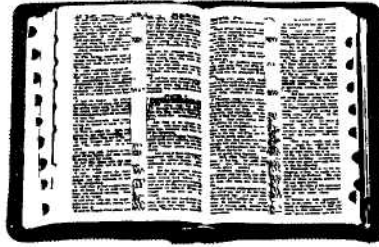


SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

' 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 XXX

JANUARY, 1989

NUMBER 1

THINK ON THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 1631
Lutz, FL 33549



RESTORE SUCH AN ONE

Those who have very little concern for the lost will not make much effort to restore them to the Lord. Those who love the lost and are concerned about their eternal destiny will work and pray for the salvation of their souls. The difference between these two groups is the difference between the spiritual mind and the carnal mind. This will depict the zealous and devout workers in the kingdom versus the indifferent bench warmer who finds fault and criticizes every effort on the part of the faithful.

Galatians 6: 1 says: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

Restoring that one who has been overcome in a fault requires more than knocking at the door and scolding him for his sins. It involves more than sending a card, or making a phone call and talking with generalities. These things will help show the sinner that he has someone's attention, and that they are expressing some concern for him. Restoring the lost requires an attitude of love for the lost and a respect for the word of God that propels that person to seek opportunity to communicate with the one who has been overcome with sin and convince him to repent of his sins, confess his sins and pray to God for forgiveness.

There are so many hindrances to getting this work done. I suppose that is the reason we have so few who are willing and ready to attempt to restore the lost to the

Lord. Often there is little interest in and desire for the salvation of the lost in the hearts of those who claim to restore the lost. These will talk about how others ought to be doing the work, but they will make no effort themselves. Some will boast of what they have done in this area, but they sometimes do more harm than good.

The Holy Spirit said the man to be "restored" is the one who has been "overtaken in a fault." The word used by the Holy Spirit for "overtaken" indicates one who has been caught in sin without premeditating the sin; his terrible trespass overcame him. His "fault" was not simply a mistake in judgment or a weakness he may have. It was a serious sin which would cause him to be lost in eternity. It does not mean that the "spiritual" person caught him in the act of sinning and therefore has the responsibility of restoring him. But he does observe that the person has been overtaken in sin, and he responds by trying to "restore" that one.

"... ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Those who are "spiritual" refer to the previous chapter where the works of the flesh are in contrast to the fruit of the Spirit. Those who walk in the Spirit will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh (5: 16). "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (5: 25). There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8: 1).

The "spiritual" one is sometimes too harsh and cold in his attitude and judgment of the sins of others. I do not suggest that one should compromise with sin to any degree or in any matter. Sin is sin and it damns one in hell if he does not repent. Godliness and love for the truth do not permit any deficiency in dealing with sin. Love and kindness alone, without conviction and urging repentance, will not rescue from sin. If they could, no one would be lost because God has unlimited love and kindness toward mankind. God is no respecter of persons and we sin if we show respect to persons (Acts 10: 34, 35; Rom. 2: 11; James 2: 9). The restoration of anyone overtaken in sin is not a penalty, but an attempt to rescue him from the consequence of his sin. It is an act of love, not revenge.

The "spiritual" one is admonished to give heed to himself as he goes about the work of restoring the overtaken. He is to do it in the spirit of meekness. In the previous chapter the fruit of the Spirit includes love, gentleness and meekness (5: 22, 23). Here the spirit of meekness must characterize the one who restores the offender.

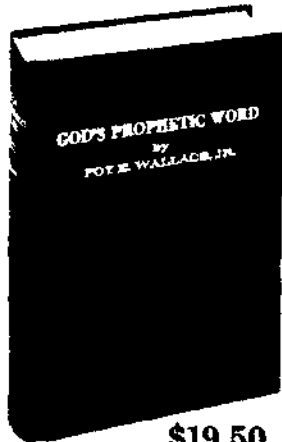
But he is also to consider himself lest he be tempted. Tempted to do what? Clearly it refers to the trespass into which the one to be restored fell. One could hardly help another out of a situation into which he himself has fallen, or is likely to fall. One who has a reputation for gossiping, talebearing and lying or adultery could hardly do much with one who was overtaken in a terrible sin which was destroying him. Could one cry out to another who is as weak in the same area of temptation? The deceitful and seductive nature of sin and the persistence and subtlety of Satan should put every Christian on 24 hours a day watch lest he be overtaken in a trespass. It is even more important that one watch himself and pray when he is trying to recover another from sin.

The "spiritual" person who attempts to restore the person overtaken in a trespass must remember where the power is that recovers the lost—the gospel of Christ (Rom. 1: 16). Opinions, personal evaluations of behavior, psychological analysis and conformity to denominational doctrines will not restore anyone. We must teach the truth and encourage those who are in sin to repent and turn to the Lord for the forgiveness of their sins. Every Christian who loves the lost, especially those who have fallen away, will put forth every effort to "restore such an one" to the Lord.

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VOLUME 30 JANUARY, 1989 NUMBER 1

Published Monthly at
BROOKS, KENTUCKY

Second Class Postage Paid at Brooks, Kentucky
and at an Additional Mailing Office
USPS-487-440

CONNIE W. ADAMS, Editor

Office of Publication
52 Yearling Drive
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Editorial

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EMOTIONAL ARGUMENTS

Human emotions must not be left out of our response to the will of God. To ignore them is to reduce religion to cold, sterile formalism. But "zeal for God" without knowledge is equally barren (Rom. 10: 1-3). God's divine revelation is first of all addressed to the human intellect. God proposes to educate our intellects by certain fundamental truths which must be understood and which serve as the foundation of fervent activity. This is the order of conversion. It may be illustrated as follows:

Intellect Educated → **Emotions Stirred**
→ **Will Activated**

Jesus said those who come to the Father must first hear and learn before they can come to Him (Jno. 6: 44-45). "And he will teach us of his ways and we will walk in his paths" (Isa. 2: 2-3). In the Great Commission, the order was "teach" and then "baptize" and then, "teach them to observe all things" commanded (Mt. 28: 19-20). "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared, teaching us..." (Tit. 2: 11-12).

This body of truth (the faith once delivered to the saints) understood, then the sensibilities are acted upon through the knowledge of the truth and the desire for the promises contained in it. Our hopes are quickened, our desires are stimulated, our love excited and our fears of punishment for failure to obey the gospel, are then aroused. "The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance" (Rom. 2: 4). "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God" (Rom. 11: 22). "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10: 31).

Regardless of how much knowledge one has of the truth of God, or how deeply stirred his emotions may be, there is no fruit borne until the human will is activated. "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" (Mt. 7: 21-23).

When emotions are stirred apart from the evidence of scriptural truth, then trouble is not far away. There have been many instances of this down through the years.

Missionary Societies

In the last half of the last century, when disputes intensified over the missionary societies as a means through which churches might act in preaching the gospel, the argument turned to emotion with many. No better example of this was seen than in the impassioned speeches of J. B. Briney in his debate in 1908 in Louisville, Kentucky against W. W. Otey. He painted a horrible word picture of cold, hard hearts who were uncar-

ing about the salvation of lost souls. Such words inflame the passions of the hearers. The Lord gave a pattern for the work and organization of the church and the missionary society was outside that pattern. Emotional arguments did not change truth.

Benevolent Institutions

The promoters of the various institutions for child care, or care of the aged, got emotional mileage out of picturing those who opposed the churches building **and** maintaining these institutions, as cold blooded, insensitive people who would let little orphan children **die** in the street before they would help them. The argument was usually shortened to "they don't believe in helping orphans (or old folks, or unwed mothers)." That **was** supposed to stop all argument. Never mind that some relief was to be supplied by individuals (1 Tim. 5: 16) **and** some by the church (same verse), and that the church functions at the congregational level under elders **and** served by deacons (Acts 14: 23; Phil. 1: 1).

Divorce and Remarriage

The questions surrounding divorce and remarriage are an emotional minefield. If you think **you** have heard emotional arguments before, don't go away. You have heard nothing to what you are going to hear. There is hardly a family among the Lord's people which has not been touched in one way or another by the tragedy of divorce. It is much easier to be objective and factual until some of our own become involved. Then, it is different. We are already hearing that those who stand where this editor does would "tear up families" and leave "desolate children." Everyone knows that the most basic of human emotions are involved here. Hearts and lives are torn apart in family upheavals. But may I ask a question? Has anybody stopped to cry for the **scriptural** marriage that was torn apart? Were there no broken hearts then? Were there never any distressed children? What of their plight? Why is it that the emotional devastation of what was a scriptural marriage can **be looked upon** with detachment while those who have become involved in adulterous unions must become the recipients of **all** the sorrow while objectivity is lost? My heart bleeds for the suffering of **all** caught in the web of **sin, whether that sin** be theft, murder, addiction to alcohol or drugs, or adultery. Sin always exacts a heavy price. **It costs much** more than we want to pay. But first of all, we will have to study and learn what the word of God teaches on this and all other subjects. Then with David we must learn to say "Oh how love I thy law." And because **we love His law**, we will also be able to say "I hate every false way." The issue will have to be decided on the basis of scriptural truth. Hearts must be kept pure. Attitudes must be godly. But truth must be taught and upheld and all must be taught to conform to it.

Emotional arguments are two-edged swords. In a debate on church support of benevolent organizations, the brother defending such practice hinted in his first speech on this subject about the **plight of "poor little orphans."** I responded by promising to get more tears out of the audience over the sad condition of those deprived of a family circle and subjected to institutional care, than he could and that I was ready to be tested on **the** matter. Then it was pointed out that when we got

through with all of that and dried our eyes, we would still have to come back to the Bible and study what it says about the work and organization of the church. He decided not to pursue the emotional aspects of the argument.

In the matter of divorce and remarriage, something could be said, not only about the heartbreak of the dissolution of the first (and scriptural) marriage, but also about the confusion and destruction of peace in congregations, not to mention the false hope generated in eternity bound souls. The thought of people standing at the judgment seat of Christ unprepared because they listened to some expert who thought he had found a loophole in the Bible, ought to make us all shudder. What eternal disappointment! Those who want to inject an emotional argument to tar those of an opposing view need to be duly warned that they are skating on thin ice here. Let us settle all religious and moral issues by a "Thus saith the Lord. "

A STATEMENT FROM HOMER HAILEY

**Homer Hailey
760 Las Lomas Rd.
Tucson, AZ 85704**

For forty-five years I have held a view on God's attitude toward individuals who seek salvation in Christ, though they have been married, divorced and remarried previously, which differs from that held by many brethren. Though I have not made an issue of our differing views, or felt impelled to crusade for mine, I have never hesitated to express it when asked.

All at once I find myself under attack by some, being charged as a false teacher, unfit for the fellowship of certain ones who differ from me. This attack began in the spring following a study with brethren in the church at Belen, New Mexico. Because of the misrepresentation in the mind of some, here are the facts.

During the week of October 5-8, 1987, a group from over the country met in Belen to assist in getting the congregation started there. During the week I met with a couple who had left the "liberal" congregation and were meeting with the new group. In the course of the conversation or visit they asked me my view on the condition of divorced and remarried individuals, which I explained. They were in that condition, having been baptized after their marriage (as I understood them). They joined the new group.

Following the meeting a preacher held a meeting for the church, preached on the subject, which brought up the question in the congregation: What of this couple and a recently converted woman (as I recall being told), On March 19th (Saturday) of this year, I returned from two meetings, then on Sunday (March 20) I received calls from Lee Stewart, the preacher, asking me to come over and present my view, which, he said differed from that presented by the preacher in the meeting. I begged to be excused, but he and Tim Stevens insisted that I come. Reluctantly I went, after they asked if six of them could fly over and meet in my home. Why six air fares when one would answer! So I went over there. I left early Tuesday (March 22), was met by Lee and Tim and we went to the meeting place. The meeting was private, and they insisted we keep it that way. A friend of mine from a different congregation wanted to attend, but they did not want it. The meeting was to be private. We sat around a table, fourteen or sixteen I believe, and for an hour and a half I went through the scriptures pointing out the ground of my position, then we spent an hour asking and answering questions. I then left. They had assured me that what they wanted was my view to compare with the differing view, that they might make a decision. I didn't even make any special preparation,

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just went as one would meet and discuss a matter. I made some statement that it looked as if I would have to make my views more public; others know how I phrased it; I do not recall. The brethren were not satisfied with the two presentations, but invited brother Ron Halbrook to come and refute my presentation of my position. The video that was made of this meeting has been given wide circulation so that what was to have been a private study has become a brotherhood issue, which is regrettable.

I make no apology for my position; I believe it to be correct. I have no intention of becoming the focal point in a brotherhood discussion of the subject. But neither do I intend to be put in a position where I cannot express my views on this or any other subject in which the truth of God is involved. Any who feel they must consider me unfit for their fellowship must make that decision, though I do not share such a feeling toward them.

Others may feel differently about their mission, but I do not intend to contribute to any division in the church over this issue. If at some future time I should feel that truth will be served by a full presentation of the scriptural grounds for my position, I will exercise my freedom to do so. However, it is both my desire and my intention to continue the practice I have followed on this issue for the past forty-five years.

EDITOR'S NOTE: We are glad to give space for this statement from brother Hailey. It is noteworthy that he did not deny the position which I attributed to him in my editorial of September, 1988 "And Wash Away Thy Wives." He rather confirmed it.

As to whether or not the presentation he made at Belen, NM was public or private, the fact is that the knowledge of what he said there has been spread far and wide. Also, when I wrote the article, I had before me an excerpt from a sermon he preached in a gospel meeting in El Cajon, California in which he dealt with this very subject. Was that just a private meeting?

Brother Hailey certainly has the right to teach or preach whatever he believes to be the truth on any subject. So do the rest of us. Whenever such teaching is given public exposure, then we can all expect reaction to it from those who differ with us, and that includes brother Hailey. Some have written about "attacks" on this beloved, 85-year-old brother. I made **no** attack on him, but addressed the teaching involved and appealed to our good brother to re-study the issue. I renew my exhortation in that direction.

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ANTIOCH — THE POWER OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

Antioch... — the name alone doesn't exactly send chills up and down the spine, nor do we usually think of it when listing prominent New Testament churches. Antioch's typical notability is that "it was one of those places Paul went." If ever there was a local church lost in obscurity and grossly overlooked it would be the saints meeting in Antioch of Syria.

The Antioch disciples, the first recipients of the divinely designated new name of "Christians," forever stand as one of the greatest examples of what God expects a New Testament church to be. And, yet, how little they have been studied. We focus so much on Jerusalem that we lose sight of Antioch. I am convinced that every twentieth century church of Jesus Christ needs to go back and model the attitudes and attributes expressed in Acts 11-15.

So many churches seem to be spinning their wheels in the mire of mediocrity. The ho-hum, status-quo has begun to feel cozy. We seem more comfortable looking at past struggles and stands for truth than at future opportunities and obligations. How is it where you worship? What's the status of the local church where you live? Is the work growing, thriving and filled with enthusiastic vision for the future? Or... is it merely holding its own? Or, worse, is it in a deadly decline? We need to go back and look at Antioch. We need to return again and examine a New Testament church that exemplified everything God intended for it to be. Every eldership, every preacher and every Christian needs to come to grips with the power-potential of the local church as demonstrated in Acts 11-15. **Antioch...** Have you ever studied it? Join us in a year-long look at Antioch. It is my hope that this great group of early believers will encourage and inspire you to the degree that I have been helped. God help us to mirror what we see here....

An Introduction

The book of **Acts** describes in thrilling detail the growth of the gospel as it burned its way into the hearts of first-century men and women. If the epochal events narrated by Luke do not electrify your imagination and stir your emotions then nothing could. **Acts** describes the turning point in all of history as the greatest message ever delivered spread across the Roman world.

It begins in Jerusalem with the potent preaching of

Peter and the conversion of over three thousand. The Jerusalem church continues to multiply until numbers no longer suffice and the generic "multitude" is given (5: 14). And, yet, God never intended for the gospel to stay in Jerusalem (1: 8). Judea and Samaria lay unconquered for Christ. The remotest parts of the world were still wandering in darkness and in need of the Light. Thus, through the providence of God Christianity moved on until "every creature" in "all nations" had a chance to hear the salvation story.

Acts 11. Antioch of Syria. Christianity has traveled some three hundred miles up the Mediterranean coastline and into the third largest city and commercial capital of the Roman Empire. On the streets of this mega-population center there walked every kind, class and culture of people. Like all big cities, then and now, Antioch was baptized in depravity. Gambling was big in Antioch along with prostitution and homosexuality. Religiously, Antioch was a smorgasbord of idolatry, supernatural superstition and a breeding ground for every kind of religious cult and quack known. Antioch was life in the fast lane offering the best and worst products of first century humanity. And, yet, it was here that some Christians came and preached, a New Testament church was established, and in the city that boasted of being the gateway to the Orient the gospel found its gateway to the world.

The great transition... **"... speaking the word to no one except the Jews alone. But there were some of them who came to Antioch and began speaking to the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus"** (11: 19-20a). Here hinges the world-wide purpose of God's eternal plan as foretold by the prophetic oracle (Isa. 2: 2). For the FIRST TIME the gospel moves into a non-Jewish city and challenges the hearts of the heathen populace. The result: **"and the hand of the Lord was with them and a large number who believed turned to the Lord"** (11: 21).

Why Antioch? Here is the reason the center of influence had to be moved from Jerusalem to another place. **Jewish prejudice would not have allowed in Jerusalem what happened in Antioch.** The hatred of the Gentiles and the power of prejudice was so strong that had the gospel stayed in Jerusalem the church would have stagnated and been seen merely as another sect of the Jews. God's wisdom did not allow that. There had to be a place in which Gentiles could freely come to Christ without the yoke of Jewish prejudice. There had to be a place where Christianity could be viewed as more than a new patch on an old Jewish garment. There had to be a place from which the gospel could be sent out across the globe. There was. ANTIOCH!

1. **The Antioch Christians were caught up in contagious enthusiasm.** Look again at 11: 21. Who were these believers? They were new Christians, babes in Christ, first generation saints; people who had seen the Light and followed it out of paganistic darkness. And they were excited to be in Jesus! They understood the apostolic admonition to **"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say rejoice!"** (Phil. 4: 4). They were a happy, enthusiastic people who were not afraid to vocalize their faith nor show their commitment.

Enthusiasm. Nothing great has ever been accomplished without it. Christianity in Antioch was not some kind of boring, yawning, "when is it gonna' be over with" experience but, rather, we see a group of zealous new believers committed to Christ with everything they had. This church was alive!

Genuine enthusiasm for the Lord is not to be equated with pure emotionalistic religion. Pentecostalism exemplifies the latter. The Pentecostal movement is guilty of elevating emotion above Scripture to the point that "feelings" determine truth rather than truth determining feelings. That's wrong! (Rom. 10: 2). That's sorry! But I'll tell you what's just as sorry, and that's New Testament Christians who have the truth and fail to be excited about it!

In a lot of cases we have fought emotionalistic religion by jumping to the other extreme. Let me give you an example. It used to be that brethren did not feel the least bit inhibited (nor did they think for a moment that they would be labeled "soft" or "pentecostal") if they responded with a resounding "A-MEN!" to an emphatic point of scriptural truth delivered by the speaker. However, today a man can preach his heart out and hear nothing but the sounds of silence. I'll tell you this—there isn't anything that will get my juices flowing any faster than a few well placed hearty "A-MENS!" And it's the same with every Gospel preacher. What's happened? In fighting emotionalistic religion we have traversed to the opposite extreme and taken any semblance of emotion out of our service. That's sad. And... it's contrary to what we read in the New Testament.

These believers were just enthused to be Christians! There was no hiding the fact. There was no squelching the news. In fact, the news about them spread back to Jerusalem: **"And the news about them reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabus off to Antioch"** (11: 22). Barnabus came. He saw the smiles. He could see the enthusiastic commitment. He was a firsthand witness to the grace of God at work in the lives of these converted pagans and he rejoiced! (11: 23). He then geared his preaching along one basic line: **"Don't let the fire of your zeal burn out!"** (11: 23b).

What a gospel preacher Barnabus must have been! What a friend to these new Christians — What a patient man... for no doubt these young saints — came to Christ with a lot of paganistic baggage from years of heathenistic traditionalism. Barnabus worked with them, taught them and loved them. He was a people preacher. And, he knew something else: for this young congregation to survive they had to make a commitment to strong, sound, solid teaching. That's why he came. That's why he stayed. **To be continued...**

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GAMBLING (Part 2)

In our first article we saw that gambling involves three basic elements: (1) **an uncertain event** that is arbitrarily determined, (2) **a stake** (wager or bet) that is deliberately chanced and (3) **a winner and loser**. These three elements can exist in many forms. In any form gambling is a sin because it violates Bible principles.

It Is Addictive

Gambling has an enslaving nature. Horace Levinson said, "Gamblers gamble as lovers love, as drunkards drink, inevitably, blindly, under the dictates of an irresistible force" (*The Science of Chance*, p. 26). The very existence of Gamblers Anonymous suggest that many are addicted. They are servants of gambling. The apostle Paul affirmed that he would not allow anything (even things lawful within themselves) to have that kind of power over him (1 Cor. 6: 12).

It Is Covetousness

Gambling involves an inordinate desire to gain without giving something of equal value. It seeks to get at the expense of others. The gambler is willing for others to lose all their time, effort and money in order to win. If we are to have a life hid with Christ we must put off covetousness, which Paul says is idolatry (Col. 3: 5). The same writer told young Timothy, "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Tim. 6: 10).

It Violates The Principle Of Love And The Golden Rule

The gambler doesn't really show true love for those with whom he gambles, for he is willing to take all they have if the uncertain event turns in his favor. And if such is the case, that's just the loser's tough luck. Actually gambling is stealing by consent. You may ask how could it be stealing if there is consent. It is stealing in the same way that dueling is murder by consent. Just because the two parties agree to a duel doesn't mean that it wouldn't be murder. Jesus said, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matt. 22: 39). Paul's writings indicate that we should seek the welfare of others (1 Cor. 10: 24). The gambler also violates the most basic rule of human relationships — the golden rule which is "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matt. 7: 12). No gambler wants to lose and be

taken. Yet he is willing to do that to others.

It Violates The Principle Of Stewardship

The Gambler wastes and squanders what he has. Most gamblers are losers. John W. "bet a million" Gates used to play bridge for \$1000 a point, match pennies for \$1000 a turn, wager \$50,000 on a poker hand and bet hundreds of thousands of dollars on horse races. His advice was "Don't gamble, don't bet on cards, don't bet on horse races, don't throw dice." The reason? Well, he learned about stewardship the hard way; he died broke in 1911. We must be faithful stewards of that with which we have been blessed (Luke 12: 42; 1 Pet. 4: 10; 1 Cor. 4: 2).

Just think about it. How would you like for someone you had given \$1000 to turn around and gamble with it and most likely lose part if not all of it?

It Violates The Legitimate Means of Transfer Of Money Or Property

There are three basic means of transfer of money or property that are approved by the Bible. Gambling does not fit anyone of the three.

(1) **Labor**: This is where money is earned and paid for effort that has been extended. Many passages deal with this principle (Eph. 4: 28; 2 Thess. 3: 10, 12; 2 Cor. 11: 8, Matt. 10: 10; Matt. 20: 1-15; 1 Cor. 9: 9-10; Luke 10: 7). Gambling does not involve gain by labor.

(2) **Exchange**: This is where a commodity is exchanged for something of value, whether money or other goods. Again, many passages support that principle (Matt. 13: 44, 45; Acts 16: 14; Luke 22: 36; Acts 4: 32-37). Buying stocks and insurance both would fit this principle. Money has been exchanged for something of value. However, Gambling doesn't involve an exchange for something of equal value.

(3) **Love - Gift**: This is where money or something of value is given to another without any expectation of anything in return. One might give something to a needy person (Eph. 4: 28; Acts 4: 32-37). Parents may leave an inheritance for their children (Num. 27: 1-11; Deut. 21: 15-17). Or one may simply give something to another out of love (Eph. 4: 28; Matt. 2: 11). None of these come under the principle of labor or exchange, but are gifts based on the principle of love. Gambling doesn't involve the principle of giving or love.

Gambling Breeds Other Problems

The Senate Crime Investigating Committee (1950-51) as reported by Sen. Estes Kefauver in **Crime In America**, stated "Gambling produces nothing and adds nothing to the economy or society of our nation. America will be in a bad way if we ever resort to taxing crime and immorality for the purpose of raising revenue to operate our institutions. "

Crime has greatly increased in those cities that are known for their gambling casinos. Las Vegas reports some 36,000 crimes a year. It has over 100 murders a year. It has the highest crime rate per capita of any city in the US. Atlantic City had some 4, 391 crimes per year before they installed their casinos. After 1980 they reported 11, 899 crimes. The Reno police department says that 75% of the embezzlement cases are related to gambling. Suicides for gamblers are up 12% -15% above

the national average.

Gambling is directly connected with drinking, theft, broken homes, neglected children and murder. George Washington said, "It is the child of avarice, the brother of iniquity, the father of mischief." Jimmy the Greek said, "When you put legalized gambling into a community, you ruin the community." Some ex-gamblers state in the Gamblers Anonymous guidebook, "The greatest loss that resulted from our gambling was neither time nor money, which are gone forever, but our sense of values."

The FBI lists gambling as one of the six selected dangers hurtful to young people. J. Edgar Hoover said, "Gambling is a vicious evil, it corrupts our youth and blights the lives of adults. It becomes the spring-board for other crimes — embezzlement, robbery and even murder."

Jesus said of some "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7: 20). We know something about the evils of gambling by looking at the fruit it produces.


How It Is Promoted

Many think that gambling is all right in that it can be used to do good. It will bring in revenue for the State to fund such things as education. Who would be opposed to funding education? However, the end doesn't justify the means. We have already noticed that gambling in our communities doesn't produce good, but only more problems. But suppose it did produce good; it is still sin! As one brother suggested, if we legalize gambling to bring in revenue, why not legalize prostitution (as they already have in Nevada) and tax it to bring in revenue? Does that justify prostitution?

Because of the problems it breeds, gambling cost more to police than it can bring in as revenue for the State.

We can be sure that the State lotteries are going to increase. Let's just be sure that God's people abstain from such evil (1 Thess. 5: 22).

**SIMPLICITY
IN
CHRIST**



P. J. Casebolt
P.O. Box 1487
Chiefland, Florida 32626

TWO SONGS AND A PRAYER

Most of us have heard the old tune that churches of Christ are "scriptural" when they have two songs and a prayer before the sermon. Sometimes this statement is made in jest, but there are times when the accusation is made unjustly, and in all seriousness.

My experience with churches of Christ has been long and varied, covering a wide area of geographical, economical, and ethnic backgrounds. And, while I don't claim to be an expert on the subject, neither do I see how anyone else can claim to be an expert if they have not encountered all of those experiences of which I speak.

Yes, I have found some brethren who were set in their ways, and slow to make changes, but who am I to pose as an authority in matters of judgment? If it is unscriptural to decide how many songs to sing before prayer, why would it not be just as unscriptural to tell brethren they need to change that order?

Generally, churches of Christ meet regularly twice on the Lord's day, and during the week for a period of Bible study. On Sunday morning, the assembly will generally begin between 9 and 10, and the evening assembly will start around 6 or 7. There are exceptions to this rule, and that is exactly the point I'm trying to make. There is no set time, nor have I met anyone who said that there was.

I have known churches to conduct two periods of worship on Lord's day morning, because the building wouldn't hold everyone all at one time. I've known congregations that assembled in the afternoon, due to local circumstances. I'm sure there are other arrangements besides these.

As to the order of worship, I think I've about seen it all. One congregation where I preached met for several years at 10: 30 a. m. for Bible study, and sang only one song between Bible study and the sermon, with no prayer. They also met for mid-week Bible study on Tuesday instead of the usual Wednesday. I've also worshipped in situations where the ratio was more like three sermons to one song, instead of the other way around.

Brethren, have we ever stopped to consider that many of our times and customs have been determined after periods of trial and error? Wednesday is about half way between the two Lord's days, keeping brethren in contact with one another at least every 2-3 days.

Times of assembly are generally determined by farmers, factory workers, office workers, distances from the building, school activities, and yes, even by Daylight

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Savings Time. I've preached where brethren did not have access to a rented hall one night of the week, and had to plan their meetings accordingly.

There is nothing unscriptural about conducting the local assemblies of the church decently and in order, and in the best interests of the most people. And, when circumstances dictate a change in such arrangements, brethren generally have the good sense to make the necessary changes.

I see no reason to change just for the sake of change, or just because some brother comes along and criticizes us for having two songs before the prayer.

What concerns me more is the preacher who says we can observe the Lord's supper any day of the week; that says the church has no corporate or public worship; that says the church has no work to do, and no organization with which to do it.

Man was made in the image of God, and given dominion over the earth (Gen. 1: 26-28). If this is true, man should have enough common sense to get in out of the rain. If he can do that, then he should have the sense to decide what time of day to meet for worship, and how many songs to have before prayer.

Personally, I think he does.

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

7637 Fleming Hills Dr. S.W.
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STUDIES IN FIRST AND SECOND TIMOTHY 2 TIM. 2: 14-26 "VARIOUS THINGS TO REMEMBER AND TELL OTHERS"

Timothy is told to do two things in verse 14. "Put the brethren in remembrance and "Charge them that they strive not about words to no profit." Men have ever been prone to speculate and theorize. Many wordy speeches are made in support of various theories, filled with empty words, that serve no purpose except to confuse and subvert hearers. Often, when preachers of theories are asked to produce the scripture that supports their teaching, they reply with syllogisms, suppositions, and the meaning of words, instead of reading what the scriptures say. Listening to many preachers, you would think Christianity is made up of theology, when in reality, it is a matter of learning the word and doing what it says (Matt. 7: 21-23; Jas. 1: 25). Timothy was to refrain from, and charge others to do likewise, a battle of words. The preacher can not save himself and his hearers by vocalizing theories with many words (the

meaning of which is vague). Quoting scripture and showing the meaning will, however, get the job done.

Instead of entering the battle of words over various theories, Timothy is told to study and rightly divide (handle aright) the word of truth (v. 15). Timothy's course (ministry) was to be the very opposite of the false teachers, with their useless words and theories. Timothy is urged to "show thyself approved unto God ("Present yourself approved to God" — NASV), a workman that needeth not to be ashamed (does not need to be ashamed). An evangelist does this when he only preaches the word, rightly dividing (handling aright) the word of truth. The Greek word translated divide rightly is "adokimastos" and literally means "to cut rightly." William Barclay says the Greeks used the word in three different connections. "They used it for driving a straight road across country, for plowing a straight furrow across a field, and for the work of a mason in cutting and squaring a stone so that it fitted into its correct place in the structure of the building" (p. 173). For Timothy, or any other preacher, to present themselves as an approved of God minister of the word, he must walk a straight path through the truth, fitting each truth into its proper contextual setting, never being lured down pleasant or philosophical paths. In this, a good minister differs from the "vain babbling" (godless chattering) of false teachers.

Profane And Vain Babblings-Ungodliness (v. 16-18)

A good minister is to shun (avoid) profane and vain (empty) babblings (v. 16). To profane is to corrupt or desecrate something holy or godly. The New American Standard Bible uses the word worldly instead of profane. This is what is done when a teacher perverts the pure word of God or mixes human wisdom with truth. He profanes or corrupts "the simplicity that is in Christ" (2 Cor. 11: 3). Vain or empty babblings would be the many words (fair speeches) of the false teacher. This kind of thing will only result in more ungodliness. The "babblings" of men are compared to a canker (cancer) in its evil effect or results.

Two men are listed as examples of this evil Timothy is warned against. They were Hymeneus and Philetus (v. 17-18). We have no scriptural explanation of just who these men were, but they were obviously known to the brethren among whom Timothy went preaching. It is affirmed that they had erred from the truth, and mentioned one thing false in their teaching—"the resurrection is passed already." A result of their false teaching is also stated. The faith of some had been overthrown. The doctrine of the resurrection of Christ and the assurance we have of this hope for all is a vital part of the gospel. Their teaching about the resurrection was designed to destroy hope of the resurrection. Destroy this hope, and the Christian's faith is overthrown. No clearer declaration or proof of the resurrection of Christ, and the Christian's hope, can be found than what Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15. I do not know what particular theories of the resurrection these men were teaching. Some, in that day, taught that the real resurrection of the Christian happened at baptism — a resurrection to newness

of life: something for this life, not after death. Others taught that an individual resurrection was accomplished through living on in one's children. The Sadducees of Jesus' day did not believe in a resurrection of the body, and argued against it (Matt. 22: 23-30). To deny the resurrection is to completely nullify and make void Christianity.

A Sure Foundation (v. 19-21)

Paul has just discussed some who had erred from the truth and, through their false teaching, caused the faith of some to be overthrown. This might cause some to question the reality and stability of "the faith." Paul wants Timothy to understand, and to teach others, that apostasy, no matter how common, does not nullify the truth of God. Read again verses 12-13 in this chapter, where Paul affirms "we shall live with him, if we be dead with him; We shall reign with him, if we suffer; We will be denied by him, if we deny him"; and that failure on our part will not cause God to fail. Truth will always be truth and God will always be faithful regardless of what men do.

This is the truth that Paul restates in verse 19. Though there may be apostasy on the part of preachers and brethren, "the foundation of God standeth sure," and the Lord can always distinguish between the faithful and the unfaithful. Every Christian, however, has the responsibility to "depart from iniquity." Iniquity means "lawlessness."

Some believe the false doctrine of "once saved, always saved" or "eternal security of the believer," but this text clearly teaches that believers can, and often do, apostatize and will be held accountable to God for their actions. If this can't happen, then why the "if in v. 12-13, and the exhortation to "depart from iniquity"?

Situations in the church that cause some to question the divine foundation, or "the faith" is illustrated in verse 20-21 by vessels of honor and dishonor. God's house today is the church and Christians are vessels therein. Some are gold and silver while others are worthless (vessels of dishonor). What can be done about this latter situation? Verse 21 teaches that wood and earth vessels can purge (cleans) themselves so as to become "vessels of honor and meet (worthy) for the Master's use." Notice who is called upon to do this purging. It is not something that God will do miraculously. Of course, God is the one who purges or cleanses, but not without action on the part of the individual. The vessel him/her self must take positive action. The "if" at the beginning of this verse shows that being a vessel unto honor, sanctified, meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work depends, and is conditioned upon, his purging himself—quitting his iniquity (lawlessness) and seeking forgiveness in God's way.

Timothy, to save himself and them that hear, must realize, and teach others, that Christians can apostatize, have faith overthrown, become vessels of dishonor, and become unprepared for the Lord's work. Such, in the judgment, will be unapproved workmen and subject to shame. The foundation (truth) of God, including rewards and punishment at the judgment, standeth sure, even though many apostatize and fall short of the

eternal reward.

Things To Flee, Follow, Avoid, and Be In Dealing With This (v. 22-26)

In verse 22 we learn that there are things that Timothy and others are to "flee," and things they are to "follow after." The things to flee are "youthful lusts." Fleshly desires are always powerful and particularly so in youth. Special watchfulness and fleeing is necessary on the part of those who are yet in the meridian of life.

Knowing the character, faith, and disposition of Timothy, it is hard to conceive of him even leaning toward a fleshly, immoral practice. However, such a warning is always timely. The context seems to suggest, in this verse, that the warning is of the fleshly lusts of self-conceit, pride, ambition, and the love of applause, rather than immoral practices. Being found in a setting where Timothy is warned about "striving about words" and reminded of the evil words of Hymenaeus and Philetus, it would seem that Paul is warning more about this kind of thing than immoral acts. But, the warning would apply to all evils springing from fleshly lust.

Things to "follow" (pursue) are "righteousness, faith (some erred from), charity or love (This would put down rashness in dealing with others, or God's word), and peace" (Hasty words or personal ambition would destroy this). This is the action of those who "call on the Lord out of a pure heart." To call on the Lord is to worship Him, look to Him for aid and blessings, submit to His authority, realizing there is no other. This is to be done out of a pure heart (in all honesty and sincerity).

Something to avoid is mentioned in verse 23. "foolish and unlearned questions." Paul warned Timothy about this in 1 Tim. 1: 3-7; 4: 7. Go back and read the comments on these verses in previous lessons. Men are prone to speculate and theorize, particularly about unrevealed things (e. g. Where did Cain get his wife? What kind of fruit was on the tree of which Adam and Eve were forbidden to eat? etc.). Continued discussion of unrevealed matters, and men's theories, can only result in confusion and strife. Preachers of the word of truth must avoid such practice.

Verse 24 tells the faithful minister, in his preaching and teaching, to "be gentle, thoroughly prepared, and patient." He is told not to strive (quarrel — NKJ; quarrelsome — NASB). In verse 5 Paul tells the Lord's servants to "strive lawfully" like one who strives for masteries. In verse 14, one is told "strive not about words to no profit," implying one may, and should strive with words that do profit. Paul does not contradict himself in these verses, telling the minister of God's word to do something, then forbid him to do it. The solution hinges on the meaning of the word "strive" or the "kind" of striving meant. In this verse, the context shows that bitter strife-heated words or quarreling, is meant. The restriction is not to strenuous activity in teaching, or to Jude's admonition "contend earnestly for the faith" (Jude 3). The words "gentle, prepared, apt" and "patient" show the kind of striving that is forbidden — the opposite of this.

All ministers of the word need to take note of their manner of preaching as they read this verse. Some

preach like they are mad at everyone who doesn't obey, or disagree with them. Such an attitude will stir animosity more than convert.

In the following verse (25), we see that giving instruction with meekness (Humility — N. K. J.) gentleness, and patience to those who "oppose themselves" (who are in opposition — N. K. J.) is the way to bring about repentance and submission to truth. God grants repentance, not miraculously, but by or through proper teaching. God furnishes the message through an apt teacher, and in this way gives repentance.

The last verse in this chapter (26) shows that repentance, while made possible by God's grace, is the responsibility of the sinner, spoken of as "recover themselves out of the snare of the devil." Those who resist and oppose truth, and its proclaimers, are in the snare of the devil, willing to do exactly what the devil wills.

All preachers of truth should observe closely, and practice, the manner of instructing the opposition that brings about repentance and submission, if they are to be successful in saving themselves and them that hear.

A BURNING FIRE

(Jer. 20:9)

Jim Deason

Rt. 1, Box 153
Culleoka, Tennessee 38451



THE HEALTHY BODY

Those of us who knew Jane were privileged to know a wonderful woman. And in the last weary hours of her pilgrimage here, as we set with her around the clock, she taught us some very valuable lessons. Not the least of which was the courageous way that, with Christ, we can face "the valley of the shadow of death." Death came to Jane as a sweet release from the agony of a body racked with disease and pain.

The human body is an amazing thing. David said, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psa. 139: 14). Healthy and mature, the body is capable of accomplishing almost unbelievable feats. But when it is ravaged by disease the body becomes a source of great discomfort and pain which often renders it powerless to accomplish even the simplest of tasks.

Paul likened the relationship which we sustain to the Lord and to one another as a body (1 Cor. 12: 12-27 and Eph. 4: 11-16). And so it is that when the spiritual body is healthy it can accomplish great things. But if it be diseased and sickly there is very little that it can do. Let's take a few moments to compare the spiritually healthy body with that which is sick.

The healthy body is obviously the body that is free from disease and, in this case, we are speaking of the disease of sin. To be free of sin means that the spiritual

body must be taught the truth, worship correctly, and work zealously. Each "member" of the body needs to be living a healthy spiritual life. There are some ways in which this healthy status can be observed on a local basis. A spiritually healthy body has...

MEMBERS WHO ARE ENERGETIC. When the body is healthy it's members are active, vibrant and busy at work. Paul's instruction to be "fervent in spirit" (Rom. 12: 11) is in evidence everywhere and in everyone. But sickness drains this zealously. When the physical body is sick it is often listless and without energy. Thus, when there is sickness within the spiritual body, all of it's resources are channeled to combat the disease within and it's energy is completely consumed internally. It becomes listless, it loses it's sense of balance and begins to show signs of fatigue. This spiritual fatigue makes it almost impossible for the body to accomplish any good task. There simply is not enough energy.

MEMBERS WHO JOY AND DELIGHT IN WORSHIP. When one is physically healthy it's much easier to have a happier disposition than when ill. The Philippian church was a healthy spiritual body and no doubt could follow Paul's instruction to "Rejoice in the Lord always ..." (Phil. 4: 4). As Paul commanded them "make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose" its not hard to envision these brethren joyfully gathering on Sunday morning for worship. Surely they could say along with David, "I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord'" (Psa. 122: 1).

MEMBERS WHO HAVE A GOOD APPETITE FOR SPIRITUAL FOOD. Sickness is often accompanied by a loss of appetite but a healthy body needs food to give it the essential nutrients for growth. Peter taught us to, "like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation" (1 Pet. 2: 2). With time and exercise comes the ability to digest "meat" (Heb. 5: 11-14) and further spiritual growth. A physical body stops growing and begins to suffer from malnutrition when it stops eating. Likewise, when the spiritual body is not engaged in Bible Study as it ought, growth will stop. This becomes the first symptom of disease in a local church or, at the very least, it makes the body more vulnerable.

MEMBERS WHO ARE FRIENDLY, OPEN TO ONE ANOTHER, AND TRULY UNITED. I have been a part both of churches that grew and churches that didn't grow and one thing I have noticed. Without exception in the churches that grew the members were generally friendly, filled with love for one another, self-sacrificing, and intent on going to heaven and carrying as many people as possible with them. For a body to grow as God intends the members must be filled with the attitudes of Philippians 2: 1-11. Not long ago I visited a local church that had a reputation for problems. Entering the building was worse than entering a morgue. There was no friendly greeting, only a cold tension. The aisles were filled with distrust and suspicion. I didn't expect to be invited out after services and one can only imagine that the gatherings outside the building were probably not

filled with conversation about how to best go about teaching a neighbor. Sick? Obviously!

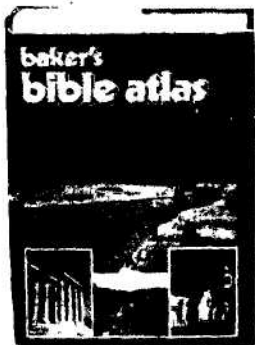
Is it not easy to see that when the body is listless and without energy and members are uninterested in worship, cold, isolated from one another with no communication, that there is disease present? There can be no growth of the body when it is convulsive and feverous and it's members are quarrelsome, hostile, and bitter. This does not please God.

Paul wrote to the troubled Corinthians, "Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree, and there be no divisions among you, but you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1: 10).

All of us want to have a healthy physical body and to be a part of a healthy spiritual body. But that's just not possible all of the time. Sickness is a part of existence in the body both physically and spiritually. Therefore, we must learn how to cope with sickness when it does invade the members of the body. It can't be ignored because this only compounds the problem. Can you imagine the tragedy of someone ignoring the symptoms of cancer or heart disease? And the point I want to make is that learning to cope with these problems begins with YOU!

Each one must first ask the question, "Am I a part of the disease or a part of the cure?" Paul put it in this manner, "Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves" (2 Cor. 13: 5)! Only when we apply the "balm of Gilead" to ourselves can we be in a position to help others. If the attitude of Christ (Phil. 2: 5) first be in us it will be contagious and others will seek to develop it in their own lives. This will result in the good health of the body.

May God give us all the strength through faith to fight off the sickness and disease of sin that so constantly troubles us.



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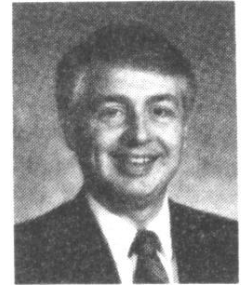
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It is important to see that dispensational premillennialists actually have three resurrections, not two. The Bible teaches that there will be only one resurrection:

"And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day... No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day... Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6: 39, 40, 44, 54).

"And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust" (Acts 24: 15; see also Matt. 25: 31-46; 2 Thes. 1: 7-9).

The separation of righteous and wicked will come at the end of the world, not a thousand years before (cf. Matt. 13: 30-50).

Premillennial Positions

The first "second coming" is the Rapture. The second "second coming" is the Revelation. In support of the first "second coming" the dispensationalist uses Genesis 5: 21-24; John 14: 1-3; and 1 Thes. 4: 13-17. In support of the second "second coming" the dispensationalist uses 1 Thes. 3: 11-13.

Concerning Genesis 5: 21-24, the claim is made that we will be translated like Enoch. The passage six times in succession speaks of some who die. Enoch did not die but was translated. We, of course, affirm that some will be taken when the Lord comes; some, that is, who have not died. The passage proves nothing for the millennialist.

John 14: 1-3 again proves nothing concerning two resurrections. All accept the truth of the passage. What it does not say is that those whom Jesus receives unto himself will later be brought again to the earth with him at an appearing or revelation seven years or a thousand years afterward.

1 Thes. 4: 13-17 is often used to teach two resurrections... one for the righteous and one for the wicked. It does not. It does not mention the wicked at all or even refer to them. The next chapter implies strongly that both are together in reference to this "day of the Lord" (cf. 1 Thes. 5: 1-8). Furthermore, the passage teaches that the coming of Christ is:

Visible. It will not be secret (see also 2 Thes. 1: 7-9; 2: 8).

Audible. Sounds will include a great noise (2 Pet. 3: 10), a sounding trumpet (1 Cor. 15: 22), a shout and the voice of the archangel (2 Thes. 4: 16).

Final. So shall we "ever" be with the Lord. We will then receive our spiritual bodies (1 Cor. 15: 31). We will not be returned to live in a material world on earth seven years later for a thousand year period.

1 Thes. 3: 11-13 is used as a last ditch stand to affirm that Christ will come once **FOR** His saints and once **WITH** His saints (millennial position). The fact is, however, that the spirits, the real beings of departed saints, have not remained on the earth in the graves. They returned to God's care at death (Eccle. 12: 7). Christ will bring the righteous spirits of the departed with him (1 Thes. 4: 14) to be joined to their resurrection bodies and all His saints, living and dead, will meet in the air.

The Bible simply teaches that at the end of time, when God calls an end to the world, all the dead will be raised and a judgment of all will take place (Matt. 25: 31-46; John 5: 28-29; Rev. 20: 12; Rom. 14: 10-12; 2 Cor. 5: 10; John 12: 48).

Can We Calculate the Time?

The answer is "NO!" Paul said, "But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, 'Peace and safety!' then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape..." (1 Thes. 5: 1-8; see also 2 Thes. 2: 1-4). Since before the Millerites who predicted that the Lord would come in 1843) men have tried to determine what the Christ said could not be known until the Lord revealed it in actual happening. A long string of "Adventist" efforts have failed. Do not be deceived by these claims. Be faithful, remain ready, and anticipate His coming never doubting that in His own time, Christ will appear.

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THE SORROWS OF OLD AGE WITHOUT THE LORD

From Solomon, the man who had nearly every experience possible and then drew a conclusion after it — an assessment of what it really means — come these words: *"These is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men: A man to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honor, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it: this is vanity, and it is an evil disease. If a man beget a hundred children, and live many years, so that the days of his years be many, and his soul be not filled with good, and also that he have no burial; I say that an untimely birth is better than he. For he cometh in with vanity, and departeth in darkness..." (Ec. 6: 2-4)*

Some of the happiest and most enjoyable people I have ever been around have been old folks. And some of the most miserable and bitter people I have ever encountered have been old folks. Some are obsessed with the idea that every silver lining has a dark cloud, while others see it the other way around. In the text, the wise preacher supposes a man to have seen the utmost possible limit of human existence. Solomon had been such a person so now he makes a comparison. He estimates the worth of this proud and protracted life: "If his soul be not filled with good, I say, that an untimely birth is better than he." But let's take a closer look at these attainments.

1. "A MAN TO WHOM GOD HATH GIVEN RICHES, WEALTH, AND HONOR, SO THAT HE WANTETH NOTHING..." (6: 2) The rest of the verse shows that possessions and the ability to enjoy them are not necessarily joined together. With some, this is the ultimate. But whether he enjoyed them or not, if his soul was not filled with good then an untimely birth (a child that is carried from the womb to the grave) is better than he.

2. "IF A MAN BEGET A HUNDRED CHILDREN..." (6: 3). Even though he has posterity (a hundred children!), even though his name will be carried on, even though he has demonstrated the ability to procreate (Which men are often proud of), if the Lord is not first in his life "he departeth in darkness, and his name shall be covered in darkness... he hath not... known anything" (6: 4, 5). Comparatively, he knows nothing about the purpose for his existence.

3. "AND LIVE MANY YEARS... YEA, THOUGH HE LIVE A THOUSAND YEARS TWICE TOLD" (6: 3, 6).

Longevity means nothing. Life has only as much value as it yields in a joy that endures. Methusaleh lived to be 969, but what effect has he had on the world? His age is all we know about him. On the other hand, Jesus lived to be 33. His impact is immeasurable. It was "for the joy that was set before him that he endured the cross..." (Heb. 12: 2). Counting time is not as important as making time count. Jesus continued to grow spiritually (Lk. 2: 52). An unknown wise man once said: "A man who is still learning and growing stays perpetually young and fresh, though he may be 90 years old."

The Sorrows of the Man Who Has Passed Through Life and "His Soul Is Not Filled With Good"

1. HE HAD PASSED THROUGH A LIFE, THAT UPON REFLECTION, GIVES HIM NO COMFORT. Bad memories which cannot be shut out bring to him their load of sorrows. He had to make an inspection which he cannot escape. The faithful can look back with pleasure and serenity but what anguish must arise in the heart from looking back at a wasted life.

All the neglected opportunities to help someone down on his luck, to talk to someone about the gospel, to show kindness and appreciation for your mate, to develop a relationship with your children and instruct them in the way of life — these will be there to haunt. Most opportunities, once they are gone, can never be recalled. This is just one facet of the sorrows of old age without the Lord.

If one has spent life boozing it up or using drugs and influencing others to do likewise, what happy memories will that bring when one is old and has little to do but reminisce about the past? Ill health and the inability of physical organs to function often follow a life of self-indulgence and self-centeredness.

If one spends his life in sexual promiscuity he may not only suffer physically but pangs of conscience may haunt him to the grave. Such reckless living often breaks up families. There will be the memory of broken vows and a mate he betrayed for self-gratification. And what of his children and grandchildren? Neither he nor they will have the happy memory of coming home uninhibited to visit and talk over fond memories of the past, for there will be some subjects that cannot be approached. There will be the constant fear and discomfort of saying the wrong thing. And there is usually a loss of respect for the one who did not respect the word of God. Often there is bitterness and resentment toward the third party who intruded (invited or uninvited) into the marriage. "Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers" (Prov. 17: 6).

What is really sad is when such children have totally lost respect and won't even come around. No wonder he had no honorable burial (6: 3). They no longer care about the one who never cared much. There is no way to describe this loneliness.

2. HE IS PASSING FORWARD TO AN ETERNITY FOR WHICH HE IS UNPREPARED. He already received his reward in his life of indulgence. We can think of nothing more dismal than sending an unprepared person on a life threatening mission. Unpreparedness

for a crucial event brings the most uneasy feelings one can experience. There are no sadder words than "the door was shut" (Mt. 25: 10).

3. HE HAS EXPERIENCED THE VANITY OF THE WORLD AND HAS NOTHING TO SUPPLY ITS PLACE. The world recedes and disappears. It rots, rusts, and corrupts (Mt. 6: 19-21). Those pleasures of sin, which were but for a season (Heb. 11: 25), are gone. The joy did not endure. Sin may taste sweet at first, but it leaves a bitter aftertaste. No one will enjoy hell, and yet one who had few spiritual thoughts in life will not have the capacity to appreciate heaven either. It is a hopeless end.

Has God Made Provision to Take Care of Senior Citizens?

We have not spent this time merely trying to depress you, as though that were an end in itself. Such would be a waste. However, the message is urgent and has a two-fold application. (1) The young need to be warned against the ruinous evil of procrastination. It may be now or never. "I love them that love me; and those that seek me early (in life, db) shall find me" (Prov. 8: 17). Remember your Creator while you are young, rather than wait till your habits are formed and you are too "set in your ways" to change. (2) It is urgent that the aged give immediate attention to the well worn path you are treading. There is not a moment to be lost for your soul is on the verge of eternity.

The Psalmist said, "I have been young, and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed begging bread" (Ps. 37: 25). "The gray head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness" (Prov. 16: 31).

"EFFEMINATE BY PERVERSION"

**George Hutto
505 S. Main Street
Madrid, Iowa 50156**

The author preached a sermon months back in which he stated that God says that women should be women, and men should be men. One of the listeners recently asked where this precept is taught in scripture.

Also, the author was questioned on another occasion about the exact meaning of "effeminate" in the King James version of 1 Corinthians 6: 9-10. What is considered effeminate in one culture may not be considered effeminate in another. British men wear kilts without being thought of as "sissies." American men cannot do so. How does one determine effeminate behavior?

The apostle Paul condemns two kinds of homosexuals with the words used in 1 Corinthians 6: 9. The KJV uses the terms effeminate and abusers of themselves with

mankind. This writer has concluded that the KJV best gets the message across. The NASB uses the same effeminate with a footnote: "i. e., effeminate by perversion." This thought gets a little closer to Paul's message, but with gays becoming more and more militant, members of the church will do well to dig deep into this subject. Can one think of a more exasperating situation than to have a male church member who acts like a female defending his behavior by claiming that he is being judged by cultural standards rather than by scriptural standards? What does effeminate mean? ... Macknight wrote that this word is translated from a Greek word meaning "catamite," the technical word for "a boy used in pederasty." "Those wretches who suffered this abuse were likewise called pathics, and affected the dress and behavior of women." Catamites were the passive partners in sodomy. (Burton Coffman, Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians, p. 87.) The NKJV has these two words: "Homosexuals..., sodomites." Footnotes are included which say "Catamites, those submitting to homosexuals..., male homosexuals."

So, the two words point to those who allow homosexuals to abuse them and the homosexuals themselves. (E. M. Zerr and Berry's interlinear confirm this fact.) But from where does the idea of effeminism come?

"MALALAKOS... soft, soft to the touch... is used (a) of raiment, Matt. 11: 8...; Luke 7: 25; (b) metaphorically, in a bad sense, 1 Cor. 6: 9, "effeminate," not simply a male who practises forms of lewdness, but persons in general, who are guilty of addiction to sins of the flesh, voluptuous. (W. E. Vine, Exp. Dict. NT Words, p. 359).

Here is the whole picture: the man condemned by Paul is one who allows homosexuals to abuse him, who was technically described by a term which gender-wise meant soft and voluptuous. The proper term to describe this wretched condition is — "effeminate by perversion." If the reader has thumbed through the record albums in department stores he is fully aware of the effeminism Paul wrote about. From the Rolling Stones in the 1960's until today, there has been a steady increase in entertainers who act — effeminate. Today's teenagers are offered a rich diet of pictures, words, and innuendoes which are designed to pervert the genders. And the Secular Humanists are out touting that people should not make boys feel like they should behave in certain ways, and that people should not make girls feel like

they should behave in certain ways. A bill was recently defeated in California which made teaching homosexuality techniques in sex education classes mandatory. (The gays truly are averse to discrimination.)

Christians should not start "witch hunts" to find sissies in the church anymore than they should unjustly scour the church for people guilty of fornication, liberalism, covetousness, or phariseeism. The point is that the Bible condemns effeminism. Boys should be raised to be boys, and girls should be raised to be girls. Masculinity and femininity are good things (Gen. 1: 27). Perversion is abominable (Deut. 22: 5).

The culture in which one lives certainly does have a bearing on how one behaves and dresses. But if the godless fashion designers and the shameless liberators make perversion popular, should Christians follow along? By no means. Who started the earring fad? Who started the long hair fad? Who started the bra-burning craze? Not Christians.

Christians should never become slaves to tradition (Mt. 15: 9). But neither should they be on the cutting edge of moral revolution. Elton John, confessed homosexual, once had a song entitled, "All the Young Girls Love Alice." The gist of the song is seen in the title. Another of his songs said, "We'll fight our parents in the street to see who's right and who's wrong." He sang, "Saturday night's alright for fighting, Get a little action in." He sang, "Burn Down The mission." I always wondered about the meaning of "Philadelphia (city of brotherly love, gh) Freedom." Christians, young or old, should not be protégés to such sinners (2 Cor. 6: 17).

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THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

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GEOFF VAN BUREN, 910 LaSalle St., Yakima WA — The work at Eastside in Yakima is doing well. Since July we have had five baptisms and some restorations. We have two new converts classes. We started with two people and now there are 17 in these classes. Members are bringing people from the community and the work is encouraging.

FELIPE CATOLOS, 82-D Caggay, Tuguegarao, Cagayan 3500, Philippines — The church at Dammurog was one year old in October, 1988. We started with two sisters who invited us to come and preach. Four brethren from Palayag and Tabang also came and helped. Eight were baptized from these efforts. There are now 53 active members. Eleven were baptized in June, 1988 when **Walter D. Bunnell** from

Francis, Oklahoma was here to preach and edify us. In September, six more confessed their faith and were baptized into Christ. We conduct meetings every Lord's day under a big tree in the open air. When it rains we find ourselves in a tight place in a brother's house. On December 4, 1987 I had a discussion at the heart of the community with the Jehovah's Witnesses. Their false doctrines were exposed and most of the people in the community have turned away from these false teachers. Now, you seldom find one of them roaming around the community telling their false doctrine.

Brother Bunnell, mentioned earlier, spent one month here (June), in 1988. In addition to preaching here in Dammurog, he also preached in other provinces such as Kalinga-Apayao Isabela, Ilocos Norte, La Union, Tarlac, Oriental Mindoro and in Manila. During his work here 36 souls were won to the Lord. If any would like to have information about work in the areas visited by brother Bunnell, you may write him at: P. O. Box 52, Francis, OK 74844, or call (405) 332-4555.

JOHN HUMPHRIES and JERRY PARKS, both of Louisville, KY spent six weeks preaching and teaching in India, with a few days in Manila, Philippines and in Japan where they visited with Bob and Bobby Nichols and Randy Reese. While their emphasis was on training and developing Christians there for more fruitful service, 107 were baptized during their work, 103 in India and 4 in Manila. They were in Manila when typhoon "Unsang" came across Luzon. Official reports from the Philippine government indicate heavy damage from this storm. Many were killed, thousands were left homeless and many vital crops were destroyed.

Brethren Humphries and Parks indicate that a great deal of progress has been made in the work in India. In February, Gerry Sandusky and Tom Moody will make another trip to India to teach.

ROY FIELDS, 5807 Golden Pheasant Ct., Dayton, OH 45424 — We have been working with the Northern Hgts. church in Dayton since April 1, 1988. It has been a good work with brethren in harmony. We just completed a good meeting with Wayne Walker of Haynes Street in Dayton. The church is as generous as possible in providing my support. My average income from the church here has been \$515 a month. I also receive a retirement check of \$231 a month. I have been unable to secure any outside support and what I have does not go very far. We are in need of at least another \$1,000 a month to pay bills and keep above water. If any can help, please write at the above address or call me at (513) 237-0434. Please pray for our work here.

SWEET HOME, OREGON — The church here is looking for a good sound gospel preacher to come and work with us. We can supply \$1,000 a month for a year, and by that time, we hope things will be better. If interested, call Loyd Sloan (503) 367-3827, or Vernon Sturdevant (503) 367-6221.



It is inevitable that differences will arise among brethren. Some of these will grow out of a simple lack of communication. Some will spring from the difference between maturity and immaturity of knowledge. Some will arise out of strife and vain glory. Some will come about because of the intrusion of teaching which is not according to sound doctrine. Of course, truth must be defended and error must be OK posed for what it is. But we do not need to treat one another as bulldogs in a tussle over turf. There are times to be outspoken and painfully plain so that all will understand. But the character of those who make up the "royal priesthood" should be such that we never lose the generosity of spirit, the kindness of demeanor which causes us to act with grace and dignity. Even when we are dead certain that the question at hand is a clear matter of truth vs. error, there is a passage we ought to always remember. "But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. 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; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will" (2 Tim. 2: 26).

"I THINK"

In our teaching we need to be long on "thus saith the Lord" and short on "I think." The world of religion is in turmoil enough because human opinion has been elevated to the rank of divine instruction. Teaching must not generate doubts. "Possibly," "perhaps," "maybe," "seemingly," are first cousins to "I think," Luke wrote to his friend, "most excellent Theophilus, That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed" (Lk. 1: 4).

SINGIN' THE BLUES

Life will always have its genuine concerns. The sun won't shine all the time. Some days, it will rain. There will be times when whatever can go wrong, will do just that. But why does every note of cheer or good news have to be dampened by "yes, but you just wait..." To hear some tell it, life has been "gloom, despair and agony on me." Here is some help. "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. 2: 3). "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4: 17). "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). "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine" (Prov. 17: 22).

TO BRETHREN IN THE PHILIPPINES

I have tried to encourage the work in the Philippines since 1970. There are many good, honest, hardworking brethren in that nation, I used to try to answer every letter received. For a long time now, it has been impossible to continue that practice. Some are agitated because they have not received an answer to a letter, or sometimes several letters. It is physically impossible to keep up with all of it. My work in gospel meetings, classes in Louisville and with the paper require the bulk of what time is available. That does not leave much time for personal correspondence. Further, many letters make appeals for funds for support, or for various needs, either individually or congregationally. Some are of the opinion that I can send any book they want. I do not own a bookstore. If I did, I would still have to pay for the inventory. I buy and pay for my own books. We also hear from many brethren in other countries. We are interested in the work of the Lord all over the world, and we are distressed when any of our brethren anywhere are in need. We have done what we could, with our own limited resources to respond whenever we could. But there are limits to that also.

So, if you write to me, and do not receive an answer to your letter (s), please do not assume that I have lost interest in the work there. Many have written since the recent typhoons struck various regions of that country. Many suffered damage to property and loss of crops. They will need help, even as brethren in Jamaica and Mexico needed help after the damages caused by hurricane "Gilbert." There have been 18 typhoons to buffet that island nation just in 1988. Add that to the unstable economic situation, the political unrest, and the general poverty of most brethren, and the stage is set for disaster. Many places need clothing, food and medicines. Churches need song books (even used ones in good repair), literature for classes and tracts. They have so little under normal circumstances. I have heard some brethren here say "Well, they are used to one calamity after another." That is small comfort when your wife and children are hungry and your crops have been destroyed and you are left without any means of supplying the basic needs of daily life. Anytime, there is an appeal for help, effort should be made to verify the need, either from brethren you know to be honest in the area involved, or from those who have personal knowledge of the situation and people involved. Check it out first. Take pains to "provide things honest" and urge those receiving help to do the same.

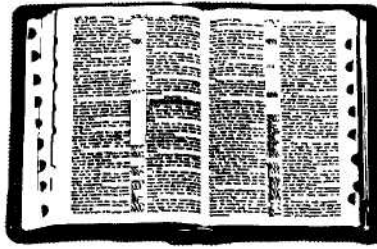
IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	247
RESTORATIONS	31

(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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VOLUME XXX

FEBRUARY, 1989

NUMBER 2

"ALL THINGS
WORK
TOGETHER"

Frank Himmel

723 15th Ave. W.
Palmetto, FL 33561



"And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, who are called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8: 28). God can and does turn adversity into advantage. However, to make that the meaning of this passage is to set our sights too low. Paul has much greater "all things" in mind than the personal setbacks of life. It is the things of God—elements of His plan—that He so beautifully brings together on our behalf. Five components are specified in the two verses that follow.

Foreknowledge

"For whom He foreknew..." To "foreknow" is simply to know before. The Greek word is prognosis. A doctor's prognosis is his forecast of what course a disease will take. Admittedly, his forecast is based on past cases and is subject to error; God's foreknowledge is perfect. When God reveals to us what will happen before the event, we can have foreknowledge (e. g. 2 Pet. 3: 17).

In this case God's foreknowledge involves people: "whom He foreknew." God knew beforehand what group of people would be saved. How? Because he chose the group and He does the saving. The group He chose is those in Christ (Eph. 1: 4).

Predestination

"He also predestined..." Here again is the idea of something done beforehand. To predestine is to decide or determine in advance. We predestine a vacation when we decide what attractions we will see and what roads we will take; when we make motel reservations or buy airline tickets.

God predetermined many things regarding salva-

tion: Jesus' crucifixion as the atonement (Acts 2: 33); adopted sons, with full right of inheritance, as the status of the saved (Eph. 1: 5, 11); eternal life as the reward (Ti. 1: 2). Our text mentions another: "conformed to the image of His Son" as the character of the saved. Jesus is our example (1 Pet. 2: 21). Being a Christian is not simply belonging to a church or having completed certain requirements. It is molding our lives to conform to Jesus' pattern, becoming partakers of the Divine nature (2 Pet. 1: 3, 4). In the resurrection, too, we will be like Jesus (1 Jn. 3: 2).

Why did God predetermine that we be like Jesus? "That He might be the first-born among many brethren." The first-born is a position of honor and preeminence. We glorify Him by changing to be like Him.

Calling

To be in Christ and to live like Christ requires a change. God invites us to make that change: "these He also called." He encourages us to come and enjoy His rich blessings. This "call" or invitation is made through the gospel (2 Th. 2: 14). Paul described it as an upward call (Ph. 3: 14), an invitation to something better.

God's calling can be rejected. Jesus told His disciples to preach the gospel to all creation (Mk. 16: 15). Everyone is invited in one sense. But He knew not all would accept. Those who do will be saved; those who do not will be condemned (v. 16). So in another sense, the called are those who accept the invitation. "Many are called, but few are chosen" (Mt. 22: 14).

Justification

"These he also justified..." God is calling sinners to be in Christ. The required change is so radical it is termed "conversion," the process of turning one thing into another. Some of this transformation is up to us. We must repent or turn from sin (Acts 17: 30). We must replace sinful practices with godly ones (Eph. 4: 17ff). But there remains the problem of guilt.

"Justification" refers to acquittal of guilt. God is graciously willing to pronounce us righteous, based on the sacrifice of Christ (Rom. 3: 24-26). We can never deserve that, but receive it as a gift. Obviously God does this only for those who accept His call. We are justified by faith (Rom. 5: 1), believing His promises and the power of Jesus' sacrifice. The question is, how do we

accept God's invitation? Or asked another way, at what point are we justified?

Here the Bible makes a play on words. "Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Rom. 10: 13). God calls us; when we call on Him we will be saved. We do not call on Him simply by saying "Lord, Lord" (Mt. 7: 21), but by following the terms of His invitation: specifically, confessing Christ and being baptized for forgiveness of sins (Acts 2: 38; 22: 16). Interestingly, it is that same act which puts us in Christ (Gal. 3: 27). Do you remember what God foreknew? That act is also a conformity to the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (Rom. 6: 3, 4). Do you remember what God predetermined?

Glorification

"These he also glorified." Earlier in this chapter Paul had written of our glorification (vv. 18-25). It is yet future, but is so certain it can be spoken of as already accomplished. "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory..." (Ph. 3: 20, 21).

Having enumerated the elements God brings together for those who love Him, Paul asks, "What then shall we say to these things?" Will you not say, "That's for me!?" Accept the gospel invitation today.

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*Published Monthly at
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Second Class Postage Paid at Brooks, Kentucky
and at an Additional Mailing Office
USPS-487-440

CONNIE W. ADAMS, Editor

Office of Publication
52 Yearling Drive
Brooks, Kentucky 40109
Phone (502) 957-2257

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Editorial

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THE NASHVILLE MEETING

On December 1-3, 1988, the Doubletree Hotel in downtown Nashville, Tennessee was the scene of a most unusual gathering. Institutional and non-institutional brethren came together to discuss their differences. Steve Wolfgang arranged for the non-institutional speakers and Calvin Warpula make the same provisions for the institutional speakers. Seven major areas were covered. They included a history of the division, establishing Bible authority, collective and individual activity, the work of the church, the relationship of the church to human organizations, cooperation of churches, and the question of fellowship.

The procedure was simple. A man from each side made a thirty minute speech. Each main address was followed by a fifteen minute reaction speech. Then moderators handled questions from the audience directed to specific speakers. Each session lasted three hours. Good order prevailed from the first to the last. The whole affair was really an extended debate. Speakers came well prepared. The attendance exceeded everyone's expectation. Crowds ranged from 500 to 800 on Friday night when we met at the Vultee church building. Each session at the Doubletree was overcrowded and many stood, or sat out in the hall, or in an overflow room where they could hear, but not see, the speakers. While there were many preachers present, it was not just a gathering of preachers. There were many interested men and women from a wide area.

Interestingly enough, the bulk of those in attendance were non-institutional, a remarkable fact in view of the fact that there are so many large institutional churches in Nashville and middle Tennessee. One local preacher of the institutional persuasion simply explained that most of our brethren are not interested in these issues — other things are much more important to them. "

There were some who were conspicuously absent, both in the audience and at the speaker's stand. Those men who write for THE SPIRITUAL SWORD, men like Roy Deaver, Thomas B. Warren, Alan Highers, Robert Taylor, Dub McLish and others who are generally regarded as more conservative among the institutional brethren, were not there. None of them consented to speak and they did not attend. These men are themselves being called "antis" by some of the institutional folks who WERE at this meeting. The above named men, and others who run with them, are generally contemptuous toward those they describe as "antis."

That within itself created a weakness in the program, for among the institutional speakers there was a wide difference on serious matters. Perhaps the two most conservative-minded speakers from the institutional side were Johnny Ramsey and Roy H. Lanier, Jr. I am sure they were personally embarrassed by some of the things said by speakers on that side. Yet, in fairness, it should be pointed out that each speaker came to represent only himself.

This was the first time many in the audience had listened to one from the other side in an orderly presentation of what he believed and why. It was an eye-opening experience for many. We heard many strange things from the institutional speakers. There were decided hints of rank modernism in speeches by Richard Rogers of El Paso, Texas and Bill Swetmon of Plano, Texas. Both denied that the New Testament provides a pattern for the church. Brother Swetmon amazed us with the news that the canon of the New Testament was not settled until 400 years after Christ. We were told by him that we "need a new hermeneutic" for this age and that the old idea of having a command, approved apostolic example or necessary inference to authorize what we do, is not valid. Lewis Hale of Oklahoma City was more conservative and made the same kind of arguments which we have heard in debates on these matters for the last thirty-five years.

Randy Mayeux, who preaches for the Preston Road church in Dallas (where Roy E. Cogdill preached many years ago) was even farther out in left field. He spoke of the New Testament responding to the "felt needs" of men and said it was never intended as a code of doctrine. He made one reference to the "eucharist" and defended gymnasiums, or whatever it takes to get people to come and hear about Jesus. Calvin Warpula said Jesus is the pattern for the church and that whatever Jesus did, surely the church can do. Keith Sharp pointed out that Jesus lived and died under the law of Moses which included instrumental music and showed that on that basis we could use that now.

While my assessment may be regarded as biased by some, I thought the non-institutional speakers did good work in setting forth the basic causes of our differences and contending for the old paths. Some feared that such a meeting would tempt some to compromise the truth. I do not believe that any objective observer would reach that conclusion. This meeting differed from the Arlington meeting of 1968 in that on that occasion, only the participants were present. This time, anyone who wanted to hear it was welcome and questions were received from the audience at each session.

What Good Did It Do?

I do not expect to see any spectacular results from this gathering. It is painfully evident that the differences between us are far greater than they were thirty years ago when churches were dividing. If anyone thinks we only differ on sending a check from the treasury to an orphan institution or to some sponsoring church, this meeting surely dispelled that notion. The differences are vast. There will continue to be individuals who will come out of these churches, and occasionally, a congre-

gation with turn around. In the last few years there have been several preachers to leave the ranks of the institutional brethren to stand for the truth. I have worked with several the last two or three years and have met others in our travels over the country.

There were a number of young men and women who attended this meeting who were not involved in the division. They have grown up since that time and had no acquaintance with brethren on that side. I don't know how many we heard express their surprise, and even shock, at some of the things they heard. They came away with a deeper appreciation of the truth. Some of the younger generation have thought that had some of us been kinder and shown more love and understanding, the division might not have happened. This meeting showed the fallacy of that. Truly there is a great gulf between us.

Those who attended this meeting should have come away impressed with the urgency of speaking as the oracles of God and determined not to let this happen again. And it can, you know.

The only way for us to have unity is for all of us to "walk by the same rule" (Phil. 3: 16), respect the example of the apostles (Phil. 3: 17) as we practice what was "received" from them (Phil. 4: 9). We must all be willing to "walk in the light as he is in the light" (1 Jno. 1: 7). We must speak "as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4: 11). We dare not "go beyond the doctrine of Christ" (2 Jno. 9-11) and we cannot afford to "think of men above that which is written" (1 Cor. 4: 6).

There can be no unity with the folks who went out to form Christian Churches as long as the objectionable practices continue. Neither can there be unity with the institutional brethren as long as the practices which divide are still present. I cannot speak for others but I can speak for myself. There is not a single point of truth which is negotiable with me. I have never stopped loving those brethren who left the truth. I have always been willing to study, whether one-on-one, informal gathering or structured public discussion. Loving each other, was never the issue and is not at this late date. But I cannot, and will not, look the other way and pretend that church support of human organizations, sponsoring churches, church sponsored recreational activities, and now the issue of whether there is such a thing as pattern authority, and even the integrity of the scriptures themselves, are simply matters of opinion. Thirty years ago, the camel stuck his nose in the tent. Now he has moved in, hide, hump, hooves and all, and the institutional folks don't know what to do with him. The Nashville meeting made that abundantly clear.

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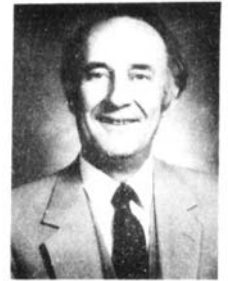
WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

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MARRIAGE AND CHILDREN

Question: *Does a married couple have a right to decide against having children?*

Answer: Marriage serves three purposes: (1) *Companionship.* "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him" (Gen. 2: 18). (2) *To avoid fornication.* "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband" (1 Cor. 7: 2). (3) *Procreation.* "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" (Gen. 1: 28, 9: 1; cf. 1 Tim. 2: 15; 5: 14). To ignore any one of these purposes is to thwart a God-given role of the marriage relationship.

Of course, marital responsibilities cannot always be met because of adverse circumstances. Companionship may be lost due to institutionalizing a mate who has become mentally or physically incapacitated. Conjugal rights may be denied because of biological impairment, and bearing children may be inadvisable due to the high risk to the woman's life because of poor health, or impossible because of sterility or past child-bearing age.

But the natural, God-given function for a married couple is to have children. Paul wrote, "I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house" (1 Tim. 5: 14). This is inspired counsel to prevent younger widows from falling into the danger mentioned in vs. 11-13.

It is normal to desire children. When Cain was born, Eve said, "I have gotten a man from the Lord" (Gen. 4: 1). She considered this a blessing from God. After the birth of Isaac, Sarah said, "God hath made me to laugh" (Gen. 21: 6). Leah rejoiced in her children (Gen. 29: 32-35). Rachel envied Leah and said to Jacob, "Give me children, or else I die" (Gen. 30: 1). Hannah prayed for a son (1 Sam. 1: 8) and Samuel was born. When the announcement was made to Zacharias that he and Elizabeth would have a son, the angel said, "And thou shalt have joy and gladness" (Lk. 1: 14). At the birth of John the neighbors and cousins rejoiced with Elizabeth (Lk. 1: 58). Yes, children are a great blessing sent from God.

To not want children is contrary to the tenor of Biblical teaching. To decide not to have children maybe indicative of selfishness, self-centeredness, a psychological hang-up, fear, an unhappy marriage or more interested in a career than home and family. The Psalmist wrote, "Lo, children are an inheritance of the Lord:

and the fruit of the womb is his reward... Happy is the man that hath a quiver full of them" (Psa. 127: 3, 5).

How many children a husband and wife should have, God didn't say. To contend that a husband and wife must have all the children they can is without scriptural warrant and to deny family planning is imposing a human regulation. God left this matter to our own good judgment.

LIFE IN THE FAST LANE

Martin W. Adams
8705 B North Pacific Ct.
Middletown, MD 21769

Once in a while, something happens. Perhaps I see someone act in a certain manner or perhaps something happens which reminds me in a personal way of a particular spiritual lesson. Yesterday such an event took place.

Since moving to Washington, D. C. five years ago I've seen, up close, political leaders of our government and others who wield great power and influence. One almost becomes calloused about such things and ignores them. So maybe this is why I was left unprepared for what occurred. Yesterday, I was invited by the pilots of the private jet for a "local" multi-millionaire to go for a ride in the jet to New York City and back. It seemed "the boss" wanted the crew to fly a veterinarian to New York to care for one of his thoroughbred race horses. The plane would be empty coming back. Needless to say I jumped at the chance. Some of you may not realize it but these jets aren't exactly Yugo's with wings. They cost millions of dollars. This particular one costs approximately \$3000.00 an hour just to operate.

Meeting the crew at the airport they took me aboard the aircraft and showed me around. It had soft leather seats (and couch), video/stereo system, gold-plated fixtures, and a small kitchen. I knew immediately I was in tall cotton. I felt like I had walked onto the set for one of Robin Leach's scenes of "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous." I sat up front with the pilots on the way up to New York while the doctors sat in the cabin being waited on by (you guessed it) the stewardess. With the airplane empty on the return trip I sat in the cabin all by myself and had a chance to imagine, to feel, and enjoy for a few minutes what it must be like to have more money than you can spend. It was quite a rush to say the least.

While surrounded by this luxury. I couldn't help but think about Jesus' teaching in Matt. 19: 16-24. I looked with new insight at Matt. 19: 24 which says, "It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." As I sat with my hands on the gold-plated arms of my seat I wondered if I would not have had the same reaction as the rich young

ruler did in vs. 16-22. The young man couldn't turn loose the power, the fun, the security he felt he received from his earthly treasures. Oftentimes, it is hard to understand a lesson of Jesus' until you're in that position. I was awarded just an imaginary peek and what I saw scared me to death. How easy it would be to clutch these beautiful things so tightly so as not to let go. Oh, we say we can give up what we have for Jesus but few of us have real wealth of great degree to release. What a blessing it is that God holds back these temptations which for many are too great to overcome. It must be said however, that wealth is relative. James shows the proper outlook from both sides of the "coin" in James 1: 9-11, "But let the brother of low degree glory in his high estate: and the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. For the sun ariseth with the scorching wind, and withereth the grass; and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his goings." Emphasis on one's physical goods instead of one's spiritual will condemn an individual whether the pile is large or small.

One of the pilots said of the owner of the jet that he treats it like it was his own "magic carpet." I suppose that is a fitting description. But there is one place into which no man can buy entrance, and that is heaven. There is no magic carpet to carry you there. You must walk it step by step just as all other saints have done. Don't be distracted by things that glitter by the roadside. Paul said it best in Phil. 4: 11 — Learn to be content. Your physical situation is only temporary, but your spiritual one is eternal.

After our landing in Washington, I walked off the plane (I wonder if anyone saw me?) with my head in a spin from my jaunt in the "fast lane" of society, yet knowing a little more about some lessons of Jesus and a little more about myself. On the drive home, I felt happy. It had been an exciting trip. The feeling of sitting there among all that wealth was awesome, yet it had no substance to it. I felt no envy for Mr. Firestone. I felt happy because I was content with what I have. Contentment and peace of mind, now that's something worth holding on to tightly. I hope maybe now you feel that, too.

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(2 Cor. 5:9)

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MUST ONE BE A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST TO BE SAVED?

You have probably either asked or been asked the question "Do you really believe that a person has to be a member of the church of Christ in order to go to heaven?" Whether you were asking or answering, you found that answering the question wasn't the real problem. The real difficulty was in swallowing the answer that was given. The religious world in general cannot imagine that the Bible could answer that question in the affirmative. Part of the problem is in understanding what the church really is.

The Standard

The first thing we must do is agree upon a **standard** of authority to answer the question. We never will come to any agreement until we use the same standard. Thus, our first concern is expressed in the words of Peter who said, "Lord, to whom shall we go?" (John 6: 68). To whom shall we turn for an answer to our question?

We must **NOT** turn to: (1) **The ideas of men.** The philosophy of some man is of no avail in that God said "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways... For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55: 8-9). (2) **Our own thinking.** My own human reasoning will not be sufficient for "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14: 12). (3) **Parents and family.** One of the first responses to any suggestion that one must be a member of the church of Christ is that if that is so then that would mean that a mother or grandmother would be lost. Since no one likes to face the fact that a close relative will be lost in hell, he or she rejects Biblical statements in favor of family members. However, the one who wishes to be a disciple of the Lord must love the Lord **more** than father or mother (Matt. 10: 37).

Our standard must be the **word of God.** Peter went on to say "thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6: 68). John suggested that we determine whether a man is speaking truth or error by whether or not what he says agree with what has been revealed unto the apostles (1 Jno. 4: 6). When this life is over we will be judged by the words of Christ (John 12: 48).

A Misconception

When one misunderstands what the church is he has a hard time seeing that it could be essential to salva-

tion. Many think of the church in terms of a **denomination**, rather than the body of the saved.

To refer to the church as a denomination or a group of denominations indicates several things. The word "denomination" suggests the idea of division or fraction. When asked by the bank teller "what denomination" she means what division of money (e. g. ones, fives, tens or twenties). Thus, the concept of denominationalism indicates (1) division is approved, (2) one division is as good as another (e. g. four fives are as good as one twenty and two tens are as good as twenty ones) and (3) there are no wrong choices (i. e. no one is going to condemn you for choosing the two tens instead of the four fives).

The same is true if the church of Christ is a denomination or a group of denominations. That would mean that **(1) all are divided with the approval of God.** Yet, Paul plainly stated that God does not approve of division (1 Cor. 1: 10; Phil. 2: 2; Eph. 4: 4). It would also mean that

(2) one church is as good as another, and (3) that there are no wrong choices (i. e. if one chooses to be a member of one denomination while another chooses another denomination, neither one has done any wrong). Furthermore, it would mean (4) that **the things that distinguish one church from another are of human origin.** If the things that distinguished one church from another were of divine origin, then one church would not be as good as another. Thus, in denominationalism the different names, doctrines and practices are of human origin.

If the Bible teaches that there is one church and that one must be a member of that one church, then the church is not a denomination as many want to believe.

One Church

The Bible could not be clearer on any point than it is on the matter that there is just **one** church. The apostle Paul said "There is one body" (Eph. 4: 4). What is the body? The same writer says that the body is the church (Col. 1: 18; Eph. 1: 22-23). Thus Eph. 4: 4 is saying there is one church! Oh sure, there are many churches like there are many gods and many faiths, but only **ONE** God is true and only **ONE** faith is true and only **ONE** church is true.

Jesus spoke of his church (singular), not churches (Matt. 16: 18). Paul said that all are reconciled in **one body** (Eph. 2: 16). Jesus is the one shepherd having one fold (John 10: 16).

The Church Is The Saved

If the church and those who are saved are one and the same, then obviously one must be a member of that church to be saved. The evidence is great that the church and the saved are one and the same.

1. The saved are added to the church (Acts 2: 47). Those whom the Lord saves are added to the church. Thus, the church is the saved.

2. Christ is the savior of the body (Eph. 5: 23). Remember, that the body is the church. Christ is the savior of the church. Thus, those whom Christ saves are in the church. There is no promise to save anyone out of the church.

3. The church was purchased with the blood of Christ (Acts 20: 28). If the church is not essential to

salvation, then the blood is **not** necessary either! However, if we are saved by the blood of Christ, then we must be in the church to be purchased or saved. If you purchase a pair of shoes for \$45.00, then any benefit you get out of the \$45.00 will be in the pair of shoes. Likewise, since the church was purchased by the blood of Christ, any benefit we receive from the blood must be in the church.

4. **"Ekklesia" is the Greek word that is translated by the English word "church."** Ekklesia literally means the **called out** (ek — out of; kneo - to call). Those in the church are those who have been called out of darkness into the light (1 Pet. 2: 9; Acts 26: 18), out of the power of Satan unto God (Acts 26: 18) and from sin unto the forgiveness of sins (Acts 26: 18).

5. **The church is the house of God** (1 Tim. 3: 15). A house is a family (e. g. the house of David - Luke 2: 3). The church then is the family of God. To be in the family of God, one must be in the church.

6. **We are saved by the blood of Christ in the one body.** Notice the parallel statements:

Redeemed — In Christ — Through The Blood (Eph. 1:7)

Made Nigh — In Christ — By The Blood (Eph. 2: 13)

Reconciled—In One Body—By the Cross (Eph. 2: 16)

From these passages I learn that we are **saved** (redeemed, made nigh and reconciled) by the **blood** (through the blood and by the cross). But, it is **in Christ** or **in the one body** that we are saved by the blood. One enters into Christ or the one body by being baptized (Rom. 6: 4; 1 Cor. 12: 13).

In view of the above who could deny that one must be a member of the church of Christ to be saved?

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SIMPLICITY IN CHRIST

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"THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED"

The entire system of Premillennialism hinges on the claim that God aborted his plans to establish the kingdom, because rebellious Jews frustrated divine preparations and prophecies relative to that kingdom. Such a claim not only contradicts the scriptures, but questions the wisdom, prudence, and power of God.

In fact, the scriptures were very emphatic in pointing out in detail how the Jews would reject Christ and his kingdom. Jesus himself knew that he would be rejected when he quoted from Psalms 118: 22 as recorded by Matthew (21: 42, 43). Peter later referred to the same prophetic passage (Acts 4: 11, 12). Isaiah also prophesied of such a rejection (Isa. 53: 3).

The truth is that the Jews would not have rejected Christ had he set up an earthly kingdom, for they tried to force him to become an earthly king (Jno. 6: 15). Jesus resisted their efforts, just as he shall resist similar efforts of the premillennialists to set up an earthly kingdom at some future date. The multitude (Lk. 19: 11), and the disciples also expected an earthly kingdom fashioned after the old Israelite kingdom (Acts 1: 6). Christ's kingdom is a spiritual kingdom, and "not of this world" (Jno. 18: 36). Both the weapons and the warfare of Christ's kingdom are spiritual (Eph. 6: 12, 2 Cor. 10: 4). And, it is just as ridiculous to suppose that a carnal battle, falsely described as Armageddon, would have anything whatever to do with Christ's spiritual kingdom.


Any good Bible student knows that God is perfectly capable of handling complicated political situations. At one stroke, God had a future heathen king anointed, along with a king for Israel and a prophet to succeed Elijah (1 Ki. 19: 15-17). At the same time, God was still monitoring the situation in the kingdom of Judah, and had plans for Egypt, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome. The idea that God would allow one small remnant of a rebellious, rejected nation to upset his plans concerning the kingdom is ridiculous indeed. The folly of such a notion is further accentuated by the total destruction of Jerusalem and the scattering of its inhabitants in the year A. D. 70. If the Jewish nation were influential enough around the year A. D. 30 to upset God's plans, why did they not influence his plans and prophecies concerning Jerusalem only forty years later?

God's ability to declare "the end from the beginning, "

to cause his counsel to stand and do his pleasure (Isa. 46: 10, 11), has been manifested at times and in ways too numerous to mention. "Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the Lord: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? saith thy God" (Isa. 66: 9). Yet, that is exactly the accusation which the premillennialist makes against God, saying that God was able to bring the kingdom to the birth, but not able to bring it forth.

There is only one way I can account for the rejection of Christ's spiritual kingdom by the Jew of the first century and the premillennialist of the twentieth century — a worldly-minded attitude that cannot discern spiritual things. Brethren likewise need to take heed when they question the sufficiency of the church to perform its mission, thereby questioning the wisdom and prudence of God (Eph. 1: 8).

**WAKE THE WORLD
AND TELL THE
PEOPLE**



Wilson Adams
891 Autumn Valley Lane
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**ANTIOCH — THE POWER OF THE
LOCAL CHURCH**

In order to study the New Testament church it is imperative that we study New Testament churches. We know about Jerusalem and the potent preaching on Pentecost. We have studied Corinth and seen in detail their triumphs and troubles. Thessalonica, Philippi, Ephesus, and Rome are likewise places about which we know a great deal. But there is another New Testament congregation that deserves our attention yet seldom receives it: Antioch. The place Paul and Barnabus called "home." The place God chose to be His strategic center for the spread of the gospel. The place that brings us face to face with the power-potential of the local church. Antioch. Our study continues...

2. The Antioch church made a commitment to teaching. After witnessing their enthusiastic response to the gospel (Acts 11: 19-21), Barnabus now arrives to encourage, edify and challenge these first generation believers.

And the news about them reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabus off to Antioch. Then when he had come and witnessed the grace of God, he rejoiced and began to encourage them all with resolute heart to remain true to the Lord; for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And considerable numbers were brought to the Lord (11: 22-24).

**A Commitment to Teaching Means a
Commitment to People**

Barnabus. His name meant "son of encouragement" and if ever a name was tailor-made, his was. This servant dedicated his life to lifting up others. From his financial sacrifice (Acts 4: 36-37), to his vote of confidence in one Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9: 26-27), and finally to his willingness to give a young preacher a second chance (Acts 15: 36-39), Barnabus was a giver. And now... he leaves the comfort and security of the Jerusalem church to work with a group of un-known pagan converts. It was a bold move. He knew it would be challenge. He knew there would be those who needed encouraging. He was right.

You don't turn to Jesus Christ from a morally depraved culture with generations of heathenistic tradition without carrying some baggage. The changes in lifestyle demanded by Christ were anything but superficial for

Foy E. Wallace Jr.
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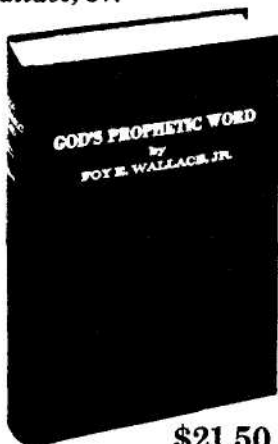
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these early believers (1 Cor. 6: 9-11). It would take a man of patience to work with these people. It would take one who knew the merit of complimenting positive progress as well as pointing out failures and areas demanding change. It required one who, while not wishing to squelch the enthusiasm of new-born believers, could balance the zeal with knowledge and instill within them a quest for continuance (Rom. 10: 2; Acts 11: 23). It would take a preacher who loved people. Barnabus did. He was the right man for the job.

People. Preaching is about people. Barnabus understood what we are prone to overlook. It's easy to view preaching as a mere 9 to 5 desk job that is best accomplished with minimal interruptions. Thus, people problems are often seen not as a part of the preacher's work but, rather, as an inconvenience and interruption to his work. Such is a far cry from the attitude of Jesus (and Barnabus!).

I'm not denying the need for prime-time studying (2 Tim. 2: 15). A preacher who doesn't study and prepare adequately for his lessons has about the same effect on a congregation as cold left-over meatloaf has on a family. It doesn't exactly generate enthusiasm for coming to the dinner table... There has to be a balance. Every preacher needs to learn that mastering the finer points of hermeneutics, restoration history, and Koine-Greek has its place but that place is not to act as a substitute for walking among the people and meeting their needs.

I heard of one preacher who remarked as to how much he enjoyed working where he did because **"I can sit in the study all day long and not be bothered by the brethren."** Can you believe that? Can you hear Jesus saying that? Our Lord's office was in the market place among the people. That's what set Him apart from the religious preachers of His day. That's what caused the common people to love Him. He was one of them. He was approachable. He was real.

Whoever advanced the "it's not good for the preacher to get close to the brethren" notion didn't get it from the example of Jesus (or Barnabus). (I've heard some dumb advice before but that's about the dumbest!) Nothing cancels out a preacher's effectivity any faster than that kind of thinking. We need to go back and study the work of the preacher as it was carried out in the first century. From it we learn two fundamental principles that we must never forget: (1) people are the only reason for preaching, and that (2) no one cares how much we know until they know how much we care!

Barnabus cared. The "son of encouragement" preached a message of encouragement (11: 23). He saw men and women leaving lives of sin and becoming transformed into new creations. He witnessed people trying to cope with the fast-lane lifestyle and seeking to take a stand for the one God in the midst of a contrary culture. They encouraged him. He encouraged them. **"And considerable numbers were brought to the Lord"** (11: 24).

The more I study Antioch the more I see a preacher-congregation relationship the way it ought to be. Often

we preachers miss out on one of the greatest joys of Christianity because we seek to keep the brethren at a distance. That's sad. Paul said of the beloved Philippians — **"For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart... For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus"** (Phil. 1: 7-8). It doesn't happen by accident. It requires sacrifice. It demands time. It takes patience.

I am convinced that there needs to be more said about this business of preaching and getting along with people. Many church-preacher problems cannot be avoided. But some can be. You see, it's not a matter of personality or charisma or a particular style in the pulpit that endears brethren to a man laboring among them but, rather, it is a knowledge based on observable action from his life that tells them that he really loves them. Paul said, **"I have become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some"** (1 Cor. 9: 22). Paul said, "I adjusted my schedule, went out of my way, and reached out to people... I built bridges instead of barriers." See the Ephesian elders as they wept and embraced the man who had worked so long among them (Acts 20: 36-38). They loved him. He loved them. And... they weren't afraid to show it.

Little things... It's often said that marriages fail not over big things but through the neglect of little things. The same could be said of preacher-church relationships. It's easy to take people for granted. It's easy to maximize faults. It's easy to forget basic courtesy and kindness. Sometimes we can find ourselves so detached that we're unable to "weep" and "rejoice" with our brethren. That's sad. More than that, it points to a serious flaw in our character.

I don't suppose I've done anything more important in my preaching work than a little practice I began a few years ago of sending a personal handwritten note to every member of the congregation (kids too!) at least once a year (usually on their birthday). A note of appreciation for a job well done. A note of admiration for faithfulness and zeal. A note of admonishment and challenge when spiritual things are lacking. "Hey, doesn't that take a lot of time?" You betcha! (And stamps, too!) But in my opinion it's time well invested. Besides... if you haven't stood at the back door after services and had a little five year old come by and grab your neck and give you one of those "moisturized" kisses and say, **"Thank-you brudder Adams for my birthday card..."**—you have yet to learn the meaning of "thrill." Little things.

A commitment to teaching begins with a commitment to and a love for people. A man can be equipped with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures and have the God-given truth on any subject and yet fail to be effective. Why? Because he fails to see himself as nothing but a servant among his brethren. Jesus said, **"If any one wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all"** (Mark 9: 35). Jesus lived the principle. Paul practiced it. Barnabus understood it. And I'm... well, I'm working on it. What about you?

PSALMS, HYMNS AND SPIRITUAL SONGS

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

The three synonyms, "*psalms, hymns, spiritual songs*" are each a specific kind of song. The word "*ode*," is a "**generic**" term which is an umbrella over all the **specific** kinds of vocal music.

Only one of these three synonyms, "*psalms, hymns, spiritual songs*" i. e., *psalms*, has any history of vocal music being accompanied by man-made musical instruments. The other two, i. e., **hymns** and **spiritual songs** have through all ages referred to purely vocal music. **Evolution of the Greek Word — Psallo**

In the Classical Age of the Greek Language, *psallo* was used to describe the "pulling of a whisker" or the "plucking of a bow-string." Eventually, this word came to refer to the "twitching or twanging" of the strings of a musical instrument.

