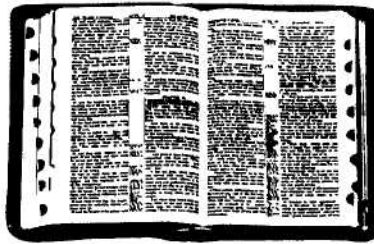


SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

"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 XXXI

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NUMBER 1

THINK ON THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 1631
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THE GOSPEL MUST BE TAUGHT

Christianity is a religion of the heart, and as such it must be taught before it can be practiced. Some religions survive better when their principles are not taught than when they are known, but this is not so with Christianity.

God commands that His word be taught. Jesus said: "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. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (John 6: 44, 45). It is only by teaching that men can come to God for salvation. Preaching is one method of teaching, and Paul said it pleased God by this preaching to save them that believe (1 Cor. 1: 21). He also said that men cannot call upon God unless they have heard the preaching of His word (Rom. 10: 13-15).

Christ required his disciples to preach. "Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick" (Luke 9: 1, 2). Later he selected seventy also, and sent them out two and two with the good news of the coming kingdom (Luke 10: 1-9). In a parable Christ gave a principle of urgency with which his disciples were to "go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled" (Lk.. 14: 23). Jesus com-

missioned his apostles: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go Ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matt. 28: 18-20). "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16: 15). They began this practice on Pentecost, and following that day they were "daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ" (Acts 5: 42). The early Christians followed this example and when the church was so violently persecuted in Jerusalem that they were scattered, "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word" (Acts 8: 4).

The apostles taught the early Christians to teach. Paul instructed Timothy to teach the disciples to teach. "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2: 2). The reason given for teaching is that others may hear and have faith. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10: 17). One can have faith only by being taught the word of God, and his faith can be strengthened only by teaching the same.

Paul and Barnabas assembled with the church in Antioch for a whole year and "taught much people" (Acts 11: 26). Not only did Paul and Barnabas do the teaching, others in Antioch also taught. "Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also" (Acts 15: 35). Those things taught by the apostles laid upon others the responsibility to teach the word of God.

Christianity will not survive without teaching; teaching the right thing—the word of God. In Ephesians 4 Paul explains why different workers, including teachers, were placed in the church: "And he gave

some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: (Eph. 4: 11, 12). We are taught to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3: 18). No one can grow unless he is taught, hence the teaching process continues in order for the Christian to continue to grow, regardless of age. We are what we have been taught to be. Our children will be just what we teach them to be. We have basic needs that depend upon teaching. The dual nature of man requires mental and spiritual developing as well as physical. "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day" (2 Cor. 4: 16). "But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4: 4). "As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Peter 2: 2).

Christianity must be taught to adults and children alike if we are to "walk by faith." We cannot expect any improvement in the moral and spiritual standards of this age until the living word of God is taught to every creature. This is God's plan to save. "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).

Searching The Scriptures

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Editorial

Connie W. Adams

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SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

For several months, this paper and the editor have been under fire from our beloved brother E. L. Flannery of Eugene, Oregon. He is one of the elders of the Coburg Road church and edits the bulletin. In several bulletins and in additional material which has been circulated among a number of brethren both in the Northwest and in other parts of the nation, attacks have been made and misleading intimations have gone forth involving articles which have appeared in this paper. As much as I would prefer to ignore the matter, truth and fairness demand that I respond. I shall do so in as kind a manner as possible but with forthrightness.

In the September, 1988 edition of STS, I wrote an editorial entitled "And Wash Away Thy Wives" in which I addressed the question of whether or not an alien sinner was subject to the law of Christ, including what he taught on divorce and remarriage. In that article I made several objections to the position and stated that it was gaining in popularity. As an example of that, I referred to the fact that brother Homer Hailey had spoken on the subject in a meeting at El Cajon, California and then later at Belen, New Mexico where the small church was greatly disturbed. Brother Flannery pasted up my editorial from STS and printed it in his bulletin. But he only pasted up the part about brother Hailey. The first part of the article was omitted without any indication that had been done. I have no objection to an excerpt being made, but the impression should not be left that the entirety of a thing has been given when, in fact, it has not. The emphasis in the article was on a doctrine which the editor believes to be false. The reference to brother Hailey was incidental to that point and only stated to show that one of repute was advocating the doctrine publicly and that we were not dealing with a subject which is just privately held.

The Ken Green Article

In the August, 1989 issue of STS, Ken Green had an article entitled "Where Do You Stand On Divorce?" Brother Green has written a column in this paper for a number of years. I did not agree with the general impression left by the article nor the use made of Romans 14. I believed then, and now, that the article was too loose, and so at the end of it, I added an editorial note and quoted the New Testament passages which deal with divorce and remarriage. I was fairly certain there would be response to what he wrote, and I was right. We have since carried a response from Dudley R. Spears and this

very issue **contains an additional article by him and brother Green.** I have tried to allow responsible men to present their views on a variety of subjects, whether or not the editor agreed. Brother Hailey was given space to be heard. The exchange we have had over the years on several subjects bear that out. If a column writer submits an article which, in the judgment of the editor, advocates a dangerous view, it has been my practice to either respond to it myself, or ask someone else to do so. Brother Flannery printed Ken's article with high commendation and used it to further reproach me. So be it. I wonder if he will want to print Dudley Spears articles. It was interesting that when he printed Ken's article, he omitted my editorial note.

The Wilson Adams Article

In material being circulated by brother Flannery, he has photo-copied an article by Wilson Adams entitled "Christ, the Head of the Church" which appeared in a special issue we did on CHRIST AND THE CHURCH. Effort has been made to make it appear that Wilson Adams agrees with the notion that an alien sinner is not under law to Christ. I wonder if brother Flannery will circulate Wilson's article in the April, 1989 issues of STS entitled "Divorce, Remarriage, and the Non-Christian — Bright Promise Or False Hope?" This article very clearly sets forth his views on the subject, and they are contrary to the impression being left from brother Flannery's use of the other article.

