I have ever known. In almost 40 years of preaching I have never met any two other persons who manifested the zeal for God I saw in these

two brethren. (Orlan died as the result of a freak fall in the Post Office while living and preaching in Huntingdon, TN in 1956). Many persons were baptized as the result of their work including several in their respective families. Their work was similar to that of Paul and Barnabas; wherever they went they caused either a revival or a riot. They pulled no punches where religious error was concerned and this ruffled the feathers of a good many brethren whose businesses or jobs depended upon their having a popular religion. Thus, with some of the brethren, Orlan and Earl were not the most popular preachers, but, by far, the most effective in the area. They took a good deal of "flack," but endured it gladly and without complaint. In time, the real reason for all the complaining among the brethren in West Tennessee was manifest: a lack of scriptural conviction and the spirit of compromise. This is proven by the fact that, almost to a person, those most prominent in it are now the leaders in the liberal churches of the area.

It was my good fortune to be associated with Earl and Orlan, along with Grover Stevens in many gospel meetings in West Tennessee. The four of us labored much together in the interest of the salvation of souls. "These were the best of times and the worst of times." They were the best of times from the standpoint of finding people who would accept the truth. They were the worst of times from the standpoint of being abandoned, opposed and even persecuted by our own brethren in the face of dogged opposition from the sectarians and false teachers. There were times when bodily harm and even our lives were threatened.

A "True Yokefellow" (Phil. 4:3)

Following graduation from Freed-Hardeman, Earl and I continued to work together in the general area of W. Tennessee. We held numerous tent meetings and public debates with denominational preachers. In tent meetings he would sometimes preach and I would lead singing; and sometimes we would reverse the order. We advertised an open pulpit, and local denominational preachers were invited to occupy our pulpit and show where we were wrong. We baptized many people and started some churches in the area. We also taught Bible classes and preached one Sunday afternoon per month at the Ft. Pillar State Prison Farm at Henning, Tennessee with great opposition from the prison chaplain, a member of some Pentecostal group.

As time went by, our work took us to different parts of the country, but we continued to work together in gospel meetings in hard places. We did extensive work in the State of Iowa, traveling there by train. In the late 1950's and early '60's I lived in St. Petersburg, FL and Earl preached for a time for the Belmont Heights church in Tampa. It was good to be close again.

The Outward Man Perishes (2 Cor. 4:16)

In the late 1950's Earl's health began to fail, and his physical strength to dissipate. He was forced to become less and less active in the work, and finally did very little preaching. He suffered a good deal physically, financially, and emotionally from the frustration of not

being able to do what he loved best. He went through several surgeries, and during the last year of his earthly sojourn, he suffered 2 or 3 strokes. The last one took him to a better country.

A Soldier of the Cross

In his prime, Earl had few equals as a Bible student, pulpiteer, debater and writer. In those early years he was, at the same time, the most zealous and patient man I ever knew. It would be hard to imagine a circumstance that could have hindered him from going wherever and whenever he was needed to preach the gospel. We have spent untold hours in homes teaching the good news of Christ to both the open-minded and the obstinate. Long after I had given up on some closed-minded and unreasonable sectarian with whom we were working, Earl was still in there repeating over and over again, patiently and kindly, the same simple truths we had already repeated a dozen times! He just never gave up or ran out of patience or spoke unkindly.

With the truth he was skillful. He not only knew the truth, but he knew how to use it, and was absolutely fearless in so doing. In debates, private and public, he used it like a dagger! No person could take a false position in his presence without facing its consequences.

His Fields of Labor

Earl's work as a gospel preacher spanned almost 40 years, though as I said earlier, failing health diminished his activities for several years. He preached at the following locations: Friendship, Tigrett, Bonnicord, Medina, First Street in Lawrenceburg and Hollywood Drive (Now Old Hickory) in Jackson (Where his health forced him to retire) in Tennessee; Valley Station, KY (Louisville area, where he did one of the finest works I ever witnessed); Belmont Heights, Tampa, and Holden Heights, Orlando, in Florida. He also was very active in meeting work, public debates and writing throughout his active years.

A "True Yokefellow,"

A Friend, and a Christian

While I knew Earl Fly as a yoke-fellow in God's work, and as a friend like few men ever have, I also knew him as a Christian. I know he was not perfect, and he would be the first to admit it, and it is not my purpose here to enlarge him in death beyond what he was in life, but he had principles and traits of character that are all too lacking in many. Christ dwelt in his heart by faith (Eph. 3:17). One could not be with Earl without taking knowledge that he had been with Jesus (Acts 4:13). He was absolutely incapable of gossip and was sternly intolerant of it in others. In all the years of my very close association with him, I never heard him utter one piece of unconfirmed rumor, and I often knew of his rebuking others for repeating such, and forcing the perpetrator to face the consequences of his dastardly deed! If there was good in a person, Earl saw it and tried to build upon it. When others were criticized in his presence, he would jump to their defense if he had the facts, or express the

possibility that there had been a misunderstanding if he didn't.