By the third century B. C., the Greek Translation of the Old Testament, used the word *psallo* to refer to the singing of songs with instrumental accompaniment, such as had been practiced by David.

Still later, in New Testament times, *psallo* referred to a song that was vocal, and without man-made instrumental accompaniment. Eph. 5: 19 and Col. 3: 16 indicate that the emotions of the worshipper serve as that which accompanies the singing.

Psallo — Verb, "To Sing" — Psalmos — Noun, "A Song"

"*Psalmos*" is the word from which the Book of Psalms, takes its name. Related words include "*Psalter*," referring to all the Psalms as a collection. "*Psalmody*," has to do with the art or practice of singing sacred songs. "*Psalttery*," was an ancient stringed instrument.

"*Psallo*," is the act of singing and in the New Testament, was figuratively accompanied by the 'heart-strings' of the worshipper. Thus, in New Testament assemblies, every Christian was "*psallo-ing*" so to speak. In congregations that digress from the New Testament pattern of worship, the players-on-instruments or special choir-groups, take the place of total congregational worship in song.

Figures of Speech Used in the Bible — By E. W. Bullinger

In writing about the synonyms, "*psalms, hymns, spiritual songs*" Bullinger states:

"Although the first word, *psalmos*, implies musical instruments, it was only in Old Testament worship that these were used: not in the New Testament, nor in the Primitive Church. Basil, Ambrose, and Chrysostom all speak in panegyrics on music, but do

not mention *instrumental* music. Indeed, Clement of Alexandria, forbade the use of flute in the *Agape*, though he permitted the harp. Basil condemns it, and Justin Martyr expressly says that it was not used in the Christian Church.

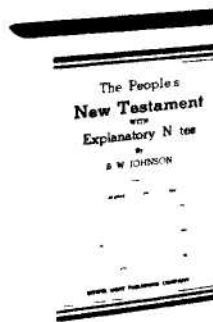
"There is no gift of God which fallen man has not misused, and indeed *diverted*, or rather *perverted* from its original design. The great enemy used it for the destruction of *spiritual* worship, under the guise of aiding it; and few discern the meshes of his marvelously clever snare. (Page 334).

Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words — W. E. Vine

Concerning the word "*kardia*" (heart), Vine writes" "... By an easy transition the word came to stand for man's entire mental and moral activity, both the rational and the emotional elements. In other words, the heart is used figuratively for the hidden springs of the personal life..." Pages 206-207. From the above quotations, it can be readily demonstrated that the 'instrument' that must accompany our psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, is the mind; the intellect; the emotions of the worshipper. Thus, figuratively, the Christian accompanies his worship in song, with joy in his heart! Nor do we have any Bible authority for substituting man's inventions in place of "the fruit of the lips."

Three verbs are involved in our song-service **speaking, teaching** and **admonishing**. A mechanical instrument of music cannot accomplish any of the three! While man's vocal chords, designed by God, can achieve each and all of the three!

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Anything that discredits Jesus Christ, departs from Biblical truth, and admits to no absolutes must be confronted and assailed with the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (Eph. 6: 17). Whether it be a written religious dogma invented and advanced by man; a worldly lifestyle; a misinterpretation of Scripture advanced by a brother; a philosophy or worldview; or a social movement — it shouldn't matter to the conscientious child of God. The high things of men that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God and the arguments that accompany those things must be cast down (2 Cor. 10: 1-6).

Today, in the society in which we live; in the circle of associations where we try to raise our children and preach the gospel, there is the burgeoning New Age movement. It is flourishing quickly, influencing young and old alike and making disciples of people from every level of society.

An urgent call to give heed to this danger and cast down these arguments needs to be sounded. For this is a view, an approach to life and a set of premises which discredits Jesus Christ, departs from Biblical truth, and admits to no absolutes!

In preaching and writing against the New Age movement over the past few years, I am often confronted with mild interest, and the incredulous question: "IS THIS REALLY A BIG DEAL? This is somewhat interesting, and it certainly isn't biblical. But do we need to preach and warn people about it?" Curiously, this inquiry often comes from gospel preachers who preach multiple — series type sermons against Calvinism, the Social Gospel, Situation Ethics, etc., but cannot see the need to deal with something equally false and perhaps more influential in the "Yuppie" segment of the population.

Here is a movement (an outlook, set of premises and practices being widely promoted) which is corrupting and subtle, with a non-religious billing, which pleads for some of the ancient errors and misdeeds Jehovah entreated the Israelites to refrain from (Isa. 2: 6; 8: 19, 20). The New Age movement stands on a course away from the Word of God, which says that IT IS NOW IN MAN THAT WALKETH TO DIRECT HIS OWN STEPS (Jer. 10: 23). It denies the basic distinction between humanity and deity; it places more value on crystals, reincarnation and visualization than faith, repentance and baptism. And the New Age gurus speak of Christ, Buddha and Edgar Cayce with the same esteem! So here is something that's happening right now, that discredits Jesus Christ, departs from Biblical truth, and admits to

no absolutes. Let every Christian "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them," (Eph. 5: 11).

What are the evidences of this widespread influence? What's going on in America that points to the reception and popularity of the New Age movement? Please take these ten evidences into account:

1. **THE GROWTH OF BUDDHISM.** There are now more than "1,000 Buddhist organizations in the United States," and "more than 4 million Buddhists in this country." This religion is rapidly discarding its cult image and gaining more respectability among "middle class" America. And "they believe there is no higher being than oneself..." (Houston Chronicle, Nov. 26, 1988, page #2E).

2. **CELEBRITY CREDIBILITY.** Early in 1987, ABC carried a mini-series called "Out On A Limb," starring Shirley MacLaine. It was an extended "plug" for New Age thinking; a docu-drama of her personal religious quest that led her to discover her divinity. Reincarnation is held by such notables as John Denver, Glenn Ford, Loretta Lynn and Sylvester Stallone. In Willie Nelson's autobiography, he tells of an unpleasant experience he had with a Baptist minister, that prodded him toward New Age beliefs. He preaches that "every atom in your body was once in a star, that life is continuous and nothing dies, and that the law of Karma... is as real as electromagnetism..." (Houston Chronicle, Nov. 3, 1988, page 2D).

3. **CORPORATE RECOGNITION.** "In July 1986, representatives of some of the nations largest corporations, including IBM, AT&T and General Motors, met to discuss how metaphysics, the occult and Hindu mysticism might help executives compete in the world market." (UNDERSTANDING THE NEW AGE MOVEMENT, by Russell Chandler, p. #148). Some of the young executives in our local churches are sent to seminars and workshops where meditation, New Age Capitalism and self-discovery sessions are common; and all of this under a non-religious billing!

4. **ENTERTAINMENT ATTENTION.** "Such films as CLOCKWORK ORANGE, ROSEMARYS BABY, THE EXORCIST, 2001, DR. STRANGELOVE, COCOON, and ANGEL HEART convey New Age themes and occultism," (UNDERSTANDING THE NEW AGE, Chandler, p. #22). Ted Turner says that America needs to elect a New Age president, if it is to survive through the year 2000 (Cited in Ronald Enroth, "The New Age Movement," Fundamentalist Journal, Feb. 1988, p. #49).

5. **FROM OUTER SPACE TO INNER SPACE!** Edgar D. Mitchell (Apollo 14 astronaut) established THE INSTITUTE OF NOETIC SCIENCES, in Sausalito, California, to study PSI, which means "phenomena that escape traditional scientific definitions," including telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition and psychokinesis.

6. **THE U. S. ARMY** commissioned a West Coast firm to "explore the military potential of meditation and extrasensory perception," (TIME, Dec. 7, 1987, p. #63).

7. **STATISTICS** (even with wide margins of error granted) indicate a growing interest in eastern relig-

ions, mysticism and other subjects and practices with New Age connections. According to an opinion research organization in Menlo Park, California, SRI International, about half of American adults (47%) now believe they have been in contact with someone who has died—"up from 27% in a previous national survey eleven years ago," (Chandler, p. #20). According to a 1982 Gallup Poll, 23% of Americans believes in reincarnation. Many believe this has increased since '82. As far back as 1978, a Gallup Poll indicated ten million Americans engaged in some aspect of Eastern mysticism.

8. THE PUBLIC HAS GROWTH MORE TOLERANT of psychic beliefs and practices. "... the nation's courts have increasingly called on psychics to use their reputed powers to weed out lying witnesses, pinpoint suspects, and locate missing bodies," (Chandler, p. #24).

9. IN RELIGION, some of the radio and television preachers reflect New Age influence in their doctrines. Kenneth Copeland says, "You don't have a God living in you; you are one," (Tape, "The Force Of Love," BCC-56). Robert Schuller, Charles Capps and Yong-gi Cho all teach doctrines which have connections to mysticism and Shamanism (contacting the spirit world through visualization and meditation methods, to gain super-natural powers, knowledge and inner healing).

10. IN EDUCATION, Dr. Beverly Galyean received a federal grant to use her Eastern religious methods in the Los Angeles Public Schools. She has said: "Once we begin to see that we are all God, that we all have the attributes of God, then I think the whole purpose of human life is to reown this Godlikeness within us... my whole view is very much based on that idea," (SCP Journal, Winter/1981, 82, p. #29).

Conclusion:

What religion really amounts to can be expressed in three questions: WHAT IS MAN? WHAT IS GOD? And HOW CAN MAN ENTER INTO FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD? The New Age movement says, "Man is god," and it is through some mystical, esoteric means (or costly seminar!) that you can look inside yourself, discover your divine essence, then join with other enlightened ones in the dawning of a New Age.

Let us tell everyone we can, THIS IS NOT GOD'S WAY! The truth to which we are committed is captured by the words of Jesus, when He said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (Jno. 14: 6).

The New Age movement — especially to those over 40—may seem like a big package of nonsense that grew out of the 60's counterculture. It may be easy for those in the older generation to dismiss the whole thing. But bring up some of these ideas and New Age premises with a group of High School students, and see what the response is? Discuss these things with some young couples, and see if they give it any credibility.

Let us take every challenge against truth seriously. For, anything that discredits Jesus Christ, departs from Biblical truth, and admits to no absolutes must be confronted and assailed by the sword of the Spirit.

CAN'T MAKE IT ON ONE INCOME

**John R. Gibson
1011 Waterside Dr.
Conyers, GA 70208**

In the March issues of **Searching the Scriptures** in both 1987 and 1988, Connie W. Adams had some excellent comments on the ever increasing problem of finding that mother is not at home. If you have not read those articles and have access to back issues I would recommend that you take the time to go back and read them. But even more than that I would recommend that you take your Bible and read Eph. 5: 22-33; Col. 3: 18f; 1 Tim. 5: 9-14; Titus 2: 3-5 and 1 Pet. 3: 1-7. Rather than allowing the thinking of this ungodly age to completely shape our views and values regarding marriage we need to make certain that God's word is the final word when it comes to home and family.

In this article I want to briefly examine the most common argument I hear being made for women not being "homemakers" who stay home to "manage the house." (Titus 2: 5; 1 Tim. 5: 14 NKJV) While a few sisters in Christ may admit that they have gone to work in order to find fulfillment, most make the claim that they would stay at home if they could. I frequently hear it said that "I would love to stay home with my children, but we just can't make it on one income." Is it really true that in the 1980s it has become impossible to live on one income? Have we reached a point where families with only one income cannot survive? Though there can be little doubt but that the feminist movement has wielded a tremendous influence on the thinking of Christians, it just may be that it is more the influence of materialism than feminism shaping our thinking regarding working women. Too many of us see it as impossible to make it on one income because we have become so materialistic in our thinking. Consider the following:

Are two incomes necessary to provide shelter from the elements? Two incomes are usually not necessary to provide adequate shelter, but a 2000 square foot house with 3 bathrooms in the "right neighborhood" often does require an extra income.

Do most families need a second income just to clothe their children? Not if they are content to outfit the children with something less than the most prestigious of labels. However, if one's children must wear the same brands as the children of the doctor down the street two incomes may become necessary.

Can adequate nourishment and nutrition be provided for the family with only one income? It all depends. Is the mother willing to take the time to clip coupons and comparison shop or does she insist on eating out several times a week? One may not eat a lot of steak and trips to Shoney's may be rare, but the honest person must admit

that one income will generally be sufficient to feed a family.

We could go on and talk about a host of other things like VCRs and more cars than licensed drivers, but I think that you can see the point. In the beginning I listed some verses for consideration, at this point I would like to suggest a few more for you. Please read Lk. 12: 23, 1 Tim. 6: 6-10 and Heb. 13: 5f. Brethren who believe that life's needs are met when food and clothing are taken care of will rarely be heard to say that they "just can't make it on one income."

I am not trying to suggest that everyone can live on one income, but I am strongly suggesting that most who speak of being **unable** to make it are in reality **unwilling** to say "having food and clothing, with these we shall be content."

CHURCHES COOPERATING IN BENEVOLENCE: GOD'S PLAN WILL WORK!

**Ron Halbrook
654 Gray St.
West Columbia, TX 77486**

It has been well said that God's plan will work if we will work God's plan. In the New Testament, God created local churches without additional layers of organization, without earthly headquarters, and without any kind of centralized agency to coordinate the work of the churches. Every church in every city selected local leaders called by several names to indicate their leadership function: elders or presbyters, bishops or overseers, and pastors or shepherds (Acts 14: 23, 20: 17, 28; Tit. 1: 5, 7). These terms do not designate separate offices but all refer to the same function of guiding a local church in its God-given work. No church was led by a single pastor, bishop, or elder, but two or more were always chosen. They were chosen according to strict qualifications given in the Bible (Tit. 1: 5-9; 1 Tim. 3). Special servants or deacons were also selected in each local church.

Paul wrote a letter "to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons" (Phil. 1: 1). Each church was independent and autonomous with its own elders leading, deacons serving, and other saints cooperating in the work and worship appointed by God for His people. There were no human organizations, bureaus, societies, archbishops, popes, presidents, councils, conventions, synods, presbyteries, zones, districts, circuits, or institutional ties of any kind between the churches or over them. No such organizational structures were authorized by Christ. All such councils and institutions impugn the perfection of God's plan for the local church and transgress the clear teaching of Christ. True churches of Christ follow the teaching of Christ (Rom. 16: 16; 2 Jn. 9-11).

Each local church is to do its own work of proclaim-

ing the gospel, helping Christians to grow spiritually, and supplying the emergency needs of destitute saints (1 Tim. 3: 15; 5: 16; 1 Cor. 14: 26). God's plan will work in every phase of the church's mission, including benevolence. **GOD HAS A PLAN FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH TO RAISE FUNDS FOR ITS BENEVOLENT WORK** "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him" (1 Cor. 16: 1-2). Each Christian gives according to his own ability and his own purpose of heart (Acts 11: 29; 2 Cor. 9: 7). God authorized no high pressure appeals, no tithes, no sales or suppers, no begging money from the unconverted world, and no collections on days other than the first day of the week. God's plan will work!

GOD'S PLAN TEACHES THE LOCAL CHURCH TO HELP DESTITUTE SAINTS. From its beginning, the church was taught to supply the emergency needs of destitute saints. The New Testament church did not extend benevolent aid to the unconverted world. This work was limited to "all that believed," "the number of the disciples," "the brethren," or "the saints" (Acts 2: 44; 6: 1; 11: 29; Rom. 15: 25). Christians who were lazy, unfaithful, or fallen back into sin were not helped from the treasury of the church (2 Thes. 3: 10; Ja. 5: 19-20). Faithful Christian widows who were destitute of all other means of support could be enrolled for regular benevolent care under certain conditions (1 Tim. 5: 4-16).

Christians on a personal, individual, daily basis are to "do good unto all men," but God did not plan the church as a general welfare agency to all the needy of the world (Gal. 6: 10). We must work God's plan, not change it!

WHEN CHURCHES ARE UNABLE TO CARE FOR THEIR OWN NEEDY, GOD HAS A PLAN FOR OTHER CHURCHES TO HELP. During a great famine, the disciples at Antioch sent "relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea... sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul" (Acts 1: 27-30). The church at Antioch chose its own messengers to carry its own funds to the elders where the needy saints lived. Several years later the saints of Jerusalem suffered an extended period of deep poverty. Many churches in other places raised their own funds, chose their own messengers, and sent the help needed so desperately (1 Cor. 16: 1-2; 2 Cor. 8-9; Rom. 15: 25-32).

No local church acted as the planning, centralizing, or coordinating agency for other churches and no other form of denominational machinery was created. Churches cooperated by sharing information and by each one sending its own funds to the needy churches. God's plan worked perfectly well!

CAN GOD'S PLAN WORK TODAY? Or, if local churches of Christ are to cooperate in benevolence today, must we pool and centralize our funds under "sponsoring" churches, man-made boards, and denominational machinery? After Hurricane Gilbert hit Jamaica and Mexico in mid-September 1988, the White's Ferry Road Church of Christ in West Monroe, LA set itself up as a centralized agency to collect funds from hundreds and thousands of churches in order to carry out relief work for them. The Richland Hills church in Ft. Worth and the Memorial Dr.

church in Houston, TX did the same thing. This violates God's plan for independent and autonomous churches to do their own work.

Many churches of Christ have followed God's plan by sharing information and sending messengers with help for brethren who suffered from the hurricane. The church of Christ in West Columbia, TX sent aid as did churches in Clute, Southern Oaks in Lake Jackson, North Freeport in Freeport, Herman St. in Humble, College Park in Deer Park, Park View and Southside in Pasadena, and others. None of the relief disappeared into the dark hole of institutional bureaucracy, but we received a direct report from our messengers and grateful letters from the brethren we helped. YES, GOD'S PLAN FOR CHURCHES TO COOPERATE IN BENEVOLENCE WILL WORK, IF ONLY WE WILL WORK GOD'S PLAN!

DENOMINATIONALISM

Norman E. Sewell
1932 S. Weller
Springfield, MO 65804

In the past year we all saw and heard or read about the things happening to Jimmy Swaggert. And there is no doubt that he sinned for he confessed it before his whole television audience. But Jimmy Swaggert's situation is not unique for other preachers in the public eye have sinned before him, and still others will sin. However, in the process of the news reports regarding Jimmy Swaggert and Jim Bakker we have been given a real view of denominationalism. I fear that sometimes I fail to teach as much about the nature of the Lord's church as I should; to show its organization and how different it is from the denominational world. But this situation is just too good to miss, for we can easily show the Lord's church as different from the denominational system.

First of all, what is a denomination? The word is sometimes used to designate a certain class or society of people who are called by the same name. But denominationalism is much more than just the fact that people wear a certain name. It is clear that those who followed Jesus in the New Testament wore the name "Christian," but they were not a part of any denomination. They were a part of the church that you read about in the New Testament, the church which belongs to Christ. The system we all saw in the news reports regarding Jimmy Swaggert is a denomination, because it is a class or society of people who all wear the same name, subscribe to doctrines and submit to an organization different from that in the Bible.

When it was first learned that Jimmy Swaggert had sinned, the matter was taken up by a group of men whose area of responsibility was the state of Louisiana.

And it appears that these men had the right (according to their by-laws) to suggest some kind of discipline for Jimmy Swaggert, or for any person who preaches for or is a member of one of their churches. Then, their recommendation was sent to Springfield, Missouri to the world headquarters of the Assemblies of God where the executive council was given the job of reviewing the situation, and deciding upon the recommendation of the Louisiana council. The executive council in Springfield disagreed with the Louisiana council and suggested much more severe penalties for Mr. Swaggert. They decided that Jimmy Swaggert should not be allowed to preach in one of their churches for at least one year. (Louisiana recommended three months), and that he be under probation for two years while undergoing rehabilitation. Where would we go in the Bible to find such penalties for sin? Who has the right to decide on such penalties and to enforce them? The truth is that in a denomination those who are in positions of power can do just about whatever they want because their authority, either to exist, or to function, does not come from the Bible but from their Constitution and By-laws. And apparently decisions made by their executive council and their superintendent are final and binding on the whole denomination.

Contrast all of this with the system so clearly revealed in the New Testament. The church which belongs to Christ has only one head, and that is Jesus. Paul wrote of this in his letter to the Ephesians when he wrote of God raising Jesus from the dead and setting Him at His own right hand, **"far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all"** (Eph. 1: 20-23). Jesus is the one who heads His church, and the rules He set in place are those given by the Father Himself. In a denomination, a man or a group of men head the denomination, with the power to set policy and make rules, even rules different from the Bible.

In denominationalism, the unit of the denomination is the local congregation. But in the Lord's church the unit is the individual Christian. This is made clear by Jesus in John chapter 15. Jesus said: **"I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned"** (v. 5-6). It is not denominations, or even local churches themselves that are the individual units of the church, but Christians, men and women who abide in Christ.

Further, in the Lord's church the only kind of organization found is on the local congregational level. There is no national or international, or even state headquarters. But on the level of the local church Jesus did give some rules. After Paul and Barnabas had returned from their first preaching tour they went back through the

cities where they had preached, **"confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed"** (Acts 14: 22-23). **Every church where men were qualified was to have its own elders or bishops.** And these men were limited to that church. Paul told the elders from Ephesus to **"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"** (Acts 20: 28). The "flock" over which they had been appointed was in Ephesus. This is the same as the language used by Peter when he wrote that the elders should **"feed the flock which is among you"** (I Pet. 5: 2).

View again the denominational system where there is an executive council able to make decisions about sin within a local church somewhere, and able to choose punishments not found in the word of God. But the Bible would place such responsibility in the hands of local elders, and even then they could not require something different from what God has already said about forgiveness of sins. When we begin to apply human wisdom and human rules to religious things we soon find that we are not the church found in the New Testament, but a full grown human denomination. And don't suppose that such cannot happen to us.

To be sure, many of those men and women, perhaps all of them, who make up the Assemblies of God are sincere people. And I don't mean to single them out from any of the other denominations, for all of them are of

men. But in any such system, when error is practiced it affects the whole of the denomination. But in the system of Christ, when one man or even one local church goes into sin, the rest of the Lord's people are not necessarily affected by it. And when some of our brethren begin to set one group of elders over more than one local church, or begin to function through the "sponsoring church" arrangement, we have the beginnings of the same denominationalism that we have seen so clearly in the news reports.

Let's shout out the news to all of the world who will listen that the church of our Lord is not a denomination and is different from denominations. We are not just a better church, or a better denomination; we are followers of Jesus, and the church that belongs to Him, and they can be too.

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PAUL WILLIAMS, P. O. Box 324, Eshowe, 3815 South Africa — Three were baptized in the work here while we were in the U. S. A. from July 28-October 26. Also, during that time, one young man was withdrawn from. Brethren in places we visited in the States made it possible to purchase a computer with all necessary equipment. This will enable me to put out quality tracts, reports, correspondence courses, and our teaching paper "Words of Life." My heartfelt thanks to all of you, and my prayer is that the use we make of this equipment will justify the expense.

BROTHER KELLY ELLIS GOES HOME

Brother Kelly Ellis ceased his journey among men on December 2, 1988, in an extended care facility in Stanford, KY. Kelly was born Sept. 3, 1913 to Charles Lee (April 18, 1874-June 6, 1960) and Lillie Bell (Oct. 22, 1874-April 19, 1956) Ellis. His parents were godly and righteous. They worshipped at the Sycamore church in Boyle County all their lives. Sycamore church was founded in 1840, and continues a thriving congregation to this day. Brother Charles Ellis, baptized in 1897, was a long time gospel preacher; he set before Kelly the

examples for life, and encouraged him to practice the truth. He saw in his father the same toils and sacrifices for the gospel which he himself made many times.

Kelly's wife, Claudia, preceded him in death just over a year. His way was more difficult after her passing, but he continued to serve in the Danville church and to preach in other places. He had preached the gospel nearly forty-five years. His home was in Danville during all this time. Through these years he taught in the school systems there, and was a bookkeeper for a local Ford Motor Agency. He would preach in an average of about 15 meetings annually. For many years, in later life, he served as an elder in the Danville church.

Perhaps, there has not been a man in the church in central Kentucky since the days of McGarvey who has had the wide respect and influence in the churches as Kelly Ellis. In most cases, preachers come into a city, stay short time and then leave. Kelly came to Danville and stayed. Though small in physical stature, he was a giant in spiritual matters and mental powers.

Kelly is survived by two daughters: Mrs. Dickie (Sue) Cooper of Stanford, KY, and Mrs. Mike (Betsy) Meadows, Cleveland, OH, and

several grandchildren. One brother and one sister also survive.

Funeral services were conducted Sunday afternoon at 2:00 from the Preston-Pruitt Funeral Home, Danville, by Earl E. Robertson and Steve Wolfgang. Burial was beside his beloved Claudia in the Buffalo Springs Cemetery, Stanford, Kentucky. — Earl E. Robertson, 514 S. Green St., Glasgow, KY 42141

STEVE WALLACE, P. O. Box 7257, APO NY 09012—There are now two more churches in West Germany, one in Wuerzburg, the other in Stuttgart. For information on the church in Wuerzburg, please write: Russell Roberts, Frankenstr. 17, 8702 Eisingen, W. Germany. For information on the church in Stuttgart: Robert Manaugh, Blankensteinstr. 17/1, 7141 Murr, W. Germany. Also the church that used to meet in Moerfeldon is now meeting in Gustavsburg near Mainz. For information on this church write: Greg Engel, Det. 12, 7 WS, Finthen AAF, GE, APO NY 09185. Feel free to contact this writer at the above address for any help I can give about the work in Germany.

CIRILO B. SUMABAL, Baybay, Leyte, Republic of the Philippines — Leyte Province is composed of 65 municipalities with a population of 3,000,000. The third largest city is Baybay where a congregation was started in 1977. Alberto D. Vivero is the preacher there. In 1978 a church was established in Barrio Ampihanon, 20 kilometers north-east of Baybay by the writer. In September, 1988 another work was established about 16 kilometers from Baybay. The writer, Seraphin O. Petallar and Ben Pitogo worked as a team. 11 obeyed the gospel. Now relatives of those saved are interested and studying.

Ten days later we moved to the town of Hilongos, Leyte, 53 kilometers south of Baybay, a town of 125,000 which was 100% Roman Catholic. Four families of professionals were converted and were joined by a brother from Pagadian City who had been unfaithful for 10 years. So, now there is a small congregation in that town. They are meeting in what was once the office for Philippine Air Lines.

TOM MOODY of South End church in Louisville, KY and **GERRY SANDUSKY** of Madison, Indiana, left on January 9 for six weeks of work in India. They were there last year for a similar period. These men, along with John Humphries, Jerry Parks, Bill Beasley and others, have done outstanding work there in training Indian preachers to work among their own people.

PREACHERS NEEDED

MERRITT ISLAND, FLORIDA: Small congregation with great potential is searching for a full time preacher. We can provide a nice house, 3 bedroom - 2 bath, and some salary. If interested please contact Jim Winton (407) 452-4762 or Cloyce D. Walden (407) 636-8255 or 636-4361. Our mailing address is: Merritt Island Church of Christ, P. O. Box 540591, Merritt Island, FL 32954

MT. WASHINGTON, KENTUCKY — We are in need of a faithful gospel preacher. We are 55-60 in attendance and can provide partial support, depending on the need of the person. We are located just outside Louisville, KY. We would like a mature man who might be elder material with strong personal work skills. You may contact Louis Miller (502) 538-7934 or Darrel Swift (502) 538-7182.

MT. STERLING, KENTUCKY — We are in need of a full time preacher for the Oak Hill church, located about five miles from Mt. Sterling. Attendance runs between 35-40. At the present time we can provide \$1200 a month in financial support. For more information contact: Arnold Smith, 604 Brentwood Dr., Mt. Sterling, KY 40353 (606) 498-1375, or Russell Ginter, Rt. 3, Mt. Sterling, KY 40353 (606) 498-3811.



WORSHIPPING THE LESSER GOD

You see it in many places over the country. On Sunday morning most of the audience arrives looking their very best. They appear to

be a people who have come to a special occasion which caused them to present themselves as respectfully as possible. But then, the same people (minus a few) come back that night looking as if the track meet just ended, or they just finished a softball game or tennis match. Why the difference? It put me to wondering if some suppose they are worshipping a lesser God on Sunday night. Now, don't get bent out of shape. Just think about it, that's all I ask.

SPEAKING A DIFFERENT LANGUAGE

At the Nashville meeting in December, one of the institutional preachers said of the non-institutional speakers "I don't understand what you fellows are talking about, we don't speak the same language." He was right. As brethren drift farther from the truth, their vocabulary changes. Every apostasy has demonstrated that. Titus was told to use "sound speech that cannot be condemned" (Titus 2: 7-8). When men make the change from gospel preachers to theologians, their speech is sprinkled with expressions garnered from more time spent in reading the philosophical and speculative musings of men than in study of the text of scripture. "Speak thou the things which become sound doctrine" (Titus 2: 1).

SUPPORTING GOSPEL MEETINGS

It is not unusual, when preaching in Canada, to have brethren come from 200-300 miles away to attend the meeting, some will make that trip two or three times during a week of gospel preaching. That happens a few places in this country, but not many. There are several metropolitan areas where there are a good number of congregations and where some of the ablest preachers of our time can be heard most any night from early spring to late fall. Yet, in many places, there are very few who will come from other congregations to encourage, to learn and to just be with other Christians. Our children need to know other young people from godly homes. They need to be exposed to the preaching of good men. But now, we have band, scouting, ball games, little league, camps, and you name it. Load up with the family and drive across town, or 40 miles away, to attend a gospel meeting? Don't be silly! We have no time for that stuff? Did somebody say something about confused values?

SWIFT PUNISHMENT

In a time when a murderer can take nine or ten years to exhaust all the legal ploys available, so that people have forgotten the horror of what he did, and the press has made a folk hero out of him, it would be good for presidents, governors, judges and lawyers to read what Ezra the scribe said: "And whosoever will not do the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether it be unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment" (Ezra 7: 26).

"DON'T WEAR FUR"

Fur is expensive, and for that reason, everyone cannot afford to wear it. But there is a movement under way now to discourage the wearing of fur because it will cost the life of an animal. To be deliberately cruel to animals is one thing. But to recognize that God made the animal creation for the use and blessing of man is not cruelty to animals. The Lord God made coats of skins, and clothed "Adam and Eve" (Gen. 3: 21). When will we hear activists admonishing people not to eat fish, or chicken, or pork or beef? Plants are also living things. Shall we ban the slaying of them, too? This whole silly business is the outcropping of evolutionary philosophy which reduces man to the level of the beast. God made man of a higher order and gave him dominion over the animal kingdom (Gen. 1: 28). Interestingly, some of the same activists concerned about the saving of the life of furry animals, are also loudmouthed advocates of abortion on demand. Save the chinchilla, but kill the human babies! What a crazy world!

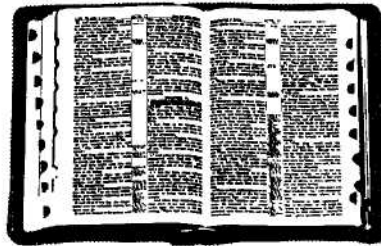
IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	225
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 XXX

MARCH, 1989

NUMBER 3

THINK ON THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 1631
Lutz, FL 33549



WHY WE DO NOT HAVE UNITY

To the discerning reader, it seems hopeless that brethren will find the unity of the faith with their approach to the word of God. I am not talking about matters of judgment such as whether to sing two songs or three at the beginning of public worship, or whether to have the Lord's Supper before preaching or after preaching. I am talking about obeying the authority of Christ in all things (Col. 3: 17). Some are urging that we must all agree that we cannot have unity on many things, therefore, we should accept each other as being faithful and true to Christ while holding our differences, and extend the right hand of fellowship to each other without qualification. This presents too many problems for all those who respect the authority of Christ. In this article I want to present the case as it really is and ask how we can accomplish true unity as required by the word of God.

There are many issues that well illustrate this hopeless effort at Bible unity. One is the use of instrumental music in worship. Presently, many are trying to generate fellowship between those who oppose the use of instrumental music in worship and those who use it. Those who do not use the instrument of music in worship take that position because they believe it is not authorized by scripture. They cannot in good conscience sing praises to God with the use of instrumental music. It is a matter of faith just like being immersed in water for the remission of sins. No other action for any other purpose is acceptable as scriptural baptism. In that

same sense no other music in worship to God is acceptable but vocal without any accompaniment.

The only possible way for unity to exist is for those who use the instrument in worship to give it up forever and sing only as public worship to God. Those who hold the position that instrumental music is acceptable to God, also say that they can sing acceptably without the instrument. Few if any contend that the instrument is essential to scriptural worship; they admit that they can scripturally worship God without the instrument. But all those who oppose the instrument of music in worship do so because they believe the instrument is sinful; it is without authority and thus not of faith. These cannot compromise their conviction without violating their consciences.

Now how can unity exist? We say that unity must be based upon God's word; that means that God's word must authorize its use by command, approved example or necessary conclusion. Not many argue that instrumental music is essential to scriptural worship — a matter of faith. The only conclusion that can be reached is that Bible unity is possible only when those who use the instrument of music in worship give up the practice and sing only psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, making melody in their hearts to the Lord. We know therefore why we do not have unity, and who is responsible for the divided condition. It is because those who use the instruments will not give them up for the sake of unity among brethren. This has been the case for over 150 years. It will continue to be the case as long as the instrument is used in worship to God. These are the very ones who are begging for the unity for which Christ prayed in John 17, and yet they are the very ones who are causing division, and perpetuating it by insisting upon the instrument in worship.

Those with whom I stand did not cause the division; we did not initiate any action or attitude that brought about the division. Unity was lost because the instrument was introduced in worship. To restore things as they were before the division, the instrument must be eliminated. When this is done, unity will exist as it was before the instrument was introduced. The only other way unity could exist would be for all to begin to use the instrument in worship, but then it would involve ALL in

the sinful practice because it is without divine authority, and such would cause many to offend their consciences by doing what they believe to be wrong.

All that I have said gets back to the standard of God's word as the only basis for that unity for which Christ prayed. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17: 20, 21).

Scriptural unity involves more than action; it involves attitude toward divine authority, the word of God, and the right respect for brethren in the Lord. Until the hearts of men and women are turned to the Lord and His word, they will walk in different directions and destroy the unity for which Christ prayed. When men are interested in pleasing God and not men, they will inquire what the scriptures say and abide therein. They will not add to nor take from the words given by inspiration. Only then will they walk by faith, and Bible unity will prevail. May God hasten the day when brethren will walk together in the light of God's eternal word. But until that day comes, division will exist because some will add to His word.

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VOLUME 30 MARCH, 1989 NUMBER 3

Published Monthly at
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Second Class Postage Paid at Brooks, Kentucky
and at an Additional Mailing Office
USPS—487—440

CONNIE W. ADAMS, Editor

Office of Publication
52 Yearling Drive
Brooks, Kentucky 40109
Phone (502) 957-2257

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Editorial

Connie W. Adams

P.O. Box 69
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PRINCIPLES OF TRUTH AND MEN OF HONOR

The November, 1988 issue of CHRISTIANITY MAGAZINE, contains a three page article by Ed Harrell entitled "Homer Hailey: False Teacher?" In it, brother Harrell laments what he calls "the personal attack on Hailey" and offers what he calls "my personal defense of Homer Hailey as a man who has earned the respect and esteem of the Christians of our time." He further states "I confess that the recent personal attacks on him seem to me to be an unheroic assault on an 85-year-old warrior." Other statements in the article seek to explain why brother Hailey has been held in such high esteem for so many years and judges him to be a man of integrity with a "devout desire to please God."

Focusing the Issue

If anyone has made an "assault" on the character of Homer Hailey, or challenged his integrity, I have been kept totally in the dark about it. We have all benefited by his study. The integrity of Homer Hailey is not in doubt. If you read only what brother Harrell wrote about this you would think that the most ungracious comments had been made about brother Hailey, as a man. That is absolutely false. In the process of defending brother Hailey from personal attacks, which have not, in fact, occurred, brother Harrell has seriously indicted the character and motives of those who have questioned Hailey's teaching on whether or not an alien sinner is subject to the law of Christ, and the ramifications of that doctrine in terms of the marriage and divorce issue. Some have expressed the opinion that those who have written about brother Hailey's teaching on this subject are "politically motivated." I deny that and call for the proof, if anyone thinks he has it.

As I pointed out in an editorial in this paper in September, 1988, many of us have known for many years that brother Hailey held a view on this subject which a great many believe to be false, the present writer included. So far as we knew, he did not seek to press this view to the disturbance of churches and it was more or less a "study point" which he has always been willing to discuss with any interested enough to ask. But in a meeting at El Cajon, California, he preached on the subject during a gospel meeting. Later he was involved in a disturbance over this question at Belen, New Mexico. A letter from him, which we published in our January issue, is his account of what took place. Much has been made of the argument that this was just a private meeting with a few people and not a "whole

church" affair. But the whole church suffered from it. People involved in questionable marriages left the church in the aftermath of this dispute and remained in their condition martially. The brethren thought the matter serious enough that they invited another brother to come in and review what brother Hailey had taught. Having preached on the subject (brother Hailey made reference to that in his remarks at Belen), and then having stated that he would become more outspoken on the subject, it was in order to take him at his word. His letter indicates that he does not intend to press the matter at this present time, but that was not the indication from what he said at Belen.

A Doctrine With Serious Consequences

While brother Harrell says he opposes the position taken by brother Hailey, he has nonetheless rendered a great disservice to the cause of truth and right by making the issue a man and his integrity. Brother Hailey is a man. All of us know he is a man who wants to do right and who acts out of sincere motives. I will defend his character as quickly as anyone else. But he espouses a doctrine which argues that the alien sinner is not amenable to the law of Christ, therefore, God's marriage law does not apply to him, and should he have been divorced and remarried a dozen times without fornication as the reason, he can obey the gospel and continue to live in the same relationship as before. Or, if a believer is married to an unbeliever and the unbeliever leaves the believer, because of his or her faith, then the believer is free to marry for the simple reason that the unbeliever was never under law to Christ in the first place.

I believe this to be the most serious doctrinal issue since the premillennial and institutional controversies. If true, then the mission of the church is invalidated. What is the point in preaching the gospel to those who are not subject to it? The work of every gospel preacher is an exercise in futility.

Here is where the doctrine becomes entangled with another serious fallacy: the false and arbitrary distinction between gospel and doctrine. It is argued by some that you preach gospel to the alien and teach doctrine to the Christian. Thus, the gospel is not actually a part of the law of Christ. It is upon this basis that the question of fellowship can be placed on a par with eating meats (Rom. 14), the wearing of a covering, and military service. We have our disagreements over these and other questions, but they are, after all, just "doctrinal" differences. Ketcherside, Fudge and all who took that path were wrong in making such an arbitrary distinction and then using that as a broadened base for fellowship with the Christian Church, institutionalism and you name it. Romans 14 was bent out of shape and more things were pressed into it than the Lord ever intended.

We are mixing oranges and apples when we decide that remaining in an adulterous state is in the same category as whether or not to wear a covering in the assembly. Paul did not believe adultery was to be tolerated in the church at Corinth and taught as much in 1 Cor. 5. But, mark my word, brethren, before all this is done, you will discover that the doctrinal base for such

advocated tolerance, is this false distinction between "gospel" and "doctrine." That has already been injected into the controversy over this marriage question among the liberals. It has been involved in the published debate between McClish and Billingsly on "The Amenability of Alien Sinners To The Law of Christ" and in the exchanges between Thomas B. Warren and James D. Bales. The gospel of Christ IS the doctrine of Christ and the doctrine of Christ IS the gospel of Christ.

Rampant Factionalism

Brother Harrell argues that "doctrinal unanimity... does not, and probably cannot, exist." Question: Is it impossible for all to know and practice truth on this subject? He then spoke of military service, marriage ceremonies in church buildings and head coverings and warns about branding as false teachers any who disagree with us on such subjects and says this will lead to "rampant factionalism." But the subject here is the doctrine of whether or not the alien sinner is subject to the law of Christ. Is it "rampant factionalism" to contend that the alien IS under law to Christ? Is it "rampant factionalism" to point out the consequences of this doctrine? Brethren, it is a false doctrine fraught with frightful consequences. Is it "rampant factionalism" to insist that those who seek congregational fellowship be people of upright moral behavior who, in true repentance, severed themselves from whatever sinful relationships they formerly occupied, whether drunkenness, thievery or adultery?

Differences on the Question

Yes, it is true that brethren over the years have differed touching several points on the issue of marriage, divorce and remarriage. Brother Harrell referred to the exchange which we carried in this paper between H. E. Phillips and Marshall E. Patton. It is certainly true that they differed in application on one aspect of this subject. But both of them stated their objections to any notion that the guilty party has any right to remarry, and to the view that the alien is not under law to Christ. They both contended that fornication is the only scriptural cause for divorce and remarriage, whether we are speaking of aliens or Christians. Neither of them took a position which eventuates in nullifying the Great Commission, rendering useless the evangelistic effort of every congregation and nullifying the work of every preacher of the gospel. Those who hold this view may deny the acceptance of these consequences, or the foundation stone of a false distinction between "gospel" and "doctrine," but they logically follow as the night follows the day. Others may proceed as they think best, but I intend to press these consequences wherever this doctrine raises its head. My quarrel is not with any man, on a personal level, but with the doctrine being taught.

A Danger

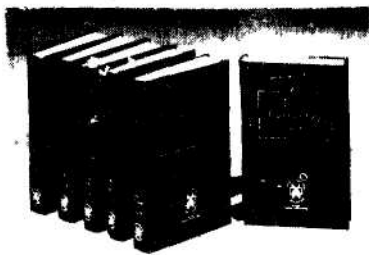
Brethren, it is right for us to give "honor to whom honor is due." But it is a dangerous thing to reach the point that we cannot call in question the public teaching of any brother, regardless of how much good he has done and how much he is respected. We must not "think of men above that which is written." It is also in order to point out that great respect places great responsibility

on those who preach. All of us are going to answer for the influence we wield in teaching others. Because a brother may become "a legend in his own day" does not exempt him from facing the consequences of what he teaches and the effect it has on the lives of Christians and the fortunes of congregations.

On Fellowship

If we will all preach the truth as plainly as we can, expose error for what it is, and call the teachers of error to account, then those who love the truth will hold up our hands and stand with us and those who do not want the truth will oppose us. The fellowship will sort itself out, if we will let it. "I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts" (Psa. 119: 63). The fellowship of the people of God is a precious thing. None of us should teach or practice anything foreign to the truth which would endanger it. But we must not choose sides over men, even admittedly the best of men. Doctrines are advanced by people, and people have names. But this dispute is not about one good man and whether or not his integrity has been challenged; it is about principles of truth and right. We must keep the issue clearly focused. Are alien sinners under law to Christ? If they are, then those who teach otherwise are teaching a false doctrine, regardless of how much we esteem them. If they are not, then those of us who teach that aliens are amenable are wrong, regardless of how well respected any of us may be. "What saith the scripture?"

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ANTIOCH — THE POWER OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

Acts 11: 19-26 introduces us to the newly established church in Antioch of Syria. It wasn't easy being a Christian there. Living in the midst of a mega-population center known for its corruption and crime was a terrific challenge to these young believers. The perils of persecution were to be faced daily. But they were there and they were committed!

Christianity wasn't stale to the Antioch disciples. They didn't take it for granted. They certainly weren't Christians because their parents were "church of Christ" (as in: "He's a 'church of Christ' preacher." Do you cringe when you hear that, too? It affects me about like fingernails scraping across a blackboard. Sorry...) These Antioch saints understood what it meant — the commitment, the challenge, the pressure. And, so, armed with the knowledge that tough times follow those who follow Jesus, they climbed out of the pit of paganism in order to live on a higher plane of illuminated light in Jesus Christ. Thank God for their courage!... and their inspiration to us.

2. The Antioch church made a commitment to teaching. After seeing last month that **a commitment to teaching means a commitment to people**, we now turn our attention to the second phase of their teaching program found in verses 24b-26:

And considerable numbers were brought to the Lord. And he (Barnabus) left for Tarsus to look for Saul; and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. And it came about that for an entire year they met with the church, and taught considerable numbers...

A Commitment to Teaching Means a Commitment to Excellence

The church at Antioch knew what some today fail to appreciate: A successful, growing, and strong church becomes that way by making an all out effort and no holds barred commitment to excellent Bible teaching. No half-heartedness here. No room for mediocrity among these people. They served a risen Savior and were dedicated to giving Him their very best. Excellence, nothing less.

Antioch was committed to quality teaching. And just what is "quality teaching?" It has nothing to do with style, or mode of delivery or a preacher's personality. On the other hand, it has everything to do with a love for the Book, an earnest plea to adhere to divine truth

and a teacher who will himself seek to live up to the standard he proclaims. It's a longing to give all you have in the pulpit, in the classroom and in every teaching situation. It's a burning passion to do your VERY BEST with the talents and opportunities that God presents. The bottom line: it's an **attitude** — an attitude toward God, His will, and the lost. "Quality teaching." It's what gave a solid foundation to a new church. It's what will strengthen any church.

Paul came. The opportunities in this mega-population center were endless. Originally a "large number" had turned to Christ (vs. 21) and now "considerable numbers" were being added (vs. 24). Barnabus could see the vision of future possibilities if only he had more help. Verse 25 reads, "And he left for Tarsus to look for Saul."

Why Paul? (referred to as "Saul" until Acts 13: 9) (1) **First, Barnabus knew the kind of man Paul was.** Back when Paul had first arrived in Jerusalem it was Barnabus who reached out to welcome the man nobody wanted (Acts 9: 26-27). Barnabus believed in Paul. He knew that his commitment was strong and that God's truth would be upheld at all cost. He knew that Paul would give the Lord and the work at Antioch all he had. **Second, Barnabus knew that Paul had been divinely appointed to preach to the Gentiles** (Acts 9: 15). And if ever an opportunity presented itself for the apostle to set in motion his mission, it was Antioch.

Look again at 11: 26. What a year that must have been! Barnabus (the encourager) and Paul (the apostolic teacher) working in tandem in a two-preacher arrangement with the result being an opportunity to teach "considerable numbers" (vs. 26).

A Twentieth Century Application

For a congregation of Christ to succeed in the eyes of God in 1989 (or, for that matter, anytime), it must get serious about the business of TEACHING! "Considerable numbers" weren't brought to the Lord in Antioch by accident. It happened because they worked hard and made quality teaching their top priority. We must do the same.

But there is a point to be made concerning teaching that I'm afraid has been overlooked at times. It has to do with (now how can I say this?) **how** we present the gospel. (It's the old adage that if something is worth doing, it's worth doing RIGHT!) Do we present God's message as **the most important message in the world deserving our very best effort at communication** or... do we treat it as a half-hearted hobby that warrants only mediocre commitment? Tough question. Let's get specific.

I had the occasion not long ago to visit a well established church in a rather large city. I left with a feeling in my mouth similar to the one I get when I've eaten one of those onion-laden hamburgers from the corner fast-food place (you know—the feeling that you could scrape the grease from the roof of your mouth!) The exterior of the building was shabby. There were more weeds than grass and it looked as if the bushes hadn't been trimmed since Eisenhower was in office. The interior wasn't any better. The yellow paint was now beige and peeling. The smell reminded me of my grandfather's old storage shed

and I thought at first I had entered a museum of early American cobwebs. The tracts in the rack had obviously been there for a very long time and each was yellow (not their original color). The classrooms were no better and looked more like a broom, paint, and trash collection center than a place of learning. And, by-the-way, who was collecting all those wrinkled up periodicals in the corner? Grot the picture?

Listen up folks: WE REPRESENT THE KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS AND WE HAD BETTER DO OUR VERY BEST IN PRESENTING HIS MESSAGE. We need to:

1) **Take a look at our classrooms.** Are they bright and cheery places with appealing decor generating an atmosphere of warmth or are they rooms of cold storage? (If my child's schoolroom looked like some of the Bible classrooms I've seen I wouldn't stand for it. Would you?) And by-the-way, some of the ones I've heard say we can't afford better sure have nice stuff at home and in the driveway. It's a matter of priorities.

2) **Take a look at our teaching aids.** Are we using materials that are outdated and stale? Do our film strips, tracts, and other teaching tools look fresh or do they carry that "nostalgic" look? Check into the possibility of purchasing a video system for the church to use in its teaching program. Many materials are now available on video tape including Norman Sewell's series for the non-Christian as well as Rodney and Carla Miller's series on teacher-training. More things are becoming available as time goes on.

3) **Take a look at our church buildings.** Do they have that "nobody's home" and "nobody cares" look or are the grounds kept and the appearance clean?

4) **Take a look at our advertising.** Are our meeting announcements well laid out? Does the bulletin have "eye-appeal?" Have we done our very best?

5) **Take a look at our services.** Are things done decently and in order? Do we start on time? Do the men who wait upon the congregation do so with an air of respect for the occasion? Do the services tend to be long drawn out endurance contests or periods of spiritual refreshment?

What I am attempting to say is that while the message must NEVER be tampered with, updated or changed, the way that message is presented and ultimately perceived by the world needs to be reviewed. Do we present the greatest message in the history of man with only a half-hearted attempt at mediocrity or are we committed to excellence in the proclamation of His Good News? That's the point.

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MAY A CHURCH DRAW INTEREST?

QUESTION: *Can a church take money given by it's members for the Lord's work and buy C. D.'s or other forms of interest bearing offerings? If so, what is the difference in that and investing in a business and running it for profit?*

ANSWER: The Bible teaches how the church is to raise money (1 Cor. 16: 2), but it does not specify how to hold or keep it. Obviously, we would want safety and security for the treasury. Churches generally use banks to keep their contributions. This is much safer than in a safe at home, or in a sugar jar or coffee can. It is also more expedient as banks offer checking accounts.

But mainly the querist is asking about C. D.'s (Certificates of Deposit) and other forms of interest bearing deposits. The C. D.'s would be just as Scriptural as the Savings Account or the Checking Account as far as a depository for the money. The issue is a question of a church drawing interest. Of course, if a church may receive interest on one kind of account, it may receive interest from another kind.

A congregation turns thousands of dollars each year over to a bank, which in turn loans the money out for profit. This is the bank doing this, not the church. The bank simply guarantees the money and it pays a small interest rate for the use of the money. The interest simply helps offset the inflationary spiral so that the money deposited has close to the same buying power when it is withdrawn as it did when deposited. Certificates of Deposit do have a higher yield, but they must be left in the bank until maturity or there is a penalty for early withdrawal. C. D. s might be practical under peculiar circumstances, like a building fund.

A congregation who refuses interest on its money may actually lose money as far as its buying power. Why is it right to lose money value, as some reason, but wrong to draw interest in order to have the same value when withdrawn? Such thinking is fallacious and irrational in my opinion.

Motive or purpose is involved in this controversy. Certainly, the church may not go into business in order to make a profit, nor invest its money for the purpose of enhancing a bank account. Money raised by the church is through free-will offerings by the saints on the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16: 2). But there are special circumstances where there is no intent or purpose to raise money contrary to the Scriptural procedure stated in the

New Testament.

A church may sell its meetinghouse for double or triple the amount it cost to build it in order to build a new one. A large tract of land might be willed to or given to a congregation and the church may want to sell part of it or all of it, gaining possibly hundreds of thousands of dollars. A down-payment may be put on church property by a business establishment, say for \$2000, to hold it for three months. But the business decides not to buy, and forfeits the down-payment to the church. Alien sinners many times contribute on Sunday when they are present at worship. Other examples could be given but these suffice to show that money is received in additional ways by the church than just through contributions from its members.

If a church began buying and selling property to raise money or soliciting alien sinners for contributions, then the purpose is evil and a divine principle would be violated. I don't know anybody who prohibits an alien sinner to give into the collection basket (this would necessitate barring all aliens from our Sunday services), or refuses to take land that is willed (or given) to the church, or sells church-property for what it originally cost and not current market value. If we can realize money from these special circumstances, then we can accept interest given to us by a bank. The bank says, "We are giving you 5 percent on your money," and wisdom, it seems to me, teaches us to accept it on the same basis we accept a tract of land that is donated by a generous person, or the forfeited money on a down-payment. It is strange that we can take money from an alien sinner, land from a beneficent person and a forfeit from a business, but we cannot take interest given to us from a bank. What have we got against banks?

All Christians are stewards of God (1 Cor. 4: 2; 1 Pet. 4: 10). Elders are stewards (Tit. 1: 7) as the overseers of the church, including its work and resources. They would be remiss in their duty as caretakers if they were not prudent in the financial transactions of the church.

Let's say a congregation has a building fund with the intention of building in five years? Where do the elders put the money? If there are \$50,000 and the elders refuse interest, then they have relinquished several thousand dollars to the bank and diminished the buying power of the money. For all practical purposes, the church has indirectly donated those thousands to the bank. Is this good stewardship? I think not! It is about like the one talent man who hid his talent in the earth (Matt. 25: 24-27).

Some congregations love their bank accounts, but if we would be more involved in the spending business to preach the gospel, and less involved in the saving business, we would not have near the problem of whether it is right to draw interest, be it from C. D. s, Savings Account or Checking Account. I venture to say that there are likely millions of dollars lying in the banks in the accounts of churches of Christ that are being saved for that "rainy day" or "emergency" which will never come in most cases. The Lord may come before our imaginary exigency occurs. The emergency is now; men are dying daily unprepared to meet God.

I have no qualms with a "cushion" or operating fund, but too many of these "cushions" have become excessive and exorbitant amounts, far beyond the needs of the operation of a local church. Too, a church inherits a large amount of money or it sells a tract of land for thousands of dollars, and several months, or longer, are needed to dispense the money in a responsible manner. I have no problem with this.

This question of churches drawing interest is a "sticky" issue among us and has caused some churches no little distress, even division. Each congregation will have to use sound and wise judgment in dealing with this matter to maintain harmony and peace.

SIMPLICITY IN CHRIST

P. J. Casebolt

P.O. Box 1487
Chiefland, Florida 32626



WHERE DID GOD GO WRONG?

If a child becomes delinquent, the parent often asks, "Where did I do wrong?" Society is often held responsible for the conduct of the criminal. There may be times that both parents and society are partially to blame for those who rebel against authority, for "to err is human." Even so, I doubt if there are many cases where **all** the blame should be shifted away from those who show contempt for civil law.

But, there are those who will hold God responsible if anything should happen to the disobedient and ungodly. Is God unrighteous (wrong), if He punishes the evildoer? Some say yes, but if so, I ask, "Where did God go wrong?" If God is at fault, then we should be able to trace His dealings with the human family, and find out where God made His mistake.

The earliest account of God's dealings with man is in creation. "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Gen. 1: 27). Is this where God went wrong? If not, let us continue.

Next, God placed man in the garden of Eden, and supplied his every need. Every other form of life was under man's dominion, and at his disposal. This was man's first taste of "the paradise of God." Did God go wrong here, by placing man in Eden?

The next incident in God's dealings with man is the confrontation between the two which developed after man's transgression. Yes, God could have made man like the beast, whose spirit "goeth downward to the earth" (Eccl. 3: 21), or He could have made him like a sycamore tree, but man was made in God's image, and given the power of choice. God didn't force man to eat of the forbidden fruit, the Devil tempted man (Gen. 3: 13).

Did God do wrong when He drove man from the garden? This was man's only hope at the time—get him away from the tree of life in his fallen condition, that he might be returned to it in a justified state.

Every since the transgression, God has been merciful and longsuffering toward man, planning and bringing about his redemption. God is still trying to bring all to repentance (2 Pet. 3: 9), and would "have all men to be saved" (1 Tim. 2: 4). Is this where God went wrong?

God gave His only Son as a sacrifice for man's sins, and Jesus has prepared the way to heaven (Jno. 3: 16; 14: 1-6). Did God do wrong to man by the manifestation of such grace?

Now, God has provided an invitation for all, and provisions for their salvation (Rev. 22: 17; Mk. 16: 15, 16), that man may once again partake of the tree of life (Rev. 22: 14). Is God unrighteous in this matter? And, if God is not at fault anywhere, or at anytime, in His dealings with man, why say that God is unrighteous "who taketh vengeance" (Rom. 2: 1-11; 3: 4-6)?

Man, disobedient and rebellious, needs to quit trying to place the blame on God for his own sinful condition, and get busy and obey the very gospel which can also condemn him.

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STUDIES IN 1ST AND 2ND TIMOTHY 2 TIMOTHY 3

ANTICIPATE AND KNOW THE NATURE OF APOSTASY (V. 1-9)

If a minister of God is to save himself, through faithfulness in the discharge of his "gift" (charge), he must be aware of the possibility, even certainty, of apostasy, of which he has been forewarned by the Spirit (1 Tim. 4: 1), and take heed lest he himself be ensnared. He must also, by this awareness, be concerned for those who hear him, constantly warning them of the things that are threats to their faith, lest they be lost. Thus, the salvation of both the minister and the hearer is at stake.

The "last days," when the perilous (difficult) times would come, may refer to that great struggle between truth and evil preceding the coming of the victorious Christ in judgment (When Satan is loosed for a little season - Rev. 20: 7-8). The nature of the apostasy described mentions characteristics of men that have existed in every age, even in the days of Christ and when Paul wrote them to Timothy, but such actions and characteristics would become worse — continue to grow and become manifest before the end, or the coming of Christ in judgment. Because of this, Timothy, every minister, and every saint would need to increase their watchfulness and zealous heed, lest souls be lost.

Characteristics of Ungodliness (v. 2-9)

These are now listed, by the Holy Spirit, so that all may know and recognize those characteristics in men that will damn the soul.

"Lovers of self has always been, is now, and continues to be a worsening characteristic of many. This feature is the foundation for many other evils. Making self the center of one's life is that which keeps one from obeying the gospel. Denying self is a prerequisite to coming to Christ (Matt. 16: 24). As long as self is enthroned, submission to God and true love for our fellow man is impossible. In seeking the cause for absenteeism (assembling with saints - Heb. 10: 25) or lethargy in service, everything points to "love of self." The guilty do not think of their responsibility to edify others, set a good example, grow in knowledge, teach others, or pray together, but of pleasing self. They had rather please and satisfy self than show consideration for God or their brethren.

"Covetous" (lovers of money), the root of all evil (1

Tim. 6: 10), is next listed as a characteristic of apostates, or godlessness. Paul has previously warned Timothy, and others through Timothy, of the dangers and folly of thinking "gain is godliness" (1 Tim. 6: 5-10) and that the success of man is determined by the amount of things he possesses (Lk. 12: 15). This characteristic of godlessness is manifested in those who spend their time, energy and money on things that satisfy the flesh, to the neglect of laying up treasures in heaven by giving and doing for God and their fellowman.

"Boasters" (boastful, braggarts) is a characteristic of the ungodly who claims great qualities that he does not have, or possesses in a much lesser degree than is claimed; makes promises he can not keep, and claims powers or ability that he does not have, for personal gain. Such is often found among politicians, business magnets and preachers. True ministers of God, however, magnify only the truth, and not themselves.

Being "proud" (filled with conceit-arrogant) is closely related to the boastful (braggart). The braggart will, with claims and promises, bluster his way into prominence, but the proud does so, holding in his heart contempt for everyone other than self. "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (1 Pet. 5: 5; Jas. 4: 6; Prov. 3: 24).

"Blasphemer's are people who speak evil against others. The enemies of Jesus were guilty of this when they charged him with casting out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils (Matt. 12: 24-31). It is a matter of hurling insults against others, even the Lord. The NASB uses the word "revilers." Those who espouse a false doctrine, anxious to deceive others and discredit contenders for truth, often engage in this evil action.

"Disobedient to parents" is rebellion to the law of God in both the Old and New Testament which says "Honor thy father and thy mother." In Roman law, we are told that to strike a father was as bad as murder. Anyone who would disregard authority in this area could not be expected to respect God or any other authority. Jesus said that following Him might involve "foes in your own household" (Matt. 10: 36).

"Unthankful" (ungrateful-NASB) is a trait of those who do not feel they are indebted to either God or man. Their own self-esteem keeps them from feeling any obligation to others.

One who is "unholy" is actually irreligious. The Greek word is Anosios and Vines (p. 170) lists "unholy" and "profane" as it's translation. The unholy act and speak disdainfully of that which is divine and sacred.

"Without natural affection" (unloving-NKJ; NASB) involves the love that parents have for children and the children have for parents and one another. It is a family love. This is found even among animals, but some humans, without this, are worse than brute beasts.

"Trucebreakers" (implacable-ASV; unforgiving-NKJ; irreconcilable-NASB) are people who will not keep their word or promises or make any truce with an enemy, or one from which he is alienated.

"False accusers" (Slanderers-ASV; NKJ; malicious gossips-NASB) spread tales on others that are designed to damage or destroy one's reputation or good name. The

tale is usually false, though, sometimes, it may have some truth in it, but is circulated with the evil motive of injuring or destroying.

"Incontinent" (without self-control-ASV, NKJ, NASB) is to be unrestrained in appetites and passions, involving money, the tongue, pleasures, touch and taste.

"Fierce" (brutal-NKJ; NASB) is from "ferus," meaning wild, savage. The illusion is to savages and wild beasts. With such, there is no restraint or control of their passions.

"Despisers of those that are good" (no lovers of good-ASV; despisers of good-NKJ; haters of good-NASB) suggests someone who has no desire or appetite for good people or things. They have become so enthralled with evil that the thought of God or the things of God provokes hostility on their part toward good.

"Traitors" (treacherous-NASB) will readily betray the trust that others have in them, and the cause that has been committed to their trust.

"Heady" (headstrong-NKJ; reckless-NASB) is an inability on the part of an individual to think wisely, because of passion and impulse, so that he stubbornly pursues his own will or desires.

"Highminded" (puffed up-ASV; conceited-NASB; haughty-NKJ) describes one who is puffed up (inflated) with his own importance.

Being "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God" (rather than-other Versions) causes one to make any sacrifice to obtain earthly pleasures, but gives nothing up for the cause of Christ or truth. With these, honoring God must never interfere with their own fleshly desires. This characteristic is clearly seen in those who grow lukewarm or become reprobate concerning faith.

It is sadly true that these numerous characteristics of ungodliness are seldom, if ever, found existing singularly in an individual. Possessing one quickly multiplies into all. Those thus afflicted may profess godliness and hold to many forms, but that's all it is — a profession... a sham (v. 5). Their actions show that their professed faith lacks the power to influence their heart and life. Paul's instruction to Timothy, and all saints, is to turn away from such. Of course, Christians must exhaust all scriptural means to save such, but when people refuse to submit themselves to the word (will) of the Lord, they must not be allowed continued fellowship with the saints.

Verses 6-7 describes the determined action of these apostates and the effect they have on some, particularly women who were controlled more by their desires than the word of truth. Such women were laden with sin, being condemned by their own conscience. These false teachers offered a teaching or philosophy (Gnosticism) that would allow them to follow fleshly passions and still have a clear conscience, being convinced by false teaching that they have done no wrong. The teaching that only the spirit matters and nothing done in the flesh does, is false and results not in salvation, but condemnation. God's ministers must ever do battle with these apostates and their philosophies if they are going to be successful in saving themselves and their hearers. Such false teachers are ever studying every new theory or

idea that comes along and discussing them, but are ignorant of truth.

An illustration of such opposition to God's truth is given in verse 8 in the mention of Jannes and Jambres who withstood Moses. These are not mentioned elsewhere in the scriptures. Early Jewish writers say these were magicians in Egypt who "by their enchantments" apparently duplicated some of Moses' miracles, by which Pharaoh was deceived, and withstood Moses and God in delivering Israel. The false teachers Paul is here warning against, may have claimed some mystical powers, as they often did, to better deceive and influence the people. Truly, such have "corrupt minds" and are "reprobate concerning the faith." The words "corrupt" and "reprobate" indicate these men were once Christians, members of the body of Christ, and embracers of truth, but their minds had been so filled with error (theories and philosophy) and their own self esteem, that now they were enemies of truth. This has happened, can happen, and will evidently continue to happen, hence this warning to all of God's ministers who are interested in their own salvation, and others.

In verse 9, Paul says that false teachers (apostates) and the havoc they cause among saints, "shall proceed no further": that "their folly shall be manifest unto all men." Moses exposed Jannes and Jambres, having the power to do so, and all Egypt saw it. Christianity (the Gospel-Truth) has always been able to prove itself over the numerous and strong actions of Satan and his messengers, and it still has that power today. God will raise up faithful ones, like Paul and Timothy, who will faithfully contend for the faith (exposing every false way), diligently teach it to others, and constantly warn and edify the saints, thus truth will always be manifest and will triumph.

Follow Paul's Example Of Suffering For Christ And Others (v. 10-13)

That divinely revealed to Paul (Gal. 1: 11-12), he had diligently and fully made known to Timothy and others (1 Cor. 2: 1-5; 4: 1-2; Acts 20: 26-27; 2 Tim. 1: 13; 2: 2). In doing this, his purpose, conduct, faith, longsuffering, love, and patience were well known and realized by Timothy and other saints. Such was Paul's manner of life in the midst of numerous persecutions and afflictions, but the Lord was his deliverer. He assures all true saints that they too will suffer persecution (v. 12), because the evil men and seducers (false teachers) that confronted Paul would continue to increase. In view of this, it would be very important that Timothy and all saints act as Paul did, lest they be deceived and lose their souls.

Be Steadfast In The Scriptures (v. 14-17)

Timothy, to save himself and his hearers, is told to continue in the things he had learned and been assured of from Paul, an inspired apostle (v. 14). Since Paul learned what he taught by revelation (Gal. 1: 11-12) and it was confirmed by miracles (Acts 15: 12), it was truth-the Word of God-Scripture. Scripture, divinely revealed truth, is something Timothy was acquainted with in youth, and respected. It is that which makes one wise unto salvation through faith in Christ (v. 15). The

importance of being scriptural (All we believe and do by inspiration of God) is further emphasized by pointing to what Scripture does (v. 16). It is profitable for doctrine (teaching). No man, interested in saving himself and his hearers, has any business teaching anything that is not found in Scripture.

"Reproof," in the Greek, is "Elegmas," which Vines says "denotes a proof, proving, test, as in Heb. 11: 1" (Page 283). This means if you want to prove a doctrine to be true, Scripture is the thing to use. Human reasoning, philosophy, or theorizing won't do it.

"Correction" simply means to "make straight." When one relies on scripture for his doctrine it is straight; otherwise it is crooked. The only thing that will correct crooked teaching is scripture. Pitting one theory against another will never reveal truth.

Scripture furnishes us with all the "instruction in righteousness" there is. Any doctrine or religious practice not found in scripture is no part of God's righteousness. Scripture, alone, completely furnishes man unto all good works (v. 17).

I am appalled at the popular belief in the religious world, and even among some brethren, that one does not have to be scriptural in all his beliefs and practices to be saved. This exhortation to Timothy to continue in the doctrine divinely revealed, which Paul enjoyed many other times in these letters, was given in order that Timothy might be successful in saving himself and them that heard him. Abiding in truth is a condition of salvation.

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SOUNDNESS? OR PERFECTION?

J. F. Dancer, Jr.
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I guess in much of my writing I am a reactionary. That means that I read something written by another and write in reaction to it. That is not all bad but it doesn't always lead to healthy, upbuilding constructive articles. This article is something of that type. Many months ago I read an article in this magazine devoted to our use of the word "sound" in describing a congregation. I don't think I really disagreed with anything that was actually said in the article but did disagree with some things I saw implied in it. I put the article aside and in time forgot it. Recently, I came across it and this is a result of my reaction.

The first time I remember the word "sound" being used in regard to a congregation of God's people was in the mid 1950s. I was preaching in Illinois and the word was used to describe those churches that were not influenced by the teaching of Carl and L. E. Ketcherside. I also found them using it to describe those churches that did not have "full time preachers." In the following years the word came to be used (by me and others) to refer to churches that did not support any human institutions from the common treasury. And when we used it that way those with whom we conversed understood what we meant. Then as time passed, concepts changed and the word came to be used in other areas.

It came to mean (as the writer of the former article set forth) a church that taught the truth on (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. We need to stop using such terms without an explanation as it is not really fair. The first definition in my dictionary of the word "sound" is: "Free from flaw, defect, or decay; undamaged or unimpaired" (Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, Second Edition).

The implication of the aforementioned article was that in addition to the five things above we also need to include (6) punitive church discipline. The author showed the lack of such in his experience and rightfully called upon individuals and churches to practice that doctrinal and practical purity in this matter as in others if they were to be considered "sound." I can agree with some of that but the danger is we will then have to list other things and finally will have a "creed" that identifies what is a "sound church." Let's get away from such terminology.

But to the matter of punitive church discipline. I have been a member of the body of Christ for about 43 years and during that time have been a part of eleven congregations scattered over six states and the District of Columbia.

These congregations ranged from a small rural one to a very large, metropolitan institutional one and then to all sizes of non-institutional ones. I know of no other way to describe them. Now to my point — in all of these (save one about which I don't remember) punitive church discipline was practiced! I remember two cases in the rural church of my youth when a deacon was disciplined for drinking whiskey and one of the other members disciplined because he cheated a man in a mule trade. In other churches I remember people being spiritually punished for things from forsaking the assembling of the saints, to sowing discord, to drunkenness, to adultery. All of this done in obedience to Matthew 18: 15-17; Romans 16: 17; 1 Corinthians 5: 1-13; 2 Thessalonians 3: 6-15 and Titus 3: 10.

Since I have been preaching the gospel ALL of the congregations with which I have worked have practiced punitive church discipline. One elder told me at one place he just couldn't have a part in putting one out of the church. However, in less than three years he was working with the others in punitive discipline as well as in other areas. Through patience he learned what the Bible taught and then led (with others) in doing it. I know that I have been blessed in being able to work with some of the better of God's people. Others (as the writer of the former article) have not been so blessed.

Now, another point. In NONE of the churches where I have worked as a preacher was punitive church discipline always carried out EXACTLY AS I THOUGHT IT SHOULD BE! Sometimes I thought they waited too long, at other times I thought they acted too quickly. Sometimes I thought they were not completely impartial in such practice. In other words, they didn't always do it the way I thought it ought to be done — but they DID IT! And generally, they did it well. It didn't take me long to realize that a lot of judgment is to be used here. The Lord didn't say how long to wait between the three contacts in Matthew 18: 15-17. And Paul didn't tell Titus how long to wait between the first and second admonition in Titus 3: 10 nor how long to wait after the second admonition before the heretic was to be rejected. How quickly was the one in Romans 16: 17 to be marked and avoided? Judgment must be used in these areas.

Brethren, we have to learn to be patient in our efforts to teach one another what the Bible has to say about punitive church discipline. Paul told Timothy to reprove, rebuke and exhort with ALL LONGSUFFERING and TEACHING (emphasis mine, jfd - 2 Timothy 4: 2). In his appeal to the Ephesian saints to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4: 3) there was to be the exercise of meekness, longsuffering and forbearance (Ephesians 4: 2). This is not justification for over-looking and condoning sin of any sort. But it is an appeal to recognize that we have to give people time to learn and then help them develop the courage to act.

We are not going to find PERFECTION in a congregation. And should a church accomplish such if one of us preachers moved there we would probably "mess it up." I write that in jest but I think you can see my point. Sometimes we are looking for perfection all at once and

don't give people time to learn and grow. Let's strive to build congregations that are "free from flaw, defect, or decay." At the same time let's recognize that there are many things that do not affect our working and worshipping together over which we will differ and we need patience to work them out. There are many matters of judgment in serving the Lord and we must not divide over them. We need to use care that we don't "draw lines" against all who disagree with us. For some reason we expect them to learn as quickly as we think we did. I still recommend a church as being a "sound" or "good" church if someone is asking for a place to worship while away from home. I use these terms to describe one where I believe they can worship without violating their conscience and where truth is upheld. If someone is considering a move to an area and asks me my opinion of the churches there I go into more detail and describe them as honestly as I can. There are a lot of fine brethren and fine congregations (is that another word that will have to be explained?) scattered around over the world but I still don't know of any PERFECT ones.

the bottom, in another world practically, is the great mass of the faithful, the laity. The development of this stratified and basically two-tiered conception of the Church, shaped during many centuries of history, was challenged at Vatican II, and other, more collegial, models were considered in its place. One such model is that of an organism, a body, the mystical Body of Christ. Another is that of a new Israel, the pilgrim people, the people of God. A third is that of an open community where those in positions of authority consider themselves to be the servants, rather than the masters of the whole community. **This third model seems to be the original form that predominated in the early Christian church.**" (Ibid, page 12. Underscoring mine. LWM).

The above description is a "far cry" from the New Testament description of the Lord's church, as established and implemented by the Man of Galilee and the twelve apostles.

"From its inception, the Catholic Church has moved gradually from grass-roots democracy and collegial authority to a vast concentration of power and authority in the hands of the clergy and hierarchy, and especially in the hands of the pope and his curia." (Ibid, page 19).

Once again the Catholic author describes the gradual change that has occurred in Catholicism. Although I disagree with his use of the term "grass-roots democracy" if by that expression he implies any practice of "majority rule."

"The New Testament view of authority in the church was based on functionality and service rather than on legality, dignity, and power. The leaders were those who had certain charismatic gifts and who were chosen by the apostles or by the community to render certain religious service to their religious brothers and sisters. They were called overseers (bishops) and elders (priests). The **laos** was not a body separate from these leaders and dominated by them. Although in the Greek language the word **laos** referred to the mass of the people, as distinguished from their rulers and leaders, this usage does not occur in the Bible except in a few places in the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament - LWM). The more comprehensive meaning, just described, is the one generally found in both the Old and New Testament. The laity-clergy dichotomy as we know it today is never mentioned in early Christian documents, because it did not exist as such. The earliest functional classifications we know of in the Christian communities (assemblies - LWM) around the Mediterranean are those of apostles, disciples, prophets, overseers, elders, and deacons, **never those of priests (or clerics) and laymen.**" (Underscoring mine. LWM. Ibid, pages 20-21).

Copying more from **Papal Power:**

"The early Christian gatherings were local churches, presided over by a number of elders. Then the elders, along with the rest of the membership, elected an overseer. At first this overseer, or bishop (episcopos), was only "**primus inter pares,**" (first among equals - LWM), but his authority grew, influenced in good part by pagan and Jewish conceptions of priesthood, and especially by the fact that he controlled the funds of the local church.

PAPAL POWER
("A Study of Vatican Control over
Lay Catholic Elites")

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

The title of this article, is copied from the title of a book, published in 1980, by the University of California Press. The original manuscript was initially submitted as a Ph. D., dissertation, by Jean-Guy Vaillancourt, who is now an Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Montreal. Basically, this book deals with the relationship between Papal power and the submissive strata of the Roman Church, termed by them, "the laity."

Let us quickly picture the pope as "the man who sits on the throne of Saint Peter, since the pope is an absolute ruler, elected for life, who is not accountable to any judiciary or legislative control." (**Papal Power**, page 10).

The Catholic author has the pope "on the throne of Saint Peter," however, this is an assertion that rests upon ancient legends rather than upon historical fact.

"The organizational image that still most often comes to mind when reference is made to the Church is that of a pyramidal or monarchical structure. On the top is the pope, the Supreme Pontiff, with his chief assistants and advisers, the cardinals, who also hold the top positions in the Roman Curia. Below the cardinals come the various types of bishops and monsignors: the archbishops and metropolitans, the resident bishops, the vicars and prefects apostolic, abbots and prelates and apostolic administrators. Below these august figures are pastors, priests, brothers, and nuns. Finally at

"The first use of **laikos** in the sense of "the masses" appears in a letter written to the Corinthians by Clement of Rome around AD. 96. The letter is a strong Paulian defense of Corinthian bishops who had been dismissed by a rival party. It expresses loyalty to the empire and has a certain tone of Roman arrogance (the obedience of Roman legionnaires is cited as an example to be followed, in the church of organization, at a time when Roman emperors were persecuting Christians). The doctrines of apostolic succession and irremovability of the clergy are among those affirmed by Clement. He makes use of **laikos** to mean the rank-and-file members of the church, as opposed to the clerical and episcopal leaders.

"With the increasing Romanization of the Western church during the second century, this definition of **laos** and its derivative **laikos** rapidly prevailed, especially among the Gentile Christians. From the third century onward, the definition of **laos** as a people distinct from church authorities becomes the only accepted one..." (Ibid, page 21).

Disregard For Scriptural Authority!

The admissions made by the Catholic author are generally historically accurate. His conclusions describe the departures of the Roman Catholic Church from the New Testament blueprint. This pattern of apostasy has been repeated over and over, in many places, in many centuries, dealing with many different doctrines, and by many and various peoples.

Among the latest being from the pen of Reuel Lemmons, **Action**, April 1988; when he makes reference to brother Darrell Foltz, as "a lay preacher."

Another, and more spectacular departure has featured in recent years the Crossroads Philosophy and more recently the Boston-based satellite-church, discipler-discipling ministry.

In recent decades, a number of Catholic scholars have come to a realization of the departures of the Roman Church... yet some of our brethren are repeating the same mistakes and departures from the New Testament, that Rome made centuries ago!

Books by R. L. Whiteside

For many years R. L. Whiteside was a favorite of many brethren. He was always a safe teacher. Though dead, he yet speaks through these excellent books.

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Reflections (by his daughter Inys)	\$6.95
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Vol. 2 (Josh.-Neh.)	\$7.00
Vol. 4 (Gospels)	\$9.00

ORDER FROM: RELIGIOUS SUPPLY CENTER

"THEY HATE HIM ... THEY ABHOR HIM" Amos 5:10

**Richard Boone
Route 1, Box 200
Hayden, AL 35079**

Amos 5: 10 reads, "They hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly." These words were written to an apostate Israel who had known God and seen the works that He had done for them (see Amos 3: 6-16). However, Israel had not been faithful in following god's Law. Instead, the people were followers of the false religion set up by Jeroboam (1 Kings 12: 25-33). In their departure from God, Israel had become so corrupt that even civil rulers who spoke truth and judged righteously were no longer desired, as our text shows. Israel desired those judges who "afflict the just, take a bribe, and turn aside the poor in the gate from their right" (Amos 5: 12). For that apostasy, Amos, the prophet from God (3: 1), plainly passed the sentence "... prepare to meet thy God, O Israel" (4: 12).

Today many Christians have the same attitude as Israel. Whereas it used to be that evangelists could speak forthrightly about sin and problems among God's people, that is no longer the case. Indeed, many "hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly" in reference to preachers and their preaching the truth of God's Word. We see that so easily in the "liberal" churches where Christians have been led father and farther away from the truth by weak and "Bible-less" sermons. Sadly, that type of preaching is even desired among "conservative" churches. I believe we have reached a turning point. A point that, if left unchallenged and uncorrected, will direct us straight toward apostasy and ultimately into hell! The cry from the pews in many places is no longer for the clear and forceful proclamation of the Truth, but for the latest pop-psychology and human wisdom. I have heard of days long ago when preachers boldly proclaimed God's Word, without worrying whether or not they may be disliked or whether they may lose their jobs at local churches. They had deep convictions and were not ashamed to speak their convictions when opportunity came knocking. Why don't we hear that same preaching today? The answer is simple. Let me offer my answer with an illustration.

In my Western Civilization class in college, the teacher made a statement that makes very much sense. In reference to the French dynasties of the 1500's and 1600's, he said, "As was the king, so was his kingdom." So it is with many churches now.: "As is the desire of those in the pews, so it will be the preaching that comes from the pulpit." I am certainly aware that this is not true of every individual of every church. I am also aware that weak preaching does not come from every preacher. But, we cannot ignore the simple fact that this is true in too many places (and

really one place is too many!). It appears to me that we are becoming concerned with sophistication and polish more than the unashamed and truthful proclamation of God's Holy Word. Brethren, learn lessons from history (Rom. 15: 4, 1 Cor. 10: 10-6)! Do you remember Israel who wanted a king so they could be like all the nations around them (1 Samuel 8)? They were concerned with their appearance before neighboring nations rather than being righteous before God. We also must be more concerned with our condition before God rather than follow the trends of the denomi-"nations" around us.

I hope that you will sincerely and seriously consider what I have said. I am not an enemy of positive preaching (as long as it is positively Biblical) or of eloquence per se. But what I am worried about is the attitude that is behind brethren who would rather be entertained than taught. Fellow Christian, if you would rather be entertained, "thy heart is not right in the sight of God" (Acts 8: 21). If you would rather be taught, "desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Peter 2: 1).

CHAOS OR ORDER?

Wayne Greeson
2630 N. 72nd Way
Hollywood, FL 33024

"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork" (Ps. 19: 1).

With the increase of man's knowledge comes the constant confirmation of the Psalmist's statement. The evidence continues to build that this universe is not the product of chance but a system of order and design. The design of the universe points to a designer.

The argument from design is a powerful argument that proves the existence of God. Atheists feel the force of this argument in discussion and debate and they are often compelled to take a rather strange position. To refute the argument from design, the atheist will often assert that there is as much disorder in the universe as order. The conclusion is drawn that the existence of randomness and disorder in the universe disproves a total system of order and design, thus there is not a designer.

This argument was presented in the Bales-Teller debate by the atheist Woolsey Teller. Mr. Teller repeatedly argued that the world and the organisms in it are so poorly made that this world could not have been designed, thus there is no designer. Mr. Teller said, "Any comment on the God idea and design in nature would be incomplete if we failed to consider the arrangement of the planets in their relation to the sun, that is, their placements in point of distance, and what occurs because of their positions. Now, if the universe was de-

signed (and the universe includes our solar system), it was designed in a very peculiar way" (Bales-Teller Debate, 1947, p. 49).

Mr. Teller proceeded to argue that the lay-out of the planets of the solar system was "ridiculous" because of its lack of order thus the universe could not be the creation of divine being. This general line of argumentation has been used by atheists in numerous debates.

While the atheists' "argument from chaos" sounds impressive, it is built upon a faulty premise. The assertion that there is chaos or disorder in the universe is an unproven and false premise. Recent scientific studies have concluded that what superficially appears to be random behavior in systems, closer observation reveals complex patterns and design!

Within the last decade, a number of scientists have studied apparent random behavior of various systems such as the turbulence of a stream, air turbulence, the development of sun spots, the spread of flames, water dripping from a faucet and water movement in the oceans. Studies in this area have even advanced to the point that this year there was a scientific conference on the subject in Monterey, California, the International Conference on the Physics of Chaos and Systems Far From Equilibrium. Scientists involved with these studies have concluded, "There is order in chaos. Underlying chaotic behavior there are elegant geometric forms that create randomness in the same way a card dealer shuffles a deck of cards or a blender mixes a cake batter ... Random-looking information can be explained in terms of simple laws" (Scientific American quoted in the "Miami Herald", Jan. 14, 1987).

The atheists' "argument from chaos" is an argument from ignorance. For an atheist to declare that a particular system or organism is without order, design or purpose simply reveals that the atheist is ignorant of the order, design and purpose of that system. Closer examination and study of what appears to be without design or purpose can often expose design and purpose.

A good example of the atheists' argument from ignorance is the once weighty "evidence" of vestigial organs. A vestigial organ is an organ or structure of the body that has no apparent purpose and has supposedly degenerated because of lack of use. One hundred years ago, science listed over 186 organs of the human body as "vestigial organs", organs with no apparent purpose. These "useless" structures were seen as evidence of evolution and disproof of the existence of God. Today, only five organs remain on the list of vestigial organs and even the classification of these five as vestigial organs is hotly debated by the scientific community. The problem with "vestigial" organs was not that they had no purpose, but that men were ignorant of their purpose.

Order, design and purpose, not chaos, rule throughout the universe. Even seeming chaos is carefully ordered. Order and design demand a Designer. That Designer is the God of the Bible. "Thus saith the Lord, the Holy One... I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded" (Isa. 45: 11-12).

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

URGENT APPEAL FOR HELP IN CHINA

JEFFERY KINGRY, AMCONGEN Shenyang, Box 45, FPO San Francisco, CA 96655 — (The following is a summary of information gathered from recent letters and reports from brother Kingry. Editor) Six have obeyed the gospel, the first fruits of the effort in China. The visa for the Kingry's expires in June and they will have to return to the states to get the children settled in school. It is urgent that someone capable of teaching English come to follow up the work started. There is a need for at least three other men to volunteer for Shanghai and Fuzhou, Fujia for at least one semester.

There are two ways to gain entry into China: (1) English Teacher. No Chinese language required. You will not be teaching on a U. S. College level, but a fifth grade level (modelling native English, outlining, topic sentences, conversation, vocabulary, etc.). A Bachelor's degree would be good, but is not absolutely necessary. You would teach 6-18 hours a week with wage of about \$200/month. (2) Intensive Chinese Language Instruction. Come as a student, pay tuition, live in a dorm or hired house, and learn the Chinese language for one or two semesters. School year is Sept. 1989 - Jan. 1990, March 1990 - June 1990.

SHANGHAI: The East China Univ. of Chemical Technology in Shanghai needs teachers for the 1989-90 school year, Shanghai is the biggest city in China, 11. 5 million. It is crowded, but has diverse history and many western refinements. The atmosphere in Shanghai would be very liberal for a worker. Brother Lu Wei Min would be there to provide a reliable Chinese-speaking helper and fellow-laborer.

FUZHOU, FUJIA: The Fujian Normal University, a teacher's college needs an English teacher for the same time. Fuzhou is the capital of Fujia, a city of 1. 5 million people. Fuzhou is a historical city with western housing, temperate climate, and close contacts with Shanghai. While sister Li Xiu-zhong is only 22, she is by far the quickest study I know and fearless. She needs someone to work in her community for Christ.

SHENYANG, LIAONING: I have two choices, teaching English at Dong Gong (NW Tech. Univ.) or taking the Chinese language semester at Liaoning Univ. There are advantages and disadvantages for both choices. But, I would stay in Shenyang to bridge for another man or to continue my work with the little church here. Whether I return or not, there is work here for two. Xue Xiao-bin and Jie Wen-jie would present a permanent presence to help any incoming preacher.

Brethren everywhere (at lecture programs, in the journals, in meetings, between brethren) need to talk this up. I will help all I can. But we need to do it NOW. It will take a minimum of six months to make arrangements, raise support. We need also to find support for plane tickets, monthly support, shipping, literature. If good men can be found, in whom brethren have confidence, the rest will come. They have to be willing and competent men willing to give of themselves for this work. The door is now open. We have made a start and it will be easier for those who follow. We are not looking for people to commit for the rest of their lives, but to come and help on a short term basis. If anyone is willing, I will arrange to meet them in Hong Kong, Manila or Tokyo and help all I can.

(ANOTHER EDITOR'S NOTE: Brethren, this situation cries for help. It is too important to ignore. Who can go? Who WILL go? Please contact brother Kingry quickly.)

P. J. CASEBOLT, P. O. Box 1487, Chiefland, FL 32626 — Lord willing, we shall be leaving Chiefland as of April 30, 1989. We plan to return to Elk Fork, WV, where we previously labored for nine years (1969-1978). We should be in a position to conduct more meetings, and our address will be: Rt. 1, box 210, Middlebourne, WV 26149, after May 1.

CARLOS CAPELLI, Casilla #83, 1665 Jose C. Paz, Buenos Aires, Argentina — I spent 20 days preaching in El Salvador in November, 1988. Three were baptized during this time. We helped a congregation with some internal problems about the elders and deacons. I preached at Santa Eugenia Church in San Salvador, at Matazano (where they have two men who preach and support themselves as taxi drivers). I also preached in Santa Ana where Hugo Luna preaches. We had 70 each night. They have their own building. Then I preached at Zacatecolucas and in Santiago Nonualco where Daniel Alvarado works. I spent three days preaching in Lomas De Perulapia. All brethren there are farmers and three brethren take turns preaching — Florentino Hernandez, Benigno Lopez and Manuel Melgar. I saw one day some of the damage from the guerrilla war with the army of El Salvador. The war is terrible! I also preached in Guatemala and Panama on my way back home.

PAUL A. JONES, 1563 41 st St., Columbus, GA 31904 — I want to get on the mailing list of churches that have good **teaching** bulletins. Deaf people have souls that need to be reached with the gospel, too. Do you know of sources or churches that have video-taped sermons with sign language interpretation? I want to teach my deaf friends, so I took a course at night on sign language, but I need more help.

RICK A. HUBARTT, 301 Fern St., Newark, OH 43055 — I was involved in video taping the Nashville Meeting and can make the tapes available for \$45 a set. There are 7 tapes at L. P. speed with 4 hours a tape, 23 hours of actual recording. Write or call me at (614) 366-7115.

OWEN H. THOMAS, 5327 S. Tryon St., Charlotte, NC 28217 — After five and a half years with the church in Charlotte, we will be moving the last of February to begin work with the Tomlinson Run church near Georgetown, PA. All correspondents please note my new address. It will be: Rt. 2, Box 117, Georgetown, PA 15043. The church here is looking for someone to work with them. Anyone interested may write them at the above address or call Bill Mayo at (704) 739-3944 or Jim White at (803) 547-4291.

DERREL STARLING, 412 Mariner, Victoria, TX 77901 — Gospel meetings at the Glasgow St. church for 1989 include Oliver Murray, March 5-10, and Delmar Hightower, Oct. 15-20. We encourage faithful Christians looking for mild weather, to retire in Victoria. Ill be glad to supply any information needed.

ROBERT H. FARISH, Rt. 4, Box 4384-D, Belton, TX 76513 — We have moved to Belton, Texas. My plans are to hold meetings, preach at any congregation which wants a Sunday "fill-in" and do more writing. We are worshipping with the Leon Valley church, 306 E. Ave. C, Belton, TX 76513. Tim Coffey preaches regularly here. Work is set to begin on a permanent meeting house in the near future. I have been asked to teach a Bible class on Wed. evenings.

WARREN E. BERKLEY, Wallisville Road Church of Christ, Highlands, Texas — In 1988, we appealed to churches and individuals on behalf of a family in need, the Luther White family. At that time, brother White was suffering with terminal cancer, his wife was ill, and

**"Behold, I have set before thee
an open door ..."**

—Rev. 3:8

his daughter was not in good health. In addition and as a result of these calamities, there was no income. Churches and individuals all across the land came to the aid of this family, in a regular and substantial way. We are thankful to God, and to you for this generosity. On January 17, 1989, brother White passed from this life, and his body was placed in the earth on January 19. The cards, letters, prayers and funds sent will remain as a refreshing memory to the family.

FROM CHILE — SOUTH AMERICA — On December 8, 1988, Efrain Perez, his wife and two daughters left for the USA and then on to Spain. Chris, their older son will remain in Chile until he finishes his medical training. Most of the Chilean preachers and some others gave them a "going away" party. The Lord's work in Chile has been tremendously blessed with the work of brother Perez. His preacher training classes will be missed. His work allowed us to grow, to exercise true autonomy as congregations and as individuals. The work of the Lord has grown in Chile and part of this growth is due to Efrain's dedication. Spain claims him. The Lord has other work for him there. The Spanish Conquerors brought their false religion to this continent, but one "more than conqueror" will take the Lord's gospel to them.

WAYNE S. WALKER, 310 Haynes St., Dayton, OH 45410 — At Haynes St. in 1988 five were baptized and two families placed membership with us. Sunday morning attendance now runs in the 80s with increases on Sunday and Wed. nights and in the contribution. We are happy that unity and peace prevail. We had fall meetings with Roger Hendricks and A. C. Grider. In the spring of 1989 we will have a meeting with Steve Wolfgang and Dale Pennock will present a series during a vacation Bible school on "The New Age Movement." In the spring of 1989 I am scheduled for meetings at Greenwood, SC, Madison, Wisconsin, and Southside in Mansfield, OH.

NEY RIEBER, 6413 Zion Church Rd., Sanford, NC 27330 — The work in the prisons continues to be encouraging. Where else could you go and have access to over 100 people and have them to be glad to see you? At Blanch there are from 25-50 each week and at Polk there are from 25-40 for a class each week. I baptized 3 at Polk in December. The church in Chapel Hill is small but we have unity and things look better than they have for a long time. Besides the work here, I have committed to preaching twice a month at Sanford. Our schedule at Chapel Hill is such there will be no conflict. Sanford is also a small but dedicated group. They are also looking for a fulltime preacher.

PAUL WILLIAMS, P. O. Box 324, Eshowe, 3815 South Africa—A 12 day tent meeting in rural Zululand saw about 100 percent each night and five were baptized. Services ran from 7-9 each night and some complained that we closed too soon. So, the services were lengthened to 10 P. M. and no one complained they were too long. We had lengthy question and answer sessions which had much to do with converting the five young women.

OBITUARIES

SHERRELL D. JACKSON of Conroe, Texas passed away on May 5, 1988 after an 8 year bout with Leukemia. He did fairly well for 6 years but began failing after that. He worked for 38 years for the Postal Service and only took five days sick time during his tenure. He and his wife, Helen Ashberry, were married 42 years and 5 months. Sherrell taught a young people's class as long as his health permitted. He was a good student of the Bible and many young people were baptized from his teaching. Preachers he had worked with for years officiated with an overflow crowd at the funeral. These were: W. H. Hance, Eris Ritchie, Robert Goodman and W. R. Jones. He is survived by his wife, Helen and two faithful children and three grandchildren.
W. R. Jones

DANA HAMPTON HALSTEAD — It is my sad duty to report the death of Dana Halstead, a husband, a father, a grandfather, a gospel preacher and debater, a Christian and a member of the church in Bossier City, LA, and my friend. He was born, March 13, 1927 in Danville, WV and died in Shreveport, LA, Nov. 8, 1988.

Dana married Evelyn McGowan Aug. 31, 1950, while in the Air Force. He was not a Christian at the time, but was baptized soon after studying with Thomas D. Rose. Dana had great zeal, and very shortly after his conversion he began to teach classes, and then to preach at

small churches in the Ark-La-Tex area.

In the beginning Dana held the no-class and no-located preacher positions. But after his first debate, with Gene Frost, he decided brother Frost was right and changed his views. Following this debate, he had two eight night debates with F. I. Stanley on the institutional question. He probably did his best job when he debated Chester A. Guinn, professor of Bible at the Bible Theological Seminary, held in Cleveland, Texas. In 1961 he debated a brother Brown of the Mansfield, LA church on the institutional question. The debate was described by many of his friends and foes as being brutal in nature, but to this day the institutional churches in Desoto Parish remain weak in comparison to the faithful brethren. Dana also debated Ronnie Wade and a brother Thomas of Kentucky on the one cup/no class position, and had a similar exchange with Buff Scott, Jr. Buff affirmed that there will be many unimmersed individuals who will be saved due to their piety in other matters. Dana had great zeal for what he believed to be right, and when he discovered he was wrong, he was willing to change to be right with his God.

Dana preached for the church in Stanley, LA; Cleveland, TX; South Flores in San Antonio, TX; East Houston Rd. in Houston, TX; El Dorado, AR; Marshall, TX; and the Union Rd. church in Kansas City, MO.

At this time he moved to Columbus, GA and went into the retailing business and worshipped at Rose Hill while there. Shortly afterwards he was struck with a form of multiple sclerosis and moved back to the Shreveport-Bossier City area where, in spite of his crippling disease, he worked hard with me and the church at Bossier City. In 1965 he began alternating the preaching duties with Huey Hartsell and myself for a new work in Magnolia, AR.

He held meetings in Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, Missouri and Oklahoma. He performed many marriages and preached many funerals, but would not accept money for these services.