The Dick Blackford Article

In the September, 1989 edition of STS, there was an article by Dick Blackford entitled "Can Any Good Thing Come Out Of Corinth?" In this article, Dick dealt with the many problems which faced the church at Corinth and yet there is no record that they divided over them. Brother Flannery printed this article in his bulletin and once again tried to use it to leave me in a bad light. This article, along with Ken Green's and Wilson Adams has been copied and circulated in the Northwest and else-where. In the Coburg Road bulletin, brother Flannery wrote the following:

"The editor of STS, Connie Adams, was in Norway when this article appeared under the guest editorship of Donnie V. Rader. We will see what brother Adams thinks of his staff member's article soon I imagine. It was brother Adams who about a year ago sought to mark Homer Hailey a false teacher and to intimidate him into silence by telling him he had better 'back off' or he was in for a strong battle. Now, a year later, Dick Blackford writes in an entirely different vein, in a very forbearing and gentle attitude. Ken Green's article last month was much the same. I hope Connie will listen to brethren Green and Blackford, writers on his staff. The threat came a year ago that 'the forces of truth' were coming down on all who disagreed with the editors of GUARDIAN OF TRUTH, SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES, and TORCH. They all fired their heaviest ammunition, but to their dismay the enemy was not quelled, but returned some well aimed rifle fire upon them. These so-called 'forces of truth' are in a state of shock seeing the crumbling walls in their own forts."

First of all, it is true that Donnie Rader was guest editor of the September, 1989 issue. The editor was in Norway when that edition was put together and Donnie stepped in to help out and give me a break. But the implication from what brother Flannery wrote is that Donnie caught me overseas and took advantage of the occasion to slip in this article by Dick Blackford. The truth of the matter is that I already had that article set in type before going to Norway and left it on hand along with other articles from which to choose for that issue. I do not have articles set in type unless I intend to use them. We have to pay for that work. I would be glad for Brother Flannery to circulate Donnie's book on Divorce and Remarriage. In the next place, I am in agreement with the sentiment expressed in Dick's article. Too many churches have splintered and started a rival group across town without trying to scripturally resolve their difficulties. But I wonder what would have happened at Corinth had they not given heed to the divine instruction which Paul gave them? There were divisions in sentiment, if not in fact, which would have fractured that church forty ways from Sunday had they not accepted Paul's instruction. The second letter shows that they made necessary changes based on what was said in the first letter.

But we will let Dick Blackford speak for himself. He has recently had back surgery and only recently learned of the use being made of his article. He sent me a copy of a letter he wrote to J. T. Smith, editor of TORCH. I quote excerpts from his letter with his permission:

"Of course, the Oregon brethren drew a conclusion not taught and which was actually denied in my article. I hold the same position you do on divorce/remarriage and have even used some of your charts in preaching on it. I was recently asked to write an article on 'Must An Unscriptural Marriage Be Dissolved?' I answered **Yes**. My position is also set forth in FOR HUSBANDS ONLY (p. 13-16).

The article 'Can Any Good Thing Come Out of Corinth?' (Sept, STS) was written in view of the current wave of splinteritis among conservative congregations with which you and I are all too familiar. Connie Adams has written and preached on this, as you may be aware. I am convinced there have been many cases where brethren were too quick to divide and start another congregation across town without 'endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit... with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love' (Eph. 4: 2-3). Surely you would agree. ... While the current divorce/remarriage issues were the farthest from my mind (I was thinking of some other problems in the area where I live), **I plainly stated This is not** to say that there may not be a time when one will need to leave a congregation because of error. "

Will our brother Flannery print and circulate this from brother Blackford? We will see.

Brother Flannery's Warning About Christianity Magazine

The following appeared in the October 1, 1989 issue of the COBURG ROAD BULLETIN: "WARNING

NOTICE: The August issue of CHRISTIANITY MAGAZINE, just delivered last Thursday, has a special section under the title: **Marriage Is A Radical Act**, Edited by Paul Earnhart. That section has articles by Jerry Earnhart (Paul's brother), by Ken Dart, in which they repeat the erroneous arguments they have been making in the Salem discussions since last January. Other writers presented articles full of error also. Be on guard when you read their material. If you read anything you'd like to discuss contact either Jerry Bassett or me. In a few months' time Jerry's booklet dealing with these very things discussed in **Christianity Magazine** will be available to you. "

This is interesting. According to brother Flannery, it was shameful for me, and others, to brand the teaching of brother Hailey as false on this subject, but he has named Paul Earnhart, Jerry Earnhart and Ken Dart as teachers of error and stated that several other articles in that special issue of CHRISTIANITY MAGAZINE were "full of error. " You see, it is all right to teach that an alien sinner is not under law to Christ and thereby to justify adulterous marriages, and it is all right to print bulletin articles and circulate material teaching that 1 Cor. 7: 12-16 gives another ground for divorce and remarriage, other than fornication, **BUT IT IS NOT ALL RIGHT TO CHALLENGE THIS VIEW**. If we do that, we do not have a gentle, loving spirit. We become war mongers. But this view has been publicly and freely advocated for sometime in the Northwest and other regions without much opposition. Freedom to some of these brethren means they have a right to publicly advocate their doctrine but the rest of us dare not call it in question under penalty of being charged with pontificating, sowing discord and manifesting an ugly spirit. It was terrible, according to some for me (and others) to name one brother who holds the view in question, but it is permissible to identify Paul Earnhart, Jerry Earnhart, Ken Dart, and several other unspecified writers in the special issue of CHRISTIANITY MAGAZINE as false teachers. Who makes up these one-sided rules?