Those Who Mourn His Passing

Earl leaves behind his beloved wife, Laverne, two children: Ronnie and Anne Marie, three grand children, and one great grandchild, plus a host of friends and brethren who will miss him, but who rejoice in his hope of the glory of God (Rom. 5:2).

Good Bye, Old Friend, I'll See You Again

He shall ever live vividly in my memory, and I shall miss him terribly, but I shall rejoice in the blessed hope that he is better now and that one day we shall meet again and reminisce of the pleasant and profitable hours we and our families spent together on earth in the cause we all loved more than life. Good bye, old friend, I'll see you again in a better land where we'll have "a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor. 5:2).

The Departure

"The dead are like the stars by day
Withdrawn from mortal eye;
But not extinct, they hold their way
In glory through the sky.
Spirits from bondage thus set free
Vanish amidst immensity,
Where human thought, and human sight,
Fail to pursue their trackless flight."

Author unknown

A Plea

As stated in this article, Earl had financial difficulties in his later years. Being close to the family, I personally know that his widow is having a problem with all the unexpected expenses connected with his death. It would be a wonderful gesture if those of us who knew and loved Earl and his family would chip in and help Laverne over this difficult time. She does not need financial worries to add to her sorrows. All help should be sent to: Laverne Fly, 2208 N. Highland, Jackson, TN 38301. May the Lord bless you as you consider this important matter. Laverne is unaware of my efforts along this line.

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PLAYING THE GAME

I'm not an ardent sports fan. I try to maintain a casual interest in Alabama football in order to keep from being tried for high treason. But actually it did not make my day when Alabama beat Notre Dame and it did not rob me of all joy when they lost to Penn State or even to Auburn.

After all, if just really doesn't matter much who wins a ball game.

And yet, I recognize that there's a lot of drama in sports. I can see how a fellow could get caught up in an inordinate interest in the game. I think Paul was a sports fan. He made use of the olympian contests several times to illustrate spiritual truths.

I'm inclined to disagree with some critics who look upon such pastimes as symptoms of national decline. There are symptoms to be sure. But I doubt that this is one of them.

Solomon wrote that there's "time to every purpose under the heaven." Therefore there must be a time to work and a time to play.

Our forefathers wisely counseled that "all work and no play makes jack a dull boy." I don't see why it should be necessary to fit oneself for heaven that one should have to be unfit to live with here. A temperate regard for pastime and recreation is desirable.

The Game of Life

There exists many lessons of life to be drawn from the diamond, gridiron, or court. Training will tell in all of these and in the game of life. Discipline and self-control are qualities that give the edge.

And if you fumble, or strike out, or miss the free throw, no one gives a flip why. Whether you have a headache, or stayed up too late, or the sun got in your eyes, just doesn't matter to the grandstand or the bleachers. You had your chance. You blew it. The game goes on. And your explanations do not change the score.

It's the fellow who makes the touchdown who draws the crowd. Only a few close friends will be listening sympathetically to the guy with the alibi.

And if there's a weakness, its going to be discovered. The fighter with the glass jaw won't last. The slugger who can't hit the breaking ball on the inside won't make it. The game of life searches out the weakness.

The boy or girl with a weakness becomes the man or woman with a weakness. The boy who cheats in school is headed for the minors. The girl who is untruthful, or lifts a few petty items at the shopping center, is preparing for a big letdown. Unless such weaknesses are worked out they will prove one's undoing.

Being A Good Sport

Everybody appreciates a good sport, whether in basketball or life. The player who gives 110 percent, but who is considerate, and abides by the decision of the referee who had rather lose than win unfairly is admired by friend and foe alike.

There are many poor sports in life. The poor sport misrepresents his enemy. He cannot see a single good quality in him. He makes alibis and quits the game if things don't bounce his way.

He is a poor winner and a poor loser.

The good sport is a gracious winner and a good loser. He doesn't waste his time giving excuses. He accepts defeat and disappointment, setback and grief, and faces the world. He will eventually be a winner.

Do you know of a single instance when such a loser did not come back to win? If not in that game, in some other?

It's one thing to lose the game. It's another to lose your temper, or your nerve.

The Rules of the Game

Whatever the game, it is played according to the rules. No game would be worth playing or watching if the rules were disregarded.

Rules are limitations. If the runner is a tenth of a second late in reaching first, he's out. And if a worker is ten minutes late getting to work, he's late.

Rules govern us from the cradle to the grave. There's "the law of gravitation," "the golden rule," the rules of health and sanitation, traffic laws, and postal laws and regulations. If you join a club, they hand you a copy of the by-laws.

Rules.

We had best mind them. There is great reward in doing so. There are bitter consequences in violating the rules of life.

Get in the game. Play hard, but play fair. Be a good sport. Observe the rules. The great Judge is going to be extremely interested when He marks our card as to how we played the game.

"And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules" (1 Tim. 2:5).

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By ads in religious journals, by letter, by telephone, or by word of mouth comes the plea, "Preacher needed." And, as long as the demand is greater than the supply, thus shall it ever be.