He was a Christian of strong convictions, and enjoyed talking about the Scriptures. When you visited Dana you talked about the Bible. Though barely able to get around, he seldom missed services, and when I had to be absent was available to preach. The church will miss him as will his family and the brotherhood. —B. J. Thomas

PREACHERS NEEDED

PRINCETON, WV — The Old Athens Rd. church in Princeton is looking for a full or part-time preacher. We are a small congregation with our own building. We are partially able to support a man, though some outside help would be needed. We can help with that. The southern part of WV is an inexpensive area to live in, and also very beautiful. If interested, contact: Leonard Matlock, Rt. 1, Box 258A, Rock, WV 24747, or phone (304) 425-4627.

NASHVILLE, TN — The Bell Road church is seeking a fulltime preacher. Full support will be provided within our ability. The church is financially debt free and is at peace. We believe there is a great potential for growth. If you are interested, please call (615) 832-1979 or (615) 776-1134.

DONIPHAN, MO — The Southside church is in need of a preacher. We are a small group of about 30 and can provide \$250 a week toward support. Those interested may contact Lial Holland at (314) 996-3513, or Rex Holland at (314) 996-3251, or write c/o Lial Holland, P. O. Box 4, Doniphan, MO 63935.

CARLISLE, PA — The Walnut Bottom Road church near Carlisle in south central Pennsylvania needs a fulltime preacher. We have about 25 members and are able to supply \$200 support weekly. Additional support would have to be raised by the preacher. Those interested should contact Garry Adams (717) 423-6707 in the evenings.

AVAILABLE FOR APPOINTMENTS

JEFF SMITH, 103 Beth Dr., Lawrenceburg, KY 40342 — I am available to preach Sundays on a fill-in basis for churches in driving distance of my home in Lawrenceburg. You may reach me at the above address, or phone me at (502) 839-3205.

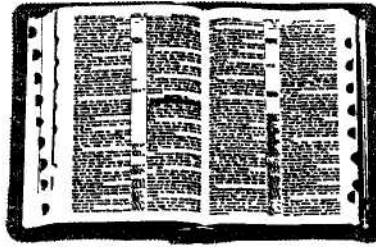
IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	383
RESTORATIONS	59

(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 XXX

APRIL, 1989

NUMBER 4

THINK ON THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 1631
Lutz, FL 33549



SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

For some time now I have contemplated giving some history of the beginning and purpose of **Searching The Scriptures** for readers who have been taking this paper for less than ten years, as well as many old subscribers from the beginning. It is my persuasion that when people know the **when, why, and how** of such a work as this, they will be much more interested in receiving it each month. I prefer not to rely too much upon my memory in giving this brief history of Searching The Scriptures lest I be unduly influenced by the passing of time. I recounted the beginning in the May, 1973 issue and I shall quote from that page in providing the information in this article. The quotation will assure the accuracy of facts as they were then.

Searching The Scriptures originated in the mind of this writer as far back as 1951. In my final editorial before transferring all editorial functions to the new owner and editor, Connie W. Adams, I wrote under the heading "The beginning of Searching The Scriptures" the following in part:

"Perhaps some brief facts that led to the conception and birth of **Searching The Scriptures** will better express my personal involvement and deep sentiment at the present time.

"I moved from Lake City, Florida, to Clearwater, Florida, in 1945 to work with the church there. Some three or four years later I became aware of some issues which were later to become very serious and prove to be a dividing wedge between many brethren and churches.

"As a young preacher with no more than eight or nine years experience, I did not really understand the nature or the significance of these issues at that time, but I know that brethren were being alienated and I was becoming involved to a degree. During 1949 and 1950 I was preaching on a local radio station and trying to publish a bulletin, but at that time the ability of the church in Clearwater was limited and I could not do more. I read every thing I could find on the history of the church from the early nineteenth century to that day to try to learn, if possible, what was happening and why. I discovered the basis for some of the problems, but did not fully understand their consequences or know how to solve them. One thing stayed in my mind, which I believe was the seed that later produced this publication, I realized that the people would have to be encouraged to read and think for themselves and not be blindly led by prominent preachers and self-appointed guardians of orthodox truth, which very few seemed able to define except by association to a school, some exalted preacher, or an established paper. The question was to me then: How can the simple, plain truth be communicated to brethren over the country by a relatively inexperienced young preacher with little influence or ability beyond the circle of his own community and among his brethren in the locality where he lived?

"There were those who were fighting these battles, some effectively, some not so effectively. Two or three papers were carrying good articles on the growing issues as they began to be defined, and some effective debates followed. But something was lacking. Most people aside from preachers and elders were taking sides for and against without really understanding. I talked with many brethren while in meetings between 1949 and 1955 who did not know what the issues were all about, but they were aligned for one position and against another. Many places where I had preached several years in meetings suddenly apologetically cancelled my meetings with no better explanation than that I was aligned with the wrong group. When asked what was wrong with that group, they usually answered that their preacher or elders said they were teaching error. When I asked what error they taught or what error I taught, many answered that they did not know. Literally hun-

dreds of people in those days would talk with me in this way. I loved them and did not want to see the breach in the church, but how could I get the message of truth to the average Christian to encourage him to study the Word of God in making his decisions? I could not compromise truth. I could not longer preach to many of them. Many of the papers in existence at that time had such prejudice against them that these people would not read them.

"I suppose the anxiety, frustration and impelling drive of this editor to get the message to these uninformed saints determined that some day, some way, by the grace of God he would develop a means of communication unattached to any other paper, school, clique or party by which he hoped to sound out the clear, pure truth that every man should study for himself just what God willed him to do.

"No opportunities were opened and no financial funds were available until 1957. I then lived in Gainesville, Florida, and had been laboring with the University Avenue church since 1953 when I moved from Clearwater, Florida. While at the lectures at Florida College in 1957 I revived the subject with James P. Miller, with whom I had discussed this matter some six years before. We determined to join forces and jointly edit and publish a 'Florida Newsletter' which soon took the name The Southeastern Newsletter. The major objective of this endeavor was to keep brethren talking and discussing their differences and out of this we hoped to save many brethren. We were too late with this effort, and besides we learned that it was not the right way to deal with false teachers.

"We began to write articles, and received requests for more such lessons. But with the articles came cancellations for the newsletter from churches.

"In the early fall of 1959, James P. Miller and I made plans for a new religious monthly, and arranged to meet with some brethren in Orlando, Florida, and tell them of our desire to begin a paper. I called it '**Searching The Scriptures**' because that is exactly what we intended to do. We met with these brethren and got the encouragement we needed. We made plans to begin in January, 1960. Several of the good brethren in Orlando, Tampa, Clearwater, St. Petersburg, Palmetto, and Bradenton and other parts of the country: Tennessee, Kentucky, Alabama, and Missouri sent lists of subscriptions and paid for them for one year. Thus began **Searching The Scriptures**." (From editorial in *Searching The Scriptures*, May, 1973, page 259).

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VOLUME 30 APRIL, 1989 NUMBER 4

Published Monthly at
BROOKS, KENTUCKY

Second Class Postage Paid at Brooks, Kentucky
and at an Additional Mailing Office
USPS-487-440

CONNIE W. ADAMS, Editor

Office of Publication
52 Yearling Drive
Brooks, Kentucky 40109
Phone (502) 957-2257

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Editorial

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TEACHING CHILDREN TO BEHAVE IN WORSHIP

Children are to be brought up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6: 4). "Nurture" means training and "admonition" means to put in mind, to gently reprove, or give counsel and warning. It is clearly, then, the duty of fathers (and mothers) to see to the whole process of training children for all aspects of life, and this must be done consistent with the will of the Lord. Surely that would include training them to be quiet, respectful and reverential during periods of public worship.

A Sensitive Subject

It is natural for young parents (and for grandparents, as well) to assume that their little children are the brightest, cutest and most amusing creatures in all human existence. It is difficult for some to come to terms with the fact that untrained little ones can disrupt the worship of the Lord on the part of parents, grandparents and those seated near them, and sometimes, of a whole congregation so that a prayer, reading, Bible class lesson or sermon cannot be heard.

We all understand that infants will cry at times, no matter where they are. If they are hungry, the only way they can let us know is by crying. If their clothes need changing, they will cry. If they are hungry, or cutting teeth, or hurt, their only means of communication is to cry. But it does not take long for their personalities to begin developing. They soon learn to respond to a warning, or to react to a word or gesture of caution, or disapproval. By the time they are old enough to speak, they are certainly old enough to understand words of instruction and warning, and to get the message from stronger actions which register disapproval.

Young mothers have entered an unknown and uncertain area when they start dealing with babies any place, including a public worship gathering. Some are intimidated by the prospect of trying to control a small child. But they are not exempted from the responsibilities and the needs of public worship. The children need to learn what it is all about. And they begin learning early. We all need to be patient and understanding with young mothers and fathers who are doing the best they can.

Sometimes the task of young parents becomes complicated by admiring friends seated nearby who make faces, or play with the child. Children like an audience and soon realize when they have one. Sometimes the process of training is destroyed by doting grandparents.

I have seen babies and small children passed up and down the row during a service. I have seen grandparents actually take a child from it's mother's arms and just take over. This tug of war helps nobody and actually hinders the training of the child in public worship

Begin At Home

Children who get out of control in department stores, shopping malls, restaurants, doctors offices and in public worship, are not properly controlled and trained at home. Titus was to teach the older women to "teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children" (Titus 2: 3-4). There is a dire need for this all over the country. Mothers and grandmothers need to be helping their daughters and granddaughters to learn how to manage their small children in services. There are two sides to this matter. It is the duty of the older women to teach the younger women, but it is also the duty of the younger to LISTEN and LEARN. Some young women think they already know it all and are not about to take any advice from older women, and especially a mother or grandmother.

A daily period of Bible reading and prayer with the whole family at home, is a good training ground for proper conduct in public worship. Teach them to be quiet, to sit still, to listen. Help them understand that this is not the time to talk, or play on the floor. When they are old enough to talk and to understand what you say to them, explain why mother or father cannot talk to them during the Lord's Supper. Explain why they need to sit quietly and listen when one is preaching the word of God. Show by your own interest and attention that this is sacred and very important to you.

Teaching Them Not To Listen

When you take a large bag full of books, cars, dolls, stuffed animals and cookies, you are giving out the wrong signal. I have seen children soon discard all of these and still act like brats and disrupt the whole service. When you put them on the floor to play under the benches, or allow them to run up and down the pew, or you run in and out with them to pacify them and then give them a cookie when you take them out, or even worse, allow them to make a garbage dump out of the pew and floor for several yards around you, you are not training your children to reverence God. You are teaching the child to hold both God and man in contempt. And by the way, if you could get a cookie for creating such a disturbance as to be taken out, would you not soon learn how to go about getting a cookie? I have seen children old enough to go to school sit in services with comic books, or other secular books, and I have seen some do school work while the gospel is being preached. I have seen children who are old enough to hold a song book and learn to sing, allowed to sit while the whole congregation is asked to stand, or worse yet, to make a bed and go to sleep rather than sitting up and being respectful. When parents allow this, they **are** teaching their children, all right; they are teaching them to dishonor God and show contempt for others. When they get older, they will move to the back rows, if you allow it, and there they will sleep, laugh with other unruly young people, pass pictures, write notes, flirt, and they will wander in and out to the

water fountain and rest room.

What To Do With An Unruly Child

What do you do with a child, past the infant stage, who is cranky and unresponsive to warnings? I first heard this formula from Gary Ogden of Plant City, Florida. He is exactly right and I pass it on to you for what it is worth. After trying briefly to get things under control (and I emphasize BRIEFLY — don't sit there so long you destroy the effect of the whole service), then here is what you do: (1) Take them out; (2) WEAR them out; (3) Bring them right back in. Well, you say, suppose that does not work? Then the next thing you do is: (1) Take them out; (2) WEAR them out; (3) Bring them back in. If that still does not work, then you: (1) Take them out; (2) WEAR them out; (3) Bring them back in. You think that won't work? Of course it works. It has been working for years. My own children soon learned that it was not much fun to have to go out and that it was much more pleasant to stay inside and be quiet. I learned the same lesson as a small child. My parents before me learned the same lesson in the same way.

The trouble is that we have too many who are relying too heavily on the instruction of permissive psychologists as to how to train children. There are principles in the word of God that will help with this problem. Consider the following:

"Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying" (Prov. 19: 18).

"Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22: 6).

"Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him" (Prov. 22: 15).

"Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beat him with the rod, he shall not die" (Prov. 23: 13).

The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame" (Prov. 29: 15).

"Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth and peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby" (Heb. 12: 11).

To his children at Laodicea, the Lord said "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten" (Rev. 3: 19).

Let no one suppose that this writer has advocated brutal treatment of children. We are all sensitive to the subject of child abuse these days, and well we should be. But measured, reasonable correction which emphatically makes the point that some behavior is not acceptable and will not be tolerated is much needed these days. The Lord placed the responsibility for training in the hands of parents. One day he shall call us to account for how we managed the task. If you want your children to grow up to reverence God and obey his will, then you must start TODAY to teach them respect for the worship of God. It will take time, effort and great patience, but it is worth all of that, and more.

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Wilson Adams
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DIVORCE, REMARRIAGE, AND THE NON-CHRISTIAN BRIGHT PROMISE OR FALSE HOPE?

The facts are scary. In 1960 there were 393,000 divorces in the United States; by 1985 that number had increased more than threefold to 1, 187,000. It is estimated that in 1989 only 4% of American households will be organized according to God's arrangement for the family: **one man married to one woman for life where the father is the breadwinner and the mother is a keeper at home.** Only 4%! Staggering!

Nothing brings home the general disintegration of the family any more than does attempts at converting the lost. It is becoming increasingly common to have to deal with multiple marriages and divorces among those we seek to reach with the gospel. The exceptions have become the rule.

It never is easy to confront sin. It never has been. Solomon very wisely noted that **"the way of the transgressor is hard"** (Proverbs 13: 15). Repentance has always been man's most difficult assignment. It isn't easy to say "no." Everyone knows that it is downright comfortable to keep things the way they are. Conversion without change would be a nice option were it available. It isn't. In fact, conversion without change is a contradiction in terminology.

And so, what do I tell my inquiring friend about commitment to Jesus? —That he can commit without change? —That he can come to Jesus in whatever state he is in and remain there? —That he can find new comfort in old sin? —That unholy relationships hold forth the promise of becoming holy? —That God makes exceptions on emotional issues? The answers should be obvious.

Should be. There are some who want to make an exception for those living in immoral and illicit marriage relationships. "Baptism washes away sins... **and wives!"** is being preached with greater force and feeling than ever before. And some, while briefly denying agreement with the above stated position, are quick to defend the character of colleagues who preach it while slow to speak out on the issue itself. Have we reached the point where the easy-going spirit of ecumenicalism has blurred our vision with respect to truth on vital issues? Vital issues? Yes! On the surface it appears as a harmless doctrine of much comfort and little consequence, but

beneath the water line it is a deadly promise of conversion without change.

Are Non-Christians Subject To The Will Of Jesus Christ?

Good question and one that is central to the whole discussion. Simplified it asks (in relation to the question at hand): Can one who has been married, divorced and remarried where God has given no right (i. e., where fornication was not the cause of the putting away, Matt. 5: 32: 19: 9) subsequently hear the gospel, obey it and continue living in what was before a sinful relationship? Does his/her non-Christian status offer an exemption from God's marriage laws? Has baptism changed a wrong relationship and made it right?

First, **God's law on marriage is universal.** In fact, in terms of human relationships, it was the first law given (Gen. 2: 24). When Jesus responded to the marriage-divorce question in Matthew 19 He went back to the divine principle established in the very beginning (Matt. 19: 3-6). In Matthew 5: 32 He made it clear that the Father's will concerning marriage applied to **"everyone"** and **"whoever."** (The same wording is also found in Matthew 19: 9.) Thus, God's rule for marriage had it's beginning in Genesis 2 and not Acts 2!. It holds forth universal application.

Second, if the unsaved are not subject to the will of Jesus Christ, then what justification could there be for preaching the gospel to one not amenable to it? Tough question. If this teaching is true, then the challenge of the great commission is absolutely meaningless.

This issue cuts to the core of God's eternal plan. It does not center in personalities (although some on both sides have done an injustice by focusing more on personalities than on the problem. Such is unfortunate for it blurs the real problem by turning it into a "personal" issue). It does not resolve itself in a discussion of "fellowship." That, too, shifts the focus away from the crucial issue. **ARE THE UNSAVED BOUND BY THE LAW OF GOD?** That is the central question and the one question that must be confronted. When it is, the question of fellowship may resolve itself.

Is There Conversion Without Change?

There is no such thing as easy-believism. The cost of following Jesus has always been high. When we attempt to sweep away our Lord's difficult demands we blunt His entire message. This position is guilty of doing exactly that. It's a call for a cheap and meaningless faith — a faith that may be exercised with no impact on the fleshly life of sin. It holds forth a false hope to sinners and promises eternal life while promoting continual living in sin.

Conversion DOES involve change! It's not enough to attempt to re-define sin. The blood of Jesus washes away every sin, for sure, but it never has re-defined a sinful practice and made it a non-sinful practice. For example, in 1 Cor. 6: 9-11 we read of "fornicators," "idolaters," "adulterers," "homosexuals," "drunkards," "swindlers," etc., who "were washed in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." Their conversion to Christ did not change their sinful practices and relationships and grant heaven's approval. Conversion changed THEM! **"And such**

were some of you!"

God forgives if man repents. He always has. For example, may a thief find forgiveness in Christ? Most certainly. May he then continue on in a lifestyle of thievery? Most certainly not. Some early Christians had carried on homosexual relationships prior to conversion. Could they find forgiveness for such abominable acts? Sure. Could they continue therein? No! "Repentance" of sin means a turning from sin (Acts 3: 19; 1 Thess. 1: 9).

If two people are living in a marriage relationship that God does not recognize, the blood of Jesus will cleanse their sin if they are willing to repent and cease the relationship. **REPENTANCE DEMANDS A CESSATION OF THAT SINFUL RELATIONSHIP!** Period. And, contrary to popular opinion, I know of no guarantee of a divine asterisk at the end of that statement. Do you? **"How shall we who died to sin still live in it?"**

It isn't enough to point to emotional appeals. When my friend agonizes over the cross he is called to bear, I likewise agonize with him. Sure, it's an emotional thing. But I do him (nor myself) any favors by extending the promise of cheap grace.

No, it is not always a black and white world we live in. I readily confess that I don't know every answer nor can I solve every marriage problem. I don't purport to. I simply try to teach what the Bible teaches and urge those in unclear situations to come to grips with God's commands as it relates to their circumstance. But not every marriage, divorce, and remarriage encounter is unclear. Some are very clear. And like John before Herod, we must confront the sin of an unlawful relationship and make an appeal for repentance. God's servant can do no less (Matt. 14: 3-4).

Cutting To The Core Of The Gospel

This position will not stand up under scrutiny in light of the Scriptures. It is a position that affects the message of salvation we teach by making no moral demands on one in an immoral relationship. We need to be reminded again of the chilling warning of Galatians 1: 6-8 toward all who tamper with that message. Indeed, the doctrine of salvation is fundamental to all we teach.

We want to make conversion easy. It isn't. The cost is high. As a result, we must never be guilty of inviting people to Christ by overlooking the radical transformation of life that conversion implies. Jesus put the sinner on notice that he/she must turn from sin and not continue in sin. The call of Calvary comes clear: There can be no turning without change. There can be no adoption without letting ungodliness go. It never has been easy to follow Jesus. But it will be worth it for those who do.

"Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword... "

"He who does not take His cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me... "

"And if your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell... "

Matthew 10: 34, 38; 5: 29
 (Note: The series on "Antioch—The Power of the Local Church," will continue next month)

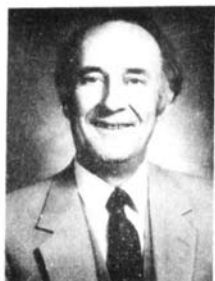
WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

Send all questions to:

Weldon E. Warnock

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KILLING OUR BRETHREN

QUESTION: *What is meant by "ye kill" in James 4: 2? Were there those guilty of murdering their brethren among those to whom James wrote?*

ANSWER: The word "kill," it seems to me, is used in a figurative sense. If interpreted literally, we must suppose that actual murderers were in the congregations, whereas Roman justice would have intervened. "Ye kill" is present active indicative, which means they were continuously killing.

R. C. Trench says that *phoneus*, which is kin to *phoneuo* (kill in Jas. 4: 2), "is capable of vaguer use; a wicked man might be characterized as *phoneus tes eusebias*, a destroyer of piety, though he made no direct attack on the lives of men, a traitor or tyrant as *phoneus tes patridos*" (*Synonyms of the New Testament*, p. 314). We could properly say that a wicked man would destroy (kill) piety and a traitor would destroy (kill) his country.

Here in James some killed (destroyed) the character and reputation of their fellow-Christians and others because of their love of pleasures and an uncontrolled zeal for carnal gratification. The strong term, "kill," was perhaps used to show they were just as great criminals as those who took the physical lives of others.

Erasmus found the passage, Jas. 4: 2, impossible to interpret and suggested the translation should be, "ye envy," assuming a mistake had been made in transmission of the text. The two verbs in Greek, *phoneuete* (murder) and *phthoneite* (envy) are not greatly dissimilar, and so Erasmus reasoned that "envy" should be in the text instead of "kill." This position was adopted by Tyndale, Calvin, Moffat and others. However, there is no basis in the Biblical manuscripts that lends any support to such a view.

Some have suggested that James classified them as murderers because their motive was murderous in nature and an attitude which leads man to kill his fellow-man. John does say, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer" (1 Jn. 3: 15; cf. Matt. 5: 21-22), but James said, "ye kill," not "ye hate your brethren." The word "destroy" would fit better.

R. V. G. Tasker, in his commentary, interpreted the difficult verse: "James, we must not forget, is writing a

general Epistle, and is not necessarily contemplating either here, or elsewhere, the circumstances actually existing in a particular Christian community known to him. He is rather underlining what *can* happen and *does* happen in human life when men choose pleasure to the exclusion of God. Under such circumstances, as the history of humanity from the days of Cain to the present time makes abundantly clear, the laws of god are disregarded; and pleasure, given full rein, takes control of the situation and often sweeps its victims to murder" (*The General Epistle of James*, p. 87).

What Tasker said is true about what can and does happen in human life, but was he accurate that those circumstances were not necessarily existing in the congregations to whom James wrote? I think not! They were killing and warring, fighting and lusting. James deals with a problem that was prevalent among them at the time. They were killing (destroying) the brethren.

Sermons on Grace

by

Robert F. Turner

Delivered by request of the elders of the College View Church in Elizabethtown, KY, June 1988

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SOMETHING NEW, SOMETHING BORROWED

Benjamin Franklin wrote in his autobiography of a young Presbyterian preacher, named Hemphill, "who delivered with a good voice, and apparently extempore, most excellent discourses... Among the rest, I became one of his constant hearers..."

The year was about 1734. While many admired the young man, the more orthodox Presbyterians did not approve of some of his sermons and attempted to have him silenced.

Franklin continued, "During the contest an unlucky occurrence hurt his cause exceedingly. One of our adversaries having heard him preach a sermon, that was much admired, thought he had somewhere read the sermon before, or at least a part of it. On searching, he found that part quoted at length, in one of the British Reviews, from a discourse of Dr. Foster's. This detection gave many of our party disgust, who accordingly abandoned his cause and occasioned our more speedy discomfiture in the synod. I stuck by him, however; I rather approved his giving us good sermons composed by others than bad ones of his own manufacture; though the latter was the practice of our common teachers."

This incident occurred to me last year when the tumult and uproar presented itself over Senator Joseph Biden's plagiarized speech. I thought, if that is a crime or a sin, then likely ninety percent of the preachers had better amend their ways and nine percent of the rest are so dull in their originality, they would give plagiarism a good name.

A few years ago, one older gospel preacher was giving a lecture to an audience composed mainly of younger preachers. He told us that he did not spend a lot of time trying to be original in his preaching; that he made free use of printed sermons and outlines. Someone asked if he had ever been accused of plagiarism.

"No," he countered. "When I get through with a sermon no one wants to claim it anyhow."

Those who know of whom I speak know that he could not be unoriginal if he tried.

The story has been widely circulated that G. K. Wallace was accused by someone of plagiarism when he presented a series of lectures at Freed-Hardeman College that was very similar to the material in a book by Brother Hardeman. The following day he carried the book onto the podium, held it aloft, and announced that he had been charged with using another's material. "Well, here it is! And it's my material! I paid \$3.00 for it!"

He exclaimed. And that was the end of that.

When I started preaching, about all the extra-Biblical material I had was the Gospel Guardian, Gospel Advocate, Searching the Scriptures, and other such journals. I'll guarantee you I made good use of them. I had been preaching for at least six months before I ever got an original idea. I still remember the pride I took in that sermon "from scratch" based on 1 Cor. 16: 8, 9. But I'm confident that other lessons that were not quite so original were more effective.

I still have original thoughts now and then. (Someone said, "Being original is forgetting where you got it.") But it doesn't bother me one iota to use another's thoughts or material in preaching the truth. Obviously one should not pretend that another's experiences are his own. And one would do well to rearrange material to best suit himself and to blend it with his own background and personality. Then too, if one uses two sources rather than one, he can call it research rather than plagiarism.

But I still agree with Benjamin Franklin: I had much rather hear someone preach a good sermon composed or developed by another than a sorry sermon that was quite original.

Years ago I asked Robert Jackson if it would be all right if I preached a certain sermon I had heard him deliver. "Just don't ask me where I got it," he said. But really, Brother Jackson was never reluctant in telling me where he got the idea, or the basic structure of a sermon.

I heard once of an old preacher and a young preacher who walked along a road. Suddenly a snake slid by them. The young man grabbed the other's walking stick and commenced to beat the snake to death. The old man stood trembling and said, "You almost made me fall!" The young man replied convivially, "I'll use anything I can get my hands on to kill snakes!"

Finally, may I remind you of the words of our Lord: **"Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old."** (Matt. 13: 52).

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HOW TO SUBVERT

Mark Roberts
805 East Sixth Street
Irving, Texas 75060

During the institutional battles of the 1950s and '60s there were many wise men who warned that the liberalism of the day would lead to much greater liberalism in the future. Time has shown them to be exactly right. Below is a copy of a letter that is being circulated among the members of a large institutional church in Duncanville, Texas (a suburb of Dallas). While providing graphic evidence of just how far many churches have gone in their desire to look like the denominations around them, it also provides a perfect blueprint of how to bring in innovations and thus destroy a congregation. The frankness and honesty on the part of the leader in the subversion is shocking, but also most helpful to those who would keep the flock of God from wolves. Here is the chronicle of this wolf's efforts (all emphasis mine — MR):

"On November 6th Dr. Jack Boyd of ACU Music Department spoke at the evening worship service on the history of church music. At 4:30 P. M. that Sunday he met with the elders, the worship committee and interested persons. **He had been invited to meet with this group to help them with the implementation of the chorus into our worship services.** The following paragraphs are quotes and excerpts by Dr. Boyd from that meeting:

"My subject here is to talk about, primarily about, **the use of choruses in the worship — the worship itself.** Minter Lane congregation at Abilene (where Dr. Boyd is an elder) does use them—has for about 2 years now. Before that we did it occasionally on Wednesday night. Then we decided, well, it's time for us to do something a little different. One of my fellow elders said, "well just why don't we have them (the chorus) on Sunday night — just have them stand up there and sing."

About 2 years ago, as I said, we started doing this, on an ad hoc basis, then this last winter we did it—we had a Thanksgiving service on the Sunday before Thanksgiving. Then we had a Christmas Eve, not on Christmas Eve, we had a Sunday evening 'Birth of Savior' service, which we try to — we tend to stay away from some of the terms that are flare words among some, particularly some of the older members of the congregation.

A small percentage of your congregation may be a little bit uptight about this. If they really are going to have a lot of trouble with it then, they can just not come that night. That's what we suggested to our people — that if you do not find that viable, then trust us a little

bit, but we won't force you to be there. There are other congregations around, so go to those. That's basically the way we handled introducing the chorus (into worship services). The choruses sang several times (in worship services) over the last year and a half. That was into Christmas, Thanksgiving and then Christmas — then twice in January, in February and then we had Easter. Now it was about that point we had a problem because the crucifixion and Resurrection service was on Sunday morning. You can't have a sunrise service at 6:00 P. M. It just doesn't make sense. As a consequence we had a bit of a problem with that.

We had one other problem which we're going to hold back on — we had readers of the Bible, the five people were up on the front pew with a hand held mike. You couldn't see anybody. There was an older man, a middle aged man, and a young boy, **and an older woman, and a younger woman.** The older woman and the younger woman were where we had the problem because it was a female voice that was heard in this worship service. **The elders** said, "No, there's nothing wrong **with that**" but some people who didn't hold with the same views did have some problems. So we said we couldn't start a chorus, and we can't have the women start taking a more active public part in the worship at the same time — that's simply too rich a diet. So we're backing **off on the woman doing** anything of that nature. We may do it — I'm not sure; however, we may do it on the 'Birth of the Savior service' on Dec. 11th. We're having one person — one female voice — I want desperately to do that. **We're going to 'back off and work it in at a later time.**

We're changing — Minter Lane congregation is not alone in using chorus in the worship service. There are others that are doing this around here. In Houston there are two or three that are using a chorus in the worship service. On the West Coast — there are about four or five congregations that are doing this. It is a very slow moving thing. The people in the Eastern part of the United States are slower to change. I'm very sad to say, because they seem to be a bit more conservative.

I think we had about twenty singing in a men's chorus — not a large auditorium — seats about 400 — sang from the balcony. We have a hard ceiling—a very good sound. **It's a good place to perform.** It has a very nice sound. We started the worship service with that—welcomed the visitors, sat down and then the men's chorus started. It was a very impressive sound.

I'm going to show you the outlines that I gave them to put on my computer from this year's Christmas program —and another one we had for a Thanksgiving program and one for an Easter program, the men's program and the Prophecy program.

Now — congregational reading—the entire thing was printed in a bulletin we handed out to everybody at the beginning. O, Little Town of Bethlehem, the congregational reading — the left hand side of the congregation does first verse, the right hand side does the second verse, then everybody does the third one (verse). They've done this before a number of times, so everybody is familiar with the drill in doing congregational reading. You have not done it yet — so let me suggest that you think about

that, as a possibility because it involves the congregation. There's a technique for doing it...

You can see on this outline that we just sort of alternated chorus, congregational reading, congregational singing, reading, chorus, reading, etc. until we got all the way through the thing. The ending of it comes down here, The First Noel, congregational reading, chorus, a final reading, then we all stand and sing Joy To the World, I Carry the Maker of the World, is about Mary and her thoughts on carrying the baby Jesus.

About twenty years ago I began leading singing at Minter Lane congregation. **I started introducing a few new things at a time.** Later on, using the hymnal we would have one-half of the congregation do the first line of a hymn — the other half do the second line and everybody does the chorus. That works out very nicely. **That gets them used to doing something slightly different** — there are other ways.

I don't think you're quite ready, apparently, for the Christmas program that we had up here. Probably, I could come in with my chorus from Minter Lane, and do it, but I don't think that you could do it with your people. Now there's a curiosity — I don't think that you could do it with your own people, but you could have somebody else come and do a program. Because obviously, the ACU choir, the Harding choir, and the whatever-it-is choir, will come in and do a program — **and they will get by with it.**

There are two benefits that we have — first of all one of not inconsiderable benefit is we're using utilizing abilities of the congregation that they never thought were going to be utilized — and this their singing ability — the women's singing ability, most notably. That's one thing. The second is—you are increasing the amount of — the number of songs that the congregation can hear — the number of words that are available to them.

It came from the **Christian Chronicle**, first, many churches are uncomfortable with anything new or different in worship. **Thus, you have to do it very slowly and introducing the idea that change is attractive as long as it's not wrenching. If it's wrenching, you back off and slowly — try it again later.**" End of excerpt.

Allow me to close with a few observations. First, the patience and persistence of those who would destroy a church is incredible. They just keep coming back to "work it in later." Secondly, the true purpose of a chorus is clearly set forth: "to perform" and to have an "impressive sound." God forbid that we should allow the worship services to become entertainment! Finally, the course of institutional brethren seems set for destruction. Incidents like this one show that the trend is for more and more apostasy. Fortunately, many members of institutional churches just are not willing to go this far. This provides us with an unprecedented door of opportunity. Brothers and sisters in Christ, let us wake up and see fields that are white unto harvest! Go to your friends and relatives that are in the institutional camp, tell them of the continued digression, warn them that it will come to wherever they are and then urge them to stand for truth! Many souls are wondering if the church of Christ where

they attend is really what the Bible means for a church to be. Let's find those people and help them before it is everlastingly too late.

SIMPLICITY IN CHRIST

P. J. Casebolt

P.O. Box 1487
Chiefland, Florida 32626



"GIVING NO OFFENSE"

"We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain... Giving no offense in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed" (2 Cor. 6: 1-3).

Jesus said that "offenses will come: but woe unto him through whom they come" (Lk. 17: 1). Many are the passages, and many are the examples which pertain to offenses, but we will limit this study to those offenses which affect the ministry adversely.

More particularly, we will limit our brief remarks to congregational offenses, since I have just recently written about how preachers sometimes bring reproach upon their own labors.

I know of one congregation which encouraged a man to preach, even though he did not have the ability to do so. The man was willing, and the congregation recommended him to others, but would not let him preach at home because no one, except possibly his family, thought he could preach. After a few abortive efforts, the young man was frustrated, discouraged, and disillusioned.

I'm all for mutual ministry, and believe that we should train and encourage both full and part-time workers, that the ministry of which Paul speaks may prosper, but one qualification of such workers is the ability to do the work (2 Tim. 2: 2). Nothing is to be gained, offenses may arise, and the ministry may be blamed when we try to make an arm do the work of a leg in the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12: 14ff).

Another young man wanted to quit his secular job and devote himself to preaching the gospel. He had preached over Sundays on several occasions, and no one questioned his ability, desire, or faithfulness.

On recommendation and invitation, he "tried out" for a good congregation which had elders and was at peace. Again, the congregation did not question his qualifications, but wanted a man "with more experience." That congregation, after several years of experienced preachers, is now without elders and in bad shape.

Another congregation, weak and without elders, invited the same young man to work with it, and the zealous, would-be preacher was willing to go, but he

lacked support. When he asked his home congregation to make up the difference so that he would be making approximately what his secular job paid, he was told that no preacher needed to make that much. Discouraged, the young man continued in secular employment.

Another young man of my acquaintance had gone to school and trained to become a craftsman, and eventually obtained a good secular job, with good pay. But, he had also done considerable preaching, and again, no one questioned his ability or desire to preach. In fact, he was encouraged to give up his secular work in favor of doing more preaching.

After the usual rejections for "lack of experience," he finally found a congregation which was willing to have him come, but could not support him fully. But this time, the congregation did not want him to obtain outside support, because "it would look bad on them." He finally gave up in frustration and discouragement.

Due to attrition in the form of old age, death, apostasy, and various other factors, good preachers are scarce and in great demand. There will always be a demand for faithful workers, because their labor begets more work. Churches need to encourage, not offend prospective workers in the vineyard.


Just because the Lord said that offenses would come, is no reason for us to feel that we have a divine mandate to make certain that his prediction comes to pass.

SINCERE WORDS

"The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth (Ecc. 12:10)."

Dick Blackford

P.O.Box 225
Owensboro, Kentucky 42302



A PORTRAIT OF THE BRIDE ON HER BIRTHDAY

In the Scriptures the church is depicted as the bride of Christ (Eph. 5: 23-27). We can know with some degree of accuracy when the church began. The New Testament teaches that it began on the day of Pentecost (Isa. 2; Joel 2; Acts 2). Pentecost was one of three annual feasts of the Jews. It always fell 50 days after the Passover. Passover always came on the first Sabbath after the first full moon following the Vernal Equinox. Using the Jewish method, that would make Pentecost fall on May 14, 1989.

Let us sit down together and view the great portrait of this beautiful bride. It is a masterpiece.

Her Price

As in ancient times when a dowry was paid, so the husband paid a great price to obtain this bride. It cost him his blood (Acts 20: 28). The ultimate price that one can pay for anything was paid by Jesus Christ. He gave his life. My, how he loved her!

How does this compare with the view of those who minimize the bride by saying the church is not important, "you don't have to be a member of the church," "church attendance is not necessary," etc. ? The attitude that some have toward the bride reflects on the bridegroom's intelligence. It also belittles his love for her. Which do you think is right?

Her Purpose

The church makes known "the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. 3: 10, 11). That wisdom is seen in that the church is the realm to which Christ adds the saved (Acts 2: 47). He is "the savior of the body" — the church (Eph. 5: 23; 1: 22, 23). WHY does he do this? "That he might present the church (his bride) unto himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5: 27). HOW does he do this? By "nourishing and cherishing" her "because we are members of his body," the church (v. 29, 30). WHEN does he do this? Initially, by the washing of water by the word" — at baptism (Eph. 5: 26; Acts 22: 16). And continually, as Christians "provoke one another unto love and good works" by "not forsaking the assembling of themselves together" (Heb. 10: 25). The church is the "pillar and ground of the truth" (I Tim. 3: 15). The church at Thessalonica was commended for "sounding forth the word of the Lord" (I Thess. 1: 7, 8).

What does this tell us about churches whose mission

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is perverted toward social work, recreation, and entertainment? Remember, Christ does not want a bride with spots, wrinkles, and blemishes. Paul said "For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy: for I espoused you to one husband, that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ" (2 Cor. 11: 2).

Her Permanency

When Daniel prophesied of the kingdom (the church) he said "it shall never be destroyed," that "it shall stand forever," and that it is an "everlasting kingdom" (Dan. 2: 44; 7: 27). John wrote of the church as "a bride adorned for her husband" and recorded an angel as saying "Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the wife of the Lamb" (Rev. 21: 2, 9). The Hebrew writer referred to it as "a kingdom that cannot be shaken" (Heb. 12: 28). And Paul said the church would manifest God's glory "for ever and ever" (Eph. 3: 21).

Her Plea

As with any portrait, we cannot get a total view of all that the picture represents.

Would you like to know more about this kingdom that shall never be destroyed? Would you like to be a part of the church which wears the name of the bridegroom, which has no plan but to be "of Christ" in all that it teaches and practices? If so, please accept this as an invitation and a plea to learn how you can be a member of the bridal party, partake of the marriage feast, and be "married to Christ" (Rom. 7: 4). Investigate the church of Christ nearest you.

A BURNING FIRE

(Jer. 20:9)

Jim Deason

Rt. 1, Box 153
Culleoka, Tennessee 38451



ATTITUDES AND ISSUES

It was good for me to attend the Nashville Meeting back in December. It gave me an opportunity to hear both sides of old issues discussed. Many who are my age and younger were not around for, or we were too young to understand, the heated battles fought over the institutional issues. And we were not there to experience the heart-wrenching rending of long held friendships. But whoever said that "truth has nothing to fear from the crucible of open and honest investigation" certainly spoke the truth.

Jesus taught this principle when he said, "And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who practices the truth comes

to the light, that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God" (John 3: 19-21).

There is a question that has been raised in the discussion of these issues that I think needs to be given more than just a passing remark. That question is, "Are brethren divided because of the sour attitudes of crankish-minded brethren or are real substantive issues of conscience involved?"

Let me first admit that in my limited preaching experience, all of which has been among non-institutional brethren, I have come across more than a few who seemed to be "born in the objective case and kickative mood." But I doubt that cranks are the sole property of non-institutional churches. I rather suspect that institutional churches have their share of them as well.

Bad attitudes are a problem in any local church, institutional or non-institutional. Recently I attended the homecoming basketball game of the school my children attend and during the course of the game I visited with a member of an institutional church. I asked him to visit with us at his convenience and he rather rudely said, "no!" He continued, "I don't go along with all of that stuff!" I couldn't help but wonder, "what stuff?" Did he not know that, in the things which his non-institutional brethren practice, his practice is virtually identical? He can attend the services where I preach and not violate his conscience at all. However, I cannot attend worship regularly where he attends because I would be called upon to participate in activities which I believe are unscriptural and unauthorized. Non-institutional churches are not the ones who practice the "stuff over which we are divided!"

This brings us again to the question of why we are divided. I don't believe it is a bad attitude to say that I can't worship with brethren who use the mechanical instrument of music in worship. *The division over instrumental music is a division over whether or not the use of the mechanical instrument in worship is right in the sight of God, not over attitudes!* Surely, there must have been brethren on both sides of the question whose attitudes could have been better. But the division took place over a fundamental issue and not because of the attitudes of the disputants.

Likewise, my brethren, I don't think it reflects a bad attitude for me to say that I can't worship in a church that either is a sponsoring church or sends money to one. It's not a bad attitude to say that I can't worship with a local congregation who uses its treasury to build and maintain human institutions. It does not reflect a bad attitude to declare that I can't be a member of a church that uses its collective funds and other resources to build "family life centers" and other such unscriptural and unauthorized activities. *I understand the Bible to teach that to engage in such activities is sin* and therefore I cannot and I will not have a part in such or fellowship those who do.

These conclusions were not reached because I like being alienated from the majority of my brethren or I enjoy being in a fuss. My Bible teaches me to be a lover of peace. But if the price for peace is the compromise of studied and genuine conviction, it is too high a price to

pay. Such is not paying the price to have a "good attitude," *it is selling out one's faith* and to be avoided at all costs.

Let us all do our best to exercise the wisdom that comes from above that "is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy" (Jas. 3: 17) and realize that "the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace" (Jas. 3: 18). But let us also understand that this "seed" of the kingdom is the word of God, the saving gospel of Jesus Christ (Lk. 8: 11; Rom. 1: 16). The apostle Paul was a defender of this gospel (Phil. 1: 16) and we are told to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). The word "compromise" as it relates to truth should not be in our vocabulary.

EXTRAVAGANT LOVE

J. Wiley Adams

103 Ridgeland Drive
Warner Robins, Georgia 31093



The love taught by Jesus Christ in the New Testament is a new kind of love. It required active good will expressed in terms of doing that which is in the best interest of **others** rather than **self**. This viewpoint on love frustrated the Scribes and Pharisees, baffled the people as a whole, and astounded the disciples of Christ. It continues to have this effect even now. After all, whoever heard of loving your enemies? The love Christ taught requires much more in its expression than most are willing to give.

Look at nature, if you will. It is one grand extravaganza! We are staggered at the enormity of the universe, our own solar system, and the earth on which we dwell. We are overcome by the vastness of everything around us, the variety of the various plant life, the endless species of life forms, each beautiful in its own way, none without purpose in the overall system of things, and no disharmony until man intervenes and seeks to mess it up.

Take a flower, for instance, to illustrate. Any flower will do. Look at it. Look how exquisite it is in its own right and how beautiful, intricate in detail and breathtaking in effect. And, this is just one flower! God is indeed extravagant in what He has put here for man to use and enjoy.

When it comes to spiritual matters, look at God's scheme for man's redemption from sin and his lost condition. It takes extravagant love to give one's only begotten Son for the salvation of an undeserving mankind (Jn. 3: 16). We are staggered by the generosity of

God in giving us all spiritual blessings in Christ (Eph. 1: 3). We are thrilled at the grand blend of the simplicity of the gospel (Rom. 1: 16) together with the overwhelming profundity of it all.

Then there is Heaven for the righteous. Who can fathom eternity with God? We are told of its mansions in John 14 and caused to think again in terms of extravagance. John, in The Revelation by inspiration gave us some awesome glimpses of that wonderful place. If the glimpses are awesome, what must the full realization of it be like?

Man has failed so miserably to comprehend the love of God and His Son. Man is so selfish in comparison. "All for self is the motto of many if not of most. Sacrificial love is what God wants and not a frugal, just enough to get by or simply a duty kind of thing, but extravagant love. Paul taught this principle in I Cor. 15: 58 when he said "always abounding in the work of the Lord." We have a current expression: "have a nice day and pass it on." That's the idea! God and Christ have shown us by demonstration what real love is and we are supposed to "pass it on" in our own dealings with the world and our brethren as we render service to God.

When we understand that love is to abound, husbands will not abuse headship, wives will not scorn subjection. Obedience will become second nature to children. Brethren will not inquire as to how much to put into the contribution basket. They will not ask how many services to attend. Preachers and elders will not have to plead, coax, beg, and persuade the brethren to teach their neighbors the truth. Preachers in hard places will not have to get down on their knees and beg for their support in gospel work. Brethren will content themselves with a "thus saith the Lord" in matters of faith and practice. In the face of God's love in action among His people the devil "will flee from us" and the false teacher will not have the courage to hawk his wares in the face of such formidable opposition.

Brethren, God's love is extravagant! Let us all imitate that love.

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BIBLE TABLES

Johnie Edwards
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There are many tables mentioned in the Bible. The word table is used in the Bible to refer to that which is provided on the table such as privileges given to God's people of the Old Testament and the provisions for Christians in the family of God today. Let's take a look at some Bible tables.

TABLES OF STONE

The ten commandments were written on tables of stone. "And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God" (Exo. 31: 18). According to Deuteronomy 10: 4 the tables of stone contained "the ten commandments." As the apostle wrote the Hebrew Christians he referred to this law as "the tables of the covenant" (Heb. 9: 4). As Paul contrasted the law of Moses and the law of Christ, he said, "Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart" (2 Cor. 3: 3). The tables of stone have served their purpose and God has taken them out of the way (Col. 2: 14-16). A careful reading of 2 Corinthians 3: 6-16 will help us to understand that the law written on tables of stone has been done away and we are subject to the law of Christ.

SHEWBREAD TABLES

The table of shewbread was placed in the outer chamber of the holy place in the Tabernacle. It was made of acacia-wood overlaid with gold. It was three feet long, eighteen inches in breadth and about two feet tall. There were twelve cakes on it and they were renewed each week. It is written, "And Solomon made all the vessels that were for the house of God, the golden altar also, and the tables whereon the shewbread was set" (2 Chron. 4: 19). A careful reading of Exodus 25-40 will give much information concerning the tables of shewbread. This is the only Bible table that God gave a divine pattern for its construction size. This shewbread may have helped to remind the people of God that "man does not live by bread alone" (Matt. 4: 4). The fact that bread was always to be on the table helps us to see our continual dependence upon our God.

TABLES OF BENEVOLENCE

A careful reading of Acts 6: 1-8 will introduce us to benevolence tables. The Grecian widows needed help. "Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, it is not reason that we should

leave the word of God, and serve tables" (Acts 6: 2). The brethren were directed to "look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business" (Acts 6: 3). The apostles needed to be out preaching the gospel while there were others who could take care of the work of benevolence. It needs to be pointed out that this work of benevolence was done within the frame-work of the local church, "among you," and no other organization was set up to do the work of the local church! This is the way it needs to be done today.

MONEY-CHANGERS TABLES

There are just some things not proper to do in the Lord's house. "And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of moneychangers, and the seat of them that sold doves, And said, My house shall be called the house of prayers; but ye have made it a den of thieves" (Matt. 21: 12-13). Doves were used in sacrifice by the poor under the law of Moses (Lev. 14: 21-22). As the Jews came from a distance, they would buy the needed sacrifices after they arrived in the city of Jerusalem. There were those who had "set up shop" to make money in the house of God as they sold and made change for the Lord's people. Certainly the religious Jewish leaders cannot be held blameless in this matter. Certainly somebody allowed these thieves to come in. Jesus showed his displeasure in this mis-use of God's house by overthrowing the tables of the moneychangers and ran them out of the Temple. Churches of Christ need to learn not to abuse the Lord's house today. We all know that the meeting house is not sacred, yet there are some specific things for which it was built and we must not abuse its use. Paul got after the Corinthians for abusing the Lord's supper as he wrote, "What, have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come" (1 Cor. 11: 22, 34). We can be out of order by using the meeting house or facilities paid for by the church for fun or frolic. If the Lord were still on earth, He surely would turn over some tables today and run folks out of the fellowship-halls and family life centers built by a lot of churches of Christ! We all need to learn "how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God" (1 Tim. 3: 15).

BETRAYAL TABLE

Can you imagine the look on the face of the disciples when Jesus said, "But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table" (Lk. 22: 21) Cannot you just see the apostles looking to see whose hand is on the table. Peter told John to ask, "Lord, who is it? Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas, Iscariot, the son of Simon" (Jno. 13: 24-26). Later, for thirty lousy pieces of silver, Judas betrayed our Lord into the hands of sinful men and he was crucified for the sins of the world (Matt. 26: 14-16). Would your hand have been on the betrayal table on that occasion?

THE LORD'S TABLE

The Lord's table is in the Lord's church and contains the Lord's supper. Jesus said to the apostles, "And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me: That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom..." (Lk. 22: 29-30). Jesus himself instituted the Lord's supper as recorded in Matthew 26: 26-30. The bread and the fruit of the vine called the cup was to remind the Lord's people of the body and blood of the Lord. On this occasion Jesus affirmed that the Lord's supper would be in the kingdom. Later we find the church of Christ at Corinth observing the Lord's supper. Remember the Lord's table was to be in the kingdom. Therefore the church at Corinth was the kingdom of Christ. The Lord's supper was observed by early Christians on the first day of the week (Acts 20: 7) and the Lord's table must be spread each Lord's day as we gather to worship God on Sunday.

A PREPARED TABLE

David said in the beautiful 23rd Psalm that The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want" (Psa. 23: 1). To help us appreciate the care of our great shepherd, he further said, "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies..." (Psa. 23: 5). Because of God's care and protection for his sheep, we can sit down and enjoy the blessings of God, even in the presence of foes roundabout. This lesson comes from the tender care of the shepherd watching over and making provisions for his sheep even while the wolves may be lurking in and around the sheep. Surely God loves and cares for his own. Are you a part of God's flock, the church?

SWIFT TO HEAR, SLOW TO SPEAK, SLOW TO WRATH (James 1:19)

Mike Johnson
P. O Box 626
Fultondale, AL 35068

James 1: 19 gives us some very important and practical advice. This verse says, "**Wherefore, by beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.**" James addresses this to his "beloved brethren." It has some advice that we need to consider.

James emphasizes that we are to be: swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath. Contextually, these exhortations seem to refer particularly to our disposition towards God's Word (1: 18, 21, 22). We are to be swift (i. e. quick/speedy) to listen to God's Word. It is difficult to learn when we are talking. We are to be more ready to hear than to speak. We must have a disposition to learn. We are to have a meek attitude that is receptive to truth so that we can understand what the will of the Lord is (Eph. 5: 17). The text also says that we are to be "slow to wrath." A person whose disposition is characterized by anger is generally not very receptive to the truth. It is hard for a person to listen to God when he is full of wrath and bitterness. So we are to be swift to hear, slow to speak and slow to wrath with regard to the reception of God's Word.

The principles of James 1: 19 about hearing and speaking would also apply in a more general way. Have you ever engaged in a conversation with a person who would hardly let you get a word in, and when you did say something you got the feeling that the person was not listening? I am sure that this has happened to almost everyone. Perhaps we have been guilty ourselves of always being quick to speak and slow to listen, instead of being quick to listen and slow to speak. It is very important for us to be good listeners so we can gain knowledge and wisdom.

There have been many maxims and expressions in different societies that have expressed this idea. In ancient times it was said, "Men have two ears, and but one tongue, that they should hear more than they speak." Another ancient quotation said, "the ears are always open, ever ready to receive instruction; but the tongue is surrounded with a double row of teeth, to hedge it in, and to keep it within proper bounds." A person named Xenocrates was once reproached by others, and he met their reproach with a profound silence. Someone asked him why he was silent? He replied, "I have sometimes had occasion to regret that I have spoken, never that I was silent." (**Barnes**) A maxim that many are probably familiar with says, "Speech is silver,

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Connie W. Adams

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silence is golden. "

There are various Bible passages which speak of the tongue in a similar way as James 1: 19. **Proverbs 10: 19** says, "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise." **Proverbs 17: 27-28** says, "He that hath knowledge spareth his words... Even a fool when he holdeth his peace, is considered wise..." **Ecclesiastes 5: 2** admonishes, "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty to utter anything before God..." **Proverbs 29: 20** has these words of wisdom: **Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? There is more hope of a fool than of him. "**

Today, in all areas we must be slow to wrath. Anger itself is not wrong (note Eph. 4: 26). The real question is how we handle our anger. Do we let anger stay with us? Does our anger lead to other sins? We certainly do not need to be quick to anger. We should not go around ready to explode. **Proverbs 16: 32** says, "He that is slow to

anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city. "

We need to be sure and take heed to the commandment of James 1: 19 and be **swift to hear, slow to speak and slow to wrath.**

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THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

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JOHN HAINS, Timmins, Ontario, Canada — The work here in Timmins is going well. We began five years ago with two families and now we are 30-40 in attendance on Sunday mornings. We have also adventured to start another work 55 miles from here in Iroquois Falls. There are four families meeting there now. We praise and thank God for this. We have recently baptized five more into Christ. We would appreciate your prayers for these two new works in northern Ontario.

DOMTNADOR D. ARCEGA, San Felipe, San Manuel, Tarlac 2309, Philippines — On January 30-31 the San Felipe congregation conducted a lectureship. Four were baptized the last day. The theme was "Restoring New Testament Christianity." The speakers were: Vic Tibayan, Pasay City (Manila); Andrew Gawe, Baguio City; Bert Enostacion, La Union; and Noli Villamor, Metro Manila. The topics were: "Restoring the New Testament Church"; "Restoring the New Testament Principles"; "Restoring the New Testament Form of Worship"; "Restoring the New Testament Distinctiveness." In the evenings we had an open air gospel meeting with these subjects: "Church Prophecies and Fulfillment"; "Denominational Errors"; "Authority in Religion Today"; and "Plea For Biblical Unity. "

JOE MCDONALD, 4924 N. W. 18th, Oklahoma City, OK 73127 — I have video tapes of the Nashville meeting. There are four tapes for \$50.00.

YOUNG BROTHER KILLED IN SOUTH AFRICA

(Editor's note: Christians in this country have followed news from South Africa with much interest and have prayed often for our brethren there. The following is lifted from a newsletter from Paul Williams, dated February 7, 1989).

PAUL WILLIAMS, P. O. Box 324, Eshowe, 3815 South Africa — Brother Solomon Mzolo phoned to say he had just baptized 4 young men—the same ones whom he had brought from Greytown to attend our Bible school, including his son, Mbuso. Three days later on Sunday, January 29, brother Mzolo phoned again, this time to say that 16-year-old Mbuso had been shot to death the day before as he was walking home from town. I was asked to preach the funeral. I would have to be at Greytown at 7: 30 AM. Friday for a briefing from the security police. The funeral would begin at 9.

It was raining when David Nkonyama and I left at 5 AM. We were glad because riots do not occur in the rain. Captain Davis of the security police told us of the regulations governing the funeral. There must be only one speaker, the speaker must be an ordained minister, only 200 people allowed inside the hall, the mourners must go to the cemetery in vehicles not on foot, the whole procedure including burial must be finished by 12, the police would search the men going into the hall and would be present throughout.

There were probably more than 200 allowed into the hall, mostly young people, and the service was orderly and solemn. Paddy Kendall-Ball from Pietermaritzburg led the prayer, then I preached that God does not allow us to return evil for evil but that God will take vengeance. I preached the gospel as I believed it should be preached on that occasion. The hearers were attentive. And sad. It is not pleasant to bury a 16-year-old boy, a son whose parents will not see him again on earth, a brother from whom sisters and brothers are parted as long as they live. I was thankful that Mbuso appeared to have repented of his sins and truly obeyed the gospel a few days before he was killed. I was able to point to the hope given by the word of God, the hope that sustains Christians in such terrible times.

NEY RIEBER, 6413 Zion Church Rd., Sanford, NC 27330—Though I have had some difficulties with the new head chaplain at Polk (prison) in Raleigh, who wants to change things so that I can only baptize once a quarter, the prison work remains lively. In January I baptized 11 young men at Polk.

DEBATE ON CUPS AND CLASSES

On the nights of April 17, 18, 20, 21 Jeff Asher will meet George Battey in a discussion of the following propositions:

(1) "The Scriptures teach that an assembly of the church of Christ for the communion, must use one cup (drinking vessel) in the distribution of the fruit of the vine. "

Affirm: George Battey

Deny: Jeff Asher

(2) "When the church comes together for the purpose of teaching the Bible, it is scriptural to divide into classes for this teaching, some of which may be taught by women. "

Affirm: Jeff Asher

Deny: George Battey

Proposition one will be discussed the first two nights in the meeting house of the Dumas Drive church of Christ, 5416 Dumas Drive in Amarillo, Texas. Proposition two will be discussed the last two nights in the Forest Hill Elementary School Cafeteria on the corner of Grand Ave. and Amarillo Blvd. East (3601 Amarillo Blvd. East). For more information contact either Jeff Asher (806) 383-4451 or 352-2795, or George Battey (806) 376-1042.

D. E. (EULANE) WALKER, P. O. Box 532, Union City, TN 38261 — April 1 st, 1989 marks the beginning of my ninth year with the First Street church here in Union City. The past eight years have been pleasant indeed. In recent weeks we have seen two repent of waywardness. In February a lady in her 70's was baptized. She was formerly a Methodist. We have a weekly radio program. Dan King will be with us in a meeting April 2-7, then Bill Cavender will be here in August or September.

DAVID PADFIELD, 2612 S. Villa Dr., Evansville, IN 47714 — **GENE TAYLOR** and I have started a small publication that will contain clip art for use in church bulletins and class booklets. We have no grand plans for the paper—we simply want to help church bulletin editors "adorn the word." Each issue will contain 10-12 pages of clip art and "filler." The "filler" will contain capsule sermons and other brief teaching aids. The material is NOT copyrighted. Cost will be \$16 per year. A sample issue can be obtained for \$2 by writing to: Gene Taylor 3208 Baldwin Dr., West, Tallahassee, FL 32308.

PREACHERS NEEDED

HILLIARD, OHIO — The church meeting at 4840 Cemetery Road in Hilliard is looking for a full time gospel preacher. Our present preacher, John Gibson, who has been with us for 10 years, will be moving this summer. For more information call: Al Ferguson (614) 272-8099 or Dick Ogilbee (614) 876-4713; or write to: Church of Christ, Box 96, Hilliard, Ohio 43026.

PALATKA, FLORIDA — The Palatka church of Christ needs a full time preacher. The congregation is small with attendance of about 25. The work began just over two years ago in a challenging area. This is a town of about 19,000 with some light industry, good schools and a Jr. College. We can presently provide \$400 per month in support. Outside support would be needed. We meet in a rented hall. Contact Richard Vandagriff (904) 328-0811; or Bill Methvin (904) 325-2700. For background information on the work, please contact Keith Ward (904) 496-3976, or write him at Rt. 3, Box 1559, Lake Butler, FL 32054.



EXCHANGE ON DOMITIAN PERSECUTION

For many years there has been an honest difference among serious students of the book of Revelation as to the date of the book. The greater number of commentators have assigned the book to the reign of Domitian about 95-96 A. D. An increasing number of writers have taken the earlier date, before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. Associated with the later date is the view that there was a persecution against the church by Domitian. In his commentary on Revelation (**The Avenging of the Apostles and Prophets**), Arthur M. Ogden takes the earlier date and argues forcefully that there is no reliable historical evidence of a persecution against the church by Domitian. Ferrell Jenkins, who also has written a book on Revelation (**The Use of the Old Testament in the Book of Revelation**) and who is widely respected for his scholarship, takes the later date and believes there is reliable historical evidence for a persecution in the reign of Domitian. Both men are excellent gospel preachers and careful students of the scriptures. I have asked them to each prepare two

articles stating their views on this matter. I now have those articles in hand. They are to have a brief rejoinder and as soon as I have all of it in hand we will proceed with publishing it in STS. I hope to begin it in either May or June. The date assigned to the book of Revelation has much to do with properly understanding much of the symbolism of the book. This material should be a welcomed addition to our study of this subject, the kind of material you will want to keep. They have each done their work well and have written in a brotherly spirit to shed light and not to generate heat. Be watching for it and be prepared to file it away with your notes and books on Revelation.

WHAT IMPRESSED MARTIN

When our boys were small, and through growing up years, we took them often to gospel meetings. On the way home we would question each as to what particular thing impressed him about the sermon. This was designed to insure that they would pay attention. We took them one night to hear Robert Jackson in Akron, Ohio. Martin was a little fellow then and he sat on the front row. On the way home, we asked him what he liked most about brother Jackson's sermon. He thought a little while and then said "I liked his cufflinks." Robert had been a good friend for many years and we told him about it. A few years later Robert stayed in our home during a meeting at Manslick Road in Louisville and Martin was baptized during that meeting. Before Robert went home to Nashville, he called both boys into his room and gave each of them a pair of his cufflinks. That called for shirts with french cuffs. Both boys went to services with arms extended and their coat sleeves pulled up high enough to expose Jackson's cufflinks.

STATE OF THE CHURCH

There are still a few brethren around who remember J. Early Arceneaux. I had the pleasure of meeting and hearing him when he was quite elderly. Once he was preaching for a church in west Texas which was short on zeal. At a gathering of preachers, one brother asked brother Arceneaux how things were going where he preached. He hesitated a little and then said "Brethren, I am afraid that church is asleep in Jesus." And I am afraid there are still some of those around!

THAT'S FRIENDLY

Luther Blackmon had more "down-home" expressions than anyone I ever met. Once he described a man to me as being "as friendly as a wet dog." That's a little too friendly.

A FEW WORDS TO WRITERS

Writing is exacting and time consuming work. This editor has done enough of it to know how to appreciate the effort of those who are kind enough to put the benefit of their study in written form for the profit of all. We have a few requests of those who send manuscripts to STS:

- (1) The longer your article is, the harder it will be to find space for it. A manuscript of 3 and 1/2 pages typed will fill exactly one page in the paper.
- (2) All manuscripts must be typed, double-spaced with at least one inch margin all around the page. Some have sent me single-spaced articles. I have to send them back. I have neither the time nor enough help to re-type manuscripts.
- (3) The writer should put his name and address in the upper left corner of page one of the manuscript.
- (4) I FERVENTLY request that you use a paper clip instead of a staple to fasten your manuscript together.
- (5) If you prepare your manuscript on a word processor, please disassemble the pages yourself, number the pages and fasten them with a paper clip.

Attendance to these things will save the editor a great deal of time, and that does become a factor when working on a stack of 10 or 12 manuscripts.

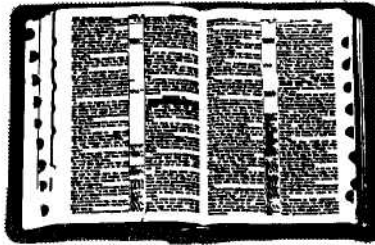
Thanks for your work, brethren.

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	237
RESTORATIONS	81
(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 XXX

MAY, 1989

NUMBER 5

THINK ON THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 1631
Lutz, FL 33549



EDITORIAL POLICY OF

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

The editorial policy of any paper sets forth right out front the purpose of that paper and the attitude to be expected in the presentation of the materials to be published. One can fairly well judge what he may expect from a paper which sets forth in concise terms its policy. I go to an editorial of August, 1972 to express the policy of *Searching The Scriptures* from the beginning. The policy today is the same as it was in the beginning.

"*Searching The Scriptures* had its beginning in January, 1960. From the beginning we have earnestly sought to use the printed page to study the word of God with all who will read and study with us. We belong to no man or group. We strive to serve no special human interest. We are not for sale to any man for any price, because our own salvation and the salvation of others is in the balance.

"In the first issue of *Searching The Scriptures* we set forth the only editorial policy we have ever had, which is still our only guide line in articles published. In that first issue we said: We have no policy but to be scriptural, fair, sincere, and faithful in our work as editors of this paper."

"I have made it clear that I am not bound to be in agreement with all who may write in this journal. Each person is responsible for what he writes. In the interest of fairness to all and for the sake of a sincere search for the truth, articles are sometimes published which requires a reply in the judgment of someone, and he should be heard. Of course, reason and fairness would dictate

that a reasonable length and number of articles be used.

"This monthly publication is dedicated to the search for divine truth as revealed in the inspired Book of God. Controversy is expected and we are not afraid of it. Sarcastic and abusive replies are expected in response to some things said, but we must say them in the interest of truth. We fear no man, but we do fear the God in whom 'we live, and move, and have our being' (Acts 17: 28). We do not strive to please men, but Christ, we do not persuade God, but men (Gal. 1: 10).

"We must do all the good we can and no harm at all. May God bless us to be faithful to His word, open minded to receive divine truth, unashamed and unafraid to boldly speak His word to all men, and to give God the glory for all good done to the very end." (From editorial of *Searching The Scriptures*, August, 1972, page 115).

Searching The Scriptures Needs Your Help Now

Connie W. Adams has continued this policy since June 1, 1973. He wrote in the May, 1973 issue, page 263: "Through time, many good papers have fallen into the hands of men who perverted them from the original purposes of their founders. We have spent much time together discussing that and related matters. We share the same concerns for the present and future welfare of the church of our Lord. We have common ideas as to the role a paper of this kind should have as a means of spreading the gospel truth and even in dealing with controversial questions."

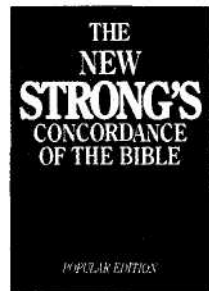
Brother Adams set forth his own direction for *Searching The Scriptures* in the May issue, 1973, page 264: "Those of us who write shall attempt to be clear, concise, candid, and always scriptural. When differences arise, as surely they will, we will do our best to practice the Golden Rule. The editor does not expect to agree with every sentiment expressed by every writer on every subject. Each one bears responsibility for what he says. Divergent views will be given a hearing when offered in proper form and in good taste. We shall reserve the right to decide when enough has been said on a subject and to choose what is thought to be the most representative material on a topic on which several have offered articles. We are aware that our writings constitute a part of our preaching and that we shall be called to account for what we teach. Our highest ambition is to please

God. We do not expect everybody to like everything we have to say and sincerely hope that the Devil and all his angels will be sorely displeased.

"This paper has not been a sounding board for extreme views nor will it be now. No space will be given to grind personal axes and perpetuate personal feuds. Should some error be made in presenting facts or views of another, we shall feel no embarrassment in offering correction."

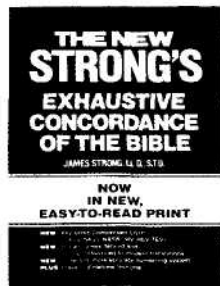
Brother Adams has edited this journal with the highest quality and in the best taste. He has not compromised doctrine or morality in his editorials. A wide range of subject matter has been presented during the course of a year by a variety of writers. In my judgment he has been fair and impartial in giving both sides of an issue an equal amount of space. He has not equivocated on any issue, but clearly states his own understanding of scripture. That is worthy of commendation.

Let me urge each of you who read this paper to send a list of five subscriptions for this year. That is not much money today, and it will do more good than you imagine. The cost of printing and postage has increased several times in the past 12 years, and that makes the cost much higher now than it was when brother Adams began his work with this journal. He needs and deserves your help and encouragement. Do it today!



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Searching The Scriptures

VOLUME 30 MAY, 1989 NUMBER 5

Published Monthly at
BROOKS, KENTUCKY

Second Class Postage Paid at Brooks, Kentucky
and at an Additional Mailing Office
USPS—487—440

CONNIE W. ADAMS, Editor

Office of Publication
52 Yearling Drive
Brooks, Kentucky 40109
Phone (502) 957-2257

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Editorial

Connie W. Adams

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H. E. PHILLIPS — A HERO OF FAITH

Among those men who have touched my life and influenced me in the work of the Lord, H. E. Phillips holds a unique place. His faith in the Lord and untiring devotion to the cause of truth have made him one of the true heroes in my life. This article is written as a tribute to him. Sometimes we wait until people have passed away to say kind things about them. I would like for him to "smell the roses" now.

I first met H. E. and Polly Phillips in 1950 when I preached in Lake City, Florida. I was 20 years old and had just married. There was a family in the congregation there who kept telling us about "Elwood" Phillips and his wife. They had worked in meetings in that area. During a meeting in north Florida, we met for the first time. His knowledge of the Bible and ability to effectively express it made a great impression upon me. Though older and more experienced, he put me at ease and treated me as a fellow-preacher. Polly's outgoing personality and sense of humor made her a delight. Here was a model marriage.

As the years passed and great changes beset the churches of the Lord, the character and conviction of this servant of God were tested again and again. It was his love for his brethren which prompted him and James P. Miller to start the FLORIDA NEWSLETTER which soon became the SOUTHEAST NEWSLETTER in the hope that communications could be kept alive while brethren had time to study the issues of sponsoring churches and the relationship of local churches to human institutions.

Searching The Scriptures

It was in January, 1960 when the first issue of SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES went into the mail. H. E. Phillips and James P. Miller had given birth to a periodical which has lasted now for 30 years. While both men wrote, it was H. E. Phillips who handled the editorial work. James P. Miller did much to gather subscriptions and help with the circulation of the paper. As the years passed, the pressure of the work took its toll. Determined not to let his work as a preacher suffer, he would attend to that during the day and then often work until 4 or 5 in the morning, writing, proof-reading and handling correspondence. It was a labor of love and it reached the hearts of many people and taught them the truth. But it exacted a price in terms of failing health. When the bills were greater than the income from the paper, he borrowed money, sometimes against

his insurance, to keep printing bills paid.

How many people have been influenced for eternity by these monumental efforts, only God knows. Always, the objective was to teach the truth, regardless of what it might cost. Error had to be opposed and that was not popular with some. Through it all, there was a spirit of fairness toward all. There was balance and the exercise of good judgment.

Two major heart attacks forced the decision to make other arrangements about the paper. When the agreement was reached that I should carry on with the publication of the paper, we met in Atlanta, along with two other brethren, to work out the details. We all got down on our knees, in a motel room, and prayed for the future efforts of the paper. We fervently prayed for my work, for loyalty to the Lord and the Scriptures, for my good health, for lengthening of his days and for his faithful companion, Polly, who stood by his side and sacrificed much in order that he might do the work he had undertaken.

In the years since that spring of 1973, he has been a rock of strength for me. There have been many times when I have called on him for advice in dealing with some of the difficult problems an editor has to handle. His concern has always been for truth. He has been open and candid. His writings have appeared on the front page of the paper, except for special issues when there was a sequence to follow. There has been variety in these articles but always there has been an appeal to the Scriptures.

True Friends To Young People

Not only have the Phillipses succeeded in rearing three daughters to serve the Lord, but all of their grandchildren who are old enough to be accountable are faithful Christians. That says a great deal. In addition, they have a large "extended family" of younger people (several of whom are preachers and elders, and their wives) whose lives have been enriched by the love and attention given to them in the home of these good people. When my sons went to Tampa to attend Florida College, I urged them to attend services where brother Phillips was the preacher. I knew they would hear the word of God preached without fear or favor and that they would be blessed by the personal association with the Phillipses. I was right. Our daughters-in-law also attended there and shared in the warmth of this couple as they were often in their home. Among those young people, so blessed, were two young Italian brothers who stayed in the Phillips' home while attending Florida College.

Common Memories

In 1976 we made a trip to Italy to preach. We met at Kennedy Airport in New York. I'll never forget the prayer offered by my good brother, as we walked off to a quiet place before boarding the 747 for Rome. The intense Bible discussions with Italian brethren, the adroit fielding of questions, the courtesy and good humor, the sense of gratitude for all the kindnesses shown us — these and many other like things, were incidental lessons to me. We wept together at our parting from the Italian brethren who came to bid us farewell at the airport.

When the darkest hour of my life came and Bobbie

crossed over to the other side, leaving me lonelier than I had ever been, Elwood Phillips caught a plane and came to be at my side. He sat with the family at the funeral. The prayer he offered at the funeral home is forever etched in my memory. His presence at the house the evening after the funeral, along with family and a few good friends, meant a great deal more than words can express.

We were with them in Nashville in December, 1988 to attend what has been called "The Nashville Meeting" where we sadly marveled at how far from the truth some of the brethren had gone.

In March of this year, during a meeting in which I preached at Palmetto, Florida, Elwood and Polly came down and spent a day with us. We had lunch together and spent several hours discussing the work of the Lord in general and that of the paper in particular. Once more, he lifted my spirits and encouraged me to stand for the truth. How could one not love such a friend?

Still At Work

Besides writing for the paper, H. E. Phillips serves as one of the elders of the Fletcher Avenue church in Tampa and shares some of the preaching with Everett Hardin. He still holds some meetings and probably could work in a few more. While health problems continue, his mind is keen and his interest in the kingdom of God undiminished.

Our readers should know that had it not been for H. E. Phillips, this paper would not be in your hands now. For whatever good you have received from the columns of this paper, you owe a debt of gratitude to H. E. Phillips. Why not take a few moments and write him a note. It will do YOU good, and it will lift the spirits of a genuine hero of faith. Thanks, Elwood and Polly, for all you have done for the cause of Christ, for this paper and for me and my family.

You may address them: P. O. Box 1631, Lutz, FL 33549

**WAKE THE WORLD
AND TELL THE
PEOPLE**

Wilson Adams
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Gambrills, MD 21054



**ANTIOCH—THE POWER OF
THE LOCAL CHURCH**

The greatest challenge facing the local church today is that of duplicating the record of gospel success that we read in the book of **Acts**. Like the example of Jesus Christ in our personal lives, we often fall short of living up to the standard (even the apostle Paul confessed his inadequacies, Phil. 3: 12) but that in no way argues against the need for a standard or its attainability. For example, to argue the impossibility of running a four minute mile is a moot point since it has already been done. (You would probably have a good case against my running a four minute mile!) But to look at the standard and deny its attainability is to argue in the face of historical fact. It has been done. Case closed.

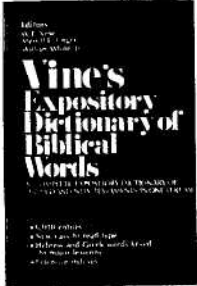
While the standard for living on this planet is Jesus, the standard for local church success has to be Luke's historical record in Acts. Page after page we see the exciting results of what happens when the gospel is taken seriously. Yes, when our hearts burn within us to the same degree as it motivated them, then we, too, will witness the spreading flame of New Testament Christianity light a fire in the lives of twentieth century men and women. Indeed, when people gain a glimpse of the King and come face to face with the majesty of the Messiah, pew warming and complacent Christianity are no longer options. Yes, Acts sets the standard. The question we face is not can it be done, the question is: how do we measure up? It's the challenge confronting every local church.

Power Amid Persecution

After seeing Antioch's example of enthusiastic reception of the gospel (article #1), and her commitment to quality teaching (articles # 2, and 3) we now focus on another aspect of this local church recorded in Acts 11-15. To properly gain a sense of the situation in the Antioch church one has to understand Antioch itself.

Antioch was not small-town-Roman-empire on an out of the way cow path. She was, in fact, the third largest city in the Roman world! Lying strategically near the coast of the Mediterranean she came to be the commercial capital of the empire and along her streets walked every class and culture of people.

Antioch had no rival when it came to sinful depravity. It was a city experiencing an open flood gate to every form of heathenistic idolatry, supernatural superstition and religious cult and quack. Gambling was big in Antioch, as was prostitution. The largest park in town



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housed the temples to Apollo and Artemis in which hundreds of priestesses (prostitutes) served the heathen populace. Indeed, living in Antioch of Syria was to experience life in the fast-lane with a moral climate offering the worst possible products of humanity. AND RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF IT ALL THERE WAS ESTABLISHED A CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST WHICH WOULD SERVE AS THE CENTER OF GOSPEL PROMOTION THROUGHOUT THE ANCIENT WORLD!

I want to say something to those of you who live in or near the Antiochs of the present day. Before we conclude that it is God's will for us to move out of the cesspools of corruption, filth and ungodliness that make up metropolitan living, we need to take a closer look at Antioch.

The monastic mentality is NOT the way of New Testament Christianity! So often we verbalize the desire to move to an isolated island and live for Jesus in a Utopian world where we are not bothered... a place where no one will persecute us or laugh at us... a place where we will not have to hear curse words or see immorality portrayed or count killings resulting from drug trafficking... a place where there will be no adult book stores, no vice, no crime, no temptation. I know of a family that tried to find that place. Not long after obeying the gospel they left the city for the security of isolation from worldly temptations. Living in a trailer accessible at times only by four-wheel drive they were "holed up" in their own little world; a "hide-out" from the devil. It backfired. While attempting to deny their children access to anything of the world they denied reality. Their extremism inevitably led their children to the opposite extreme. They ran. A son went to prison. A daughter gave birth out of wedlock. Another son grew bitter and a marriage ended in divorce. The monastic lifestyle did not deliver what they thought it promised. Their view of Christianity was warped. (By-the-way, for those who consider crime and corruption only a problem for those of us who live around big cities, you would do well to consider the shocking statement of Governor Terry Branston who recently reported that cocaine is killing two people per week in his state. Terry Branston is governor of Iowa.)

"As Thou didst send Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world" (John 17: 18). We need to understand that God want us to go where the people are. Yes, major metropolitan areas of the United States tend to be cesspools of darkness for sure, but such only points to the fact that that's where the light of the gospel needs to shine the brightest! (Mark 2: 17) Antioch was baptized in perversion but it also proved to be a fertile field for those seeking a better life. Then again, it was the same in Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi, or Rome. And today, centuries later, the names have changed to Washington, Dallas, Los Angeles, or Phoenix but the needs have not.

If the gospel could reach into the mega-population of Antioch it can do the same today in your city. **"But reaching people in metropolitan areas is tough, people are too busy, too preoccupied to listen"** is the response. True, but consider this. Don't you think it

was "tough" in Antioch? Don't you imagine there were a lot of preoccupied people there? Listen, **THE GOSPEL SUCCEEDED IN ANTIOCH BECAUSE THE CHURCH THERE WAS FILLED WITH COMMITTED CHRISTIANS WHO SOUGHT OUT SINNERS AND SHOWED THEM A BETTER WAY!** Question: What secret weapon of success did those brethren have that is not available to us? **NOTHING!**

But it wasn't easy! Acts 11: 26 says, **"... the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch."** While I believe that the term "Christian" was not something accidentally tagged on believers by the enemies of the cross, but rather was a God ordained designation and the fulfillment of Isaiah 62: 2; it was, nonetheless, a term that came to be applied in derision. James raises the question, **"Do they not blaspheme the fair name by which you have been called?"** (James 2: 7). The Antioch disciples were called **"Christians"** by God but in time that very name became a source of scorn, contempt and ridicule by the enemies of God's people.

"... but if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not feel ashamed, but in that name let him glorify God" (1 Pet. 4: 16). The Antioch Christians suffered because they were Christians. They were hated because their Master was hated (John 15: 18-21). They found themselves to be the object of ridicule and prejudice because they stood apart from the pagan community (1 Pet. 4: 3-4).

It took courage for them to do that. It took courage to confess Jesus Christ in a city where the odds were stacked against them. But they did it. Yes, in the midst of a big city with wall to wall pagan people etching out their lives in the perversion of the devil's darkness, there were Christians there, holding up a candle, spreading a little salt and telling others the story of Jesus. God help us to do the same wherever we happen to live. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power

of God for salvation to everyone who believes..." Nobody understood the principle of **POWER AMID PERSECUTION** any better than did the Antioch saints. It's a tough standard to live up to. We've got to try.

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Using the

**SWORD OF
THE SPIRIT***Ken Green*2212 Jordan Lane, S.W.
Huntsville, Alabama 35805**DON'T BE IGNORANT**

Hee Haw's Junior and Grandpa were lying in the front yard beside the pigpen. Junior said, "Sometimes I get to wanting to go and catch a wild mountain lion."

Grandpa said, "Why on earth do you want to do an ignorant thing like that, Junior?"

"I guess its just in me," countered Junior.

"What? Catching wild mountain lions?" asked Grandpa.

"No, ignorance," replied Junior.

Leroy Brownlow tells in his book, **A Time to Laugh; Grandpa Was a Preacher**, of one brother in a church business meeting who was accused of being ignorant. The brother declared, "I'll admit I'm ignorant. I wish I was ignoranter. I think its a blessing to be ignorant!"

The gentleman sitting next to him patted him on the back and said, "Brother, you're richly blessed!"

The apostle Paul did not want Christians to be ignorant. One of his favorite expressions was, "I would not have you to be ignorant." It is interesting and profitable to observe some of the things that we should not be ignorant of.

1. We should not be ignorant of the plans and motives of others (Romans 1: 13). At least, not insofar as we are able to ascertain these. Paul wanted the Christians in Rome to realize that it was not because he did not wish to visit them that he had not done so. He had often planned to travel to Rome, but had been hindered up to that time.

There were likely some who had impugned Paul's motives and sought to discredit him in the estimation of others. "He just doesn't care anything about you," these may have reported. But nothing could have been further from the truth. Paul had been desiring to preach the gospel in Rome for a long time.

2. We should not be ignorant of God's desire to save all men (Romans 11: 25). We easily lose sight of this and assume that some are so sinful or unconcerned that the Lord is not interested in them. Paul deals with the Jew-Gentile question in Romans 10 and 11. He shows that it was always God's plan to include the Gentiles in His program (10: 19, 20). But this does not mean that He was no longer concerned about the Jews. As matters had evolved, it proved to be a benefit for the Gentiles that the Jews had spurned the gospel. But Paul hoped that now that the gospel was fully preached to the Gentiles that the Jews would experience a change of heart and come to faith in Christ in great numbers.

"(God) desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2: 4).

3. We should not be ignorant of Biblical history (1 Cor. 10: 1-13). These things were written for our learning (Rom. 15: 4). If we are not careful, we may conclude that our temptations and problems are unique, and therefore the word of God does not deal adequately with them. But Paul says in 1 Cor. 10: 13 that "no temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man."

The summary of Biblical history that is sketched by the apostle in this chapter is a beautiful illustration of this principle. There could not be two people more different than the nomadic masses in the wilderness fifteen hundred years prior to Christ, and the Gentiles who lived in the Grecian city of Corinth that was known worldwide for its corruption and immorality. Yet the temptations were the same. And Paul stresses to those first century Christians that they should avoid the pitfalls that those ancient Jews had fallen into (vv. 6-12).

Biblical history teaches us that regardless of the era or area of our habitation, our temptations and trials are common to mankind. And regardless of our time or place, the only recourse we have is to trust in the faithfulness of God and seek His way of escape.

4. We should not be ignorant of spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12: 1). There has always been much ignorance on this subject. Many of the Corinthians were ignorant of the purpose of spiritual gifts. They had turned these into devices of pride rather than tools for service.

In 1 Cor. 12-14, Paul names nine spiritual gifts and shows that they were given to the end that the whole body might be edified. He shows that they were not intended to endure beyond their temporary need, but the truly essential qualities that reflect true spirituality will continue (Chapter 13). In the fourteenth chapter, Paul set forth regulating guidelines for the practice of those gifts while they endured.

He begins his discussion of this topic by saying, "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant." As he draws to a conclusion, he declares, "But if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant" (14: 38). And today, after studying all that is given on this subject, if one is still ignorant, I suppose he will just have to be ignorant.

5. We should not be ignorant of the troubles of others (2 Cor. 1: 8). Often we are so caught up in our own sphere of activity that we are oblivious of the burdens of others. Rather than taking quick offense when someone is harsh with us, let us look beneath the surface. Perhaps that one is carrying a heavy load. Love is kind and longsuffering. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Where possible let us seek to help bear the burdens of others; and even when we are not in a position to know the situation, let us be ever mindful of the possibility that our brother or neighbor is heavy-burdened.

6. We should not be ignorant of the hope that we have in Christ (1 Thess. 4: 13-18). We are given five facts here to which we may moor our anchors. First, we are assured that we have God's truth on this matter: "For this we say to you by the word of the Lord..." The only

One who is able to speak authoritatively and knowledgeably on this subject is God. And He has spoken.

The second fact is that Christ is coming again (vv. 14, 15). He who brought life and immortality to light at His first coming will come again to usher His people into their eternal inheritance.

Thirdly, the dead in Christ will rise first (vv. 15, 16). Their spirits will descend with the Lord (v. 14) to be united with a renewed, incorruptible, glorious body.

The fourth fact is that Christians who are living at that time will be changed and caught up with the saints of all ages to meet the Lord in the air (v. 17).

Finally, Christians will forever be with the Lord. This is our hope.

May every child of God apply himself unto knowledge and give diligence that he not be ignorant of these things.

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

7637 Fleming Hills Dr. S.W.
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STUDIES IN FIRST AND SECOND TIMOTHY

2 Timothy 4: DILIGENTLY PREACH ONLY THE TRUTH (V. 1-5)

As has been pointed out in previous studies, first and second Timothy contains instruction and warnings to the evangelical (minister) as to what is to be taught, done, avoided, and rebuked in order that he might "both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (1 Tim. 4: 16).

This last chapter of second Timothy begins with a very serious charge to Timothy. It is not a new charge, but one that has been emphasized throughout both of these epistles (1 Tim. 1: 3, 10-11, 18-19; 4: 1-6, 11-13, 16; 6: 2-3, 12-14, 20-21; 2 Tim. 1: 6-8, 13; 2: 1-2, 15-16; 3: 13-17). The seriousness of the charge is emphasized by calling attention to who it is from. It is made before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the chief authority in His Kingdom and the judge of all at this coming (v. 1).

The charge is to "preach the word - v. 2" (Scriptures — 3: 14-17; The faith - 1 Tim. 4: 1; 2 Tim. 2: 18; 3: 8; Truth - 2 Tim. 2: 15, 18, 25; 3: 7), not theories, philosophy, fables (fiction) - 4: 4. Any teaching other than this is not righteousness, or a good work (2 Tim. 3: 16-17). The charge concerns not only what to preach, but also how to do it. It is to be done urgently and persistently, "in season, out of season." Preaching the word is not a seasonal or convenience activity. This expression has been explained as "Take or make your opportunity." Marshall

Keeble has been reported as saying "preach it when they like it and don't like it." Keeping this charge involves "reprove" or reproving. This is not rebuking someone, but means to keep giving the scriptural ground or evidence that proves the faith. The charge does include the matter of "rebuke," which is to be given the false teachers and brethren deceived by them. All is a part of faithfully preaching the word. Sermons without scriptural backing, glorifying human philosophy, and carefully worded so as not to offend or expose error, is not faithfulness to the charge of this verse, and will not result in the salvation of either the preacher or hearers. Because preaching the word will result in sacrifice, scoffs, scorn, privation, even persecution, patience and long-suffering on the part of the preacher are necessary to his diligently continuing to teach truth.

Verse 3 gives an added reason for diligence and faithfulness in preaching the word. It is because of an increasing attitude of disrespect, and no desire for "sound doctrine." Man's desires will be for human fables or fiction; that which is ear-tickling and flesh pleasing. There were roving teachers of philosophy in those days who would teach or argue any line of thought that people would pay to hear. Especially popular was the teaching of the "gnostics" that you could indulge fleshly desires without the pain of conscience because only the spirit matters with God.

Let us observe that the scriptures make a distinction between "sound doctrine" (Scriptural truth) and fables or fiction (doctrines and commandments of men — Matt. 15: 9). Today, many people (preachers) make light of, and speak disparagingly of doctrine. They tell us "Doc-trine is not important - doesn't matter; only how you feel and live with yourself and others, matters." No matter what a man believes or does - because it feels good to him, there may be found some who will preach accordingly, for a fee. The ears that itch to hear teaching that will bless their sensual, fleshly ways, or intellectual egos, will always be able to find teachers anxious to scratch them, if it is to their financial good. Flesh and pride satisfying programs, though not scripturally authorized, appeal to many, and calls for a soft, palatable teaching that convicts no one of sin and is always tickling to fleshly ears. Such a course is popular, particularly to the more affluent, and with numbers and wealth they are able to pursue fleshly ways and pay preachers to bless them, never questioning the scripturalness (truthfulness) of their actions. Consequently, many have, and do, turn from truth to fables (v. 4).

In view of this, Timothy (and every true minister) is told to "watch-be watchful (sober-NASB) in all things" (v. 5). The word means a wakeful attitude, constant presence of mind, and ready discernment. Such must always characterize those who go about the work of saving souls. Furthermore, the true minister must willingly endure affliction. One who "fears what men may do" is almost sure to faint in the heat of battle. If God's minister does as Paul here instructs Timothy, when afflictions come, he will calmly "grin and bear it" while continuing to preach the word. "Making full proof of his ministry," means Timothy would fulfill every duty and

responsibility of his ministry, leaving nothing undone.

Follow Paul's Example (v. 6-8)

In verse 6, the apostle uses two figures to describe his approaching death: That of a sacrifice and a departure. His death would be an offering of his life, something that would be taken from him, for no reason except he had boldly preached the word in love.

Though he was to be killed, it would not be his end. It would only be a departure from one place to another — from one state to another. He described this departure to the Philippians as leaving a fleshly existence to "be with Christ" (Phil. 1: 23-24), and wrote the Corinthians that "If our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," therefore, considering the groaning and burdens while "at home in the body," this faithful apostle was "willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5: 1-8).

Verse 7 is a simple statement of facts (no boasting) concerning the life Paul lived in the flesh from conversion till the end of that life, which he said was "lived by the faith of the son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2: 20).

When the apostle said "I have fought a good fight" he was referring to what he had enjoined on Timothy when he said "fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life" (1 Tim. 6: 12). Paul was an example for Timothy, and us, in fighting a good fight. Faithfully preaching the word is a warfare, and involves fighting, not after the flesh, with carnal weapons, but against spiritual strongholds, imaginations, and high things that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God (2 Cor. 10: 3-6), using the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, having on what is described as the whole armor of God (Eph. 6: 10-18). Besides positive action in preaching the Word and exposing spiritual wickedness in high places, enduring hardness as a good soldier and suffering privation is part of fighting a good fight (2 Tim. 2: 3-4). Paul was doing this when he "fought with beasts at Ephesus" (1 Cor. 15: 32). Always, Paul manifested the soberness he demanded of Timothy in verse 5, so that he fought "not as one that beateth the air or ran as uncertainly" (1 Cor. 9: 26). Truly, Paul had fought a good fight.

The course that Paul said he had finished was that Christ set before him and which he humbly and willingly determined to run. At Paul's calling, the Lord said unto him "I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in me" (Acts 26: 16-18).

Paul told the elders at Ephesus that he was going to Jerusalem, being assured by the Holy Spirit that bonds and afflictions awaited, but "none of these things move

me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20: 22-24). He further said to these elders, "I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men, for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (v. 26-27). In his letter to the Philippians, he said "I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3: 13-14). It was a long, difficult course, but with faith, determination, patience, and much long suffering, Paul had come to the end, leaving Timothy, and all saints, a great example to follow.

The "faith" that Paul had kept was that which he preached to Felix and his wife, Drusilla (Acts 24: 24), and that for which Christians are to earnestly contend (Jude 3). It is the same thing that is called "the word" (2 Tim. 4: 2) and "truth" (2 Tim. 2: 15, 18, 15). Though some denied (1 Tim. 5: 8), erred from (1 Tim. 6: 10), departed from (1 Tim. 4: 7), made shipwreck of (1 Tim. 1: 19), Paul continued believing and contending for the faith, never faltering, until the end. No suffering, disappointment, persecution, or false doctrine could shake or shatter his faith. Truly, he "kept the faith."

The result, or reward, for having fought a good fight, finished the course, and kept the faith, for Paul, and every true lover of Christ (v. 8), will be the crown of righteousness (life - Rev. 2: 10), bestowed in "that day" (When he comes in judgment).

Awareness of Co-workers And Situations (v. 9-22)

These last few verses of this second epistle are a personal message from Paul to Timothy concerning circumstances, co-labourers, and the cause of Christ. Not much instruction for Timothy regarding his ministry is given in these verses, but much may be learned, by way of example, from Paul's awareness of situations affecting saints, concern for co-workers, and a constant willingness to sacrifice himself for the sake of his brethren in the Lord. A minister of the Word of the Lord will need to imitate these characteristics in Paul if he is to come to the end of his life's work with the success, hope, and confidence of the apostle Paul.

The apostle is facing death, virtually alone, and, therefore, has a great desire for his "son in the gospel," and co-worker (of whom he had no man like minded) to come to him as quickly as possible (v. 9). Reasons for Paul's loneliness are given in verses 10-12. One co-worker, Demas had forsaken Paul and gone to Thessalonica "having loved this present world." I do not know the nature of Demas' love for the world, whether it was for "things" (material), ease and comfort instead of the ridicule, persecution, and discomforts of working with Paul in the gospel, or a tendency to fulfilling fleshly passions, or all of these things. One, or all, classifies under "love of the world". Every minister of the Word needs to be warned by Demas that if they fall prey to such, they will fail to save "self along with all who might have been saved had there not been this defection.

Evidently, Crescens, Titus (Tit. 1: 4; 2 Cor. 2: 13; 7: 6, 13; 12: 18), and Tychicus (v. 12; Col. 4: 7; Eph. 6: 21) were sent by Paul to other places. They would have, no doubt, been a comfort to Paul in his hour of peril, but the cause of Christ was of more concern to him than his loneliness. This is just another example of Paul denying himself for brethren and the cause of our Lord, a thing that must be true of every dedicated evangelist.

Verse 11 mentions two men who were of great worth to Paul and the cause of Christ. The apostle says "only Luke is with me." Luke, the writer of Acts, in using the first person plural, shows he was present on such occasions, particularly on Paul's journey to Rome and to prison (Acts 27). He is referred to as "the beloved physician" (Col. 4: 13) and as Paul's "fellow-labourer" (Phil. 24). Some Bible scholars think "the brother who is famous among all the churches" (2 Cor. 8: 18) referred to Luke. Since he was a physician, and Paul did have "a thorn in the flesh," his usefulness to Paul could have been much more than just a fellow-labourer.

Timothy is asked to "Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry." This statement concerning Paul's desire to have Mark with him, and his profitableness to the ministry, was very complimentary of Mark. Mark turned back from Paul, Barnabas, and the work on the first missionary tour (Acts 13: 5, 13). This action disappointed Paul so much that he refused to take him along on the second journey, resulting in the separation of Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15: 36-40). We know nothing of Mark's work for a number of years, but evidently he redeemed himself from that early-in-life defection. He was with Paul at his imprisonment in Rome when the Colossian letter was written, in which Paul urged the Colossian brethren to "receive him" (Col. 4: 10). Now, as Paul faces the end of his earthly existence, he wants Mark with him, saying "he is profitable to me for the ministry."

The things Paul wanted Timothy to pick up from Carpus at Troas and bring to him (v. 13) may be suggestive of Paul's situation. The "cloak," said to be a round like garment, with a hole for the head in the center, and covering one like a tent, would certainly be beneficial to one in a cold Roman prison. The "Books" were papyrus rolls, perhaps early gospel writings, and the "Parchments," which some think were legal documents of Paul's Roman citizenship, were more likely Hebrew Scriptures, written on parchments made from animal skins. It may be expected that a faithful soldier of the cross, in prison and facing death, would want more than anything else, scripture and faithful brethren.

What Paul said about Alexander the Coppersmith (v. 14-15) does not show grudge-holding, but a wise observation that was the basis for telling Timothy to beware of him, and all such known enemies of the truth. Every true minister of the Word should be perceptive and on guard of such characters, and stay clear of them. Rather than seeking combat with them, follow Paul's example, and leave just retribution to the Lord.