It is time to appeal for fair-mindedness. Must we realize the same attitudes we saw in the 50's and 60's when fundamental issues sometimes got lost in deceptive reporting, half-truths, innuendoes and misrepresentation? There is nothing to gain from this and much to lose. There are basic questions at stake here. (1) Are alien sinners accountable to the law of Christ, including what he taught about divorce and remarriage? (2) Does 1 Cor. 7: 12-16 provide a second reason for divorce and remarriage? Let these be resolved regardless of who stands where. That is of much less importance than the truth on these questions. If my teaching does not square with what the Bible says touching these matters, than I am wrong and brethren have a right to say so. If brother Flannery and those who stand where he does are out of sync with the Bible on these questions, then they are wrong. The Bible is right if all of us are wrong. It matters not how long any of us have preached, nor how much or little influence we may have. The Bible, as it is, is addressed to man, as he is. It is understandable and we shall be judged by it. While we ought to love and respect

good men, we must not "think of men above that which is written" (1 Cor. 4: 6).

The question of fellowship will be resolved in each congregation. We all need clear heads, pure hearts, conviction of truth and determination to follow wherever truth leads. We must not resort to carnal weapons and impute to others views which they do not hold. We must take pains to get our facts straight and report accurately.


"Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good" (Rom. 12: 9).

**WHAT SAITH THE
SCRIPTURE?**
(Rom. 4:3)

Send all questions to:

Weldon E. Warnock

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SAVED IN CHILDBEARING

QUESTION: What is the meaning of Paul's statement in 1 Tim. 2: 15 that the woman shall be saved in childbearing?

ANSWER: In the context Paul states, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression" (vv. 11-14). Then in v. 15 he writes, "Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety."

It is my persuasion that Paul is saying that women will be saved in their natural, God-given role of childbearing if they continue in faith and love and holiness with all sobriety. Childbearing is not made a condition of salvation. A woman shall be saved IN this function or role (a dignity and glory all its own), and not by means of it. Wives who are barren, or women who are single may be saved also. David Lipscomb wrote, "This means she is to work in the sphere of childbearing and training, and her work in the church should be in a private and quiet manner" (**Questions Answered**, p. 729).

God said to Eve, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (Gen. 3: 16). God said woman would bring forth children, and Paul writes that IN this role she shall be saved if she is faithful to the Lord.

Women are not to function in a public way in the assemblies of the church, such as leading prayer where men are present (1 Tim. 2: 8), nor to teach over men (1 Tim. 2: 12), but to learn in silence with all subjection (v. 11). Their duties are primarily domestic—to be mothers

and guide the house (1 Tim. 5: 14). This is why Paul said they would be saved "in childbearing." Men are to be bishops, deacons and evangelists and take the lead in the church.

This does not mean that women may not teach other women or children in classes arranged by the church (cf. Tit. 2: 3-5). They are only prohibited from taking control or being put in a position of authority and oversight, usurping the prerogatives that God has assigned to men.

Some advocate that Paul is referring to the birth of the Messiah, putting emphasis on "THE childbearing" that appears in the original, the "the" being omitted in translation. But if the birth of Jesus is intended, Paul uses a most obscure and ambiguous manner of stating it. In my opinion the position stated previous to this one has far more merit.

Men and Women Jointly Teaching

QUESTION: Is it scriptural for a man and a woman to jointly teach a public Bible class composed of men and women?

ANSWER: Absolutely not! Such action violates the Lord's restriction in 1 Tim. 2: 12. Paul wrote in that passage, "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." Teaching in the text is predicated on "Usurp authority over the man." When a woman jointly teaches a mixed-class of men and women, she is doing the very thing that Paul tells her she may not do.

It would be just as reasonable to ask, "May a man and woman jointly preach or jointly lead singing or function as elders?" as to ask, "May a man and woman jointly teach a mixed-class composed of men and women?" One is no more scriptural than the other.

Granted, a woman may impart knowledge (and would be teaching in so doing) in a mixed-class where she is a student as she responds to a question or gives an exegesis and application of some passage, but this is quite different than in having charge of a class. In the former she is in a subordinate position, while in the latter she has control and oversight. Faithful men (not women) are to teach mixed-classes of men and women.

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First Stop — Cyprus

In 13: 5-6a Luke gives a quick summary of their work on the island. Here two things happen about which the writer offers no details. It was here that (1) Saul begins to be referred to as "Paul" (vs. 9 - probably to render him with greater effectivity among the Gentiles), and (2) Paul emerges as the leader (whereas before it was "Barnabus and Saul" (13: 2), now it is "Paul and his company" (13: 13). Then something happens which Luke carefully chronicles.

1. **The Men**, vs. 6-7. Sergius Paulus: a Roman, a man of intelligence and most of all the governor of the island. And we know something else. He was searching... No doubt he had heard about the arrival of two men who claimed to preach the word of God. Thus he "summoned Barnabus and Saul..."

There was another man: Elymas the magician. Lately Elymas had been spending a lot of time with Sergius Paulus hoping to impress him with his "occultic powers" and thereby gain a position of influence in the house of the proconsul. It was a career move on his part, a power play that would launch him into immediate recognition and financial reward. It's no wonder that he was not pleased with the preaching of Paul and Barnabus (vs. 8b).

2. **The Method**, vs. 9-10. Take a good look at Paul's response to Elymas. Is there a more fiery denunciation in all of Scripture? Paul described him in **character** (vs. 10a) and in **motive** (vs. 10b). Finally, not only did Elymas feel the sting of verbal rebuke, he received physical punishment in the form of blindness (vs. 11).

3. **The Motivation**. Why such a strong response? Three reasons. First, Elymas was a false prophet. Second, not only was he a false prophet but he was a **Jewish** false prophet who dabbled in sorcery. But there

was a third reason... **Paul uttered these scorching words because Elymas was standing in the way of Sergius Paulus**. A careful search of the Scriptures will reveal that the severest of words are reserved for those who stand between other men and the truth. Here was a man who was searching, a man of intelligence, a man attempting to locate the will of God for his life and, at the same time, here was another man attempting to pervert that will. God knew the hearts of both men and allowed Paul to know them (vs. 9). Thus the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to speak these words of harsh rebuke and to demonstrate the genuineness of his message by miraculous sign. Yet in the midst of a fiery denunciation, there was a touch of tenderness even upon the soul of Elymas. He would be blind only "for a time." The result is given in verse 12 -

"Then the proconsul believed when he saw what had happened, being amazed at the teaching of the Lord." Note the final word from the island of Cyprus: "he believed." We don't know much about the other events that happened on this island but we do know this: the message of Jesus was preached and it touched honest hearts. Paul and Barnabus went on their way rejoicing.