Since the gospel message has been placed in "earthen vessels" (2 Cor. 4:7), we have heard the plea of the Macedonian man echoed time and again (Acts 16:9). It is good that the church place proper emphasis on the preaching of the gospel, for by that method men are saved (Rom. 10:14, 15), congregations are established (Acts 11:19-26), and the church is edified (Acts 16:5).

In order for this pattern to continue, preachers may be fully supported by the church or individuals, partially supported by these sources, or he may support himself. Circumstances should determine which of these methods is most expedient, as in the case of the apostle Paul.

But, while I would neither discourage nor minimize the preaching of the gospel, I am convinced that there are situations where a preacher is needed and not wanted, or wanted and not needed. I am just as convinced that at times our methods are not very efficient, when it seems that those with the most talent and experience are where they are least needed, and those with the least talent and experience are in the most difficult places. As long as the demand for preachers exceeds the supply, we need to use our time and make our decisions as wisely as possible.

Again, without intending to dampen anyone's zeal, I think some congregations need to reconsider some of their requests. In most cases which come to my attention, the congregation looking for a preacher seems to want an experienced, able man who is adept both in the pulpit and in "personal work," and want someone else to fully support him. Even when the requesting congregation is willing to share part of the support, they still insist on a "full time" preacher, not one who is willing to help support himself at secular work. With this kind of philosophy, some of the congregations of the first century and some in our time never would have been established.

Brethren need to learn to walk before they try to run, and need to help themselves as much as possible before asking for help. There is nothing degrading about meeting in a private home, a rented room, a converted dwelling, or a modest building in a modest neighborhood.

While some brethren have made some unwise decisions' and manifested little zeal or foresight in the past, the fact remains that every new congregation is not going to start off with the finest building in the best part of town, and the best preacher in the brotherhood, with someone else paying the bill.

It appears that our effort in society to formulate programs for the needy and underprivileged has fostered a climate of perpetual, professional welfare. I wonder if this attitude has affected some in the church — those who expect a few to be faithful in work, attendance, responsibility, and financial integrity, while the rest ride along free of charge. I have also seen this spirit manifest itself among brethren of foreign lands who feel that it is their place to make request, and the place of the American brethren to meet those requests, however numerous or unreasonable they might be.

My life has been spent trying to preach the gospel where it is needed. I have always tried to encourage other preachers and congregations to be like-minded. We need congregations which are financially and doctrinally sound, so that they can assist those which are not. We need experienced, able preachers to help those younger in faith. May we all be found in the right place at the Lord's coming.

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COMMENTS ON MATTHEW 16:13-20

Luther W. Martin
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Verse 13 — *"Wow; when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He began asking His disciples, saying, 'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?'"*

Caesarea Philippi was a town in the northern portion of Palestine, some 25 miles north of the Sea of Galilee. It was located at the foot of Mount Hermon. Herod Philip extended the town in his day, and named it after himself, to distinguish it from his father's "Caesarea" on the sea-coast. This is the northern-most region that Christ is recorded in Scripture as having traveled.

The expression "district" merely refers to the region, territory, or area around Caesarea Philippi.

Verse 14 — *"And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist; some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.' "* The disciples recount the various opinions held by the residents of the area, as to Christ's identity. John the Baptizer had been beheaded. This "haunted" Herod the Tetrarch (Matt. 14:1-2). Malachi, the last of the Old Testament Prophets, had spoken about Elijah being sent back to Israel (Mai. 4:5-6).

Verse 15 — *"He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?'"*

This is a direct and emphatic question. An answer is demanded!

Verse 16 — *"And Simon Peter answered and said, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God:'"*

The Gospel of Matthew is obviously written to instruct the Hebrews as to the identity of the Messiah, for whom they had looked so long (Matt. 1:16). "The Living God" was an expression used by the Jews for their God, in contrast to the pagan gods, who were considered to be 'dead gods'... "gods without power". This passage could be rendered "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the God who lives forever."

Verse 17 — *"And Jesus answered and said to him, 'Blessed are you, Simon Barjonas, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.' "* Congratulations, Simon, son of John (Jonas)! This truth concerning Me, you did not receive from a human source, but from My Heavenly Father. Obviously, Christ was pleased with Peter's confession of His Divinity. So, the word "Blessed," "happy" (as in the Beatitudes,) or even "Congratulations!"

Verse 18 — *"And I also say to you, that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it."*

The Greek word for "Peter" is *petros*, meaning a stone or pebble. So, Jesus was not telling Peter what his name was, but was stressing the size or dimension of stone which Peter's name designated. Then, the contrast was completed when Jesus continued by emphasizing, and upon *this* rock, *petra*. a ledge of rock, or "bed-rock" I will construct or build my church or kingdom. Note that Jesus was NOT promising to build His church upon Peter, but upon something far greater and more stable, *i.e.*, Christ's Divinity which Peter had just confessed. Some translators give the word "rock" a capital "R", but since the original text was in uncials... all the same size letters, then any capitals are the product of the translator's own mind, and may or may not be correct. May I suggest the following translation:

"And I also say to you, that you are a pebble, and upon this bed-rock I will build My church..."