At Paul's first answer (defense) he was disappointed and saddened, but not remorseful, that he was deserted by brethren who should have stood with him (v. 16). This

forsaking of Paul when on trial for his life was, evidently, not because of a lack of love and respect for him, but for fear of also being put to death because of their closeness to the apostle. Paul seemingly understood, and prayed that "it may not be laid to their charge." What a great example Paul here set for Timothy, and all other faithful ministers, who are disappointed in certain brethren!

Though forsaken by brethren at that trial, Paul was not actually alone (v. 17-19). The Lord to whom the apostle belonged, and served, who stood by to deliver many times before, stood with him, resulting not only in his being "delivered out of the mouth of the lion," but his having the courage, ability, and opportunity to continue his ministry among the Gentiles Paul was confident that such help from the Lord would follow him right on up to the time he entered the "heavenly kingdom." Timothy, if he remained true and faithful to his ministry, could have this same confidence of hope, and so can every faithful servant of the Lord.

This letter closes with greetings being sent to, and from various ones, and some final instructions to Timothy (v. 19-21). Greetings are sent to Prisca and Aquila (Acts 18; Rom. 16: 3-5; 1 Cor. 16: 19), household of Onesiphorus (2 Tim. 1: 16), Erastus (Acts 19: 22; Rom. 16: 23), Trophimus (Acts 20: 4; 21: 29). Joining with Paul in sending greetings are Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and "all the brethren." The Scriptures reveal nothing concerning these, though some speculation about one or two may be found in secular history.

The letter closes with a prayer for the Lord and his grace to be with them.

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"SOME DO AND SOME DON'T"

My wife's grandmother used a colloquial expression that covered a multitude of situations, and sometimes helped one get out of a controversial situation rather gracefully. More often than not when someone expressed a particular position in her presence, she would reply, "Well, some do and some don't." I don't see how anyone could argue with the truthfulness of that statement, whether or not they agree with what people do or don't do. Some of my liberal-minded brethren would be a whole lot closer to the truth in many cases if they would just admit that "some do and some don't."

A headline in a local newspaper reads. "ACU professors give revised hymnal for Churches of Christ an urban slant" (Gainsville Sun, Feb. 22, 1986). Those who released this information for publication could at least have indicated that this revision effort applied only to some churches of Christ. ACU, of course, stands for Abilene Christian University, which is supported by some churches of Christ, or at least by those wearing the name.

"Bringing in the Sheaves' is out because it's too rural, but 'Victory in Jesus' is in as the Churches of Christ (sic) adopts its first completely revised hymnal in nearly a half-century.

"We are a city people, we need city hymns," said Dr. Jack Boyd, a muscology professor at Abilene Christian University who served as music editor."

The article goes on to say that ACU's lectureship is "put on by the Churches of Christ" and that the younger people wanted music that fit them, and that "far too many of the hymns have rural imagery." Again, it would have been more truthful to say that some churches of Christ put on the ACU lectureship, and some don't. Also, some younger people may want to change from rural to urban imagery, but there are also some who don't.

In fact, I do not see how these ACU revisers expect to sell any songbooks to churches which have a rural imagery, of which there are several. There is no question that "Great Songs of the Church," with its premillennial origins needed some revising from its original form, but by eliminating songs with a "rural" imagery, they must also eliminate most of the Bible, both Old and New Testaments. If these same brethren revise the Bible (which some are doing unofficially), out goes the parables of Christ and much of his other doctrine. But, this should be an easy step for brethren who will not respect

the silence of the scriptures, an approved apostolic example, or divine patterns for the work, worship, or organization of the church.

Brethren used to claim that they had been misquoted when such articles as mentioned above appeared in newspapers. And, we have learned to allow for "editing" on the part of secular writers. But, when brethren print their own bulletins, write their own ads for publications, and practice the very things mentioned in newspaper accounts of their activities, no amount of editorial liberty can be blamed.

When it comes to scriptural or unscriptural practices in church of Christ, we could accurately say, "Some do and some don't." The same will be true in the judgment (Mt. 25: 32, 33).

A BURNING FIRE

(Jer. 20:9)

Jim Deason

Rt. 1, Box 153
Culleoka, Tennessee 38451



ENTANGLING AFFAIRS

The life of a faithful disciple of Christ is one of single minded dedication. The disciple's relationship with his Lord is to always be the guiding star of his life. To the Christian, every circumstance he faces in life must be viewed through the glasses of spiritual mindedness.

For this reason the apostle Paul told Timothy, "*No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier*" (2 Tim. 2: 4).

The greatest danger I face as a Christian is not that of committing some clear, easily definable sin. I have never been tempted to commit murder and to steal from my neighbor is presently the most distant thing from my mind. But there are far more subtle influences at work in our lives which threaten our relationship with the Lord.

Jesus has taught us to "... *seek first His kingdom and His righteousness...*" (Matt 6: 33) thus defining our priorities. Any man who would seek to please the Lord and go to heaven when he dies must live with the rule and righteousness of God as the center of his life.

However, it is so easy for us to get priorities out of order. Let me cite a few examples....

The Market Place

A regular part of everyday life for the faithful Christian is that of "*laboring... with his own hands what is good, in order that he may have something to share with him who has need*" (Eph. 4: 28). In fact, Paul told Timothy, "*if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the*

faith, and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Tim. 5: 8).

However, more than a few men have gotten so involved in their secular labors that they have forgotten their greater responsibility to the Lord. It's not uncommon in our age to see men choosing to work more overtime while not only missing services but rendering them almost powerless to do anything else related to the Lord's work such as teaching the lost, visiting the sick, etc. Sometimes such wrong can be attributed to outright covetousness, but at other times the problem is simply a matter of losing touch with the more important and misplacing our priorities... becoming *"entangled... in the affairs of everyday life."*

The Ball Field

Another important area of concern is our recreation. Certainly it is good for families to have time together in recreation. Our play time together, especially in our fast-paced society, can be used as quality time to draw us closer as a family unit.

However, it must also be recognized that we live in a sports-crazed world. Some folks are obsessed with recreation. They eat, breathe, and sleep to play. That which in moderation is a blessing turns into a curse. Again, it is a matter of becoming *"entangled... in the affairs of everyday life."*

A Plea

It appears that the list of everyday things in which we can become entangled is endless. The message for us then should be quite clear. Let's work to keep our priorities in order. When becoming like our Savior is the focal point of our lives then every thought and deed will be our passion, the ruling influence in our lives.

It will make us better students of the Book. It will make us a stronger influence for good on the job, on the ball field, in our neighborhoods, and in our families. More lost souls will be brought to the knowledge of the Savior. Dying churches will be revived. And nothing but good can result.

A friend once made this observation in a sermon he presented, "We have raised up an army in which only the generals do the fighting." His comment is probably more accurate than we like to admit. How utterly impotent we are to try to do battle with the forces of evil while soldiers are picking posies. With your life hidden in Christ *"set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth"* (Col. 3: 2) and let not Satan distract you from serving the Lord with all your heart (Matt. 22: 37).

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THE PARABLE OF AN INDIFFERENT EMPLOYEE

Norman E. Fultz
Rt. 29, Box 37
Kansas City, MO 64166

A teacher, though he'd tried several approaches, still felt he'd been unsuccessful in making the necessary impact upon some of his students, for their response so indicated. He thus fell upon the use of the following parable.

"An opening with a reputable company was advertised. It offered generous salary and an enviable 'fringe benefit package.'

"A young man who was working for another firm felt his present service unfulfilling. He had a gnawing emptiness, and he knew his present position would ultimately lead to sheer frustration.

"Upon seeing the advertisement, he decided the new position might be for him. He investigated and applied. In his interviews, he convinced his would-be employee of his earnest desire to be a part of their endeavor. He was hired. And he felt excited. He relished the thought of the good things available to him now that he'd changed masters.

"Howbeit, his record was less than admirable. He needed further training to perform efficiently. The employer offered such training by other employees that had proven themselves able, but the young man wouldn't attend the training sessions. His example of worker commitment was needed for others who were "coming aboard" and who'd be looking to the older employees for guidance and example, but he often missed work for no good reason. When told how his poor example was causing other employees to lag in their level of service, he simply retorted that his behavior was nobody else's business. Efforts to convince him otherwise proved futile. It was easily apparent that all he'd really been interested in was what he could get from the company, not what he could give in the way of dedicated service that could help the company to grow so it could offer the same benefits to many others that it had offered to him."

Now had you been the employer of such an individual, what would you have done? Write your answer in the following blank before you read further. I would _____

Wait! Stop! Did you write your answer? If not, please do it NOW. Do not read further until you do.

Now the parable is this: The young man's first employer is the devil, Satan, who through his servants "promise liberty" but actually bring into bondage (2 Pet. 2: 19). His early employment was as a "servant of sin"

(Rom. 6: 17). The advertisement was for the blessings promised through the gospel to those who would become "servants of righteousness" (Rom. 6: 18), the ultimate blessing being eternal life (I John 2: 25), a "fringe benefit" that is "out of this world." The young man is any person who has sought the salvation in Christ (2 Tim. 2: 10) through gospel obedience. His hiring is his obedience. His excitement is the rejoicing he experienced upon his cleansing from sin (cf. Acts 8: 39). His relishing was from his having "tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come" (Heb. 6: 5). His new employer is God (Rom. 6: 22), and the place of employment is in His kingdom (Mat. 20: 1 -16; Col. 1: 13-14). His negligence in the work place resulting in his poor example is the indifference and lack of commitment of those who have become Christians but who try to render the very least service possible but who still want the benefits of salvation (cf. Lk. 17: 10). They are those who think attending service on Lord's Day morning is all the Lord and other Christians have any right to expect. It is as though they had said to the Lord, "I want the benefits of your generous provision resulting from your death, but don't expect very much from me."

Wait! Stop! Think about this situation. How do you think the Lord looks upon that kind of a Christian? Write your answer. I think He _____

(Some possible answers: "... approves and considers them 'blessed of my Father'", Mat. 25: 34; "... disapproves and considers them 'lukewarm', ready to be spewed out of His mouth," Rev. 3: 16.)

The teacher hopes for the best when his students read the parable and its application, but in his heart he imagines those to whom it really applies will read it, ignore the instructions to write the answers after serious thought, and continue in their same uncommitted, indifferent service. For after all, when plain teaching from such passages of God's word as Hebrews 10: 22-25 have not budged them toward more diligent service, why would such a parable from a simple preacher's pen?

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According to the Statistical Abstract of the U. S. we have averaged 2, 405,000 marriages per year since 1980. For the same time period, we have averaged 1, 179, 333 divorces per year. From 1976-1985, there were 12, 104,000 reported child abuse cases. One-parent homes have increased with a 1987 high of 12, 955,000 cases. "Living together" arrangements rose from 523,000 in 1970 to over 2, 300,000 in 1987. Surely no one can deny that these statistics show the serious trouble that the home is in today. Although we might want to ignore it, we cannot. Therefore, let us consider what comprises a godly home.

In order for a home to be a godly home, there must be a **reverence for the marriage relationship itself**. In order to have the proper reverence toward marriage, there are some facts we must remember. When God ordained marriage, it was for mankind's good. Adam's being alone in the Garden was the only facet of creation that was "not good" (Gen. 2: 18). Therefore, God made woman, presented her to Adam, and they became husband and wife. Several other passages also point out that marriage is good for mankind (Prov. 5: 18-19, 12: 4, 18: 22, 19: 14, 31: 10-12, Heb. 13: 4, etc.) Further, in order for us to properly reverence marriage, we must remember that God ordained marriage for man and woman (Gen. 2: 21-22, Matt. 19: 1-6). When we reject God's design here and turn to homosexuality, we do nothing but cause trouble for ourselves, as AIDS shows us (Rom. 1: 26-32, 1 Cor. 6: 9-10). A homosexual is such by his own choice — God did not make him one (Gen. 19: 1-8)! Moreover, we must realize that marriage is for adults. When men and women marry, they agree to **leave, cleave, and be one flesh** (Gen. 2: 24). It takes an adult to realize that now he must handle problems and make decisions for himself instead of relying on Mom and Dad to do so for him. Finally, to properly reverence marriage as it should be, we all must remember and teach those who are younger that marriage is permanent. We see too much, even in the church, of the attitude: "Well, if it doesn't work, I'll dump her/him and get another one." Jesus said, "What therefore God hath joined together, **let not man put asunder**" (Matt. 19: 6).

Next, if we are going to build godly homes, there must be **reverence for places in the home**. Through the influence of numerous human philosophies, homes are much different than the pattern found in the Scriptures. The Bible teaches a specific order of authority in the home: the husband is to be the head, the wife is to be the helper, and the children are to honor their parents. The

husband, as a leader, is in a position of headship (1 Cor. 11: 3). That headship is compared to the headship that Christ has over the church (Eph. 5: 23-24). However, that headship is not responsibility free! Husbands are to love their wives as they love their own bodies (Eph. 5: 25, 28-29). They are to dwell with their wives "accord-ing to knowledge" so that their prayers "be not hindered" (1 Peter 3: 7). That is an awesome responsibility. It is not just a "bring home the bacon" and "expect treatment like a king" proposition. As God gives hus-bands the position of headship, He also expects great things of them.

Women also have a special place in the home. As a matter of fact, woman was created to fill a need for man that nothing else could fill — a "help meet" for him (Gen. 2: 18). But, just as with husband, the wife also has limitations. The wife's role is one of subjection to her husband (Gen. 3: 16, 1 Cor. 11: 3, 1 Tim. 2: 12-14, Eph. 5: 22-24, 1 Pet. 3: 3-6). ERA and NOW advocates don't like that, but that is the position that God has given the wife in the home. After all, we are talking about having godly homes, aren't we?

That brings us to the child and his place in the home. A child's place is to honor and respect his parents (Exod. 20: 12, Eph. 6: 2-3). To honor one's parents means to respect and revere them. If children want to please God in heaven, then they must learn to do just that. Each child should remember that Mom and Dad have already traveled the road of life. Therefore, they should respect the guidance and counsel by their parents as they journey down life's pathway.

Finally, in order for godly homes to be made and maintained, we must have a **reverence for responsibilities in the home**. Too often today, we see the responsibilities in the home neglected and then homes are destroyed. God has told us who is to do what, and we should listen, as His counsel is "for our good always" (Deut. 6: 24). The husband is to be the provider and leader of the home. That was so from the beginning, as man's punishment for his part in the fall was to work for his sustenance (Gen. 3: 19) Such passages as Eph. 4: 28, 1 Thes. 4: 9-12, and 2 Thes. 3: 6-12 teach that same principle now. Through honest labor, husbands pro-vide for the necessities of life for his family (1 Tim. 5: 8). If he is able but unwilling to do so, he is worse than an unbeliever, even an animal, and does not deserve children! But, the husband's role does not stop here. Husbands also have a significant part in the training of children. We know that from passages like Deut. 6: 6-9, Josh. 4: 1-7, Prov. 13: 24, Eph. 6: 4, Col. 3: 2, and Heb. 12: 9. All of them deal with man's role as a father to his children and cannot be ignored.

Likewise, the wife has responsibilities as a home-maker (Titus 2: 4-5, 1 Tim. 2: 15, 5: 14). The Feminist Movement would have wives to believe that this is a role of bondage and slavery, but any godly woman who has raised Christian children knows the blessings of being a homemaker. Truly, the home is realm where the wife is queen. It is there that she does her best work. It is there that she molds lives. Indeed, it is there where she can have the single most powerful human

influence possible (Ezek. 16: 44, 2 Tim. 1: 5, 3: 14-15, 1 Pet. 3: 1-6).

Children are to obey their parents as well as honor them. "Children obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right" (Eph. 6: 1). "Children obey your parents in all things: for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord" (Col. 3: 20). We should also consider Solomon's words, the wisest man to ever live (1 Kings 3: 9-12). He wrote about the son receiving instruction from his father (see 10: 1, 13: 1, 18, 15: 5, 10, etc.) As we learn from the mistakes that Solomon made in marrying foreign wives, we should learn that children are to be obedient to their parents — and not the other way around.

Certainly, we have serious problems in the home. What can we do to solve those problems? Rather than just giving temporary relief, let us cure the problem: obey what God's Word teaches about it. When we do that, our homes will be stronger, happier, and we will be enjoying a foretaste of heaven itself.



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When the prophet Isaiah carried God's warning to the nation of Judah he warned them about their idolatry and then said, "**Remember this, and shew yourselves men: bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors**" (Isa. 46: 8). The Holy Spirit here used the word "men" in opposition to "child," or "children." In fact, several times the word "men" is used to show that there is a time when we must get on with developing maturity, with being serious about what we are doing. In 1 Samuel 4, when the Philistines saw that the ark of the covenant had come into the camp of the children of Israel they said: "**Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you: quit yourselves like men, and fight**" (I Sam. 4: 9). "**Quit yourselves like men**" seems to mean that they were to ACQUIT themselves, conduct themselves, as men, not as children or as cowards. Almost at the end of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians he told them. "**Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong**" (I Cor. 16: 13).

As the followers of Jesus there is a time to be a child, and there is a time to be a man, one who has matured in the faith, and who stands firm and strong in that faith. On one occasion when the disciples were arguing over who would be greatest in the kingdom of heaven Jesus called a little child and said: "**Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven**" (Matt. 18: 3). And Paul wrote to the Corinthians. "**Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be ye men**" (I Cor. 14: 20). In this passage the word "men" is from the Greek word "teleios" which means perfect or of full age. While we are all to be like children in some ways, yet God truly expects us to be perfected, to become mature in spiritual things, to be serious about being Christians.

This theme of perfection is found over and over in the pages of the New Testament. As the apostles taught and wrote they frequently urged Christians to grow. When Paul wrote his second letter to the Corinthians he said: "**For we are glad, when we are weak, and ye are strong: and this also we wish, even your perfection**" (chapter 13, verse 9). Further, when Paul wrote to the Colossians about that which was done for them in Christ, to reconcile them to God, and to keep them grounded and settled he said: "**whom we preach,**

warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Col. 1: 28). Part of God's plan for us is that we do not remain as babies or children, but that we mature into those who are strong and standing fast in the gospel of Jesus.

Do you remember a time when Christians were thought of as people who knew the Bible, and some were even called "walking Bibles?" Is that still true today? Well, there are some of course who seem to know quite a lot about the Bible, but it seems to me that there are a lot more Christians who know very little about it; who know only the very basics. The Hebrew writer warned the Jewish Christians about this in Hebrews chapter 5. He wrote: "**For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection**" (Hebrews 5: 12-14; 6: 1). Many today seem just like that, having failed to go on to maturity as children of God, and needing to be constantly fed on the milk of the word.

How do we go about becoming men? Is there some magic formula we can use? The formula is not magic, but if we apply it, it will work every time. Peter wrote: "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (I Peter 2: 2). There is a time when we must feed on the milk of the word, so that we can go on to eat the meat of the word. But unless we DESIRE that spiritual food, and make an effort to eat all of it we can get, we will never grow as we should. While the apostles and prophets of the New Testament received revelations directly from God, many others did not; they had to study. Paul wrote to Timothy and said, "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine" (I Tim. 4: 13). And in his second letter to Timothy Paul wrote: "**Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth**" (2 Tim. 2: 15). Why are our Bible classes seemingly drawing fewer and fewer people? Perhaps because sometimes they are dull or boring. But in truth, there is so much to learn from the Bible that despite the routine which we follow we can learn something. I suspect that the real reason why attendance to Bible classes is falling is lack of interest in the word of God. But some are interested, and can hardly wait to learn more. For our sake, and for our children, let's be sure that we never miss a Bible class period. Not only will we learn from God's word, but we are developing good habits in our children. Here's something else you might try: in addition to those Bible classes arranged by the elders of the local church, start a Bible class in your home or rotating from home to home one night of the week. Some won't come because of prior commitments. Some won't come because it's inconven-

ient. Some won't come just because they aren't interested. But some will come, and it will give you a wonderful opportunity to study things you might never get around to in an assembly. And those who come will further benefit from the association with brothers and sisters in Christ and a much closer feeling. Further, it is possible to attract some non-Christians to a home class who probably would not come to the meeting-house.

I have often wished you could open up the top of your head and pour in God's Word, but we all know it doesn't work that way. The only way to be "men" in spiritual things is to find some time, turn off the TV, and study what God says. Brethren, it's time to "**quit you like men;**" it's time to get serious about being Christians.

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

TOM MOODY, 4001 Taylor Blvd., Louisville, KY 40215—In 35 working days in India, GERRY SANDUSKY and I preached 80 times and taught 45 public classes. We spent many hours in private studies and discussions. 31 precious souls were baptized in the places we preached. Six were baptized in two places visited by Bill Beasley and Allan Martin. A small congregation was established in one village where the gospel was preached for the first time. If there had not been one baptism while we were there, the intensive study and preaching efforts would have still been well worth the time and energy expended. However, to see visible fruit as "God gives the increase" is a source of rejoicing. On our way home we spent a week with the church in Tunbridge Wells, Kent, England where Derek Daniel works. Gerry and I each spoke five times there. Gerry Sandusky's expenses were fully paid by the congregation in Madison, Indiana, with which he works. My expenses were paid by the South End church in Louisville where I work.

DEBATE ON THE GODHEAD

There will be a debate in Leitchfield, Kentucky, June 12, 13, 15 and 16 on the subject of the Godhead between Perry Hall (Christian) of Caneyville, Kentucky and Nathan Lowe (Pentecostal). The debate will take place at the Middle School in Leitchfield at 7 P. M. on the nights designated.

SPECIAL EFFORT TO BE MADE IN DULUTH, MINNESOTA

WILSON COPELAND, 9747 Union Terrace Lane, Maple Grove, MN 55369— A special door-to-door effort is being planned for this summer in Duluth, MN. The brethren plan to begin a two weeks effort on Monday, July 17 and conclude on Sunday, July 30. The first week we will knock on as many houses as possible to set up personal studies for the evening hours. Invitations will also be given for the preaching services that will be held the second week (July 23-30). Six preachers have already committed to helping: Jady Copeland, Springdale, AR; Rick Lanning, Maple Grove, MN; Keith Barclay, St. Paul, MN; Rennie Frazier, Red Wing, MN; Lance Bailes, Pine City, MN; and myself.

The congregation at Duluth is very small, so sleeping accommodations with brethren are very limited. The brethren will help in any way possible, but you most likely will have to provide your own lodging. Might it be possible for some preachers to get expense money from their home congregations to help in this effort? Are there other brethren who might be able to take a few days vacation and support us in this work? If you cannot come for the full two weeks, whatever time you could help would be appreciated. For more information contact me at the above address or call: (612) 424-4097. Or, contact Melvin Krumrei, 612 West Tischer Rd., Duluth, MN 55803. Phone (218) 728-1087.

EFRAIN F. PEREZ, Apartado 27026, 08080, Barcelona, Spain— We have been in Spain two weeks now and are getting settled. I have already begun my preaching and teaching with the church at Badalona. We are thankful to all who helped us to come here. Please pray for us.

FREDERICK JACKLETT, P. O. Box 654, Mariposa, CA 95338 — My wife, three children and I have moved from Ash Fork, AZ where we worked for four years, to work with the church in Mariposa, California. W. L. Norton and wife began the work here about ten years ago, and I am the first to work with them full time. We encourage brethren visiting Yosemite National Park to worship with us. We meet on Highway 49 south of Mariposa. If you know people in this area it would be helpful for us to contact, please let us know. My phone number is (209) 966-4281.

ROSS E. BERRY, 200-15 32nd Ave., Bay side, NY 11361 —Recently the church of Flushing, New York began meeting in a new meeting place. The new address is 200-15 32 Ave., Bayside, NY 11361. Albert Dickson and his family faithfully work with this congregation. One of two faithful churches in greater New York, we have grown to ten families. We meet each Lord's Day at 9: 30, 10: 45 and 5: 30. Midweek classes are held on Thursdays at 8 P. M. Dempsey Collins of St. Peters, MO will be with us for a series of meetings May 7-12. We look forward to continued growth. Although difficult, the work is very encouraging. Phone numbers are (718) 463-0234 or (718) 445-2773.

TEACHER WANTED FOR IN-DEPTH BIBLE CLASSES

The Danville church is seeking a teacher to assume Kelly Ellis's classes in an intensive program of Bible studies. Brother Ellis, who initiated these classes and devoted twelve years of his life to them, died last December. The Danville church has continued these classes under their local preacher, Steve Wolfgang, and has used such men as Art Ogden, Wayne Galloway, and Billy Ashworth on a temporary basis during the 1988-89 term.

The elders of the Danville church are committed to the continuation of this program, and feel the need for a second teacher who can work with Steve Wolfgang for an entire nine month period of classes. Thus, they are seeking a mature, capable Bible student who had the ability to teach others and has extensive experience in preaching. This opportunity would be ideal for an experienced preacher, recently retired and on Social Security; or one who, like brother Ellis, has been a teacher or has educational experience and credentials. However, those in other circumstances will be considered. Financial remuneration, at about a "half-time" level, would be sufficient to supplement other income from retirement, or some meeting work, or other possible arrangements.

Courses to be taught include mostly New Testament books, but also include Old Testament books such as Isaiah, Daniel, and the Psalms. Classes are conducted from September to May (with appropriate vacation or "breaks") and meet Monday through Friday from 9 AM to noon. Class days alternate every other day with brother Wolfgang's classes. The curriculum follows a two-year pattern and is organized in three terms of approximately ten weeks each per year. In each term, the teacher will prepare and teach three different hour-long classes each teaching day.

Students in this program are normally in their twenties, and many will have had some college, career, or life experience. Most are newly-

converted Christians seeking deeper knowledge of the Scriptures and most will be considering the possibility of making preaching their life's work. About 75 students have been enrolled in these classes since their beginning. Many are now preaching in more than a dozen states and several foreign countries. They are enthusiastic and will challenge the best of teachers. You can have a part in influencing the lives of those who in turn can do untold good in the Lord's cause (see 1 Tim. 2: 2).

Anyone interested in accepting such a challenge may write to the elders of the Danville church of Christ, 385 East Lexington Ave., Danville, KY 40422, or call (606) 236-4204 or 236-8506. Please enclose a resume or letter stating experience and other qualifications.

PREACHERS NEEDED

JORDAN, ONTARIO, CANADA (near Niagara Falls) — We are in need of a faithful gospel preacher as of July 1, 1989. We are presently 100 in attendance and can provide full support plus house and utilities. We would like a mature man with strong personal work skills. For more information contact Irvin Burgess (416) 562-5974.

BEULAVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA — This small rural church on the east coast of Carolina (35-40 members) needs a full time preacher. We own our property but cannot supply full support. We are located about 30 miles from two major military bases. Call Mel Prater (919) 298-5231 or Jim Wilson (919) 324-5207 for details. Come work and worship with us.

W. O. BYERS

We sadly report the death of W. O. BYERS of Louisville, Kentucky on March 24, 1989. He was in an automobile accident a week earlier and never regained consciousness. In 1950 brother Byers moved to Louisville from Butler County, Kentucky. He was a building contractor. For over thirty years he served as an elder at Valley Station. After his health failed, he moved near the Expressway building and he and his wife, Donna, who survives him, placed membership with that congregation. Funeral services were conducted in the Expressway building with Grover Stevens preaching and Robert C. Welch leading congregational singing. A large crowd gathered and extra chairs had to be used.

The influence for good from this man and his family has been strongly felt in the congregations of the Louisville area and wherever his kin have gone. His two sons serve as elders, Dr. Harold Byers at Expressway and Edsel Byers at Douglas Hills. His four daughters are all faithful and the many grandchildren and great-grandchildren are devoted to the Lord. In fact, if every member of the Byers family were removed from the churches of the Louisville area, they would be greatly weakened and in several instances, deprived of part of their leadership.

Brother Byers loved the truth and continually had the work of the church on his mind. The morning of the accident, which occurred in front of his house, he had been listening to a tape of a gospel sermon. He was a strong man both physically and spiritually. His convictions were an open book and they were never for sale. He was gifted with the ability to get to the heart of a matter very quickly. Yet there was a gentleness about him in dealing with those beset with problems. In such cases, as Grover Stevens pointed out, he was truly a shepherd. All who knew him are richer because of it. This brother of 85 years left an influence that is felt not only in Louisville, but around the world. We will miss him, but we all rejoice in the hope of the gospel. Connie W. Adams



EXCHANGE ON DOMITTAN PERSECUTION

We plan to carry the exchange between Art Ogden and Ferrell Jenkins on the Domitian persecution in our June and July issues of this paper. We now have all of that in hand. There will be two articles

from each, with a short rebuttal by Art Ogden. Both have done their work well and have written with respect for each other. Those who take the late date (95-96 A. D.) for the book of Revelation generally believe there was a serious persecution of Christians during the reign of the Roman Emperor, Domitian. Those holding this view usually interpret the symbolism of the book against that background. Brother Ogden denies there is any valid evidence for such a persecution and believes the book was written before the destruction of Jerusalem in the reign of Nero. Brother Jenkins believes there is such evidence, hence, the exchange. Both men have written books on Revelation. Both are respected preachers of the gospel and students of the word of God. We commend the study to our readers and thank both men for their careful work.

THE SUBVERSION OF THEOPHILUS

When my good friend, Bob West published his first book of cartoons featuring the devout little character which became so well known to so many, I was asked to write the forward, which I was glad to do. Pungent truths were presented in that feature. It is with sadness that I note the inclusion on Theophilus in THE EXAMINER published by Charles A. Holt, a paper set on the destruction of local churches. Articles blatantly appeal for people to come out of local churches with their buildings and treasures and meet in homes with others who have done the same thing. They will tell you of "contact persons" in your area who will help rescue you from the tyranny of a "board of elders." Over and over we are being told that Jesus did not die for a church, he has no church, elders are over-lords, treasures are unscriptural, and preachers are just hirelings. Now, Bob West has joined in and has revived his famous character to spout the party line, and that is exactly what he is doing. This movement is destructive of the faith of God's people and it grieves me to see friends caught up in it.

PRAYER REQUEST

It happened down south. A small boy gave his mother a hard time during services. Finally she gave up and turned him over to his father. The father had no better success and became exasperated. With measured strides he headed for a side door at the front of the auditorium. The little boy looked over his father's shoulder at the congregation as he exited and in a loud plea said "Y" all pray for me. "

TRADITIONS

Every now and then there are some fellows who get all worked up about "ruts" and "traditions." They are afraid that the same order of worship each Sunday can become a tradition. Or, that an invitation song is a tradition and we don't even need to offer an invitation. They absolutely will not be bound by tradition. They must strike a note for freedom. Well, there are good traditions and bad traditions. The traditions set by the inspired apostles are worthy of our emulation (Phil. 3: 17; 2 Thes. 3: 6). Jesus spoke against the traditions of the elders (Mk. 7: 5-9) who nullified divine law by them. They elevated human traditions into statutes of the Lord. But a thing is not wrong because it has been done before, or even for a long time. Some things are done because they have proved to be expedient — they work. We are to proceed with decency and order (1 Cor. 14: 40) and there is something to be said for people knowing what Will be done next and why. As for invitations, I have asked in a number of meetings "how many of you responded to a gospel invitation in a public service when you obeyed the gospel?" Without fail, the greater part of the audience raised their hands in each instance where I asked this. You fellows who are so worried about ruts and traditions perhaps can find a better way, but as for me — well, I think I'll just keep on closing services by reminding audiences of a Saviour who died for them and who said "Come unto me all ye that labor" and telling them **how** to come to Him. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come" and if there is something wrong with ending a sermon by inviting people to obey the truth of the gospel, then I am unable to discover what it is.

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	386
RESTORATIONS	72
(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 XXX

JUNE, 1989

NUMBER 6

THINK ON THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 1631
Lutz, FL 33549



THREE PHASES OF DIGRESSION

More than twenty five years ago I wrote something on this subject because the sponsoring church arrangement, the church supported benevolent institutions, church supported colleges, church funded play-grounds and "fellowship" banquet halls, and church supported social gospel centers had made an invasion into churches of Christ all over the country. This tide of digression had taken a heavy toll just as the instrument of music and the missionary society issues had done nearly one hundred years before. I did not believe digression was weakening then, and I do not believe it is dying now. Satan is not relinquishing his hold on religious thinking, and his ministers will continue every effort to pervert the truth in this generation. The power and tactics of digression must not be underestimated now; the methods of approach must be understood. It seems pertinent to present these thoughts again.

By digression is meant to turn aside from, a departure from the faith or to deviate from the truth. Paul put it this way: "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).

Digression has taken many forms since the church was established by the Lord. Sometimes it involves adding to the word, sometimes taking from the word, and sometimes perverting the word to promote unscriptural

practices. History will bear out the fact that digression from the truth has taken three well defined steps: Aggression, Ridicule, and Compromise.

1. **Aggression.** Digression begins by teaching something contrary to the truth. Its roots are in the hearts of men who are seeking something new and different from the faith once delivered. Such new doctrines soon take the characteristic of aggression. These false teachers boldly advocate their strange doctrine which is not taught in the word of God. They are content only when they have pressed their new teaching to the fracturing of peace and unity among brethren. "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15: 9). This is usually taught with great ardor and determination. These are they "... whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake" (Titus 1: 11). They aggressively teach those things "which they ought not." Sometimes elders are the source of much of this sort of discord. "Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20: 30). Those who followed Paul were aggressive in teaching false doctrines to corrupt the minds of the disciples. "And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: to whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you" (Gal. 2: 4, 5). At the introduction of any false doctrine we can expect it to be aggressively taught. It will be urged upon the church as an important belief in being **loyal** to Christ.

2. **Ridicule.** There are always those who will not be turned from the faith, and who will fight against all forms of digression. The second phase in digression is to ridicule those who oppose the false doctrine. All sorts of names will be used to prejudice people, all forms of evasive quibbles will be used to divert attention from the issue, and all forms of mockery will be employed to try to stop the opposition. Much of this has been seen in recent years concerning the present issues. Sanballat and Tobiah mocked Nehemiah and those Jews who rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem, and they ridiculed their efforts by pointing out how weak they were (Neh. 4: 1-3).

Ridicule attempts to answer arguments, but it never does to those who sincerely seek truth. Ridicule has an effect upon some because they cannot stand it.

3. **Compromise.** The time always comes when ridicule does not convince; in fact, in time it usually turns the people from their unworthy cause to seek the truth. It is at this point that those in digression will cry that they are the peace-loving and fellow-seeking children of God. They take the role of persecuted people who are misunderstood and misrepresented. Again and again I have taken the very words of a promoter of some digressive doctrine and had him cry, "You have misunderstood and misrepresented me." No false teacher can stand up under the fire of truth, and when his digressive teaching has been answered and his ridicule exposed, he will try for a compromise somewhere between truth and his stand. If this is rejected, as it must be, he will play the persecuted martyr who stands for truth and unity and is rejected.

There can be no compromise with truth on any issue. Ridicule does not make or answer arguments; it simply tends to cloud the real issue and disturb the seekers for truth.

Digression may be at work in reference to the organization of the local church, in the work of the church, in the public and private worship to God, and in the life of one trying to walk in righteousness before God. It must be opposed with all our might. When digression is unsuccessful in its efforts in a locality, it then turns to compromise and talks of "peace" and "unity." Only the sword of the Spirit will bring real peace and unity.

OUTSTANDING WORKS

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Published Monthly at
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and at an Additional Mailing Office
USPS—487—440

CONNIE W. ADAMS, Editor

Office of Publication
52 Yearling Drive
Brooks, Kentucky 40109
Phone (502) 957-2257

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JESUS, THE PREACHER

"From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mt. 4: 17). "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom. . ." (Mt. 4: 23). Preaching occupied a central place in the ministry of Jesus. He was ever the preacher: in the synagogues, on the mountains, by the seaside, from village to village, at the temple, in the homes of publicans, at a well in Samaria. He drew after him unbelievably large crowds until some of his preaching offended some of his hearers. Perhaps it will help those of us who preach, and those who listen to preachers to consider some of the characteristics of the preaching of Jesus.

His preaching was **authoritative**. At the end of the sermon on the mount, the people were "astonished at his doctrine, for he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes" (Mt. 7: 28-29). All the power of heaven was behind what he said. There was certainty about his preaching. Paul told Titus that he should "speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority" (Titus 2: 15). When a man preaches truth, he had the backing of heaven and he can speak with all boldness and assurance.

His preaching was **urgent**. He was sent and ordained of heaven "to preach good tidings to the poor.. to proclaim release to the captives.. to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (Lk. 4: 16-21). He had an urgent proclamation to make. His preaching was a **cry**. "Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught..." (Jno. 7: 28). "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" (Jno. 7: 37). He lifted up his voice to be heard. There was urgency in his message and his tone. It was arresting, compelling.

His preaching was **instructive**. "He opened his mouth and taught them" (Mt. 5: 2). To teach is to give instruction, to impart information. He taught in parables so the spiritually inclined would "know the mysteries of the kingdom" (Lk. 8: 10). At other times, he taught them "plainly" and without proverb. "His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou earnest forth from God" (Jno. 16: 29-30). Jesus did not preach simply to fill up time.

The people were so ignorant of the will of God. He came to teach them. He did not come with warmed-over

platitudes and offer meaningless pep talks. The message of heaven was in his heart and on his tongue and those who heard him learned something.

His preaching was **compassionate**. While he came to "seek and save" the lost, he took no delight in the misery suffered by those entangled in sin. "But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest" (Mt. 9: 36-38). The spiritual plight of the people constantly kept before the Son of God the reason for his coming. Without condoning the sin of adultery ("Go and sin no more"), Jesus was gentle with the woman taken in adultery. While reminding the woman at the well that she had lived an immoral life, and the man she was living with then was not her husband, Jesus explained to her about the water of life and answered her question about worship. He had time for Zacchaeus, interrupted his trip to Jerusalem and went home with him. He took time for Nicodemus who came at night. He was not too busy for the children. He was grieved when the rich young ruler, who was so close to the kingdom, turned and walked away. Even in the agony of the cross he looked down upon his tormentors and said "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do. "

It is very easy for those of us who preach to become callous and insensitive to the longings of human hearts and to the abject spiritual misery of those ensnared by Satan. Paul was as "gentle" with the Thessalonians as a nurse with her own children (1 Thes. 2: 7). It is one thing to tell people they are lost and on the way to hell, and something else to leave the impression that we are glad.

The preaching of Jesus was vehement at times. He reserved his strongest denunciations for the pious frauds of his day. He was unsparing with the hypocritical sectarians of that age who were so presumptuous that they made their own traditions equal to the commandment of God. To them he said "Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Mt. 15: 7-9). Later in that context, the disciples informed him that he had offended the Pharisees (v. 12). Jesus said "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (vv. 13-14). The most severe language of all is found in Matthew 23 as he pronounced heaven's woe upon the religious leaders of the Jews who repudiated the Messiah of their own expectation, based on the prophetic scriptures which they knew, but scorned. Repeatedly he called them "hypocrites." He referred to them as "fools and blind," said they devoured widows houses, prayed in pretense to be seen of men, were inwardly filled with corruption, were "serpents" and destined for the "damnation of hell." Yet, the most severe preaching of all ended with

Jesus weeping over Jerusalem and the fate which awaited it when its house would be left desolate (Mt. 23: 37-38). He had tried to save them, but they would not come to him.

The preaching of Jesus was **demanding**. From the first, he demanded repentance. Later he would charge his disciples to preach "repentance and remission of sins, beginning at Jerusalem" (Lk. 24: 47). He demanded self-denial as a prerequisite to discipleship (Mt. 16: 24). **You** cannot be "number one" and be the Lord's disciple. **You** will give him **first** place or he will have **no** place. You cannot place father or mother, son or daughter, brother or sister, before him (Mt. 10: 37). You must present your body as a living sacrifice, totally devoted to him, and even be willing, if necessary, to put your life on the line rather than give up the faith (Rom. 12: 1; Rev. 2: 10).

Preaching which asks nothing will get nothing. Rather than deciding that the choices are too hard for people to make, let us faithfully preach the truth, challenge the hearers to meet the demands of truth, whatever they may be. All the while, let us warn of the horrors of hell and the bliss of heaven.

The preaching of Jesus had a **common touch**. "And the common people heard him gladly" (Mk. 12: 37). He touched the sensitive areas of human existence. He was not an inaccessible image upon a marble slab. He was equally at home with fishermen, farmers, carpenters, merchants, tax collectors and with children. He spoke their language. No, he did not bring the message to the level of the coarse and profane, but in words they all understood, he elevated the thinking of the common people to the realm of the sublime.

Our preaching must not be so stilted that in our effort to impress the sophisticates of this world we shoot over the heads of the common people and fail to touch their hearts with heaven's message. Neither should we cheapen the message by phrasing it in the bizarre language of some sub-culture where words have double or perverted meanings. There is a dignity and a stateliness about the gospel. But there is also a simple charm about it, too.

Would you take twenty minutes and read the sermon on the mount? That is real preaching, folks. You will understand it. Yet you can spend the rest of your life probing into the profundity of it. And it will take the rest of your days to put it into practice in the situations of your life.

Jesus was a preacher. And what a preacher! No wonder the temple guards came back that time and said "Never man spake as this man." We would all be better preachers, and better hearers of preachers if we would give more attention to **what** Jesus preached and **how** he went about it.

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LEARNING FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

Truth often lies between extremes. So it is with assessing the Old Testament. On the one hand are those who continue to bind it. Many think people today are still under the ten commandments. Instrumental music in worship, a separate priesthood, tithing, and numerous other practices are retained from that bygone era. Paul warns that going back to the law for justification puts us under obligation to keep the whole law, severs us from Christ, and makes us fall from grace (Gal. 5: 2-4). The opposite extreme is to recognize that the Law has been taken away, but erroneously conclude there is no real value in studying the Old Testament any longer.

"For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope" (Rom. 15: 3). Everything God has revealed has a purpose; there is something to be learned. I am thankful for the opportunity to write under this heading, to call attention to people and events of old with modern applications. Let us begin with a look at different ways New Testament writers used the Old Testament.

1. Character studies. Hebrew 11 briefly reviews ten O. T. characters to show us what faith is and how it acts. The author then adds that many others could have been included. James commended the patience of the prophets and Job (5: 10, 11). Jesus contrasted both the men of Nineveh and the Queen of Sheba with His generation (Mt. 12: 41, 42). Even wicked characters can teach valuable lessons. Jude recalled the sins of Cain, Balaam, and Korah (v. 11). Esau's life is summarized in Heb. 12. He is set forth as what we must not be.

2. Events as examples. Some of the brethren at Corinth saw no danger in eating meat sacrificed to idols. Paul skillfully used Israel's conduct at Mt. Sinai to document how such eating could lead to other offenses. Beyond that, their overall wilderness experience demonstrates how great spiritual privileges are offset by disobedience (1 Cor. 10: 1-13). This was written to warn us. Conversely, Peter employed the deliverances of Noah and Lot as testimony to God's desire and ability to rescue the godly from temptation (2 Pet. 2: 4-9). This comforts us.

3. Fulfilled prophecy. There is no greater faith-building exercise than reading the prophets and tracking the fulfillment of their predictions in Jesus and His kingdom. All four gospel writers quote prophecy. Paul reasoned from the Scriptures, both in his preaching and

in his letters. Peter affirmed the prophets "were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you" (1 Pet. 2: 12). "All the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and his successors onward, also announced these days" (Acts 3: 24).

4. Types and shadows. Jesus came to fulfill the Law and the Prophets (Mt. 5: 17). Both made predictions: the Prophets in word, the Law in symbols. Much of the old Jewish religious system — the tabernacle service, the sacrifices, the priestly functions — pointed to what Jesus would accomplish for all mankind. They were shadows of things to come (Col. 2: 17). Like the prophecies, they had to be fulfilled before the Law could be taken away.

Many O. T. characters are likened to Christ in one way or another: Adam, Melchizedek, Moses, Aaron, and David are a few. Some were like Him in their position; others, in things they did.

A word of caution here. Something more than a resemblance is needed before we designate a thing a type. Some have let their imaginations run wild, seeing almost every O. T. person or event as typifying something. It is fine to draw parallels, but let us keep "typology" to those things which were designed by God to foreshadow, to prepare for that which was to come. A good rule is to limit types to those things so designated by inspired writers.

5. Language. N. T. writers and speakers sometimes borrowed O. T. language to express their thoughts. Peter used God's designations of Israel in Ex. 19 and the symbolic names of Hosea's children to tell us who we are (1 Pet. 2: 9, 10). Paul wrote that God will render to every man according to his deeds, utilizing David's expression (Ps. 62: 12). Many of our hymns employ the rich phrases of the Psalms and the Prophets. These become more meaningful as we learn their original setting.

6. Practical wisdom. Jesus praised the Queen of Sheba for traveling to hear Solomon's wisdom. It is a worthwhile journey. His proverbs are "words of the wise on the ways of the world." Ecclesiastes depicts the struggle to find happiness and meaning in life. These 3,000-year-old books are quite up-to-date!

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ANTIOCH — THE POWER OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

Acts chapter seven details the death of Stephen and presents the turning point in the history of God's church. Until now the Gospel has been limited to the Jerusalem Jews, but following Stephen's martyrdom that all changed. It was the turning point in the accomplishment of God's global mission for the kingdom. "And on that day a great persecution arose against the church in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria... Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word" (Acts 8: 1, 4). **"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation..."** was on the road to fulfillment. As a result, the story of salvation spread, thousands obeyed and new congregations of dedicated disciples were born through-out the Roman world.

Antioch. "So then those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose in connection with Stephen made their way to Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch..." (Acts 11: 19). What follows in the text of Acts 11 is one of the greatest testimonies to what God can do with committed people. We've seen their zeal, their commitment to teaching, and their power in the face of opposition. Now look with me at what is perhaps the most remembered feature of this New Testament church: **"... the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch."** (Acts 11: 26b).

They Wore A Proud Name

There are four points about this name we should note: **1. It was a new name.** "The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch." Please observe that it was the disciples who were called "Christians" and not the church as a body. There is no place in New Testament scripture where the church is ever referred to as the "Christian Church." It was a term applied to disciples and described their **individual** allegiance to Jesus. It is never used to describe the church as a body.

And where did this new name originate? Not a few scholars point to the use of "Christian" as first given by the enemies of the Cross as a label of scorn for the followers of Christ. True, the term was later used as a title of contempt and ridicule by non-believers, but the origin of that name came from a higher source.

"And you will be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord will designate" (Isaiah

62: 2b). Following Isaiah 61 and the prophetic utterance of the Messiah's coming (Isa. 61: 1-3) we now see that in that day God's people will have a new name "which the mouth of the Lord will designate" (62: 2). This new name would be bestowed upon the followers of the Messiah by God Himself.

2. **It was a prophesied name.** Isaiah lists four aspects of this new designation.

a. "You will be called by a new name." The name "Christian" was the ONLY name by which followers of Christ were called that was new. The terms "brethren," "believers," "disciples," "children of God," and "saints" were not new. They were used to describe God's own prior to Christ's coming. But the name "Christian" was new and was inclusive of all other names. A Christian is a "believer," "disciple," "brother," "child of God," and a "saint." It is the one **all inclusive term** describing not only a relationship with God but how that relationship is made possible.

b. When the "nations see your righteousness and glory." This new name would be given at a time when salvation would burn like a torch from Zion, (Isa. 62: 1). In Acts 10 the gospel message shed it's light upon the Gentiles prompting Peter to announce, "I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears him and does what is right is welcome to Him" (Acts 10: 34-35). Then in the next chapter, and for the first time, the gospel goes to the Gentiles in mass resulting in large scale conversions to Christ. "And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch..."

c. "Which the mouth of the Lord will designate." It was a name given by God to the followers of the Messiah.

d. It will be an "everlasting name which will not be cut off" (Isa. 56: 5). In Ephesians 3: 14-15, Paul writes, "For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name..." I believe that "every family" has reference to all the redeemed, the family of God. All those who are redeemed by Jesus Christ are called by a God-given name! That name is the name of "Christ." Thus, the name "Christian" represents the fullness of God's eternal plan to redeem man and that name is just as everlasting as the salvation it signifies.

3. It was a persecuted name. The fact that they were called Christians first in Antioch necessarily implies that they were called by that name in other places afterwards (Yes, there are such things as necessary inferences!) And, there is no doubt that as that name began to be more commonly used it was adopted by unbelievers as a title of scorn. ("Do they not blaspheme the fair name by which you have been called?" James 2: 7).

It is impossible for you and me to comprehend what our first century brethren endured for a name that we tend to take for granted. For example, in 1 Cor. 7: 7-8 Paul discourages marriage among believers. Why? It wasn't that he had a low view of marriage at all. But, rather, it was due to the pressures being exerted upon

followers of Christ. It was tough enough facing the fire of persecution alone: "Renounce your faith or die!" How unbearable it would be to have the sword laid upon the neck of a beloved wife or child and hear those awful words of ultimatum. Paul said, I'm trying to spare you the anguish!" We don't realize what they endured.

Sure, it gets to me sometimes... When I see people making a claim to that name acting as if it is the greatest of impositions to worship consistently with the saints or to make financial sacrifices or to give their Bible classes their very best — yes, it gets to me. Listen, our brothers and sisters in Antioch DIED for the cause we take for granted! Why, do you feel the passion flowing from the pen of Paul when he says, "Greet one another with a holy kiss?" Because first century saints didn't know if they would ever see each other again! Brethren, when we thank God that we can meet without fear of harm, don't throw that out as a meaningless cliché! Say "A-MEN!" to that. Our Antioch brethren could not pray that prayer!

4. **It was a definitive name.** The name "Christian" is only used three times in the New Testament text and, yet, on each occasion we learn something different about those qualified to wear it.

a. A Christian is a disciple (Acts 11: 26). The Antioch brethren were willing to submit to the Lordship of the Master. Only those willing to walk according to His discipline can be His disciples and only His disciples can be Christians.

b. A Christian is a persuaded person (Acts 26: 28). Usually we don't think much is happening when a person makes the good confession (1 Tim. 6: 12). But EVERY- THING IS HAPPENING! That confession recognizes the authority and rule of Jesus Christ. You can't be a Christian without it. And it changes everything.

c. A Christian glorifies God above all else (1 Pet. 4: 16). The Antioch faithful were not ashamed of that name. They used it for heaven's glorification. God help us to have the same feeling for that name as they did. Help us to understand that it was divinely given and that those who wore it first, wore it proudly. The words of Mrs. Frank A. Breck ring with a potent passion:

"Shall I crucify my Savior,
When for me He bore such loss?
Shall I put to shame my Savior?
Can I nail Him to the cross?"

You crucify Jesus every time you reject the invitation to wear His name or, as one already wearing it, you gain a sense of embarrassment when others find out your allegiance. The point of our study comes down to this: If you're going to wear that name then WEAR IT! LIFT UP YOUR HEAD, TAKE HOLD OF HIS HAND, GET A FIRM GRIP AND WALK WITH THE MASTER AND NEVER, NEVER, NEVER LOOK BACK! It's the legacy of Antioch. Our study continues...

**READ YOUR
BIBLE TODAY**

THE DOMITIAN PERSECUTION

Arthur M. Ogden
212 Cherokee Trail
Somerset, Kentucky 42501

Elsewhere in this issue of STS you will find an article by Ferrell Jenkins in response to this article. I ask that you read and carefully consider the material he has submitted.

I am sure this study of THE DOMITIAN PERSECUTION comes as a surprise especially since Domitian has been billed as a great persecutor of Christians, both in print and in the pulpit, by students of the book of Revelation. This has been proclaimed as a proven fact and for someone now to question whether it ever occurred must be surprising.

Two facts shall evolve from this study to seize your interest. First, you will learn there is no evidence, from sources contemporary with Domitian, documenting a persecution directed by him in any way against Christians much less that he slew many thousands, bathing the empire in their blood, as taught by many zealous students of the book of Revelation today. Second, you will learn that the strongest case that can be made for a Domitian persecution is that there MAY have been one.

My Position

My position in this exchange should not be misunderstood. It is not my place to prove that Domitian did not persecute Christians. The obligation of proof is upon those who advocate the Great Domitian Persecution. I readily admit that he MAY have persecuted some Christians, however, neither you nor I have the right to charge him with slaying many thousands and bathing the empire in their blood upon the premise of what he MAY have done. It is admitted that the silence of history does not prove Domitian did not persecute Christians but, at the same time, it must be recognized that the silence of history does not prove he persecuted them either. **We have no right to build a case against him without evidence.**

When discussing what MAY have been, we must be careful not to presumptuously assert as fact what MAY have occurred. One can readily relate to this problem by considering the headline of a recent newspaper article. The headline stated, "BLACK HOLES MAY FORM CORE OF 2 NEIGHBORING GALAZIES." This statement necessarily implies three things: (1) That scientists do not know whether black holes form the core for the neighboring galaxies: (2) that scientists only deem their conclusions theoretically possible while at the same time admitting (3) the possibility there is another plausible explanation. However, if the word MAY is dropped from the headline, that which was stated as a possibility has been made a fact. This is precisely what

has been done in reference to Domitian. Men have looked at Domitians' nature, his self-deification and the recorded cruelty directed toward those who opposed him and have concluded that, since Christians would surely have been in conflict with all of this, he must have persecuted them. Without question, the time would have been ripe for a persecution during the last two years of his reign, but this does not mean a persecution took place. The strongest case that can be made for a persecution without presumption is to say there MAY have been one. Recognizing this problem many historians simply say, "Domitian MAY have persecuted Christians."¹

The Evidence

I have observed the statement more than once in publications and in the pulpit that persecution against Christians reached its zenith during Domitian's reign. Until three years ago, I never questioned this. As far as I was concerned it was true but I tell you now, without fear of contradiction, this statement is false. Even IF Domitian was guilty of persecuting Christians the statement is false. The persecution against Christians reached its height under Diocletian (284-305 AD) two hundred years later.

Note carefully the following statements often quoted which are also false. "Domitian instituted a persecution against Christians on the charge of atheism, that is perhaps, refusal to participate in emperor worship. It was short, but extremely violent. Many thousands were slain in Rome and Italy, among them Flavius Clemens, a cousin of the Emperor, and his wife, Flavia Domitilla banished."² While Suetonius, the Roman historian, has recorded the death of Clemens and the banishment of Domitilla by Domitian, he does not record that they suffered because they were Christians, nor does he record the death of any others because of their being Christians. The quoted statement is without historical substance.

"Domitian (c. 81-96) is the emperor who has gone down in history as the one who bathed the empire in the blood of the Christians."³ While it is true historians centuries after the fact have billed Domitian as a bloody persecutor of Christians, there is no evidence from the historians contemporary with his reign that would convict him of directing a persecution against them.

There was no persecution before, or after him to compare to that of his reign... Nero's persecution was confined mainly to Rome, while Domitian's persecution was expanded to the whole of Asia Minor."⁴ There is no historical evidence of any truth in these statements.

In fact there is no literary record to substantiate a persecution of any kind by Domitian against Christians.⁵ Neither Tacitus, Suetonius nor Pliny, all of whom resided in Rome (Tacitus and Pliny were members of the Roman Senate during Domitian's reign),⁶ leave any record of any kind of campaign against Christians. This would appear strange since Tacitus and Suetonius both left a record of Nero's persecution against Christians. Would not a persecution directed against Christians of the magnitude described above demand a place in the historical records of these and other writers? And why

was Pliny, who was a member of the Senate during the reign of Domitian, ignorant of the precise crimes Christians were guilty of and how they were to be convicted and punished since such trials of Christians would have taken place in the Senate? He wrote Trajan, his emperor, "I have never taken part in trials (cognitiones) of Christians; consequently I do not know the precedents regarding the question of punishment or the nature of the inquisition."⁸ How could a man of his political background have been so ignorant of what to do to Christians if there had been a sustained persecution directed against them during the reign of Domitian?

The Earliest Historical Record

The earliest historical record of a persecution under Domitian by either secular or church historian is 75 years after the fact.⁹ In order to date the record that soon after Domitian's reign, we must give credibility to Melito and Hegesippus, the two sources cited by Eusebius in his "Ecclesiastical History." Using these two men as sources, Eusebius (264-350 AD) said of Domitian, "He was the second that raised a persecution against us."¹⁰ He said this at least 200 years after the reign of Domitian. While Eusebius speaks of "martyrdoms" during the reign of Domitian,¹¹ he does not cite a single case of a Christian dying as a result of such a persecution. This is remarkable since Origen (185-254 AD) relates that only a few, "whose number could be easily enumerated,"¹² had died for the sake of Christianity up to his time. He recorded this a good 50 years before Eusebius penned his history. Surely, if their number could be easily enumerated, Eusebius could have named one Christian who died for the cause of Christ under Domitian. His failure to name Christian martyrs tends to argue against a persecution under Domitian.

The Roman History of Cassius Dio, composed between the years 210 and 229 AD,¹³ is often relied upon as a source for documenting a persecution by Domitian against Christians. He wrote, "And the same year Domitian slew among many others Flavius Clemens the consul, though he was a cousin and had to wife Flavia Domitilla, who was also a relative of the emperor. The complaint brought against them both was that of atheism, under which many others who drifted into Jewish ways were condemned. Some of these were killed and the remainder were at least deprived of their property. Domitilla was merely banished to Pandateria..."¹⁴

Before we get too excited about the content of this statement we would be wise to consider that the part of Dio's history which described Domitian's reign is preserved for us only in what at best can be described as "a fairly reliable" abridgement made by Xiphilinus, a monk of the eleventh century.¹⁵ There are no early reproductions of this part of Dio's history to draw on. It should also be observed that even if we give this portion of the record credibility, Dio does not mention any persecution of Christians. While it is true Christians could have been charged as atheist, it is also true that the Jews and others who refused Domitian's self-

proclaimed deity would have likewise been so charged.¹⁶ In this specific case, those charged with atheism are said to be following Jewish ways. While Christians MAY be associated with the Jews to some degree, it is not necessary to conclude that Christians are the subjects of the persecution described in Dio's history. They MAY be but, at the same time, they MAY NOT be the subjects of the persecution described. Again, we **cannot** charge Domitian **upon** the basis of what **MAY** have been.

Tertullian, 160-220 AD, is drawn upon by Eusebius to prove a persecution by Domitian against Christians,¹⁷ yet in none of his statement does Tertullian accuse Domitian of killing Christians. The source for Tertullian's statement is unknown though many scholars believe he drew from Melito as did Eusebius.¹⁸ If this is true, Melito again is the earliest source we have for a Domitian Persecution. He lived approximately 75 years after the reign of Domitian.

In an attempt to find evidence of a persecution by Domitian from contemporary sources, some have gone so far as to argue that Clement of Rome in his first epistle, addressed to the Corinthians, makes reference to a persecution under Domitian when he spoke of "sudden and repeated calamities and adversities" which had come upon the Roman church.¹⁹ This conclusion is totally unreasonable because (1) no one knows who Clement of Rome was or when he lived, and (2) no one knows the identity of the "sudden and repeated calamities and adversities." Reasoning on the matter usually runs this way. "The sudden and repeated calamities and adversities evidently refer to persecution under Domitian, therefore, since the epistle makes reference to the persecutions of Domitian, it must have been written following the last two years of Domitian's reign. Since the book was written following Domitian's reign. Clement of Rome must have been contemporary with Domitian." Such reasoning staggers the imagination. There is no evidence that Clement of Rome was contemporary with Domitian or that he made reference to a persecution during his reign.²⁰

In speaking of the evidence for a Domitian persecution, T. D. Barnes said, "No writer of the fifth or any subsequent century can be shown to have drawn on reliable evidence of the period before 250..."²¹ Elmer T. Merrill said, "It should be further observed that neither in Suetonius, nor in Dio, nor in any other of the pagan writers who touch upon the subject, is there the slightest intimation that Domitian's bloody jealousy was directed against any but the leading aristocrats whom he supposed he had reason to fear, or that it ravaged at all outside the narrow circle of the Court and the Parliament. There is no indication of its extension into the provinces, or among the commonalty even in Rome. And if there had been such extension, it is altogether probable that some echo of it would be heard. There is absolute silence."²²

Conclusion

In view of this total lack of concrete evidence to support the so-called Domitian Persecution, we must ask, "how could scholarly men conscientiously teach a Domitian Persecution?" The answer probably lies in the fact that sincere men honestly believed the Bible identified Domitian as a persecutor, therefore, they felt justified in

proclaiming him as such.²³ If they were wrong in their biblical interpretation, however, they would likewise be wrong in their historical conclusions. The fact that history does not substantiate their biblical claims shows that their interpretation of scripture is in error. Neither Daniel (chapter 7) nor Revelation (chapters 13 & 17), the texts usually used to support the Domitian theory,²⁴ specifically identify with Domitian though many modern day biblical students teach that they do. This flaw in biblical interpretation apparently has led to a flaw in historical interpretation as well.

Whether Domitian persecuted Christians or not does not matter to this biblical student nor does it affect his understanding of the books of Daniel and Revelation. If Domitian persecuted Christians, so be it, but let it be stated for what it really was. Let us prove by concrete evidence what took place and let us not assume anything. Many have been greatly overstating the case against Domitian and this needs to be rectified.

Footnotes

¹ Albino Gargetti, **A History of the Roman Empire**, p. 285

Jerome Carcopino, **Daily Life In Ancient Rome**, p. 137

² Henry H. Halley, **Bible Handbook**, p. 860

³ Ray Summers, **Worthy Is The Lamb**, p. 83

⁴ Ken Butterworth & John Shaver, **The Bible Way** (March-April 1983), p. 4

⁵ James Moffett, **The Expositor's Greek Testament**, Vol. 5, p. 311

Merril C. Tenney, **New Testament Survey**, revision by Walter M. Dunnnett, pp. 10-11

Stewart Perowne, **Caesars and Saints**, pp. 83-84

⁶ Elmer T. Merrill, **Essays In Early Christian History**, p. 150

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 172

⁸ F. F. Bruce, **New Testament History**, p. 423

⁹ Merrill, p. 161

¹⁰ Eusebius, **Church History, III**, Chapter 176

¹¹ *Ibid*, III, Chapter 18

¹² Origen, **Contra Celsum**, 111: 8

¹³ Leon Hardy Canfield, **The Early Persecutions of The Christians**, p. 166

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 167

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 166; Merrill, p. 152

¹⁶ Merrill, pp. 155-157

¹⁷ Eusebius, **III**, Chapter 22

¹⁸ T. D. Barnes, **Early Christianity and The Roman Empire**, p. 32

Merrill, p. 163

¹⁹ Clement of Rome, **First Letter To The Corinthians**, 1:1

Cf. **Apocalypse of John** by Beckweth, p. 204

²⁰ Merrill, pp. 160-161, 207-241

²¹ Barnes, p. 32

²² Merrill, p. 157

²³ *Ibid*, pp. 158-159; Canfield, p. 162

²⁴ Jim McGuiggan, **Book of Daniel**, pp. 108-109; **The Book of Revelation**, pp. 184-185

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THE DOMITIANIC PERSECUTION (A RESPONSE)

Ferrell Jenkins
9211 Hollyridge Place
Tampa, FL 33637

"The persecution of Domitian burned itself ineradicably into the memory of history; it may be doubted by the critic, but not by the historian... So strong and early a tradition as that which constitutes Domitian the second great persecutor cannot be discredited without wrecking the foundations of ancient history. Those who discredit it must, to be consistent, resolve to dismiss nine-tenths of what appears in books as ancient history, including most that is interesting and valuable."¹

Ogden Demands Too Much

In the article by my long-time friend and brother, Art Ogden, demand is constantly made for evidence "contemporary" with Domitian which states that the emperor persecuted Christians. To ask for this is to request too much. Unbelievers make much of the fact that we have very few references to Jesus and the church from sources outside the New Testament. From the first century we have only a few references in Josephus (written more than 60 years after the event, Tacitus (more than 50 years after the event mentioned), and possibly Suetonius (about 70 years after the event he describes)²

The earliest evidence for a Neronian persecution of Christians in A. D. 64 comes from the writings of Tacitus (A. D. 115), **more than 50 years after the event!** Art accepts this testimony, but rejects similar evidence regarding Domitian. And in the case of Nero he had **no evidence of any persecution of Christians in Asia Minor**. If Art were in the affirmative in this exchange he would have to affirm a Neronian persecution in the same way I seek to establish a persecution under Domitian.

Art rejects the testimony of pagan historians and the so-called "Church Fathers" who wrote 75 or more years after the reign of Domitian. When one rejects the testimony of these writers regarding the Domitianic persecution he will soon find himself way out on a limb which is about to be sawed off.

When browsing through the writings of the Christians of the second century and afterwards I feel uncomfortable. I don't like what I read, and would not want to be identified with one of those churches. One can see that many departures from the apostolic practices were already under way. Having said this, we must express our debt to these men. It is they who provide our earliest references to the New Testament books. The **patristic** evidence is frequently earlier than the **manuscript** evidence. Unless their testimony contradicts the internal evidence we have no valid reason for rejecting it.³

The Book of Revelation

Let us use the book of Revelation as an example. The post-apostolic writers provide information not contained in Revelation. In addition to details about the Domitianic persecution they tell the **date of composition and the specific identification of the author**.

Let no one say "But **I** have the book of Revelation itself." The earliest historical allusion to the book is in the writings of Justin Martyr who died in A. D. 165.⁴ According to Art, that would be 100 years after Revelation was written! The earliest fragments of papyrus manuscripts of the book date from the third century (p. 16, p 47, p 65). The first complete manuscript is Codex Sinaiticus of the fourth century. The earliest reference to Revelation as "Scripture" is quoted from the Letter of the Churches of Lyons and Vienne in Gaul to the churches of Asia Minor and Phrygia. But for this we must depend on Eusebius.⁵ Earlier writers such as Papias, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen show an acquaintance with the Apocalypse.⁶

Overstatement of the Persecution

The persecution by Domitian has been exaggerated in numerous sources, and it is appropriate for Art to warn us about this. In material which was originally written in graduate school nearly a quarter of a century ago, I cited Summer's statement that Domitian was the emperor "who bathed the empire in the blood of the Christians."⁷ I would not use this statement today. We need not, however, swing from the extreme of overstatement to the opposite extreme of denial of persecution.

The Case for the Domitianic Persecution

1. The Book of Revelation. John was on the island of Patmos "because of (Greek: **dia**) the word of God and the testimony of Jesus" (Rev. 1: 9). He was a fellow-partaker in the tribulation" with those in the seven churches of Asia. Antipas had been killed at Pergamum (Rev. 2: 13). He was called the Lord's faithful witness (Greek, **martus**, from which the English word "martyr" comes).

Aside from the internal evidence which I believe sustains the conclusion that Revelation was written during or shortly after the reign of Domitian, we have the testimony of the Fathers.⁸ Irenaeus (flourished c. 175-190), as a boy in Smyrna, listened to Polycarp who had been a disciple of John. He states that the "apocalyptic vision... was seen no very long time since, but almost in our day, towards the end of Domitian's reign."⁹ Adela Collins says that "the fact that he dated the book as he did, in spite of the difficulty about the apostle's age, implies that he had independent and strong evidence for the date."¹⁰ His independent evidence may well have been from the Christians of Asia Minor who knew about these things. Why would he misrepresent the matter?

Be assured that if Art had evidence like this for the Neronian date of Revelation he would be quoting it. In fact, the first source I have located which dated the Apocalypse to the time of Nero was heading in the Syriac Version of A. D. 508. That's about 440 years after the book was written!¹¹

2. Pliny. When Pliny wrote to the Emperor Trajan, about A. D. 111, for advice on how to conduct the trials for Christians in Bithynia, he stated that some Christians had quit their practice three years earlier; others many years earlier; "and a few as much as twenty-five years ago."¹² Pliny's statement suggests that their defection came about A. D. 86 during the reign of Domitian.

Albert Bell, who seeks to defend a date for Revelation in A. D. 68, points out that Pliny's statement that he had never been present for the trials of any Christians implies, "of course, that there had been such trials. And the only time in Pliny's life that they are likely to have occurred is under Domitian."¹³

3. Melito. Melito, bishop of the church in Sardis, wrote an apology to the emperor Marcus Aurelius about A. D. 175. Eusebius quotes from his work as follows: "Nero, and Domitian, alone, stimulated by certain malicious persons, showed a disposition to slander our faith..."¹⁴

4. Tertullian. Tertullian was trained as an attorney in Carthage, North Africa. In his **Apology** to Septimus Severus, written about A. D. 197, he said "**Consult your histories.** There you will find that Nero was the first to **rage with the imperial sword** against this school in the very hour of its rise in Rome." He continued, "Domitian too, who was a good deal of a Nero in **cruelty, attempted** it... soon **stopped**... restored those he had **banished**. Such are ever our **persecutors...**" [Emphasis mine, FJ]. The emperor was expected to find this information in **his histories**. Eusebius quotes Tertullian to the effect that the apostle John returned from exile on Patmos and abode at Ephesus till the reign of Trajan.¹⁵

5. Eusebius. Our most systematic church historian of the early centuries was Eusebius of Caesarea. Best known of his works is **Ecclesiastical History** (Church History) which was published about A. D. 325. Eusebius stated that Domitian was "the second that raised a persecution against us"¹⁶ He says, "In this persecution, it is handed down by tradition, that the apostle and evangelist John, who was yet living, in consequence of his testimony to the divine word, was condemned to dwell on the island of Patmos." He quotes Irenaeus, but says that "even historians that are very far from befriending our religion, have not hesitated to record this persecution and its martyrdoms in their histories." He says that Domitian persecuted some "for professing Christ," and names Flavia Domitilla.¹⁷ Whether Eusebius got this information from Dio Cassius, Brutus or some other historian he does not say here.

Space does not permit a discussion of the identity of Flavia Domitilla or Flavius Clemens, the issue of **atheotes**, and the confusion of Jews and Christians by the Roman leaders. My question is this: If these people were not Christians, why would the Christians, such as Eusebius, want to claim them?

6. Hegesippus. Hegesippus may rightly be called the Father of Church History. He lived near the time of the apostles (between c. A. D. 117-A. D. 189). His words are now preserved for us in Eusebius who states that Hegesippus compiled in five books "the plain tradition of the

apostolic doctrine."¹⁸

Hegesippus tells of some relatives of our Lord who were brought to Domitian. He asked if they were of "David's race, and they confessed that they were." When he learned that they had little money and property, he then asked "respecting Christ and his kingdom." They told the emperor that it was not a temporal or earthly kingdom. "Upon which, Domitian despising them, made no reply; but treating them with contempt, as simpletons, commanded them to be dismissed, and by a decree ordered the persecution to cease."¹⁹

Conclusion

This evidence of a persecution by Domitian seems, to me, too strong to reject. I wish to close this reply with the comment of the Italian scholar Marta Sordi. "The reality of a persecution was well known to all the Christian commentators, from the Shepherd of Hermas to Melito, from Hegesippus to Tertullian, and is confirmed not only by contemporary Christian sources, from Clement's First Epistle to the Revelation of St. John, but also, as we have seen, by the pagan writers Pliny and Bruttius. In order to prove that the persecution never actually happened (and I do not personally believe this is possible), each reference would have to be explained away separately... But even if it were feasible to find a convincing explanation for each reference, I still maintain that the mere fact of there being so many individual reports of the persecutions having taken place, makes it unreasonable to harbour any serious doubts on the subject."²⁰

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³ Jenkins, **Introduction 74-84.**

⁴ **Dialogue With Trypho**, 81.

⁵ **Ecclesiastical History**, V. 1.

⁶ Everett F. Harrison, **Introduction to the New Testament** (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964) 427-431.

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⁸ For a more detailed evaluation of the internal evidence see Jenkins, **Emperor Worship in the Book of Revelation** (Tampa: privately published, 1988).

⁹ **Against Heresies**, V. xxx. 3.

¹⁰ Adela Yarbro Collins, "Dating the Apocalypse of John" **Biblical Research** 26 (1981) 33-45.

¹¹ Bruce M. Metzger, "Versions, Ancient," **Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible**, 4 vols. (New York: Abingdon, 1962) IV: 754. Arthur M. Ogden incorrectly dates this to the second century. See **The Avenging of the Apostles and Prophets** (Louisville: Ogden Publi-

cations, 1985) 15-16.

¹² **Pliny Letters**, X. xcvi.

¹³ Albert A. Bell, "The Date of John's Apocalypse: The Evidence of Some Roman Historians Reconsidered," **New Testament Studies** 25 (1979) 96. A. N. Sherwin-White, **The Letters of Pliny. A Historical and Social Commentary** (Oxford: Clarendon, 1966) 702, points out that Merrill (**Essays**, ch. 6) "failed to notice the implication." So did Ogden, who cited Merrill.

¹⁴ **Ecclesiastical History**, IV. xxvi.

¹⁵ **Ecclesiastical History**, III. xx; Ill. xxiii.

¹⁶ **Ecclesiastical History**, Ill. xvii.

¹⁷ **Ecclesiastical History**, Ill. xviii.

¹⁸ **Ecclesiastical History**, IV. viii.

¹⁹ **Ecclesiastical History**, Ill. xix.

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(2 Cor. 5:9)

Donnie V. Rader

4724 E. Manslick Road
Louisville, Kentucky 40219



LOVE NOT THE WORLD (1 John 2: 15-17) IMMODESTY

The apostle 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. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2: 15-17). The book of 1 John sets forth the principle that in order to have fellowship with God and his people and go to heaven, we must walk in the light and not darkness. The things mentioned in the text above are a part of darkness and not light. In fact, every sin involves loving the world and thus puts us in darkness.

We, the people of God, must be reminded that we can't love the world and expect to go to heaven when we die. With this purpose in mind, we begin a series under heading "Love Not The World" which will include articles on dancing, fornication, social drinking, stealing, misuse of the tongue and smoking.

One of the more common sins that is practiced today is immodesty. I suppose that we have come to expect it of people of the world. In fact, if we didn't see a lot of people immodestly dressed in the summer time, we would wonder what was wrong. However, it is disappointing to see that is not so uncommon among Christians. I say we are disappointed, but not shocked.

We must begin with an understanding that the Bible governs what we wear.

Principles That Govern What We Wear

1. **Modesty** (1 Tim. 2: 9). Modest means "well arranged, seemly" (Thayer), "decent" (Vines) or "respectable" (Kubo).

2. **Shame** (1 Tim. 2: 9). Paul used the word "shamefacedness" which is "a sense of shame, modest... reverence, would always restrain a good man from an unworthy act" (Thayer). This refers to the ability to blush. An ability some had lost in Jeremiah's day (Jer. 6: 15; 8: 12).

3. **Good judgment** (1 Tim. 2: 9). The text says one must have sobriety. That means "soundness of mind, self-control... good judgment, moderation... especially as a feminine virtue, decency" (Bauer). Thus, good judgment and common sense must be used to determine what we wear.

4. Godliness (1 Tim. 2: 10). Our dress ought to demonstrate that we are professing to be godly, devout and devoted. What we wear will indicate whether or not we are serious about serving the Lord.

5. What we wear has an effect on others. Whether it be intentional or not, a lack of decent clothing can arouse impure thoughts in the minds of others. Mary Quant, designer of the mini-skirt, said, "Mini-clothes are symbolic of those women who want to seduce a man." When asked where all of this was headed, she replied with one word: "sex." In 1960 when the Santa Maria was overtaken by the Portuguese rebels, all of the American women made sure that they didn't wear any enticing clothes. They stopped swimming and wearing shorts. No one needs to explain why. The Atlanta Constitution reported, "This question was put to a group of Atlanta teenagers: Do you seek the exercise or the sun when you don a swim-suit? 'Neither' was the reply, We seek the boys!" (1971). A Gallup poll a number of years ago revealed that 50% of the women dress for men. Thus, many of the women who wear shorts and bathing suits, etc., do so for the men.

It is no secret that a scantily clad female body is prone to arouse greater lust than a completely nude body. "A great number of men are of the opinion that women are more attractive partly dressed than nude. They prefer to see women partially disrobed to the sight of complete nakedness. In many cases the development of sexual excitement is retarded or weakened by the nude body, while the sight of a partly unclothed female body affects these men as exciting" (**Theodor Reik, Of Love and Lust** p. 465).

The story of David and Bathsheba illustrates this point well (2 Sam. 11-12). The apostle Paul warns of "lasciviousness" (that which leads to lust and wanton thoughts) in Gal. 5: 19-21). Just the mere reading of Matt. 5: 28 would explain a lot about how easily lust can be stirred.

6. Nakedness. When we use this term, we generally think of complete nudity. However in the Bible, it applies to one who is only partially disrobed. Though Adam and Eve had made themselves aprons of fig leaves (v. 7), which I am sure would have covered at least the mid-section of the body, the Lord says they were still **naked** (v. 10). When Peter had cast his coat (outer garment) off and was left only in his under garments (most likely covering more than our under garments today), John the writer says he was **naked** (John 21: 7)

Nakedness is equated with shame in both the Old and New Testament (Isa. 47: 3; Rev. 3: 18).

Application Of These Principles

Most would agree thus far with what has been said. The problem is that some who may agree with the above principles are not willing to make the obvious applications.

1. To whom do they apply? These guidelines apply to both men and women. I am just not ready to accept the fact that God laid down a strict code for women and let the men do as they please. If he did, then a man could not be immodest no matter how he dressed

or undressed. Some have argued that 1 Tim. 2: 9-10 is addressed to women and thus the regulations about modest dress do not apply to men. Let's grant (for the argument's sake) that 1 Tim. 2: 9-10 does not apply at all to men. There are still other passages and principles that do apply to the men. Consider that God saw fit to cover the naked man as well as the woman (Gen. 3: 21).

If none of the principles of 1 Tim. 2 do not apply to a man, then a man is not required to be modest, display a sense of shame, use good judgment, etc.

2. Where do these principles apply? The answer is simple: **Everywhere!** Modesty is required when one sits as well as stands. How many times have you seen some sister, who looked fairly modest while standing, pull and tug on her skirt when she sat down? These principles apply when you are doing yard work, where your neighbors and others see you. Why do we reason that we must be modest when we go to the store, but as long as I am mowing the grass I can pull my shirt off and put on my shorts. Just because it is in my own yard does not mean that it is not public. Modesty and a sense of shame, etc. are required while on vacation on the beaches of Florida or Southern California.

They apply when engaged in sporting events: when playing tennis, swimming, jogging or playing softball and basketball. If not, why not? What rule of logic would suggest that we must be modest at all other times, but if it is a sporting event, the principles do not apply? Why could we not justify complete nudity on the same basis. I understand that the Greeks trained in their gyms in the nude. In fact, our word "naked" and "gymnasium" have the same origin because of that practice. Were the Greeks justified because it was the way most dressed (or "undressed") for a sporting event?

God's regulations on apparel apply at weddings. I have been to a number of weddings (where those marrying and those in the party were Christians) and was shocked to see the dresses worn. Some of the same people would not dare wear the same or similar outfits anywhere else. But, call it a wedding, put it in a chapel and it is all right (they think) to wear those low cut, backless and off-the-shoulder dresses. I stand amazed at the reasoning some Christians use!

If these principles do not apply everywhere, they do not apply anywhere!

3. Which outfits do these principles forbid? It's really not all that hard to use a little common sense and apply the principles that are set out in the first of the article. Since there are only two categories: modest and immodest, it shouldn't be hard to decide in which class you will place a certain outfit. Using the two categories in the chart below, you answer for yourself the question of where you would put some of the outfits that are worn today.

MODEST Shame Good judgment Godliness	NOT MODEST "Naked" Lascivious
--	--

Where would you put these: Swim-suits (one and two

piece), shorts (for men and women that show a great portion of the thigh), halters, tubes, majorette uniforms, cheerleading outfits, short dresses, dresses and skirts with splits (displaying a large part of the leg), swimming trunks, men without shirts, jogging shorts, strapless dresses, spaghetti strap and sun dresses, backless dresses, blouses and dresses with low necklines, tight and form-fitting outfits, and see through styles? The answer, I think, is obvious.


I agree with the older preacher who said that he would like to know what kind of fruit it was that made Eve realize she was naked. He said he would like to get some and pass it around today. I would too.

(Some of the quotes in this article came from David Tant's excellent tract *Modest Apparel*.)

**SIMPLICITY
IN
CHRIST**

P. J. Casebolt

Rt. 1 Box 210
Middlebourne, WV 26149



MINISTERS OR MC'S?

In my early days of preaching, I returned to conduct a meeting with a congregation where I had made a short talk a year or so before. One saucy old sister told me, "I remember you. You are the preacher that told the story about the stink bug."

I had used an illustration about spewing out a month full of raspberries which had been contaminated by a stink bug. I had intended to illustrate what the Lord thought of the church at Laodicea. But the only thing the sister remembered was the stink bug. I had illustrated the lesson so well that the illustration was remembered, but the lesson forgotten.

There is mounting evidence in the brotherhood that some preachers are being remembered for their ability to emulate some stand-up comedian, a talk show host, or a master of ceremonies, a person capable of "introducing numbers, interviewing speakers, and usually providing the continuity" (Webster).

Some sermons are interspersed as much with characters from some popular TV series as they are with Bible characters. The language and mannerisms are more suited to a speech before the local Lion's Club or the Chamber of Commerce than they are to an audience which has been invited to hear words whereby they might be saved or edified.

A few years ago, I heard a sectarian preacher describing a "workshop" sponsored by the Crossroads movement in Gainesville, Florida. Chuck Lucas had just recently been featured in the local paper, presenting his "new look" — hair style, mustache, and the color and style of his clothes. During the worship, it was evident that some of the visiting preachers were attempting to

be Chuck Lucas "look-alikes," which prompted an observer to comment that one Chuck Lucas in town was enough.

Any preacher with an average education, average command of the English language, and average personality, could be an MC or an entertainer if he chose to do so. Some of us have even entertained on the stage, radio, and TV, and it may take a conscious effort on our part to hide behind the cross of Christ and the gospel message surrounding it.

Some of the most effective preachers in the brotherhood are men who could hold their own in the secular or academic world, or even on the stage as an entertainer or after-dinner speaker. But they have chosen to relegate such qualifications to the background in order to "preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord" (2 Cor. 4: 5).

We are not talking about the judicious use of humor or a "merry heart that doeth good like a medicine." Some humorous citations have transpired during sermons and public assemblies, and all you can do is make the best of the situation. Any preacher who has been around for a few years has accumulated enough illustrations to punctuate his lessons without going to joke books, or slang expressions more suited to video games and TV comedy formats than they are to the pulpit. When a preacher tells his audience that God "zapped" the Egyptians, or that he will "zap" you if you are bad, once is enough. Ten times in the same sermon is more than we need.

In the books of 1 & 2 Timothy, Paul tells the younger preacher what will make him "a good minister" (1 Tim. 4: 6), and what constitutes "the work of an evangelist" (2 Tim. 4: 1-5). The power still lies in the gospel (Rom. 1: 16), and in "the simplicity that is in Christ" (2 Cor. 11: 3).

I emphatically deny that the Bible message is so dry and uninteresting that we have to doctor it up with cheap gimmicks and expressions. Children may need to be taught on their level, but adults should also be taught on their level.

The preacher who cannot take his text, whether topical or expository, and edify an audience is in the wrong business. The more a preacher is deficient in the art of public speaking, the more he needs to lean on the power that is inherent in the word of God; and the more fluent and adept the preacher is in his ability to hold the interest of an audience, the more he needs to restrain himself from emphasizing the worldly over the spiritual.

The apostle Paul was careful not to rely on worldly wisdom, "lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect" (1 Cor. 1: 17ff). He warned against exalting men, philosophy, and the man who is "vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind" (Col. 2: 8, 18). We have preached this to the world, and it is time to practice it ourselves.

If a congregation desires to be entertained, the preacher needs to be strong enough to resist the temptation. If a preacher is going to mimic some entertainer or present a skit fashioned like a TV sit-com, the congregation may as well stay home and watch the real thing on TV.

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

DICK BLACKFORD, P. O. Box 83, Tuckerman, AH 72473 — After ten and a half years with the Westside church in Owensboro, Kentucky, I began work with the church in Tuckerman, Arkansas the first Sunday in May. We encourage all visitors in that area to come and worship with us.

TENTH ANNUAL SOUTHSIDE LECTURES

The Southside church in Pasadena, Texas will conduct its tenth annual lecture program June 12-15. The theme will be "Walking With the Master: Studies in the Gospels." Speakers will be Ed Harrell, Tack Chumbley, Don Bassett and Dee Bowman. R. J. Stevens will lead congregational singing. The church meets at 808 Fresa Rd., Pasadena, TX 77502. Phone (713) 946-8562. Contact the office for housing during the lectures.

HAL SNYDER, P. O. Box 285, Newport, NC 28570 — We have just completed a weekend meeting with Leslie Sloan, of Gallatin, TN. The topic for the series was "The Neo-Crossroads Movement." Brother Sloan was well prepared and we were informed and edified. Although the Boston/Crossroads philosophy does not pose a problem in our immediate area, our proximity to several major military installations where they are many in the age bracket most usually susceptible to this error (18-25 year-olds), prompted us to be prepared. For certain, we are better grounded in the faith and more alert to innovations.

OLEN HOLDERBY, 2010 N. Sierra Vista, Fresno, CA 93703 — It has been some time since we have offered a report on the work at N. Sierra Vista. The Lord has, indeed, blessed our efforts and given us many opportunities. About 40 have been added to our ranks the past year and many more visitors are coming our way. An architect is now drawing plans for a new auditorium to be added to our present facilities. We hope to complete this program by the end of this year. A rather massive program of correspondence courses is providing us with more contacts than expected. We are now in our second year with this program and continue to be pleased with the response. We are utilizing the services of Val-Pak for this part of our agenda. Dan Shipley was with us for our spring meeting and Bill Moseley will be with us in the fall. Robert Scifers, whom we formerly supported elsewhere, is now working with us locally, training for more effective service. In addition, we are assisting in the support of two other gospel preachers: George Garrison of Lodi, California and Bobby Goodman of Tulare, California. Come see us!

OLD FASHIONED CAMP MEETING

June 12, 13, 15, 16, 17 (no Wednesday service) there will be an old fashioned camp meeting at Old Ezell place, Cedar Creek Lake, near Belgreen, west of Russellville, Alabama at 6: 30 P. M. (come early). There will be gospel singing and two speakers nightly. Services will be in open air (with shelter available). Earl Kimbrough will speak each night on the spread and growth of the gospel in this area. Other speakers will be: Billy Norris (Monday), Lindsey Allen (Tuesday), Steve Patton (Thursday), Ed Bragwell (Friday) and Eugene Britnell (Saturday). For more information call Jackie Richardson (205) 332-9114, or 332-2525; or Eugene Britnell (205) 332-5451.

WHIT SASSER, 1819 Vinland Rd., Oshkosh, Wisconsin 54901 — A congregation has been started in Oshkosh which meets in my home at the above address. We are striving to be a church patterned after the divine plan in everything. If you know of people in this area whom we might contact, please let us know. Our mailing address is: P. O. Box 3188, Oshkosh, WI 54903. Phone (414) 426-0235.

NIGERIAN REPORT AND ELDERS

WILLIAM V. BEASLEY, 1513 W. Roller Coaster Rd., Tucson, Arizona — From December 26, 1988 through January 17, 1989 Allan Martin, a deacon of the Pekin, Indiana church, and I were preaching/ teaching in Nigeria. Our work was limited to three states (Akwa Ibom, Cross River, and Imo) in eastern Nigeria. We have reason to believe that some good was done. In addition to the three preacher training classes conducted, we visited and preached in as many congregations as possible. There were more than thirty baptisms in the places we visited. This is credited to the work of the Nigerian preachers. Two of the problems we tried to deal with were liberalism (World Bible School) and the "no-class" position. Both of these were, by circum-stances, forced upon us. The brethren seemed to appreciate our efforts. I was encouraged by being with the Nigerian brethren and by working so closely with Allan. He is a good friend, and an excellent Bible teacher and co-laborer.

By keeping our eyes and ears open we were able to identify some problems. It is because of one of these that I would like to offer some advise to the elders of congregations which support Nigerian preachers. It would be good if you would write those with whom you have fellowship in the gospel and ask the following questions: (1) What is your position on the social drinking of alcoholic beverages? (2) Do you drink alcoholic beverages socially? (3) Have you ever done so? (4) If so, when was the last time?

Please do not take this as an accusation against any individual. No preacher, worthy of support, should object to being asked about his teaching or manner of life. The Lord willing, I would like to make another trip to Nigeria to help deal with this and other problems which were noted. Remember the saints and work in Nigeria in your prayers.

HELP NEEDED

The Westside church in Clarksburg, West Virginia began on December 13, 1981 with four families. After meeting for several weeks in various homes, they were able to meet at the Westside Town House Motor Lodge, one mile west of Clarksburg on Route 50, where the church continues to meet. We have experienced both numerical and spiritual growth. But we have outgrown the present facilities, especially space for classes for children, which range in age from 5 to 16 years of age. Right now we only have space for two classes for them.

We have been able to locate a good piece of land (1. 6 acres) at a purchase price of \$33, 500. The church has thus far paid \$12, 211 of this amount. Due to the poor economic conditions in this area, our growth has not given us all the financial support needed. At this time we cannot afford to pay rent at the motel, pay for the land and build a building. We are doing the best we can, but we need some help. Once the land is paid for, we can use that as collateral for a building loan. We would like to contact individuals who might be willing to help with this problem. The following brethren have conducted meetings here: Ronny Milliner, Steve Reeves, Marshall E. Patton, Paul Casebolt, Barry Hudson and Stan Adams. Others who have preached here on occasion include: Landon Hope, Paul Rockwell, John Veyon, Connie W. Adams and John Underwood. These brethren all know our circum-stances and we invite any interested in knowing more about the work to contact any of these who might be known to you. Please contact: David Cochran, Rt. 2, Box 203, Bristol, WV 26332. Phone (304) 782-2132.

DON'T FORGET TO PRAY!

BILL DODD, Rt 6, Box 200, Oxford, MS 38665 — I have decided to undertake the writing of a biography on the life of Luther Blackmon while many are yet living who knew brother Blackmon and appreciated his work. His life touched the lives of many people over many years. If you have articles or other writings penned by him or have personal anecdotes, or other information about his life and work, please forward these to me.

NEY RIEBER, 6413 Zion Church Road, Sanford, NC 27330 — We have just passed the 900 figure on people to whom we have sent the correspondence course. Over 600 of these have responded. I have fifty contacts now in Murfreesboro, NC which is over 100 miles from where I live. There is no conservative church within 50 miles. Anyone have a suggestion? We have made a commitment to construct a much needed meeting house in Chapel Hill but we are facing a great amount of red tape. My problem with the chaplain at Polk Youth Center continues. He refuses to let me baptize more than once a quarter. I am persuaded that he is trying to undermine my work, but I will weather the harassment. At Blanch Youth Center, things look good. This past month there were 18 inmates baptized.

AUSTIN MOBLEY, 75 W. Tick Ridge Rd., Waynesburg, KY 40489 — Since June, 1988 we have been working with the small church at Waynesburg, KY. Attendance has doubled and there is good reason to believe we will continue to grow spiritually and numerically. You can see that the rumors of my "retiring" have been highly exaggerated. I have 17 bound volumes of STS for sale — 1966-1988. 1966-1977 are hard bound and the balance spiral bound. I'm asking \$100 and the buyer pays the postage.

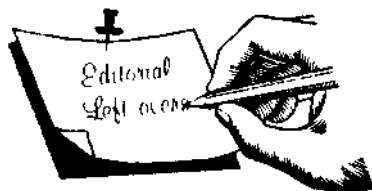
CORRECTION

ART OGDEN, 212 Cherokee Trail, Somerset, KY 42501 — In your pre-publication notice of the exchange between myself and Ferrell Jenkins, one statement was incorrect. You stated that in my commentary I argued forcefully against a Domitian persecution. The fact is, I wrote my commentary thinking Domitian was the greatest persecutor of all times. My discovery about Domitian came in the latter part of 1985 after my commentary was published in the spring of 1985. (Editor's note: We thank brother Ogden for this correction and offer our apology to him for the mistake).

PREACHERS NEEDED

CLEARWATER, FLORIDA — The Northeast congregation in Clearwater is beginning a search for an experienced gospel preacher to spend all his time here in the work of preaching and teaching. We anticipate being able to provide his living expenses. Any who wish to inquire about it should write to: Northeast Church of Christ, 2040 N. McMullen-Booth Rd., Clearwater, FL 34619.

MARTINSVILLE, VIRGINIA — This congregation of about 40 seeks a full time preacher. We would desire one who possesses the qualifications of an elder, but this is not a must. We need someone older in the faith and who likes to do personal work who could help us grow in spirit and number. We will do our part. Martinsville is located in the foothills of the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains. With an area population of 76,000, there is potential for much good work if we can locate the right man. We can supply \$325 a week toward support. Contact James L. Blankenship, Route 7, Box 339, Martinsville, VA 24112. Phone (703) 638-1892 or 666-1240.



TRAVELING AND WORSHIP

As summer draws near, many Americans, including brethren, will be traveling all over this country. It is refreshing to the spirit to have

a change of scenery. Christians from areas where there are congregations readily accessible, are sometimes taken by surprise in certain sections of the country to discover how far apart faithful congregations are. You may have to drive 100 miles out of your way and spend an extra night if you are in the upper tier of states between Minnesota and Washington. Plan carefully in New England. In the midwest, you will have to also make plans with care. In traveling, we have found the directories published by GUARDIAN OF TRUTH and the one by Bob Buchanon to be very useful. These are updated regularly and are inexpensive. You can get them from RELIGIOUS SUPPLY CENTER. We keep one in the car always when traveling to and from meetings. Also, we have made good use of the church ads in the back of STS and other periodicals which carry such ads. These give times of services, addresses and phone numbers to call. If you are going into an area and are uncertain about where brethren meet, then ask someone you think would be able to help you BEFORE YOU START YOUR TRIP. In areas of the country where congregations are very small and far apart, you will not only be blessed by worshipping with such brethren, but your visit will be a great blessing to them. And please, if you find the information in one of these directories to be incorrect, please inform the publishers to that effect. You are the Lord's whether at home or away. The Lord's Day is still the Lord's Day whether you are on vacation or not. Be careful, have a good summer and DON'T FORGET WHO YOU ARE and WHOSE YOU ARE.

LIGHT SUCCESSFULLY CONCEALED

Recently, Bobby and I were traveling across the country after a gospel meeting in the southwest and drove 35 miles from where we spent the night to worship with a congregation listed in a directory we had with us. We found the address in the small town of 2,000 but there was an insurance company at that location. We asked but got no help. One said "I have lived here all my life and if there has ever been a Church of Christ in this town, I never heard of it." We drove out of town on every main road without success. We drove up one street and down the other until we had covered the town, but to no avail. Finally we had to give up and drive the 35 miles back. I do not know if there was ever a congregation in that place. It is possible the information was incorrect in the directory. But it put me to thinking. What about the church where you live and worship? Is it aggressively trying to reach the community? Do you ever advertise in the paper: a gospel meeting, or a free tract available, or a correspondence course, or a phone number to call for a gospel message? Have you ever printed posters to advertise a meeting and approached local businesses to see if they would allow you to put one in the window? Have you ever made any kind of door-to-door effort? Even if these efforts do not bring many contacts, at least the people of the community know you are there and that you are trying to reach out in some way. Christians who do business with local establishments ought to have some influence, or impact over a period of time. Brethren, don't hide your light. "A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid."