Second Stop - Pamphylia

Acts 13: 13. Here again Dr. Luke presents the facts and quickly moves on. Pamphylia was a low-lying desolate area whose people were known for being backward and illiterate. The living conditions here were some of the worst in the Empire. It was here that Paul became ill (Gal. 4: 13-14). Surely it's not fun to be sick any time but there's nothing worse than being sick away from home. How Paul must have longed to be back with his beloved brethren in Antioch. But he wasn't. He was far away in a lonely desolate place. There was nothing to do except trust in the Lord and move on.

Except Mark. Luke in a simple statement of fact reports that Mark went back home (vs. 13b). Why? We're not sure. Likewise, Acts 15: 36-38 reveals the fact of his desertion but gives no reason. Perhaps Mark missed his association with the apostle Peter. There is no question that no one had impacted his life quite the way that Peter had (Acts 12; 1 Pet. 5: 13). But there is probably another reason... a more realistic one. Perhaps Mark was homesick. After all, the mountain-top experience of working with the church at Antioch and then the encouraging reception on Cyprus had now faded into the pits of Pamphylia. Everywhere he looked the young preacher saw sickness, disease, and danger. Everything was unfamiliar. He had to eat strange food, observe different customs and then to top it all off there was the set-back of Paul's illness. What would they do if something should happen to Paul? — he must have wondered. And so, as Mark laid down at night on a strange bed and in a strange place his heart must have ached of loneliness. He wanted to go home. And did.

Maybe we've been too hard on John Mark. Maybe you would have echoed the same sentiment as Paul: "He's not worthy to travel again, he who deserted us in Pamphylia..." But not me. My sympathy leans toward Barnabus. I have a reason.

In one sense there is no joy for a preacher like that of

traveling to distant places to preach a message to which he has dedicated his life. On the other hand, there is no ache quite like the ache of loneliness that comes from being in a strange place far away from home and separated from those we love the most. It was more than Mark could handle. Sure, Paul had encouraged him to stay the course but, then again, not everyone had that measure of unflinching determination that he had. Mark was afraid. He was lonely. He went home.

But he didn't quit! Yes, he quit the journey but he never quit the Lord! Barnabus' judgment on the worth of this young preacher proved to be correct. He was worth the risk. He should have another chance. And in time to come Mark could prove himself to be invaluable to the Cause so much so that years later an imprisoned Paul pleaded with another young preacher to bring the experienced Mark with him to Rome "for he is useful to me for service" (2 Tim. 4: 11). Early failures by young preachers can be overcome. Just ask John Mark...

Thus the message of Jesus Christ moves across the Roman world. It moved due to the sacrifice, dedication and devotion of two preachers: Paul and Barnabus. But it was also due to a group of folks at home who were committed to living the dream and fulfilling their responsibility to reach the lost wherever they might be. **Don't lose sight of that!** Behind every verse in chapters 13 and 14, behind every success story on this journey there was Antioch. Paul and Barnabus could not have done it without their encouragement and prayers. The power of the local church... Nobody understood it any better than they did.

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REJOINER TO DUDLEY ROSS SPEARS

Since I do not believe Brother Dudley Ross Spears has properly represented my convictions in his response (October, '89) to my STS column of August, '89; and more important, because I believe he is wrong in some crucial areas, I feel that a reply is incumbent.

I certainly do not accuse Brother Spears of deliberately being ungenerous in his article. He sent me a copy with a cover letter assuring me of his love and friendship and requested that I inform him if I felt there was anything in the article that was not in good taste, or in keeping with good Christian behavior. I appreciate such and hope I may demonstrate a similar spirit in this response. Other duties hindered me from replying before the article was published.

Now, to business. I did not say that the question of divorce defies understanding. I did indicate there are some things about it that I do not understand, and the numerous positions held and problems posed imply that it is, in some areas, a perplexing subject. The simple quoting of four passages at the close of my article by the editor hardly proves otherwise.

Anyone who read the exchange between brethren Marshall Patton and H. E. Phillips in this journal several months ago, and still maintains that the subject is not difficult is out of my league entirely. I do not say this to disparage these brethren, for I highly respect and esteem both of them. I merely observe that if the average person is expected to comprehend the intricacies of this subject—whether the conjunction **kai** in Matt. 19: 9 is to be understood sequentially or adverbially; or whether the prepositional phrase, "in the Lord" in 1 Cor. 7: 39 is adverbial or adjectival — I say if the average person must understand that, we might as well hang it up.

Brother Spears says I picture the question of divorce as one of "black ball first, and study the issue later," I don't know where he got his quote. Certainly not from my article. Neither did I say that "there is not a man on earth with whom (I) fully agree on this issue." Such is careless reporting. I said, "I am not sure that I know anyone with whom I totally agree on this subject." Surely there is a man somewhere on earth with whom I agree. I may totally agree with Brother Spears on this subject. I don't know what all he believes.

He quotes Connie Adams as making "a statement with which everyone of us ought to fully agree." Now Brother Adams is a fine student of Scripture, an exceptional preacher, and a friend of several years. But I don't

believe he has written the catechism that we must all recite. Furthermore, I'm confident that neither Brother Spears nor Brother Adams believes so either.

But what Brother Adams said as quoted by Brother Spears will help illustrate a Point I was trying to make in my original article: "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."

I assume that the above categories would include any combination of such people, i. e. a couple consisting of one whose mate had passed on to his reward, and another who was single (which I suppose means never married), etc. With those assumptions understood — while I hate to recite the catechism — let me say that with my present understanding of Scripture, I too fully agree with that.

So Dudley and I agree on that much, at least. May I wonder out loud if Connie agrees with it. He is quoted as saying it. But unless I am mistaken, he would not agree with the second point without further modification. The innocent party in a divorce involving fornication would not necessarily have a right to remarry, I think he would say. Not unless that innocent party took the initiative in obtaining the divorce.