The later part of this verse deals with two possible subjects: (1) That the powers of the Hadean world cannot conquer, prevail against, over-power or over-come His church. Or, (2) That the powers of the Hadean world will not be able to prevent Christ's resurrection. And this second view, agrees with Acts 2:24: "And God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power."

It is true that Daniel and other Old Testament Prophets foretold the establishment of Christ's church, His kingdom, and that it would never be destroyed. But this passage under study, is dealing with the Divinity of Christ, and the resurrection of Christ, and stating that "the powers of the Hadean world are not strong enough to prevent Christ's triumph over death and the grave. Thus, by their failing to retain Christ in the tomb, the church would indeed be established.

Verse 19 — *"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you shall bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven."* The word "keys" denotes the privilege, prerogative or authority to unlock or open something that has previously been unopened. So, Peter is given the privilege of "unlocking" or releasing salvation and remission of sins to the world. He is granted the opportunity of proclaiming Christ's soul-saving gospel for the very first time to the Jews on Pentecost, and later for the first time to Gentiles at the household of Cornelius. (Acts 10th Chapter.)

Even in this modern day, we sometimes give the "Key to the City" to some visiting dignitary. Although this ceremony is a rather hollow thing, nevertheless, it is a symbolism that goes back to antiquity, wherein Kings granted "keys" to their trusted stewards and court offi-

rials. Various privileges accompanied the "giving of the keys".

Next, comes the subject of "binding and loosing", permitting or prohibiting. The way that many translations are worded, leaves the impression that Heaven gave Peter *carte blanche* or unrestricted authority, upon this occasion. As if Heaven were saying: "Peter, whatever you bind, God will subsequently ratify and also bind." Such an idea puts God in direct conflict with His Son, when Christ announced that He, Christ, possessed *ALL authority*, both in heaven and earth. (See Matt. 28:18.)

Therefore, instead of granting the Apostle the right of determining what should or should not "be bound", as the King James and other versions state: in reality, Heaven was commanding Peter to subsequently teach and bind, that which Heaven had already bound. I copy from the Nestle-Marshall Text:

... and whatever thou bindest on the earth, shall be, having been bound in the heavens, and whatever thou loosest on the earth, shall be, having been loosed in the heavens."

Thus, in harmony with Christ's having full (all) authority in these matters, Peter is assigned the task (yet a privilege) or carrying out Christ's instruction . . . *i.e.*, what Christ had bound.

Verse 20 — *"Then He warned the disciples that they should tell no one that He was the Christ."*

Christ frequently directed His disciples NOT to make known His real identity. See Matt. 8:4; 9:30; and 12:16.

Conclusion

The confession of Christ's Divinity, serves as the bed-rock foundation of his church. "If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved" (Rom. 10:9). "... No one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:3) "... That every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil 2:11).

The preceding passages establish that indeed the church of Christ is founded upon His Divinity, for no person can be added to His church, without first obeying the commands to believe in Christ as God's Son; repent of one's past sins; confess Christ before mankind (Matt. 10:32); and be baptized into Christ, for the remission of one's past sins (Acts 2:38). Certainly, Christ's Divinity is the foundation of His church.

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Most students of the Bible are acquainted with such fine works as Vincent's "Word Studies in the New Testament," Vines' "Expository Dictionary Of New Testament Words," and Young's "Analytical Concordance to the Bible." These works aid the student in the study of the scriptures, but slavish reliance upon them must be avoided. Scholarly integrity does not always reign: sectarian bias and other unhealthy soul conditions have been known to cloud their definitions. How then can those who do not have scholarly training in Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic, etc. accurately determine the meaning of words found in the Bible? Study of context, is the answer. This is a brief study of definitions by context, *i.e.* allowing the Bible to define its own terms. Some words, with no variation in spelling, have quite different meanings in different contexts.

John wrote, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15). Here children of God are commanded to love not the "world." It is further stated that if any man love the "world", the love of the Father is not in him. The same writer used the same word, "world", to describe the object of God's love: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son..." (John 3:16). Does God love that which he forbids his children to love? This certainly cannot be the case. The context in both cases defines the word.

The "world" of 1 John 2:15 is made up of the "lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the vainglory of life" (1 John 2:16). Notice John's language. He wrote that "all" that is in the "world", which Christians are forbidden to love, is lust in the three areas cited.

The "world" in John 3:16 is made up of human beings, beings capable of believing. "Whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have eternal life." This language, along with the statement of verse 18, "He that believeth on him is not judged . . ." identifies the "world" here as men and women. Christians are required to love this world; but they must not love the "world" which is in view in 1 John 2:15.

Another word which carries a different meaning in different contexts in the word "know." The context in which the word "know" is found in the Bible is our main reliance in defining the word.

The word "know" is used to "convey the thought of connection or union, as between man and woman" (Vines). This use is found in Matthew 1:25, "Knew her not till she had brought forth a son;" or again, Luke 1:34, "And Mary said unto the angel, how shall this be, seeing I know not a man." "Know" here expressed phys-

ical union; it speaks of sexual intimacy.