COULD YOU? WOULD YOU?

Did you know that for \$7.50 a month you could have this paper sent to 12 of your friends or relatives? Do you realize how much good this might do them over a period of a year's time? Do you know of anyone who is reading too much Bible-based material? Have you ever sent anyone a gift subscription to a magazine? How much did it cost you a year to send it to just one person? We have had a loyal group of supporters over the years who have, year after year, sent the paper to a list of people. Many of these have had to stop because of declining health and income. It seems that the younger generation, as a whole, does not see the importance of this as well as their parents and grandparents did. We need your help, friends, to get this paper in the hands of as many as possible. Now, **Could** you? Well, **Would** you? Let us hear from you.

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	604
RESTORATIONS	73

(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 XXX

JULY, 1989

NUMBER 7

THINK ON THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 1631
Lutz, FL 33549



IF YOU BELIEVE THE BIBLE

The evidence is strong that most people who read and claim to live by the Bible do not really believe what it says. They do not, in fact, accept Jesus Christ as the only and final authority in all things. Instead, they use tradition, custom, morality, theology and history to establish the proof of what is doctrinally right and what is wrong. Many do not accept the claim of the Bible that it is verbally inspired of God. Problems will continue to multiply as long as religious leaders insert their opinions into Bible teaching.

Jesus said to those Jews who relied so much on their scriptures: "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5: 39). They had the scriptures from God, but they did not really believe them. If they had understood and believed what the Old Testament said, they would have believed what it said concerning Christ. We would criticize these Jews for their unbelief, while at the same time revealing exactly the same disposition toward the New Testament scriptures.

The Bible is important. It is the only means of knowing the will of God. If we do not believe it, we are no better off than if we had no revelation at all. On the other hand, if we really believe the Bible, we must accept some facts that most people will reject in modern religion. Note these few:

1. **It is all-sufficient.** If we really believe what the Bible says, we must believe it to be all-sufficient and complete as a revelation from God to man. "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 Tim. 3: 16, 17). When men feel the need to create "creeds" which will define their various "beliefs," they are saying by that act that the New Testament is not sufficient to do the job.

2. **The only way to heaven.** If we really believe what the Bible teaches, we must believe that there is but one way to heaven, and that is by Christ and his word. Jesus said, "Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matt. 7: 14). "... I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14: 6). "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6: 63). Denominationalism contends that there are many ways to heaven, each denomination claiming its own doctrine to be one way. But Jesus said, "I am the way the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14: 6). "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way..." (Heb. 10: 19, 20). The only way one can come to God by Christ is to obey the full authority of Christ in the New Testament. All who go beyond in any respect, or come short in any matter, of that which is the authority of Jesus Christ are not in the one way. We have to believe this if we believe the Bible.

3. **All the saved are in the church.** If we really believe what the Bible says, we must believe that the church is important to salvation. Usually denominational teachers will insist that the church is not important to one's salvation because to do so would present the problem of deciding WHICH ONE IS IMPORTANT! "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" (Acts 20: 28). The one body, the church, was so important to Christ that he died for it (Eph. 5: 25). The blood that was shed for the one church he built was for the remission of sins (Eph. 1: 7). Christ is the head of this church (Eph. 1: 22, 23; Col.

1: 18). He is the head of no other. The Bible also teaches that there is but one body of Christ (Eph. 1: 22, 23; 4: 4; Col. 1: 11, 24; 1 Cor. 12: 20).

4. **Only the pure gospel is the power to save.** If we really believe what the Bible says, we must believe that only the pure gospel of Christ is the power of God to save. Not all that is called "the gospel" is the pure gospel of Christ. Paul wrote, "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" (Rom. 1: 16). He also said, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. 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..." (Gal. 1: 6-8). This one gospel requires faith in Christ and his authority. It requires repentance of sins (Acts 2: 38; Acts 17: 30; 2 Peter 3: 9). It requires a confession with the mouth, the faith in the heart that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (Rom. 10: 9, 10; Acts 8: 37). It requires baptism, a burial in water, for the remission of sins (Acts 2: 28; Mark 16: 16; Col. 2: 12; Rom. 6: 3, 4). To believe the Bible means to believe all these facts, commands and promises that are revealed in it, without addition or subtraction.

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VOLUME 30 JULY, 1989 NUMBER 7

Published Monthly at
BROOKS, KENTUCKY

Second Class Postage Paid at Brooks, Kentucky
and at an Additional Mailing Office
USPS-487-440

CONNIE W. ADAMS, Editor

Office of Publication
52 Yearling Drive
Brooks, Kentucky 40109
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Editorial

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"RICH IN GOODS, BUT RAGGED IN SPIRIT"

A few well chosen words can capture the spirit of a moment in history. In a time of great apprehension, Franklin D. Roosevelt put things in perspective when he said "We have nothing to fear but fear itself." In the aftermath of the Civil War when the nation was battle weary and deeply scarred, Abraham Lincoln appealed to noble instincts when he said "With malice toward none, but charity for all..." John F. Kennedy will be long remembered for his inaugural appeal "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country." In 1968 Richard M. Nixon summarized the general state of our society when he said "We find ourselves rich in goods but ragged in spirit, reaching with magnificent precision for the moon but falling into the rock of discord on earth." How true that was then, and now.

This was the paradox of Israel of old. Amos painted a picture of a nation "at ease in Zion" which stretched itself upon ivory couches, ate fatted lambs and calves, relaxed to music, sipped wine in bowls and perfumed their bodies expensively. "But they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph" (Amos 6: 1-6). They were rich, but poor. Haggai prodded the returned captives into completing the temple by reminding them that they had time to build and ceil their own houses, to earn wages and supply their own needs while the temple remained nothing more than a foundation for sixteen years. Their spirit was ragged.

This was the problem with the rich fool of Luke 12: 16-21. He made plans for the material to the neglect of his soul and the Lord called him a Fool." Paul warned those who would be "rich in this world's goods" not to be "highminded" and to "trust in the living God" (1 Tim. 6: 17-19). Anytime we place the material above the spiritual, we are ragged in spirit, regardless of how rich we may be in goods. There are many practical applications of this principle.

It is true in our **nation** now. A recent report indicated that we have the highest rate of employment since 1972. Our homes are filled with conveniences and even luxuries undreamed of in a former time, or by a large portion of the rest of the world now. Our highways are choked with trucks moving goods of a rich nation, with expensive cars, campers, motor homes, boats and tour buses. Restaurants are packed. Does anyone eat at home anymore? Motels and hotels must be reserved ahead. Theme parks are crowded. Overnight accommodations in many state and national parks require booking a year

in advance. We have a strange thing in our country in that many workers are retired at 50-55 years of age. But with all that, we are a nation ragged in spirit. Evidence of wrong doing by those in high office is commonplace. The threat of murder and mayhem hangs like a tornadic cloud over our great cities. All too many of our citizens are mesmerized with drugs, from the small hamlet to the metroplex. School children all over America know where and how to obtain drugs if they want them. Divorce rages out of control. AIDS threatens even the morally upright through the "lifestyles" of the immoral. Our schools have, in many instances, become more our enemies than our benefactors. God has been ruled out of education and some of our schools have become anti-religion for all practical purposes.

It is still true that "righteousness exalteth a nation but sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov. 14: 34). All is not lost, nor should we seek for Elijah's cave to withdraw from the human race. Christians are still the "light of the world" and the "salt of the earth" (Mt. 5: 13-16). But we have to be careful not to hide our light nor allow our salt to "lose its savour."

The principle is true in **denominationalism**. Although doctrinal errors have provided the foundation for denominationalism, time was that they could be counted on to exert an influence for good morally. They stood up against drunkenness, adultery, homosexuality, dishonesty, indecency of every sort. But now the great mainline denominations of the day, with their large memberships, elaborate facilities, institutional projects and influential members, are platforms for radicals of every stripe. They tolerate infidelity, homosexuality (even officially endorsing such perverts for "the ministry"), social drinking, dancing, trial marriages, and you name it. Though rich in goods and politically powerful, they have contributed to the destruction of morals and the loss of faith. They are ragged in spirit.

It is true in many of our **homes**. Our penchant for material things, career advancement, multiple incomes, sports, exotic trips and relaxation has left us with frazzled marriages where we are too tired or preoccupied to have any romance left. Children are left unattended or with strangers. Many families don't even sit down to eat together. Home has become an overnight motel, a fast food counter and sadly, too often a place of unrest, if not outright strife.

We must not forget to bring up our children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6: 3-4). Husbands must love their wives "even as Christ loved the church" and wives must see that they "reverence" their husbands. Children must be taught to "obey" and "honor" their parents (Eph. 6: 1-3).

It is true in many **local churches**. It is evident that, as a whole, congregations have larger and finer buildings than they had a few years ago. They have larger budgets. Many are equipped with the latest tools for visual aids in teaching from the pulpit and in the classroom. Without doubt gospel preachers are better supported and stay longer in most places. But there is a ragged spirit in evidence in too many places. Complacency is too common. A deadly spirit of "keeping house

for the Lord" has set in with many. Sermons that seek to stir evangelistic fervor to spread the gospel to the whole world are sometimes met with a puzzled stare. Pride afflicts many. While none of us should want services to be disorderly, neither should they become stilted performances of eloquence, elegance and sophistication so that we worry about getting a little chalk dust on the carpet, or concern ourselves with whether or not the preacher's tie clashes with the drapes or carpet.

We are ragged in spirit when we are too comfortable with error and do not want it exposed for what it is. When every gathering becomes a pep rally for feeling good about yourself and when sermons become more entertaining than instructive, we are in trouble. When Christians look upon refraining from the works of the flesh as a penalty rather than a blessing from God, we have ragged spirits. When we exert most of our energies fussing with each other and choosing up sides to the exclusion of being on "the Lord's side" our spirits are tattered. Already there are signs of churches which once were large, thriving and aggressively reaching out to the lost, who are dwindling because of infighting, and/or love for the world.

Thank God for those who are still rich in spirit. We all remember the church at Laodicea which thought it was rich but was, in reality, deeply impoverished spiritually. But don't forget the church at Smyrna which was in poverty but to whom the Lord said "but thou art rich" (Rev. 2: 8-9). It is not wrong to have material riches. But it is wrong to trust them. It is wrong to misuse them. Let us learn to be "rich in good works" (1 Tim. 6: 18).

**WAKE THE WORLD
AND TELL THE
PEOPLE**

Wilson Adams
891 Autumn Valley Lane
Gambrills, MD 21054



**ANTIOCH — THE POWER OF THE
LOCAL CHURCH**

The passage is Acts 11. The place was Antioch. If you are not aware of the power of God as it moved in the midst of that mega-population center of long ago, then you are probably not alone. The church of Christ in Antioch stands as an exemplary congregation that needs to be closely studied and reviewed in light of our attempt to establish New Testament churches today. It's not enough to compare ourselves with ourselves. That's easy. One can always find a local church that is failing in an area where another is succeeding. Such shallow comparisons may build confidence but they do nothing to draw us closer to the New Testament pattern. We need to study New Testament churches. We need to take a closer look at Antioch.

They Exemplified Selfless Love

John said it this way: "**Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth**" (1 John 3: 18). It's easy to pledge allegiance to the name of Christ. But the real question is: does our life mirror the life of Him who first wore that name? Are we willing to sacrifice to the same degree of selfless love that we see in Him? Look again at Antioch in Acts 11: 27-30 and observe some commendable qualities of these Christians who abounded in benevolent love.

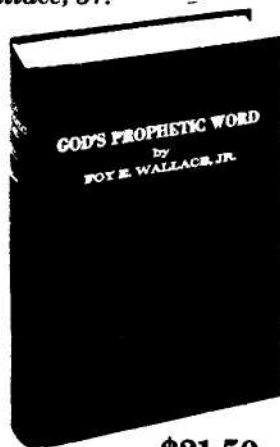
1. **The assurance of historical confirmation**, vs. 27-28. First, the writer of Acts reminds us that the activities of the early church take place in a historical context. "There was a great famine," says Luke, "during the reign of Claudius." History records that Claudius Caesar reigned thirteen years (A. D. 41-54). Josephus reports that during his rule there was a famine and that "many people died from want of food." Fact: there was a Roman emperor by the name of Claudius. Fact: there was a severe famine during his reign. Fact: what we believe and practice as a local church of Christ does not rest in fictitious ignorance but in the root of historical reality. Remember that.

2. **Their confidence in the spoken Word**, vs. 27-28. There were in the early church a group of God-inspired men known as "prophets" (Eph. 4: 11). Several came to the church in Antioch and one of them, a certain "Agabus," began to foretell. (This is the same Agabus who later would, in Ezekiel like fashion, bind himself with the belt of Paul as a sign of the apostle's coming capture and arrest, Acts 21: 10-11). But observe in our text the warm receptivity that the Antioch brethren

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gave the prophet of God. These Christians had no written word. Their book, chapter and verse rested in the form of a prophet. He spoke and they listened as he told of a coming famine that would cause their Jewish brothers to greatly suffer. And their reaction? They respected the word of God so much that they were willing to send a financial contribution IN ADVANCE of the need! That's how much confidence they had in the promises of God.

Think about it. Think what would happen if we had that same degree of confident trust in what God has said. Local churches often fail in their objectives because they lack confidence in the divine guarantees. If we really believed what God promises in passages like Matt. 28: 20 or in 1 Cor. 3: 7 then we would see local churches leaving the mode of mediocrity and launching out in faith with visions and dreams dependent not upon their own ability but upon the power of God. It's the attitude we see in Antioch. It's the attitude seen today in New Testament churches.

3. They **experienced the thrill of giving**, vs. 29. Let's note four things about their benevolent response to need:

a. Their spontaneous generosity. Nowhere in the passage does one get the impression that this was an arm-twisting, guilt trip lecture laid upon the church by Paul and Barnabus. In fact, the whole scene seems to be framed with the words of 2 Cor. 9: 7 which defines true giving as being without grudging and with genuine joy. Look closer. The word for "cheerful" is the Greek word, *hilaros*. Literally it says: "God loves the hilarious giver!" The hilarious giver is one who gives out of a heart filled with overflowing generosity while understanding that true giving is measured not in terms of giving until it hurts but rather in giving until it feels good! The hilarious giver feels good when he gives. He doesn't have to be pushed or prodded or begged. That's why the hilarious giver smiles when he gives; not a smile of self-righteous pride but one that simply acknowledges a heart which has learned that the thrill of living is GIVING! It's called joyful generosity. It's called blessedness (Acts 20: 35).

The Antioch disciples were hilarious givers. They reflected well the liberality of the Macedonians (2 Cor. 8: 1-5) or those in Exodus 36 who gave with such generosity that Moses had to beg them to stop. (I bet you've never seen that done!) Giving. It's a touchy subject. But only for those who haven't learned yet how to do it. In Antioch, it was not a problem.

b. They were willing to take the risk. Did you see it? Look again at verse 28. This was prophesied to be a general famine. Certainly it would hit Judea hard because of hardships already there, but there was no guarantee that the fingers of famine would not reach to even Antioch. These Christians were willing to take the risk and give in the face of the fact that one day they themselves might have need! That's love. That's selflessness. That's Christianity.

c. They gave according to their prosperity. **"In the proportion that any of the disciples had means..."** These weren't rich folks who had more money than they knew what to do with. They were people struggling to

carve out a life for their families in a big city where costs were high and hardships many (especially for Christians). But they had prospered and they gave accordingly (1 Cor. 16: 1-2). Do we? (The problem in too many churches is that there are folks making \$35,000 per year and giving \$25 per week. That works out to a whopping 3. 7% of their income going to the Lord's work. People, that's not sacrifice; it is stealing!)

d. Every member was involved. Verse 29 reports that of those who had means, **"each of them sent a contribution for the relief of the brethren living in Judea."** This was not an activity for the few but for the many. The point: If the local church is to accomplish its work then it must actively seek the involvement of everyone. Elders need to be talent scouts and opportunity seekers as they seek to involve every member in the work. The Old Testament reminder that **"every man stood in his place"** (Judges 7: 21) is apropos to the New Testament local church. All of us need to look for those who tend to be marginal participants and help motivate them to move into the mainstream of the local work. Indeed, there is work that we all can do.

4. **The power of unity**, vs. 29. New Testament Christianity was introduced into a world filled with racial hatred, bitterness and bigotry. And, yet, the story of the Cross is the story of a Savior whose love was so great that no man could accept Him and still hate his brother. Back up to verses 22-26. It was then that Antioch had a need. This infant church of young Gentile believers stood in great need of stability. The Jerusalem Jews responded by sending Barnabus to Antioch. No church would ever want to lose a Barnabus. But Jerusalem was willing to let him go in order to help lay a foundation in scriptural instruction for their Gentile brothers. **JEW'S REACHING OUT TO GENTILES...**

Now the situation was reversed. Now the Jews stood in need. **GENTILES REACHING OUT TO JEWS** is what we see in 11: 27-30 and later described by Paul, **"For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they are indebted to minister to them also in material things"** (Rom. 15: 27). The Jews had shared their spiritual heritage with the Gentiles. Now the Gentiles had the opportunity of giving in return. There was no hesitation.

The Antioch church buried racial hatred. She stood as a shining light in a darkened sea of prejudice. In fact, Antioch herself was a racially mixed congregation (vs. 19-21). But it didn't matter in Antioch — not the color of your skin, nor your country of origin, nor your economic background. Only one thing mattered in Antioch: do you belong to Jesus Christ! (Gal. 3: 28-29).

Let me say this about racial prejudice. **JESUS HATES IT!** And if you are going to be His then you have to hate it, too. It pains me to say this but it's true. There are still churches in this country today who make a claim to Christ where a black man would not be welcome as a member. It is false advertisement. That church is not of Christ because that church stands opposed to everything that the Cross stands for. Prejudice is sinful. Period. Brethren, we have not restored the New Testament church until, like Antioch, we bury racial prejudice

and treat every man as equal in the sight of God. And any local congregation that fails in this area can in no way claim allegiance to Jesus. In no way.

**WRITTEN FOR
OUR INSTRUCTION**

Frank Himmel

1575 14th Ave W.
Palmetto, Florida 33561



JEALOUSY AMONG THE LORD'S SERVANTS

Israel's journey to Canaan was laden with difficulties, many of them self-imposed. Such was the case in the episode at Hazeroth (Num. 12).

The Event

Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because he married a Cushite woman. They complained, "has the Lord indeed spoken only through Moses? Has he not spoken through us as well? Meek Moses did not reply. God did. He summoned the three to the tabernacle and came down in the pillar of cloud. God explained that he spoke to prophets in visions and dreams, but to Moses He spoke mouth to mouth. This difference should have been obvious. It should have made Miriam or Aaron afraid to speak against Moses.

When God departed, Miriam was leprous. Aaron confessed their sin to Moses, who interceded for Miriam. The Lord agreed to heal her, but insisted she be shut up outside the camp seven days to bear her shame.

Practical Lessons

The first lesson from this incident is about honesty. What did Moses marrying a Cushite woman have to do with God speaking through Miriam and Aaron as well as Moses? Nothing. It was merely a pretext, an occasion to voice their pent-up ill will. Real complaints are often disguised in superficial issues. When someone gets his feelings hurt and decides to leave a congregation, it does not take him long to find a "valid reason" for doing so. If you do not care for a man personally, you are more likely to detect something that makes him unfit to serve as an elder or deacon. How many churches have divided, ostensibly over some doctrinal matter, when the real problem was brethren did not like each other, or would not humble themselves and learn to get along? This text challenges us to be honest with ourselves.

Miriam and Aaron's complaint betrayed their real feelings, and points to the main lesson from this episode: jealousy. Jealousy is a feeling of hostility toward those we perceive to have some advantage over us. It threatens all. Children become jealous if they sense that one has the special affection of a mother or father. Workers often envy fellow-laborers who make more money, get more time off, or receive a promotion. Stu-

dents sometimes snub those who get the best grades.

Jealousy creeps into the Lord's church, too. Brethren who want to run things covet the elders' position. Some envy others' God-given skills or accomplishments. Preachers can be among the worst about this. One resents another because he is a more eloquent speaker or writer, or is mightier in the Scriptures, or baptizes more people, or holds more meetings. Unfortunately, preaching Christ from envy and strife is nothing new (Ph. 1: 15). Even whole congregations can be jealous of each other, especially if one in town is growing faster than the rest.

Miriam's jealousy bore three fruits: personal uncleanness, disrupted fellowship, and hindered progress. Leprosy made one unclean (Lev. 13). So does envy. It is rottenness to the bones (Pro. 14: 30). It is a work of the flesh that will cause us to forfeit our inheritance (Gal. 5: 20, 21). Leprosy is contagious. Miriam had to be put outside the camp to prevent her disease from spreading. Perhaps envy is contagious. At any rate, it can sever ties between brethren as well as with God.

Forgiveness does not remove all the consequences of sin. Miriam had to spend seven days in quarantine, as did all lepers who were healed. The march toward Canaan halted while Miriam bore her shame. Bitter feelings and rivalries have the same effect among God's people today. Attention that should be focused on our work is diverted. A dying world is neglected while we tend to internal problems. Wounds may be inflicted that will take years to heal.

Jealousy and strife are signs of carnality, of walking by human standards (1 Cor. 3: 3). "When we remember that talents and position and power are granted in the providence of God, it is real rebellion against His will to be envious of those to whom these powers or privileges have been assigned" (Charles Eerdman). Accept the place God has chosen for you. As for others, do not envy them. Instead, learn to "rejoice with them that rejoice."

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THE DOMITIAN PERSECUTION (NO. 2)

Arthur M. Ogden
212 Cherokee Trail
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Ferrell Jenkins, whom I love dearly in the Lord and whose scholarship I respect highly, has responded to my presentation on the supposed Domitian persecution. I appreciate his skilled defense of his position and his brotherly spirit. He did an excellent job of presenting his evidence. I believe, however, that a careful reading of my previous offering is sufficient to serve as an answer to his response. In that article I anticipated the case to be made for a Domitian persecution. I showed why it is weak, and I also showed that in order to prove a Domitian persecution one must appeal to the book of Revelation.

Evidence Not Rejected

Ferrell did a good job of showing the contribution made to our understanding of the early years of Christianity by the evidence sifted from early pagan sources and the "Church Fathers." Yet, we both understand that many things found in these sources are contradictory and others are false. He accepts these no more than I. The evidence must be sifted and questions asked: What is fact? What is fiction? What is opinion?

Somehow Ferrell concluded from my article that I reject the patristic evidence. Reread my article and see if I rejected the evidence. I simply questioned whether the evidence is strong enough, in the absence of corroborating contemporary sources, to convict Domitian of directing a persecution against Christians of the magnitude described by many historians and Revelation commentators. I readily admit that Domitian MAY have persecuted some Christians. I reach this conclusion by considering the kind of evidence presented by Ferrell. If I totally rejected that evidence, I could not say there MAY have been a persecution.

The Case is Overstated

Ferrell readily admitted that the case for a Domitian persecution has been overstated. No longer will he say "Domitian bathed the empire in the blood of the Christians." What will he say? His evidence from "Christian" sources, except for his use of Revelation, reveals that Melito (175 AD), Hegesippus (117-189 AD), Tertullian (197 AD) and Eusebius (325 AD) said there was persecution, but the sum total of their evidence reveals two banishments (the apostle John and Domitilla), and an inquiry of some relatives of the Lord. No deaths are presented. Though Edward Gibbon accepted all of this evidence, plus accepting Flavius Clemens (husband to Domitilla) as a martyred Christian, did not think this ordeal deserved the right to be called a persecution.¹

Just how strong is the evidence from "Christian" sources? Ferrell thinks it is "too strong to reject." I think

it is too weak to build a case upon. The case for John's banishment to Patmos during Domitian's reign is weak because it contradicts the internal evidence of the book of Revelation,² and the evidence that Domitilla was banished by Domitian because she was a Christian is weak because no one knows whether or not she was a Christian at the time of her exile. Even if she was, our earliest information about her banishment indicates that she was banished for political reasons rather than religious.³ All of this boils down to there being too little evidence to convict. Domitian may have persecuted some Christians but the evidence from "Christian" sources does not prove it, certainly not to the proportions claimed by so many today.

The Contemporary Evidence

The impression is left that Tacitus, writing 50 years after (115 AD), was not contemporary with Nero any more than Hegesippus and Melito, writing 75 years after, were contemporary with Domitian. Contemporary means "living, occurring, or existing at the same period of time; contemporaneous" (Webster). Tacitus (55-120 AD), Suetonius (69?-140 AD), and Pliny (61-113? AD) were Roman writers who left at least a partial record of the history of Domitian's reign. Though only a lad of 9 to 12 years of age, Tacitus leaves a record of Nero's persecution as does his contemporary Suetonius, yet neither of them, though men of age and maturity and in a position to have witnessed it, tell anything about efforts on Domitian's part to persecute Christians. They are as silent as the tomb. Could a persecution of the magnitude often pictured have gone unnoticed by them?

Ferrell thinks that Pliny's letter to Trajan (111 AD) implies an earlier policy of the Empire toward Christianity. He had concluded, since some Christians defected 25 years previous to their inquest before Pliny (i. e., 86 AD), that they ceased to be Christians because Domitian persecuted them, yet no one charges Domitian with persecuting Christians before the last two years of his reign (95-96) AD). Their defection, therefore, had nothing to do with persecution. It is then reasoned, since Pliny states he had never been present for trials of Christians, that implies there had been such trials under Domitian. It is assumed there were earlier trials of Christians and then assumed that those trials were conducted during the reign of Domitian. This is assuming too much.

Ferrell says if I were affirming the Neronian persecution I would seek to establish it the same way he establishes the Domitian persecution. He is mistaken. Tacitus was contemporary with Nero and the people of his reign. He revealed the Neronian persecution. Suetonius also recorded it. Be assured that if Ferrell had evidence like this for the Domitian persecution, he would have used it.

The Book of Revelation

Without the book of Revelation there is practically no case that can be made for a Domitian persecution. We probably would never have heard of it if the Apocalypse had not been written. The book of Revelation indicates some kind of persecution in progress in Asia while the book was being witnessed by John. This is not a problem with the early date. It matters not how far reaching

Nero's persecution was because the scriptures reveal Jewish persecution of saints in every place Jews resided and also some Gentile persecution. I maintain the primary persecutors in Revelation are Jewish and that the Roman conflict with the saints is secondary covering 200 years from the time of Trajan until it ended. The advocates of the late date will not accept this explanation of the persecution depicted in Revelation, so in order to substantiate their position, they MUST have a Domitian Persecution. The early date is too early to satisfy their view of the Apocalypse, and the reign of Trajan too late.

Ferrell has written, The book of Revelation is the most thoroughly Jewish in its language and imagery of any New Testament book. "4 To me it is amazing that the most thoroughly Jewish book of the N. T. describes what has been concluded is a thoroughly Gentile persecution of a predominantly Gentile church. I rather think the most thoroughly Jewish book of the N. T. was designed to reveal God's judgment upon the Jews, the primary persecutors of God's people in both the Old and New Testaments ages.

Efforts are made to prove the date of the Apocalypse by calling upon Irenaeus (130-200 AD) who states that the "apocalyptic vision... was seen... towards the end of Domitian's reign." The impression is left that Irenaeus got this information from Polycarp, though he did not indicate the source of his statement. The uninspired statement of Irenaeus' opinion about dating the book is of no more strength than my own uninspired statement. Ferrell thinks I would like such a statement to establish the early date but, if that were the strongest case for it, I would reject it. Like the evidence from the Syriac Version,⁵ which Ferrell mistakenly thinks I use to establish the early date of Revelation, this kind of evidence only indicates that early church fathers also had opinions about the date of the book's composition.

The Early Date

Restraining the urge to present a counter argument for the early date is difficult, however, I must forego because our discussion concerns the question of whether Domitian was a persecutor of Christians and not the date of the Apocalypse. If Ferrell wishes an exchange upon that topic, let him read my commentary on Revelation (1985), **THE AVENGING OF THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS**, and answer my arguments. This book has been in print for three and one half years and to date, though the first printing is nearly depleted, **not one person having read the book and holding to the late date has offered to refute my scriptural arguments.** I have received nothing but commendation for the work. **A Challenge to Ferrell**

It would be of help if Ferrell would describe for us exactly what he deems the Domitian persecution to have been. To help him with this task, I challenge him to tell us if the statements quoted in my previous article from (1) Halley, (2) Butterworth and Shaver are true statements? (3) Is the description given by Weldon Warnock in **REVELATION: MESSAGE FROM**

PATMOS (page 10) a true description of the Domitian persecution? (4) Do you really believe that "Domitian attempted to crush Christianity"?⁶ (5) Do you believe he developed a new policy toward Christianity? (6) Do you believe that the number of Christians slain by Domitian was in the thousands, hundreds, fifties, teens or single digits? (7) Can you identify just one Christian who died as a result of a persecution instigated by Domitian? (8) Can you prove beyond all shadow of doubt that he persecuted anyone simply because they were Christians? A forthright answer with historical evidence to substantiate the claim would be in order.

Footnotes

¹ Edward Gibbon, **The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire**, p. 278.

²The internal evidence from the book of Revelation which makes this argument weak is the evidence within the book demanding the book be written before 70 AD. See my arguments in **The Avenging of the Apostles and Prophets**, pp. 17-23.

³Elmer T. Merrill, **Essays In Christian History**, pp. 149-150.

⁴Ferrell Jenkins, **The Old Testament in the Book of Revelation**, p. 22.

⁵The **Avenging of the Apostles and Prophets** is CORRECT in stating the Syriac Version dates back to the 2nd century (pp. 15-16). However, Ferrell is probably correct also in stating that the earliest manuscript of that version, carrying the 68 AD date, is dated in 508 AD. Thanks to Ferrell for pointing out this error.

⁶Ferrell Jenkins, **Emperor Worship in the Book of Revelation**, p. 4 I highly recommend this much needed work on Emperor Worship. Apart from the author's speculation on the date and interpretation of Revelation, it is an excellent work.

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THE DOMITIANIC PERSECUTION (A RESPONSE) (NO. 2)

Ferrell Jenkins
9211 Hollyridge Place
Tampa, Florida 33637

Not only did I get the impression from Art's first article that he rejected the evidence from the "Church Fathers," but I still have that impression despite his disavowal. Art wants to know "What is fact? What is fiction? What is opinion?," and I want to know the same thing! In my previous article I set forth "The Case for the Domitianic Persecution." Since I admitted that the case for the Domitianic persecution has been overstated, Art wants to know what I will say now? Let's summarize again.

Summary of the Patristic Evidence

1. The Book of Revelation. John was on Patmos because of his preaching of the word (1: 9). Antipas had already been martyred (2: 13). The patristic evidence says that John was exiled under Domitian, released upon the death of the emperor, and then wrote the book of Revelation. Adela Collins says the fact that Irenaeus "dated the book as he did, in spite of the difficulty about the apostle's age, implies that he had independent and strong evidence for the date."¹ Colin Hemer says "if John suffered exile in Domitian's reign, and the emperor was remembered as a persecutor, it is easy to account for the growth of the tradition."² Art is of the **opinion** that all of these early writers just gave their **opinion** and that it was wrong. If Nero, or one of the other emperors, or the Jews were responsible for the exiling of John and the death of Antipas, why didn't the early writers just say so? Why did they incorrectly attribute these things to Domitian? Why couldn't just one writer before the sixth century have a different opinion?

2. Pliny. In A. D. 111 Pliny wrote to the Emperor Trajan for advice on how to conduct the trials for Christians in Bithynia. He stated that he had never been present for any of these trials. Even Albert Bell, who dates the book of Revelation to the reign of Galba (A. D. 68/69), points out that this implies, "of course, that there had been such trials. And the only time in Pliny's life that they are likely to have occurred is under Domitian."³

3. Melito. Melito, in his apology to the emperor Marcus Aurelius, singled out Nero and Domitian as showing "a disposition to slander our faith..."⁴ Why would Melito make such a blunder in writing to the emperor of Rome?

4. Tertullian. Tertullian, in his **Apology to Septimius Severus**, even called upon the emperor to "Consult your histories." He stated that Nero was the first to "rage with the imperial sword" against Christians. He stated that "Domitian too, who was a good deal of a Nero

in cruelty, attempted it" but "soon stopped... restored those he had banished. Such are ever our persecutors..."⁵ Why would Tertullian, trained as an attorney, challenge the emperor to consult his histories about something that did not happen?

5. Eusebius. This church historian quoted several earlier writers to the effect that Domitian was a persecutor of Christians. He says that Domitian persecuted some "for professing Christ," and names Flavia Domitilla. Art states that no one knows whether Domitilla was a Christian at the time of her exile. In this he follows the **opinion** of Merrill. The Roman historian A. N. Sherwin-White reminds us that "Eusebius is not lightly to be set aside when he names a particular person..."⁶ My question was, and is: "If these people were not Christians, why would the Christians, such as Eusebius, want to claim them?"

6. Hegesippus. This church historian recites the story of Jewish disciples of the Lord who were brought before Domitian. He states that the emperor dismissed these individuals and "by a decree ordered the persecution to cease."⁸

Who Is Contemporary?

It was pointed out in my first article that the earliest evidence for a Neronian persecution of Christians in A. D. 64 comes from the writings of Tacitus (A. D. 115), **more than 50** years after the event! Art thinks that Tacitus, a lad of 9 years of age, and Suetonius, born about 5 years after the persecution, were **contemporary** with Nero. He rejects the evidence of Pliny, Melito, Tertullian, Eusebius, and Hegesippus regarding the persecution under Domitian as not being contemporary. President Franklin D. Roosevelt died when I was 9 years old (if my encyclopedic sources can be trusted) and I have **never** thought of him as my contemporary.

Argument From Silence

The argument from silence is appealed to by Art. He wonders why Tacitus and Suetonius tell nothing of "efforts on Domitian's part to persecute Christians. They are silent as the tomb. Could a persecution of the magnitude often pictured have gone unnoticed by them?" The answer: "Yes, they could have failed to mention such." We pointed out in the beginning of our first article that unbelievers often make much of the fact that we have only a few early references to Christ and the church outside the New Testament. A. J. Hoover, a reputable historian, comments on this insistence for evidence that does not exist: "Unbelievers have a bad habit of demanding perfect evidence for various aspects of the Christian faith. For example, in this matter they wonder why we have no record of the report that, presumably, Pontius Pilate, prefect of Judaea, sent to Rome concerning the trial and execution of Jesus of Nazareth. We simply remind them that no official record has been preserved of any report which Pilate, or any other Roman governor of Judaea, sent to Rome about anything!"⁹

The first known historical allusion to the book of Revelation is in the writings of Justin Martyr who died in A. D. 165. The earliest manuscript fragments are from

the third century. Yet, Art believes the book belongs to the seventh decade of the first century. He was curiously silent about my comments on the **date of composition** and the **specific identification of the author** of Revelation. These things we know because of the testimony of the "Church Fathers." I think the reader can see why I thought Art rejected the evidence from patristics.

Must "Later Daters" Have a Domitianic Persecution?

Art thinks that these who believe Revelation was written during the reign of Domitian "MUST have a Domitian persecution." Let's set the record straight. My own view is that John received the Revelation while on Patmos during the reign of Domitian. John was returned from exile upon the death of Domitian (A. D. 96). I don't know whether the Seven Churches received the book before or after the death of Domitian. The book itself mentions only the exile of John and the death of Antipas as having taken place at the time of writing. Revelation was written to explain "the things which must shortly take place" (1: 1). The emperors of Rome continued periodically to persecute Christians until early in the fourth century.

My view of Revelation does NOT necessitate a persecution of Christians by Domitian. The evidence which I presented in my first article does lead me to believe that such persecution took place.

Art's Defense of the Early Date

We are informed that **The Avenging of the Apostles and Prophets** has been in print for nearly four years and that no one answered the arguments. Portions of my **Studies in the Book of Revelation** have been in print since 1973. In the "Introduction" I examined the major arguments for the early date presented by James M. MacDonald, **The Life and Writings of St. John** (1877). This was the source followed by Foy E. Wallace, which in turn was followed generally by Art. Numerous commentators have replied to these same arguments in the past. I have no inclination, and less time, to enter into an exchange with every person who advances these views. In fact, I urge students to read all the views and draw their own conclusion. That's what the readers will have to do with this exchange.

A Challenge Answered

My friend wants me to describe exactly what I deem the Domitianic persecution to have been. Colin Hemer's book, which was developed from his PhD thesis at Manchester, deals with these matters. He suggests that "persecution" is not "a simply defined term, to be discovered by clear criteria, but that complex pressures existed in the historical situation, and might be activated by authorities not necessarily predisposed to 'persecute,' but adopting policies which impinged on a vulnerable group... I want to stress the severity of the trial present and impending, and not to deny it the title 'persecution' from the Christian viewpoint, whatever the official view."¹¹ This very point may well account for the fact that the "Church Fathers" mentioned the persecution and that the Roman writers did not. Bell says that the total number of Christians brought before the imperial courts must have been "insignificant from the Roman point of view, but to the small fellowship of

Christians the sudden loss of even three or four prominent members would be staggering blow"¹²

Here are my answers to Art's questions. (1, 2) I think Halley was incorrect about number; Butterworth is wrong about the severity. (3) Warnock's correctness depends on what he means by "widespread." (4) Domitian did attempt to "crush Christianity" through the persecution of John and others mentioned in my first article.¹³ (5) Hemer says "No Domitianic edict against Christianity is extant."¹⁴ But see the case built by Hemer and by Jenkins who presents Revelation as a "Polemic against the Imperial cult" in **Emperor Worship**. (6) I only know what has been presented in the evidence cited. The total number persecuted or slain remains a conjecture. Persecution may exist without killing. (7) I think Antipas belongs in this category. (8) The evidence for a persecution by Domitian seems, to me, too strong to reject.

A Friendly Challenge Returned

It is easy to ask for specific names of people killed and then incorrectly to conclude in the absence or scarcity of such that no persecution took place. I would like for Art to (1) name a single person of Asia Minor who was killed because he was a Christian as a result of either the Neronian or Jewish persecution during the years A. D. 60 to 70. (2) If the New Testament canon was closed by A. D. 70, why didn't the "Church Fathers" know this? (3) Why were they of the "opinion" that John was exiled by Domitian and that he lived until the time of Trajan? (4) Why were they of the "opinion" that Domitian was the second to raise a persecution against the church? (5) Since the "Church Fathers" left volumes upon volumes (far more than the Roman historians), and since they differed on many things, why wasn't a single one of them during the first five centuries of the "opinion" that Revelation was written during the reign of Nero? (6) Why do you consider the pagans, Tacitus and Suetonius, good historians when failing to mention Christians, but consider the Christians, Hegesippus and Eusebius, as bad historians when they mention what the Romans did to the Christians?

Conclusion

With the modern Italian scholar **Marta Sordi** "I still maintain that the mere fact of there being so many individual reports of the persecutions having taken place, makes it unreasonable to harbour any serious doubts on the subject."¹⁵ I wish to close with the words of the nineteenth century scholar, Sir William Ramsay: "The persecution of Domitian burned itself ineradicably into the memory of history; it may be doubted by the critic, but not by the historian... So strong and early a tradition as that which constitutes Domitian the second great persecutor cannot be discredited without wrecking the foundations of ancient history. Those who discredit it must, be consistent, resolve to dismiss nine-tenths of what appears in books as ancient history, including most that is interesting and valuable."¹⁶

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¹Collins 34.

²Colin Hemer, **The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in Their Local Setting** (Sheffield: The University of Sheffield, 1986) 222.

³Bell 96.

⁴**Ecclesiastical History**, III. xx.

⁵**Ecclesiastical History**, iv. xxvi.

⁶**Apology**, V. 3, 4; **Ecclesiastical History**, III. xx.

⁷AN. Sherwin-White, **The Letters of Pliny. A Historical and Social Commentary** (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966) 695.

⁸**Ecclesiastical History**, III. xix.

⁹Arlie J. Hoover, "Jesus and the Historians," **Firm Foundation**, April 29, 1980, 278.

¹⁰See G. B. Caird, **The Apostolic Age** (London: Duckworth, 1955) 167.

¹¹Hemer 213-214. Consider the comment by Edward Gibbon in this light.

¹²Bell 96.

¹³This statement was made by Donald L. Jones, "Christianity and the Roman Imperial Cult," in **Aufstieg un Niedergang der Romischen Welt** (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1980), 1033. I have found his essay most helpful.

¹⁴Hemer 216.

¹⁵Sordi 45.

¹⁶Ramsay 259.

REBUTTAL

**Arthur M. Ogden
212 Cherokee Trail
Somerset, KY 42501**

Due to limited space, I cannot respond to everything presented in Ferrell's previous article. The 12 questions asked must be by-passed due to space and being unable to introduce new material needed in response.

Ferrell has ably presented the case for a Domitian persecution. The evidence is before us. We must weigh it for value. If we grant validity to all of his evidence, this is the sum total of what he has proven: two banishments, an inquiry, and one death (Antipas, Rev. 2: 13). Realizing the difficulty, Ferrell summoned Colin Hemer to define persecution so that it will include what he has tried to prove. Surely you can see by now the weakness of the case for a Domitian persecution.

Ferrell wants us to fear questioning the patristic evidence. He quotes Ramsay to the effect that if we do not accept this weak evidence, to be consistent, we must be ready to reject 9/10 of all we call ancient history. Ferrell does not believe this himself for, as I have pointed out already, there are many things revealed by the "Church Fathers" which he questions and often rejects. In fact, two of Ferrell's quoted sources contradicted each other on who "recalled the exiles," Domitian or Nerva? Tertullian said it was Domitian. Eusebius said it was Nerva. Ferrell chose to believe Eusebius. I wonder how he made his decision?

It should further be observed that not all who hold to the same general interpretation of Revelation as Ferrell place the same degree of confidence in the statement of

Irenaeus. Jim McGuiggan, whose Commentary on Revelation ranks #1 among Revelation commentaries in sales at the Religious Supply Center, dates the Apocalypse during the last years of Vespasian's reign. Many brethren with sound Bible background are now agreeing with McGuiggan. Wonder if these brethren have ever heard of Irenaeus?

Ferrell needs more than an implication from Pliny's letter to prove a Domitian persecution. He needs a necessary implication. He overlooks the obvious, namely, that Pliny's letter (111 AD) implies trials of Christians under Trajan (98-117 AD). This is the most reasonable implication since Trajan was a persecutor. Pliny was appointed governor of Bithynia in 111 AD, the thirteenth year of Trajan's reign.

To use the Book of Revelation, whose date of writing and application is debatable, to prove Domitian was a persecutor, to me, is unreasonable. It assumes a thing as proven which is yet to be proven. If Ferrell is wrong about the Apocalypse, he is likewise wrong about Domitian, and vice versa, despite his disavowal.

I admitted in my first article that historical silence does not prove Domitian was not a persecutor. I realize that history does not record all events. This is why we say there MAY have been persecution during Domitian's reign. At the same time, it must be recognized that historical silence **does not prove** persecution either. I doubt seriously that history would have recorded a persecution of the size indicated by Ferrell's evidence, however, I believe history would have recorded a persecution of the size and intensity implied by Ferrell and taught by others.

Ferrell thinks he answered the arguments for the early dating of Revelation in his **Studies in the Book of Revelation** (1973). Sorry, but my main arguments were not dealt with in his work and those he dealt with, which were used by Macdonald and Wallace, he did not answer. He only stated them and showed why he and others do not accept them. I would welcome the opportunity for just one hour to present my case for the early date of Revelation before Ferrell and all others who are interested and, then, let them take all the time they need to see if they can destroy it. Take me up. I challenge you.

I stated in my first article that the strongest case that can be made for a Domitian persecution is that there MAY have been one. This is still the case. Ferrell has admitted that much of what has been said about a Domitian persecution is false, that it has been overstated, that no edict against Christianity during Domitian's reign is extant, and that he does not know how many, if any, were killed by Domitian. He even said, "Persecution may exist without killing." What has he proven? He has merely proven that there MAY have been a persecution. What have I proven? I have merely proven that there MAY NOT have been persecution under Domitian. My point in all of this is very simple. Let us stop this non-sense of declaring Domitian as the (greatest) persecutor of all times. If you believe the evidence presented by Ferrell, then teach what the evidence says. As far as the Book of Revelation is concerned, there is another view of the Apocalypse that

does not depend upon Domitian as one of its chief characters. Read and study **The Avenging of the Apostles and Prophets.**

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the EDITOR of STS for suggesting and planning this exchange and to my dear friend Ferrell Jenkins for his honorable part in this discussion. Their interest in truth and fair play is evident. I love them for this and because they are my brethren.

DIVINE COMMUNIQUES

C. G. "Colly" Caldwell
Florida College
Temple Terrace, FL 33617



WHAT GOD HAS JOINED TOGETHER

DIVINE COMMUNIQUE: "What God has joined together, let not man separate" (Matt. 19: 6).

I shared with you in the last issue the wedding message presented at the marriage of our daughter. Perhaps some would like to see the vows they used. They are a blend of traditional and current wording of great promises all husbands and wives should make both to God and to one another.

Your marriage, endorsed by your loved ones and sealed in conjugal union, is meant to be the most binding relationship of your life next to your union to God through Christ. It must be cherished, preserved, and protected in view of the eternal destiny of your souls. It is, therefore, God who now enjoins upon you both the lasting bond of your vows to each other. The promises you make to God and to each other can be severed only by one of your dying.

MARK, WILL YOU TAKE SHERRI TO BE YOUR WEDDED WIFE, TO LIVE TOGETHER ACCORDING TO THE ORDINANCES OF GOD; WILL YOU LOVE, HONOR, AND CHERISH HER IN SICKNESS AND IN HEALTH, IN PROSPERITY AND ADVERSITY; AND WILL YOU PROMISE TO KEEP YOURSELF TO HER ONLY, AS LONG AS YOU BOTH SHALL LIVE? Response: "I Will"
SHERRI WILL YOU TAKE MARK TO BE YOUR WEDDED HUSBAND, TO LIVE TOGETHER ACCORDING TO THE ORDINANCES OF GOD; WILL YOU LOVE, HONOR, OBEY, AND CHERISH HIM IN SICKNESS AND IN HEALTH, IN PROSPERITY AND ADVERSITY; AND WILL YOU PROMISE TO KEEP YOURSELF TO HIM ONLY, AS LONG AS YOU BOTH SHALL LIVE? Response: "I Will"

Since it is your desire to become one in marriage, will you please join your right hands and each in turn repeat the vows of love and loyalty to each other:

I TAKE YOU SHERRI/MARK TO BE MY WIFE/HUSBAND, TO HAVE AND TO HOLD, TO LOVE AND CARE FOR, ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF GOD UNTIL DEATH SHALL SEPARATE US. I PROMISE MY LOVE AND FAITHFULNESS, MY LOYALTY AND DEVOTION, MY TRUST AND CONFIDENCE. YOU WILL BE MY CLOSEST COMPANION AND FRIEND, MY TRUSTED HELPER AND SUPPORTER, THE INTIMATE LOVE OF MY LIFE. I WILL NEVER LEAVE YOU OR FORSAKE YOU AS LONG AS WE BOTH SHALL LIVE.

Mark/Sherri, what symbol of your love for Sherri/Mark and of your marriage do you bring for your new wife? **A ring.**

I GIVE YOU THIS RING, AS A SYMBOL OF OUR PLEDGE OF CONSTANT FAITHFULNESS AND ABIDING LOVE. WITH THIS RING WE ARE WED, AND ALL THAT IS MINE I NOW SHARE WITH YOU.

Sherri, you are a marvelous joy to us. Mark, you do not realize the pride you give to your family. Today is a new beginning in your relationship with one another and in ours with you. All of us will be with you so long as God gives us breath. Our active prayer will be that you will never forget the love of God and the love of your family and friends who have come today both to hear your vows and to pledge ourselves to surround you not as mere spectators but as loving supporters along the pathway of life. God go with you as do we.

Dear Lord, please accept the vows of these Thy children and join them in marriage. In keeping with thy will as expressed in Thy Word and in accord with the laws of this state, I pronounce that Mark and Sherri are husband and wife.

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SMOKELESS BRETHREN

In my own personal experience, I have encountered two cases where the victims of lung cancer requested the preacher to warn about the dangers of smoking. One was a brother in Christ, and requested on his death bed that I continue to warn brethren about the relationship of smoking and lung cancer. He was convinced there was a connection between the two, and that was years before present statistics were available.

The other individual was not a member of the church. I visited her a few months before she died, and she continued to smoke her cigarettes in spite of her emphysema, violent coughing spells, and pleas of her family and friends to stop smoking. Her lung cancer was diagnosed shortly thereafter, but the heart gave out, maybe mercifully, before the lung cancer could take its toll. On her death bed, she requested that the preacher say something in the funeral sermon about the dangers of smoking.

Back in the days of black powder, we could always tell where dad was in the woods when he had a squirrel in the sights of that ancient twelve gauge, and pulled the trigger. An enormous cloud of black smoke arose from his position, and I am sure the remaining squirrels knew where he was by then. Then, smokeless powder made its advent, and it was heralded as an improvement over the smoking kind. Maybe so for the hunter, but the squirrels may argue the point.

Now, smokeless tobacco is becoming more popular with the avalanche of evidence indicating a link between smoking, lung cancer, and heart disease. Some brethren are switching to smokeless tobacco, in spite of evidence and statistics which indicate that it may cause cancer of the mouth. What will it take to produce a generation of smokeless, chewless, spitless brethren?

I have just read a **partial** list of seventeen famous personalities who died of lung cancer, and who were all heavy smokers. When I taught first-aid and CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation), for the Red Cross and the American Heart Association, **I was required** to teach that smoking was a factor in heart disease. At the same time, some brethren object if I warned them about the ill effects of smoking on the human body.

Now, local, state, and federal laws have been enacted to protect the non-smoker in the work place, restaurants, and food preparation areas. There are still the die-hards who resist all the evidence, including brethren who do not think that 1 Cor. 6: 19, 20 and

Rom. 12: 1 have any application to those who abuse their physical bodies in any fashion. We recall a period of time in the history of God's people when they became so hardened to their condition that it took a drastic demonstration to bring them to their senses. A man cut a woman's body into twelve pieces and sent a piece to each of the twelve tribes (Judges 19: 29, 30). This got their attention. It is sad when people resist the truth to such an extent. It is also sad when a friend or loved one dies of lung cancer by inches, and requests the preacher to warn others not to follow their example.

All lung cancer isn't caused by smoking. And, it is conceded that there are other dangers which threaten the human body, such as alcohol, other drugs, automobile exhausts, and overeating. But all that doesn't minimize or justify the ill effects of tobacco on the human body. And, you can always find a preacher who will agree with you on any subject, be it marriage, grace, faith, baptism, or smoking.

Israel was reproved for offering the halt and the lame in sacrifice unto God. And, while the soul is of greater value than the body, a body which has been wrecked and ruined by a senseless habit cannot be presented as much of a "living sacrifice... unto God. "

THE NEW RESPONSE

O. E. Watts
Box 895
Craig, CO 81626

Jesus urged his followers to have and to show unusual reactions. Perhaps we have not seen just what He meant in Matthew 5: 41, "And whoever shall force you to go one mile, go with him two. "

Few of us have ever been made subjects of impressment. But civilian conscription has not always been illegal in our country. Years ago two young men had saved money and vacation time to spend two weeks in a lovely Northwest location. A forest fire there caused them to be pressed into the service of fighting it the entire time.

In Judea, then under military rule, the common reaction was to resent the restrictions of the Roman army. A soldier, walking through a region, could demand that, for free, a citizen, in his turn, carry his baggage for him. One mile for each was not too great a distance for one easily to walk back home. We can understand how the soldier would come to expect unenthusiastic compliance. Sullen obedience surely was the usual attitude during the demanded service which was next to slavery.

Now, say that our military lone traveler encounters a husky, pleasant young man. No doubt he is surprised at how cheerfully and readily the Jew sets out with him. He even visits a little. They ask about each other's work and background. At the end of the seemingly short walk together the relationship takes another startling turn. The subject says, "Sir, do not bother to find your next

helper here. Let me go another leg of your trip with you. We could talk some more. "

Perhaps it would not be supposing too much to suggest that the Roman might ask why the helper has such an attitude. The probable answer would be, "I am a Christian. Jesus, the Son of God, whom I serve, told me to act in this way." Would not such a reply cause the soldier to remember the words, "Christ", and, "Christian," long and favorably? Might this not affect his later life?

Who can say that the positive attitude would not also be beneficial to the mental and emotional health of the Christian? Resentments are corrosive to the one holding them. Blessing others is helpful. Helping others is a blessing in both directions.

In all the cases where people saw Jesus or a disciple showing a viewpoint of this kind their reactions were described by words of similar meanings. They marveled, or wondered, or were amazed. Such decidedly unexpected conduct always evoked surprise and was regarded as strange. At the time that tortured victims

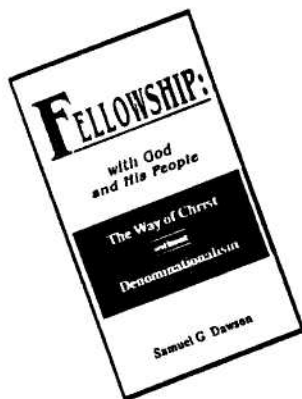
sometimes cursed their tormentors, the hardened executioner heard Jesus pray, "Father, forgive them. They do not understand what they are doing." Later, as the result of seeing how our Lord died, surprisingly that heathen said, "Truly this innocent man was the son of God!"

In the experience of Saul of Tarsus the memory of a reaction displayed in prayer lingered and rankled, becoming hard for him, and helping to lead to his conversion.

Yes, the response required is still unusual behavior. This is very difficult to do. But it is included in being a disciple of Christ.

**"Behold, I have set before thee
an open door ..."**

—Rev. 3:8



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

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STEVE KEARNEY, 140 Woodlawn Park Grove, Firhouse, Dublin 24, Ireland — Five have been baptized here between January and April. A young man who had fallen away and become a Punk with his dyed hair, weird clothes, drug abuse and other sins, has returned to the Lord. He has since converted his girl friend who was baptized on March 12. Keiran Murphy also reports five baptisms over the last few months. We have enlarged our pre-fab building to 36' x 24' and this should accommodate us for perhaps the next four years. By then we hope to get a loan to build. Old Street in London, England has informed me that they will not be able to continue to support me. They need the funds to support their own preacher, with which I agree. But it does mean that the greater part of 225 lbs will be missing. They have given me 3 months notice to try and replace it.

VIVION ROAD LECTURES

We regret that we received announcement of the lectures at Vivion Road in Kansas City, MO too late to include it before it occurred June 19-22. The speakers were Hoyt Houchen, Grover Stevens and Kenneth Chumley. Subjects covered included authority, institutionalism/social gospel, spiritual growth and worldliness. Both video and audio tapes are available. Write to: Church of Christ, P. O. Box 28478, Kansas City, MO 64118. Copy for material in this column goes to the printer a month before the date printed on the issue. That means copy for June had to be sent in by May 1 at. We request that those who wish to have announcements of such events appear in the paper, please let us know 4-5 weeks in advance.

CHICAGO CONGREGATION DISBANDS

JAMES D. ELAM, 5220 Grove St., Skokie, IL—On Dec. 18, 1988, the congregation known for nearly four decades as the "410 S. Michigan Ave. Church of Christ" ceased meeting in the Fine Arts Building in downtown Chicago. Through the years, the group has been a beginning place for many young preachers, has supported works in various locations on a continuing basis and also contributed to travel funds for preachers overseas and in difficult places in northern and eastern USA. After 33 years at the 410 S. Michigan address and a nearly 3 year span at the Americana Congress at 520 S. Michigan, we returned to the 410 address in 1987 in a sublease-type arrangement which severely restricted our efforts. We could not find another suitable location in the downtown area which would permit the type of work needful for us to grow.

The contributions are being distributed to Whit Sasser, Oshkosh, WI; Jerry Folk in New Jersey; Dale Pennock, Palatine, Illinois; Rick Boswell, De Motte, IN; Rudolph Berry, S. Ashland Ave., Chicago; and two brethren who are in physical need.

In late February, a group formerly known as the 19 S. LaSalle St. church began meeting at our old location. This group has been liberal in teaching for all the years they have been downtown. Efforts were made in years past to persuade them differently but to no avail. The nearest sound church is the one in Berwyn. Please call us for any directions you may need. Please remember us in your prayers as the members work with other congregations in the area. We wish to keep in touch with our many friends. Phone (312) 967-9667.

HELP NEEDED

BELL DODD, Rt. 6, Box 200, Oxford, MS 38665 — This is an appeal for brother Ray Roberts, gospel preacher of Coffeerville, Alabama. His wife, Erline, suffered a massive heart attack last November requiring

open heart surgery. Her extensive hospital stay resulted in a debt of \$60,000. Ray had just dropped an insurance policy on which they had paid premiums for years. The reason for dropping the policy was a premium raise from over \$300 per month to over \$500 per month. These folks are worthy. Ray has preached in southwest Alabama for more than a quarter of a century and is a very able preacher. For references contact Horace Hugging of Thomasville, Alabama or the writer. You may contact Ray Roberts at: Rt. 1, Coffeerville, Alabama. Phone (205) 276-3341.

MIKE SCHMTTTT, 6808 Oakdale Dr., Tampa, 33610 — We at the Northeast church in Tampa, Florida have just finished a week-long meeting with Ron Daly of Millington, TN doing the preaching. And what preaching it was! Ron was a stranger to us at Northeast. We had heard good things about him, and he certainly did not disappoint us. Northeast is in an integrated neighborhood, and we have been trying to reach the people who live near the building with the gospel. We thought that having a black man for a meeting might go a long way toward proving our good intentions toward all people, so we contacted Ron and rented a tent to put up on the corner of our property. There are apartments all around the building and a 7-11 store across the street.

Ron came and used our big PA. to literally draw in the people with his powerful and Scripture-packed preaching. He spoke for an hour every night, quoting and explaining lengthy passages without once looking at any notes, and kept everyone's attention riveted upon the word of God. His powerful voice literally echoed the Scriptures off the walls of the surrounding apartments, causing people 2 blocks away to listen from their porches. (I just got off the phone with a woman requesting that I come over and study this week with her and her grown children — a direct result of this meeting). Before every service he was out by the road shaking hands with passers-by and urging them to come in — which several did right on the spot.

Every member of Northeast, both black and white, was tremendously impressed with Ron Daly, the man, and the preacher. We were lifted up, exhorted, encouraged and emboldened to go forward. Ron doesn't know I am writing this, and will probably be embarrassed, but I know that there are many churches across America that could use a man of his caliber if they only knew he was out there. He is needed to preach not only to blacks, but to all of us. He has recently lost 3/4 of his support, and is having to do secular work to support his family. He never complained about that, but it is a shame that a man of his talents is not able to work full time for the cause of Christ. There are many of us, both black and white, with far less ability who are free to work completely at preaching. Are there not churches or individuals who will meet this need? I believe so. Won't you? Ron Daly can be contacted at: P. O. Box 401, Millington, TN 38053. Phone (901) 873-4254.

BARRY MARK PENNINGTON, Rt. 1, Box 12-B, Grand Saline, TX 75140—We have been with the work here for nearly a year. On April 9, 1989 we had 90 present for morning worship. I preached in a meeting here in April with the house filled each night. We had a good number from neighboring institutional congregations with several doors now open for further study. We also had a number of denominational people to come.

A new congregation has been established in Mineola, Texas. On Sunday morning, April 30, 1989, 34 people met in the old school administration building in Mineola. The new work will be known as

the West McDonald Street church. Mineola is at the intersection of Highway 69 and Highway 80 (north of Tyler and Lindale, east of Grand Saline, west of Longview). The meeting place is P. O. Box 963, Mineola, TX 75773. Phone (214) 569-3117. Ardie P. Brown of Carrollton, TX was to hold a meeting in June.

**IN MEMORY OF T. E. WEBB
(1917-1989)**

T. E. Webb, Texas preacher, passed away on May 1, 1989 during open heart surgery. He was born June 12, 1917 in Fairfield, Texas. He was married to Minnie Rebecca Long and to this union three children were born. In 1941 they moved to the Gulf Coast of Texas where they lived for 22 years. During this time he taught and baptized M. Roy Stevens. They helped establish several new churches in the Brazosport area. He was a quiet man who worked diligently and excelled in home Bible studies. He taught and baptized many precious souls. Funeral services were conducted on May 3, 1989 before a large audience. The writer spoke and read the obituary and W. R. Jones preached.

— Barry M. Pennington

GIANNI BERDINL Via Battisti 20, Nuggia (TS) 34015, Italy — We recently had a very successful meeting with Arrigo Corazza of Alessandria, Italy speaking. He spoke on "What is the Bible?" and "Can We Trust the Bible?" These lessons were well illustrated with slides. The first night there were 100 in attendance, with 65 of these being non-members. The second night about 80 came, with 45 of these being non-members. We had rented a hall and advertised with large posters, radio and newspaper. It is highly unusual in Italy to draw that many non-members (a total of 90 different ones for the two nights). The church in Trieste is much encouraged and we are following up all leads.

PAUL WILLIAMS, P. O. Box 324, Eshowe, 3815 South Africa — The church at Alra Park, Nigel were able to accommodate about 300 people in their new church building for the lectures held March 24-26. The building seats 200 normally, but children were seated on the platform and many people sat on folding chairs in the aisles. Most were blacks, though there were whites, Indians and Coloureds. Brethren came from far and wide. A bus load of Indian brethren came from the Durban area, 100 miles south of Eshowe. The lectures were on first principles. On Friday afternoon there were four hour-long lectures plus an hour of singing. Saturday morning there were two lectures with three more in the afternoon. There was one on Sunday morning. All sermons were interpreted into Zulu and on Saturday into Northern Sotho as well. In my estimation the finest lectures were delivered by South Africans: Basil Cass on "Repentance," Leslie Maydell on "Baptism, What, Who, Why: and Paddy Kendall-Ball on "The Curse of Denominationalism."

On March 30 the Eshowe church received permission from the town council to use our rented building as a meeting place and the church had its first services there the weekend of April 8-9. We had 28 Saturday evening, 35 Sunday morning and 24 Sunday evening. The building is quite adequate to our needs for sometime. With no carpets or curtains the building has quite a ring to it, encouraging singers to give their best. On Saturday night we sang until we were breathless. We are located opposite the police station which makes it easy to direct people to us.

PREACHERS NEEDED

GLADESVILLE, WEST VIRGINIA—We are looking for a full time gospel preacher. Only apply if you preach the word exactly as contained in the Bible. We are able to supply about \$1,000 a month support. We have a house. We have about 54 in attendance. If interested please contact: Church of Christ, Route 1, Box 193, Independence, WV 26374, or call (304) 864-6721 or (304) 864-6835.

ALMAVILLE, TENNESSEE — This congregation, located between Franklin and Murfreesboro, is looking for a full time gospel preacher. We are small with about 30 in attendance. In the past we have had only part-time preachers. The area has grown considerably and is potentially capable of much growth. We need a man who can do door-to-door work. We can supply about \$500 a month, possibly more. For more information call: James King (615) 395-4567.



PICTURES IN POETRY

P. J. Casebolt, who writes a column in this paper has published Volume I of a book of poetry. He is gifted in such writing. It is entitled PICTURES IN POETRY. All poems in Section I are Boyhood Memories; Section II - Inspiration; Section III - Seasons and Scenery; Section IV - Solitude and Serenity; Section V - Loving Memory, Living Tribute. There is a blend of tears, songs and laughter. The book is a neatly printed paperback and sells for \$6. We are glad to recommend it. You may order it from: P. J. Casebolt, Route 1, Box 210, Middlebourne, WV 26149.

SISTER MARIE

We met her in Tupelo, Mississippi. She has only been a Christian for one year. She is the only black member of the church which meets on Hamm Road. She regularly brings visitors to the services and brought some to the gospel meeting in which I preached. She was included in three social gatherings to which we were also invited. In the summer she personally conducts a daily Bible school for one week with neighborhood children. Many come. She and her husband have brought up four children and have seen them all obtain college degrees. At 67 she is still a hard working woman and has a keen appetite for the truth of the Bible. She is a respected sister in the Lord and we are richer for having her as a sister and a friend. By the way, I think I have seen as many integrated churches in Mississippi as I have anywhere in the country. In fact, over the last few years I have seen more in the deep south than anywhere else. And why not? We must reach out the gospel to men and women of every race.

DRESSED FOR THE OCCASION

My brother, Wiley, has a knack for attracting unusual situations. Either that, or he has surely bent coincidence out of shape. During a meeting in which he preached in the deep south, a young preacher from another congregation came with a man to baptize after their service was over and most of the people had gone home. The local preacher took them inside, showed the young preacher the garments for baptism and the baptismal boots. He and Wiley sat down on the front row to witness the baptism. When the two men came down into the baptistery, the preacher had on the fresh clothes for baptism and the man to be baptized had on the boots! It was too late to stop them. When the preacher laid the man back beneath the water, he floated up, feet first, and there was quite an effort required to get him back on his feet. I guess you could say there had been a "communication problem."

PERSECUTION, ANYONE?

It took a persecution to scatter the disciples out of Jerusalem and into a broadened effort to take the gospel into Samaria and ultimately "unto the uttermost part of the earth." I know a number of congregations which are abundantly blessed with talented men, many of whom are capable teachers and preachers of the Word. In fact, there are some men like that in several congregations I know about than are laboring in some states, and in a few cases, in a whole region of the country. Rudolfo Berdini and Sandro Corazza, both of Rome, Italy, have each told me that we ought to pray for them to have a severe persecution because the church in Italy grew faster under those circumstances than at any other time. And maybe we should consider that here, too.

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	443
RESTORATIONS	21

(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 XXX

AUGUST, 1989

NUMBER 8

SINCERE WORDS

"The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth (Ecc. 12:10)."

Dick Blackford

P.O.Box 83
Tuckerman, Arkansas 72473



THE BENEFITS OF HELL

You know, they tell us that if we look close enough at anything we can find something good about it. Sure enough, for the benefit of all who are making plans to go to hell, we have closely examined that place and have concluded that there really are some advantages in going to hell that exceed this life on Planet Earth.

No More Preaching

Some folks have the feeling that every time they attend services the preacher picks on them. They think all he does is sit around dreaming up some new way to make them mad. For this reason, some don't want to get too close to the preacher. Unless they are on their deathbed, they avoid him. Spasmodic attendance is usually an indication.

Well, if preachers make you nervous (2 Tim. 4: 1-5; Tit. 2: 15), if preachers are making you mad by trying to get you to do better and are telling you where you are going if you don't, then just wait awhile! You will be in a place where you will never be bothered by preachers again. You can show them a thing or two. You will never have to listen to another message preached or another warning.

This is not to say there won't be some preachers in hell. There may be as many of them as of any other class of people. But they won't be preaching there. Isn't that great?!

No More Contributions

Some have a rough time enduring this on earth (1 Cor. 16:1, 2; 2 Cor. 9: 6, 7). It is an imposition on their wallet or

purse and they find it disgusting. Here's good news! One of the benefits of hell is that there will be no contributions, sermons on giving, or classes on the subject. Not one place in the word of God is there any mention whatsoever about collection plates in hell. While preachers may be there, they won't be asking for donations. If you find it disturbing to be faced with sacrificing for the greatest work on earth, then rest assured that once you enter the portals of hell you will never hear another sermon on giving or have to look at another collection plate. With some, this will be the greatest benefit.

No More Calls to Holy Living

One of the things many do not like about the church of Christ is its emphasis on pure living (Tit. 2: 11, 12; Gal. 5: 19-21; 1 Tim. 2: 9, 10; Eph. 4: 24; Mt. 5: 28). Uprightness is not "in" for our modern age. The masses don't see any reason in all this "self-denial" (Lk. 9: 23). Why can't people just live their own lives (morally and religiously) without someone telling them how they should dress and talk and where they should not go? After all, we wouldn't be the first society that ever did that (Judg. 17: 6; 21: 25). A little idolatry, bestiality, homosexuality, adultery and drunkenness never hurt them, did it? If we could just call a meeting to get together and decide how much lower we should lower the standard maybe we could make some headway against all these restrictions. This is the age of liberation. We demand our rights!

To all who feel this way, we have examined the scriptures closely. There is not one place in the entire Bible that indicates that those who go to hell will be bothered by someone preaching to them about blending in too much with the world. No one will rebuke you for the lifestyle you choose. Think of all the freedom! **No More Personal Evangelists**

If Christians coming to your door or calling on the phone about living for God and worshiping regularly bugs you, just wait. You may soon be free of them at last! If the fellow at work keeps hounding you about attending the services, about repentance and baptism, or about being restored to faithfulness and is agitating you, don't worry — be happy! From everything I have read about hell (and I think I have read every verse), there will not

be one tract passed out in hell and no one will try to get you to change your life when you reach this place of freedom. Won't it be wonderful there?

No More Invitations

Some folks can pretty well handle the preaching, collections, calls to holy living and the personal workers. They can even endure the prayers for their salvation and the hymns about judgment. They have managed to develop a protective shield that keeps such things from penetrating and have gotten to where they almost don't feel a thing. And if they would just do away with extending the invitation things would be ideal! But for some reason they ask everybody to stand and sing an invitation song while the preacher makes a plea for sinners who have never obeyed the gospel to repent and be converted or for erring Christians to get back on the right track. This is hard for some to handle and they plain don't like it. It makes them fidget and squirm till they can hardly stand it. That's the reason some stay home.

Boy, have we got news for you! We have examined the scriptures thoroughly and there is not even a hint that invitations will be extended in hell. Once there, you won't have to think about how repulsive an invitation is.

No More Demands on Your Time

Going to services, preparing to teach a class, visiting the physically and spiritually sick, cleaning the building! These all take time. I know it sounds too good to be true, but you are not dreaming. Think of all the free time you will have in hell! We are talking Utopia, Man!

Conclusion

There's just one catch. Once you step across that line from this life to that other place there will never be an opportunity to change your mind. If you think for one moment that someday you just might wish to hear a gospel preacher talk about holy living; if you think there would be a time when you might welcome a phone call from a concerned Christian; if you think you might wish to support the Lord's work; or if you think you might want to stand and sing just one more invitation song, or teach a Bible class, or clean the church building—then it would be wise right now to start thinking very seriously about where you are headed.

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Searching The Scriptures

VOLUME 30 AUGUST, 1989 NUMBER 8

Published Monthly at
BROOKS, KENTUCKY

Second Class Postage Paid at Brooks, Kentucky
and at an Additional Mailing Office
USPS-487-440

CONNIE W. ADAMS, Editor

Office of Publication
52 Yearling Drive
Brooks, Kentucky 40109
Phone (502) 957-2257

SUBSCRIPTION RATES
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READ YOUR BIBLE TODAY

Editorial

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LEARNING FROM THE PROPHETS

"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15: 4). It is a grave mistake to neglect the study of the Old Testament. It is true that God speaks to us "in these last days by his Son" (Heb. 1: 2). But the Son by whom he speaks is linked to the Old Testament. Jesus said "Search the scriptures... and they are they which testify of me" (Jno. 5: 39). It is impossible to comprehend the New Testament without some knowledge of the Old Testament. It has been wisely said that "the Old Testament is the New Testament concealed, and the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed."

Try to make sense of the book of Hebrews without some background knowledge of the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy! How could you fathom much of Paul's argument as it unfolds in Romans without knowing something of the books of law as well as the prophetic books. There are 400 allusions to the Old Testament in the book of Revelation. Unless one is familiar with the prophetic symbolism of such books as Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah, not to mention Isaiah and Jeremiah, he will have great difficulty with the last book in the Bible. A study of the sermons of the apostles in the book of Acts reveals frequent references not only to the Psalms but also the prophetic books. After the resurrection, Jesus connected that momentous event with the prophecies which had gone before. "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself: (Lk. 24: 27).

There are many practical lessons for us in the message of the prophets of old. Consider these with me.

God Is The Answer To Our Problems

Even though many of the problems of Israel were the product of their own folly, God still loved them. Over and over the prophets challenged them to "Hear the word of the Lord." Though described as a "sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward" (Isa. 1: 4); yet God said "Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow" (1: 18). When they were tempted to turn to Egypt, or some other nation to come to their defense against impending invasion and captivity, repeatedly the prophets taught that only by turning to the Lord in repentance could they find

help.

God is still the answer to our problems. Things" are no defense. They perish with the using. Human wisdom has its limits. Many have turned to alcohol and drugs. Mystics have been consulted. Satan worship is on the rise. Religious cults and quacks abound. Paul urged the Athenian philosophers to "seek the Lord" and said "he is not far from every one of us" (Acts 17: 27). There is one true God and we are his offspring. There are many false gods which can do nothing. Israel only found help when they turned in repentance to the one true God. That is where we will find our help. "So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me: (Heb. 13: 6).

God Reacts To Sin

"For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape.... (Heb. 2: 2-3). Sometimes in the Old Testament days, God's reaction to sin was instantaneous. At other times it was measured and deliberate. Both the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities were foretold by prophets who pleaded with the people to repent and avert these calamities. The eloquent and statesman-like utterances of Isaiah were unheeded. The plaintive, weeping speeches of Jeremiah were despised and he was mistreated. When captivity came, it was God's punitive reaction to their sins.

God is still offended by sin. The grace, mercy and love of God provided a covering for sin. "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission: (Heb. 9: 22). "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5: 8). But we must not trifle with the grace and forbearance of God. While he is not willing that any should perish, the day of the Lord will come (2 Pet. 3: 9-10). "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness... (Acts 17: 31).

The Remnant and The Messianic Hope

Even before the captivity of Israel, those prophets which foretold it offered a ray of hope when they promised that God would recover a remnant of his people and settle them in their land again. While Isaiah (10: 22-23) and Jeremiah foresaw a remnant salvaged before the captivity even began, Daniel and Ezekiel offered the same hope from within the captivity. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah report the return of the remnant. Even in the midnight of Jewish History, there was hope of better things to come.

The church is God's remnant now. "Even so then at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace" (Rom. 11: 5). There are moments in human history when it seems that nearly all have forsaken the Lord, but God still has his "seven thousand which have not bowed the knee to Baal." MAN'S EXTREMITY becomes God's **opportunity**. In despair, there is yet hope. Remember the prophets.

The Providence of God

The book of Daniel impresses the lesson that God rules among the nations (5: 21). When a nation becomes too wicked for God to tolerate, then another power will subdue it, though it may also be wicked. In due time that evil nation will fall unless it repents. I do not understand

how one could study the prophets without seeing this. Israel was God's "holy nation" (Ex. 19: 6). Yet, he punished the northern kingdom at the hands of the Assyrians and later, made Babylon his rod to chastise faithless Judah. God's providence continued to work in captivity for there were Daniel and Ezekiel to remind the people of the word of the Lord and to keep hope alive. Further, the captivity provided time for rebellious people to ponder, and to come to repentance. Through captivity, God providentially broke them of idolatry, for while they committed other sins after the captivity, idolatry was not among them. God cared for them even by the rivers of Babylon. When the captivity ended after seventy years, the providence of God had a Zerrubbabel, an Ezra and a Nehemiah to lead the returnees.

If God provided for a temporal nation, preserved a seed and fulfilled his promise to give the world a Saviour through that restored remnant, is he any less concerned for his spiritual children now? Indeed, "the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous and his ears are open to their prayers" (1 Pet. 3: 12).

The people of God are often defenseless against the prophetic speculators and would-be seers who build their cases on a misuse of the prophets and extract passages from their historical context and ignore the fulfillment of them in events described in the New Testament. The premillennial and dispensationalist preachers have sometimes deceived and mesmerized even members of the body of Christ who would have known better had they studied the prophets. What about where you worship? Do you include the prophets in your Bible classes? Preachers, are you acquainting the people with this important part of the word of God? It takes time, effort and skill to make it come alive, but it is well worth the effort and the practical lessons for living in today's world, abound.

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LOVE NOT THE WORLD

FORNICATION AND ADULTERY (Part 1)

Fornication and adultery are prevalent sins. We don't have to read far into the Old Testament before we see men and women engaging in immoral conduct. Gen. 34 reveals that Shechem and Dinah (the daughter of Jacob) committed fornication (vs. 1-7). Just four chapters later we read of Judah and Tamar doing the same (Gen. 38: 12-18).

Demosthenes said concerning the Greek world, "We keep mistresses for our pleasure, concubines for our constant attendance and wives to bear us legitimate children and be our faithful housekeeper." What a sad picture!

Today it is not much different. In 1987 Josh McDowell surveyed 1400 "church going" young people. He found that forty-three percent of them had committed fornication by the age of eighteen. Another thirty six were guilty of petting. Even among Christians it is not uncommon to hear of some teenager who is pregnant out of marriage or some man who has left his wife for another woman. A number of preachers have also been caught up in this immoral behavior.

Defining Our Terms

Fornication: This refers to "every kind of unlawful intercourse" (Bauer). Thayer says it means, "properly of illicit sexual intercourse in general." This term is generally used to describe unlawful sexual relations of those who are unmarried. Fornication is a broad term that includes adultery.

Adultery: This refers to "unlawful intercourse with another's wife" (Thayer). It is a more specific term than fornication. It is generally used to identify the sexual sins of those who are married. However, these two terms are used interchangeably.

In these articles we will talk about premarital and extramarital sex.

It Is A Sin

The very definition given above suggests that fornication is a sin. It is **unlawful** intercourse. It is sexual relations contrary to God's law — sin.

In the Old Testament: God has been grieved by such activity since the beginning of time. The seventh of the ten commandments said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Exo. 20: 14; Deut. 5: 18). In fact, God instructed that the fornicator be put to death (Lev. 20: 10;

cf. John 8: 5). It is called a **heinous** ("hateful; odious; very wicked; outrageous" — Webster) crime and an "iniquity to be punished by the judges" (Job 31: 11).

In the New Testament: Paul warned that the un-righteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Among those he listed were fornicators and adulterers (1 Cor. 6: 9-11). Later in the same chapter he said, "flee fornication: (v. 18). The same writer listed fornication and adultery as works of the flesh that condemn souls to hell (Gal. 5: 19-21). The Thessalonians were commanded to "abstain from fornication: (1 Thess. 4: 3).

It is not sexual relations **that is condemned, but the unlawful sexual relations.** In marriage, this intimate relationship is honorable and undefiled (Heb. 13: 4). The thing that is condemned is the premarital and extramarital intercourse.

What It Does

Let's consider some of the serious consequences of fornication and adultery. Obviously, those who yield to the temptation have not seriously weighed the consequences.

It perverts the use of the body. Paul said that fornication is a sin against the body (1 Cor. 6: 18). In that context we see that the body is for the Lord (v. 13), is the temple of the Holy Spirit (v. 19), has been bought with a price (v. 20) and should be used to glorify God (v. 20). Therefore, to use the body to commit fornication is a perversion of the body.

It destroys your reputation and respect for self. The book of Job describes it as "a fire that consumeth destruction" (31: 12). Solomon warned about adultery in Prov. 6: 24-35. He said, "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?" (v. 27). "But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul. A wound and dishonor shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away" (vs. 32-33).

Fornication brings shame, dishonor, reproach and a cloud. It destroys a precious reputation that take years to rebuild, if it ever can be. It destroys your name, character and self-esteem. Perhaps this is best illustrated in a letter that a young lady wrote to Josh McDowell: "Having premarital sex was the most horrifying experience of my life. It wasn't at all the emotionally satisfying experience the world deceived me into believing. I felt as if my insides were being exposed and my heart was left unattended. I know God has forgiven me of this haunting sin, but I also know I can never have my virginity back. I dread the day that I have to tell the man I truly love and wish to marry that he is not the only one—though I wish he were. I have stained my life—a stain that will never come out. — Monica."

David faced his sin with Bathsheba every day. He said, "my sin is ever before me" (Psa. 51: 3).

It is cruel to others. Prov. 5 contrasts sexual immorality to marital faithfulness. In his warning about the former, Solomon said to flee from the harlot "Lest thou give thine honour unto others, and thy years unto the cruel" (v. 9).

The fornicator thinks only of himself. He may reason that he is hurting no one but himself. He may not realize

at first that he is being cruel to others. His actions are mean and devastating. Pain and grief come to others. It is cruel to self, the one you are with, your mate, the children and your parents.

Young lady, your date may tempt you saying, "If you love me you will," but you remember that the truth is that if you love him you won't!

It creates jealousy. In the context of warning about adultery, the Proverb writer said, "For jealousy is the rage of a man: therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance. He will not regard any ransom; neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts" (Prov. 6: 34-35). Jealousy is created in the mate of the one you are with as well as your mate. Furthermore, it creates doubt that may never be removed.

It destroys the home. The one exception to divorce being wrong is when one's mate had committed fornication (Matt. 19: 9). So, for one moment of pleasure you have destroyed your marriage. The children now have no Dad (or Mom) and suffer emotionally. Even if it could be worked out, it will take years and years to overcome all the heartaches that were created.

It hinders worship. When either the husband or wife are not what they ought to be, his/her prayers are hindered (1 Pet. 3: 7). Thus, one who fornicates cannot properly offer praises unto God, until he repents of his sin.

It stirs the wrath of God. Paul warned that we shouldn't commit fornication as some in the wilderness did for God slew 23,000 when they did (1 Cor. 10: 8). As Moses records it he said, "and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel" (Num. 25: 3). Later he called it the "fierce anger" (v. 4). Young person, you just remember when the desires are stirred to the point that you are ready to yield, that you are about to make God angry!

It brings disfellowship. The Corinthian church was instructed to withdraw fellowship from the fornicator who refused to repent (1 Cor. 5).

It sends **one's** soul to hell. Paul listed fornication as one of the sins that would keep one out of heaven (1 Cor. 6: 9-11; Gal. 5: 19-21). John was a little more blunt when he said that the whoremongers spend eternity in a "lake which burneth with fire and brimstone" (Rev. 21: 8). If that doesn't cause one to think twice, I can't think what would.

It breeds other sins. That is exactly what happened in the case of David and Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11). Lust led to fornication which led to deceit and finally murder. If you commit fornication or adultery the next thing you know you will have to tell a lie to cover your tracks. Then more lies. Later he begins to neglect his family. Sin is just compounded upon sin. If one is willing to commit this sin (fornication), why not commit another? His resistance is now broken and so he willfully sins.

Next we will notice how this sin is committed so easily by some who know better and how we must flee from it.

DON'T FORGET TO PRAY!

DIVINE COMMUNIQUES

C. G. "Cobby" Caldwell

Florida College
Temple Terrace, FL 33617



DIVINE COMMUNIQUE: "MARRIAGE IS HONORABLE" (HEB. 13: 4).

Recently Lynda and I gave our daughter, Sherri Lynn, in marriage to a fine young Christian named Mark Alan McCray. We are proud of both of them and look forward to their happiness and usefulness among other Christians and in the larger society. Perhaps the comments I spoke to them at the wedding would be helpful to other young Christians who are blending their lives for the future.

At the marriage of the Prince of Wales and Lady Diana Spencer, the Archbishop of Canterbury began: "Here is the stuff of which fairy tales are made: the Prince and Princess on their wedding day." Mark and Sherri, you are no less a prince and princess on your wedding day than they. The wonderful portrait of your splendidly handsome young groom, Sherri, and your beautiful bride, Mark, is every bit as grand in true substance as the scene in London almost eight years ago.

We are not, however, experiencing a "fairy tale." These moments are as exciting as any fantasy framed in the minds of history's greatest novelists and poets. You are totally saturated with love. You are secure in your faith in one another. You are possessed by hope which looks to the future with joy and happy anticipation. But we are looking at **real life**, with our eyes wide-open to the eternal consequences of the changes we make in our lives today.

We are so very blessed and honored to be surrounded by our families and many of our friends today. You have grown up together in the company of our extended spiritual family. You have worshiped together and have grown to know each other's values, values upon which your love is being rooted and grounded. Today you have asked that we all come to be reminded of God's Divine will with regard to marriage, to edify one another by praying and singing together about the spiritual responsibilities and purposes which form such an important part of your concept of the union into which you are entering, and to hear you say your vows before the Lord because in fact you do recognize that it is He who joins men and women in marriage. You have both declared your commitment to allowing the will of Christ to guide you in this and all other relationships.

The Lord's view of marriage, it seems to me, includes a special emphasis upon three wonderful words which I would like to bring before your minds today:

The first is "LOVING." The vision of bride and groom suggests romantic love and I am thankful that you share that desire for one another. It has attracted you to each other and it will be important in your continuing union and faithfulness in the days ahead. When your hair turns gray, Mark; or when a slight character line appears alongside your eyes, Sherri; I truly hope that your desire for one another will not diminish.

More importantly, however, loving suggests trust and caring. It means actively sacrificing to give the happiness you desperately want for each other. It means putting your companion above yourself. It means placing your mate above all others except the Lord Christ. This love is what will truly fan the flame for as long as you live and give you warmth as your hands touch on the arms of your rocking chairs and your eyes meet after many years as one. Marriage is loving.

Secondly marriage is "SHARING." In marriage you will join your lives as one and partake together of the wonderful adventures before you: the splendors and miseries, the achievements and discouragements, the possessions and lack of them, the hopes and disappointments. You will see them all through one another's eyes as well as your own and your love will grow stronger, because you are not laughing or crying alone. Be gentle and tender with one another. Do not withhold yourselves from one another in anything. **Sharing** will become a bonding adhesive giving the bad times meaning, turning new experiences into occasions for maturing and learning more of life, and making the good times better. Marriage is sharing.

And marriage is "SERVING." You must not gaze only into the eyes of your spouse. Your marriage will have consequence beyond yourselves. You have the potential to be powerful influences upon others... not because you seek such, but because that is the necessary result when two Christians, more in love with the Lord than in themselves, use their blended lives to the encouragement and assistance of others. You will "live happily ever after" only if your new, combined life finds true meaning in serving, particularly when that is focused upon influencing others to do good as divinely directed by Christ.

Please remember, "**LOVING**," "**SHARING**," and "**SERVING**"... and remember them in three frames of reference:

LOVE one another, **SHARE** with one another every aspect of your lives withholding nothing good and right, and **SERVE** one another unselfishly.

LOVE others: **SHARE** your lives with others, particularly those whom you can help through life; and **SERVE** them, doing good unto all men, especially those of the household of faith.

But above all, **LOVE** God; **SHARE** your lives with Him never forgetting his companionship in all you do; and **SERVE** Him with all your mind, with all your heart, and with all your soul. In keeping with this message brought forth on your wedding day, your parents want to give you this Bible, used in your wedding, to take into your new home with the hope that you will read from this Good Book together every day of your lives.

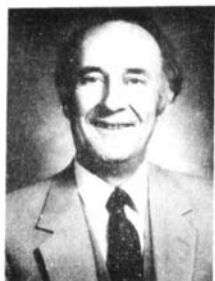
WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

Send all questions to:

Weldon E. Warnock

1021 Welford Dr.
Xenia, OH 45385



ONE-CUP DOCTRINE

QUESTION: Should we use only one loaf of bread and one container when we partake of the Lord's Supper? A brother said that G. C. Brewer introduced the multiple cups into the church. What about this?

ANSWER: The Bible does not tell us how many pieces of bread we may have in eating the Lord's Supper, nor how many containers. This is a matter of judgment and expediency. Can you imagine what problems the Jerusalem church would have encountered with one piece of bread and one container, trying to serve thousands of people.

Let's say a congregation is composed of 2000 worshippers and the time required to serve each one with one loaf and one container would be about 10 seconds. The total time for the whole assembly to observe the Lord's Supper would be in excess of 5 hours. Also, think of the size of the loaf, if just one piece, and the size of the container to accommodate 2000 people. They would be whoppers!

The container has no significance, whatsoever. We just as well bind the plate on which the bread is served as to bind the container for the fruit of the vine. We are told the container symbolizes the New Testament, but if we may have only one container in the assembly, it would follow that we may have only one copy of the New Testament in the assembly. This is where extremism leads.

When Paul wrote in 1 Cor. 11: 27 that those who eat the bread or drink the cup in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, he did not say one word about being guilty of the "container" of the Lord. This shows there are two elements in the Lord's Supper — not three.

1 Corinthians 11: 23-26 is plain about the bread and the cup that Jesus took when he instituted the Supper. Listen to Paul:

(1) "I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you" (v. 23). In other words, I passed on to you exactly what Jesus revealed to me and the following is the way it was. So, let's permit Jesus to tell us what is involved in the Lord's Supper.

(2) "That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread" (v. 23). If we take bread (unleavened), regardless whether one, two or a dozen pieces, have we not done what Jesus said and did?

(3) "After the same manner also he took the cup" (v. 25). What was the cup? Verse 26 states, "For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup..." The CUP is what we drink, that is, the contents. We don't drink the container. Hence, the "cup" or fruit of the vine is representative of the New Testament in His blood (v. 25). The container does not represent the New Testament, but the contents symbolize it. How do I know? Jesus said so through Paul! That should be good enough for all of us.

In the Gospels, Jesus called the "cup" the "fruit of the vine." Notice: "For this cup is my blood of the new testament... I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until..." (Matt. 26: 28-29). In Mark 14: 24-25, "This (cup) is my blood of the new testament... Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until..." Yet, in spite of all of this, some still insist that Jesus was teaching that we are to use only one container. They need to open their eyes.

Paul wrote, apparently, 1 Corinthians from Ephesus. He stated, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ" (1 Cor. 10: 16)? Though separated by hundreds of miles, yet, the saints at Ephesus and at Corinth had only one cup of which both groups partook and one bread of which they broke. However, they had different containers—at least two, and different pieces of bread — at least two. Therefore, whether we have 2 containers or a thousand, and two pieces of bread or several, we still have ONE cup and ONE bread or loaf. I believe we must have one loaf, but not necessarily one piece on a plate for the entire assembly.

Concerning G. C. Brewer, what if he were the first one to introduce individual containers into the observance of the Lord's Supper? Does this make it wrong? Such a statement is about like saying, "John Doe was the first one to preach on the radio." Does that make radio broadcasting wrong because there is no specific Bible example of someone preaching on the radio? Certainly not!

Preaching the gospel is authorized and the methods used, such as preaching on the radio, comes under the general authorization to preach the gospel. Radio preaching is one of the expedient ways to execute the command. The same is true with individual cups. Jesus said to eat the bread and drink the cup. He did not bind the methods to expedite these commands. Hence, plates with bread on each one and individual containers are authorized.

Through the years some brethren have sown discord, caused division and hindered the growth of the church over a cup (container). This is regrettable. Hasten the day that we see the difference between what is binding and what is expedient.

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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
7637 Fleming Hills Dr. S.W.
Huntsville, Ala. 35802



STUDIES IN TITUS (Ch. 1: 1-9) INTRODUCTION

We know practically nothing of the family or background of Titus. He was a Greek (Gal. 2: 3) and is mentioned only in three other New Testament letters (Second Corinthians, Second Timothy, and in the letter that bears his name). It is not known where he was born, or lived. Some have supposed he lived in Antioch of Syria since he was there when Paul, Barnabas, and Titus were sent to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem (Acts 15; Gal. 2: 1).

Titus was the bearer of the First Letter to the Corinthians, one of the most severe and censorious letters Paul ever wrote, indicating Paul's confidence in Titus' ability to deal with a troublesome situation. He also delivered the second letter. He was chosen by Paul to direct the raising of funds for poor saints in Jerusalem (2 Cor. 3: 16-17, 23; 12: 18). Paul referred to him as "mine own son after the common faith" (Titus 1: 4), indicating that the apostle had converted him, and as "my partner and fellow helper concerning you" (2 Cor. 8: 23). He was left in Crete to teach and help in the organization of the churches there (Tit. 1: 5), and to be "a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, and sound speech" (1: 7). From Rome, Paul sent Titus on a mission to Dalmatia (2 Tim. 4: 10).

Knowing that Titus was a faithful partner and fellow helper with Paul, it is a mystery that he is never mentioned by name in the book of Acts, written by Luke. Some have suggested Titus and Luke were relatives, even brothers, and according to an ancient custom, Luke refrained from mentioning even his own name in his writings, using the pronouns "we" and "us" when he was involved.

This letter to Titus, and First Timothy, were probably written after Paul's release from his first imprisonment and before his second imprisonment, about A. D. 65.

This letter to Titus, an evangelist, so far as aim and instruction are concerned, is in perfect harmony with the theme of first and second Timothy, "Saving thyself and them that hear thee" (1 Tim. 4: 16).

Paul's Salutation — Tit. 1: 1-4

In the first four verses of Titus, Chapter one, Paul, in a very long sentence, declares the cardinal principles of God's great scheme of redemption and his connection, as an apostle, with it. Note, in the first four verses, these words, familiar to the Christian System

and telling the gospel story—God, Jesus Christ, Saviour, servant, apostle, faith, elect, knowledge, truth, godliness, hope, eternal life, promised, word, message (preaching), entrusted (committed unto), commandment, grace and peace. These words refer to a life in Christ that people of the world know nothing about.

Paul refers to himself as "a servant (bondservant) of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ," suggesting he was bound to God and was appointed by the Lord Jesus Christ an apostle of His. Such would show to Titus, and others, the authority backing Titus in the work he was assigned to do.

"According to the faith of God's elect... knowledge of truth... after godliness" seems to be expressing the purpose of Paul's apostleship. Williams renders the statement "To stimulate faith in God's chosen people and to lead them on to a full knowledge of religious truth, in the hope of eternal life."

The "hope of eternal life" evidently refers to that hope all who embraced the faith Paul was commissioned to preach could have. It begins at conversion and continues, if we remain faithful, without end. Efforts to limit this hope to a way of life in this world, reaching not beyond the temporal and visible, are a denial of the faith and immortal hope in a life beyond this one, set forth in the gospel and cherished by the early church. This is something God, who cannot lie, promised before the world began. What God promises or says is always truth, and has had, or will have, its fulfillment in due time. While all this was purposed by God before the world began, and promised in the long ago, it was not fully known until the preaching of the gospel. This was the commissioned work of the apostle Paul, other apostles, prophets, and evangelists.

Titus' Special Work in Crete — (v. 5-9)

There was a particular work that Paul left Titus in Crete to do (v. 5). Something was wanting (lacking) in the churches in Crete. The thing lacking was "elders in every church," so Titus was to "set in order" that which was lacking by "ordaining elders in every city."

In verses 6-9 the apostle Paul gives qualifications showing the kind of man who can be ordained. These qualifications were considered in the study of 1 Timothy 3: 1-7. The reader is urged to look back to that study and review that lesson on qualifications for elders. (STS Nov. '87, Vol. 18, p. 536-8)

Since these qualifications are discussed in a previous lesson, I will not repeat here. However, I would like to make some comments about churches being "in order," with elders. Often, in our day, churches that have been "set in order" are soon found in trouble and disorder because of the appointment of elders. This has caused some to conclude that a church is better off without elders, so they abandon God's appointed order.

Titus' charge to remain in Crete and ordain elders in every city was to promote peace, the salvation of souls, and to prevent deception and apostasy. This is why there should be "elders in every church" today. It is tragic that God's order is so often the source of discord and apostasy. In over fifty years of preaching, I have observed that many serious church troubles have as their source the preacher or the elders. This, I think, is usually due to a misunderstanding of their work, relation to each other

and the flock, hinged to a degree of that forbidden vice—"self-willed."