If this is the case, what shall we do, Dudley? Can you and I continue to have fellowship with Brother Adams? When he teaches that people whom we consider to be married should divorce, is he not putting asunder what God has joined together? And what shall he do with us who in his view are condoning adultery?

Brother Spears says that I conclude "that each one of us should be content to believe whatever we want to believe about divorce." I don't know where I concluded such a thing. That is his conclusion about what I believe, not mine. And may I kindly say that he jumped to the conclusion. I don't believe we should just be content to believe whatever we want to believe about any Scriptural subject, be it the Christian's participation in government, the eldership, the Lord's supper, baptism, or the matter of divorce and remarriage.

Having noticed some points that do not properly represent my teaching, let's turn to the more important areas in which I believe Brother Spears falls short. He uses baptism for the remission of sins as a parallel to this subject and observes that there are many questions relating to it. The question, Dudley, is how you would treat a brother with whom you disagree on one of those questions. If someone asked you to baptize him in a stream of running water for conscience sake, would you accommodate him? Would you continue to fellowship him if he continued to believe that? I suspect you would do both. I know I would. If he continually pressed the matter and caused constant agitation over it, that would be another issue.

Brother Spears has a simple answer as to what a marriage is. But such does not negate the fact that brethren disagree on some specifics in this area even as I indicated in my first article. I know of a situation in which a very young teen ran away and married and her parents had the marriage annulled. Now was there a marriage or not? Several years later she married another and is raising a family. I might have some ideas or even convictions on the matter but I for one am not going to demand that she divorce her present husband. I would fear I might be putting asunder what God has joined together. Neither am I going to assure her she's OK. She and her husband will have to decide that question.

Brother Spears says, "... if we will limit our thoughts to what is revealed clearly, we will avoid the problems he sees." Well, I just see some problems where I have not yet found the clear revelation, i can preach the principles about as well as anyone, and I probably teach what most of us believe to be the truth of Matt. 19: 9 and related passages more than most. I am on call-in radio and TV programs a total of two and one-half hours each week and receive numerous questions on this subject. I teach what I believe the Bible plainly reveals. But again, I don't claim to know all the answers to all the problems I see.

Dudley avers that "to put (the war question) in the same class as marriage, divorce, and adultery is not possible." He states several reasons for this conclusion. For one thing, "they are not handled the same way in the Scripture," we are told. Adultery is specified as grounds of excommunication, and God hates divorce; but "nothing even remotely like that is ever applied to governmental participation by God's people."

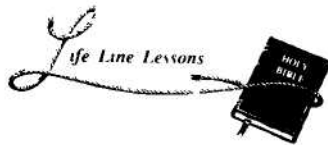
Now, while Dudley and I agree on the basic principles of divorce and remarriage, I think we need to be honorable with those who disagree. We need to keep our logical antecedents and consequents properly categorized. Pacifists believe that "governmental participation" in war or law enforcement is murder or may lead to it. Now looking at the matter from their point of view, is murder less serious than adultery? Is murder or the condoning of murder not grounds for excommunication? Doesn't God hate murder? A brother who disagrees with Dudley and me on divorce might say, "nothing even remotely like that is ever applied to marriage by God's people."

The difference in both instances is not whether adultery and murder are wrong, but whether these particular situations equal adultery or murder. My object in all this is not to condone adultery, but to at least cry out for a little consistency in the way we treat brethren with whom we disagree on some of these quite difficult questions.

The scope of this article will not permit an analysis of Romans 14. Let me briefly state that I did not say; nor do I believe; nor does my statement on Romans 14 demand that "there can be no wrong position to take on anything over which good men of spiritual wisdom and unblemished reputation differ." There were some wrong positions being taken by some of whom Paul wrote in that chapter. I believe it is erroneous to conclude that "both sides are right, as far as the Almighty is concerned." The subject of foods and days were both matters of divine revelation. Both sides were not right in their understanding.

Some brethren have written me that if they held the pacifist position or the covering position they could not continue to fellowship brethren who were, according to those views, practicing sin or teaching error. According to them, the unity we have enjoyed in spite of such differences is based on the fact that those brethren just haven't noted their inconsistency.

It will surely be a spectacle when everyone gets consistent and we divide over every difference we have on marriage and divorce, civil government, the covering, smoking cigarettes, observing Christmas, working on Wednesday nights, wearing shorts, slacks on women, singing with an instrument at home, weddings in the church building, individually supporting Bible colleges, etc., etc., etc. "... if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!"



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an open door ..."**

—Rev. 3:8

SECOND RESPONSE TO BROTHER GREEN

Dudley Russ Spears
2061 Old Scottsville Rd.
Alvaton, KY 42122

I appreciate the clarifications brother Ken Green gave in his rejoinder to my response. It is never easy to read cold print and always come out with the precise meaning of the one who put that print on paper. Ken feels that I have not properly represented this convictions and he is possibly correct. Any misrepresentation he sees was not intentional on my part. My response was more of a reaction than a rebuttal.

Brother Green denies that he said the question of divorce defies understanding. What was said was simply that his article led this writer to question whether brother Green has a clear understanding of divorce and remarriage. Brother Adams was moved to assure the readers that the subject of marriage and divorce did not defy understanding, evidently because of his perception of the impression Ken's article would leave. I felt precisely the same way. But, Ken, if the topic does not defy understanding (and I am not saying you believe it does) what was the point of your article? As I read your words I continued to get the impression that since we don't have all the answers to the questions that arise over marriage and divorce, we must be as tolerant of one another in those differences as Paul said for those with diverse views in Romans 14 to be. That is the point I was addressing in response to the article.

Ken mentions the exchange between brethren Phillips and Patton. The average person, he opines, could never understand the intricacies involved in the grammatical expressions of Matthew 19 and 1 Corinthians 7. Just as many others could opine the opposite and introduce you to a number of those "average" people who read, studied, and came to definite conclusions about the Phillips-Patton exchange. But that still does not eliminate the fact that Ken's article strongly suggested that the divorce issue with so many and varied views is beyond the understanding of the "average person." Therefore, if we blackball brethren with whom we disagree on divorce we ought to do the same on all questions over which there is disagreement.