The same Greek word is used in other contexts which do not remotely suggest physical "connection or union." When John wrote, "And this is life eternal, that they should know thee, the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ" (John 17:3), he was conveying an entirely different idea with the word "know," than that of "union between man and woman"! The same Greek word, translated "know," which is used to describe the physical union of man and woman, is here used as equivalent to life eternal. The idea clothed with the word "know" in one case in no way suggests the meaning of the word "know" in the other case. It is a dis-service to understanding to take the meaning of the word "know" drawn from one context and use it to define the word "know" in other contexts.

This same apostle wrote, "and hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar and the truth is not in him: but whoso keepeth his word, in him verily hath the love of God been perfected" (1 John 2:3-5). Do you "know" that you "know" God? If you are depending on emotion or feeling, you are trusting in the wrong thing for evidence. You "know" that you know, if you are obedient.

Intimacy is not the idea present in the word "know" when speaking of our connection with God. The child of God loves his heavenly Father, but is not "over-familiar" with God. He comes to the throne of grace with reverence and awe. He does not approach God with a "hello daddy!"

From 1 John 2:3 we learn that knowing God is keeping his commandments. It is also true that the Lord "knows" us when we "do" the will of God. "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 who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works. And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you . . ." (Matthew 7:21-23). "Know" (knew) in this place conveys the idea of approval. The thought that Jesus was ignorant, not aware of their existence, or that he was unacquainted, is certainly not the thought expressed by the word "know" here.

John uses the word "know" which we are studying in the gospel of John forty-five times, while the other three gospel writers all together use it only forty-nine times. The word "world" which is considered in this lesson, is used sixty-nine times in the gospel of John but only fifteen times by all three of the other gospel writers. The study of the way John uses the words will be helpful.

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Philippians 2:4 says, "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." This is a very important Bible passage. However, it is often overlooked, and is not emphasized as it should be.

Many people have a very selfish attitude today as they care only about themselves. So many people today only "LOOK OUT FOR NUMBER ONE" as the expression goes. They have no concern for anyone else but themselves.

The statement in Philippians 2:4 certainly contradicts the self-centered attitude that is so prevalent today. The NASB translates it "do not merely LOOK OUT for your OWN PERSONAL INTERESTS, but also for the INTERESTS OF OTHERS." Certainly this passage is not saying that we are to be busybodies. However, it is saying that we are not to be just interested in our own affairs, but we are to be concerned and interested in the good and welfare of other people. Christians are to care about other people and not just themselves.

A similar concept is found in Galatians 6. This text tells us that in addition to bearing our own burdens we are to bear the burdens of others. Verse 2 says, "Bear ye one another burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

In the first part of Philippians 2, Paul is trying to emphasize the importance of unity. He states various things in the text which will promote unity. Among them is the passage which we are examining. If we have concern for others, as well as ourselves, it will be much easier to be of one accord and of one mind as Paul implores in verse 2.

A proper application of this passage can help us a great deal in our daily life also. Often, when we get our minds off of our own problems, and look at the difficulties and hardships of others, our own problems seem much smaller. We are able to cope with them much better.

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Among too many professed believers in the body of Christ there is the spoken and sometimes the unspoken notion of limited church soundness. Too many think that the canon of soundness basically embraces the following: (1) the plan of salvation; (2) a scriptural name; (3) a rejection of human institutions; (4) opposition to the social gospel; and (5) the right order of worship, namely the rejection of mechanical instruments of music and the scriptural order of partaking of the Lord's Supper. All of these I heartily embrace, but I believe the soundness (wholeness) involves more than this limited use. The church of Ephesus had many commendable qualities including a stand against false apostles; hence, it took a stand against false teaching. The church at Ephesus was a fighting congregation making it a prime candidate for brotherhood "soundness." The Lord had a different view from many people on what comprises soundness. Christ chided the church for having left its first love (Revelations 2:4). Having left their first love, they were in danger of losing their identity (Revelation 2:5).

Brethren, I have been a member of the body of Christ for twenty-eight years, and during that time, I have seen only two cases of punitive church discipline. Some have never seen the first case of punitive discipline. Is it not strange that no real measures of discipline are being taken in spite of a plethora of: deserters (church quitters); divorce and unscriptural remarriage; hatred among members; social drinking; scandalous attire; rampant greed; envy and jealousy; and some elderships that are manifestly unqualified. Also, a veritable Diotrephes can be ruling with an imperious hand, and the church in most instances never gets around to dealing with this church-splitting problem for many reasons, within and without the church. Many people in the church often know that a person is acting like Diotrephes, but try to look the other way, because they don't want to get involved in helping to deal with the problem. Brethren, all of the above things involve the matter of soundness or the lack of it; moreover, all of these things challenge the authority of Christ. All of these things most surely involve the matter of doctrine.

Conclusion:

Brethren, smugness about staunchness for soundness needs to be zeroed. Congregations all over the land need to read again the account of two men who went up to pray (Luke 18:9-14).