Many troubles arise over hiring or firing (asked or told to leave is the more modest term) the preacher. This is frequently done with no stated cause or charge because of the "hired hand" concept on the part of the elders and or the congregation. The preacher is not just a hired man. He is one who has committed himself to studying and preaching the word of God to save souls. Churches, through the elders, if they have such, invite a preacher to come live in their midst while engaging in the work to which he has committed himself, and they will supply his family material needs.

Saving souls is not only the primary objective of the evangelist, but also the church and elders. This objective will be greatly hindered if the elders and preacher do not work and plan together for it's accomplishment. Elders meeting to plan and discuss the work of the church and the preacher, apart from him, is, I think, bad judgment. I can think of no reason for elders meeting apart from the evangelist, even to consider his salary, work, or some rumor or complaint they have heard. Above all others, he is the one who ought to be present for such considerations. There should be no secret, behind the door, activities in the elder-preacher-congregation relationship. There is nothing wrong, but much good, with the evangelist, if otherwise qualified, being an elder where he labours. Anytime elders suddenly, without a charge of sinful action, impropriety, or unsound teaching, decide to ask (fire) a faithful preacher to leave, within a set time, they cause hurt, unhappiness, and confusion with the preacher and in the congregation. There is hurt, embarrassment, and family and financial burdens to a faithful servant of God, and unrest within the congregation.

Even if elders genuinely feel that "a change" would be good (expedient) for the church, there is a way to bring this about without offence to the preacher or the congregation. If there exists a proper elder/preacher relationship, fears, dissatisfaction, and feelings will be freely discussed between them. Any sincere minister can tell when a difference in thinking and feelings are becoming prominent, and will begin looking about for a move. It may take him a year or more to find another place where he could fulfill his spiritual commitments, meet his family needs, and be adequately supported. This would be better than some hasty, forced action that would result in hurt feelings, loss of confidence, and unhappiness plaguing a congregation for many years.

Of course, many times the cause of trouble is not the elders, but the evangelist. Some are self-willed, domineering, and intolerant of any who would oppose them. They may claim "evangelistic authority" that exceeds that of elders. If they can't manipulate or intimidate the elders, they will politic the congregation until they turn, at least, a sizable number against the elders, resulting in getting rid of them, or leading out a group to start "another work." To avoid this situation, elders should carefully investigate a preacher (his life, attitudes, disposition, ability, past works) before asking him to come work with them. The preacher/elder/congregation work

and relationship is god's order and if each is what it is supposed to be, and functions as the Lord directs, souls will be saved, unity and peace will prevail, and God will be glorified.

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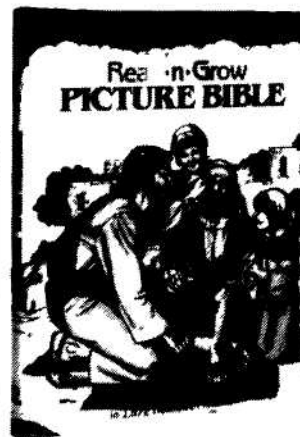
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WHERE DO YOU STAND ON DIVORCE?

To paraphrase Churchill: Never has so much been based upon so little with so many unsettling consequences. I speak of the volumes which have been written and published over the quarter century of my preaching life on various phases of the marriage-divorce-remarriage topic. I am confident that if the Lord had revealed one one-thousandth of what brethren have written on this subject that all our questions would be fully answered.

"Where do you stand on divorce?" I know of one group of elders who asked that question of a preacher who was considering the work there. He replied: "I'm against it." I agree with him. And sometimes I think that about all I really know about it is "I'm against it."

We are widely divided on this subject. If blackballing and ostracism were consistently applied few of us would have enough friends for a pot-luck supper. We would be splintered a dozen different ways. We don't even agree on what the essential components of marriage are; let alone the right to remarriage. Some say that the marriage bed is the necessary consummation of marriage; others disagree. Some believe that couples may be legitimately married by common law; some say no.

As for divergent views on divorce and remarriage, they are numerous. Some claim that such is wrong for any reason. Most teach that fornication is a scriptural reason to put away one's spouse and remarry. Many are of the conviction that the abandonment of a believer by an unbeliever is another scriptural cause. Some say that the civil divorce proceedings constitute the putting away of Matt. 19: 9. Others believe the putting away is distinct from any civil authority. Some believe that one who has been divorced or put away, regardless of the cause, may never remarry. Others are convinced that an innocent party who has been unjustly and unscripturally divorced may remarry if the other party in the original marriage is guilty of fornication. Some believe that God's marriage laws are addressed only to Christians. Many say that if a person who has a right to be married enters a marriage with someone who has no right that said marriage may be dissolved and the first party has the right to marry again. Many would take issue. Some say that both parties in a divorce that is because of fornication have the right to marry again. Others teach that only the innocent party may scripturally remarry. Some would say that if the innocent party

in a divorce dies, the guilty party may then remarry. Others would say that the guilty party may not remarry even then. Some demand that adultery be proved beyond any shadow of doubt and that it be the expressed cause of divorce in the civil proceedings. Others are a bit more lenient in their interpretation of circumstances.

Now I am not suggesting that such questions are unimportant or unworthy of our study and discussion. I have convictions on most of them. The jury is still out on some of them. But I have learned that if I even get close to thinking that I have all the answers, I soon learn that I haven't even heard all the questions. I have facetiously made the comment that if someone wants all the answers, I can't help him, but I know some brethren who can. But really, I know that's not true. I've asked those brethren some questions they did not have the answer to.

Brethren have uniformly admitted the difficulties involved in these questions. Men of spiritual wisdom and unblemished reputations have reached different conclusions. I am not sure that I know anyone with whom I totally agree on this subject. Yet on most phases of it the majority of us seem to get along; treat one another as brethren; and not attack each other as false teachers. There seems to be some space for tolerance in this area. Am I overstepping the boundary of good judgment to suggest that we may need to make room for more?

After all, we disagree in other areas which are surely as crucial. The question of participation in war or law enforcement is a good case in point. If I could fellowship a brother who is a murderer or an advocate of murder as the conscientious objection view considers it, it would seem that consistency would demand tolerance in some other areas. I heard one preacher exclaim in response to this parallel that if a brother were going out and killing someone every night, he wouldn't fellowship him either. I hardly think that such a premise is the basis of our unity in diversity on such differences. The fact is a soldier in war or a policeman may kill someone at any time.

Brethren, let's teach what we believe to be the truth on such matters. But let's be humble enough to grant the possibility that we may not know everything; and charitable enough to allow some individual applications and sincere differences. I realize that this stance produces problems of its own. But I had rather err on the side of charity on such matters as these than on the side of rigidity. It might help us to remember that the Lord has not given to us the prerogative of final judgment.

Many will doubtlessly disagree with me, but I believe the following exhortation is appropriate: **"But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ"** (Romans 14: 10). EDITOR'S NOTE: Lest readers are left with the impression that the subject at hand is so complicated that we cannot understand what the Bible says on the subject, we cite the following passages:

"It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto

you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery" (Mt. 5: 31-32).

"And I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Mt. 19: 9).

"And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and shall marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery" (Mk. 10: 11-12).

"Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery" (Lk. 16: 18).

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—Rev. 3:8

LOOK WHAT'S BEHIND THE WALL

**Doug Focht, Jr.
107 Hoffman Drive
Tallahassee, FL 32312**

Not long ago, Harry E. ("Buddy") Payne, Jr. held a four-day meeting in our area on creation & evolution. During that meeting he made several profound observations, but one which particularly impressed me was his explanation of the "language" of DNA. DNA is a 3-foot long molecule which is wound inside virtually every cell of a living organism. Its two strands are twisted around each other and held together like rungs on a ladder by four chemical building blocks. The DNA acts as a kind of blueprint for cell formation. By "reading" the coded DNA, some cells become limbs; other eyes, blood vessels, and so forth. Today, scientists are in the process of reading and decoding this molecule to determine which parts are responsible for what results. In fact, biologists have been able to take apart a DNA molecule and reassemble it in a different order. By this means they have actually been able to produce a fruit fly that has a leg growing out of its head! (cf "The Infinite Voyage: The Geometry of Life" produced by WQED/Pittsburgh in assoc. with the National Academy of Science, 1988)

All of this may sound quite bizarre (and where this will take us is the topic of another study altogether), but the point being made was that if from outer space we were to receive "non-random" signals with a "language convention," we would conclude that such signal emanated from an intelligent source. In fact, Carl Sagan used this very line of reasoning in arguing for governmental funding in search of intelligent life from outer space. And yet, not from outer space but from the minuteness of our existence we have discovered what are indeed "non-random signals" within a "language convention." The four chemicals of the DNA molecule are arranged orderly, and in specific sequences which can be deciphered and understood. Why would such a find also not point to an intelligence?

Those who believe in God, and especially who believe in the Bible as His word, may take these and other such discoveries for granted. In fact, we can be almost haughty about it if we're not careful. One might be tempted to say to the scientist, "Huh! What's so surprising about that? You don't need science to find God!" Maybe not, but such thinking severely limits a person's appreciation for the God in whom he believes. In fact, the most astonishing thing to me is that we are privy to information unknown by mankind since his creation! And why life's details be made so infinitely complex from the beginning when no one would know it until our day? It's as if God is saying "go ahead, keep searching! There's plenty there for you to find out. No matter how deep you search, you will still see my hand in it all!"

Look at it this way. Suppose you bought a house. You were impressed by the workmanship from the first day you saw it; in fact there was none like it anywhere. And now that you've moved in and lived in it you appreciate even more the craftsmanship of its builder; craftsmanship that you could not have known without living there. You noticed that the corners and floors are square and plumb as that big bookcase stands straight against the wall without leaning; that ceilings and window frames are perfectly formed and level. Doors fit snugly without letting in light around the edges, and windows open and close easily without sticking.

Then, after living there for awhile, you decide to do some remodeling. And when you tear open a wall, behind it you find wall studs that are straight and true, selected from the finest wood without knots, splits or blemish; they have even been planed, sanded, painted, and they are screwed — not nailed — to the upper and lower plates. Instead of wiring that is stapled along the studs, some studs have had a groove routed in them to accommodate the wiring. Even the paneling you pulled out from the wall has been finished on both sides. Of course, no one would build a house like that! Who would ever look inside a wall to appreciate all that work anyway, except maybe by accident, or in your case, remodeling? Who indeed?!

The human race has occupied this house a long time — since creation. We have known for ages about the beauty and order of life, of the earth, of the universe surrounding us. Yet only now are we discovering what lay hidden by the builder for millennia behind those walls; hidden to be discovered, not by the Psalmist who said "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Ps. 139: 14) for he could not have known the half of what he said (but God knew); not even by the pioneers of microbiology; but by those of our own time, even as these words are being written. And yet, faith wagers that until the end of time there will be yet more to find.


This might look like a good place to end our discussion, but there is a far more important lesson in this than that of God in nature. I speak now to the believer. Nature can reveal certain things about God, but not God himself. We acknowledge that He has revealed Himself in His word, but do we intend to see what's behind the walls of that house too — to search' out the depths of His word? Or are we content with knowing about the first principles of the oracles of Christ? The threat of complacency in our lives toward His word is real; and how shall we know the deep things of God without searching? Do you think that searching is not necessary? Are first principles sufficient for you? Do the Sunday sermons and Bible classes stimulate your search, or do they satisfy it? And, most of all, do we suppose that our own traditions and experiences are sufficient guides to understanding the mind of God? The book of Hebrews cries out against such complacency (see for example Heb. 5: 11-14). No other book in the Old or New Testament teaches against the sin of neglect in such a forceful way. The most terrifying admonitions anywhere are found in Heb. 2: 2-3; 4: 11-13;

6: 1-8; 10: 26-31 and 12: 25-29, and each of them follows on the heels of complacency and neglect — not fornication, drunkenness, murder, or other so-called "terrible" sins, but complacency and neglect. And so the real lesson is this: We must diligently seek out God continually (Heb. 11: 6), because the person who is not concerned about what's behind the wall in His house will soon not care about the house itself.

**SIMPLICITY
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CHRIST**

P. J. Casebolt

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DISCIPLINE AND FIRST PLACE

We claim that the church is essential to salvation because the Lord purchased it with his own blood (Acts 20: 28); that the Lord adds the saved to it (Acts 2: 47); and that Christ will save that body (Eph. 5: 23). Some give lip service to the command of Jesus, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God... (Mt. 6: 33), and then put the church in second, third, or fifth place. There are times when I do not think the church is even in the top ten on some lists.

A lawyer who violates the ethics of his profession is subject to disbarment; a physician is answerable to his colleagues in the American Medical Association. Employees are bound by certain rules and regulations as a condition of employment, both initial and continued. Amateur and professional athletes, and contestants in beauty pageants are subject to certain rules, and face discipline or disqualification if those rules are broken. Some labor unions require an oath of allegiance and can levy fines, reprimands, or even purge from their ranks those who violate that oath. The teaching profession, various clubs and organizations of a civic or social nature, fraternal organizations and even volunteer groups are protected by charters, laws and by-laws. The military branches of the government can dishonorably discharge from their ranks those who violate their codes of conduct.

But just let the church warn negligent, unruly, or disorderly members that they are violating terms of their membership, and the church is accused of meddling. Let the church exercise discipline toward those who will not repent and reform, and the church is guilty of harassment and subject to ridicule, or worse, to a civil lawsuit.

Any organization may mis-trust its members, or violate its own code of ethics. But generally, all the church is trying to do is to save the soul of the offender, warn and protect the offended (the rest of the body), and obey the head of the church (2 Thes. 3: 6). While there may be a case of malpractice occasionally, there seems to be a wide gap of inconsistency, disparity, injustice and hypocrisy

between what we allow secular organizations to do and what we allow the Lord's church to do.

And, in the latter case, let us not forget that the final decision of things pertaining to Christ's body is not going to be determined by the courts of this present world, but by the Lord himself (Jno. 12: 48, 2 Cor. 5: 10, 11).

EYES

Oliver Watts
Box 895
Craig, Colorado 81626

"The eye evolved," say evolutionists. Poor foolish men pretending to be wise; While they are urged to stop and look, and learn That God has made ten billion human eyes.

All alike We talked with an ophthalmologist. He is an eye surgeon with many years' experience. We asked him if he had ever found any eyes further "evolved" than others. He replied that all of them are alike in all their parts. How strange it would have been, with so much "adapting" during "millions of years," that some eyes did not "adapt" differently or faster than others! Would not such an even rate and uniformity by chance have been nearly as great a wonder as the creation itself?

Formed When the Lord God formed man (Gen. 2: 7), He also "formed the eye" (Psalms 94: 9). This marvelous invention was among the systems of organs which together constituted a human being, God's finest creature. The intricacies of each "system" and their harmonious working together "boggle the mind." And all this "happened by chance"? "Please, Professor, don't give me that."

Duplication Perhaps even more wonderful than the rest of the original invention was the devising of the process of reproduction. G. K. Wallace used to say that if, some morning, he found his little car building a nest, he could put Henry Ford out of business. By designing our race to be self-perpetuating the Almighty repeated the "forming" over and over so as to make the billions of peoples' eyes. Never was mass-production more magnificent.

Individual We must conclude that through the generations there was close personal supervision all the while. "Thee" in Isaiah 44: 2 is singular, about **one** person, where the prophet speaks of, "Jehovah who made thee and formed thee from the womb." With the Psalmist (139: 14) each of us can say, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made." We should note "me" and "my" in Verse 13, (NASB and margin of ASV), "For thou didst form my inward parts, Thou didst knit me together in my mother's womb." We can be assured that each pair of eyes receives careful attention. Color and all. they are "custom-built."

Praise Everyone should make a careful study of all the parts and workings of the eye. Meditating about these will cause each Christian more and more to appreciate and praise our great good Creator. As He made every other part of us, so, also, did He form our eyes.

WAKE THE WORLD AND TELL THE PEOPLE

Wilson Adams
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ANTIOCH — THE POWER OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

Romans 8: 29 targets God's plan for your life and mine, that being to become "conformed to the image of His Son." God wants to build into us the same qualities that made Jesus distinct and different. And central to that plan is the local church.

I am convinced that in many instances the local church has been overlooked and under appreciated in God's scheme of individual spiritual development. We need to see the local church as a family of brothers and sisters dedicated to helping each other reach their spiritual potential. A family shows love. A family offers forgiveness. A family exhorts, admonishes, and encourages. And a family not only provides its members with an opportunity to receive but, more importantly, to give. A quick survey of the "one another" injunctions of Scripture ("encourage..." "build up..." "forgive" "greet..." "be devoted to...") reveals in each case the necessity of giving in the context of a local church. And herein lies the problem with the fellow who wishes to divorce himself from the local assembly and be a "Christian at large." He is selfish to the core. He hasn't learned the thrill of giving. Let's face it: there just isn't any way to fulfill our "one another" responsibilities of giving apart from being with one another in a local church. That's what makes the local church so special in God's plan. That's what makes Antioch so exemplary.

Let's move into Acts 13: 1-3 with two observations concerning a church and their enthusiastic commitment to growth.

The Uniqueness of First Generation Christians

For the most part, this was not a collection of people who had "grown up in the church." They were not Christians because mom and dad were Christians (see 11: 20-24). The fact is, they had obeyed the Gospel at tremendous cost. Their decision for Christ had led them away from their upbringing, their family, their way of living. It wasn't easy. They knew all about hardship caused by the good confession. Their cross was heavy. Their price was high. They were first generation Christians.

And just what did it do for those people? It created an inseparable bond of commitment between them and their Lord. They didn't **take it for granted!** That's exactly what made Antioch so powerful. The opposite is what makes many churches today so weak.

Second and third generation Christians have a tendency to take it all for granted. Admittedly, it's one of the toughest struggles I have. As a third generation Christian I reap the benefits of parents and grandparents who have had to study their way out of denominational error, engage in unpleasant confrontation and forge out ideas that are consistent with Scripture. Years later it's a great temptation to take it all for granted and simply view New Testament Christianity with a "ho-hum" mindset. This is no imaginary problem. It's REAL!

That's why I love first generation Christians — their enthusiasm, their willingness to try, their positive outlook and fresh input. First generation Christians challenge my thinking by questioning the basics. They keep me on my toes. They keep me alive. They help this third generation Christian review his commitment. And I need that.

There is something to be said for a church filled with first generation Christians. That is not to say that a church filled with first generation saints will not have some unique problems with which to deal. It will. That is not to say that a congregation doesn't need the teaching and balance that older and wiser people can give. It does. But it is to say that a group of new Christians will be full of zeal, devotion and committed to bringing others to Jesus. I've seen it happen. So have you.

Remember... when you first obeyed the Gospel? That burning excitement? The first Sunday you took the Lord's Supper? The quest to learn more and more? To be more and more? Remember? But days turn into weeks and then months and finally years and before we know what has happened we have lost the edge of appreciation for what we have and who we are. I challenge you: GET IT BACK AGAIN! Rekindle that flame of commitment. Re-light that original fire. The fire is dying in too many local assemblies because we have begun to take it all for granted. Don't. Please don't. Another generation follows in our wake....

But back to balance. Antioch had it. Antioch had the balance of young converts plus seasoned inspired instructors in Barnabus, Paul, Simeon, Lucius and Manaen (13: 1). Romans 10: 2 pinpoints the problem of imbalance — "zeal for God **but not in accordance with knowledge.**" Enthusiasm without direction in a congregation is disastrous. But when the two are brought together it makes for a living illustration of the power of the local church.

Organized Teaching Program

"Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets **and teachers...**" (verse 1). "Prophets" were men who spoke from God without error. Sometimes they spoke warning, sometimes prediction but always revelation. These men provided the Antioch congregation with special exhortation and guidance directly from God. "Teachers" were those who took the revealed truth from the prophet and gave explanation

and application more fully (see Eph. 4: 11-13). (No doubt, these offices at times overlapped). Obviously today the office of the prophet has been removed for God's entire revelation has been given (1 Cor. 13: 8). And the miraculous element in first century teaching and instruction remains (2 Tim. 4: 1-2).

The point? The church at Antioch was not a hodge-podge, unorganized "who are we gonna' get to preach for us this Sunday?" congregation. There were God-directed men providing the direction, stability and order needed in the church. In 1 Cor. 14: 40 Paul admonished the Corinthians to clean up their assemblies by saying, "**But let all things be done properly and in an orderly manner.**" That's the way it was in Antioch.

Local churches need to give time and attention to conducting orderly worship services. Services need to start on time. Those asked to serve the church need to serve the church. (Nothing grates on me any more than to have a brother appointed to lead in prayer wait until the song is over and then saunter up to the front. He's not waiting on the church. The church is waiting on him!) Those who preach need to recognize time limitations. Those who conduct the singing need to plan for that responsibility. Those who teach Bible classes must teach in a way that captures the attention of their students while modeling the lessons by personal example. Mark it down. A growing church that is alive will be marked by two things; enthusiasm from first generation Christians and order from those grounded in the knowledge of God.

The Result: GROWTH!

There is nothing more exciting than a growing, healthy local body of Christ. It has a magnet effect that draws people together. If you want a thermometer that will register the temperature of a local church, here it is: look at when people come (early or late) and watch how long they stay. I've been in places where some view the assemblies much like pit row at the Indianapolis 500 (zip in and zip out in minimal time). I mean as soon as A-Men!" is said its: vvvrrroooooom! — here they come and there they go! That church has problems.

I don't guess that there is anything more demoralizing than seeing a church once alive, active and healthy go on the decline. The poet, Joyce Kilmer, wrote — Whenever I walk to Suffern, along the Erie track I go by a poor old farm house with its shingles broken and black.

I suppose I've passed it a hundred times But I always stop for a minute And look at that house, the tragic house, The house with nobody in it...

There's something worse than a house where nobody is home and that's a church where the flame has gone out. There are places all across this land where the truth of God once echoed off the walls of auditoriums packed with people but which are now houses with nobody in them. God makes no promises here. If you and I fail to live for Jesus Christ with the same enthusiasm and conviction of past generations then we will gradually see what we have slip away. It doesn't have to be.

Look at Antioch. A church of enthusiastic new believers joined with seasoned saints knowledgeable in the

truth of God. Think how exciting it must have been! Think how exciting it CAN BE TODAY if we begin to mirror what we see reflected in that local assembly. It can be done. No. It MUST be done. Another generation hangs in the balance... "... and there arose another generation after them who did not know the Lord, nor yet the work which He had done..." (Judges 2: 10)

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THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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LARRY R. DEVORE, P. O. Box 313, Medina, OH 44258 — We continue to enjoy the work at Medina. In January, a sister was restored from whom we had earlier withdrawn. One was baptized in March and another restored in April. We had a men's training class one night a week from Feb. 25th to May 20th and also have a class for ladies meeting in different homes each Wednesday morning. I was in a meeting at North Ridgeville, Ohio April 16-21 where Ed Holcomb is the preacher. Also, I was at Wooster, Ohio at Burbank Rd. in a meeting May 21-26. Ray Vess is the local preacher.

ERNEST A. FINLEY, 506 Front St., Poteau, OK 74953 — We just concluded a very fine meeting with Don Hastings. Six were baptized and one requested prayers in the meeting and one has been baptized since the meeting closed. This meeting was with the church at Saratoga, Arkansas. I will begin work with the church in Poteau, Oklahoma on June 18. We are looking forward to our work there. Pray for us.

EDGAR J. DYE, 4700 West 28th Ave., Pine Bluff, AR 71603—James W. Adams of Lufkin, Texas was with us July 24-28, 1989 and spoke on Institutionalism and Centralized Cooperatives among churches of Christ, past, present, and future - what they are; what is wrong with them; and the evil fruits which have, and no doubt, will result. (We regret that we received this notice too late for it to appear prior to the event. Again we urge all who wish to have such announcement made before the event, to please give us ample time. We must have your news item five weeks before the issue in which you want it to appear. We wish we did not require so much time but have no choice in the matter. Editor)

TYLENE KENNEDY

TYLENE JOSPEHINE KENNEDY, wife of Dr. Martin Kennedy of Salem, Indiana, passed away quietly on June 5, 1989 at the age of 58. Her husband, Martin, is a dentist in Salem, Indiana and also preaches for the Westside church in Salem. He has served as a deacon at Pekin, Indiana and has done considerable preaching over the last few years, mostly in southern Indiana. She served the Lord faithfully and without fanfare. She is survived by her husband, Martin; one daugh-

ter, Wendy Thompson; two sons, Timothy W. Kennedy and Stephen M. Kennedy, and two grandchildren. Funeral services were conducted at Pekin, Indiana with over 300 present. Harold Comer and Bob Buchanan conducted the services in which there was congregational singing.

— Bob Buchanan

J. DAVID POWLAS, 3430 Kay St., #D-3, Columbia, SC 29210 — I have just completed my first year with the Lower Richland congregation as preacher. In the Columbia metropolitan area, there are 9 institutional churches and 3 non-institutional churches. These three are small in number. We have baptized 2 at Lower Richlands in the past year. We recently completed a gospel meeting with preaching by Chris Reeves from Camden, SC. Chris is a young man in his early 20's and this was his first week-long meeting. He presented the teaching of the Bible just as accurately, boldly and clearly as those men who are widely known in meeting work. He has an understanding of the Scriptures usually characteristic of older men. We highly recommend him to any congregation looking for a man for a gospel meeting. If you have friends or relatives in this area we might contact about the kingdom, please call us at (803) 776-0754 or (803) 772-4371.

LUTHER W. MARTIN, 707 Salem, Rolla, MO 65401 — Would you let the brethren know that I buy and sell preacher's libraries.

BILL CAVENDER, P. O. Box 595, Cullman, AL 35056—Would you let the brethren know of the need of a good man? James W. Shear, P. O. Box 1766, Milledgeville, GA 31061 (Phone 912-452-1212) is losing \$400 a month support from a church here in Cullman County due to internal problems and some folks moving away. There are 31-35 meeting now in Milledgeville and he would like to stay due to the need of the work there. Also his daughter has special needs and is in the state school and work program there where she can be greatly helped. Brother Shear is a good man and a dedicated and experienced preacher who is worthy of support.

(Editor's note: I also have known James W. Shear for many years and concur in what brother Cavender has said. I hope there will be some who will see this and be moved to help him stay in a work where he

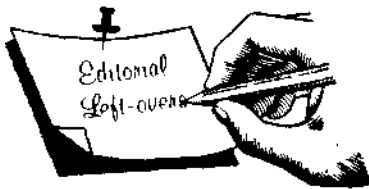
is badly needed. There are 100 counties in the state of Georgia where there is no sound congregation.

EFRAIN F. PEREZ, Apartado 27026, 08080 Barcelona, Spain — I am now preaching for the church meeting in Badalona. There is much to do. We rejoice that five persons have been baptized into Christ for the remission of their sins. We now have a phone number (398-2273). We are thankful to all who make it possible for us to work here.

RANDY S. REESE, SR., P. O. Box 14, Ashiya Shi, Japan 659 — One of the young Japanese men has been teaching his fiancée and she was recently baptized. Two weeks later they were married. We continue to have several studies underway.

ALLEN AND VERLE NICHOLLS, R. R. #1, Dunnville, Ontario, Canada — We made our second trip to Capetown, South Africa this past February-March. Thanks to STS we started to correspond with Eric Reed prior to leaving. He now works in the Capetown area. We also read of the stand of Conrad Steyn and met him through Eric Reed. We were thrilled when they combined their Sunday worship so we could meet them all. We met in the house of one of the members where Conrad preaches. They have no permanent meeting place. Then we traveled a fair distance to Bellville (a suburb of Capetown) for evening service where Hendrick Joubert very ably taught a lesson on prayer in the home of Eric and Sandra Reed. Their home is situated in an "African" stronghold with five large Dutch Reformed churches and they are not allowed to build or rent a place to meet. They have a congregation of blacks, whites and coloureds. We have much admiration for Conrad Steyn and his wife, Ann Marie. They are honest people who walked away from a large congregation, nice building and good support when confronted by error, although this had been their life's work. They are still suffering persecutions through untruths being told about him after all this time. Members who left with them, plus new Christians are planning a new place to worship. A young Jewish couple (new Christians) are taking time from their work and lives to help renovate a house in a new area to worship, a monumental job as well as expensive. The Steyn's son-in-law, George Harris is faithfully working with them. We must pray for these good people and hold up their hands.

(Editor's note: I have known the Nicholls for a number of years and stayed in their home once during a gospel meeting at Wellandport, Ontario. They are people of ordinary means and their trips to visit the brethren in South Africa have been at their own expense and out of regard for the work of the Lord there. This is refreshing, isn't it?)



POUND, VIRGINIA

This column is being written at Pound, Virginia where I am in my third gospel meeting with this congregation of about 70. Pound is located in the extreme western tip of the Commonwealth of Virginia, my home state. I was born and reared in southeastern Virginia far from this mountainous region. Pound is located in the heart of the coal fields which extend through this part of Virginia, West Virginia and the extreme eastern part of Kentucky. There are many signs of prosperity in this part of the country. The rundown looking cabins and shacks that once lined the sides of the highways have long been replaced by modern ranch-type houses with pleasant landscaped yards. Business appears to be booming and there are shopping centers springing up near the outskirts of many of the towns. In the homes of the people, I see no difference in the way people live than in other parts of the country. There are poor people in many parts of the country but the great cities of the northeast and midwest have as many or more than are in evidence here. This is not the picture painted by the news media when they do their documentaries on "poverty in Appalachia."

Leonard Salyers is the preacher here. He is a distinguished man and a hard working preacher of the gospel. I have known him for many

years and have worked with him in a number of gospel meetings over the years. He has been a voice for soundness, sanity and stability. He has led many people to the Lord in his work in Dayton, Ohio, eastern Kentucky and here in western Virginia. The church at Pound is at peace and the members love each other. They have an attractive meeting house and make an effort to let the community know they are here and at work for the Lord. A weekly radio program reaches out and many hear it. There are a number of small congregations scattered through these mountains and among them you will find some devout Christians. I just thought our readers, who have never been in this part of the country, would like to know that there are a number of good brethren in these parts and that the church at Pound, Virginia is alive and well.

THE PREACHER'S PANTS

Several years ago, while in a meeting in west Tennessee, I stayed with a fine older couple who lived on a big farm. It was July and plenty warm. They gave me their bedroom downstairs because it was the coolest room in the house. I hung my clothes in the same closet where they kept theirs. I would get ready for services and vacate the room so they could change without having to move all their things. One night on the way to the meeting, the sister, who was in the back seat suddenly leaned over the seat and said to her husband, "Where'd you get them pants?" Before he could answer, she said, "Oh, my land, you've got on the preacher's pants!" It was too late to go back and change. She was "mortified" and begged me not to tell it. I said "Sister, that is too good a story to keep to myself and I am going to tell it as soon as I get in the pulpit." And I did, much to the delight of her many relatives in the audience.

In case you think preachers lead dull, uninteresting lives, I can tell you otherwise. I have had my shirts put in yard sales, had my toothbrush used to brush the dog's teeth, had to push a dresser against the door to keep ungoverned boys from barging into my room, have preached in the Philippines in an area where there was armed conflict between Muslim rebels and the Philippine army and where fourteen armed soldiers guarded the premises where we slept every night for a week, and have been threatened by bullies who did not like what I preached. Every preacher I have met, who has had much experience, has his own set of stories to tell. The toils, sacrifices and heartaches of many of the pioneer preachers make our more modern-day experiences pale by comparison. Beyond all that, I am humbled every time I read 2 Cor. 11; 23-33. Have you read that lately?

PREACHERS NEEDED

ALBANY, OREGON — The Oak St. church here needs a full time preacher. We are a congregation of about 60, and have our own building. We will be able to partially support a man, although some outside help will be needed. Possibly we could help in securing this support. If interested please contact Chuck Carroll, P. O. Box 454, Albany, Oregon 97321, or call (503) 926-7670, or leave a message at (503) 928-5286.

CLEVELAND, MISSISSIPPI — This small congregation (35-40), 100 miles south of Memphis, Tennessee, and 100 miles north of Jackson, MS, needs a full time preacher. We own our own property but cannot supply full support. In the past, two other congregations have helped the local preacher in his support. Call Allen Williams at (601) 843-1532.

CALGARY, ALBERTA — The Northside church in this city of 600,000 needs a full time gospel preacher. We now have 35-40 members. We would prefer a man between 30-40 who has had some experience dealing with institutionalism. There is a large liberal church here. There is much work to do in this area where there are so many people. If interested, write: Wayne Bailey, 1707, 620-67 Ave, S. W., Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2V 0M2. Or call (403) 258-1358.

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	270
RESTORATIONS	47

(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 XXX

SEPTEMBER, 1989

NUMBER 9

THINK ON THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 1631
Lutz, FL 33549



THE GOSPEL WHICH WAS PREACHED OF ME

No man in New Testament times received more attacks and criticism for his preaching than did the apostle Paul. Again and again he was called upon to defend his apostleship and the gospel which he preached. The book of Galatians is in part devoted to the proof of his apostleship and the divine origin of the gospel which he preached in contrast to the false doctrines which were carrying them away from the Lord. The ideas of what constitutes proof of sound doctrine today may vary, but the one way to prove what is sound doctrine was used by the apostle in Galatians 1: 11, 12.

The Holy Spirit said, "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. "

Of course, we do not today receive the gospel directly from Jesus Christ, but we do receive that which was delivered directly to the apostles. What we read in the New Testament is the word of Christ just as Paul and the other apostles received it. But usually when one comes to prove a proposition or establish a practice he uses other arguments besides the fact that it is written in the New Testament. Those who do such are occupying the grounds of the false teachers against whom Paul wrote in the Galatian epistle. A certain doctrine is taught; and to make the hearer believe it, the teacher or preacher resorts to the following claims:

1. **My years of experience.** Paul could not say much for his years of experience in the gospel as compared to

the other apostles. He speaks of himself as "of one born out of due time." Now one of the first arguments made is that of preaching so **many** years. That is supposed to make the hearer accept what he says. This is no proof because a man may preacher error for fifty years and never get right. I have known some.

2. **My education.** Paul mentioned his education in the righteousness of the law at the feet of Gamaliel (Acts 22: 3), but he counted all this for nothing in preaching the gospel delivered to him by Christ (Phil. 3: 7-9). One does not know God by the wisdom of this world (1 Cor. 1: 20, 21). The number of degrees a man has does not prove his preaching to be true.

3. **I stand with great men of the past.** Paul stood with one of the greatest teachers of his day — Gamaliel — but he did not offer that as proof of the truth he preached. Often great men of the past were wrong in what they taught. The thing to do is to prove that these men stood upon the only foundation of truth — the New Testament, then we have only proved that we have the truth because it is taught in the word of God. Just the fact that we stand with great men of the past does not give credence to what we teach; it is the fact that it comes from the New Testament.

4. **The majority agree with my view.** Not one time do we read of Paul, or any other apostle, using this argument to prove either apostleship or truth of the gospel they preached. History abounds with proof that the majority have always opposed the gospel. It is true that many people are more persuaded by the stand of the majority and the elite than they are by what is taught in the gospel of Jesus Christ, but this does not prove their doctrine to be true. Just the fact that one stands with the minority does not prove him right. It must be proved by what is taught in the word of God. Neither the majority nor the minority proves a man is teaching the true gospel.

5. **I have never changed.** This is certainly not the proof Paul used to establish his apostleship and his gospel. He freely admitted his change and told why. His proof was not in the consistency of his own belief and practice through his years, but rather that he had learned and received the truth that did not come from man nor by man, but from the Lord himself. He says that

in his former course he "thought" he was right, but learned of his error and **changed**. The mere fact that one has never changed his teaching does not prove his doctrine to be true. The only proof of sound doctrine is what is taught in the New Testament.

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Searching The Scriptures

VOLUME 30 SEPTEMBER, 1989 NUMBER 9

Published Monthly at
BROOKS, KENTUCKY

Second Class Postage Paid at Brooks, Kentucky
and at an Additional Mailing Office
USPS-487-440

CONNIE W. ADAMS, Editor

Office of Publication
52 Yearling Drive
Brooks, Kentucky 40109
Phone (502) 957-2257

SUBSCRIPTION RATES
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Guest Editorial

Donnie V. Rader

4724 E. Manelick Road
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FORNICATION AND ADULTERY (PART 2)

In a previous study we learned what fornication and adultery are, that they are sin and the serious consequences of engaging in such immorality. In this article we will see how it happens and how we must flee from it.

How It Happens

It may be hard for some to realize how someone could so easily yield to the temptation. Especially is that true of those who are supposed to be faithful Christians. When we hear reports of some Christian (even some elders, deacons and preachers) committing fornication, we wonder, "How on earth could they do it?" We reason, "Surely, they know it is wrong and that there are eternal consequences." But, even so, some are swept away with the excitement.

I doubt there are many (at least among those claiming to be Christians) that set out with the raw determination to become immoral. However, something leads a few of them to surrender to the seduction when they never thought it would happen to them. How does it happen?

They forget the covenant. Prov. 2: 16-17 warns about the seductive woman who "forgetteth the covenant of her God." Fornication is easily committed when one forgets about the covenant he has with God. At least for a moment, he forgets about God, his law, the warnings he gives, the consequences of the sin and the fact that he is God's child. I doubt that anyone ever thought much about God and his law while in the very act of adultery. To the contrary, "by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil" (Prov. 16: 6). This is how those who know it is wrong can do it. They are not thinking about what they know to be true when they are tempted.

Furthermore, those who are married and commit adultery, forget about the covenant they have with their mate. Malachi spoke of the "wife of thy covenant" (Mai. 2: 14). Paul said that those who are scripturally married are bound by God's law to their mate (Rom. 7: 2-3). When one forgets about the bond that obligates him to his mate and restrains him from sexual relations with another, he can easily be overcome in sensuality.

They become careless. Bathsheba carelessly disrobed and bathed herself where David and others could see. David carelessly looked until lust was created in his heart. (2 Sam. 11: 1-5). Solomon warns the young man about being overwhelmed by the strange woman (Prov. 7). He closes the chapter by saying that if he is not careful, he will fall to destruction like many others who have listened to her (vs. 24-27).

If we become careless about the way we dress, our conversation topics with those of the opposite sex, where we let our eyes wander, the places we go and how intimate we become, we are sure targets for Satan's sensual attacks. Too many have become careless about how they touch and handle members of the opposite sex. **Preachers, did you get that?** Why do so many preachers think that they have to hug and put their hands on every woman they greet? What is wrong with a simple handshake? Why risk your morality and reputation by such familiarity with the women? But, some preachers are not the only ones guilty of such thoughtless behavior.

They give heed to the looks of her eyes. Again, Solomon warned, "Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids" (Prov. 6: 25). She can flirt with her eyes in such a way that it is more persuasive than words. Her eyes are powerful instruments to break down a man's resistance.

They listen to the flatterer and lies of the tempter. God's laws and warnings are "To keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman" (Prov. 6: 24). "With her fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him" (Prov. 7: 21). She may praise him and build his ego which only weakens any barriers he may have. Solomon said that the strange woman may say, "Therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee" (Prov. 7: 15). That would be a lie, for she wanted any man who may come her way. Young lady, you may have a date that will tell you that you are the only one for him. He may tell you that he wants your body because of the great love he has for you. He may try to disarm you with praise for your beauty and charm. **Don't listen to him!** Chances are he is lying. He would take any girl that would satisfy his desires.

They are encouraged by society. Today's music, television, movies and books all present sex as a casual thing. A survey of teenagers, reported in the **Journal of Adolescent Health** stated that 90% of the teens felt that the greatest pressure to engage in premarital sex was the television. The same number said that they had seen between one and nine shows within one week that pressured them on sex.

Dr. Victor Strasburger, A Yale University Pediatrics professor, says that a child sees 10,000 references to sex in one year on television. He says the message is: "Sex is fun, it's sexy. It has no consequences. So, why aren't you out there having sex?"

They sneak around. When one decides to yield, he begins to sneak around in an effort to hide his immoral deed. Some who are thought to be faithful Christians can easily be carried away with their desire thinking they can just hide it from others. "The eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, No eye shall see me: and disguiseth his face" (Job. 24: 15). The harlot would tempt her prey saying, "the goodman is not at home, he is gone on a long journey" (Prov. 7: 19).

We Must Flee Fornication

The warnings: "Flee fornication" (1 Cor. 6: 18). "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it

not be once named among you, as becometh saints" (Eph. 5: 3). "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication" (1 Thess. 4: 3).

How to flee: We can learn a lot about how to flee fornication by looking at the story of Joseph fleeing from Potiphar's wife (Gen. 39) and a few other passages.

1. **Say "No!"** Joseph refused and did not hearken unto his tempter (Gen. 39: 8, 10). Young people are instructed to say "No!" to drugs. They likewise need to be schooled to say "No!" to premarital sex. Say "No" and hold to that.

2. **Remember that someone trusts you.** Joseph told Potiphar's wife that her husband didn't know what he was doing in the house with her and trusted him with all he had (Gen. 39: 8). That trust was so strong that he didn't want to betray it. Don't forget that your parents trust you while your out on a date. Your mate trusts you while he/she is not there. Don't let them down.

3. **Run from the temptation (literally if necessary).** The text says that Joseph "fled, and got him out" (Gen. 39: 12). The proverb writer warned, "Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house" (5: 8). Get up and get away from the situation that tempts you. That may involve literally running away from the seducer. As one brother has advised it may mean you need to jump out of the parked car and run to a telephone and call Mom or Dad or escape from the house or apartment.

4. **Remember it is a sin.** Joseph recalled that such activity was wickedness and sin against God (Gen. 39: 9). With that before his mind, how could he possibly give in?

5. **Watch your behavior around friends and companions of the opposite sex.** Joseph saw the danger of being in a house alone with another man's wife (Gen. 39: 11). When a young dating couple are left in a house or an apartment for hours, a situation is created that is dangerous and doesn't look good to say the least. However, in many cases desires are created and fulfilled. Those who go to lunch with a boss or co-worker of the opposite sex (just the two of them) are asking for trouble. Preachers who counsel women (just the two of them) behind the closed doors of his office are playing with fire. Why not avoid any and all situations that could possibly create temptation.

6. **Get married.** Paul said, "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband" (1 Cor. 7: 2).

7. **Keep your thoughts pure.** Our thoughts should be in subjection to Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 10: 5). No one has ever committed fornication who didn't think about it and lust beforehand (Matt. 15: 19-22). Those who fantasize about unlawful sexual activity have not only committed adultery in their hearts (Matt. 5: 28), but are inching closer to the overt act.

8. **Be what you ought to be in the marriage.** In 1 Cor. 7: 3-5, Paul describes the mutual obligations to render the conjugal rights. When you are what God demands that you be (satisfying your mate), you will have no worry about your mate coming home or what he may do while he is away. Every list that I have seen of

problems that cause divorce, puts a failure on the part of one of the mates to respect the conjugal rights of the other somewhere near the top. The innocent party in many divorces, while innocent of adultery, is not innocent with respect to the marital problems.

Flee fornication, for the moment of pleasure is not worth an eternity of fire.

WAKE THE WORLD
AND TELL THE
PEOPLE

Wilson Adams
891 Autumn Valley Lane
Gambrills, MD 21054



ANTIOCH — THE POWER OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

It's easy to lose sight of what is really important. It's easy to get side-tracked, lose a sense of balance and live with inverted priorities. It happens as individuals: (1) the husband who feeds his career with twelve hour days, flight schedules and constant apologies to his family for being gone too much, (2) the mother of three who would rather "find herself" in the secular work force than "lose herself in the responsibilities of the home, and (3) the person who continually puts off accountability to God under the disguise of "there's always tomorrow..." It's easy to lose your focus and blur your vision.

It happens to churches, too! Yes, congregations can lose their perspective. Five of the seven churches in Revelation 2-3 lost their values, confused their priorities and forgot their purpose. (The amazing thing was that none of those Asian churches viewed themselves as off center. In fact, it took some royal mail from the postman's bag to bring them back to reality!) The impact of that divine communication sends shock waves all the way to the twentieth century. We can never afford to rest and relax. We must remain constant in our commitment to growth and firm in our adherence to truth.

Antioch helps! Reading about the local church at Antioch in Acts 11 & 13 helps to realign our perspective. It puts New Testament Christianity back into focus by causing us to view ourselves in the mirror of first century churches. In Antioch, the picture is clear...

God Uses People to Carry Out His Plan

In Acts 13: 1 we are given the names of five men whom God used as teachers in the Antioch church. Five men, none of whom were alike but all of whom were unified in one common goal.

(1) He used **Barnabus**. If ever there was a name synonymous with encouragement it was Barnabus. From the early days in Antioch Barnabus gave himself to motivating these new disciples (11: 23). Never do we read of any attitude of superiority that said, "Now look... I'm an older Christian who has been around the block a few times, so listen up!" No, Barnabus reacted

with remarkable insight and patience. He refused to aim only at their failures and shoot them down with arrogant pride every time they made a mistake. And they, no doubt, made a lot of mistakes. These were new Christians fresh from the portals of paganism. They needed encouragement. Barnabus filled the need.

Frankly, I tire of people who think it their God-given duty to be a discourager of men. Is it just me or does it appear to you, too, that in most churches there are those who seek to nit-pick everybody and everything? Such an attitude kills morale and destroys effectivity. Listen, you want to do something great in a local church, be a Barnabus! I know of those who lack in public abilities who more than make up for it in their commitment to encouragement behind the scenes. Be a Barnabus!

And while we are on the subject... it wouldn't hurt those who preach to take on the attitude of Barnabus when it comes to dealing with other preachers and especially younger ones. I have never appreciated associating with older men who seem to relish in playing the senior-junior game of superiority. On the other hand, how much I admire those preachers who have given me their friendship as well as their advice. They have treated me as an equal even though such treatment was not deserved. The time spent with the Sewell Halls, Colly Caldwell, L. A. Stauffers, and other like-minded men has in turn helped me to formulate the proper attitudes toward those younger than I. There is no place for arrogance in the kingdom. At best we are all unprofitable servants. Just ask Barnabus...

(2) He used Simeon. Simeon is thought by some to be the same Simon of Cyrene who carried the cross of Jesus (Lk. 23: 26). If he was, just think of the story he had to tell! Think what it must have been like to sit in Simeon's Bible class, to hear him talk of Jesus while challenging you to greater faith. Every church needs a core of faithful teachers like Simeon.

(3) He used Lucius of Cyrene. Cyrene is in North Africa which means that Lucius was a newcomer to Antioch. Probably a Gentile, Lucius could have identified very well with these new converts in Antioch. He knew where they were coming from, the pressures they faced at home and their lack of background knowledge in the Old Testament scriptures. He was an encouragement to every Gentile convert in Antioch.

(4) He used Manaen who "had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch." There was one in the leadership at Antioch with aristocratic connections. Here stood a man of rank, education and ties with the ruling family. True, the Gospel finds its greatest results among the poor and lowly (1 Cor. 1: 26), but not always. Because of his background, Manaen would be able to reach some that no one else could.

(5) He used Saul.

Has there ever been a more heterogeneous collection of men to lead a local church? These men were not clones! They differed in background, nationality, levels of education and social standing. They had different talents and abilities. Yet, they came together like pieces to a puzzle and worked without jealousy or competitiveness toward a common goal. It's the attitude of cooperation

that will be found in any congregation that is alive for God.

Dedication to a Spiritual Cause

This church grew because people were willing to make the necessary commitment to the work of the local church. Look at verses 2-3. Their lives revolved around the work of God at Antioch. The local church was not a "P. S." to their lives but was the central part of their lives. We see them "ministering," "fasting," and "praying." It is here they succeeded where we often fail...

These were willing to invest their time and energy in the local church. They "ministered," i. e., they were working, teaching, encouraging, preaching, and serving. They "fasted," i. e., they were so involved in the Lord's work that at times they neglected the normal occasions to eat. (A word about fasting... The practice of fasting was never a regulated, regimented requirement of the Christian life. See Matthew 9: 14-15 where Jesus taught that fasting was to be the natural response to a preoccupied mind. It was not to be forced. These brethren were fasting because their minds were so preoccupied with the things of God to the point that they didn't feel like eating.) And they were "praying." They spent much time in prayer asking God for His blessing and direction in the local work.

Let's be direct. How do you fare in these three areas? For instance, (1) how much time do you spend "ministering" to the needs of others? Are you so detached from what is going on where you are a member that you don't even know the needs? Do you view the local church as a place where you come to "get" but never to "give?" And, (2) when was the last time you were so preoccupied with the Lord's work that you missed a meal? Do we have the level of dedication that they had? Finally, (3) how much time did you spend last week praying for the local church? Tough questions.

Folks, something is seriously wrong with our spirituality when elders have to beg, prod and plead for members to get involved, come to all the services and place the work of the church as more than an after-thought to their plans. For example, I have known those who take a week of vacation in order to be at every service of a gospel meeting. Now not everyone can do that but some could (and that's just one illustration). You see, it's a mindset; a way of thinking that realizes that God's work through the local church deserves our very best. Look at Antioch. No half-hearted, 50% commitment to mediocrity here, but a willingness to accept the challenge of what it means to serve God by doing your part in a local church. These five accepted the challenge. The question is: Have you?

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GOD'S CHARGE TO JOSHUA

The historical section of the Old Testament opens with God's charge to Joshua (Josh. 1: 1-9). It was time — past time — for the Israelites to conquer Canaan. Joshua was to be their leader. Here are his orders. Here are our orders for conquering the world for Christ.

"Be At It"

"Moses My servant is dead; now therefore arise, cross this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them, to the sons of Israel" (v. 2). Israel had mourned Moses' death for thirty days (Dt. 34: 8). That could not go on indefinitely. There was work to be done.

Some may have been wondering if the time was right. Israel had long since lost the element of surprise. Would they be successful? Joshua was a good man, but he was not Moses. Was he up to the job? Perhaps a few were thinking, "If only Moses had not said what he did at Meribah." But he did. No one can turn back the clock. And we do not always know the opportune moment to act. We must do the best we can with what we've got. Now. God's order is, "Be at it."

Is there someone you have not talked to about his soul? Be at it. A month from now you will not likely know a better way to approach him than you do today. Pray about it, then do it. He may be wishing you would. Is there a brother or sister who has fallen? Be at it. Has the church been thinking about some kind of special effort to reach the community? Be at it. Canaan will not be conquered with us camped across the Jordan. I do not wish to minimize proper planning. However, I suspect that a lot of us do more thinking and talking about reaching the lost than we do teaching them.

"Be Strong and Courageous"

"Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them" (v. 6). God had promised this land to Moses (v. 3), and to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob long before. Now He had promised to bless the effort to take it. All Joshua needed was the courage to trust God's promises.

Trusting God's promises means trusting God's providence. How would God make Israel's enemies fall (v. 5)? After all, they were bigger physically, better armed, and more experienced at warfare. They lived in fortified cities. Jericho was first. What would God do about its massive walls? "Be strong and courageous, Joshua." God has unbounded power and unlimited means. Provi-

dence does not preclude human effort. God gave Jericho to Israel, yet they had to march around it and take it when the walls fell. God will give the increase, but we must plant and water.

Trusting God's promises means trusting God's presence. "Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go" (v. 9). His Son said to those working to make disciples, "And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Mt. 28: 20). The prospect of speaking to others may produce "weakness and fear and much trembling," as it did in Paul at Corinth. Sometimes teaching is pure delight, other times it is stressful. In either case God is with us. We cannot see or hear or feel Him, yet His promise assures us. He expects us to fight with persistent vigor, not occasional token efforts. He looks for us to get up when we are knocked down. "Be strong and courageous."

"Be Careful"

"Be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go" (v. 7). Joshua must not let his zeal for conquest allow him to put God's law aside. The land to be conquered had limitations (v. 4). There were rules to follow in battle (one man's violation at Jericho resulted in Israel's defeat at Ai). Devotion to God and right conduct toward man are continuous obligations.

Yes, there was and still is a law from God, a fixed standard of right and wrong to be observed in every circumstance. Joshua was to keep all the law, not just major parts or those he liked. Did that make him a legalist? He was not to turn aside to the right or the left, neither adding to nor taking from what God said. "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it" (v. 8). To some that makes one a fanatic. To God that makes one faithful.

Every soldier of Christ must be careful to follow God's law. None of us will influence the world for good if our lives are not as they should be. And we must strive lawfully. Some brethren have formed unscriptural alliances to finance the fight. Others have exchanged the sword of the spirit for gimmickry and carnal appeals. Some adulterate the message to make it more palatable. Others win souls to church leaders instead of to Christ. In defense of such things it is said you cannot argue with success. However, large numbers and success do not necessarily equate. God told Joshua success would come only if he followed God's law.

Do not become paranoid. Some are so afraid of doing something wrong that they do nothing at all. Let us not limit ourselves to pointing out unlawful striving. Let us show how it ought to be done by carefully, yet courageously, being at the business of conquering the world.

DON'T FORGET TO PRAY!

A BURNING FIRE

(Jer. 20:9)

Jim Deason

Rt. 1, Box 153
Culleoka, Tennessee 38451



"NEWBORN BABES"

A task which every evangelistic congregation faces is that of strengthening newborn babes in Christ. Often those we baptize are left at the baptistery steps and we leave unfulfilled the last part of the great commission to teach "them to observe all" that Jesus has commanded (Matt. 28: 20). As a result we have what might be termed a "high infant mortality rate," i. e., newborn babes who go back into the world or into religious error. Too few obey the gospel to allow even one to lose his or her soul because of a lack on our part. Thus, the need to address the problem.

YOUNG CHRISTIANS NEED BASIC TEACHING FROM THE WORD OF GOD. Peter said, "... like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word..." (1 Pet. 2: 2). One doesn't bring a new baby home from the hospital and immediately begin to feed him steak or pot roast. The need is for something more digestible like formula and baby cereal. Likewise, the young Christian needs to be taught the basics of trust in and commitment to the Lord's ways. They need to study the basics of worship and daily living. An in-depth study of Ezekiel or Revelation is too much and simply not digestible at this point in their spiritual maturity. An alert eldership can recognize this and help by providing public classes to address this need. Another, and perhaps better, approach is to have more mature Christians study with these new converts in their home. This method helps these new Christians establish a pattern of regular Bible study that is so necessary to spiritual growth.

NEW CHRISTIANS USUALLY NEED NEW FRIENDS. When one is converted from the world or religious error not only do they change religious environments, but their whole social life usually changes as well. The opposition of family and friends is often one of the greatest barriers to conversion. And merely the fact that one cannot go to the same places and do the same things with the same people can make life very lonely for the new convert. Every Timothy needs a Paul and every John Mark needs a Barnabas. Paul admonished the Thessalonians to "... encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all men" (1 Thess. 5: 14). He encouraged the Romans to "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor... practice hospitality" (Rom. 12: 10, 13). In friendship with other Christians there is found love and strength. Every new Christian needs special attention.

NEW CHRISTIANS NEED UNDERSTANDING

AND PATIENCE. One doesn't expect a baby to mature into adult overnight. But with the right diet and an ample amount of exercise, along with time, nature will take its course and the human body will develop to maturity. Much of the same is true when one develops spiritually. With a steady diet of the word of God and the constant exercise of obedience in one's life spiritual maturity will come in the course of time. Mistakes will be made and lessons will be learned the hard way. Sometimes pain is associated with growing. But through all of this the young Christian needs our prayers, our understanding, and our patience. When sin is found in their lives it must be removed but with understanding and patience, not a rod of iron.

NEW CHRISTIANS NEED OUR TIME. Time is a very precious commodity these days. It seems that the older we get the less of it we have. But I rather suspect that it's not that we have less time, we just don't use what we do have wisely. Time has come to be more precious than money to most. We had rather pay for something to be done than actually do it ourselves. And this is not wrong in many cases. But there are some things that we just can't pay others to do for us. We can't pay others to do our teaching for us, it is a personal responsibility (Heb. 5: 11-12). Paul said, "Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one..." (Gal. 6: 1). And again, "Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6: 2). Young Christians find themselves being caught up in sin, not necessarily through a willful and hard-hearted departure from God, but merely because of weakness or ignorance. They need someone to care enough to spend time with them — teaching, praying, and strengthening. This is a burden we must help them bear, not something we can pay someone else to do for us. It requires our TIME!

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**STUDIES IN TITUS (1: 9-16)
"THE EVANGELIST AND ELDERS
MUST CONFRONT EVIL MEN"**

The last qualification of an elder mentioned in this text (v. 9) was "holding fast the faithful word," necessary to his being able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers (opposition). The evangelist and elders are responsible for "stopping the mouths" of false teachers (v. 11) and "rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith" (v. 13). The responsibility of the evangelist and elders in this respect is not to use abusive, angry words, violence, or persecution, but rather "convict the gainsayers (opposition)" in such a way that he is moved to admit his error. Trench, commenting on this, wrote "to rebuke another, with such an effectual wielding of the victorious arms of truth, as to bring him, if not always to a confession, yet at least to a conviction of his sin." Elders and evangelists must have the ability and courage to do this. The main objective is that all "may be sound in the faith" (v. 13). There is no greater threat to truth and righteous than that of false teachers, seeking to corrupt the minds of God's people. (Rev. 2: 2; 2 Jno. 9-11; 2 Tim. 4: 1-5).

The seriousness and importance of this is emphasized when we take note of the kind of opposition to be dealt with.

Judaizers

It seems that the greatest threat came from Judaizers who were ever trying to turn Christians from their liberty in Christ to the requirements and traditions of the law of Moses. They were "unruly" (undisciplined), like a soldier who refuses to submit to commands of authority, so they would not submit to the Lord's word, as revealed through the apostles and prophets by the Holy Spirit (v. 10).

They were "deceivers," leading away from truth rather than to it, while desperately trying to convince all that they taught truth.

Verse eleven mentions two things about their teaching. They "subvert (upset) whole households," thus had an ill effect on family life, creating doubts and questionings that resulted in a loss of faith and the disruption of the family. Secondly, their teaching was for "gain (filthy lucre's sake)." They were more interested in what they could get from the people than what they could offer or give them. Every minister of the word should carefully guard his heart against this motive.

Cretan's Nature

The nature of the people of Crete, with whom Titus and elders had to work, demanded faithfulness to the things required of Titus and elders in this letter. The quotation from one of their own prophets (A Greek Poet called Epimenides) presents a strong indictment (v. 12-13) — "liars, evil beasts, slow bellies (lazy gluttons)." There are other statements in ancient literature referring to Cretans as liars, cheats, gluttons, traitors, and given to greed and avarice.

With all these vices, the Holy Spirit did not regard them as being beyond redemption and as those with whom servants of the Lord would be wasting their time in dealing with them. Paul said "rebuke them sharply that they may be sound in the faith" (v. 13).

The Judaizers, with their fables (theories) and human traditions (commandments) are to be rejected (v. 14). These theories and traditions are no part of the faith that is in Christ, and those who embrace them turn from the truth—are moved from Christ (Gal. 1: 6-9) - are fallen from grace (Gal. 5: 4).

The contrast in verses 15-16 is between true Christians who act from a pure heart (sincerely cleansed and committed to the truth of God) and a clear conscience, and those false teachers of verse 14, who were quick to pronounce various foods and actions unclean. There may be a reference here, not only to the "unclean" meats and touching of dead or diseased bodies of the Mosaic system, but to Gnosticism, prominent in that day. Gnosticism held that all flesh is evil, including all the natural instincts of the fleshly body. It was a sin to touch this, eat that, or even marry and beget children. Thus, many natural and pure things, within themselves, became things that defiled. Paul was dealing with this in his letter to Timothy (1 Tim. 4: 1-5). See also Romans 14: 1-6, 20-23.

The heart under consideration involves the intellect (Prov. 23: 7; Mk. 2: 6, 8), emotions (Mt. 22: 37; Rom. 10: 1), and will (2 Cor. 9: 7; Rom. 6: 17) of man. If one is pure in heart, his thinking, desires, and actions are in harmony with God's truth. But, if the heart is corrupt, every thing he thinks about, desires, and does is defiled.

The false teachers that Titus, elders, and all saints had to deal with, oppose and rebuke, are further described as professors of God, but deny him in their actions, abominable, disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate (v. 16). Their lives (actions) gave the lie to their profession: they were disobedient to the inspired scriptures that are profitable unto every good work (2 Tim. 3: 16-17) and were, therefore, worthless (unfitted) for any good work. William Barclay says "The word used for useless (adokimos) is interesting. It is used to describe a counterfeit coin which is below standard weight. It is used to describe a cowardly soldier who fails in the testing hour of battle. It is used of a rejected candidate for office, a man whom the citizens regarded as useless. It is used of a stone which the builders rejected. (If a stone had a flaw in it, it was marked with a capital A, for adokimos, and left aside, as being unfit to have any place in the building.) — "Letters To Timothy, Titus, and Philemon," p. 246.

The church suffers greatly today from a lack of qualified ministers and elders, with the faith and courage to stand and contend for the faith in the midst of great opposition from such individuals as were found in Crete. As a result, the salvation of the teachers and hearers is in jeopardy.

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"CAN ANY GOOD THING COME OUT OF CORINTH?"

No church has had more problems than the church at Corinth. Page after page, chapter after chapter is dealing with problems - some major, some minor. Some chapters deal with a multiplicity of problems. Almost any church can see itself mirrored in one or more of Corinth's difficulties. And most any congregation can look at Corinth and be thankful they are not so plagued with so many problems. We are forced to ask, "Can any good thing come out of Corinth?" And the answer is YES!

Let us look at some of their difficulties and make some observations.

1) "PREACHERITUS" (1 COR. 1: 11-15). Some had become so partial to their favorite preacher that they were calling themselves after him. In a figure (4: 6), Paul refers to Paulites, Apollosites, and Cephasites. They had a serious problem. But **there is no record that they split and splintered among themselves and ran off in different directions!**

2) FORNICATION (1 COR. 5: 1-13). A man had his father's wife. That should repulse any right thinking person. It could be enough to cause anyone to want to find another congregation, or start one. But Paul was optimistic that the Corinthians could work out this problem. Naturally, it would take **conviction** as well as **patience** to see this problem through. And they did! (2 Cor. 2: 1-10). It must be said on their behalf that **there is no indication that anyone left or that they split and splintered among themselves and ran off in different directions!**

3) GOING TO LAW AGAINST BRETHREN (1 Cor. 6: 1-11). I would hate to be in the middle of such a controversy. I have known churches in our time who have encountered this and they split. But **there is no record that the church in Corinth split and splintered among themselves and ran off in different directions!**

4) MARITAL PROBLEMS (1 Cor. 7). Paul answers several questions that appeared problematic. Any one of these could have led to an explosive situation if brethren had hastily judged in these matters. But **there is no record that they split and splintered among themselves and ran off in different directions!**

5) EATING MEAT SACRIFICED TO IDOLS (1 Cor. 8). Some would have insisted on their rights at all cost and it would have been disastrous. We live in a time

when everybody seems to be insisting on their "rights." It would have been easy for a spark of this attitude to have resulted in a huge explosion in the Corinthian church. But **there is no record that they all split and splintered and ran off in different directions!**

6) PREACHERS' WAGES (1 Cor. 9). Brethren have had a lot of arguments over this. What constitutes wages? How much? What about benefits?, etc. Paul's response indicates a problem in Corinth over this. But **there is not even a hint that they split and splintered and ran off in different directions!**

7) THE WOMAN'S COVERING (1 Cor. 11). This has long been debated. It has engendered many strong feelings and in some cases brethren have severed connections with and boycotted each other. But **there is no indication that brethren in Corinth split and splintered among themselves and all ran off in different directions!**

8) THE LORD'S SUPPER (1 Cor. 11). This and the subject of marriage and divorce probably have more controversies surrounding them than any other subjects. There were some serious differences and some gross abuses in Corinth over the communion. A man with a short fuse could easily get fed up and hastily start another congregation. But **there is no record that the church split and splintered among themselves and all ran off in different directions!**

9) MIRACULOUS GIFTS AND REVELATIONS (1 Cor. 12-14). It would have been easy for one to get his feelings hurt over this. Perhaps some did. Paul could have said "It's no use, you'll never get this problem worked out." But through **patience** he instructed and pleaded for brethren to do the right thing. And **there is no record that they split and splintered among themselves and all ran off in different directions!**

10) THE MANNER OF THE RESURRECTION (1 Cor. 15). Truth must be taught on this and every other subject. But we must be careful not to alienate brethren through uncalled for sarcasm, prejudicial slurs, and insulting remarks that generate more heat than light. "Let all **things** be done unto edification" (1 Cor. 14: 26). Corinth may have had their difficulties with the resurrection. But **there is no hint, suggestion, or clue that they split and splintered among themselves and all ran off in different directions!**

Today the brotherhood is suffering from "Splinteritus." We may be quick to judge the church at Corinth in each and every controversy they faced. But they never taught us to split and splinter as so many are doing today. Could it be because Paul reminded them that we must each stand before God (2 Cor. 5: 10)?

Not only is there no record of a split, neither is there any indication that Paul (or the Holy Spirit) thought they should! In spite of all their problems Paul had hope for the church at Corinth. In his second letter he wrote of their hope of salvation (ch. 4) and bragged on their readiness to help others (ch. 9). Throughout his letters he stressed the importance of **togetherness**: "Perfected **together**," "Tempered **together**," "Fitly framed **together**," "Builded **together**," "Fitly framed and knit **together**," "Supplied and knit **together**," "Striving

together," (1 Cor. 1: 10; 12: 24; Eph. 2: 21, 22; 4: 16; Col. 2: 19; Phil. 1: 27).

This is not to say that there may not be a time when one will need to leave a congregation because of error. It is to say that many of us are far too impatient with our brethren and sisters and too intolerant with those who need to be worked with. It is to say that it is easier to run from problems than it is to forbear; to run off to another congregation or start one of your own. Remember these things the next time you ridicule the church at Corinth.

CONCLUSION: When Jesus prayed that we might all be **one** "that the world might believe" (Jn. 17), he implied that if we are not united the world will not believe. He said it would be by our love for one another that the world would know we are his disciples (Jn. 13: 34, 35).

What does "splinteritus" do to those Christians who are young in the faith? What does it do to those outside the body of Christ who might have been interested or attracted? What do the gossips in any community do with such information? We all know the answers to these questions. Can we not see a solution to these problems? Can any good thing come out of Corinth?

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WISHFUL THINKING

Several years ago the persistent rumor that God was dead received a good bit of publicity. Some small children in the congregation where I preached became concerned at the rumor, and asked their Bible class teacher why people were saying such things. The teacher referred the question to me, and I proceeded to answer it, along with some other sensible questions asked by the same children.

The best reason I could give for the "God is dead" rumor was that it was merely wishful thinking on the part of some people. If they could succeed in convincing themselves and others that God was dead, then they wouldn't be accountable to Him (Eccl. 12: 13, 14).

I'm persuaded that a lot of things which people say is simply an exercise in wishful thinking. While there may or may not be any harm in wishful thinking, depending on the thing wished, it is going to take more than that to transform a wish into reality.

When the controversy over human institutions spread into the Ohio Valley during the late 50's and early 60's, it was accompanied by its share of false accusations, quarantine efforts, and rumors. Only eternity will accurately assess all that was said and done, but I bore my share of such rumors, innuendoes, and false accusations.

One preacher who aligned himself with the support of human institutions told some mutual friends that I had quit preaching and had gone into farming. I never did quit preaching, and the nearest I came to farming was plant and raise a garden or two. I think some of the liberal brethren just wished that I would quite preaching and take up farming.

The same preacher also told some brethren that if I didn't change my position, and quite opposing the church support of human institutions (or quit being an "anti"), that I would ruin my influence and soon be out of a place to preach. Several years later, that same preacher and I ended up the same town, and I challenged him and the elders where he preached to defend their false doctrines and practices. They may have wished that they could do it, but they didn't try.

And, since that futile exercise in wishful thinking some twenty-five years ago, I have never wanted for a place to preach, and have had more preaching than I can do.

Others heard rumors that I had quite preaching and

gone into construction work. Some were sincerely concerned, and inquired as to the validity of such reports, but found out that I had no more quit preaching and gone into construction work than had Paul quit preaching and gone into tent-making. On the contrary, during the period of time in question, I was instrumental in helping several congregations take a stand for the truth on the institutional question, went to the Philippine Islands to preach, and did more preaching than I had done for years.

When I first moved to Florida to preach, the rumor preceded me that I was a "semi-retired" preacher looking for a place to preach that fitted such status. After folks met me and heard me preach a few times, they laughed at such rumors. So did I.

Now that I have decided to leave Florida and go back to the Ohio Valley to preach, the rumor has already reached me that I am retiring (again), and moving back to be near our children. I feel something like the noted humorist who said that the premature reports of his death had been greatly exaggerated.

In the first place, we have one child each in the extreme northern and southern parts of West Virginia, one in Kentucky, and one in Tennessee. In the second place, it will be good news to my friends and bad news to the wishful thinkers that I have no intention of retiring or even semi-retiring as long as I have the ability and opportunity to preach.

And, even if I should some day decide to draw Social Security (for which I am not yet qualified, due to lack of years), I still have no intention of letting up on the preaching end. If I am hindered from preaching, it will be by something other than wishful thinking.

Brethren, on a more collective level, it will take more than wishful thinking on our part to offset the liberal/social gospel craze among churches of Christ. I have never said, or even thought, that if we would just ignore the digressive trends among us that they would go away. Neither have I suggested that those who advocate such will be out of a place to preach. On the contrary, there is always a place for the preacher who will seek popularity and the praise of men, both now and in the judgment. But I wouldn't envy him his place either now or then.

One older preacher told me in 1951 that if we would let up on the youth oriented recreation movement of that time that it would turn out to be just a "fad" of the brethren, and would play itself out. Now, thirty-eight years later, the "fad" has become the mission of the church for some congregations.

Be not deceived. Wishful thinking will not stop the preaching of the gospel, nor will it get the gospel preached. The only way a thing gets done is by doing.

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A Colorado church of Christ may lose its state tax exemption because a preschool operates in its building. Since the mid-1980's, Colorado state law has required that work done on church or synagogue grounds be religious, educational or charitable. Now, the Cherry Vista church of Christ, Englewood, CO, finds itself under "temporary tax revocation," and facing the payment of property taxes back to 1980, because Colorado state officials have defined "religious" as activities relating solely to worship.

It is sad and shocking to see this church of Christ and its sympathizers sounding the alarm over the state telling them that their preschool is not religious! Cries of "separation of church and state" and "the state is defining religious worship" are being heard in Colorado, according to an article appearing in **The Christian Chronicle**, March, 1989, pp. 1, 8. One is compelled to ask, "Has God given a definition in His word of worship which includes preschools?" "Has God so defined the work of the local church as to include preschools, day-care centers, etc.?" Or, have men changed the definitions to fit their desires? While the state of Colorado gives one definition, and the Cherry Vista church gives another, every serious and sincere Bible student must ask, "What saith the scripture (Rom. 4: 3; Gal. 4: 30)?"

Since the days of the apostles, the plea has been sounded forth from the pages of inspiration to "do all things in the name of Lord Jesus" (Col. 3: 17). This divine injunction must be applied to the work of the local church, even though many have chosen a different path. The application of Bible authority respecting the work of the church has not occurred without its share of persecution and hardship (2 Tim. 3: 12; Mat 5: 10-12). But, such is the nature of discipleship to Jesus (cf. Lk. 6: 26; Jn. 15: 18-21; 1 Jn. 3: 13). Respect for and obedience to the God-given pattern of work by the local church (**Evangelism**—1 Thess. 1: 8; Phil. 1: 5; 4: 15ff; 2 Cor. 11: 8 / **Edification**—Acts 2: 42; 1 Cor. 14: 5, 26 / **Benevolence to needy saints**—Acts 4: 32-35; 6: 1-6; et al.) is not an out-dated issue. It is essential in order to have God's approval and fellowship. In Hebrews 8: 1-5, we learn that the tabernacle in the wilderness had to be built according to God's pattern (v. 5) in order to please Him. How much more important it is that the church (v. 2, the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched) observe the pattern God has given it. One application of this principle is the divine pattern for congregational work. It is self-evident that preschools, day-care centers, etc., provide neither spiritual edification nor benevolent assistance to the saints (even the

state of Colorado can see this fact!). Yet, for years now, some churches of Christ have sponsored and supported such activities as a part of their work. Other churches, not wanting to **oversee** such a work, have nonetheless allowed their grounds (building and property) to be used by their members as a facility in which private pre-schools, etc., are operated. We are told that under this type of an arrangement, a church avoids adding secular education to its divine pattern of work. We are told that the church is not involved. However, whether a church oversees the work, or whether it lends its property to others who oversee it, the fact remains that the church gives its name, its influence and its property to areas of organized work other than evangelism, edification and benevolence to saints. Assets which should expedite the work of the local church are being used to expedite other works. Such works must be lawful on the basis of divine truth before they may be expedited (1 Cor. 6: 12; 10: 23).

The local church **is** involved whether it oversees the work, or whether it gives its facilities to others who oversee it. Who decides to offer a preschool as a part of a church's work? Well, the church does, of course. But, who decides to offer a church's property to individuals, so they can operate a preschool upon church property? Again, it is the church that makes such a decision. Either way, the church is involved? The crucial questions become: "Are such decisions (and works) by a church authorized in the word of God? May a church of Christ provide child-care facilities to the public with heaven's endorsement? May a church of Christ help expedite the operations of such facilities on the basis of Bible authority?" The revealed pattern for the work of the church answers with a resounding, **"No!"** This sort of teaching is described as being fanatical and extreme, but in light of God's revealed pattern of work for the New Testament church, we must not compromise. We must not retreat from God's pattern by making alterations in it. Whenever a church adds works to the God-given ones, it perverts the gospel of Christ (Heb. 8: 5; Gal. 1: 6-10; Rev. 22: 18-19). The God-given pattern thus violated, fellowship with God is destroyed (2 Jn. 9; Rev. 2: 4-5).

The government of Colorado is able to tell the difference between what is religious and what is not, and it is able to apply that difference to the local church. It says a preschool **is not** religious. The Bible agrees. Such things are not a part of the work of local churches. However, some churches of Christ in Colorado (along with the denominations of men) are saying a preschool is religious (because it is located on their property), and therefore a "religious" use of property which should enjoy tax exemption. It appears the government of Colorado is able to define what is "religious" better than many who claim to do the Lord's work! Men have changed the definition of the work of the church! "Thus saith Jehovah, Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way; and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls: but they said, We will not walk therein" (Jer. 6: 16). We must honor God's pattern for the work of the church by faithfully obeying His pattern (Heb. 8: 5). "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh" (Heb. 12: 25).

THIS EARTH WILL PASS AWAY!

Ron Halbrook
654 Gray St.
West Columbia, TX 77486

Scoffers console themselves with the illusion that there will be no fiery Judgment by God, because, they note, "All things continue as they were FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE CREATION." 2 Peter 2 discusses the past, the present, and the future of the physical universe. "THE CREATION" includes "the heavens" and "the earth," which came into existence "by the word of God." The heavens here is not God's eternal dwelling place, but the sky created for birds and clouds, and the even greater expanses created for the stars (Gen. 1: 1, 14, 20; 2: 1). "The earth" — or "the world that then was" — stood out distinctly from the clouds above it, the oceans around it, and the subterranean rivers beneath it until God's Word caused it to be "overflowed with water" in the judgment of Noah's day.

The same Word of God preserves "the heavens and the earth which are now" until a fiery "day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." Contrary to the scoffers consolation, the created universe will not always continue. Fire will consume the entire universe: "the heavens," "the elements," "the earth also and the works that are therein." In "the day of the Lord," the effect of this fire on the whole world will be all-consuming. Everything will "pass away," "melt with fervent heat," "be burned up," and "dissolved." Some translations add "discovered," i. e. shown to be temporary, contradicting the scoffer's claim that the creation will always exist.

We know "the heavens and the earth, which are now," as our dwelling place. In this world, we enjoy many blessings from God but we also face sin, sorrow, and death. When this universe is gone, God has a far better place for His people—a "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness: without sin, sorrow, or death! Elsewhere, Peter says that this new dwelling place is the very heaven of God — "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Pet. 1: 4).

Self-styled "Jehovah's Witnesses" join the scoffer's in claiming the physical creation will always exist. This sect argues that the world Peter described as heavens, elements, earth, and everything in it really means only the false civil and religious systems of men. The J. W.'s AID TO BIBLE UNDERSTANDING(1971) says on page 477, "The apostle Peter compares the literal heavens and earth (2 Pet. 3: 5) with the symbolic heavens and earth (vs. 7)." From verse 7 on, they try to impose this symbolic idea on the context. In other words, the heavens and the earth which God created will always exist, but a figurative heavens and earth of false systems will be removed. This explanation flatly contradicts the whole context!

Peter is answering the scoffer's claim, "All things continue as they were FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE CREATION" (vs. 4). Did the scoffers refer to the creation of false systems or to the creation of the world? Verse 5 says the heavens and the earth were created "by the word of God." Does it mean God created false systems or a physical universe? Verse 6 says God flooded "the world that then was" — flooded the false systems or the literal earth? If God only flooded the false systems, the flood was limited to the living quarters of the false leaders and was not a universal world flood. Why, then, did Noah and the animals need an ark to survive?

Verse 7 says, "But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire...." If heavens and earth refer to false systems, then the same Word of Almighty God that created in verse 5 is sustaining and upholding the false systems until the Judgment Day. Whatever God sustains in this passage is what will pass away by fire (vv. 7-11). God upholds the physical universe by His powerful Word until the day that He decides to destroy it by fire. The literal heavens and earth of verses 4-7 will pass away, according to verses 7-11.

When the earth passes away, all who "know not God, and... obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" will receive "everlasting punishment" in "everlasting fire" (2 Thess. 1: 7-9; Matt. 25: 31-41). So far, God is waiting in patience, "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3: 9). Dear reader, if you are lost in sin, we plead for you to obey the gospel of Christ — believe in him, repent of all sins, confess him as God's divine Son, and be immersed in water for salvation through his blood (Mk. 16: 16; Rom. 10: 10; Acts 2: 38).

IF WE NEGLECT SO GREAT A SALVATION

James W. Hester
18282 Cajalco Rd.
Perris, CA 92370

I once witnessed near destruction of property which could have resulted in the loss of lives as well, through simple oversight or neglect of an operator. When the emergency became apparent, the swiftness of the operator brought things under control. He then had this to say: "Oh how I discipline myself when I do such things."

"Discipline" is defined by The American Heritage Dictionary as, "Training that is expected to produce a specified character or pattern of behavior, especially that which is expected to produce moral or mental improvement."

If men in the execution of material matters deem it advisable to censure and discipline themselves for their neglect of duty; how much more should the Christian exercise vigilance over matters which are eternal! How

many are walking circumspectly (Eph. 5: 15)! Where is the awareness of danger? A deer in the forest is alerted by a broken twig; but we, too often do not hear the voice of God (Matt. 7: 24; Lk. 8: 18; Heb. 12: 25) when He speaks unto us and yet we have the audacity of calling the animal dumb. If the devil walks about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour (1 Pet. 5: 8), then surely we ought to be able to see something in the term "roaring" that would call our attention to danger. Personally, I can see a big difference in a broken twig and a roaring lion. A broken twig is often heard in the woods, but a roaring lion is something I never heard, but if I ever do, I'll put distance between the two of us immediately. Let us never become oblivious to danger.

It is Dangerous to Neglect We are told that God speaks unto us by His Son (Heb. 1: 2); that His Son (Jesus) has absolute authority with the scepter in His hand (v. 8); that He is superior to the angels (v. 13), which were God's ministering spirits (v. 14). The word spoken by angels was steadfast, or proved to be binding on the people. As ministering spirits, the law with Moses as the mediator was ordained by angels (Gal. 3: 19). Stephen confirms this, (Acts 7: 38, 53). Moreover, when God spake through angels every act of

disobedience received a just recompense of reward (Heb. 2: 2). That means that God was justified in His punishment of sin — He had a right to punish. This being true how should we respond to the words of the Lord Jesus Christ? We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we heard, lest at any time we should let them slip (or drift away from them) (Heb. 2: 1). For if we do not, dear brother, give heed, **how shall we escape**, if we neglect so great salvation? Vincent in his Word Studies says it means literally, **"Having neglected."**

What Would One Have To Do To Neglect?

Well, actually nothing. Doing nothing amounts to neglect of duty. We are guilty of neglect when we look upon our duties and responsibilities to God — our service unto Him, as being optional. Or, when we serve Him at our convenience; that friend is not service at all. Until we learn to put God first in our lives, we are guilty of the sin of neglect. Think about it! What will it be? We determine where we spend eternity.

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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

EDGAR VIRGIL SRYGLEY, JR.
(1928-1980)

We are saddened to report the death of Edgar V. Srygley, Jr., faithful gospel preacher, and for 33 years a teacher of Bible and New Testament Greek at Florida College. He preached a number of years for the church in Zephyr Hills, Florida and also at Cherry Sink, near Trenton, Florida. For many years he wrote a Word Studies column in this paper. His preaching, teaching and writing will long influence the lives of his hearers, students and readers. His death leaves a great void in the faculty of Florida College.

He was born from a rich heritage of men and women of faith. We heard him speak on the 1981 Florida College lectureship with justifiable respect concerning his relationship to F. B. and F. D. Srygley (fine preachers of the late 1800's). He prepared himself for teaching work and established outstanding academic records at Freed-Hardeman, David Lipscomb and Harding Colleges. He was loved and supported by his good wife, Betty, and to them were born two daughters.

Typical of his determination and great love for his students, just seven weeks before his death, and after being unable to teach for several weeks, having undergone surgery, and with a myriad of matters weighing on his mind, he appeared tall and straight to march with his students to graduation.

It is not ours to judge Edgar's destiny. We can only take comfort in the many things we saw in him that at least seem to us to conform to truth, but I think I know that Edgar, humbly but with confidence in the Lord would share Paul's "graduation statement:" "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing" (2 Tim. 4: 7-8).

We express to Betty, his wife, and daughter Janet, our sincere best wishes and rejoice with them in the hope of the gospel. Summarized from funeral speech by Colly Caldwell

ALAN YEATER, 290 Warfield Blvd., Clarksville, TN 37043 — We have enjoyed another year with the Warfield Blvd. church. We are conveniently located for I-24 and other major highway travelers. Five of those recently baptized are working with us. Nine have recently confessed sin in their lives. The spiritual growth has been uplifting. Attendance and contribution continue to increase. Clarksville is the home of Ft. Campbell and Austin Peay State University. This makes the work challenging. About one third of the congregation moves every two to four years. However, they take the gospel and maturity they have gained in Christ with them. Several of the young military families have been a great encouragement in the work, being actively engaged in evangelism on and off the base. Please notify us of any incoming military personnel and of any APSU students you would like for us to contact. We will do our best to meet them, have them into our homes and encourage spiritually all who desire to serve Christ. Phone numbers are: (615) 647-4007 or 647-1324.

FILIPINO PREACHER DIES

BERNARDO T. MALUGAO, preacher for the Molave congregation in Zamboanga del Sur (Mindanao) passed away on June 28, 1989 at the age of 59. He has been suffering from strokes for about five years. He and his wife had 12 children and they formed the beginning of the church there. Two of his sons, Samuel and Benjamin, are gospel preachers. They had no land, no insurance and no savings account. Sister Malugao is left with funeral expenses of about \$900. Any who might want to contact her may write to Mrs. Bernardo T. Malugao, Molave Church of Christ, Molave, Zamboanga del Sur, 7023, Republic of the Philippines.

GEORGE W. LAMBROFF, 629 Ordway Ave., Bowling Green, OH 43402 — **CHRISTIAN PARENTS** — if you have a son or daughter planning to attend Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, Ohio, we would like to hear from you. We will make contact with all who are referred to us and attend to their needs while they are here. Church of Christ, 302 Caldwell Road, Bradner, OH 43406. Phone (419) 352-8842.

FRANK THOMPSON, 916 23rd St., Ogden, Utah 84401 —After five and a half years at Heights church in Albuquerque, N. M., my wife, Melba, and I have moved to Ogden, Utah. The church here is small, but dedicated. Some members are not able to attend all the services due to age and infirmities. Not being financially able to support a man, they have been without a preacher to work with them for well over a year. But, thanks to a few dedicated service men from Hill Air Force Base, the work has gone on. If you know of anyone in the area we might contact, please let us know. If you know of military people being sent to Hill Air Force Base, please tell them about us, and tell us about them. Our meeting address is: 910 23rd St., Ogden, Utah 84401. Phone: (801) 394-1397.

WAYNE S. WALKER, 310 Haynes St., Dayton, Ohio 45410 —During the first six months of 1989, the Haynes St. church lost two members to death and two famines through moves. But three were baptized, three placed membership, one was restored and two confessed sin. We had a spring gospel meeting with Steve Wolfgang and a summer vacation Bible school with Dale Pennock speaking to the auditorium class. Our Sunday morning attendance averaged 85 and the weekly contribution averaged \$856. During this same period of time, I preached in meetings at Greenwood, SC; Madison, Wisconsin; Palatine, IL; Mansfield, Ohio; and Columbus, Ohio.

DEBATE ON BENEVOLENT INSTITUTIONS

A debate on the benevolent institutions issue will be conducted September 4-5 and 7-8 at 7 P. M. The first two nights will be hosted by the 32nd St. church of Christ, 1028 N. 32nd St., Paducah, KY. The last two nights will be hosted by the church of Christ (Hwy. 45) in Metropolis, IL. The first two nights, J. Noel Meredith will affirm that churches of Christ may build and maintain benevolent organizations such as Boles Orphan Home, Tennessee Orphan Home, Childhaven, and Home for the aged for the care of the needy. Carrol R. Sutton will deny this. The last two nights Carrol R. Sutton will affirm that churches of Christ may not build and maintain such organizations and J. Noel Meredith will be in the negative. For information contact Ray Madrigal at (502) 554-7539.

DEBATE ON MIRACULOUS SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Randy Pickup of the Lackland church of Christ in Cincinnati, Ohio, will debate Tom Smith of the Fellowship Christian Church on September 11 and 12, 1989, somewhere in Cincinnati. The details are not all worked out. For information, lodging and directions, call Randy Pickup at (513) 733-3187. Tom Smith's background is in the non-charismatic Christian Church, but besides his belief in spiritual gifts today, he also believes that baptism is **not** necessary for salvation. He is now President of a new denominational organization "that will unite as many as 300 congregations nationwide... (offering) charismatics from the Church of Christ, the Christian Church, the Disciples of Christ and others, a spiritual home" (from articles in the CINCINNATI ENQUIRER).

CRAIG MEYER, 1910 Shelley Ln., Madison, WI 53704 — I am saddened to report that my wife, Kim, has an advanced (stage 3), a symptomatic form of Hodgkin's Disease. She is undergoing chemotherapy and radiation treatments. We solicit your earnest prayers on her behalf.

The July report from **PAUL WILLIAMS** in Eshowe, South Africa reports 13 baptisms into Christ from tent meetings and other contacts.

RUBEN C. AMADOR, P. O. Box 924456, Houston, TX 77292—I was in a meeting in Reynosa (Mexico) where Emiliano Trevino is doing an excellent work. The church was well prepared for the meeting. Attendance was over 100 at nearly every assembly. Two young ladies obeyed the gospel. There is a good future for this congregation. In August I preached in Venezuela and visited several congregations.

GOSPEL TRUTHS

In January, 1990, GOSPEL TRUTHS will begin as a 24 page, monthly periodical. It will supplant TORCH and will be edited by J. T. SMITH, who has edited TORCH for the past several years. Such men as Elmer Moore, Delmer Hightower, Paul Blake, Grover Stevens, Bill

Robinson, Jr., Dudley Ross Spears, Earl Robertson, Loren Stephens, Jamie Sloan and Art Ogden have agreed to write. The cost of subscription will be \$10.00 per year. Write to: GOSPEL TRUTHS, P. O. Box 906087, Tulsa, OK 74112.

FERNANDO VENEGAS, Casilla #122 C. C., 5500 Mendoza, Argentina, South America — Recently, we have been blessed with the opportunity to preach the gospel on the radio. We have a 15 minute program, Monday-Friday called "A Moment With God." At this time Thomas Holley and I are studying the book of Matthew as if we were personally in the homes of our listeners. After reading a paragraph, questions are asked. We also use the program to enroll people in a correspondence course and invite them to visit our services. We had one visitor last Sunday as a result of this.

JERRY PARKS, 4437 S. 6th St., Louisville, KY 40214 — John Humphries and I spent most of the month of May and into June in the Philippines and Japan trying to help the brethren. In Manila we stayed in the home of Ben Cruz which also hosted several other preachers during the two weeks we were preaching and conducting Bible classes at Kapitbahayan. Our days were filled with activities from morning till evening. Vic Tibayan, who had recently suffered a heart attack, is now able to do limited work. We are thankful for his recovery as he is a valuable man in the work. We had planned to go to Davao City, in Mindanao for a week, but were prevented from going by a storm which forced the cancellation of our flight. We were disappointed and so were the brethren there who were expecting us.

In addition to the preaching we did at Kapitbahayan, we were able to hear Filipino preachers in a lecture-type meeting and we had opportunity to preach in some of the surrounding congregations. There is much evidence of dedication and sacrifice among Filipino brethren. Many preachers have lost all their support yet they continue to preach while holding secular jobs, if they can find them. Most of the jobs available require working 6 and 7 days a week and the wages are very low. Many of the meeting places are in homes or rented rooms which are little more than fire traps. They have been taught to give, but most of them are so poor they have very little to give. There are basically two classes - the very rich and the very poor. Some have pointed to the 3 million member religion, Iglesia Ni Kristo which has flourished and has elaborate buildings and wondered why the brethren can't do as well. The answer is simple. This is a religion which caters to the rich. Many political leaders are members of this group. Ferdinand Marcos was supported by many members of this denomination. It is hardly fair to compare the plight of the brethren with this group. There is a need for long term commitment to faithful men there and we must not grow impatient with their impoverished condition. They need our help with support for worthy preachers, teaching supplies, song books and a benevolent heart when calamities strike. Yes, there are some unworthy preachers in the Philippines, even as there are in this country. But we cannot throw the baby out with the bath water. The fields are white to harvest in that part of the world. Even though we spent our time teaching the preachers, five were baptized into Christ while we were there.

We also spent two weeks in Japan where we visited the work of Bob Nichols and Randy Reese. Their work is difficult with the increasing emphasis on material possessions, plus the many years of false religion. We sat in some of their home studies. We believe they are doing good under difficult circumstances. We would be glad to share our information with interested brethren on the work we know about in the Philippines and Japan.

LETTER FROM MINDANAO PREACHERS

(Editor's Note: The following letter speaks for itself. It is signed by five preachers in Mindanao, all of whom I know personally. They are also well known by brethren who have traveled and preached in the Philippines. Please consider seriously what they have to say. CWA). Dear brethren in Christ:

Our sincerest greetings to you in the Lord. It is our utmost desire to convey to you news about the Lord's work in the old Cotabato province (now composing the provinces of North and South Cotabato, Maguindanao, and Sultan Kudarat). Cotabato province where we live and preach is the homeland of the first settlers who are Christians that started a congregation in 1937.

Truly, between 1937 and 1970's, several congregations grew with

all our efforts to preach the gospel of Christ. In this we were so glad. At the current time there are three congregations needing every one preacher (with ability and sufficient knowledge of the scriptures). During the decade of the 1970's we were so glad that we fully received financial assistance from faithful churches and individuals from the USA. This helped to sustain our families so we could be fully given to the work. We did our best in the work of evangelism and edification. There was a great harvest as many were baptized and others were restored and the churches grew spiritually and numerically.

As the decade of the 1980's came, we faced a sad plight in our work. Many of us lost support due to inflation, financial difficulties of those supporting us. This left us to preach with limited means. Our heart's desire was divided between meeting the basic needs of our families and the welfare of the churches. Our time to preach is well demanded by the churches, yet we could not leave our wives and children to starve (1 Tim. 5: 8).

We do humbly make this brotherly appeal that you will kindly open your hearts and minds to us and help us. We love to preach fulltime. Our income is not enough for our transportation fares to preach in neighboring churches and provinces where we are often called in the work of evangelism and edification. We do need you, brethren. The churches need us.

Based on our present economic standard, we need a minimum of \$300 a month, to start with. We would appreciate it if some congregations and individuals could help, according to their ability. This amount will meet basic family needs, transportation and food, preaching materials and supplies. We pray the Lord will help us to our preaching needs to the growth and glory of his dear church. The best way to send funds is by International Postal Money Order or a Cashier's check issued by a bank, via registered air mail. It reaches us within 15-20 days. Can any of you have fellowship with us in preaching the gospel?

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Benjamin Libertino
Church of Christ Midsayap,
Cotabato 9410
Rep. of Philippines

Virgil B. Villanueva
Eastside Church of Christ
Lambayong, Sultan Kudarat 9802
Rep. of the Philippines

Reuben S. Agduma
Church of Christ
Kidapawan, Cotabato 9400
Rep. of Philippines

Isidro Manibog
Church of Christ
Ginatilan, Kidapawan 9400
Rep. of Philippines

Ricarte S. Velonero
Church of Christ
Lampayan, Matalam, Cotabato 9406
Rep. of Philippines

MIKE HUGHES, P. O. Box 2481, Corinth, MS 38834 — I have been helping with the publication of the APOSTOLIC MESSENGER for over a year now. In this publication we have a page called OUTLINE STUDIES. We try to use sermon outlines from faithful gospel preachers. Could you send us about three good outlines for this page?

PREACHERS NEEDED

NEW RICHMOND, OHIO — This small congregation of about 50 (including the children) needs a fulltime preacher. We are located about 30 miles east of Cincinnati, Ohio. We can supply about \$325 a week with outside support needed for the rest. Contact: Robert Pennington, 2556 Crane Schoolhouse Rd., Bethel, OH 45106. Phone (513) 734-7524.

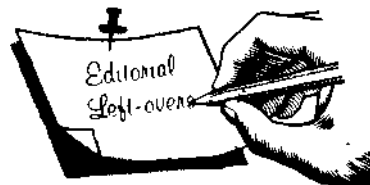
MEMPHIS, INDIANA — We need a fulltime preacher, preferably someone within a 100 mile radius. We are presently 56-60 in atten-

dance and can only provide partial support. We would like a mature man with personal work abilities who would live in the Memphis area. Those interested may call: Fred Minton, Jr. (812) 294-4798; Jim Key (812) 246-3444; Fred Minton, Sr. (812) 294-4012, or write to: Church of Christ, 123 Ebenezer Church Rd., Memphis, IN 46742 for details..

CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA—The church of 5327 S. Tryon St., Charlotte, NC 28217, is looking for a fulltime preacher. Partial support and a modern residence is available. Those interested may contact us at the above address, or call Bill Mayo (704) 739-3944, or Jim White (803) 547-4291.

CHAPLIN, KENTUCKY — This small rural church in central Kentucky (near Bardstown), with 45-50 members, is searching for a full time preacher. We need an experienced person who can spend all his time in the work of preaching and teaching. Since we are the only faithful church in a county of 27, 600, we feel much can be accomplished here. We can supply \$275 a week toward support. Contact Calvin Runner, 5140 Lawrenceburg Rd., Bloomfield, KY 4008. Phone (502)673-3103.