The quotation of "blackball first, and then study the issue later," did not come directly from Ken's article. He described the way the question is being handled as brethren blackballing one another and questioned how consistent these imaginary brethren are. In fact, since his article was an effort to stop such, why would he expect anyone to conclude anything else? Brother Green either believes that the question is being handled by inconsistent blackballing or he does not. He appears, to me at least, to be warning all that inconsistent blackballing of others with whom we differ on the divorce issue

will leave us with too few friends with whom to have pot luck.

I agree that he did not say there is no one with whom he agrees fully on the question of marriage and divorce. He said he is not sure such a man lives. If it helps us get closer together, just strike that sentence of mine out. I retract it. It is a very small thing to dissect a sentence from "I am not sure there is a man anywhere with whom I agree," and there is no man with whom I agree. I stand corrected.

One thing that is extremely comforting to me is his agreement with the basic principles I attributed to Connie Adams. But Ken, if that old saying of "sauce for the..." still works, why did you even mention the catechism you are certain that all of us are certain does not exist? Were you concerned that someone might think the catechism exists, even unofficially? We can put that in the "careless" reporting sack or something very close to it.

Brother Green agrees with the scriptural principles in reference to those who clearly have a divine grant for marriage. But we do not fully agree. Ken again leaves what is plainly revealed on an excursion into the "if land. The "if is whether Ken and I can agree with Connie Adams in regard to the second point. I will not even attempt to speak for brother Adams. He has been doing that quite well for years without my help. But permit me to simply observe that any modification anyone puts on a given situation must be based on what is plainly revealed — not on some supposed or even real situation. I perceive this to be Ken's problem on this point.

Ken wonders out loud in regard to Connie's consistency regarding an innocent party's right in a divorce to remarry in a case where fornication is involved. The case involves the innocent party's initiating the action, as Ken sees Connie's position. This entire portion of his article smacks of pitting one against another who both concluded there is danger in what Ken wrote. I believe that not only brother Adams, but a number of other readers, perceived that danger.

The question of fellowship recurs in Ken's articles. In theory, Christians are in fellowship (if ever so loosely) with other Christians, meaning they have a common family connection. In practice, jointly participating with the brethren, the same Christians have very little fellowship with others outside their local activities. What fellowship have brother Green and I ever had? What joint work have we engaged in as brethren in fellowship? This encounter is one of the few associations we ever have had. We should quit trying to decide the fellowship question before we get the problem fully studied.

My point on baptism was not even remotely designed to deal with how we treat a brother who wants to be baptized in a running stream. Ken, it had to do with understanding the plainly revealed facts concerning baptism and abiding within the divine standard even in the presence of questions we may not be able to answer. We may not be able to answer all the questions someone can pose regarding various aspects of baptism, but we can recognize scriptural baptism. I could not get from

your article that you believe such is the case in marriage and divorce. If you do recognize a scriptural marriage, a second marriage God authorizes, it would be very enlightening (at least to me) to know how you recognize it.

The war question is not handled in scripture like adultery. The two issues are not in the same class. In the "war question" it is their obligation. I cannot blackball a brother who believes participation in governmental affairs is murder. I can try to teach him. But in adultery, where I am presented with the facts of an illegitimate marriage, and understand the Lord's will as I do, I would be in the position of the pacifist. But, Ken, I would be right (and you agree) if I stand on the three premises listed earlier. Adultery makes a union of male and female corrupt. Participation in governmental affairs is not sinful. Murder is wrong. Adultery is wrong. But participation in governmental affairs is not murder. This is a case of keeping apples with apples and oranges with oranges.

I wish the scope of our discussion could permit a full analysis of Romans 14, but Ken says it doesn't. The statement, "there can be no wrong position to take on anything over which good men of spiritual wisdom and unblemished reputation differ" was mine, Ken. I am putting it on you as a consequence of your application of Romans 14. If it is erroneous to say "both sides were right" in the things over which they were divided in Romans 14, which was the wrong party? Why did Paul say in verse three that both the one who would eat and the one who would not were both received by God? Did God receive someone who was wrong on an issue that parallels adultery? If your application of it to divorce is valid, does God accept some who are in an adulterous relationship? Brother Green did the very thing Paul repeatedly says no man has a right to do. He rendered a judgment on someone in Romans 14 and Paul forbade such (Verses 4, 10, and 13). Paul even prohibited trying to change the other's scruples (verse 1).

Ken's reference to the brethren who have written him saying they would not fellowship anyone with whom they disagree on the war issue, the covering, or divorce proves very little to me. It has about as much weight as the many letters and calls I received as a result of my written response, without exception expressing the same fears of which I wrote. In the final analysis, it is a love of revealed truth, a respect for individual differences in unrevealed matters, and brotherly concern for each other that will help us strike hands in unity and fellowship as God would have it. There is nothing at all wrong with vigorous discussion of differences of any kind, such as those Ken mentioned in the last paragraph, but I still deeply feel that there is a great danger in any effort to reduce the seriousness of something as clearly condemned in scripture as the adulterous and sinful results of divorce and remarriage with no scriptural grounds. To make it appear that it is no more serious than the covering question or the war question was a mistake.

I appreciate the opportunity this paper has offered to have this problem heard. I sincerely hope there will be no biting and devouring among us. I still admire brother

Green greatly for his ability and his work. I wish he could see his article through the heart and eyes of others like me. He obviously cannot, at least, at this point. And I sincerely wish he had not mentioned all those differences brethren have over unrevealed issues, for again, it appears that his views of unscriptural divorces are in that class.

I wish to close this piece with a reference to the late Sir Winston Churchill. D. Martin Loyd-Jones, in his "Studies in the Sermon on the Mount" dealt with the restriction the Lord gave, "Judge not." I am not saying this in regard to brother Green, but for the benefit of us all. Jones mentioned that many regarded Churchill as difficult and harsh because he stood firmly for certain things and equally firm against others. Then he applied that to modern times.

