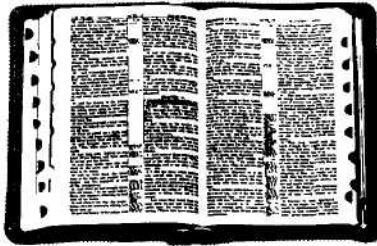


SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

"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

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THINK ON THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

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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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Guest Editorial

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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
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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

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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!

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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

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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.

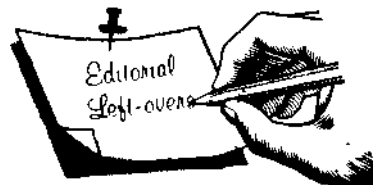
MEMPHIS, INDIANA — We need a fulltime preacher, preferably someone within a 100 mile radius. We are presently 56-60 in atten-

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.

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RESTORATIONS	36

(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)