"BLINDNESS IN PART"

Olen Holderby
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Most Bible students will recognize the title of this piece as coming from Rom. 11:25 where it is applied to the Jews of Paul's day. In this context Paul has taught that some (a remnant) of the Jews had been saved, by their obedience to the Gospel, "For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins." Three thousand Jews became the first segment of that remnant (Acts 2:41). This number was greatly increased during the next eight or ten years Acts 5:14; 8:4; 9:31). This "blindness" was to be complete after "the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." However, it is shown that "all Israel" could be saved in the same way that the remnant was saved-by obeying the Gospel. This is brief, but will serve as an introduction to what I am about to say.

"Blindness in part" has indeed, happened to God's Israel of today (the church of the Lord). Excluding the context of Paul's statement, it could very well have been said concerning spiritual Israel of our times. I can well imagine that the same could be said of the church during any generation of its members, from its beginning until the present day. However, we cannot rework the past; we can only learn from it. RIGHT NOW needs to be our main concern. Without the concern for NOW, the FUTURE holds little promise for enlightenment. Preacher, elder, or teacher, how many do you know right where you are that cannot determine "soundness" in the faith? I am not talking about the new convert; I am talking about those members that have been members more than a little while. How many know what to look for in determining who is "sound" and who is "liberal?"

I have before me a church bulletin, sent me by a "senior saint" in another part of the country. Near the end of the bulletin is a plea to the local saints to not forget their monthly commitment to an orphan's home. This "senior saint" had penned a note beneath this plea — "They help orphan home through private contribution." What a comfort this must have been! Shout the "glad tidings!"

I here give some of the activities listed in that same bulletin, in which that congregation was to be involved during the summer: Men's breakfast at Sambo's, Skating party, Youth rally, Bus evangelism workshop, Youth devotional, Senior saints luncheon, Mid teen camp, Family camp, Pre teen camp, Men and boys campout, Jr. teen camp, Sub teen camp, and Sr. teen camp. They are to be so busy this summer making "provision

for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof" (Rom. 13:14), that the Lord will have to be satisfied (?) with the "left-overs." Such people really need to digest what Jesus said in Mt. 7:21-23, "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. 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."

It seems to me that the impression is left, much too often, that a "sound" church is merely one that does not support an orphan home or the Herald of Truth. We need to be repeatedly warned that if we must list the items that make for "soundness" or "unsoundness", the list must be a good deal longer. Many appear to be "cut-and-dried" liberals without realizing it. The "deceitfulness of sin" has, indeed, done its work (Heb. 3:13). The proverbial "wolf in sheep's clothing," whom Jesus identifies as a "false prophet" (Mt. 7:15), has entered "in among you, not sparing the flock" (Acts 20:29). But, Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice" (Jno. 10:27). It probably would do little good to plead with the group mentioned above to hear the voice of the Master; for they have long since ceased to listen; they are really on the move! But, in which direction? Complete apostasy, if not already reached, is knocking on the door — very loudly! About the only question remaining is, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Lk. 6:46).

The "senior saint" mentioned above apparently did not recognize the liberalism that was running wild in the local church there. I have personal knowledge of several such cases; and I have wondered just how gen-

eral such cases may be. In conversation with others, in various parts of the country, I have found experiences that parallel mine. The fact is, for some reason, many members of the church simply do not know how to determine "soundness" and are thus led into liberal practices. I make no effort to assign blame, but do think that such should cause alarm with us all. The problems involved with orphan homes and the Herald of Truth most certainly should be identified for what they are, to be sure. However, are we overlooking something? Are not there other things that disgrace the cause of Christ just as much? How much liberalism does it take to be liberal? Human judgment can err! Many instances could, no doubt, be explained by saying, "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; — "(Mt. 13:15). In all honesty, let us hear the question — Is this the only explanation?

"Blindness in part" has, indeed, happened to God's Israel of today. Whether the situation improves or worsens depends upon those who have the capabilities to recognize "shortcomings" and to apply the remedy of Divine truth. We can count higher than two, on the list of liberal practices. Let us strive to equip brethren to recognize liberalism, regardless of the direction from which it may come, and in spite of the insidious forms in which it may raise its ugly head. Faith comes by hearing God's Word (Rom. 10:17); that Word is God's power to save (Rom. 1:16) by the precious blood of Christ (1 Pet. 1:19). Tried faith in that Word is more precious than gold (1 Pet. 1:7). Error thrives on ignorance; and I pray God that no ignorance be the result of my failure to properly proclaim His Word (1 Cor. 9:16; Acts 20:26-27). How about you?

THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

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MIKE BAGGETT, Rt. 3, Box 148AA, Water Valley, MS 38965 — The purpose of this letter is to let brethren know that we have left behind all liberal practices. On August 10, 1986, my wife and I made the hardest change of our lives. We decided that attempts to change a liberal-minded congregation were to no avail.