"The same mentality that led to such treatment of Winston Churchill in the thirties is in control in the realm of Christian affairs and in the realm of the Christian Church today. There have been ages in the history of the Church when men were praised because they stood for their principles at all costs. But that is not so today. Such men today are regarded as being difficult, self-assertive, non-co-operative and so on. The man who is now glorified is the man who can be described as being in 'the middle of the road', not at one extreme or the other, a pleasant man, who does not create difficulties and problems because of his views...."

"At a time like this, then, it is of the utmost importance that we should be able to interpret correctly this statement concerning judging, because there are many who say that 'judge not' must be taken simply and literally as it is, and as meaning that the truly Christian man should never express an opinion about others. They say that there must be no judging whatsoever, that we must be easy, indulgent and tolerant, and allow almost anything for peace and quiet, and especially unity. This is not a time for these particular judgments, they say; what is needed today is unity and fellowship." (Pages 161).

I urge those who have a copy of this book to read the entire chapter dealing with this issue, for even though brother Green likely would not hold such a weak view on judging, I firmly believe the effect of his article would encourage such a weak attitude. When we come to the point of discrediting those who stand for principles of truth on divorce or any other issue, and praise those who would rather be charitable and consistent than right, we are in deep danger. At any rate, let us all be careful that nothing be done, said, or written that might give any advantage to forces intent on destruction from within the great body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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SOCIAL DRINKING (PART 2)

There are a few Christians that feel that there is nothing wrong with social drinking. I have been told by some that they occasionally will drink a beer or a glass of wine. They do not think they have done anything wrong. They will agree that drunkenness is wrong, but they cannot see that their practice is also condemned in the New Testament.

Social Drinking Is Specifically Condemned The Bible clearly forbids drinking of alcoholic beverages without any reference to how much. I mean that the Bible does not just condemn excessive drinking. Rather, it condemns the drinking.

1. "**Banquetings**" is one of the sins listed in 1 Pet. 4: 3. This is translated from the Greek word POTOS which refers to "a drinking bout" (Strong's); "drinkings" (Englishman's); "a drinking, carousing" (Thayer) and "a drinking, signifies not simply a banquet but a drinking bout" (Vines). R. C. Trench adds "... not of necessity excessive." Obviously this is social drinking. Thus, it is specifically condemned in this text.

2. "**Be sober**" is the command given in the next chapter (1 Pet. 5: 8). Sober means to be "free from the influence of intoxicants" (Vines, Vol. IV, p. 44). The idea is to **abstain** from the drink. The social drinker does not abstain. He is not free from the influence of intoxicants. Thus, he has violated a command of the Lord and sinned.

The Social Drinker Influences Others To Drink

It is the moderate social drinker that is the major cause of recruiting new drinkers and not the gutter drunk. Dr. Andrew C. Ibey, A Chicago physician and scientist and Vice-President of the University of Illinois said, "It is the social and moderate drinker — not the drunk who is to blame for the failure of his less enlightened, weaker brother to maintain control of his drinking. The fact is that others are injured by the example of the person who can control his drinking... Let us inquire who is really responsible for the fact that the consumption of alcoholic beverages has created such a tremendous social evil in the U. S. A. The abstainers are not responsible. The heavy drinkers and alcoholics are not responsible because they are the worst advertisements that the consumption of alcoholic beverages have. What group then is responsible? It must be the occasional and moderate drinkers who can control their drinking. That is the group which glamorizes the social custom of drinking alcoholic beverages, and is responsible for the perpetuation of the huge public health and social problem" (as

quoted by Johnny Stringer in **With All Boldness**, May 1975).

The Christian who socially drinks and influences others is not guiltless. Jesus said, "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh" (Matt. 18: 6-7)!

Arguments Made To Justify Social Drinking

Believe it or not there are a few Christians who endeavor to uphold their practice of social drinking by the Bible. They think that not only did the Lord approve, but even suggested that we should drink alcoholic beverages.

1. Some contend that the story of Jesus turning water into wine (John 2: 1-11) proves that he approved of drinking alcohol.

The word that is translated "wine" does not inherently mean fermented wine. While it can include that (which is determined by context e. g. Eph. 5: 18), it is also used to refer to unfermented juice of the vine. Mark 2: 22 and Matt. 9: 17 refer to the fermentation process. The practice was to put new wine (unfermented) into new bottles (of skin) which would stretch with fermentation. If new wine were put in old bottles (already stretched), the bottle would burst and the wine be lost. The point to be seen is that the Lord uses the same word "wine" (also the same word in Greek) that he used in John 2 to refer to unfermented wine (grape juice). Thus, it is an assumption that the term "wine" in John 2 means that the Lord turned water into an alcoholic beverage. The word "wine" does not suggest that at all! The problem may be that we do not use the term "wine" in that sense today. However, in the Old Testament that term describes the juice that is still in the cluster (Isa. 65: 8).

In Luke 1: 15 "wine" is put in contrast to "strong drink," which means it was either pure grape juice or a drink that had far less alcoholic content than their "strong drink" of the day which contained 5%-8% alcohol.

If the wine Jesus made was fermented, then we could easily justify excessive drinking as well as social drinking. When we consider that there was 100-160 gallons, "It would seem to prove either: 1. Excessive drinking was allowable, or 2. The **oinos** in this case was grape juice. In light of the whole Old Testament condemnation of wine, it certainly would appear that the beverage was grape juice" (Joseph P. Free, **Archaeology and Bible History**, p. 355).

"It is sometimes objected that this is referred to as 'good wine' (John 2: 10), indicating an alcoholic content. Upon examination, however, we find no hint that its goodness was in its high alcoholic content (Harris, BT, p. 183). Earnest Gordon comments, 'When the creative hand of the Lord made wine for the guest we maybe sure that it was superlative even to corrupted tastes... It isn't likely they would call Christ's wine anything but good' (SST, 'Note on Open Letters, ' July 22, 1944, p. 514)" (**Ibid**, p. 355).