BRADLEY, ILLINOIS — We need a fulltime preacher, preferably middle-aged with experience. We are located in an industrial area. We have a brick residence beside the church building. For details call James Spurgeon after 6 PM (815) 933-5684, or Coy Lentz (815) 932-5749.



W. CARL KETCHERSIDE IS DEAD

On May 25, 1989, W. Carl Ketcherside of St. Louis, Missouri passed away at the age of 81. Funeral services were conducted by Leroy Garrett and he was buried in Farmington, MO. Carl Ketcherside spent the first 30-35 years of his life opposing located preaching and colleges in which the Bible is taught. He advocated evangelistic oversight and "mutual ministry." In 1957 he made a dramatic shift in which he greatly enlarged the circle of his fellowship to include all whom he regarded as "heirs of the Restoration Movement." He conducted many "Unity Forums" and launched what came to be known as the "Grace-Unity Movement." He was an eloquent writer and speaker and in both segments of his public work, he was able to attract a good many younger men to his viewpoint. The "Grace-Unity Movement" invaded the ranks of non-institutional brethren in the late 1960's and early 1970's and the full force of that erroneous movement has not fully abated yet. He advocated a distinction between the gospel and the doctrine. He said we may only preach gospel to the alien and that we teach doctrine to the saint. He argued that the divisions among brethren were in the realm of doctrine and that these should not be a hindrance to fellowship. His life and work had far reaching influence which will continue to be a troubling factor for many years to come.

NORWAY REVISITED

Bobby and I will spend the last two weeks in August in Norway (this is being written on August 2) where we will visit the brethren in Bergen where Tom Bunting preaches and in Stavanger where Don Bunting is the preacher. It has been 24 years since the last visit to Norway (Bobby has never been). My first wife and I began the work there in 1957. Wilson was born there. We will give a fuller account of our impressions of the work there later.

Meanwhile, we thank Donnie V. Rader for putting together the September paper to give me a little break, which is badly needed.

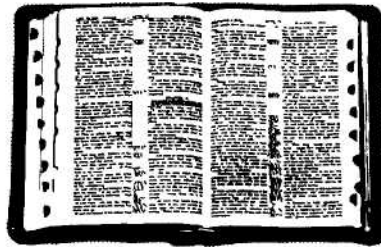
IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	127
RESTORATIONS	36

(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 XXX

OCTOBER, 1989

NUMBER 10

THINK ON THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 1631
Lutz, FL 33549



"THEY HAVE REJECTED ME"

The history of Israel is the history of a people in constant rejection of their God. Generation after generation the children of Israel rejected God's word, God's blessings, and God's promises. We are amazed to see that the people of God under the prophets never learned from their mistakes. The same is true today. People never seem to learn the lesson of obeying God by witnessing the failures and heartaches of former generations.

When Samuel became an old man and his sons did not rule honestly and righteously in Israel, the people came to Samuel and said: "Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the Lord. And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them" (1 Sam. 8: 5-7).

It is a serious charge to be accused of rejecting God, but that charge was made by the Lord Himself. We can be sure the same charge is made against us when we commit an act like that of Israel. There are three clear acts of rejection God outlined in the Old Testament.

1. **They rejected God's government.** Before this time God had judged Israel by judges selected by Himself. Samuel had been the spokesman for God and had guided the people in God's way. Now that the sons of Samuel were taking his place and were not leading the

people in the right way, they were demanding a change in the system of government. A different **kind** of government was not what was needed; they needed to put righteous men in the place of the wicked ones. Often today, because elders do not "rule well" or because they are not qualified for the work, churches want to change the government of the local church instead of getting qualified men in the place of unqualified men. Any change of government is the same act of Israel in demanding a king and thus "rejecting" God.

2. **They rejected God's word.** A rejection of God's form of government nearly always leads to a rejection of His word regarding other matters. The substitute rulers will make new laws and regulations and to suit them-selves rather than to conform to the law of the Lord. The first king given to Israel in their rejecting God's government was Saul. Samuel told him when he was made king to "hearken thou unto the voice of the word of the Lord" (1 Sam. 15: 1). He was sent to destroy "utterly" all the Amalekites and slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass" (1 Sam. 15: 3). Saul's work was clearly outlined for him. There could be no mistake about what God had ordered him to do. But what did God's word mean to this man who was occupying a position in rule that the people, not God wanted? Saul went about his work and "utterly destroyed all the people." BUT—here is the big word —" But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them..." (1 Sam. 15: 9). Saul took matters into his own hands. He made himself the judge of what should be destroyed and what should be saved. He decided what was "good."

When he returned and met Samuel he assured him that "I have performed the commandment of the Lord" (1 Sam. 15: 13). Many think that if they do some little thing that the Lord tells them to do, they have "obeyed the commandment of the Lord." But Samuel informed Saul that he had not obeyed the Lord (vs. 19). Instead he had done evil in the sight of the Lord. Samuel said to Saul: "Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king" (vs. 23). Let us learn this lesson from Saul.

3. They rejected God's promises. God has promised to bless Israel if they would keep his commandments, but because they did not believe his promises, they failed to obey him. Many are doing the same thing today.

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VOLUME 30 OCTOBER, 1989 NUMBER 10

*Published Monthly at
BROOKS, KENTUCKY*

Second Class Postage Paid at Brooks, Kentucky
and at an Additional Mailing Office
USPS-487-440

CONNIE W. ADAMS, Editor

Office of Publication
52 Yearling Drive
Brooks, Kentucky 40109
Phone (502) 957-2257

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Editorial

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A RETURN VISIT TO NORWAY

"How can one find adequate language to convey in writing the delights of this northern land of forests, lakes, mountains, valleys and fjords. And how many delights are there to be discovered when we return. Painters have painted its beauties, poets have sung its praises, and writers have written about its glories. Yet each of them individually and all of them collectively cannot convey the true portrait of this splendid land." (TERRY PLANT, *Viking Journey To Happiness*, p. 123)

With mixed emotions we spent two weeks on vacation in Norway in August. It was the first trip for Bobby. But for me it was a return to familiar scenes which stirred many memories. It had been thirty-two years since that September day in 1957 when our ship rounded a bend in the fjord and there sprawled out in the valley and up the sides of seven mountains, lay Bergen, one of the most beautiful cities in all the world. With us were William and Pearl Kickliter (business people who came to stay only two months but to help us make a start), and Mary Russell who remained with us for eight months and rendered valuable service. I was twenty-seven years old, lacking two weeks and my wife, Bobbie (known to her parents and Fulton, Kentucky friends as Barbara Rose) was six months pregnant when we arrived. Wilson, our first-born son arrived on December 29, 1957.

We went to Norway to make a start in the work of the gospel. We found Norway under a state religion-Lutheranism. We met a friendly people who were kind to us in many ways. But we found them to be more worshippers of nature than of nature's God. The work was slow and hard and still is. We began from square one. We had no song books, tracts, literature of any kind in the language. We had to learn a new language, find a place to live, a place to meet for public services and do what we could to let people know why we had come. Through the providence of God doors were opened and we were able to make a small beginning. In two years we had baptized 6. When we left, two other preachers had come to work and we left them in the field. Mason and Louise Harris came in the summer of 1958 and in the summer of 1959, Bill and Mary Lou Pierce came. The Harrises stayed five years in all and the Pierces stayed seven years. Others were converted in Bergen and the Pierces moved down to Stavanger and began the work there. Others who worked there included Joe Pruett and family, James C. Jones and family, Tommy Thornhill and family and the

Bob Tuten family.

In 1968, Tom and Shirley Bunting and three sons moved to Norway. They stayed two years the first time. Then in 1980 they returned to Bergen and are still there with a total now of over 11 years in the work. They are much at home in Norway. They have three sons who preach the gospel and two of them are now at work in Norway, Terrell in Bergen and Don in Stavanger. Terrell and Karen have two children and Don and Cami have three. Both of these men learned Norwegian as children and speak the language fluently. We heard both of them preach in Norwegian, and then translate for themselves into English for those present who could not understand Norwegian.

Through the years the work has been difficult at best. There have been some tragic disappointments. After the Thornhills came home, the Norwegian members left to carry on the work proved to be unreliable and the well-located meeting place, which the church owned, was lost by default of payments. Valuable teaching materials which took years of work and much expense, were lost. All furnishings were lost, chairs, tables, classroom equipment, Bibles and song books. This left the church in a bad light in the community. When Tom and Shirley Bunting came back in 1980, it was like starting all over again. It has taken much work and unbelievable patience to do what has been done. Some of the earlier converts are now dead. Some moved out of the country for work elsewhere. Sadly, some have fallen away.

The Work in Bergen Now

So far as I know, Tom and Shirley Bunting plan to stay in Norway. Their work has been long and hard and above all, faithful to the Lord. Their convictions are strong. They are resolute in purpose. When personal support fell below the needed level, Shirley found a job teaching school, which she continues to do. After losing \$800 a month, Tom has found it necessary to do the same for them to survive and continue the work he is doing there. He would rather have all his time free for the work but is willing to spend and be spent for the cause of Christ. They are good, deserving people and have every right to be fully supported for their work. Not many are willing to do what they are doing. Are there not some who can help them?

The cost of living in Norway is extremely high. Gasoline is over \$4 a gallon. Food and housing costs are high. There is a new Burger King in Bergen where you can treat yourself to a hamburger, fries and soft drink - all for \$9! Last year Tom paid 36% of his income in taxes to the government there. They have bought a modest two bedroom apartment.

Terrell and Karen plan to spend their lives in Norway. They are well adjusted to life and work there. At the present, Terrell has adequate support. That can suddenly change, as anyone dependent on support from several places well knows. They have also bought a small but adequate apartment.

On Sunday morning in Bergen, there were 15 present, including two American tourists. The Norwegian members, except for one man who is presently unemployed, are young people who are students and thus

have very little income. One young man, who was baptized in Pasadena, Texas by Chuck Durham, plans to prepare himself for preaching the gospel. We were much impressed with him. The contribution is enough to provide their own meeting place, conduct a telephone message each day, and pay for a weekly notice in the newspaper about their meeting time. They get 60-100 calls each week for their phone messages and while we were there, picked up a new student for the Bible correspondence course. On Sunday morning a middle-aged man and wife attended for the second time (they came the week before). This is from the correspondence course. The Buntings have gone all over Norway to find people who have taken the Bible course. On Sunday night, it was my privilege to speak to the small church.

The Work in Stavanger

In Stavanger where Don and Cami Bunting work, there are a few American members who are there because of the oil strikes in the North Sea. At one time there were 50-60 in attendance. Now, there are about 15 in all. There are two Norwegian members. The contributions of the members at Stavanger have been such that they have been able to support a preacher there. But the brethren there have to be careful to make an effort to slant the work toward reaching the Norwegian people and not just keep house for Americans temporarily in Norway who find it easy to insulate themselves from the native people. Don and Cami and their three boys have well adapted themselves to life in Norway. It was a pleasure to speak on Sunday morning and to spend several hours with some of the brethren discussing the work.

It is difficult for those of us who live in areas where there are a number of congregations in easy reach and within them many members with numerous talents to use, to fully appreciate how lonely and frustrating it can be at times for those who live in the outreaches of the world. Yet, we heard no complaining nor did we see any evidence of feeling sorry for themselves. They have burned bridges behind them, made choices such as few are willing to make, and quietly and humbly go about their work from day to day, trusting the Lord to give the harvest. There is a new generation in Norway now. Many of the old religious indifferences persist, coupled with many of the attendant evils of affluence. Morals leave much to be desired. Crime is becoming more prevalent. The state church has stifled the spirit of many of the people. It impedes the work of the gospel in many ways. While the government guarantees religious freedom, the dissenter laws are such that before one can leave the state church and associate himself as a member of any other religious connection, he must notify the Lutheran priest, who in turn exerts pressure to prevent such a change.

Like the church at Philadelphia, the small churches in Bergen and Stavanger have "a little strength" and who knows but what there is set before them an open door. It is not easy for an American preacher to gain entry into Norway to live now. But the Buntings are there. Bjorn Rigsdal is there. There are a few others whose names would not be known to brethren here, who

are faithful. These brethren deserve our prayers and support.

And in this land is the peace of dreams Peace cool and welcome as the summer rain Over the lofty hills, or as icy streams Threading the green valleys or the gentle plain Peace all enfolding as the sky and sand Enfolding the beauty of this splendid land. But far more beautiful than the glaciers, the majestic mountains, the picturesque villages, the cascading waterfalls, or the penetrating fjords where every turn opens vistas with a thousand marvels to the eye, or the brilliant colors of the summer flowers — far more beautiful than all of this which the hand of God has wrought, is the faith, courage and devotion which has flowered in the hearts of these few noble Christians who are sounding out the word of the Lord in the land of the midnight sun.

Do you want to do something that will lift the spirits of these good people? Why not write a letter of encouragement to the Buntings and ask them how you might contact one of the Norwegian Christians to speak a word of cheer? Will you do it? If so, here are some addresses:

Tom Bunting
Adolf Bergsvei, 52D
5030 Landaas
Norway

Terrell Bunting
Bronndalen 89
5070 Loddefjord
Norway

Don Bunting Sivblom
37 Stavanger, Norway

SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO H.E. PHILLIPS

The September 7, 1989 edition of **GUARDIAN OF TRUTH** is a collection of articles in tribute to the life and work of H.E. Phillips former editor of this paper, and presently our front page writer. It is well deserved. Since many of our readers have been familiar with brother Phillips and his work for many years, we wanted you to know about this. It would be a nice item to keep. Single copies of **GUARDIAN OF TRUTH** are .70. Write to: **GUARDIAN OF TRUTH, P.O. BOX 9670, Bowling Green, KY 42101.**

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ANTIOCH — THE POWER OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

Learning is an intriguing process by which the mind is informed. There are many ways to learn, to acquire knowledge and develop skill, but the most proficient tool of learning is, and has always been, demonstration. Let's illustrate.

Other than micro-wave popcorn and the wheel the greatest invention of modern times has to be the computer. As words and phrases dance on the screen to the tune of the keyboard this incredible machine organizes, rearranges and spits out the finished product with amazing rapidity. Yet, learning how to operate this technological marvel, well... that took some doing. (You see, I'm one of those guys who has trouble comprehending the directions on how to put stuff together that comes in cereal boxes!) My computer came with three notebooks of information that I needed to learn in order to gain the knowledge to operate it correctly. Do you know what all of that did for me? Nothing. I learned through demonstration.

That's exactly the way God seeks to impact knowledge to you and me. Look at Romans 5: 8, "**But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.**" God didn't drop leaflets from the sky telling about his love but, rather, He demonstrated it in the person of Jesus Christ (John 3: 16). There is no substitute for demonstration when it comes to learning (Phil. 4: 9).

The same principle holds true when it comes to the New Testament church. It's one thing for God to say, "This is what I want the church to be..." and another to say, "Here is a group of saints doing what I have in mind, follow them!" This is exactly the scene when we survey the church at Antioch. Antioch affords us the opportunity of looking at a New Testament congregation at work on the inside. We see what they did, how they functioned and thereby gain a glimpse of how God is glorified when a church performs according to divine specifications.

Commitment to Greater Service

After reading Acts 11: 19-30 and 13: 1-3 one can only imagine the thrill of being a member at Antioch. These Christians were alive to the call of God. Baptisms, studies in the Word, folks bringing other folks to the Lord were not the exception but the rule. I have a feeling that the Antioch disciples didn't drag in late and then hustle out the door as soon as services were over. Here were people that looked forward to the times when they

could be together. Periods of worship were not exercises in boredom but, rather, were times of refreshment in which souls were renewed and spiritual passion restored. (I doubt they sang, "To the Work" with the enthusiasm of sorghum molasses. What do you think?) Nothing is more exciting and magnetic than a congregation on the cutting edge of its collective potential. And that's exactly where Antioch was! They had gifted teachers, enthusiasm, conversions, a great program of work and a deep level of spiritual commitment. And then God interrupts...

Focus in on Acts 13: 2. Luke records that, "**while they were ministering to the Lord and fasting...**" In the midst of growth and multiplication, teaching and instruction, praying and preaching, "**the Holy Spirit said...**" This was a day of direct divine inspiration. The Spirit gave specific instructions, "**Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.**" Herein is contained two vital principles much needed among churches today: (1) the WHO: **The principle of utilizing everyone's talent for the greatest good.** And, (2) the WHY: **The principle of using wisdom in starting new congregations.** Let's look at the latter first.

Starting New Churches — Knowing When

In Acts 1: 8 our Lord lays out His blueprint for the spread of the Gospel, "... **you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.**" By Acts 13 the story of the resurrected Savior had been told throughout Jerusalem and into the hills of both Judea and Samaria. But the rest of the Roman world lay unconquered for Christ. From the beginning God had a global vision for the Gospel (Isaiah 2: 2), and now the Antioch church would be His instrument in bringing that to reality. It would be from Antioch that Paul and Barnabas would go out to tell the Story and thereby establish new communities of believers. It would be to Antioch that they would return. Antioch served as God's gateway to the rest of the world.

But note the order. First, the Lord worked to build up the Antioch body itself. It was only when the local church had shown that it was committed to growth, was maximizing its opportunities and carrying out its responsibilities that the Spirit of God led these saints to look beyond their doorstep to the harvest in distant lands.

God did not move into the remotest parts of the earth until the Antioch church was where it needed to be! Question. What if this church was dependent upon the work of Paul and Barnabas and God took them away? No doubt, such would have left these first generation Christians discouraged and demoralized. But God did not do that. He waited until Antioch had a broad base of leadership, the church was well established, had financial means and had shown spiritual maturity... and then He moved.

The point is simple: **You don't begin new congregations by making cripples out of established ones!** How many times have you seen it happen? Brethren have split, splintered and swarmed in order to start a new church (sometimes involving those who are to-

tally unprepared to assume the reins of leadership and motivation) and in so doing leave the congregation they left in disarray. And now what do you have? Rather than one church reaching its potential, being self-supporting, carrying on a vibrant teaching program with qualified instructors and generating enthusiasm in the community; now you have two churches both of which are struggling. That is the very opposite of what we see in the pattern of Antioch. Here were brethren sensitive to the will and wisdom of God. We must be, too.

Seeing the Vision of Greatest Service

Note verse 2, "I have called them..." God was specific in whom He wanted. Herein lies another major principle to be utilized in the local church: God does not want everyone doing the same work! God did not want everyone running off to the remotest parts of the world. God wanted Paul and Barnabus to go; He wanted Simeon, Lucius and Manaen to stay home.

Not everyone needs to go to China, India and central Africa. How do I know that? Because the Lord took two and left three! Your vision of greater service may be in your own back yard, in the place where you work, among your neighbors and friends. God wants you and me to operate in the place that we are the most effective. That's exactly why He wanted three men to stay at home.

Sometimes we think that in order to best serve Him we must do the big things, the great, the noticeable. The truth is that He is glorified to as great a degree when we learn the secret of serving in the closet of obscurity. "Be ye faithful in a few things," said the Master, "and I will reward you with many things."


God never intended everyone to do the same thing. Not everyone needs to be a preacher. How many men have tried to preach without the ability only to grow discouraged and sometimes bitter? Many. Someone should have pointed out the Antioch principle that says, "Yes, you have talent but you need to maximize it in the area where you are most effective." That may mean staying with a secular job, teaching friends and through the years developing your potential in a local church. That may be the greatest area of effectivity for you. If so, God is just as glorified in your work at home as he is in the man who launches out for the mission field. Paul and Barnabus left to preach in distant places. Simeon, Lucius and Manaen stayed behind. It was God's plan. It still is today.

SINCERE WORDS

"The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth (Ecc. 12:10)."

Dick Blackford

P.O.Box 83
Tuckerman, Arkansas 72473



EPAPHRODITUS (I)

MY BROTHER

Epaphroditus was the one chosen to carry the offering from Philippi in Macedonia (northern Greece) all the way to Paul who was imprisoned in Rome. This was an 800 mile journey and would have taken about 6 weeks in the first century. Having ministered to Paul at Rome, Epaphroditus was handed the manuscript of the Philippian letter and he served as a courier to carry it back to the mountains of Macedonia - again taking 6 weeks to go 800 miles. Most of us wouldn't do that for just anybody.

His Name

The name Epaphroditus is interesting. Whereas a lot of New Testament names have caught on and have become names we give our children today (Matthew, Mark, Stephen, Mary, etc.), Epaphroditus never caught on!

It was a common name in the Greek speaking world of the New Testament. It was a pagan name related to the Greek goddess of sensual pleasure, Aphrodite (the Romans called her Venus). This name meant that either he or his family had been devoted to the worship of Aphrodite (from which we get our word **aphrodisiac**, a drug or other agent that supposedly increases sensual desire).

It is interesting that the church did not suggest or require that he change his name, considering the significance men often attach to names. But they were not so interested in the name he possessed as in the faith he practiced. It is good to know that the church was not filled with cranks who wanted to major in minors, always marching to the anthem of the marginal and raising the flag of the inconsequential. Though there may be names of cities and places today that have had false religious significance in the past, we are not held accountable for their former significance.

"My Brother" (Phil. 2: 25)

The possessive pronoun "my" goes with each of the three word designation—my brother, my fellow-worker, my fellow-soldier. It is easy to skip over these and yet they are replete with instruction for they describe his personal commitment to Christ. His first designation deals with his relationship in the family of God — my brother. This phrase is likely to trip off the tongue so quickly and easily that we lose its significance because we are famous for calling one another brother (or sister). Yet, it is biblical. In fact, 133 times in the New Testament Paul calls someone "brother" in the Lord.

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The Greek word **adelphos** gives us the name of Philadelphia (city of brotherly love). But literally, in its root it means someone who came from the same womb, someone who shares the very roots of life with someone else. When Paul used the word **brother**, he was willing to say that he and Ephroditus shared the very roots of spiritual life together. There was no closer possible association or word of warmth and affection that could describe their relationship.

What About Us?

When you refer to brother _____ does it conjure up this meaning or has it become a mere formality or tradition? Is it a habit that is commonplace? Brethren, we are members of the same family. We share the very roots of life. This was a radical thing. It meant Paul and Epaphroditus had crossed national, racial, language, cultural, and religious barriers to call one another "brother." Paul being a Jew, Epaphroditus being a Greek, was enough to separate them right there. **Racially**, here was a Jew and Gentile. **Religiously**, one was a Pharisee who literally would not have wanted a Gentile's shadow to fall upon him and who was prohibited as a kosher Jew from going into the house of an unclean Gentile. **Linguistically**, here was a Hebrew of Hebrew whose principle language was Hebrew, and the other whose main language was koine Greek. Their differences were enormous. Here were two men with all the major differences that could separate two men. When you add the fact that Epaphroditus was from a pagan city and bore the name of a pagan goddess, only the power of God could so transform them that Paul could call him "my brother." That is exactly what happened when they obeyed the gospel! It is the power of God (Rom. 1: 16). We need to understand that nothing of this kind was going on anywhere else in the first century Roman world.

The Significance Of The Term "Brother"

We use the word "brother" in many ways — physical brother, fraternity brother, lodge brother, union brother. But there is nowhere that the word has the significance as it does in the family of God, the church — if we mean it when we call someone brother. It dives right down into that remarkable passage in Mark 3: 24-35 where Jesus' mother and brethren came seeking him because, literally, they thought he had lost his mind. When he was told that his mother and brethren were there, he gestured to the crowd and said "those that are doing the will of God are my brother and sister, and mother."

This indicates there are no closer ties **in life** than those that bind us together in the family of the faithful. This is what Paul meant when he called Epaphroditus "my brother." Think about that the next time you use the word "brother."

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WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

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REBAPTISM

QUESTION: Were those that were baptized under John's baptism required to be baptized again after the day of Pentecost?

ANSWER: The Bible does not specifically answer this question. There is no indication that any of those who were baptized under John's baptism before the cross were re-baptized.

Acts 2: 41 seems to suggest that there was a company of believers who comprised the church before the 3000 were baptized. This company or number was the apostles and, perhaps, those of the 120 mentioned in Acts 1: 15. God would have set them into the church. Just as Adam and Eve began by a special creation, and all living persons subsequently came into existence by the law of procreation, in like-manner the church began on Pentecost by a special, spiritual creation, and all those following enter it by spiritual procreation.

The passage states in Acts 2: 41: "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." You will notice that those baptized were "added unto them" — the "them" being the church. The "them" were baptized, but not on Pentecost. Rather, they had been baptized under John's baptism (Mk. 1: 4-5; Lk. 7: 29-30; Jn. 4: 1-2).

It is granted that the words "unto them" are in italics, meaning they are supplied by the translators, but they are implied, it seems. Thayer says of the word **prostithemi** (added in v. 41), "to add, i. e. join to, gather with any company, the number of one's followers or companions" (p. 549). Arndt and Gingrich state, "of persons who are added to a group already existing, or who are attached to an individual to whom they henceforth belong" (p. 726). The NIV translates Acts 2: 41: "Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day."

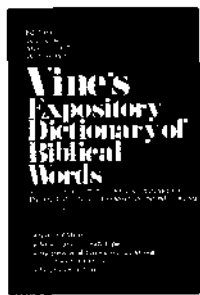
On the other hand, some contend that all those baptized before the cross had to be re-baptized in the name of Christ. Gareth Reese (Christian Church) wrote: "The words 'unto them' are not in the Greek. Our translators have understood this verse to say that the 3000 who were converted on the day of Pentecost were added unto the number already following Christ (the Twelve and the 120). What the Greek tells us is that the 3000 were joined together into a community, a society. It does

not say they were added to the church, for there was no church until this beginning was made" (**Acts, p. 66**).

I disagree with Reese for several reasons. (1) Thayer's and Arndt & Gingrich's definition of "add." (2) Several translators thought "unto them" or "number" should be included in the translation, such as KJV, ASV, NIV, NEB, Weymouth and Williams. (3) There is no record of Apollos, who knew only the baptism of John, being re-baptized. Aquila and Priscilla took Apollos and taught him the way of God more perfectly (Acts 18: 26), but no mention of baptism. It is possible that "the way of God more perfectly" included baptism, but we would have to assume it. Apparently, Apollos had been baptized under John's baptism when it was valid (before the cross), hence, he just needed to be corrected in some of his teaching. However, those 12 disciples at Ephesus (Acts 19: 1-5) who had been baptized under John's baptism had to be re-baptized in the name of Christ because they were baptized unto John's baptism after it had been superseded by the baptism of the Great Commission. (4) According to the divine record, those baptized on Pentecost were not the apostles, but only those who heard the preaching of Peter and the apostles.

My feeling toward this question is about like R. L. Whiteside who said, "But I never give much thought to questions that affect neither our faith nor our practice. If anyone wishes to argue that all of John's disciples were re-baptized, he has an open field. None of John's disciples are now living! so what good can come of arguing the matter. As John's baptism is not now in force, and all the people that either accepted or rejected John's baptism are now dead, I cannot see that we would be any worse off if we could not answer any of these questions — But, of course, we all like to know as much as we can about the Bible" (**Reflections, p. 240**).

Whether John's disciples were or were not re-baptized, Jesus tells us to be baptized "in (into) the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 28: 19). This is a relationship into which we are baptized and it is also for salvation (Mk. 16: 16) and the remission of sins (Acts 2: 38).



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**WHERE DO YOU STAND ON
DIVORCE — A RESPONSE**

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It is never easy to differ with good friends, and excellent students of the word, but the article from Ken Green in this journal (August 1989, pages 10-11) calls for a response. I appreciate brother Green very much, but after reading his thoughts on divorce I am left with a huge question mark. Thankfully, the editor added his comments to the effect that the question of divorce is not one that defies understanding, for no such conclusion would have been drawn from the bare statements of brother Green. Please give some thought to a response to brother Green's views.

His opening paragraph quotes the late Sir Winston Churchill that much has been based on very little with so many unsettling consequences - and Ken applied this to the multitude of published statements on the sensitive question of divorce. He is right that the Lord has not revealed nearly as much as brethren have written on the issue, but the differences are not produced by what has been revealed. From his remarks, I was fearfully and reluctantly led toward a view that the divorce question is so hazy and unclear that it is beyond the realm of possibility to ever fully know the truth on it. It is really difficult to think that Ken Green, or any other faithful man, would believe that, but whether he does or not, his words led me to think that he does not have a clear and full grasp of what Jesus Christ requires on the topic of divorce. If Ken is right it would seem that the blame for the confusion that exists is the Lord's failure to provide us the right answers.

Brother Green pictures the question of divorce as one of "black ball first, and study the issue later." I know of no man among faithful brethren who has ever even hinted that such be done. Because we do not agree on various aspects of what constitutes a marriage, a divorce, a scriptural second marriage, is in no way to blame for the lack of clarity on the issue of divorce. Yet, that is what kept standing out more clearly the longer I read the article. The same things said of divorce could be said of just about any Bible topic. Take baptism for the remission of sins. Must the water be running in a stream, should the candidate be immersed face forward or backward, just how much must the candidate understand at the moment of immersion, and a million other questions follow in the wake of plain and fundamental teaching on the subject. This should not cause us, however, to minimize the importance of standing solidly for immersion for the remission of sins, and against any humanly devised opinion on the issue.

Why are there so many divergent views? Why do good and honorable men among faithful brethren differ, often

very radically, on divorce and the consequences? Why cannot we come to some solid ground of agreement on the issue of divorce? Brother Green posits that we cannot because we cannot find the answers. Reluctantly, I note that this has been a sectarian appeal for all my conscious life. It might be good to test that position.

1. Can we understand what a marriage is? If we take all of the Lord's revealed teaching and stop we can. Does anyone disagree? A marriage is the joining together of two eligible individuals into a relationship called "one flesh." This is God's divine ordinance that is to last as long as the two live. We may get no closer to the precise point at which the marriage exists as we do the precise point when sins are remitted from one who is being immersed in water, but surely we can recognize a scriptural marriage from an adulterous relationship.

2. Can we understand what a divorce is? We can if we take the teaching revealed in the New Testament and stop. Jesus spoke of divorce as "putting away." The dissolution of a marriage is a divorce and rather than ferret out the precise point at which the marriage exists no more, we surely can recognize when a divorce has taken place. Just because there is a difference of views among us over what takes place after the divorce should not keep us from recognizing the plain fact of what a divorce is. And, we ought to be able to see the difference in a scriptural divorce and one that is not scriptural.

3. Can we understand what adultery is? If we take divinely revealed principles and stop we should have very little problem. Adultery is the corruption of a marriage relationship. It happens, according to the Savior, when either of the parties in a marriage are sexually unfaithful to the other. Does brother Green agree that we can understand clearly what marriage is, what divorce is, and what adultery is and recognize them when they all three exist? If so, and if we will limit our thoughts to what is revealed clearly, we will avoid the problems he sees.

It is true that great and good men have admitted the difficulties in the marriage and divorce problem. They have certainly reached different conclusions. I think it is sad, however, for brother Green to affirm that there is not a man on earth with whom he fully agrees on this issue. And once more, reluctantly, I note this is another sectarian appeal most have heard when trying to convert someone from a human denomination. Several years ago, I heard brother Connie Adams, editor of this journal, make a statement with which everyone of us ought to fully agree. He affirmed that there are three categories of people who have a divine right to marry — (1) Two single people, (2) Two people where one or both of them have been the innocent party in a divorce involving fornication, and (3) Two people whose mates have passed on to their reward. He concluded that beyond that he knew of no divine right granted to anyone for a second marriage. I don't know if Ken agrees with that fully, but I can truthfully state that I do.

Brother Green includes the variety of different views on the marriage and divorce issue with differences on a Christian participating in governmental affairs involving war and law enforcement. The so-called "war ques-

tion" ought to be studied carefully, but to put it in the same class as marriage, divorce, and adultery is not possible. The war question, or participation in civil government is not even handled in the same manner divorce is in Scripture. Paul specified adultery as grounds of congregational excommunication. God expressed His divine hatred of divorce (Malachi 2: 16). Nothing even remotely like that is ever applied to governmental participation by God's people. Someone might call a soldier or a policeman a murderer, but it is pure assumption that a law enforcement official is committing the sin of killing in taking a life in the line of duty. Is it an assumption that one is guilty of adultery who marries someone who has been divorced for fornication, or for that matter, for any other reason? Surely not.

Brother Green has made a serious mistake, as I see it, in regard to Romans 14: 10. After posing question after question that he feels defy answers he concludes that each one of us should be content to believe whatever we want to believe about divorce. Stand where you are fully persuaded is right and if someone takes a different stance, do not judge one another. This is a tragic use of Romans 14. You see, we cannot take verse 10 which prohibits judging and ignore verse 3. If brother Green's use of Romans 14 is right, there can be no wrong position to take on anything over which good men of spiritual wisdom and unblemished reputations differ. Verse 3 of the same chapter affirms that whatever differences are involved in the chapter both sides are right, as far as the Almighty is concerned. Furthermore, we cannot take verse 10 and not take verse 5 which gives those who differ the right to believe as they will.

Finally, brother Green's article evoked the response from me that there are several hard nosed radical preachers and elders among us who believe it is necessary to first disfellowship all who dare to differ with them on the divorce question, then study the issue. He left me thinking that there are some of these same people who will assassinate the character of any brother who may differ in any degree on this question. He reflects on these people as lacking humility, charity, and concern. If brother Green or anyone else cares to identify such culprits they will do us all a favor. Personally, I know of no such individuals.

Brother Green is right — some will disagree with him. Romans 14: 10 has no more to do with a study of marriage and divorce than it does dealing with "the pious unimmersed." Will there be severe and adverse consequences of his article? Only time will tell. Those who are prone to justify any kind of union between two people, whether adulterous or not, will find great comfort in what Ken has written and for that I am sad. At a time when there are nearly as many divorces as there are marriages, does it not seem more appropriate to take a concrete stand on what the New Testament clearly teaches and leave off the speculations that only generate more and more sinful situations? If brother Green understands that the Lord did reveal something on the topic, even though what brethren have written far outweighs it, I urge him, and all others, to take a stand on that solid foundation of divine teaching and leave unanswered questions alone.

WRITTEN FOR OUR INSTRUCTION

Frank Himmel

1575 14th Ave W.
Palmetto, Florida 33561



AHAZ' ALTAR

Ahaz was one of Judah's worst kings. He served idols to the extent of offering his son as a sacrifice to them. During his reign, Israel and Syria formed an alliance and attacked Judah. God promised to deliver them (Is. 7), but Ahaz was not interested in what God had to say. He had a plan of his own. Ahaz bought the help of Tiglath-Pileser of Assyria with Judah's treasures and freedom.

The Assyrians easily defeated Syria. When Ahaz went up to Damascus to meet Tiglath-Pileser and celebrate the victory, he saw and coveted an altar there. The story of Ahaz' altar (2 Kn. 16: 10-16) is the story of how innovations come into the Lord's church. Notice these details.

Ahaz' altar was borrowed from religious neighbors. I do not know whether it was Syrian or Assyrian. Whatever its source, Ahaz liked it and wanted one. Sadly, he was not the last to adopt appealing practices from others. Paul warned the Colossians against taking from popular philosophy, heathen religions, or Judaism. In the centuries that followed, many churches patterned their organization after Rome. Heathen festivals and ceremonies were "Christianized" to attract more people. Today the borrowing continues. Following the lead of denominationalism, many churches now sponsor ball teams, recreational outings, specialized ministries, and general benevolence. Some have adopted their looser moral standards as well. Such things may swell our numbers, but they will bring God's condemnation as well.

Ahaz' altar was the result, at least in part, of dissatisfaction with God's simple arrangements. The Damascus altar had considerable "workmanship," literally, "doings." God's altar may have been plain in comparison. It was more functional than aesthetic. Ahaz liked the new one better.

God's arrangements for His church are also simple. No great acts of heroism are required to enter. Instead, men and women moved by faith put away sin and are baptized into Christ. There is little in God-directed worship that appeals to the senses: no pomp, no ceremony, no entertainment. God offers no positions of prestige. Each church governs its own affairs, planning and doing its own work. Through these plain provisions, God is honored, saints are edified, and the gospel is proclaimed throughout the world. What could be better? Yet dissatisfaction abounds, resulting in departure

from God's plan.

Ahaz' altar required weak religious leaders. Ahaz sent the pattern of the altar back home to Urijah the priest. If Urijah were the kind of man he should have been, he would have vehemently opposed the idea of a new altar. But not only did he fail to oppose it, he is the one that built it! And he worked so hard on the project that he had it finished by the time Ahaz returned from Damascus!

God has ordered preachers to guard the gospel (1 Tim. 6: 20). Elders are to be on guard for all the flock (Acts 20: 28). Innovations creep in when the watchmen go to sleep. The truth is, those appointed to keep error out are often the very ones who bring it in.

Ahaz' innovation was given preeminence over God's order. That preeminence is seen in three ways. One is that Ahaz ordered that all offerings — animal, grain, and drink — now be burned on a new altar. Another is that he called the new one "the great altar." Notice also the position he gave it. Urijah had set up the new altar in front of the much larger bronze altar (the Lord's altar). Ahaz did not like that, and moved God's altar off to the side, leaving only his in front of the temple.

Is not this still the case? The bulletins I see from churches with "new altars" have scant space set aside for teaching, and what is there often reflects little study. Yet whole pages are devoted to social and recreational matters. We receive far more letters advertising seminars, workshops, dinners, camps, and concerts, than gospel meetings. If these are good barometers, the innovations have taken precedence.

Yet, *Ahaz maintained a token attachment to God's way.* He did not completely remove God's altar, but said, "The bronze altar shall be for me to inquire by." That, of course, was a misuse of the altar. But the point is that he wanted to maintain at least a token connection to God's order.

Modern tokens include the name "Church of Christ." Change what you will inside, but do not put an unscriptural name on the sign. Or a slogan, like "We speak where the Bible speaks." Or the heritage of the restoration movement. Our tokens may be certain doctrines that are special to us, regardless of how inconsistently we apply them. We remain opposed to titles, such as reverend or father, though doctor is increasingly acceptable. Many boast congregational independence while they are tied to all sorts of inter-church organizations. Ahaz was neither bold enough to sever all ties with God nor honest enough to admit how far adrift he was. He is not alone.

In time, Ahaz did totally abandon God. He literally closed the doors of the temple (2 Chr. 28: 22-25). God prefers that to perverted service (Mai 1: 10). Doubtless He would rejoice if some modern buildings were padlocked. Of course, what God really wants is for us to discard human wisdom and homemade religion and obey His word. Will you do that?

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Phil. 4:13).

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
7637 Fleming Hills Dr. S.W.
Huntsville, Ala. 35802



STUDIES IN TITUS CHAPTER 2 SOUND DOCTRINE INVOLVES PROPER CONDUCT (v. 1-6)

In these verses, Paul points to duties of people of various ages and stations in life that Titus must teach. These duties are identified with sound doctrine (v. 1). All precepts and duties for Christians are based on truth. Every truth one learns imposes responsibility, for each truth has its corresponding duty, and every duty the Christian has is based on the word of truth. Many learn and know truth, but this knowledge does not alter their conduct. This is the case because they fail to recognize the duty that knowledge imposes. On the other hand, some impose duties upon themselves, and others, when there is not truth (sound reason) behind them.

Aged Men

The duties of aged men are first addressed (v. 2). The word "aged" refers to older men in the church, not necessarily "elders" who are officers in a local church, though these would be included.

These are to be sober (temperate). People usually associate these words with abstinence from strong drink, but while this is embraced, the word here seems to go further and suggests a way of life. It suggests a man who has lived long enough to have experienced and observed that the cost of self-indulgence is extremely high and no part of true riches, so lives a life of self-restraint, avoiding excess in anything.

To be "grave" is to be dignified, serious, worthy of respect. This does not mean that such an one goes around with a long face, never smiling or reflecting joy and happiness, but one who reflects the fact he is living in the glorious light of eternity and will soon be leaving this earthly life for the joys of heaven. He is concerned, not with carnal indulgences, but with those things that are spiritual and eternal.

Being "sober-minded" is to be prudent, thoughtful, and self-controlled. Over many years of minding the things of the Spirit rather than the things of the flesh, older man should be able to govern every instinct and passion so that each is in its proper place.

Three things are mentioned in which elderly men are to be sound (strong-healthy). The first one is "faith." Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11: 6). Abraham "being not weak in faith... staggered not at the promise of God" (Rom. 4: 18-21). Faith comes by hearing the word of God (Rom. 10: 17). Being sound in

faith is simply a matter of knowing what the Bible teaches, putting one's confidence in what it says, and acting accordingly.

The second thing in which one is to be sound is "love." Strength here means love is the guiding principle in one's life. It leads to properly dealing with God and one another. (See 1 Cor. 13; 1 Jno. 5: 3; Matt. 22: 36-40).

Thirdly, the elderly men are told to be strong (sound) in "patience," or steadfastness. (See Rom. 5: 1-5; Jas. 1: 2-4). Years should temper a man so that he can bear more and more and be able to conquer life's problems without fainting.

Aged women are next addressed (v. 3). Titus is told to teach them "that they be in behavior as becometh holiness" (reverent in demeanor- ASV). They are "not to be false accusers" (slanderers), an action designed to defame or injure the reputation of another, nor to be "given (enslaved) to much wine," showing a lack of ability to overcome fleshly desires.

Older women should be apt and anxious to teach good things. This is a positive duty of elderly Christian women, though often ignored or neglected. The experience of age should ever be used to instruct and guide for it is, indeed, a tragedy for the younger to be deprived of this. There is a great need for grandmothers of faith, like Timothy had (2 Tim. 1: 5), in the church for they are natural instructors of the young of both sexes.

Younger Women

Some of the things the older women are to teach the younger are now listed (v. 4-5). To be sober-minded is to have a well-balanced mind, or able to think straight. Loving one's husband and children is something that can be taught and learned. Of course, this should come naturally, but such is not always the case, especially when feelings and emotions are relied upon instead of divine teaching and training. "Discreet" is the same as "sober-minded." (KJ & ASV) "Chaste" refers to purity in heart and life. "Keepers at home" (KJV) "Workers at home" (ASV) "Homemakers" (NKJ) refer to being workers at home or guardians of the house-active in household duties. Younger women should be taught that in thinking of a career, there is none greater than that of homemaking. There is no task, responsibility, privilege or reward greater than this. To be "good" (KJV) "kind" (ASV) is to demonstrate a gracious, benign disposition toward servants, husband, children and all. Teaching the younger women to "be obedient to their own husbands" (KJV) "in subjection to" (ASV) is something God has always required (Gen. 3: 16; 1 Cor. 11: 3). This does not mean women are men's slaves, but that God has assigned unto man the responsibility of leadership (headship), providing, and protecting, requiring that they continually sacrifice love of self and desires for wife and family, being gentle, kind, and patient in dealing with them. If the conduct of Christians does not harmonize with sound doctrine, this word of truth will be blasphemed (spoken against).

Young Men

The young men "likewise" (like the young women, and older) must be taught the importance of being "sober-minded" (sensible-ASV).

Be A Proper Example (v. 7-8)

What Paul told Titus to teach others, he must demonstrate (be an example-pattern) in his own life. Nothing is more repulsive to God and man than hypocrisy on the part of a preacher. Such will result in the loss of both the preacher and hearers.

The doctrine taught by Titus, according to this text, must be characterized by certain things. First, there is the matter of "uncorruptness." It must be pure, unmixed with the philosophies of men. It must be only that divinely revealed, established as truth by searching the Scriptures (Acts 17: 11). False doctrine saves neither the preacher nor the hearer, but rather damns (2 Thes. 2: 10-12).

Secondly, the preacher of sound doctrine must preach it with "gravity" (reverent, dignified, and serious), and thirdly, his speech must be "sound"—"Teaching which does not deviate from the truth"—Thayer. This kind of teaching cannot be justly condemned or censured. It is in contrast to the doctrines and commandments of men, born of carnal desires, corruptions, and perversions. "He that is of the contrary part" (v. 8) is actually put to shame in his unjust censure and opposition to the preacher of sound doctrine who is also pure in life, sincere, and upright in attitude. Every successful evangelist (saves self and them that hear) must be an example of soundness in his speech, life, and attitude. The same principle is true of every Christian in his relationship with the world (1 Pet. 2: 11-12).

Teach Servants To Serve As Christians (v. 9-10)

Rather than attack and try to abolish slavery as an institution, New Testament writers relied upon the spirit of the gospel and the principles it set forth (dignity and worth of every human soul; all in Christ are brethren, and alike servants of the one heavenly Father) to moderate the harshness and inhumanity of the system and eventually destroy it.

In harmony with this, these verses instruct servants, as with all Christians in every walk of life (1 Cor. 7: 20-24; 1 Pet. 2: 18) to be exemplary in conduct. As hard as it may be for a slave, who has tasted of the freedom and oneness in Christ, to accept his situation, he must be taught the importance of being in submission to his master and honestly and sincerely seek to please him as best he can. He is told not to be "answering again" — KJV, "gainsaying" — ASV, "argumentative" — NASV, "answering back" — NKJ (v. 9). He is to serve without answering back, arguing, or speaking against. Such action would be opposed to the cheerful, willing, submissive service that the gospel demands.

"Not purloining" — KJV, ASV; "pilfering" — NASV, NKJ. (v. 10) means taking what has been entrusted to one and using it for himself. Some define the word as "thieving." Certainly, this is not in harmony with the gospel, but in direct opposition. The gospel demands that a Christian "show all good fidelity (honesty). So, if a slave, or anyone else, shows, demonstrates, or is an example of true Christianity, the enjoined and forbidden things above will be demonstrated. Otherwise, the doctrine of God our saviour would not be adorned.

The Grace Of God Brings Salvation And Instructs (v. 11-14)

The preceding verses emphasized conduct that adorns the doctrine of God our saviour in all things. Such conduct is possible because of the grace of God. The grace that brings salvation has appeared (been manifested) to all men, not to just a select few, but to all, regardless of race or sex, who will accept it. It involves God's scheme of redemption that was manifested with the coming of Christ, His personal ministry, selection of apostles, death, burial, resurrection for our justification, and the preaching of inspired apostles and prophets, evangelists, and dedicated saints. The gospel, God's power to save (Rom. 1: 16), is the preaching of these facts that produce faith (Rom. 10: 17), resulting in people's obedience (Rom. 6: 17). If God had not sent His son to die for us and arranged for the revelation and teaching of His truth, man would be without hope. Our salvation, therefore, is by the grace of God. Please read the following passages which confirm this is what the grace of God is that brings salvation. (Col. 1: 6; Acts 11: 23; 13: 43; 1 Pet. 5: 12; Heb. 12: 15).

The grace of God that brings salvation also "teaches" (v. 12). It teaches us that there are some things we must deny (renounce or forsake). One such thing is "ungodliness." Thayer says this is "a want of reverence toward God." Even professed Christians, besides people of the world, often do not show proper respect for God and His word. A second thing to be denied is "worldly lusts." This is desiring things of the flesh or world which are forbidden. (1 Jno. 2: 15-17; Jas. 4: 4).

The grace of God also teaches us a positive manner of life. We are to live "soberly," which means a self-controlled life. "Godly" is showing proper respect and submission to God. "Righteously" involves rightly dealing with our fellowman. These are things we are to deny and do, or be, in this "present world" — The here and now. Verse 12 answers the question, What is my duty here on this earth?

Verse 13 points to the reward at the end of life's day for those who have been saved by the grace of God. This will be bestowed at the appearing of the great God and our saviour Jesus Christ. The "blessed hope" of the Christian is called "our hope of glory" in Col. 1: 27. Peter wrote of "the glory that shall be revealed (1 Pet. 5: 1). See 2 Tim. 4: 6-8; 2 Pet. 1: 5-11).

Christ's motive in making the supreme sacrifice for our salvation was that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and make us a special people of his own; a people who would be zealous in doing his works (v. 14). See Eph. 2: 10; Phil. 2: 12-13.

Paul's command to Titus to "speak, exhort, rebuke with all authority, letting no man despise thee" (v. 15) shows how important these things are to his own salvation and those who heard him.

"Pray without ceasing" (1 Thes. 5:17).

A BURNING FIRE

(Jer. 20:9)

Jim Deason

Rt. 1, Box 153
Culleoka, Tennessee 38451



JESUS, THE GOOD SHEPHERD

As one who loves to sing it often seems as though each song is my favorite. But perhaps none touches the heart with such a poignant message as does the hymn, "Does Jesus Care." Written in 1901 by J. Lincoln Hall and Prank E. Graeff, the message is timeless. "Does Jesus care when my heart is pained too deeply for mirth or song, As the burdens press, and the cares distress, and the way grows weary and long? Does Jesus care when my way is dark with a nameless dread and fear? As the daylight fades into deep night shades, does He care enough to be near? Does Jesus care when I've said "good-bye" to the dearest on earth to me, and my sad heart aches till it nearly breaks, is it aught to Him? Does He see? O yes, He cares, I know He cares, His heart is touched with my grief; when the days are weary, the long night dreary, I know my Savior cares."

Yes, Jesus cares. And this is communicated so beautifully to us in John 10: 1-29 as Jesus pictures Himself as the Good Shepherd. As I write I allow my imagination to picture the beautiful grass covered hills of Canaan with quiet, gently moving streams. There on the mountainside is a flock of sheep carefully being nurtured and protected from nature's elements. From the many hours spent together the shepherd knows all his sheep down to the last frail lamb. And they know his strong but gentle voice. Willing to spend and be spent the shepherd will risk his life to protect the flock from predators and on dark and stormy nights he gathers them safely within the sheepfold. Those torn by the rock's jagged edge he mends and those lost he risks all to find. From this tender care a flock prospers.

Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd" (John 10: 11, 14). Thus all of the peace and security that the sheep could find in their shepherd we likewise should be able to find in Jesus Christ. Let's let our minds dwell on the specific aspects of this figure of speech for a few moments....

1) A GOOD SHEPHERD NOURISHES HIS SHEEP. He would make them to "lie down in green pastures" (Psa. 23: 2) and "feed them in good... rich pasture on the mountains" (Ezek. 34: 14). Likewise, Jesus feeds His sheep. He said, "I am the bread of life... This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die" (John 6: 48, 50). A disciple finds spiritual nourishment as he studies and imitates the life of his Lord and grows as he continues in the Lord's commands. Such nourish-

ment is necessary to become spiritually strong (2 Pet. 2: 1-2; Heb. 5: 12-14).

2) A SHEPHERD PROTECTS HIS SHEEP. On one occasion while David was tending his father's sheep he had to protect them from both a lion and a bear (1 Sam. 17: 34-36). Flocks left alone become "food for all the beasts of the field for lack of a shepherd" (Ezek. 34: 8). "He who is a hireling, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, beholds the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep, and flees, and the wolf snatches them, and scatters them. He flees because he is a hireling, and is not concerned about the sheep" (John 10: 12-13). Jesus promised, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep... I lay down my life for the sheep" (John 10: 11, 15).

Perhaps there is no greater assurance of protection to the disciple of Christ than is found in this figure of speech. Hear the Lord as He continues, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of my hand" (John 10: 27-28). The advocates of the "once saved, always saved" doctrine find no proof text here for the Lord's promise of protection abides only with those who "follow" Him. But in refuting denominational dogmas let us not miss the Lord's beautiful declaration of security for those who are His own. Jesus here promises that there is no power on earth or from the pits of Hell that can take you away from the Lord and His blessings against your will. In Christ, the good shepherd, the obedient believer can find true security.

3) THE GOOD SHEPHERD KNOWS HIS SHEEP AND THEY KNOW HIM. My experience with sheep is very limited in that I have never personally known a shepherd. However, a friend here in Middle Tennessee is a dairyman with probably fifty or sixty cows. Black and white Holsteins all look alike to me but he knows all of his cows individually. He's named them all. And it is neat to me how that he can call his cows one at a time to be milked and, knowing his voice, they each push through the crowd to get to their appointed stall for the business at hand.

Jesus declared that the same is true with the good shepherd and his sheep. Speaking of the good shepherd He said, To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name, and leads them out. When he puts forth all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. And a stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers" (John 10: 3-5).

The lesson here for us is that Jesus knows those who belong to Him. Whether or not we are able to make such judgment is immaterial and beside the point, Jesus knows and will be the judge (2 Cor. 5: 10). But my greatest fear here is that there may be some who think they are in the sheepfold who don't know the shepherd. It's one thing for a person to go through a form of worship and something entirely different to see beyond the form to Him whom we worship. Of what benefit is it to know the proper worship, work, and organization of the church if as individuals we have not the mind of Christ?


There are many other lessons to be learned from the

good shepherd. He cares for the special needs of his flock. He leads them. And he seeks those who are lost. When all are considered we see a beautiful portrait of our Lord, the GOOD SHEPHERD. Jesus the loving shepherd cares. He cares for you.

**SIMPLICITY
IN
CHRIST**

P. J. Casebolt

Rt. 1 Box 210
Middlebourne, WV 26149



TEARS AND TRUTH

Some seem to be under the delusion that tears and truth cannot blend together; that you cannot tell people the truth and shed tears at the same time.

After Jesus delivered one of the most scathing rebukes of his ministry, he wept over Jerusalem (Mt. 23). Did Jesus not love those whom he rebuked? "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent (Rev. 3: 19). Often, those who were the subjects of the truth which Jesus spoke, also became the subjects of his tears.

Jeremiah had the unpleasant mission of rebuking God's people for their idolatry, and pronouncing their punishment of 70 years in Babylonian captivity. Yet, he told the truth through tears (Jer. 9: 1; 13: 17). This fact, along with the Book of Lamentations, earns him the title of "The Weeping Prophet."

David wept while his son was alive, but when the child died, he dried his tears and ate bread (2 Sam. 12: 21). His friends couldn't reconcile his actions. People today may shed or conceal their tears, or may display their emotions in public or private. The truth of a matter may not always be determined by the absence or the presence of tears.

Phaltiel had to give up his wife, and "went with her along weeping behind," but he still had to let her go (2 Sam. 3: 15, 16). Esau "wept bitterly," but that did not alter the truth that he had sold his birthright (Heb. 12: 17).

The apostle Paul could say, while weeping, that some were "the enemies of the cross of Christ" (Phil. 3: 18). The fact that we love people, and condemn their sin, does not preclude tears or truth. On the other hand, we may tell people (or God), that we love them, but may do so only "in word... in tongue," and not "in deed and in truth" (Jno. 14: 15; 1 Jno. 3: 18).

If we love the truth and the church enough to tell people that the church does not glorify God through human institutions in evangelism, edification, or benevolence, we are liable to be accused of being hardened haters of widows and orphans, or that we don't believe

in preaching the gospel.

Others can tell the truth about edification and evangelism, but still think that in matters of benevolence you cannot shed tears for orphans and widows while opposing church contributions to human institutions in benevolence. Yet others can oppose human institutions under a board of directors, but not those under elders, or **vice versa**.

The truth of the matter is, that neither the presence nor absence of tears has anything to do with what is right or wrong, or whether or not you love orphans and widows, or whether or not you believe in education or preaching the gospel.

Tears may be shed before we tell people the truth, while we are speaking the truth, or after the truth has been spoken. But truth is still truth. Some avoid speaking the truth, thinking that they can avoid the shedding of tears, either their own or someone else's. Avoiding the truth, or the postponing of it, does not alter the truth itself.

Some of the most bitter tears ever shed are those of remorse, postponing a thing until it is too late. All the "weeping and gnashing" of countless billions will not quench the fires of hell.

Some of us may have better control of our tears than others. I knew one lady who was unable to cry, even at the death of her husband, yet she was just as sad inwardly as the next person. Some of us may have cried until there was no tears left, or until it seems that tears are useless.

But don't try to determine the truth of a matter by the absence or presence of tears. The tears may be dripping from the heart, and not from the eyes.

FAITH AND THE FAITH

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"If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" (Jno. 7: 37).

SHE HATH DONE WHAT SHE COULD (Mark 14:8)

Fred A. Shewmaker
58305 TR 1195
West Lafayette, OH 43845

Some months ago I received a letter from a sister in Christ that began: "I'll begin this by copying from a letter that I received at the church building this morning." It was a letter to her on the occasion of her husband's death. In it are some things which may be an encouragement to other children of God to do what they can.

"You probably won't remember me, but you have been thought of over the years in helping me to be more determined to become stronger in my faith." The letter went on to tell why. It relates circumstances and events that occurred some 27 years earlier. At that time, the author had a small child, was expecting another and her husband was in the military overseas. "When we moved into the housing, you sent a post card telling the address of (the local church). "I was a member, but went on Sunday A. M. only and then usually when my husband wasn't home. But I never had a clear conscience about missing any time. You and bro. _____ being friendly and concerned helped and made an impression on me. When the

baby was born you and either your daughter or daughter-in-law came to see me a few days after we came home from the hospital. That impressed me. Any way I wanted to say 'thanks,' and let you know what has happened since then." For about four years she continued to attend services

For about four years she continued to attend services intermittently. Then she "determined to do it right or not at all."

"Until then my husband didn't care. After that, it was not so easy, with him as a Baptist, but with the Lord's help and much prayer we got through it. He was baptized" (about five years later). "All our sons are faithful members" (they have four). Our youngest just obeyed the gospel this past June and is learning to speak. All the rest are active in the services. We have nine grandchildren and my prayer is all will be faithful Christians. THANKS! In Christian love," The sister who shared that letter with me also wrote,

"I believe I needed that letter very much. I've always felt that I haven't done much in setting examples for others." As I reread that letter, a few days ago, it reminded me of the words of the song:

"Have you lifted a stone from your brother's way,
As he struggled along life's way,
Have you lovingly touched some frail toil worn hand,
Shared with some one his heavy load?
Oh, the things we may do, you and I, you and I
Oh the love we can give if we try;
Just a word or a song as we're passing along,
They will count in the great by and by."

—Lizzi DeArmond

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

CORRECTION

In the August issue of STS on page 478, in the article by Wilson Adams, the following sentence appeared, incorrectly: "And the miraculous element in first century teaching and instruction remains (2 Tim. 4: 1 -2)." The following is what the article actually contained: "And the miraculous element in first century teaching is gone for the same reason. But the need for teaching and instruction remains (2 Tim. 4: 1 -2)." This was an error in printing and we apologize for it.

ALBERT SHEARER, Ft. Walton Beach, Florida—A new work with about 25 in attendance has begun in Mary Esther, Florida which is located just west of Ft. Walton Beach on Hwy. 98. The meeting place is just off the Mary Esther cutoff. Services on Sundays are at 9: 30, 10: 30 A. M. and 6 P. M. and Wednesday nights at 7. Call 244-2335 for information.

PEWS NEEDED

LEON MAULDIN, P. O. Box 9, Lexington, AL 35648 — The North Bibb congregation, located near Blockton, Alabama, is interested in obtaining some used pews for their new meeting house. If you have some either for sale or to give away, call Wallace Reach at (205) 938-2491, or Tim Mauldin, 926-5726. They would prefer about 14 foot

length, but would consider other sizes as well.

KEITH SHARP, 2510 Lakeland Hills Blvd., Lakeland, FL 33805 — It is a great pleasure to have Jady and Dorothy Copeland back to work with the Lakeland Hills Blvd. church. He labored here as an evangelist for 8 years before moving to Springdale, Arkansas in 1987. He was an elder of this congregation at the time he resigned.

Brother Copeland will be working with me in a two preacher arrangement. I will be doing most of the preaching, whereas we will both teach classes, both publicly and privately, and write. We hope the members of the church will select him to serve as an elder again. Jady Copeland's new role will allow him to preach more gospel meetings. Since he is now on Social Security and limited in the amount of income he can receive, he would be especially happy to help small, struggling churches who have limited ability to pay. This good man's years of experience and excellent knowledge should be put to use. His new address is 235 Marcum Trace Drive, Lakeland, FL 33809. His phone number is (813) 853-1339.

LARRY A BUNCH, P. O. Box 461, Dawson, TX 76639—We are now working with the church in Dawson, Texas. There are about 25 in attendance. So far as I know, the nearest conservative churches are

at Ennis and Waco, some 35 miles away. We will try to encourage the brethren, visit those not attending who should be, and trying to set up Bible studies with non-Christians. I will utilize every means available, within our financial ability to reach the public. At present, I have only \$700 a month in support. Help is needed.

GEORGE SLOVER, P. O. Box 5244, San Marcos, TX 78666 — In 1988 a group of Christians saw a need for a congregation that would stand opposed to the institutional trends found in the other churches in this area. They began meeting in February, 1988. After outgrowing a rented place just off of I-35, excellent commercial property was bought and a building at that location was remodeled for present use. It seats about 100 and has good classroom space. We began work here in June, 1989. If you visit in this area, you will find an enthusiastic and friendly group of Christians striving to do Bible things in Bible ways. We are located at 1607 River Rd. about 1 block off of State Hwy. 80. Phone (512) 396-2399 or 353-0364.

FROM ITALY — Stefano Corazza reports another baptism at Udine, Italy. Also, at Pomezia, Roberto Tondelli tells of a husband and wife being recently baptized after many months of studies. They have some teen-aged children who also took part in the studies.

DOUG HEIL — We are in the process of building a new building for the church here, located at 2801 South Main St., Winston-Salem, NC 27127. It will seat 99 and has several classrooms in the basement. We should be in it by early fall. We have about 45 now, including 19 children. John Meadows and Wally Hayes serve as co-preachers with the rest of the men teaching classes. Our group is a close, cooperative, hard-working one with a love for God for each other. If you know someone in this area we might contact, please call us at (919) 784-5058; 760-2510; or 996-1253.

TEACHING IN JAPAN

PHILIP D. SMITH — My wife, Shirley, and I will be holding Bible studies and worship services in Fukuoka, Japan through August, 1990. Christians in that area or traveling to the island of Kyushu can contact us through West Chester University, 1-3-29 Nagahama, Chuo-ku, 810 Japan, where we both work. Telephone 092-761-0421 and FAX 092-761-5936.

PREACHERS NEEDED

CALGARY, ALBERTA, CANADA — This congregation of 30-35 needs a mature, experienced man to work with us. Majority of support would have to be raised elsewhere. Huge potential in this city of 700,000. There are no elders, but a good core of willing and able men. We have been without a preacher for over a year. For more information and references contact, Northside Church of Christ, c/o Wayne Bailey #1707 620-67 Avenue S. W., Calgary, Alberta, CANADA T2V 0M2.

WELLSBURG, WEST VIRGINIA — We are seeking an evangelist to labor with us. We are located in the northern panhandle of West Virginia and the church has been here since 1934. We want a preacher who will give Bible, not fashionable, answers to our questions. Unless his needs are great, one would not need outside support. Please contact Charles Isinghood, RD 1, Box 368, Wellsburg, WV 26070, or David Harless, RD 1, Box 59, Wellsburg, WV 26070.

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA — The congregation which formerly met on German School Road in Richmond is looking for a full-time evangelist as it seeks to build spiritually as well as physically. Partial support (about half) anticipated. Contact: Pete Brailey (804) 272-3546.

GOOD MAN AVAILABLE

MARC W. GIBSON has completed his college work at Florida College and at the University of South Florida in Tampa. During the seven years he has been in Tampa he has attended Fletcher Avenue church of Christ and did some preaching here. He filled preaching appointments over central Florida during the past six years. He preached during the summer months with Bob Buchanan, Harry Lewis and Ron Halbrook. Marc has been married a little over a year. He is a good student of the Bible and is dedicated to preach the gospel of Christ. He is seeking full time work, preferably in the southeast. I have known

him well during the years he has been in Tampa. I commend him to any church looking for a faithful preacher of the word. Brother Gibson can be reached at: 8700 N. 50th St., #1133, Tampa, FL 33617, phone: (813) 988-0035.

H. E. Phillips, Lutz, Florida

STANLEY LOVETT AT REST

Stanley J. Lovett passed away on July 7, 1989. He was a preacher of much ability, a man of integrity and devotion to his Lord. His labors were extensive, touching the lives of countless people. From May, 1956 until October, 1978, he edited the PRECEPTOR. His writings were always true to the Bible and he handled his editorial responsibilities with great wisdom and foresight. The last years of his life found him confined to bed and totally helpless. He was lovingly cared for by his devoted wife, Sarah. The July, 1989 issue of PRECEPTOR, now edited by Danny Brown, has several articles of tribute to him. It would do you good to read it. (Write: The PRECEPTOR, P. O. Box 187, Beaumont, TX 77704).

Funeral services were conducted by Robert Turner, W. L. Whar-ton, James W. Adams, Harold Turner and H. Osby Weaver. R. J. Stevens led those attending in four songs. His body was laid to rest in Nacogdoches, Texas. Truly, a giant among men has left us. To sister Lovett and the three children we express our condolences. (James W. Adams wrote an excellent article about brother Lovett in the June PRECEPTOR).



THANKS TO DONNIE V. RADER

The September issue of the paper was edited by Donnie V. Rader. We thank him for his excellent work. This gave us a little breather from the heavy load of meeting work and for the trip to Norway in August. By the way, the Raders are proud parents of a son, Dathan Vaden, born August 30, 1989.

ABOUT NEWS ITEMS

We carry a news column as a means of offering information which we think readers would like to know and as a courtesy to those who send these items. We are glad to have news about the work in many places. Items announcing debates, lectureships, meetings and other events with a date, should be sent far enough in advance for us to present before the event takes place. We usually work on a 30-days-in-advance basis with our printer at Berne, Indiana where the paper is printed and mailed.

But the editor carries on a heavy schedule of gospel meetings from March - November each year. That means that sometimes we have to do the news column early, or else take with us to a meeting what items have arrived before leaving for the meeting so the column can be written during that time. Because of that, sometimes there are news items, which normally would have arrived in plenty of time, which fall through the cracks, much to the disappointment and annoyance of those who sent them. We regret this and wish we knew how to avoid it. The paper is a labor of love. But those who have never lived for many years with paper deadlines to be met around meeting dates and other obligations, both work-related and personal, have no idea what is involved in making it all come together. As much as I love the paper, I have always put my commitments for preaching appointments ahead of that, and plan to continue that practice. Most people have been understanding about this, but a few have not. The Lord expects us to do only what we can do and others will have to learn to live with that. We have had to come to terms with it and could not function very long otherwise.

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	430
RESTORATIONS	106
(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 XXX

NOVEMBER, 1989

NUMBER 11

THINK ON THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 1631
Lutz, FL 33549



FROM THE HEART THE MOUTH SPEAKETH

"O generations of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. 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. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matt. 12: 34-37).

These are stinging words for most of us because we talk far more than we should, and concerning the things that are evil. But Jesus said the mouth speaks what is in the heart. We are often told that we can not tell what is in a man's heart, but the Lord gave us a means of knowing if the man will speak. "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7: 20). Observe a man's conduct and listen to his words and you will know his heart.

Add to this the statement by James: "For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body... Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of

nature; and it is set on fire of hell" (James 3: 2, 5, 6).

There are several evil conditions of the heart that would never be known if words did not come from the mouth. Envy, jealousy, hate, self-conceit, lack of love, etc., come to light by our speech regardless of how much we try to keep them hidden. Unjust and hurtful criticism is one of the most frequent of evil speech. Paul said, "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice" (Eph. 4: 21). James said, "But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your heart, glory not, and lie not against the truth" (James 3: 14).

Beware of the person who gets you to one side and begins: "Sister Blank is a good woman, BUT..." This lead statement is presumed to make you accept what is to follow an awful truth which must be told. Beware of that person who finds fault continually with every one of whom he or she speaks. Self-conceit and jealousy make us require the conduct of all to be measured by our standards only. Criticism of one's friends, possessions, and habits is usually a sign of envy and lack of love. When the very tenor of one's language about his brother or sister in Christ is fault-finding and ridiculing, you mark it down that person is not right at heart. If we have some criticism to make of a person, let us go to him and talk about it. In that way some good can come of it.

If we will strive to keep our tongues under control we can be a greater influence for good and cultivate a better attitude toward others. Angry and evil words hurt all men and help none; but words of truth and soberness spoken out of a heart free of malice and bitterness help all and hurt none.

It is also a fact that wagging tongues spreading evil gossip will soon cease in shame if ears will refuse to listen. Evil speaking is possible because there are eager ears to listen to slander. Do not think that you can hide the real condition of your heart when you either speak or encouragingly listen to slander and criticism of others. "But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison" (James 3: 8).: But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another" (Gal. 5: 15).

Jesus made another statement that should govern us

in our language as well as in other conduct. Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matt. 7: 12). How would you like to have someone talk about you in the way you talk about them? What would your estimate be of such a person as a Christian? Every time you begin to speak of another person in a manner to discredit him or her, stop and think if you would want them to speak so of you. If not, do not say it! God will deal with us exactly alike in the judgment.

We believe that most people who talk about others in a hurtful and unjust way do so expecting to make people think more of them. It never works that way! When you criticize another to a friend, he will know that you would do the same to him if it served your purpose. We do not want this reputation. Let us be careful of our tongues and speech; our hearts are betrayed by our language.

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3. FREQUENCY OF ISSUE Monthly	3A. NO. OF ISSUES PUBLISHED ANNUALLY 12	3B. ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION PRICE \$11.00
4. COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESS OF KNOWN OFFICE OF PUBLICATION (Street, City, County, State and ZIP Code) (Not printers)		
52 Yearling Dr. (P.O. Box 69) Brooks, Bullitt Co., Kentucky 40109-0069		
5. COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESS OF THE HEADQUARTERS OF GENERAL BUSINESS OFFICES OF THE PUBLISHER (Not printers)		
52 Yearling Dr. (P.O. Box 69) Brooks, Bullitt Co., Kentucky 40109-0069		
6. FULL NAMES AND COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESS OF PUBLISHER, EDITOR, AND MANAGING EDITOR (The name MUST NOT be blank)		
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EDITOR (Name and Complete Mailing Address)		
Connie W. Adams, P.O. Box 69, Brooks, Kentucky 40109-0069		
MANAGING EDITOR (Name and Complete Mailing Address)		
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1. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales		
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E. TOTAL DISTRIBUTION (Sum of C and D)	5088	4960
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PS Form 3526 July 1982

(See instruction on reverse)

Searching The Scriptures

VOLUME 30 NOVEMBER, 1989 NUMBER 11

Published Monthly at
BROOKS, KENTUCKY

Second Class Postage Paid at Brooks, Kentucky
and at an Additional Mailing Office
USPS—487—440

CONNIE W. ADAMS, Editor

Office of Publication
52 Yearling Drive
Brooks, Kentucky 40109
Phone (502) 957-2257

SUBSCRIPTION RATES
\$11 per year in advance

Club rate:
\$9.00 per year for 4 or more

Bundles to one address:
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24 for \$15.00

Group subscriptions:
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Editorial

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OBSERVATIONS ON ROMANS 14

Romans 14 deals with the tension that sometimes arises between strong and weak Christians. In the specific case introduced, the strong brother was the one "who believeth that he may eat all things and the weak brother "eateth herbs" (v. 2). Paul was a strong brother, for he said "I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself (v. 14a). Yet, the weak brother who "esteemeth anything to be unclean" could not eat without violating his conscience, hence, could not eat in "faith." This is the "faith" of verse 1 and also verse 23.

It was a matter of divine truth that it was acceptable with God to eat meat. It was also acceptable for one to eat herbs. For brethren of either persuasion to judge the other as unworthy before God was wrong. The strong brother could exercise his liberty, but not in a circumstance where he would put the weak brother under pressure to violate his conscience. The weak brother, not yet fully taught and persuaded, was to have his "faith" to himself before God (v. 22). In this way both the strong and the weak could live with their consciences, forbear with each other and allow time to study, learn and grow.

But if the weak brother in this passage was the untaught, then the only way for him to ever become strong was for him to be taught. If Paul was persuaded "by the Lord Jesus Christ," then divine revelation had been given and the knowledge and application of that would help one who was weak to be strong. Further, this implies that truth could be known on the subject. Paul came to be "persuaded" and could not have been unless the truth was within reach.

The eating of meat in Romans 14 must have been of the same kind as that described in 1 Cor. 8: 4 and 7 where some ate "with conscience of the idol." To buy a piece of meat in the marketplace which had come from the idol's temple where sacrifice had been offered, in itself, was not wrong. To eat it with no intention of honoring an idol was not wrong. But to eat it with conscience of the idol, supposing that by the eating of this meat, veneration was being given to the idol, was wrong. The solution to the problem? Teaching and forbearance while that was being done.

Not An Excuse For Fellowshiping Error

Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 were never intended as proof texts to justify fellowshiping erroneous doctrine and immorality. The church at Ephesus was commended because "thou hatest the deeds of the

Nicolaitans, which I also hate" (Rev. 2: 6). To the church at Pergamos the Lord said "But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam... to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth" (Rev. 2: 14-16). Here the eating of things sacrificed to idols is linked with fornication which often attended idolatrous ceremonies. The Lord would not tolerate either the **practice** or the **doctrine** which led to it.

Again, to the church at Thyatira, the Lord said "Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, **to teach and to seduce** my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, **except they repent** of their deeds (Rev. 2: 20-22).

Romans 14 must never be used as an excuse for a doctrine which eventuates in immorality within the church. These other passages make that clear.

Faith and The Faith

Romans 14 concerns matters of "faith" in the sense of being fully persuaded in one's mind that what he does is right before God. He must not "doubt" if he eats. That is not "of faith." But the truth on the subject was that it was right to eat meat as long as there was no veneration of the idol. Paul was "persuaded by the Lord Jesus" on the matter. That was "the faith." It was part and parcel of the divine system of truth. God granted liberty in this area. That was "the faith." A brother was not to abuse his liberty to embolden a weak, untaught brother to violate his conscience. That was "the faith."

This great passage was never written to justify every kind of a doctrinal or moral perversion which man might invent. The passages we cited in the letters to the churches of Asia are abundantly clear on that subject, as are other New Testament references. It did not matter whether Hymemaeus and Alexander were sincere in what they taught or not. They were wrong and their teaching contrary to "the faith" with the end result that the faith and hope of others were imperiled thereby. Those who taught the Corinthians that "the resurrection is past already" were wrong, whether or not they were lovable.

Every time we are faced with some new crisis among God's people over some teaching and it's practical import, we are hastened to Romans 14 with the admonition "not to judge another man's servant." Roy Key and Ernest Beam back in the early 1950's left the faith after first compromising with the Christian Church and seeking grounds for expanded fellowship in spite of instrumental music and other dividing wedges. They took us to Romans 14. Carl Ketcherside and Leroy Garrett and younger disciples such as Edward Fudge and the cadre that he influenced, sought an expanded platform of "unity in diversity" among the "heirs of the restoration"

and took us to Romans 14. This was supposed to cool down the rhetoric so we could fellowship instrumental music, Premillennialism, institutionalism, the social gospel, and you name it. After all, we should not judge another's servant. And since he is honest in what he teaches and practices we should not be too severe in condemning him. Never mind how many souls are led astray and how many churches are weakened to the point of losing their identity as a people belonging to the Lord.

Every time I see a brother start making a list of how many things brethren have differed over, I wonder what is the substance to the shadow. There is a point to these lists. Right now, the point of the most recent lists, is to leave the impression that since good men have disagreed over various aspects of the subject of divorce and remarriage, that we should be still and allow error to be taught with its attendant evil work and say nothing while the purveyors of said error are active and vocal and churches are being divided. And make no mistake about it, that is exactly what is happening!

The doctrine that an alien sinner is not under law to Christ and its application to adulterous marriages is causing havoc. If these are only views privately held, why are churches being troubled over them? From what source is the doctrine coming? Several well-intentioned brethren have said they don't agree with the doctrine. But they are miffed because I, and a few others, have identified a well-known and highly respected brother who holds and has **publicly taught** this view to the disturbance of churches. Whether we used good or poor judgment in such identification is now a moot point. The fact is, the pernicious doctrine is being taught, souls are being encouraged to remain in adultery, the peace of local churches is being disrupted. When you fellows get over your grumbling and get your noses back in joint, would you please take up the sword of the spirit and HELP to expose this doctrine for what it is and warn of the devastating moral consequences? Do you really believe that adultery is a matter of indifference with God? That one may, or may not, practice it without divine approval or disapproval? I know how you will answer it. And when you do, you will have to remove it from the realm of things considered in Romans 14. If you know a better way to approach the problem, then by all means do it, but please **APPROACH THE PROBLEM**. "Speak thou the things which become sound doctrine" (Tit. 2: 11).

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THOMAS H. ICARD

Thomas H. Icard, gospel preacher of Richlands, Virginia, died of a massive heart attack on September 28, 1989 in a hospital in Pittsburg, PA where he had gone for tests about his diabetes. He was 49 years old, lacking ten days. He preached five years for the church at Wellsburg, WV, seven years with the Tomlinson Run church in PA, in Virginia Beach, VA and was working with the church at Richlands at the time of his death.

He was the editor's brother-in-law . Services were conducted in Wellsburg, WV by Wilson Adams, Owen Thomas and Stan Adams, then later another service was conducted in Hopewell, VA by John Nosker, J. Wiley Adams and the editor. Burial was at Chester, VA in the beautiful Sunset Memorial Park. He is survived by his wife, Glenda, two sons, Howard and Jimmie and a daughter, Patti. Friends who may wish to write to Glenda may address her: Mrs. Glenda Icard, P. O. Box 362, Richland, VA 24641.

HUGO-RELIEF

Since hurricane Hugo hit the coast of South Carolina, I have received calls from all over the country inquiring about the condition of brethren in that area. There are two congregations in Charleston: Ashley Heights and West Ashley. Little damage was done to the Ashley Heights building and no damage done to the West Ashley building. The hurricane actually did more damage to buildings belonging to brethren north of Charleston. The building of the Woodland church in Sumter had several trees fall on it. I have personally seen the damage in Charleston and it is unbelievable and yet no brethren were seriously hurt. The care and love of brethren throughout the country has been heart warming. Immediate needs of some brethren at Ashley Heights have been met. The church there has received several thousand dollars and is now refusing additional help. At this time I do not know of any brethren who are in need. Thank you for responding to these needs.

But there are many other people who yet could use help. Many small towns do not have the government that Charleston does to assist in receiving help from state and federal officials. The state has set up this number to call if you would like to help individually: 1-800-868-HUGO. They will tell you where help is most needed.

—Jim Allen, P. O. Box 4, Beaufort, SC 29902

WAKE THE WORLD AND TELL THE PEOPLE

Wilson Adams
891 Autumn Valley Lane
Gambrills, MD 21054



ANTIOCH — THE POWER OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

The book of **Acts** describes in thrilling detail the growth and spread of the Gospel as New Testament Christianity burned its way into the hearts and homes of men and women throughout the Roman world. If the epochal events narrated by Luke do not electrify your imagination and stir your emotions, then nothing could. Acts describes the turning point in all of history. This is not the history of one man but of one God who used many men to reach the world by means of the greatest message ever delivered.

Acts 13. Antioch serves as a pit-stop on the road to God's global plan. In Jerusalem the match had been lit. In Judea and Samaria the fire was kindled. In Antioch the fuel is added, thus igniting a spiritual explosion that would reach to the "remotest parts of the earth" (Acts 1: 8). Indeed the Antioch church served as the gateway to the world. It was **from** this place that Paul and Barnabus would go. It was **to** this place that they would return.

Antioch Was Willing To Let Them Go

Read again our primary passage in Acts 13: 1-3. Look closely at the final phrase in verse 3 - "**they sent them away.**" The point? It should be obvious. **THERE WOULD BE NO EVANGELISM IN OTHER PLACES IF SOME PLACE DOES NOT SACRIFICE. "They sent them away..."**

Do you think it was easy to let them go? Paul and Barnabus were not leaving on a six day meeting with all the modern conveniences of air travel, warm beds and meal lists. This was an indefinite journey filled with unforeseen perils and problems. And no specific timetable. They left not knowing when they were coming back or if they were coming back. Like a parent facing the day that every parent dreads - the day when their child is no longer a child and leaves the nest; a day of long good-byes, hand-holding, final words, and tears; a day when you turn loose because you know that is the way it must be. Antioch faced that day. It wasn't easy.

The Antioch church loved these men! When they were just beginning their walk with Christ and needed guidance, experience and encouragement, Paul and Barnabus responded (Acts 11: 22-26). They came to Antioch, grounded them in the truth of God and, at the same time, endeared themselves in the hearts and lives of these people. This was a love affair between congregation and preachers, between teachers and students. Paul and Barnabus had done something for these new converts

that no one else had accomplished. And they would never forget it.

Take **Barnabus**. Barnabus came to Antioch at a time when any preacher who went there would be taking a chance - on failure, on frustration, on the unknown. But he went. He went when he could have stayed in Jerusalem. The church was settled there. The apostles were there. Jerusalem had leadership, experience and sound organization. Yet he pulled up roots, left the security of home and moved north to help a new church composed of unknown pagan believers. You don't forget someone who sacrifices like that. And... you don't let them go very easily either.

Or take **Paul**. How they must have loved the preaching of Paul. Acts 11: 26 informs us that for an entire year Paul labored in Antioch teaching "considerable numbers." Paul had a way of teaching that reached into the hearts of his hearers. There may have been better preachers and more eloquent orators (2 Cor. 11: 6), but no one could take the message of the risen Savior and make it live any better than Paul. He had been there. He was a witness with his own eyes. His enthusiasm for the Cross was without comparison. His zeal for Christ was without masks. Paul was real. He loved His Savior and he loved His Savior's people.

It's no wonder that the Antioch brethren gathered to fast and pray (Acts 11: 3). Sure the church was, by now, well established and the sound preaching and teaching would continue through the work of Lucius, Manaen and Simon (13: 1); all of that is true. But the fact remains that you don't lose a Paul and a Barnabus easily. They would be missed. Their absence would be felt.

The brethren gathered to pray; for the safety of their beloved brothers for the success of the Gospel... for their return back to Antioch... Surely they prayed for all of that and more. This was no mid-week "does anybody have any more announcements?" and "Oh yeah, remember Paul and Barnabus in your prayers..." gathering. The church met and fasted and prayed. And, no doubt, cried.

Then they let them go. Somebody had to. There would be no conversions in Pisidia without the support of the brethren back home. There would be no Lydia of Thyatira, no Philippian jailer, no Ephesian elders. Somebody had to let them go and give them the support they needed. That somebody was Antioch. And, when you think about it, Paul and Barnabus endured much as they traveled (2 Cor. 11: 23-28) but somehow they always managed to keep going against all odds. How? How were they able to stand up under the pressure, the persecution, the stress? How? There are a lot of reasons but one that sticks out in view of our present context is this: they knew that the folks back home were spending a lot of time with bowed heads and bended knees. Then when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. "

In a day so many are hungering and thirsting in distant lands for the soul relieving power of the Gospel, may God help us to find more men like Paul and Barnabus who are willing to go. May God help us to find more churches like Antioch who are willing to send, support and en-

courage. It takes both. Search your heart and answer the question - are we really doing the job? I leave you to your own conscience...

WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

Send all questions to:

Weldon E. Warnock

1021 Welford Dr.
Xenia, OH 45385



IS THE CHURCH TO EVANGELIZE?

QUESTION: Isn't it the local church's responsibility to support those from the treasury who evangelize rather than doing the evangelizing itself? It seems to me the Great Commission was given to individuals rather than to the church, and, hence, the church has no obligation to preach the gospel, itself.

ANSWER: It is true the local church's responsibility is to support, financially, preachers of the gospel, but to say that a church may only support preachers, and not evangelize itself, is to deny the church what the Bible authorizes and obligates it to do.

Certainly, the Great Commission was initially given to the apostles, and those whom they baptized were to observe all things Jesus commanded them (Matt. 28: 19). Among those things commanded was to "go teach all nations." This was given before the church was established, and before disciples were baptized into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. But the church falls under this Commission by implication as it has the duty to preach the gospel as well as individuals. We learn this by either a command, positive statement or an example.

Granted, the church uses agencies in doing its work of preaching, but it is the church at work, nevertheless. This is also true in other functions of the church, such as edification and benevolence. Cf. 1 Cor. 12: 28-29; 14: 26-33; Acts 6: 1-6; 11: 27-30; 1 Cor. 16: 1-3. The church is no less involved in evangelizing, as it is in other assigned activities, while employing agencies. Paul rejoiced that the church at Philippi had "fellowship in the gospel" with him (Phil. 1: 5; 4: 15-16). Other churches had fellowship with Paul while he labored at Corinth (2 Cor. 11: 8).

Let us notice several passages that show the local church is to preach the gospel.

1. 1 Thess. 1: 8. "For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad." The church at Thessalonica preached the word far and near.

2. Phil. 2: 16. "Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain." The word is to be "held

out" or "proffered" to a crooked and perverse generation (v. 15).


3. 1 Tim. 3: 15. "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of the God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." W. E. Vine says "pillar" is used metaphorically "of a local church as to its responsibility, in a collective capacity, to maintain the doctrines of the faith by teaching and practice."

4. Acts 13: 2. The church at Antioch sent out Saul and Barnabas on their missionary journey. "And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." When they returned from their journey, Paul and Barnabas "gathered the church together" and rehearsed all that God had done with them (Acts 14: 27).

All of the preceding passages show conclusively that the church has the function and responsibility of preaching the gospel in order to evangelize the world. By implicit and logical deduction, therefore, the church comes within the purview of the Great Commission.

If the local church, itself, has no God-given function to preach the gospel, then why are churches conducting radio and TV programs, cottage meetings, tent meetings, offering Bible correspondence courses, distributing gospel tracts, having gospel meetings and involved in other ways of reaching the lost?

Yes, the church is to preach the gospel!



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HOME SCHOOLING

Some years ago while driving home late one evening from a gospel meeting I was enjoying the host of a call-in talk show that I had managed to tune in from a Northeastern city. The fellow seemingly specialized in common-sense psychology and his advice to troubled callers had a ring of Bible based ethics and wisdom about it.

My complacent consent was shaken, however, when a mother related some problems she was experiencing with her teen-aged daughter, and the radio counselor advised her to take the girl out of school and educate her at home. "How on earth can you just take a kid out of school? I protested. I decided the counselor was some kind of nut and searched for something else on the dial.

I now know the answer to my question, for we are beginning our third year of home schooling with our daughter. She is now thirteen.

Home schooling is not for everyone. I have no intention of mounting a campaign to persuade all Christians to adopt this course. But if you share some of the frustrations that my wife and I have sustained over the training of our children, perhaps you have not seriously considered what we came to recognize as a viable alternative to public education.

We have four children. Three are married and on their own (sort of). I am thankful to God that all are faithful Christians. I remember asking Pete Wilson's advice on rearing children and he said, "Remember that you're bigger than they are and do a lot of praying." We always tried to do that and, in spite of many mistakes I wish we could amend, I think we did a few other things right. But folks, this child rearing business isn't as easy as I used to think it was!

In regard to secular education, we've tried the public schools and a private school operated by Christians. The private school was, in the middle school and upper grades, a much better situation for us than the public education available. One of the principal drawbacks was the expense. It was a hefty financial load. Then too, public education or private, the quality depends foremost on the individual teachers in the classroom. Public schools have no monopoly on good, or bad teachers.

"Why did you decide to home school?" is a question that I almost always hear when people learn what we are doing. Here are some of the reasons:

1. From our experience and observation we believe

the odds are against Christian parents raising their children in the training and discipline of the Lord (Ephesians 6: 4) when the schools take over most of the training and much of the discipline or lack of it.

Most Christians have been alarmed over the influence of humanism in the schools. Even more treacherous is the peer pressure that is constant in that environment. I watched one of my children depart into the far country and almost demolish her life because she wanted so desperately to be accepted. She wanted friends. If I could go back and go at those years again, I assure you that I do not know what I would do differently to avert that situation, at least as far as our personal efforts as parents are concerned.

While our children fared better in a school administered by Christians, I don't believe the percentage of young people who have continued as faithful Christians upon leaving home is much higher there than it is with those who have graduated from public schools. Someone may say, you can't blame the schools. Well, the environment our impressionable youngsters are forced into day after day is largely to blame. I see too many good Christian parents who have given their best and highest efforts to training their children lose them to the world! This is probably the main reason so many churches have problems appointing elders. Parents come off wondering what they did wrong, and the fact is they were playing against a stacked deck.

This is one reason we decided to home school.

2. We have tried to have family worship on a fairly consistent basis ever since we started a family. School schedules and activities have never been cooperative. In the early grades the children often have so much homework that this interferes. Wednesday nights and gospel meeting weeks are especially hectic because the children's lives at school and at home are being run by the teachers.

As children get into high school, if they are athletes or good students, their evening hours are filled with practice and games and school functions. We found that family life was virtually destroyed during the very time that parents need to be exerting the primary influence in the lives of their children. We got tired of it.

3. Academically, there are decided advantages in home schooling. A student in the traditional classroom that does not catch on quickly to a new area of study is often left behind and never catches up. One of my children missed out on basic math in the early grades and was in the dark when algebra was introduced. He was totally unprepared for college math, though for a variety of reasons he seemed to do average work in high school. In home schooling the teacher can be sure that the child has grasped the lower foundations of study before moving on.

Now let me share with you the objections that I have most often heard to home schooling.

1. "But won't your children miss out on the socializing?" I often respond, "Yea, and there are a lot of other advantages too!"

Really. How much good has ever been produced by a bunch of kids hanging out together? Now, I know some association and interaction with the peer group is im-

portant. But sufficient opportunities for this exist apart from school. And in such cases the parents can exercise greater control in the choice of associates.

2. "But doesn't it take a lot of time to home school? Like anything else important, it takes time and it takes discipline. But in many cases this will not prove to be a prodigious obstacle. A child can normally accomplish in three hours of home schooling the work that takes six hours or more at school. If evening work is assigned, the parent can know that this is work the child can accomplish on his own. We have found that we spend no more time teaching our child now than we did in helping with homework when she was in school.

One family in the congregation just finished their first year of home schooling. They have four children. One was in the fourth grade, two (twins) were in the first grade, and one is a pre-schooler. The biggest concern of these parents was the time factor. But the mother, who does most of the teaching, soon saw that she wasn't as busy as last year when she was room mother in three classes, vice-president of the PTA, volunteer librarian, and, as a dutiful parent, just generally on call for any need.

3. "But can they get a quality education?" One might expatiate on the quality education that most children are getting in the public schools. Tests consistently indicate that home schoolers do better, scholastically. We have been extremely pleased with the S. A. T. scores that home schoolers here have tallied.

But as one friend expressed it, "What are you going to do, Green, when they get to the multiplication table?" I think that was his subtle way of asking if there might be subjects I won't be able to handle. In the home schooling organization we belong to, tutors are available at a nominal fee. Video tapes are now available from educational publishing firms that specialize in home schooling. Also a number of fellow Christians in this area with expertise in higher mathematics and many technical areas have indicated that they will be happy to lend a hand.

Meanwhile, our daughter is doing very well. She has developed a love for reading that she did not have before. In the past couple years she has read **Little Women, Tom Sawyer, Huckleberry Finn, Great Expectations, Christy, Heidi**, the ten volumes in the **Mandie** series, as well as several other good books. She is presently reading the **Anne (of Green Gables)** series. We made a good study of the book of Proverbs last school year. She won first place in the seventh grade in a space art contest sponsored by UAH.

4. "But isn't that against the law?" Different states have different laws. Some state laws make it easy on home schoolers; some make it difficult. There has been no specific legislation in the state of Alabama, so it's an open question here. We belong to a local organization of home schoolers that provide certified teachers to help coordinate the curriculum and program. They also give the S. A. T. tests each year and keep records of grades and report cards. We keep records of the work that is done each day. We also belong to a legal defense group that offers legal assistance if the school board decides to take the matter to court. This "insurance"

costs \$100 per year.

I have not written this column with the purpose of answering all questions. We are still quite new to the home schooling program. Some brethren have been doing it for years. But we have found that this approach to education helps us, rather than hindering, to fulfill the Biblical mandate to bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

If you would like to learn more about home schooling, I encourage you to pick up some books on the subject at a religious book store. The books by Raymond and Dorothy Moore (published by Word Books) authorities in education and pioneers in the home school movement, are highly recommended.

SIMPLICITY IN CHRIST

P. J. Casebolt

Rt. 1 Box 210
Middlebourne, WV 26149



STRAINING THE GNAT

"Ye blind guides, which strain at (strain out, ASV) a gnat, and swallow a camel" (Mt. 23: 24).

All of us may be guilty at times of straining out the gnat while swallowing the June bug, or maybe even a camel on occasion, due to inconsistency, or failure to make the proper application of a matter. But it seems that the Pharisees were guilty because of hypocrisy, not just because of ignorance.

I do not profess to know at what point our ignorance or inconsistency may turn into hardness and hypocrisy, nor do I profess to know just when a June bug turns into a camel. But, I still think we can tell a gnat from a camel, and profit from a study of the subject at hand.

We have marveled at the self-acclaimed scholars who profess to be experts on the 1000-year reign of Christ and other symbolic language in the Book of Revelation, but still can't seem to understand other plain, non-symbolic passages concerning the kingdom of Christ.

Then, there are others who can verbalize about the genealogy of Cain's wife, Melchizedek, or some "foolish and unlearned question," but still can't understand plain language like "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mk. 16: 16).

But all this straining out gnats and swallowing camels is not confined to those outside the body of Christ. Some of us in the church can put on a pretty good performance in the act of straining and swallowing, and the subject of the Lord's supper seems to produce its share of this activity.

When I visited the Philippines in 1984, there had been a congregation of "one cup" brethren established since my

visit in 1977. Some zealot had decided that the Filipino brethren didn't have enough obstacles to overcome, and decided to give them another bone of contention on which to chew. And in my area of the country, there is renewed effort on the part of the one-cup brethren (I don't know how else to identify them), to make disciples for their cause.

But, even that does not concern me so much as do the other exercises in nit-picking and gnat-straining done by brethren who use individual containers for the fruit of the vine. In some places, it is next to impossible for a man to "wait on the table" without being criticized for something. He shouldn't use the term "emblem," or "loaf," or "represent," or "common to a spiritual use," or any like expression in his remarks about the Lord's supper.

Since all things are to be done unto edification, it is fitting that something be said on such occasions so as to exhort brethren and inform the unbeliever. But when the audience is sprinkled with gnat strainers just wait-ing to pounce on a man's words, I advise brethren to just quote 1 Cor. 10: 16 and let it go at that. Or call on one of the gnat strainers to offer thanks (or the husband, if his wife is the critic).

I've heard some strange language used by those who preside at the Lord's table, and some of it just cannot be harmonized with the scriptures, but my observance of the supper depends a whole lot more on my attitude of heart than it does on the grammar or choice of words on the part of those who are serving the Lord's supper to the congregation.

Now, if what I have said is all that there is to be said, I doubt that I would have bothered to say it. But now we come to the swallowing of the camel.

Some of the very ones who are the most observing when it comes to finding fault with how we observe the Lord's supper, will forsake the entire assembly of the church, go on vacation or some other jaunt, and not even observe the supper or the other acts of worship associated with it.

Or, some will attempt to eat the supper (which the Lord placed in his kingdom), with digressive groups who corrupt the worship with mechanical instruments of music or other innovations which are more appropriate in a Bacchanalian feast than they are in the worship of the church, which is the temple of the Lord (Eph. 2: 19-22).

We certainly need to "speak as the oracles of God" and we would not discourage those who would teach us the way of the Lord more perfectly. Neither would we offend the conscience of some sincere brother or sister who has a problem with some of the things which are done or said at the time we are supposed to be discerning the Lord's body and shed blood.