In March, 1986, I began a serious study of the issues which have divided the Lord's church for some 30 years. I put aside what I had been taught in preacher's school for some honest, open-minded study. I decided that names such as "anti" and "orphan-hater" would have no bearing on this personal study. I have been asked, "What led you into such a deep study of these issues?" My answer is that I became alarmed over sudden changes in the liberal camp. They were changing too fast for me. Large amounts of money were being spent (from church treasuries) to build expensive dining halls, camping houses and even gymnasiums to attract and keep people coming. It seemed to me that many of the liberal churches were jumping on the same bandwagon with the denominations about them. I had already left the Baptist church and was let down very much. I had to know if such practices were simply expedients or sinful. It did not take long to realize that such things were unscriptural. That led me to consider

other questions, such as church support of orphan homes and other institutions.

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES aided me much in this study. For this I am thankful. Articles on institutionalism gave me meat to chew on. Other sources and individuals helped me greatly in this study. To everyone who helped, I say "thank you." A study of individual duties and church (collective) duties, proved my former position dead wrong. I had been incorrectly taught on James 1:27. Collective action was not in the verse. I had been taught that whatever an individual can do, the local church can do. Brethren, here is the root of our deceived brethren's error. God's word shows a difference in certain individual and church duties. Read carefully Matt. 18:15-17 and 1 Tim. 5:16.

It wasn't long before I realized who it was who should care for orphans and widows in general. God expects much of us as individuals. Read Matt. 25:40-46; Gal. 6:9-10; 1 Tim. 5:16; James 1:26-27. This is not to teach that the local church has no benevolent work. Read Acts 6:1-8; Rom. 15:25-33; 1 Tim. 5:3-16.

Having learned the truth on these issues, I taught my wife. Then I tried to teach the congregation where I was preaching at the time. For

about two months I pressed hard on these issues. Some seemed to agree with me. After about 6 weeks, I was told to stop preaching my "perverted doctrine." Few were willing to search the scriptures or even talk sensibly about the matter. One said "these issues are best left alone." We should preach "positive" matters. My determination to continue preaching the truth led to my having to leave. Many churches and individuals helped me greatly in our move. I now preach for the Laws Hill church in north Mississippi and also work a secular job. It is great to stand in the truth and to stand with brethren who love the truth. Thanks to all who have helped me.

DAVID L. ODOM, 2727 County Line Rd., St. Joseph, MO 64504 — As of July 1, 1987, my family and I will begin working with the brethren in St. Joseph, MO in spreading the word of God. They have been without a preacher for over two years and have been taking turns with the public teaching. Since they can only supply half the needed support, I am taking a secular job in order to work with them. I have done this in the past and the Lord has always seen us through. I believe He will do so again. It would help is we could give full time to the work. Any who might consider having fellowship with us and who wish to investigate the work should call Ronald L. Goforth (816) 279-7552, or Gerald Cooksey (816) 233-3718. Concerning me, you may contact Harold Fite (713) 578-7163.

WAYNE S. WALKER, 310 Haynes St., Dayton, OH 45410 — We are moving to work with the Haynes Street church in Dayton, Ohio and look forward to our association with these fine brethren. Things continue well at Medina. Progress is being made in preparing a lot on which to build a new meeting house. Larry DeVore, one of our members, has been asked to preach regularly at Medina after we leave. He would like to find support for work full time. In March, I was in a meeting at Route 3 near Madisonburg, OH and in May with the Lily Chapel church outside Portsmouth, OH. I will be at Roseville, Michigan in October.

JADY W. COPELAND, P.O. Box 1528, Springdale, AR — Having just moved to Springdale to work with the Westside church, we are again enjoying the beauties of the Ozarks. We were with the Lakeland Hills church in Lakeland, FL for 8 years and came to love and respect the good people there. We saw a good opportunity in Springdale to work with the Lord's people who have had many problems for many years. They are now united and working and we believe the cause will prosper here. Jack Parmenter began worshipping with the church here several months ago and has helped the progress of the church greatly with his leadership, involvement in home studies and the like. He has

baptized a goodly number within the last 18 months. Mason French preached here for several months prior to Sept., 1986. Our building is just off Hwy. 71 which bypasses the main part of town. It is located at 1300 S. 45th. Springdale and Fayetteville (home of the University) have, in effect, become one city and the area is still growing. When passing through the Ozarks, visit with us.

JOE F. NELSON, 8054 Farmington Dr., Southaven, MS 38671 — I am working with the Horn Lake, Mississippi church. The church here has moved into a new meeting house in the past year (please see our advertisement in STS) and all seems to be doing well here. We hope readers of this paper will visit with us when you are traveling south from Memphis, TN on I-55. Take Horn Lake exit west to Hurt Rd., then left to Meadowbrook Drive. The building is on the corner of Foxbriar and Meadowbrook. I am available for some meeting work each year with needy congregations.

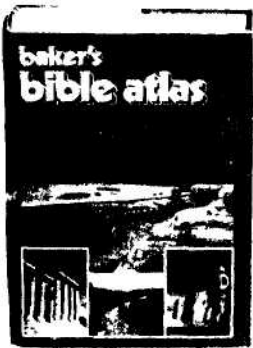
BILL PIERCE, 759 E. North St., Spencer, IN — After six years with the church here, we will be moving, in July, to Hillsboro, Ohio. This is, hopefully, our last move. I will be selling real estate and working part time with the Northside church, along with Jim Grushon. Our address will be: 226 E. Pleasant St., Hillsboro, OH 45133. Stan Caldwell will follow me in the work at Spencer. The Spencer church is a growing, active church with three fine elders.

CHARLES MURRAY, 5810 Bayou Grande Blvd. N.E., St. Petersburg, FL 33703 — The Skyview church in Pinellas Park will begin an hour long, live, call-in radio program on May 17, 1987 from 8 to 9 A.M. on Sunday mornings on WRFA, 820 on the AM dial. This is a 50,000 watt station and can be heard throughout the state and into parts of Georgia and Alabama. We will have access to two Pinellas County phone lines: 581-7800 and 581-9424. Also there is a toll-free number for Florida (outside Pinellas County) — 1-800-642-0820. There is also a toll-free national number (outside Florida) — 1-800-992-0820. We have had 14 baptisms in the last sixteen months, several restorations and a good number to place membership. There is an excellent spirit within the congregation and a willingness to work. We are excited about this new opportunity to proclaim God's word through the radio program. We invite your questions and solicit your prayers.

JAMES LYNN, P.O. Box 8, Fort Towson, OK 74735 — On March 21, 1987 we moved here to work with the Northside church. The work was discontinued in December, 1979 but restarted by several former members in July, 1986. Since that time until the present the preaching was done by several men in Oklahoma and Texas. This is a difficult area due to the number of churches which hold to the one cup and/or no Bible class doctrines and those which support various institutions from the church treasury. The church here is able to supply \$700 a month support with the rest made up by Southside church in Greenville, TX; Josey Lane church in Carrollton, TX and by individuals. We number 16 members plus 6 children. Last month attendance ranged from 27 to 44. We are averaging 21 on Wed. evenings. We are offering a Bible correspondence course. Ardie Brown of Carrollton, TX was here in a meeting May 31-June 5. We meet at the corner of West Second and Boston Streets, one block north of Hwy. 70 and 15 miles east of Hugo. If you are traveling this way, please stop and visit with us. If we may contact someone you know in this area please write us or call me at 1-405-873-9333.

IVAN VALDES, La Serena, Chile, S.A. — In March we had a gospel meeting with the theme "Catholicism vs. the Bible." We planned this to coincide with the visit of Mr. John Paul (Pope of Rome) who visited several cities in Chile, including La Serena. We passed out invitations and placed an ad in the paper. We had special studies on Catholicism from 9 A.M. to noon and then the evening Tom Holley preached. We were assisted in this effort by Fernando Venegas, Sergio Pino, Nestor Sanchez, Mark Morgan and Efrain Perez. These brethren paid their own transportation to help us. Members here cooperated with housing and food. The new brethren of Catholic origin were confirmed in the faith and we made several new contacts.

STEFANO CORAZZA AND VALERIO MARCHI, Via Tagliamento 9/2, 33100 Udine, Italy — In the last two months our work in Udine had great encouragement. We enjoyed the baptism of three souls, two



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young men and an older one. We reached them through our work of distributing invitation cards, tracts and local bulletin. We thank God for the power of his word to change the lives of sinners. In the same period we had two gospel meetings. We generally prepare these meetings through a distribution of a thousand invitation cards, plus big posters which we put on city walls. We also started an "Answering Machine" program called: "5 Minutes with the Gospel." So far we have had interesting calls but no definite contacts. We will see in the future. We continue our bulletin CHRISTIANI OGGI (Christians Today), eight pages of simple and short articles which have created several opportunities of preaching and then baptisms. We usually deliver 1300 copies each month by putting them in mail boxes. Thanks to all who have fellowship in our work.

PREACHERS NEEDED

SPARKS, NEVADA — The church here is seeking a family man for full time evangelistic work. No outside support will be required. Must have strong personal work abilities and be personable. Please reply with complete resume to church of Christ, 475 Queen Way, Sparks, NV 89432. If more information is needed, contact: Dennis Neely (702) 331-0919; or, Larry Demangate (702) 673-1011. **TULSA, OKLAHOMA** — This congregation of 140, which has been

meeting since 1977, and is fully self-supporting, is seeking a preacher for full time work. Contact the elders at Woodland Hills church of Christ, 9119 E. 61 St., Tulsa, OK 74133.

KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI — The church which meets at 5825 Sterling Ave., Raytown, MO is looking for a preacher for full time work. We can supply \$300 per week support and have contacts for additional support. We are looking for a preacher who will do personal work. If interested, call (816) 625-3741 after 6:30 P.M. or send resume and personal references to the above addresses. **CHESTER, ILLINOIS** — The church which meets at 1604 Hyland Road in Chester, Illinois 62233 is in need of a preacher who is retired or one who could help get his own support. We can help some. Attendance is between 20-30 (most are retired). We are in a very hard area and it would be a challenge for a faithful man. Contact W. F. Crowder Rt. 2, Box 198, Chester, IL 62233. Phone (618) 826-3661.

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	287
RESTORATIONS	75
(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)	