But let us examine ourselves, and make certain that we are not "straining out the gnat and swallowing the camel."

"Pray without Ceasing" (1 Thes. 5:17).

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

7637 Fleming Hills Dr. S.W.
Huntsville, Ala. 35802



STUDIES IN TITUS CHAPTER 3

In the previous chapter, Paul describes the true character of Christians that must be manifested in their dealings with one another and the motive behind their action. This chapter deals with attitudes the Christian must have toward unbelievers.

Attitudes toward Unbelievers (v. 1-3)

Christians need to know what their attitude should be toward those of the world, and Titus was responsible for teaching this. Since Christianity is to manifest itself in every relationship of life, we must know how to act toward civil authorities (v. 1). Titus was to remind Christians that the Lord ordains that they be in subjection to such (See Rom. 13: 1-7; 1 Pet. 2: 13-17).

Nero was the Emperor when Paul wrote this letter to Titus and was a persecutor of Christians, yet Christians are told to subordinate themselves to him, and all such authorities. Civil disobedience is never justified, except when those in authority demand that Christians disobey God's stated will. Then Christians must obey God rather than men (Acts 4: 18-20; 5: 29).

"To be ready unto every good work" suggests the limits wherein Christians are to be ready to obey Civil authorities. Respect their position, honor, pray for, and obey, so long as God's will is not violated. Certainly, the Christian must not do evil that good may come.

In dealing with others, Christians must not "speak evil of" anyone. That is, they must refrain from speaking reproachfully, railing at, or reviling anyone, especially rulers and authorities (v. 2). A Christian must not show himself to be contentious, quarrelsome, ready to attack others (forbidden of elders - 1 Tim. 3: 3), but rather one who manifests gentleness and meekness in dealing with all men.

Sometimes Christians are disposed to lose patience with those of the world who follow divers lusts and pleasures, being filled with malice, envy and hate (v. 3). They seem to forget that they once were in "the same boat," and are, actually, living examples of what God's grace can do for those about them who are now as they once were.

The Christians escape from the shameful past is not due to any merit of their own, but rather to the "kindness" and "love" of God, which had appeared, (v. 4) Kindness in this verse is the same as "goodness" in Rom. 2: 4. Love is literally "love for mankind." From the original word comes "philanthropy." Salvation is due to the kindness or goodness of God, based upon his love for

fallen man. This system for saving man appeared or was manifested in the coming of Christ and the perfecting of the gospel (See Tit. 2: 11-12; 1 Cor. 15: 1-4).

Verse five mentions something this salvation did not come by—"works which we have done," what it did come by—"His mercy," and how it was effected—"By the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit."

This, and other "not of works" passages (Rom. 4: 1-6; Eph. 2: 8-9) suggests to some a conflict between any works in connection with salvation and salvation by faith. Martin Luther had this problem and by adding the word "only" to Rom. 3: 28 he became the father of the "Salvation by Faith Only" doctrine, which is in direct conflict with James 2: 24.

This problem is due to a failure to note the sense in which works is used in these passages. This text speaks of works which we (ourselves) have done, and Eph. 2: 8 speaks of salvation "not of yourselves" which does not involve "works" of which one may "boast" (V. 9). Obviously, meritorious works are under consideration in these "not of works" passages. There is nothing that man could, or can, do that makes his salvation a possibility. Man only accepts through an obedient faith that which God's grace and mercy made possible, or provided. There is a great difference between meritorious works and obedience which springs from faith. No New Testament writer ever placed "obedience of faith" (Rom. 1: 5; 16: 26) in contrast with faith. Truly, salvation is by grace (God's love, goodness, mercy) through faith (expressing itself in obedience) and not by works (meritorious) of which one may boast. (Eph. 2: 8-9).

The how of His saving according to his mercy is by "the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit." In our salvation, a regeneration or renewing takes place, involving a "washing" and the "Holy Spirit." "Washing (laver) of regeneration," according to Arndt and Gingrich, is "the bath that brings about regeneration." Obviously, this washing refers to baptism, which the Holy Spirit, through Peter, says saves us (1 Pet. 3: 20). The expression is equivalent to being "born of water and the Spirit" (Jno. 3: 5). The Holy Spirit in revealing, confirming truth (the gospel), and indwelling the Christian, plays a very prominent role in the begetting, birthing, and development of the new creature in Christ. Take away God's grace, the agency of the Holy Spirit, the gospel (death, burial, Resurrection of Christ) or the obedience of faith, and regeneration (salvation) is impossible.

The Holy Spirit, an important agent in regeneration, was promised to all obedient believers (Jno. 7: 37-39; Acts 2: 38-39; 5: 32; Gal. 3: 14) and verse 6 affirms that this promise was fulfilled. The terms "shed" or "poured out" are figurative (The Holy Spirit is a person and cannot be literally poured out), indicating that this promise of the gospel has been given unto us.

Verse 7 states the true position of the Christian based on what has been previously stated. He had been justified (acquitted, declared righteous, made acceptable) by God's grace and, therefore, is "an heir according to the hope of eternal life."

Verse 8 shows Paul's reason for writing these things to Titus, especially those instructions about the basis of salvation and the works Christianity demands, The Lord expects such action on the part of the redeemed, and since such is good and profitable unto man, it follows that a failure would be bad and unprofitable. It was important that Titus affirm this constantly to the saints, lest they lose their hope.


Paul's Final Charge To Titus (v. 9-15)

Not only did Paul want Titus to teach Christians to positively teach and hold to truth and maintain good works, but they must also avoid certain things which will hinder successful evangelism and even destroy the cause of Christ in a given area. Some of these things are "foolish questions, genealogies, contentions, and striving about the law" (v. 9). Timothy was also thus warned (1 Tim. 1: 4; 6: 4-5; 2 Tim. 2: 14, 23). The evangelist or teacher may easily get bogged down in these things which will make the teaching and learning process, so far as truth is concern, a complete failure.

Titus is told to reject a factious man (heretic - K. J.), after the first and second admonition (v. 10). Such an one is not the preacher (teacher) who contends for truth when confronted with an opposing view, but one who contends for theories and practices clearly foreign to or out of harmony with Scripture. Such can be identified not only by what he is teaching, but by his attitude and demeanor. Persistence in advocating things not authorized by scripture, generating strife, is sin and the one who so does brings condemnation upon himself (v. 11).

In Paul's final charge to Titus, two things are emphasized, (1) Doing works worthy of the gospel; (2) Purity of doctrine and the peril of false teaching. Neglect either of these and the salvation of the teacher and hearers will be impossible.

From verses 12-15, a personal note to Titus, it seems that Paul sent this letter to Titus by Zenas, the lawyer, and Apollos. At the proper time, he would send Artemas, or Tychicus to Titus, at which time Titus would leave Crete to join Paul in Nicopolis.



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20TH CENTURY PAPYRI DISCOVERIES: THEIR IMPACT UPON THE NEW TESTAMENT!

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

Between the 3rd and 10th centuries, Greek manuscripts of the New Testament were written in 'uncials' (capital letters); one letter at a time and not connected with other letters. As far as is now known, there are 276 uncial manuscripts in existence.

Another type of New Testament manuscript, was a cursive type of writing originating from the 9th of the 16th centuries and sometimes called minuscule due to its small size, when compared to the 'uncial' or **majuscule** size. There are 2, 795 of these cursive manuscripts known in the 1980's. Some 80% of the cursives are of the Byzantine Text; much like the **Textus Receptus**.

There were also some 2, 200 Greek Lectionaries, which were used in the public worship of the early church. A scribe would prepare a copy of part of a New Testament Book, for study by the congregation. These also were mostly of the Byzantine Text.

For two hundred and seventy years the King James Version had been the dominant English Bible (1611-1881). It was in 1881 that the English Revised Version was completed and published. But in the 1890's, a great mass of 'papyri' began to be discovered in the dry sands of Egypt. Fragments of the New Testament Books, dating back to as early as 125 A. D., were found by Adolph Deissmann and Professor Thumb of Germany, and Grenfell and Hunt of England. These many bits of 'papyri' served to prove that the New Testament had NOT been written in **Classical Greek** but had been written in **Koine Greek**, the commonly spoken Greek of the 1st century A. D.

This surprising fact had not been known by the earlier translators, such as Westcott and Hort, and others. The early Greek lexicographers had given New Testament words **Classical Greek** definitions. J. H. Thayer would prove to be the first lexicographer that identified the changing meaning of Greek words from the **Classical** to the **Koine**. (Example - **psallo**).

Tischendorf listed only ONE papyrus in his writings. Westcott and Hort mentioned NONE! But, in the 1980's, 88 Papyri Manuscript fragments are known and cataloged! Several readings found in the Papyri, agree with the Byzantine or Majority Text, and thus render invalid the Westcott - Hort textual theory.

Contents of New Testament Papyri

MATTHEW—Fractions of 16 different chapters.

MARK—Fractions of 9 different chapters.

LUKE—Eight complete chapters and fractions of 13 additional chapters.

JOHN—Twelve complete chapters and fractions of all 21 chapters.

ACTS—Twenty-three complete chapters and fractions of 25 chapters.

ROMANS—Fractions of 16 chapters.

1 COR. —Fractions of 16 chapters.

2 COR. —Fractions of 13 chapters.

GAL. —Fractions of 6 chapters.

EPH. —Fractions of 6 chapters.

PHIL. —Fractions of 4 chapters.

COL. —Fractions of 4 chapters.

1 THESS — Fractions of 4 chapters.

2 THESS. —Fraction of 1 chapter.

TITUS—Fractions of 3 chapters.

PHILE. —Fraction of 1 chapter.

HEBREWS—Two complete chapters and fractions of 13 chapters.

JAMES—Fractions of 5 chapters.

1 PETER—The complete book, plus fractions of 3 chapters.

2 PETER—The complete book, plus fractions of 2 chapters.

1 JOHN—Fractions of 5 chapters.

2 JOHN—Fraction of 1 chapter.

3 JOHN—Fraction of 1 chapter.

JUDE—Complete, plus a fraction in each of 2 additional Papyri.

REV. —Fractions of 13 chapters.

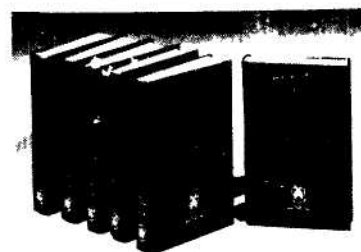
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One of the things that separates the people of God from the multitudes of the world is the willingness to "serve one another." In Paul's letter to the Galatians he wrote: "**For brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another**" (5: 13). Being a Christian does not bring us the freedom to run over the feelings of others, or to stake our claim on our rights regardless of who might be affected by it. Instead the Holy Spirit directed Paul to write that we are to "**serve one another.**" This concept is very different from that of the world. Where the world says, "look out for number one," the gospel says, "**Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; 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).

It appears that this willingness to serve, to be a servant to others, is not natural to us but must be learned. Jesus criticized the Pharisees because they loved to have the preeminence. In Matthew chapter 23 He told them, "**But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chiefs seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi**" (v. 5-7). Then Jesus made the application of His lesson to the multitude by saying, "**But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted**" (v. 11-12). There is always a danger that we too may love the preeminence, the chief seats, the sounds of the praises of our fellowman, and forget who we really are, sinners who have been cleansed by the blood of Christ.

On at least two different occasions reported in the book of Matthew the disciples were involved in discussions of who was the greatest among them. In chapter 18 "**Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven**" (v. 2-4). Later, in chapter 20 James and John came to Jesus, along with their mother, requesting that they be allowed to sit on His right hand and on His left in the kingdom. And verse 24 tells us that the other ten among the apostles

were "**moved with indignation**" against these two brethren. Then Jesus answered them, "**Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many**" (Matt. 20: 25-28). There just isn't any room in the kingdom of God for the pettiness of setting ourselves up as better than others.

In John chapter 13 we see Jesus, just after the Passover, washing the feet of the disciples. This He did, not because they were really in need of physical cleansing. Jesus said: "**Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them**" (v. 12-17).

In Luke chapter 17 we find Jesus again teaching the disciples about being servants. He said: "**But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do**" (v. 7-10). When we serve our Lord, and when we serve one another, we have done only that which is our duty to do. There is no special reward, no extra stars in your crown; just the joy of serving as the Master requires.

Most often when we talk of doing good for others the idea seems to involve money. But very often the thing we have least of is money, and the thing we have the most of is our selves and our time. Is it too much effort, too inconvenient, too time consuming to go by and pick up someone who needs a ride to the assemblies? Is it too belittling to stop by some brother or sister's house to help with some chore they can't handle alone? Are we too important and too busy to stop by the home of a brother or sister who is ill or shut-in and help mow the grass, or wash the windows or whatever may be needed? Certainly there are times when brethren do not want this kind of help, for it makes them feel that we think they can't cope on their own. But we should be willing to inconvenience ourselves to do for others. If we would follow Jesus we must learn to "**serve one another.**"

CHARISMANIA: ERRORS AND EXCESSES OF THE MODERN CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

Ron Halbrook
654 Gray Street
West Columbia, Texas 77486

David R. Reagan went into apostasy and left the churches of Christ several years ago to wander in the wastelands of Premillennialism, denominationalism, and Pentecostalism. Modern converts to Pentecostal concepts who have not joined the old line Pentecostal denominations and who take a softer line on some traditional Pentecostal issues are called charismatics. Reagan conducts his own independent ministry called "Lamb and Lion Ministries" especially devoted to spreading Premillennialism. This work has led him to associate with many Pentecostal and charismatic groups for nearly a decade.

In the April 1989 issue of his paper **Lampighter**, Reagan made several "Observations on the Charismatic Movement." If those of us who oppose all the unscriptural errors of the charismatic movement were to make the same observations Reagan makes, we would be accused of being prejudiced, narrow-minded, and traditional. Speaking from the vantage point of his fellowship and participation in various charismatic activities, Reagan will not be so charged. His observations are objective, and his analysis is accurate. At both the beginning and ending of his article, he highly commends the charismatics for their revival of miracles, "Davidic praise worship," and "victorious living." But the real heart of his article is a stunning expose of the excesses and errors of the charismatic movement, listed below.

1. **THE SPIRIT OVER JESUS.** Reagan laments that "the dove has come to replace the Cross as the symbol of Christianity. That is tragic and un-Biblical. Our salvation is not in the power of the Holy Spirit. Our salvation is in the blood of Christ. The Cross is our hope; not the baptism in the Holy Spirit."

2. **GIFT OVER FRUIT.** Though he attempts to defend miraculous gifts of the Spirit today, Reagan admits that an overemphasis on miraculous gifts has fostered "an incredible degree of spiritual arrogance" and has caused much division. "The frequent result is people who speak in tongues but who cannot control their tongues."

3. **EXPERIENCE OVER SCRIPTURE.** "Visions, dreams, and out-of-body experience have been applauded, even when what was reported ran contrary to the Word. This tendency has opened the Movement to an invasion of the occult."

4. **PRAISE OVER PRAYER.** Reagan has found that charismatics so love to "revel" in praise that they lose the sense of humility which ought to be expressed in prayer and in the confession of our sins before the Lord. "God cannot inhabit the praises of an unholly people."

5. **UNITY OVER PURITY.** "One of the most danger-

ous trends within the Charismatic Movement has been its growing tendency to embrace anyone and everyone who claims to have experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit." Reagan bemoans the fact that charismatics often fellowship "spirit-filled Catholics," who are "in bondage to doctrines of demons like the exaltation of Mary," and accept "spirit-filled" Mormons, who believe that "Jesus is one of several thousand gods created by the supergod Adam, an exalted man!"

6. **COMFORT OVER SUFFERING.** Reagan complains that "those who are not healed are treated with embarrassment and are often condemned for 'a lack of faith.'" "We do not receive glorified bodies until the resurrection," Reagan notes. "All the overemphasis among Charismatics on painless living has eclipsed the true calling of scripture. The fact of the matter is that we are called to suffer for Christ (Rom. 8: 17; Phil. 3: 10; 1 Pet. 4: 13). The scriptures say that Jesus was perfected through what he suffered (Heb. 5: 8-9). Can anything less be expected for us?"

7. **POWER OVER HOLINESS.** Reagan laments an "increasing lust" among charismatics for political and economic power and for the things of this world. "The union of the Church with the world has always resulted in the corruption of the Church. Our quest is to be for holiness, not power (1 Pet. 1: 13-16). Is it any wonder that the power hungry ministry empires of these latter days have been plagued with constant scandal?"

8. **SUCCESS OVER SACRIFICE.** Reagan severely castigates charismatic ministers who trumpet "worldly success as a measure of Christian faith," and who "live in conspicuous splendor, pointing to their ministries." "What a perversion of the gospel! How can those who wallow in materialism claim to be followers of a man who denied the world, who had no place to lay his head, and who died with only one possession—a robe? For them, the Rolex watch has replaced the Cross as the symbol of Christianity."

9. **PARTIAL OVER PERFECT.** Reagan did not include this last point but it is the root of all the errors, excesses, and confusion which is manifested in charismania. 1 Corinthians 13: 8-13 teaches that the miracles of revelation and confirmation provided the means for unveiling truth part by part by part. "But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." When the revelation of all truth was completed, new miracles of revelation and confirmation were no longer needed in God's plan. All such miracles were to "fail," "cease," "vanish away," and "be done away" with the **full** and final revelation of the New Testament. Pentecostals and charismatics of all varieties have been led into many extremes and excesses by trying to hold on to "the partial" when "that which is perfect" has already come.

The Holy Spirit has already fully revealed the gospel of Christ as God's mighty power unto the salvation of every soul. Let us preach that gospel in its simplicity and fullness today without creating unrealistic expectations of new miracles. The miracles served the temporary purpose of bringing the gospel into the world, but the gospel itself is the permanent plan of God for the salvation of souls. Let us preach the gospel of Christ in its original

purity and power, and urge men to accept it and obey it. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16: 16).

WHO HARDENED PHARAOH'S HEART?

David A. Padfield
2612 S. Villa Drive
Evansville, IN 47714

Of all the characters in the Bible, few have caused as much speculation as the Pharaoh who ruled Egypt during the time of Moses. God spoke to Moses about Pharaoh and said, "I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go" (Exodus 4: 21). This promise of God was repeated on several other occasions (Exodus 7: 3; 9: 12; 10: 20, 27; 11: 10).

Many fanciful theories have been devised to explain how God hardened Pharaoh's heart. Calvinists often point to this case and claim that God miraculously hardened his heart by the Holy Spirit. But, as is always the case, their argument fails in the light of other passages.

Three times in the narrative we read that Pharaoh hardened his own heart (Ex. 8: 15, 32; 9: 34). Four other times the Bible simply says his heart "grew" or "became" hard (Ex. 7: 14, 22; 8: 19; 9: 7). The record also indicates the magicians had a hand in the hardening of Pharaoh's heart (Ex. 7: 22; 8: 19).

When we put all the pieces together, what do we find? Pharaoh was an insolent, arrogant and cruel man. He had two reasons for not wanting to release the Israelites: pride and covetousness. It would look bad for a monarch to allow nearly two million slaves to go free. It would also hurt the national economy if he lost his labor force.

It went against the grain for a man like Moses to make demands in the name of Jehovah. Every time Moses spoke Pharaoh's heart grew harder.

The magicians also played a part in the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. By the use of enchantments, they tried to neutralize the miracles of Moses. Robert Jamieson commented, "the art of those ancient magicians, who were not common jugglers, but educated men, was enlisted in support of the idolatry of Egypt... it is not difficult to imagine what immense power those professors of occult science must have wielded over the minds of men in an age of darkness, when the superstition of Egypt was in all its glory."

I suggest God hardens the hearts of men today the same way He did 3, 500 years ago. Some men will never condescend to listen to a simple gospel preacher. The "pride of life" (1 John 2: 16) will cause them to close their ears to the truth. Pride kept many of the rulers from confessing Christ, "lest they be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12: 42, 43).

When a man repeatedly hears the gospel message, yet refuses to obey it, his conscience becomes "seared" (1 Tim. 4: 2). To some men, gospel preachers are the "aroma of life," but to those who have had their conscience seared, they are the "aroma of death" (2 Corinthians 2: 16).

False teachers also help to harden the hearts of some. Pentecostal preachers, by their use of "signs and lying wonders" (2 Thes. 2: 9), have deceived people into putting their trust in things other than God's word. Denominational creeds and traditions have also blinded men to the truth (Matt. 15: 8, 9).

Religious groups like the PTL club have convinced many people that "Christianity" is a sham. It is tragic that the shenanigans of these con artists will cause people to give up on God, and never find out what it really means to be a Christian.

When Jesus prayed for the unity of his disciples, He said, "that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent me" (John 17: 21). The unity of our Lord's followers would help convince the world that the Father had sent Him. The denominations who preach "join the church of your choice" are acting against the prayer of Christ.

Pharaoh had the opportunity to heed the voice of God. I am sure he would give 1,000 worlds like this one for another chance. You have the same choice Pharaoh had. The difference is that he cannot change his decision now, but you can.

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THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

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STEVE KEARNEY, 140 Woodlawn Park Grove, Firhouse, Dublin, Ireland—During the late summer, six were baptized and one restored in the work in Dublin. We have lost over \$200 a month in support and could use help. In May we were visited by the Daniell family from Tonbridge Wells, England. The Colly Caldwells from Temple Terrace, Florida were here later and Colly spoke for us. Also in August we were visited by Les and Linda Maydell from Pretoria, South Africa. Then Bill and Inez Fain from Portland, Oregon visited with us en route to England and Germany. All of these encouraged us much.

WILSON COPELAND, 9747 Union Terrace Lane, Maple Grove, MN 55369 — In the May, 1989 issue of STS, we announced a special two-week door-to-door effort for the city of Duluth, Minnesota and appealed for volunteers to come and help us. The response was beyond expectations. In addition to Melvin Krumrei, Jady Copeland, Rick Lanning, Keith Barclay, Rennie Frazier and myself, we were joined by the following: Wayne Troulias, Fultondale, Alabama; Mike Johnson, Gardendale, Alabama; David Hawthorne, Columbia, TN; Lonnie and Cindy Fritz, Peoria, IL; Roland and Donna Fritz, Woodbury, TN; Orman and Frances Henderson, Deerfield, MO; Kent Persall, Cullman, AL; Carlton McPeak, Mt. Pleasant, TN; David Diestelkamp, Eau Claire, WI; and Albert and Bernice Wanous, Pine City, MN. We distributed about 9,000 pieces of literature, had many at-the-door discussions, and feel much good was done. Twelve adults and ten children visitors attended the meeting the second week, there were seven home Bible studies conducted the week of the meeting. Over 30 other names were left who had interest in having a Bible study. Another door-to-door effort will be made next summer in another Minnesota city. Consider this your "Minnesodian call" and start planning to "come over and help us."

MIKE HUGHES, P. O. Box 2481, Corinth, MS 38834 —We have been with the central church for a year in which time four have been baptized. We have started a bulletin mailed to 300 homes. I typeset two magazines, as a labor of love. One is THE APOSTOLIC MESSENGER published by Walton Weaver and the other is called GOD'S ALTERNATIVE put out by Wayne Goforth. I am seeking sermon outlines from faithful gospel preachers for possible publication in an outline book. I have lost \$100 a month in support. I would like to be placed on the mailing list of those who publish bulletins. Visit with us at Central, located on Central School Road off Hwy. 72 East. Our phone number for directions is (601) 287-6413.

JOE PRICE, 1053 North 1390 West, Layton, Utah 84041 — I have just returned from a two-week preaching trip with brethren Robert W. LaCoste and Dennis Scroggins to Moscow, Idaho and Calgary, Alberta, Canada. In Moscow three teenage girls were baptized into Christ. In Calgary, one brother was restored. Daily classes and evening services were conducted at both places. The churches are similar in several ways. They are small in number. The Moscow church has 15 members and the Calgary church has 25 members. Neither church has an evangelist working with them now but both are interesting in finding a good man to work with them. Moscow is about 75 miles from other churches while Calgary is about 150 miles from the closest congregation. In Moscow, our morning classes had alien sinners each day, with some attending nightly services. At Calgary, about 25 contacts were made with people enrolled in correspondence courses, and two of these came four nights of the meeting.

At both places, the topic of marriage, divorce and remarriage was of great concern. In Moscow, we conducted a 3 and 1/2 hour class one morning on the subject, at which the brethren had many questions. In Calgary, Friday night was devoted to the subject, with questions following our speeches. That session lasted almost three hours. The

brethren are hungry for the truth on this crucial subject, which have caused doubts to arise. Some preachers in the northwest and other parts of the U. S. have suggested that the topic of MDR is too "complex" and "controversial" to take an absolute stand upon it. This has caused brethren in these churches to doubt the truth Jesus taught in Mt. 19: 3-12, et al. We encountered the doctrine that the guilty, put away fornicator may remarry, as well as the doctrine that aliens are not amenable to Christ's marriage law. It is crucial that brethren and preachers in the northwestern part of the U. S. and the southwestern part of Canada take a strong stand for truth on this subject. Doubt must be replaced with firm conviction upon the revealed truth of God. We plan to return and work with them again next year. Any interest in the work at either place may contact, in Moscow, Eddie Northern (208) 882-5242. In Calgary, contact Wayne Bailey (403) 258-1358. For more information you may also call me at (801) 546-6216.

ROBERT H. FARISH, Rt. 4, Box 4384-D, Belton, TX 76513 —The Leon Valley church met in their new meeting house, located at 4404 Twin City Blvd., Temple, Texas 76502, for their first service June 18, 1989. Jerry Fite began a gospel meeting on that date. The preaching was true to the word of God and effectively presented. Our next meeting will be in October with Harold Fite preaching. We are the closest congregation to Ft. Hood, or brethren at Killeen. Tim Coffey is the capable local preacher. I know of no other preacher, young or old, who spends more time and labor in the Lord's vineyard. We feel there is a bright future for the church here. About half the congregation is made up of children, from babes-in-arms to young teens. We invite you to visit with us and solicit your prayers. The last request was not intended as just the right thing to say in closing! We will appreciate your prayers and are confident they will help.

JOHN W. PITMAN, P. O. Box 9, Louisa, KY41230 —Paul Casebolt was here in late August in a well attended meeting. We look for his return in the fall of 1990. In the past six weeks there have been seven who confessed wrongs and one baptized. I need some additional support. If you know of anyone living in this area of the Big Sandy Valley please contact us at the above address or call (606) 639-9546.

TOL BURK, 1500 E. 12th Sweetwater, TX 79556 — After much prayer and continued thought my family and I have decided to move to St. Croix in the U. S. Virgin Islands next June with a view toward spreading the gospel throughout the Caribbean. There are 5 million English-speaking people in the Caribbean as well as 9 million who speak Spanish. There are several brethren already on St. Croix. The cost of living is high. We need help for monthly support, travel funds and equipment to help us in the work. Please contact me at the above address.

RAY VOTAW, Box 801, Springs 1560, South Africa — Because of health problems, I have not been able to made distant trips and have been meeting with the local black church made up of Kwa-Thema Ndabele and Bapedi tribesmen. Although I helped establish this church many years ago, my work with them has been the same as with some 40 other churches I have helped - a case of benign neglect. I'm always surprised and thrilled at how these "neglected" churches have matured - most of the time without me. I strongly believe that a case can be made for a preacher in my type of work making it a point of not being **too** available. These Kwa-Thema brethren have one "official" service in a school hall for a few hours each Sunday morning. Then with some pre-planning most of them go to some member's house

where there are physical and/or spiritual problems. The same is done each Wednesday evening, again, concentrating on those whose faith is weak or who might have become completely unfaithful. These are their plans - not mine. In the past few months there have been several baptisms. Among the "babes" there are several young women and men who receive much encouragement, exhortations and sometimes rebuke from their older, faithful and knowledgeable brethren. I would not want to leave the impression that all the work is without problems, but these churches have shown their ability to cope with their own problems in a decisive and scriptural way.

The winds of change have received hurricane force in this country. Even for an old hand like me (we began our 36th year this week) these are heady, exciting and frightening times. The uncertainties of these unsettling conditions makes the certainties of the gospel more appealing (Jno. 14: 6). This blessed assurance is being held out by God's people from the Zambesi River right down to the tip of the Cape of Good Hope. Be assured that you there in the U. S. A. have many brothers and sisters here.

PAUL WILLIAMS, P. O. Box 324, Eshowe, 3815 South Africa — The Bible Slides Lectures presented by Gene Dumas from Milton, Vermont provoked great interest wherever they were presented which included Krugersdorp, Soweto, Nigel, several places in the Venda, Gazankulu, Zimbabwe, Pietermaritzburg, and Eshowe. In the nearly two months he spent here he got a good introduction to the churches here, and the brethren and visitors received great good from the information on Bible history, prophesy and evidences.

Gene is an energetic, enthusiastic fellow who attracted friends everywhere. We thank him for coming to South Africa and we thank the churches and individuals who made it possible for him to come. Three more were baptized from the work of two native young men, Funda Mpanza and David Nkonyama.

WALLACE H. LITTLE, P. O. Box 751973, Memphis, TN 38175—My wife and I having settled our problems according to God's word, I now want to get back into full-time preaching. I have 25 years full-time preaching experience. Since my military retirement provides for most of my financial requirements, I do not need much additional support. For this reason, I am particularly interested in hearing from small congregations needing a full time man, but unable to provide full support. For personal reasons, I prefer to locate in east Texas, southeast Arkansas, western Louisiana or western Mississippi, but I will consider any place with a need I can fill. After October 1, please contact me at: 3108 Longhorn St., Rosenberg, TX 77471. Phone (713) 232-2890.

PREACHERS NEEDED

HUDSON, NEW YORK — We have been without a preacher for a year and need someone to help us in the gospel. We have 34 people - 6 men, 15 women and 13 children. We are a young group. A considerable amount of support would need to come from other sources. Keith Clayton from Vermont has helped us in door-to-door work and knows about our work and needs. Anyone interested may call (518) 784-9703.

MCMINNVILLE, TENNESSEE — We are in need of a full time preacher for the West End Ave. church here, located about 70 miles S. W. of Nashville, TN. We own our own property. We will be able to partially support a man, although some outside help will be needed. For more information contact: Don Henry, 139 Clearview Dr., McMinnville, TN 37110. Phone (615) 473-3425.

AUGUST CHRISTIANITY MAGAZINE

Paul Earnhart is to be commended for the August issue of CHRISTIANITY MAGAZINE which deals with the family. In addition to some excellent articles touching various aspects of the subject, Paul

has written some excellent material dealing with the reasons why an alien is under law to Christ and also what repentance demands. In his usual style, it is forthright, perceptive, and carefully thought out.

THE NEW HERMENEUTICS

Those who attended the Nashville meeting last December will remember the call from some institutional speakers for a "new Hermeneutic" and decrying the old way of demanding a precept, approved apostolic example or necessary inference to prove something from the New Testament. Well, on October 14, 1989 there was an all day forum on this subject at Freed-Hardeman College. Two speakers who think there is a need for a "new hermeneutic" spoke. They were Thomas H. Olbricht of Pepperdine University and C. Leonard Allen of Abilene Christian University. Two men who opposed this also spoke. They were Howard W. Norton of Oklahoma Christian University and Earl D. Edwards, Freed-Hardeman College. The sessions were moderated by Stafford North of Oklahoma Christian University. The flyer sent out by Freed-Hardeman College said: "Does one learn God's will by command, example, and necessary inference or by some other approach? The overall theme will focus on "the new Hermeneutic" and how to interpret and understand God's will.

Are the New Testament letters epistolary or constitutional? Should there be fuller fellowship with the evangelicals? Is instrumental music in worship in the realm of judgment? Should there be more latitude for disagreement?

Will there be a division in the church with reference to interpretation of Scripture? THESE ARE IMPORTANT QUESTIONS.

COME HEAR THEM DISCUSSED. "

Indeed! They are important questions. All is not at peace among the institutional folks, either.

LULU PENCE

On September 21, Lulu Pence, longtime member of the Expressway church in Louisville, celebrated her 100th birthday. She is one of my favorite people. She lives with Geneva, her oldest child (who is now 80). Her husband passed away at the age of 90. They were married 65 years. Sister Pence and daughter are remarkable people. They attend every service (including every night of every gospel meeting) at Expressway. She is seldom sick. Geneva says she gets up singing each morning. Her mind is keen and she is always pleasant to those around her. She concludes her day by reading her Bible from 7 P. M. to about 9: 30 P. M. When her eyes get tired she sometimes reads only 1 1/2 hours. She then prays for 15 minutes or more and says she has much to be thankful for. She usually reads an entire book at one sitting. Short epistles such as Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians she reads all in one night's reading. She commented to Paul Woodward, an elder at Expressway, that in reading she always does three things to help understand what she reads: (1) "I find out who is doing the writing"; (2) "I learn to whom he is writing"; and (3) "I determine why he was writing." She has read all the Old Testament at least 25 times and the New Testament well over 100 times.

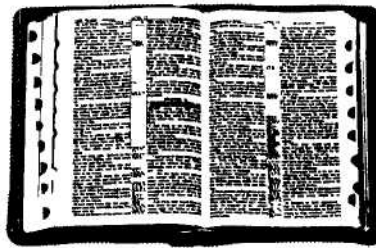
I love her sense of humor. Last year, I attended a party for her in the home of the Woodwards on her 99th birthday at which time R. J. Stevens was present and sang "Happy Birthday" to her, before we all joined in. I saw her a few days later at a meeting at Expressway and told her I enjoyed her party and had never attended a 99th birthday party before. She looked at me with a twinkle in her eye and said, "Well now, you want to take good care of yourself so you won't have to miss the one next year. It'll be something." Well, I tried to take care of myself, but regrettably was out of the city in a meeting and was not able to attend. But a large crowd of people did attend and it was really something, according to all accounts. Thank God for dear people like Lulu Pence and the grand and worthy example they set for the younger.

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	388
RESTORATIONS	76
(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 XXX

DECEMBER, 1989

NUMBER 12

THINK ON THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 1631
Lutz, FL 33549



FOR WHAT ARE WE PREPARING?

This country is full of people who are busy providing and preparing for something, but what is it? In the process of this preparation for something in the future, they are losing their souls. Money plays a vital role in the building of new barns in which to bestow their goods for the future. That makes money the most important commodity sought after, and most people are after as much of it as they can get. There is very little importance to how they get it, just so they can get more and more. Several high ranking political figures have recently been toppled from their positions of power because of their greed for money. Even the ones who brought their downfall are guilty of the same things.

Jesus taught a lesson in the form of a parable, recorded in Luke 12: 16-21, in which he pictures a man who gives all his talents and time preparing for this life by way of wealth. He gave no thought to the life which is to come. When he reached the point in preparation for this life, when he thought he was secure, he said to himself: "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." This, I think, is the goal of most preparation today. Men will work hard to build a house in which to live. They will provide comfortable surroundings for their families and themselves. They will labor and save to get an education for themselves and their children. They will work and save to buy an automobile, boat, sports equipment, good clothes, and lots of fun and pleasure. They will accumulate

estates for later life and put their trust in that which is laid up for a "rainy day." All of it for this life of a few short years, and when this is done they think they are safe and all is well. But suddenly they face death and eternity. There is no real lasting security in earthly things, yet these are the objectives of the great majority of people on earth today. All here is vanity and vexation of spirit.

To what does the average person look forward in eternity? After the man in the parable had assured himself that he could now enjoy life because he has been successful in preparing for his life here, God said to him, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" What a terrifying sentence! What a great miscalculation! What a horrifying realization! All his work for nothing. He had spent all his effort in providing for this life, and when he was ready to enjoy the fruits of his labors, his life is about to end. What would happen to all his work? What good was all the preparation for this life now that he was going to die? How many millions are now in the same situation as this poor man.

As a conclusion to this parable, and the lesson which the Lord wants men to get: "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." Every man and woman who emphasizes preparation for the comforts and pleasures of this life and ignores preparation for eternity is in the class with this man who lost all. The day will come, and it may be sooner than you think, when your life will be required. Then what will happen to all those things which you prepared for this life? More importantly, what will you do about the failure to prepare for the judgment and for eternity?

It is right to provide for those things we need in this life, but it is wrong to push into second or third place the things of the Spirit. The most important preparation before us now is not the needs for the present, but for the time when we shall all appear before the Lord to account for the lives we have spent on the earth. When you put "making a living" before "serving the Lord" you are preparing for the present and not for eternity. No argument can change that. When you put "having a good time" before "obeying God" you are making provisions for this life, and are not rich toward God.

Preparation for eternal life requires a faithful and constant study of God's word, an obedient life of worship and work for the Lord, and a faithful and regular attendance to all opportunities for public worship and edifying. Do not be a fool, as Jesus said this man was, but make your preparation for eternal life.

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VOLUME 30 DECEMBER, 1989 NUMBER 12

Published Monthly at
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Second Class Postage Paid at Brooks, Kentucky
and at an Additional Mailing Office
USPS-487-440

CONNIE W. ADAMS, Editor

Office of Publication
52 Yearling Drive
Brooks, Kentucky 40109
Phone (502) 957-2257

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Editorial

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EDITORIAL STEW

Carnal Weapons

Paul did not wage spiritual war with carnal weapons. He said "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds)" (2 Cor. 10: 3-4). His enemies at Corinth had resorted to carnal weapons in their attempts to discredit him. Paul was willing to defend his apostolic work, but not with the use of carnal tactics.

All of us could learn a needed lesson from this. It is one thing to contend for a principle of truth and it is another to resort to misrepresentation, innuendo and half truths. In recent months material which has appeared in this paper has been misrepresented in a church bulletin from the northwest. Half of an editorial was presented with the format of the editorial page of this paper with no indication that only a portion of the article was given. Another article was reprinted out of this paper with my editorial note omitted. Then, another article was reprinted with a note stating that Donnie Rader had included this article while I was in Norway, and leaving the implication that it would not have gotten by me otherwise. The truth is, I had had every article for that issue already set in type before going to Norway and Donnie certainly did not try to slip something by me. Really folks, we can do better than this. We respect the right of others to disagree with what we have to say and certainly know that everyone will not agree with all we have to say. We have tried to fairly represent those with whom we disagree and must confess to disappointment on the part of those who resort to carnal weapons in spiritual battles.

H. E. Phillips' Mother

With sadness we report the death of the mother of H. E. Phillips. She was in her 92nd year when she passed away in a Clearwater, Florida hospital. She was a special lady. What a legacy she has left behind! The faithfulness of children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, whose lives have reached out to touch and bless multitudes, speak eloquently in tribute to her and to her husband who preceded her in death. Our heartfelt love and sympathy are extended to brother Phillips and all the family.

Donnie Rader to Alabama

Donnie Rader and his family are moving to Lexington, Alabama to work with the good church there. They

begin there on December 10. Brother Rader has worked at Manslick Road in Louisville, where we attend, for nine years. He was only 20 years of age when he came to work here. His work has been superior. I told someone recently that he is 29 going on 45. His knowledge of the word is rich and full and he expresses it both orally and in writing, with power, conviction and persuasion. He knows what he believes and why he believes it. He is not ashamed nor afraid to teach the truth on any subject. Donnie and his wife, Joan, will always have a special place in my heart. When my first wife died, they stepped in to take on the office work for the paper. It was not an easy time but they worked tirelessly to provide continuity to the business affairs of the paper and we did not miss a single issue. Donnie writes a column and our readers are familiar with the excellent material he produces. On two occasions he has edited the paper for a month each time to give me a breather. Not only will they be missed at Manslick Road and in the Louisville area, but I shall personally miss him and his family. He will continue to write for the paper and help in a number of ways. We wish for him a profitable work in Lexington, Alabama and hope that his family will be happy in the new location.

No-Class Doctrine in Nigeria

Several brethren in Nigeria have contacted me within the last year requesting materials to use in combatting the no-Bible class doctrine which some are pressing now in that country. There are many good churches and some able preachers in Nigeria. A number of faithful men from the USA have preached there at different times. Allan Martin and Bill Beasley were recently there for a few weeks before going on to India. SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES goes to a number of the native preachers there and we hear from some of them all along. I. O. AKU wrote me recently urging us to pay them a visit and preach among them. Nothing would please me more, though circumstances are not favorable to that end just now. I hope that several good brethren will be able to visit and work with them on a short term basis. If any of you have some material which would help combat the no-class doctrine, why not write to him: I. O. AKU, P. O. Box 12587, Umungasi Aba, IMO State, Nigeria, West Africa.

New Appearance in January

We are adding color to the front and back pages of STS with the January, 1990 issue. Otherwise our basic format will be the same. We hope you like the new look. We will continue to present material from good men for your study.

Meetings for 1990

At present the following meetings are scheduled for 1990. We would be pleased to greet many of our readers.

- | | |
|-------|---------------------------------|
| March | — Central City, Kentucky (5-11) |
| | Riverdale, Maryland (18-23) |
| April | — Round Hill, Kentucky (1-6) |
| | Westfield, Indiana (9-15) |

- May — W. Main St., Barnesville, Ohio (exact date to be set)
Loudon, Tennessee (exact date to be set)
- June — Chiefland, Florida (exact date to be set)
Hillview, Nashville, Tennessee (17- 22) July
— Hickory Grove, Kettle, Kentucky (exact date to be set)
- August — Lakeview, Hendersonville, Tennessee (5-10)
- Walnut Lane, Springfield, Missouri (20-26)
- September — St. Peters, Missouri (9-14)
Oak Ridge, Tennessee (24-30)
- October — Golden, Colorado (14-19)
- San Bernardino, California (21-26) Fresno, California (Oct. 28-Nov. 2) November — Lang Road, Houston, Texas (5-11)
- Seffner, Florida (18-23)

Home For The Winter

We look forward to being home through the winter. The elders at Manslick Road have asked me to preach here during these three months and I have gladly agreed to do so. Because of the extra load of preaching, I will only have one extra class this winter. It will meet each Friday morning at 10 and will study the theme: TROUBLED OVER MANY THINGS. We look forward to a few quiet evenings by the fireplace. This is one of the simpler joys of life and provides balm for the spirit.

Religious Supply Center

The folks at Religious Supply Center, 4001 Preston Hwy., Louisville, KY 40213 continue to provide efficient service for all your literature, books, maps and communion supply needs. They have a large inventory and friendly people who are concerned for your satisfaction. Marie Ricks has now retired and with her husband, has moved to the country a few miles from Hopkinsville, Kentucky. But David, Phyllis, Wimpy, Mike and Wendy are still on hand to fill your orders. While it seldom is necessary anymore, we remind you to order books and supplies from the bookstore and keep paper business separate. They are two separate businesses. But we are always glad to recommend the bookstore to our acquaintances. Their toll free number is: 1-800-626-5348.

A Little Too Sweet

Solomon said "It is not good to eat too much honey: so for men to search their own glory is not glory" (Prov. 25: 27). A little honey is good to the taste and probably good for many things, but an overabundance can make you sick. It is hard not to think of this when confronted with those whose mannerisms are just a little too sweet. It is like trying to eat a whole bucket of honey.

All of this reminds me of a preacher who reported an incident in which he was in a meeting in Tennessee and was given a quart of freshly made sorghum molasses. He had to fly back to Texas and decided to pack the sorghum in his suitcase. When he claimed his luggage, he saw this brown, sticky substance oozing from his suitcase. He opened it to find everything stuck together, including

sermon notes and pages of his Bible. He said he decided right then that anytime he was given something to eat, he would either refuse it, or else sit down right there and eat it all.

"Long Sermons, Or..."

Some of us have justifiably been charged at times with preaching longer than was necessary to drive home the point. But, once I was accused of preaching over an hour when actually I spoke 45 minutes. You see, we sang four of those two-page-spread songs, every verse. Then we had announcements for over 10 minutes and a prayer that was about 15 minutes, and lengthy concluding remarks which half-soled the sermon. Now, I'll take my lumps for how long I preach, but please don't hang me with long songs, long prayers and announcements for which I am not responsible. Can anyone else identify with this problem?

Thanks To Our Readers

We want our readers to know that we do not take you for granted. Your business is much appreciated. Many have been readers ever since the early years of this paper's existence, though many have joined us more recently. In either case we thank you for subscribing and for reading what we have to say. Always measure whatever is taught here, or elsewhere, by the Scriptures. Tell your friends about the paper. It would make a nice gift for a friend, new Christian, son or daughter. Many of the younger generation have been started as readers of good material because of the thoughtfulness of others.

Billing

Every now and then some reader wonders why we don't put a renewal date on the address label. Others want us to insert a bill in the paper. We have found that we have a much higher rate of renewals by sending a bill with first class postage. The rate of return more than justifies the expense. While some would renew from such a label arrangement, many would never notice it. When we started publishing this paper we resolved to treat it in as businesslike manner as possible. Thanks for the various suggestions, but that is how we are going to do it. Nobody will misunderstand when it is time to renew when they get a bill.

Thanks to Jane Ashbrook

Our office work is efficiently and faithfully done by Jane Ashbrook. The office is organized better than it ever has been and that part of our operation runs smoothly with very few errors. She keeps all this up to date whether we are at home or gone, as we are much of the time. Jane is the wife of Lee Ashbrook, one of the elders at Manslick Road in Louisville, and the daughter of A. C. and Hallie Grider. We are fortunate to have her excellent services.

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ANTIOCH — THE POWER OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

If you've been studying along with us this year in Acts, you have by now been impressed with the growth, development and commitment of the local church at Antioch. Here is a living demonstration of what God aims for every congregation to be. From their enthusiastic beginning in chapter 11 to their evangelistic commitment in chapter 13, everything about this group is exemplary. Our study continues...

After seeing their sensitivity to divine will and their willingness to let Barnabus and Saul go on their first preaching journey (13: 2-3), we now aim the spotlight on yet another commendable characteristic. In verse 4 we learn that the preaching journey begins in Cyprus and verse 5 adds — "And when they reached Salamis, they began to proclaim the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews; **and they also had John as their helper**" (emphasis mine — w. a.). Apparently there had been another preacher working at Antioch who was not mentioned among the five listed in 13: 1. His name? John Mark.

But back up to 12: 25. There we read, "And Barnabus and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled their mission, taking along with them John, who was also called Mark." Apparently John Mark was brought from Jerusalem to Antioch to work with the church in order that he might gain the necessary experience which would help him develop as a preacher of the gospel. And now as the first journey begins, Mark is asked to travel with and assist Barnabus and Saul (13: 5).

A First Century Preacher—Training Program

The Antioch church understood the absolute necessity of doing its part in teaching and training young men to preach. How often do we preach the all-sufficiency of the local church in edification and rightfully point out that the responsibility for training young men belongs to the church and is not to be delegated to a school... but how often do we actually do it?

This is not a knock against formal education. The fact is, I would encourage anyone who wanted to preach to get some higher education if at all possible. Gaining information in the classroom, fine tuning communication skills, getting a firm grasp of grammar and the English language, learning to exegete passages and studying the finer points of hermeneutics, Greek and restoration history all have their place and will help any

man who seeks to preach. Yet even with all of these advantages, nothing takes the place of personal, practical experience. Nothing.

The Antioch congregation gave John Mark the opportunity to come in as a young man and gain practical experience that would prove invaluable throughout his life as a preacher. Every preacher soon realizes (sometimes the hard way!) that learning Greek and Hebrew, developing homiletical skills and researching the facts of reformation history does not always meet the needs of real people in a real world. It's like the story I heard about where one fellow "tried out" at a place and during his talk with the men was asked, "Bro. , do you know any Greek?" He replied with hesitation, thinking that his answer would probably end his chances of being asked to move. "No," he said, "I never had the opportunity to study much Greek..." The questioning brother responded, "Good! You're just the man we've been lookin' for. The last preacher we had spoke more Greek than he did English!") Hmmmm. There's a lesson there

Preaching is about people! (Mark 12: 37; Matt. 10: 16). It's about working with elders... learning to take advice... getting along with folks... writing... visiting ... encouraging... comforting... confronting... It's all of that and more. It's working with people in a hundred different situations. Take a good long look at the preach-ing work of Jesus. He teaches us two principles that we must never forget: (1) people are the only reason for preaching, and (2) no one cares how much we know until they know how much we care!

Those principles cannot be absorbed by means of textbooks or classroom lectures. They come by practical experience and "on the job training." As I look back on a brief eleven years of preaching, I'm thankful for three churches who gave me exactly that. Three churches who for three summers invested their time, financial resources and (most of all) their patience to help me grow as a preacher. The service they rendered to me was invaluable. I shall never forget them. Yes, I think I know what John Mark felt when he reflected back on Antioch. It's a feeling of appreciation that never goes away.

What I am saying is this: **THE LOCAL CHURCH SHOULD WORK TOWARDS THE GOAL OF TRAINING YOUNG MEN TO PREACH THE GOSPEL.** Now, not every church can do that at a given time and not every older preacher is cut out to be a good role model. But those who can, should. And those who can't should work in that direction.

And many are. Nothing has encouraged me these last few years as much as learning of more and more churches fulfilling their responsibility in this area. Some are bringing in a young man for the summer while others are opting for longer commitments to those who are out of school and desiring a place to begin. Sure it cost a lot of money. But the life-long return more than makes it worthwhile. There is nothing a local church can do that will prove as profitable.

Guidelines and Goals

Whether working with a young man for a summer or for a longer period of time there needs to be some

guidelines and goals suitable to each specific situation. Good communication at the very start is essential in any situation. Both young preacher and congregation need to be informed as to the particulars of what is expected of each. There are, I believe, five major areas that need to be emphasized in any such program of work. They are: (1) the disciplining of time, (2) studying, (3) preaching and teaching, (4) writing, and (5) relating to people in different situations. Some of these obviously overlap but all are essential for a young man to have a practical learning experience.

Although I have not asked them, I feel confident that the following men would be glad to share their advice and insight along these lines. All three have had a lot of experience working with young men and their counsel would surely be prudent. They are: Harold Comer, 1200 Nashville Hwy., Columbia, TN 38401; Wayne Chappell, 521 Cumberland St., Florence, AL 35630; L. A. Stauffer, 948 S. Geyer Rd., St. Louis, MO 63122. Also, I have a three page outline especially designed for a summer program that I would be glad to send to anyone interested.

I am confident that John Mark did not go to work with Paul, Barnabus and the Antioch church without some goals and guidelines. Undoubtedly he knew his role and what was expected of him. And undoubtedly he could, like others today, point back to that experience as a key period in his life.

I wonder... I wonder how many young John Marks slip through the cracks and give up on life's greatest work all because they didn't receive the needed guidance and encouragement at the most critical time. Yes, it is the responsibility of the local church to train preachers. Antioch knew that. She did her part. So are some today.

ACCEPTED OF HIM

(2 Cor. 5:9)

Donnie V. Rader

4724 E. Manslick Road
Louisville, Kentucky 40219



SOCIAL DRINKING (PART 1)

Drinking and drunkenness is a problem nearly as old as man. Gen. 9 records the story of Noah's drunkenness. Ten chapters later we read of Lot doing the same.

We all know that drunkenness is a sin, but what about social drinking? What about drinking responsibly? What's wrong with an occasional beer or wine? Surely you are well aware that such is not only practiced, but defended by some Christians.

Let's carefully consider that social drinking is a sin for the following reasons.

It Is Drunkenness

1. The Bible condemns drunkenness. The apostle Paul wrote, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess..." (Eph. 5: 18). In listing the works of the flesh that causes one not to inherit the kingdom of God, the same writer mentions drunkenness (Gal. 5: 19-21; cf. 1 Cor. 6: 9-11).

2. Social drinking is drunkenness. The word translated "drunk" "signifies to make drunk, or to grow drunk (an inceptive word, marking the process of the state) to become intoxicated, Lk. 12: 45; Eph. 5: 18; 1 Thess. 5: 7" (W. E. Vine, Vol. I, p. 343). Bullinger says it means "to grow drunk (marking the beginning...)"

1 Thess. 5: 6-9 presents a contrast of being "sober" or being "drunken." The word translated "sober" means "to be free from the influence of intoxicants" (W. E. Vine, Vol. IV, p. 44). To be free from the influence of intoxicants would be to not drink. In this passage the only alternative to not drinking is drunkenness. So, you either don't drink or you are guilty of drunkenness.

Alcohol in any amount weakens one's inhibitions and he thus loses his ability to think and reason clearly. Howard Pyle of the National Safety Council (in 1970's) said, "Everyone loses some self-control and clearness of mind when even small amounts of alcohol are taken..." (**Today's Health**, Dec. 1962). He further said that a few drinks impair accuracy of steering and slows down decision making. He also added that just one or two drinks makes the chance of an accident twice as high. Thus, one who drinks socially (even one or two drinks) is drunk to some degree!

3. Social drinking leads to a greater state of drunkenness. All who are alcoholics or drunkards started with the first drink. Many (if not all) started as social drinkers. One example is the case of M. Norvel Young who was arrested in Sept. 1975 for drunken driving. He later said that it all started in the late 1960's by having a drink after dinner to just relax. Gradually it

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got out of hand.

It Is Strong Drink

1. Strong drink is condemned in the Bible. The Proverb writer said, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Prov. 20: 1).

2. Any of our drinks today are strong by comparison.

It is generally agreed that the wines of Palestine reached a maximum of 5 to 8 percent alcohol. Some may put it as high as 7 to 10 percent. Furthermore, there were no distilled beverages since that process did not begin until the 13th century.

When we compare the alcoholic content of some beverages today, they must be put in the category of **strong** drink. A report from the International Narcotic Research Foundation (appearing in **Teenage Christian**, 1961 and reprinted in **The Voice of West End**, March 1, 1964) states that **distilled** beverages (whiskey, gin, brandy, etc.) contain 45% to 50% alcohol. **Malt** beverages (beer and ale) contain much less, though still strong according to the wines of the Bible day. Beer has 4% to 6%. Ale has about 10%. **Wines** usually have 10% to 14% alcohol. Some that are fortified have as much as 20% or more.

No matter what type of alcoholic beverage you may drink, it will be the strong drink that the Bible condemns.

It Is Harmful

1. Drinking is harmful to the body.

a. Alcohol is a poison. Former Surgeon General Dr. Parran said, "Alcohol is the major cause of insanity and poisoning from it causes more deaths than from all our most infectious diseases" (as quoted by Wilson Adams in Guideposts, Sept. 25, 1983). The very fact that one becomes **intoxicated** (toxic = poison) from alcoholic drinks would suggest that it is a poison and harmful to the body.

b. Alcohol is a narcotic—a drug. Dr. Haven Emerson of Columbia University said, "Alcohol is one of the group of drugs classed as narcotics, whose dominant action is a depression of function of all forms of living tissue" (as quoted by T. O'Neal in **Walking In Truth**, Oct. 1976). Dr. Harris Isbell, of the Research Branch of the United States Public Health Service Hospital in Lexington, KY, said, "Statistically, alcohol is the most important of all addicting, depressant drugs" (*ibid.*) The International Narcotic Research Foundation reports that Beer contains **lupulin** which is a narcotic. "It is an interesting observation that BEER'S LUPULIN comes from the HOP PLANT which the science of botany classifies as belonging to the same family (MORACEAE) as does the HEMP PLANT, from which is derived the MARIJUANA cigarette with its Cannabinol" (International Narcotic Research Foundation).

c. Alcohol damages the brain. A **Reader's Digest** article (June 1970) entitled "Alcohol and Your Brain—Some News for Social Drinkers" stated that there is now strong evidence that there is no safe level of alcohol below which alcohol fails to damage and destroy groups of brain cells. The article pointed out that the only difference in a heavy drinker and the social drinker is

one of the degree of damage. I like what Thomas Edison said, "I have better use for my brain than to poison it with alcohol. To put alcohol in the brain is like putting sand in the bearings of an engine. "

2. It is a sin to harm the body. We may think that our bodies are our own to do with as we please. To the contrary, listen to the apostle Paul, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6: 19-20).

In our next article we will see that social drinking is condemned (without reference to how much one drinks), how social drinking influences others and some of the arguments made to justify social drinking.

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BREAKING OF BREAD

QUESTION: Was the breaking of bread in Acts 20: 7 a common meal? What about v. 11?

ANSWER: No, the breaking of bread in Acts 20: 7 was not a common meal, but it was the Lord's Supper. W. E. Vine states, "of the breaking of bread in the Lord's Supper, Matt. 26: 26; Mark 14: 22; Luke 22: 19; Acts 20: 7; 1 Cor. 10: 16; 11: 24." "Break bread" in Acts 20: 7 has the same connotation as it does in Acts 2: 42, namely, the Lord's Supper.

However, "breaking bread" in v. 11 seems to indicate a common meal. After Paul restored life to Eutychus, Luke records, "When he (Paul) therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed." No one broke bread, according to the text, except Paul. But in v. 7, the disciples came together to break bread and Paul preached unto them. All ate in v. 7, but only Paul ate, it appears, in v. 11.

The assembly is broken up by Eutychus falling out of the window. Subsequent to that, they come back up and Paul talked a long while, even till day break. Notice that Paul "preached" in vv. 7, 9, but the "talked" in v. 11. The word "talked" means to "converse with, talk with" (Thayer, p. 444). Vincent says, "It denotes a more familiar and confidential intercourse than **discussed**, in ver. 7" (**Word Studies in the New Testament**, Vol. 1, p. 559). Lenski states, "He ate in due time and then spent the time until dawn, still quite a space of time... in conversation — Luke purposely changes from 'to discourse' which he has used in both v. 7 and 9. One may even guess what the conversation was about — the miracle which all had witnessed was in the minds of all" (Acts of Apostles, p. 831). So, there seems to be a termination of the assembly in v. 9, but an informal meeting till day break in v. 11. Luke and companions had departed earlier (v. 13)

The word "eaten" in v. 11 is from the Greek word **geuo**, meaning, "to take food, eat: absol., Acts 10: 10; 20: 11" (Thayer, p. 114). In all other passages it is always used to mean a common meal. Hence, we conclude that Paul broke bread and ate for physical nourishment as they did at Jerusalem in Acts 2: 46. If the first day of the week (v. 7) was Roman time, then the Lord's Supper was observed on the Lord's day (Sunday), but Paul ate the food in v. 11 on Monday morning. If it was Jewish time, the Lord's Supper was

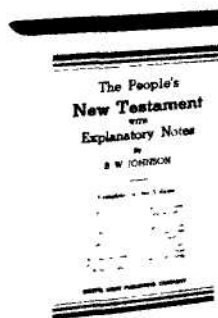
observed on the Lord's day, and Paul ate a common meal on Sunday, sometime after midnight.

Obviously, the food Paul ate was totally separate from the assembly of the church in v. 7. A common meal eaten in such assembly would have been in direct violation of 1 Cor. 11: 21-22. Church functions and social functions are not to be mixed. Several brethren have not learned this as they have the church building kitchens and dining halls in which to eat.

J. W. McGarvey, and others, take the position that the breaking of bread in both vv. 7 and 11 was the Lord's Supper. He wrote in regard to v. 11, "They returned to the upper chamber, where lights were still burning, and where the elements of the Lord's supper were as yet undistributed... and this followed the commemoration of the Lord's death" (New **Commentary on Acts**, Vol. 2, p. 181). McGarvey contended they were keeping Jewish time, the first day beginning immediately after the Jewish Sabbath that ended at sunset on Saturday. McGarvey may be correct in his view on v. 11. We cannot be absolutely sure. We can know for sure, however, that Acts 20: 7 is the Lord's Supper, the same as in Acts 2: 42, and we are to partake of it on the first day of every week.

The "breaking of bread" by the disciples at Troas occurred once a week. "And upon the first day of week, **WHEN** (emph. mine) the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them." If this was a common meal, they were sparse eaters, eating just once a week. I imagine they had to eat more often than that—at least I do. Plainly, it was the Lord's Supper!

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BREAD OF LIFE

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PHILEMON

Introduction

Paul, evidently, wrote this short letter to Philemon during his first imprisonment in Rome. Timothy joins Paul in writing this letter. Apphia and Archippus are also addressed. Apphia is thought to be Philemon's wife and Archippus, son, who was a preacher in Colosse (Col. 4: 17). Philemon was, evidently, a resident of Colosse. In the beginning of the letter, Paul referred to himself as "a prisoner of Christ," Timothy as "a brother," Philemon as "our dearly beloved and fellow laborer," Apphia as "beloved," and Archippus as "our fellow soldier" (v. 1-3). The letter deals with faithful brothers in the Lord.

The letter was written concerning a slave of Philemon, named Onesimus, who had gone to Rome as an escapist. In Rome Paul had converted Onesimus and writes Philemon to receive his slave back, "not as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved." In the letter, Paul sets forth principles that should govern Christians in their relations to each other, and the concern and action of a servant of God for those he converts. Paul exemplifies the concern and actions one who converts others should manifest toward his converts in order that both might please God and be saved. From this standpoint, this letter to Philemon blends with the theme of Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus—"Saving thyself and them that hear thee." The action of the apostle in this Philemon-Onesimus episode, and the instruction he gave, emphasizes essentials to salvation for all saints in every age. A history of this incident is not important, but how Paul acted, and the instruction he gave, is important to faithfulness for all Christians.

Paul Expresses Gratitude For Philemon (v. 4-7)

Paul was a praying man and often gave thanks for Philemon in his prayers (v. 4). Philemon was most likely a convert of Paul (v. 19), and being concerned for, and much in prayer for one's convert should characterize every teacher of the Word.

The thing that gave Paul grounds for rejoicing and thanking God for Philemon was his faith, love and fellowship in the Lord and "toward all saints" (v. 5-7). Philemon was a member of the congregation at Colosse; a man with a living faith who not only showed his love for the Lord but also constantly "refreshed the hearts of the saints." Not only did Paul have grounds for giving thanks to God for Philemon, but saints everywhere had grounds to do likewise.

Every saint should seek to be a credit to the Lord and

to others, **and** those who are should be praised and mentioned in the prayers of others. The living faith of Philemon involved entertainment of saints (hospitality), service to all saints, and knowledge of every good thing—graces that are sadly lacking in many professed Christians today. A sobering question for all of us is, do fellow Christians have grounds for expressing gratitude for and giving thanks to God for me?

Our Rights (v. 8-9)

Before writing Philemon as to what he should do about his run-away slave, who was now a Christian, Paul speaks of a right of his that he was foregoing in dealing with this situation. In this Paul was an example of an ethical principle that Philemon and all saints should follow.

Paul was an apostle, endowed with all the authority and rights of an apostle. In speaking of his rights in his letter to the Corinthians, he said we (apostles) have a right to "eat and drink, lead about a wife, to forbear working" (1 Cor. 9: 4-6). Paul, however, sometimes felt it best to forgo, or not assert his rights. In the matter of Philemon and Onesimus, Paul could have used his authority (right) as an apostle to demand that Philemon receive back his slave. Yet, for love's sake, the apostle chose to exercise his right to forgo his right to demand, and in tenderness and love "beseech thee."

Paul mentions two factors for this action—(1) Being Paul the aged, and (2) Being now a prisoner of Jesus Christ (v. 9). Paul was probably about 55 years of age at this time, which many would not consider an "aged" person. He was old enough, however, to be considered among the elders, and considering Paul's extensive labours and dedicated service as an apostle, he certainly deserved the submissive respect that elders (older, wise, experienced men) should have. The fact that Paul was at this time a prisoner (mentioned twice in this letter—v. 1, 9), himself in need of mercy, would suggest to Philemon that Paul was, in a sense, like the slave, Onesimus, and help persuade Philemon to yield to Paul's request. So, the elderly, experienced apostle who, as a prisoner, could fully relate to the slave, was willing to forgo his right to command Philemon, and use his right to beseech in love and tenderness. What a wonderful example Paul here gives of a teacher dealing with his converts and Christians dealing with one another!

Trouble has often come because some insist upon their right to do or say certain things, which may, indeed, be a lawful right. But, a Christian also has the right to give up his lawful right, and often does, in order to preserve peace and promote the welfare of others. Of course, a Christian is never justified in giving up his right (obligation) to stand for truth (the faith), but in our dealings with one another in numerous matters, Christians need to exercise their Christian liberty to give up certain rights for the sake of love and peace. This is the thing Paul did in this text and was asking Philemon to do.

The Transforming Power of Christianity (v. 10-16)

Onesimus became a different man when he was converted. In some way, Onesimus came in contact with

Paul while the apostle was a prisoner in Rome and was converted to Christ, enabling Paul to speak of him as "my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds" (v. 10).

Paul said he was beseeching Philemon for Onesimus which suggests that both felt it was right for the slave to return to his master. Becoming a Christian caused Onesimus to change his desire to flee from his master to a desire to return. He also changed from unprofitableness to profitableness (v. 1). The nature of his unprofitableness to Philemon, other than his running away, is not stated. Some have speculated from verse 18 that he stole from his master. Regardless of this, the fact is that whereas he was unprofitable, as a Christian he would be profitable as a slave and as a helper to Paul and the cause of Christ.

There is great power in the gospel of Christ to transform lives. This case is an example. The gospel has changed many worthless citizens into good, upright citizens, worthless fathers and mothers into worthy parents, and worthless husbands into faithful, dutiful husbands, etc.

Both Paul and Onesimus felt that returning of the run-away slave, and forgiving and receiving back by Philemon was necessary to fulfilling the principles of Christ (vs. 12-16).

Slavery, itself, is not a situation that following the principles of Christianity would establish, but eventually abolish. The gospel of Christ does not permit men to own and control others as chattel. Obedience to the gospel does not set a slave free from a master—from duties and responsibilities to which he is committed. It, on the other hand, sets forth principles of dealing with one another for both slaves and masters (Eph. 6: 5-9); Tit. 2: 9-10). Ultimately, following the principles of Christianity would abolish slavery.

While Onesimus, in obeying the gospel, had obtained freedom from the bondage of sin, he did not have freedom from all obligations in the various relationships of life. Giving up his ill-gained freedom from slavery and returning to his master, with a mutual reconciliation between brothers in Christ was a part of the change that becoming a Christian demanded, and that Paul was trying to bring about. This principle would demand that unfaithful husbands, who abandon wife and children for another, if they decide to become Christians, must turn from their illegal acquisitions and be reconciled in their original commitment. Being baptized into Christ does not wash away previous commitments and obligations.

Onesimus, after his conversion, was very profitable to Paul there in Rome and would continue to be so, but regardless of Paul's desire and need for him, this principle of restoration and reconciliation was paramount. Paul loved both Philemon and Onesimus, his sons in the gospel, and could forget about his own wishes and desires and urge what was right and best for his children in the faith. Paul's concern for the conscience and fellow-ship on the part of his converts is an example for all who are active in leading others to Christ. Teaching, beseeching, and being a proper example of right and truth is as important to ones eternal salvation as leading them

to obey the gospel. The change that begins with one's becoming a Christian must manifest itself throughout one's remaining life (Ref. 2: 10). This, "fathers in the gospel" must ever teach and emphasize if they are to be successful in "saving thyself, and them that hear thee" (1 Tim. 4: 16).

Philemon's Receiving Responsibility (v. 17-21)

It was as much Philemon's responsibility to receive Onesimus as it was for Onesimus to return to his master. The slave was to return and prove himself a profitable servant and Philemon was to receive him "no longer as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved" (v. 17).

Paul argues that if Philemon accepted him as a partner (one with whom he had fellowship in the Lord), then accept Onesimus on the same basis—a brother in the Lord. If there was the matter of previous injury or debt standing in the way of Philemon accepting his servant back, Paul says "put it on my account—I will repay it" (v. 18-19). Here is another statement that shows what the preacher is willing to do and sacrifice for his convert. However, Paul reminds Philemon of what he owed him (converted and brought him into all the spiritual blessings in Christ); a debt that Philemon, evidently, was seeking to pay but would never get it liquidated. He would do well to follow his "father in the gospel" in sacrificing for a brother in the Lord.

Philemon's proper response in this matter would give Paul great joy, and fully justify the confidence he had in Philemon to always do the right thing (v. 20-21).

Conclusion (v. 22-25)

As Paul closes this letter, he expresses confidence in his being released from prison when he requests that Philemon "prepare me also a lodging; for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you." He next makes mention of others, fellow workers, who sent greetings to those at Colosse. Epaphras, a fellow prisoner, called a "fellow-servant" in Col. 1: 7; Mark, atone time unfaithful to Paul (Acts 13: 13; 15: 36-41) but later fully redeemed himself (2 Tim. 4: 11); Aristarchus had accompanied Paul in returning from Macedonia (Acts 19: 29) to Jerusalem (Acts. 20: 4) and was with Paul when taken prisoner and went to Rome with him, either as a fellow prisoner or voluntarily; Demas, a companion of Paul in Rome, but who evidently forsook Paul after the second imprisonment (Col. 4: 14; 2 Tim. 4: 11); Luke, Paul's usual traveling companion, the beloved physician, who wrote Acts of Apostles and the Gospel of Luke (Col. 4: 14; 2 Tim. 4: 11).

The letter closes with a prayer that Philemon, Ap- phia, Archippus, and the church in Philemon's house might ever have in their hearts the favor of Christ and a fullness of all the blessings that being in Christ brings.

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APOSTASY—SAME OLD SONG

God knew that when his people began to prosper in the land of Canaan, that they would be "lifted up" in their own hearts, and forget the commandments of their God (Deut. 8: 10-20).

God also knew that his people would have to first dethrone him in their hearts and lives before they embarked upon their course into idolatry and apostasy, by replacing God with an earthly king (Deut. 17: 14-20). This is why God later told Samuel, "... for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them" (1 Sam. 8: 7).

In other words, God's people would have to change the form of government, or organization, before they could even begin to do the other things which they were bent on doing. Of course, they needed an excuse, so they used Samuel's sons as an excuse for changing the system (1 Sam. 8: 5).

Sound familiar? Well, it should, for it is the same old song to which apostasy always marches. Maybe a slight change in the lyrics or the tune, but still the same old song. "The church isn't doing anything, so lets change the system." Or, "It is better to do something wrong than to do nothing." Or, "I like the way we are doing it better than the way you are not doing it. "

It makes no difference even if the church is doing something (what Christ has authorized), or if those following the head of the church are doing as much or more than those who resort to human organizations and reasoning. When God's people get restless and become discontent with God's commandments, they will find a way to depart from God, even if they have to sing the same old song that is as old as apostasy itself.

In the first great departure from the faith, the organization of the church had to be corrupted and breached before brethren could do the other things which they wanted to do. So it has ever been, and shall be.

Christ is "head over all things to the church" (Eph. 1: 22), or "the chief Shepherd" (1 Pet. 5: 4). On earth, the highest and only expression of authority in Christ's church are elders over the local church (Phil. 1: 1; 1 Pet. 5: 1-3). The qualifications for this office prove that the Holy Spirit is not just talking about "older" men with reference to elders.

This is why Paul warned the elders at Ephesus to be

on guard against those "grievous wolves" from the outside, and those on the inside "of your own selves... speaking perverse things..." (Acts 20: 28-30). True to Paul's warning, the oversight of the church was first corrupted with: presiding elders," "metropolitan bishops," and finally, the universal elder, bishop, or "pope. "

In the next great apostasy of the 1800's, the organization of the church was first corrupted with the missionary societies supplanting the work of the local churches, with their elders. This began in 1849, followed by corruption in worship (instrumental music), in 1859. As long as the organization of the church remains sound and strong, false doctrine and false practice can be kept out of the worship, the work, and mission of the church. Once the authority is corrupted or changed, anything can be introduced.

In the next apostasy which came to a head in the 1950's the same old song was sung, and the autonomy of local congregations and elders was supplanted by the "sponsoring church" and "sponsoring elders" and "sponsoring homes." When we reject the organization which Christ placed over his church on earth, we reject Christ as head of the church, just as Israel rejected God as their king. We may give lip service to divine authority, even as the Samaritans "feared the Lord and served their own gods..." (2 Ki. 17: 33). But not those who claim to do things "in the name of Christ" are justified, but those who actually do his will (Mt. 7: 21-23).

Now comes another apostasy of the 1980's, and of what proportions it shall be when compared to other apostasies, I know not. But I do know that the same old song is being sung by its song leaders.

First, you have to change the organization and structure of the local congregation, which was given by Christ, the head of the church. Do away with the office and qualifications of elders. Eliminate the treasury with which the local congregation does its work. Dissolve the assemblies of the local church.

It matters not that the preachers who undermine the authority of elders and up speaking with authority reminiscent of the "evangelistic authority" of a few decades ago. And, it matters not that even though the treasury of the church is dissolved, these preachers still find a way to get money to support the song they want to sing. Too, even though they trade the public assemblies of the church for satellite assemblies on a smaller, impromptu basis, the preachers still need some convenient outlet for their doctrines and practices. As their movement continues to grow, watch for their assemblies which they say are not really assemblies to grow also. Then, the leader(s) of the apostasy can usurp the authority of elders (unofficially and informally, of course).

But the key to a successful apostasy, in any century, is to first undermine organization with its duly constituted authority, be it God, judges, Christ, elders acting on behalf of the chief Shepherd, or just the local congregation acting and moving under orders from the head of the church.

The lyrics or the melody may be changed in a few places, but if you listen closely, you will hear the unmistakable strains of Apostasy's theme song.

1960

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1990



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—Donnie V. Rader

THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

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FRED A. SHEWMAKER, 1101 S. W. Dorchester St., Lucie, FL 34983—Fort Pierce is located on the east coast about halfway between West Palm Beach and Melbourne, Florida. The church began here through a number of coincidental circumstances. A brother moved to Ft. Pierce from Miami. Another brother from California moved to Vero Beach. A couple in Stuart with three small children had recently been baptized while on a visit to Arkansas and were attending at West Palm Beach. Steve Willis, who then preached at Eau Gallie, brought these folks together and thus the church was formed.

Services were first held in the house of Paul Rogers. Later they were conducted in a rented house behind a shopping area at 4131 S. U. S. 1. At present the church meets in a building at the southwest corner of the same shopping area. If you plan to retire to Florida, or should winter in this area, please consider the church at Fort Pierce. Grover Stevens of Lubbock, Texas is to be with us in a meeting Feb. 4-9, 1990. All are welcome.

MRS. OSCAR SMITH, 2411 Tannehill Dr., Houston, Texas 77008—I wish to sell the library of my late husband, Oscar Smith, Jr. There are between 500-600 books, including some old and rare books owned by his father, Oscar Smith, Sr. Some books date back to 1823. They are in good shape with few exceptions. A list is available.

FROM AROUND THE WORLD

STEFANO CORAZZA reports the baptism of four at Udine, Italy. Two of these were aged women and two were young men who are sons of members there. Membership there is now 21 with attendance of about 30. The church has a new rented location which is better suited to their needs. **MIKE ROSSER** of Brea, California recently visited the work there.

PAUL WILLIAMS in South Africa reports four baptisms in his last two monthly reports. There is a great deal of activity going on among the churches in that country. A recent tent meeting in Middleburg,

Cape, a farming town, drew over 150, filling the tent to overflowing. Two men preached at each service and then answered questions.

FERNANDO VENEGAS reports three more baptisms in Mendoza, Argentina. Two of these had been listening to the daily radio program. There are 26 enrolled in a correspondence course. **TOM HOLLEY** is now working in Mendoza along with brother Venegas.

JOHN HUMPHRIES is again in India to work with the local preachers in training classes and preaching in as many places as possible.

RODY GUMPAD CALLED FROM THE Philippines to tell of a typhoon which hit Luzon and which caused much damage. His sister and father-in-law were killed and one of his children was hospitalized with injuries. Several of the members lost their homes and goods.

PREACHERS NEEDED

PORT WALTON BEACH, FLORIDA—The church here needs a mature and experienced man to work with us. We are small in number. We want someone who will give us book, chapter and verse. We are located in the panhandle of northwest Florida, the most beautiful part of the state. Growth potential here is great. Anyone interested may call H. N. Eubanks (904) 243-3603, or Pat Patterson (904) 862-8563, or write: Northside Church of Christ, 520 Mary Esther Cut-Off, Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32548.

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BILL WATKINS, 202 Castile Circle, Panama City, FL 32413—This 50-year-old preacher with several years of preaching experience desires to relocate. Call (904) 236-1414.

TO WARM THE HEART WHAT ONE TEENAGER CAN DO

Tim Wadlington died of cancer on September 8 at the age of 17. I attended his funeral at Eddyville, KY. He attended services at Suwanee, near the Kentucky Lake/Lake Barkley area where he and other teenagers published a bulletin called **THE RIVER OF LIFE**. I knew Tim from summer camp and he had preached for me in Owensboro on one occasion. I had known the Wadlington family for over 20 years. During the past three months the Suwanee congregation has had 12 baptisms—people with whom Tim had studied. Satan gained nothing by Tim's death. Four of those obeyed the gospel the night before the funeral while Tim's body was at the funeral home. His influence was also felt in the Bartlett, Tennessee church where 10 baptisms occurred recently. The Wadlington family worshipped there while Tim was receiving treatment at St. Jude's Children's Hospital. He also left a list of people he had talked to or was making plans to contact.

Tim was a bright boy. He was a 1989 honor graduate, Beta Club president and a member of Who's Who Among American High School Students. His plans to attend Florida College this fall were prevented by the cancer. But his first love was the Lord and he was a great example for young and old. He did more in 17 years than many of us do in 70. "And he being dead, yet speaketh" (Heb. 11: 4).

Tim will be missed by his loved ones and in the ranks of gospel preachers. As I reflect on lessons learned from Tim, I think of the following:

- (1) It is possible for a teenager to be a faithful, active Christian in this world of sin and corruption. He did not use his youth as an excuse.
- (2) It is not how long you live but what you do with your life that matters.
- (3) Instead of giving in to peer pressure, sometimes we have to go against the flow. And we can, both young and old.
- (4) Instead of withdrawing from society and feeling sorry for himself, he placed greater value on others.
- (5) In a sense we are all terminal and we need to realize the urgency of preaching the gospel now.

What about your prospect list? Dick Blackford, **THE LAMPLIGHTER**, Tuckerman, Arkansas

THOMAS H. ICARD, GOSPEL PREACHER AT REST

The November issue of STS carried a brief notice of the sudden

death of the editor's brother-in-law, Thomas H. Icard who preached for the church at Richlands, Virginia. Tom left us at the untimely age of 48, 10 days short of his 49th birthday. He was converted at Hillsboro, Ohio while a teenager, by Lloyd and Gwen Barker. He encountered much opposition at home but remained faithful through it all. Lloyd Barker and Bill Pierce encouraged him in his first attempts at preaching. He attended Florida College where he met my sister, Glenda. They were later married and moved to Hillsboro, Ohio where Tom had a good job for a printing company. He began to preach by Sunday appointment at Neville on the Ohio River and also preached some for the church at Winchester, Ohio. His desire to preach the gospel predominated and they sold their nice house and moved to Wellsburg, West Virginia for his first full time work. He remained there for about five years and the work did well. Then they moved a few miles north to Tomlinson Run, PA (just across the WV line near Weirton, where they labored for seven years with the largest congregation in the state. Great good was done.

From there they moved to Virginia Beach, Virginia to help a struggling work. The church at Tomlinson Run continued to help in support. At this place the work was difficult and financial times were hard. In order to survive, Glenda had to work part of the time and Tom did some part time work with handicapped people who came to love him dearly. The doctrine of Charles A. Holt was brought in by means of a family there which had the **EXAMINER** sent to all the members. Tom did his homework, learned what this was about and did all he could to contain the damage. But great damage was done.

Upon leaving Virginia Beach, they moved to Richlands, in the mountainous western tip of Virginia where again they had to have outside support. The church there was making progress. Fourteen were baptized there in the last year or so. Tom had home studies going for miles around. The small church at Richlands badly needs a mature preacher of the gospel to work with these good brethren.

Tom went quietly about his work. He always sold himself short and felt that others could do the work better than he. This was not false modesty, but reflected the genuine humility of the man. He was good to his family, including our parents who loved him as a son. He was like a brother to Wiley and me. Their three children, Howard, Jim and Patti, are all faithful Christians. In recent years Tom did an increasing amount of meeting work, always acquitting himself capably. His preparation was thorough. His office reflects a man of studious habits and orderliness. His many overhead charts were of professional quality.

The ranks of gospel preachers are thinning and I don't see as many young men preparing themselves to enter the list as once was the case. Somehow we have to turn this around. Men like Tom Icard are badly needed. Since his death, we have learned from so many of his impact upon their lives. His memory is sweet, not only to our family, but to so many whose lives touched his and who were made better because of it. The prospects of Heaven grow dearer all the time.

—Editor

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Index for Volumes XXIX and XXX

A BURNING FIRE — Jim Deason

Attitudes and Issues.....	379
Burning Fire, A- About This Column.....	277
Entangling Affairs.....	402
Healthy Body, The.....	307
Jesus, The Good Shepherd.....	525
Newborn Babies.....	495

ACCEPTED OF HIM — Donnie V. Rader

Gambling - Part 1.....	280
Gambling - Part 2.....	303
Letting Up On The Acceleration (No. 1).....	156
Letting Up On The Acceleration (No. 2).....	186
Love Not The World - Fornication & Adultery - Part 1.....	468
Love Not The World - Immodesty.....	428
Must One Be A Member Of The Church Of Christ To Be Saved?.....	326
Social Drinking - Part 1.....	566
Standing On The Promises (Part 1).....	10
Standing On The Promises (Part 2).....	34

BREAD OF LIFE — Herschel E. Patton

Philemon - Introduction.....	569
Studies In 1st & 2nd Timothy -1 Timothy 4.....	9
Studies In 1st & 2nd Timothy - 2 Timothy 3.....	352
Studies In 1st & 2nd Timothy - 2 Timothy 4: 1-5.....	399
Studies In 1st & 2nd Timothy - Dealing Properly With Age Groups-Widows.....	56
Studies In 1st & 2nd Timothy - Treatment Of Elders/Gen. Admonitions.....	81
Studies In 1st & 2nd Timothy - 2 Timothy 2: 14-26.....	305
Studies In 1st & 2nd Timothy - 2 Timothy 1.....	229
Studies In 1st & 2nd Timothy - 2 Timothy 2: 1-13.....	259
Studies In 1st & 2nd Timothy -1 Timothy 6.....	206
Studies In Titus (Ch. 1: 1-9) Introduction.....	472
Studies In Titus (Ch. 2: 1-6) Sound Doctrine Involves Proper Conduct.....	523
Studies In Titus (1: 9-16).....	496
Studies In Titus Chapter 3.....	545

DIVINE COMMUNIQUES — Colly Caldwell

Christians In The Work-Place.....	5
Divine Communique: "Marriage Is Honorable" (Heb. 13: 4).....	470
Give Attention To The Right Things.....	77
How Many Resurrections?.....	308
In His Name.....	30
Inspiration Of The Scriptures, The.....	134
Marci Did Right.....	249
Rapture And Revelation Of Christ The Divine Message.....	282
What God Has Joined Together.....	452

EDITORIAL — Connie W. Adams

And Wash Away Thy Wives.....	203
Boston Hierarchy, The.....	3
Editorial Stew.....	275
Editorial Stew.....	563
Emotional Arguments.....	299
H. E. Phillips - A Hero Of Faith.....	395
Hating Every False Way.....	251
Jesus, The Preacher.....	419
Learning From The Prophets.....	467
Luther Blackmon - A Hero Of Faith.....	27
Nashville Meeting, The.....	323
Observations On Romans 14.....	539
Preaching In Italy.....	179
Principles Of Truth And Men Of Honor.....	347
Return Visit To Norway, A.....	515
Rich In Goods, But Ragged In Spirit.....	443
Sensitive Subject, A.....	51
Smoother Than Butter And Softer Than Oil.....	75

Teaching Children To Behave In Worship.....	371
EDITORIAL LEFT-OVERS — Connie W. Adams	
About News Items.....	528
Attentive Youth.....	264
August Christianity Magazine.....	552
Bag Of Diversions, A.....	4
Catholic Relics.....	240
Could You? Would You?.....	432
Danville Special Training Classes, The.....	192
Differences.....	312
Don't Wear Fur.....	336
Down Memory Lane.....	264
Dressed For The Occasion.....	456
Elders And Financial Records.....	240
Exchange On Domitian Persecution.....	384
Exchange On Domitian Persecution.....	408
Few Words To Writers, A.....	384
Foro Appia.....	192
How To Treat Your Wife.....	240
I Think.....	312
Just To Warm Your Heart.....	240
Light Successfully Concealed.....	432
Lula Pence.....	552
New Hermeneutics, The.....	552
Norway Revisited.....	504
Passing Scene, The.....	216
Persecution, Anyone?.....	456
Pictures In Poetry.....	456
Pound, Virginia.....	480
Prayer Request.....	408
Preacher's Pants, The.....	480
Presidential Politics And The Middle East.....	88
Singin' The Blues.....	312
Sister Marie.....	456
Speaking A Different Language.....	336
St. Paul's Has A Large Baptistery.....	192
State Lotteries.....	88
State Of The Church.....	384
Subversion Of Theophilus, The.....	408
Supporting Gospel Meetings.....	336
Swift Punishment.....	336
Thanks To Donnie V. Rader.....	528
That's Friendly.....	384
To Brethren In The Philippines.....	312
Traditions.....	408
Traveling And Worship.....	432
W. Carl Ketcherside Is Dead.....	504
What Impressed Martin.....	384
Without Guile And Hypocrisies.....	64
World-Class Gossips.....	216
Worshipping The Lesser God.....	336
GUEST EDITORIAL — Donnie V. Rader	
Converted, But Not To The Lord.....	131
Fornication And Adultery (Part 2).....	491
GUEST EDITORIAL — Wilson Adams	
Kids Under Construction.....	155
Who Are The Sound?.....	227
MY SERVANTS THE PROPHETS — Rodney M. Miller	
In The Shadow Of The Temple - Part 1.....	164
In The Shadow Of The Temple - Part 2.....	181
Living In The Shadow Of The Temple.....	80
PRECEPTS AND PERCEPTIONS — James R. Cope	
Busy, Happy, Committed.....	36
SIMPLICITY IN CHRIST — P. J. Casebolt	
Apostasy - Same Old Song.....	571
Christ, The Savior Of The Body.....	132

Index for Volumes XXIX and XXX—Continued

Cut Off Occasion	163	When To Be Silent	161
Discipline And First Place	476	When To Speak	52
Giving No Offense	377	Where Do You Stand On Divorce?	474
Into All The World, Except	209	WAKE THE WORLD AND TELL THE PEOPLE — Wilson Adams	
It Hath Been Said... But I Say	255	Antioch - The Power Of The Local Church -	
Kel And Winnie	83	"First Called Christians"	421
Ministers or MC's	430	Antioch - The Power Of The Local Church -	
Powerful Word, The	49	1st Cent. Preacher-Training	565
Present Distress, The	187	Antioch - The Power Of The Local Church -	
Procrastination On The Plains	285	A Church With Balance	477
Smokeless Brethren	453	Antioch - The Power Of The Local Church -	
Some Do And Some Don't	402	Committed To Excellence	349
Speedy Sentence, A	4	Antioch - The Power Of The Local Church -	
Stone Which The Builders Rejected, The	327	Committed To Greater Service	517
Straining The Gnat	544	Antioch - The Power Of The Local Church -	
Tactics	233	Five Men Who Accepted The Challenge	492
Tears And Truth	526	Antioch - The Power Of The Local Church -	
Two Songs And A Prayer	304	Introduction & Explanation	301
Where Did God Go Wrong?	351	Antioch - The Power Of The Local Church -	
Wishful Thinking	498	Power Amid Persecution	396
SINCERE WORDS — Dick Blackford		Antioch - The Power Of The Local Church -	
Benefits Of Hell, The	466	Preachers and Churches	541
Can Any Good Thing Come Out Of Corinth?	497	Antioch - The Power Of The Local Church -	
Dinosaurs Attack Children!	252	Preachers And The People	328
Epaphroditus (I) My Brother	518	Antioch - The Power Of The Local Church -	
Mamas, Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up To Be Preachers	8	Selfless Love	444
Portrait Of The Bride On Her Birthday, A	378	Booze I - Maryland	76
Sorrows Of Old Age Without The Lord, The	309	Divorce, Remarriage And The Non-Christian/	
Unification Theology Of Sun Myung Moon (2), The	54	Bright Promise or False Hope	372
Unification Theology Of Sun Myung Moon (3)	84	Doctrine- Does It Really Matter?	201
Unification Theology Of Sun Myung Moon, The	34	Historical Confirmation And Doctrinal Certainty	28
When You Marry One Who Is Not A Christian	283	People	53
THE NEW MAN — Gary Henry		Taking It Back	129
Life In Jesus Christ	1	WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE? — Weldon E. Warnock	
Life Indeed	189	Breaking Of Bread	568
Some People Are Truly Different	136	Church, The Individual, And Religious Journals, The	139
What It Means To Be A Christian	32	Disfellowshipping Brethren	159
THINGS MOST CERTAINLY BELIEVED — Julian R. Snell		Eating Blood	205
Another View Of The Thief	258	Human Organizations Teaching The Bible	31
Attitude Toward The Word Of God	279	Is Jesus The Son Of God, Eternally?	254
Workman Worthy Of Hire	236	Is The Church To Evangelize?	542
THINK ON THESE THINGS — H. E. Phillips		Killing Our Brethren	374
Doctrine And Discipline	153	Marriage And Children	324
Editorial Policy Of Searching The Scriptures	393	May A Church Draw Interest?	350
Faith And Works	25	One-Cup Doctrine	471
For What Are We Preparing?	561	Re-baptism	519
From The Heart The Mouth Speaketh	537	Sign-Language	229
Gospel Which Was Preached Of Me, The	489	Spiritual Gifts and Talents	79
Hypocrisy Of The Pharisees - No. 1	177	WRITTEN FOR OUR INSTRUCTION — Frank Himmel	
Hypocrisy Of The Pharisees - No. 2	204	Ahaz' Altar	522
If You Believe The Bible	441	God's Charge To Joshua	494
Kingdom Of Christ, The	73	Jealousy Among The Lord's Servants	446
Proselyting Disciples Away	225	Learning From The Old Testament	420
Restore Such An One	297	Adams, Connie W.	
Searching The Scriptures	369	Christ And The Church	97
They Have Rejected Me	513	Adams, Stan	
Three Phases Of Digression	417	Grow Up!	257
What Are We Trying To Do?	273	Adams, J. Wiley	
Why We Do Not Have Unity	345	Extravagant Love	380
USING THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT — Ken Green		Adams, Martin W.	
Distinctive Preaching	278	Life In The Fast Lane	325
Don't be Ignorant	398	Adams, Wilson	
Home Schooling	543	Christ, The Head Of The Church	105
Something New, Something Borrowed	375	Berkley, Warren E.	
Watergate And The Resurrection	208	Taking The New Age Challenge Seriously	331

Index for Volumes XXIX and XXX—Continued

- Blackford, Dick**
Temple Of The Lord, The 110
- Boone, Richard**
Having Godly Homes 404
They Hate Him—They Abhor Him—Amos 5: 10 357
- Caldwell, Colly**
God's Eternal Purpose In Christ — An Overview Of Ephesians. 101
- Clayton, Joe Nell**
In Memory Of Bra. H. L. Bruce 6
- Cooper, James**
Things That Last 142
- Cope, James R.**
What It Means To Preach Christ..... 99
- Curry, Carl**
Much More Than Elders 62
- Dancer Jr., J. F.**
Soundness? Or Perfection?..... 355
- Edwards, Johnie**
Bible Tables..... 381
- Focht Jr., Doug**
Look What's Behind The Wall 475
- Fultz, Norman E.**
Is Modesty A Lost Virtue?..... 188
Little Man Who Walked Tall Is Fallen, A..... 38
Parable Of An Indifferent Employee, The 403
What's Happening To Our Young Folk? 231
- Galloway, Wayne T.**
Killing A Giant..... 58
- Gibson, John R.**
Can't Make It On One Income..... 332
- Graham, Bobby L**
Seven-Count Indictment, A 59
- Green, Ken**
Reconciled In One Body By The Cross 109
- Greeson, Wayne**
Chaos Or Order?..... 358
- Grider, A. C.**
About Marriage and Divorce 286
Is There Too Much Soft Preaching? 33
- Hailey, Homer**
Statement From Homer Hailey, A..... 300
- Halbrook, Ron**
Alcohol, Parents And Children 166
Charisma: Errors and Excesses Of The Modern Charismatic
Movement..... 549
Churches Cooperating In Benevolence: God's Plan Will Work... 333
Giving Goliath His Due: The Philistines In Archaeology And Bible
Hist 237
This Earth Will Pass Away 501
- Hester, James W.**
If We Neglect So Great A Salvation..... 501
- Himmel, Frank**
All Things Work Together 321
Fly In The Ointment, A..... 14
Great Faith..... 212
- Hutto, George**
Effeminate By Perversion 310
- Jenkins, Ferrell**
Domitian Persecution (A Response), The..... 426
Domitian Persecution (A Response), The - No. 2 449
- Johnson, Mike**
Swift To Hear, Slow To Speak, Slow To Wrath..... 382
- Kimbrough, Earl**
Christ And The Renewed Mind..... 116
- Martin, Luther W.**
20th Century Papyri Discoveries: Their Impact Upon The New
Testament..... 547
- Papal Power..... 356
Prayers To The Dead And Prayers For The Dead..... 60
Psalms, Hymns And Spiritual Songs 330
Thunder Over The Vatican Council..... 11
- Mauldin, Leon**
Status Of Divorced Persons, The 160
- Ogden, Arthur M.**
Domitian Persecution, The 423
Domitian Persecution, The - No. 2..... 447
Rebuttal..... 451
- Osborne, Harry R.**
Divorce, Remarriage And Courage: A Parallel Between Ezra And
Us..... 234
- Padfield, David A.**
Who Hardened Pharaoh's Heart? 550
- Parks, Jerry**
India Trip 1987 37
- Patton, Herschel E.**
Glorifying God In The Church..... 112
- Patton, Marshall E.**
From Dead In Sin To Heavenly Places In Christ..... 107
- Phillips, H. E.**
Unblemished Bride, The - Eph. 5: 27 119
- Posey, David**
And It Was Night..... 213
Judas Knew The Place 13
Preach The Text..... 232
- Pratte, David E.**
Lessons Learned At A Funeral 262
- Price, Joe**
Changing The Definition..... 500
- Rader Donnie V.**
Armed In Christ To Stand..... 117
- Rader, Dorris V.**
Reincarnation #1 (Born Again And Again) 158
Reincarnation #2 (Born Again And Again) 183
- Ramsey, Willie**
Individually-Supported Institutionalism-A Response To Weldon
Warnock 137
- Roberts, Mark**
How To Subvert..... 376
Worldly Church, The 184
- Sewed, Norman E.**
Denominationalism..... 334
Lessons From An Ice Storm 86
Lies Of The Devil, The 238
Serve one Another..... 548
Show Yourself Men 406
- Shewmaker, Fred A.**
She Hath Done What She Could 527
- Snell, Julian R.**
All Spiritual Blessings In Christ 103
- Spears, Dudley R.**
Outs Of A Preacher, The..... 261
Where Do You Stand On Divorce - A Response 520
- Tant, F. Yater**
Troy C. Irvin..... 212
- Walters, Dan**
Childbearing 167
- Warnock, Weldon E.**
Growing Up In Christ 114
- Watts, O. E.**
Eyes..... 477
New Response, The..... 453
- Wolfgang, Steve**
The Nashville Meeting - A Discussion Of Issues Which Have
Divided Breth 210