2. Some argue from 1 Tim. 5: 23 that Paul encouraged Timothy to drink alcoholic beverages. Paul said, "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities."

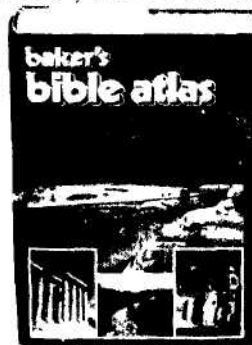
Again, the term wine (same word as in John 2) does not suggest that it was fermented wine. To say that it is fermented is an assumption!

Furthermore, notice that Timothy was to drink wine for his stomach's sake and his often infirmities. It was for **medicinal** purposes. Thus, if we grant that it was fermented (alcoholic content) it does not justify social drinking. It would only justify drinking such for medical purposes.

3. Several have twisted 1 Tim. 3: 8 which lists "not given to much wine" as one of the qualifications of a deacon. It is assumed that it means he can be given to a little, but just not much. A passage that forbids excessive-ness (in my matter) does not permit anything short of that excessive point. Passages that forbid fornication do not justify anything short of the overt act. Passages that condemn murder do not uphold beating a man just as long as we stop short of killing him.

"It is not affirmed that it would be proper for the deacon, any more than the bishop, to indulge in the use of wine in small quantities, but it is affirmed that a man who is much given to the use of wine ought not, on any consideration, to be a deacon" (Albert Barnes, comments on 1 Tim. 3: 8).

Since social drinking cannot be justified by the Bible and it is plainly condemned by the New Testament, we can only conclude that social drinking is a SIN!



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ESTHER

Irven Lee
405 Crutcher Circle
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There are sixty six books in our Bible. One of them is Esther. Have you ever read this book, or have you read it recently? This article is about Esther, the queen, but it will not tell the whole story. Would it be good for you to take time now to get your Bible and read the whole story of Esther? It will give you a glimpse into the palace and court of an ancient Persian king. Rivalry, intrigue, loyalty, success, and failure are evident. So also is the providence of God, even though the name of God is not even mentioned. Look for these things as you read the book.

Vasti, Esther, and Zeresh, the wife of Haman, are mentioned by name, but many beautiful young women are just out of sight. How did they behave? What attitudes did they manifest? We do not know, but we may suppose their conversations, thoughts, and conduct may have been about like those which would be found among such a gathering of young ladies today. Fear, pride, jealousy, courtesy, meekness, and a lack of chastity might have been found in one or another of these young beauties. Evidently sorrow, shock, and very great fear were found among Jewish people at the time of the crisis that came when Esther was queen.

The Crisis That Came to the Jews

Haman had a similar desire concerning the Jews in his day that Hitler had in the time of his power. It, at one time, seemed that Haman might do even more than Hitler because the Medo-Persian Empire was much larger than Western Europe. The decree for the death of all Jews was made and published over the one hundred twenty provinces of the Empire. How could this cruel plot be defeated?

Mordecai the Jew believed that deliverance would come by one means or another (Esther 4: 14). He evidently believed in the providence of God. God had a promise to keep through this nation, so it would not then be destroyed. Mordecai challenged Esther to be the one who could succeed in saving her people. He sent the message to her that she might have come to the kingdom for the very purpose of saving her race from destruction (4: 14).

What could Esther do? She had no direct power to issue decrees or to annul them. That power belonged to Ahasuerus the king. When Mordecai made his appeal to her it had been thirty days since she had been called in by the king. Neither she nor any one else was to go into the presence of this dictator uninvited except at the definite risk of being killed. What could she do even if she were invited in before the king? Haman was back

of the decree, and he was a very great political force. How could this symbol of power challenge and defeat the most powerful prince in the country?

Esther decided to try to save her nation at the risk of her life. She asked Mordecai to have the Jews of Shushan to fast for three days. She promised that she and her maidens would fast for these same three days. She would then go uninvited to the king, and she said, "If I perish, I perish" (4: 16). It would be her effort. She would be offering all she had or ever hoped to have. She might succeed or she might die in the effort. There was likely no other alternative for her, and she knew it.

What Did Esther Have to Give?

Esther had her youth, and that is something precious. She was of an age to dream of the future rather than of the age to reminisce of the past. All people are shocked when death takes one in the very bloom of youth. Evidently she had the health that usually goes with this age because she would not have been chosen to be the beautiful symbol of the Medo-Persian Empire if she had lacked the vigor of health.

She had beauty. If one mentions the obvious beauty of a young lady, she and her loved ones feel that that person has complimented her. Esther was chosen by those who had the authority to select the contestants. She was then selected as the winner from among the most beautiful young virgins of the Empire. We might say that she was "Miss Medo-Persia." She was given servants, wealth, and honor for a year before she was chosen to be queen by the king who was the final judge. She was honored by the whole empire at "Esther's feast" (2: 18).

When Esther was chosen to enter the contest she was a "fair, young virgin," if the standards were met (2: 2). Was the word "virgin" used with its true meaning? I certainly like to think it was. The king would not want a queen who had been "public property." We can know enough about Mordecai to believe that he would have brought her up to be pure. "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches" (Prov. 22: 1). What price could we suggest as a value of a good name? The future would offer more to such a queen.

She had a good countenance. How could she be "fair and beautiful" without this? The margin for Esther 2: 7 reads "fair of form and good of countenance." Her personality and appearance were not of one who had been given to dissipation, alcohol, and immorality.

It would take great strength of mind to have the calm composure before the king when she first stood before him and on every other time she stood before him. Intelligence, courage, and greatness without arrogance would be included among the traits of one who could win in the first place, and who could later make the powerful and crushing attack on Haman in the king's presence. We are not thinking of a weakling when we are thinking of Esther the queen.

Esther had the courage to make plans to try to save her people. In carrying out her plans she had the strength to walk in before the king knowing that it might mean death. The king knew that she had a very important request to make or she would not have come in as she did. She had the self control and wisdom to take her time and strike at

the opportune moment. The success she had and her evident wisdom may lead us to believe that the God of heaven gave her strength even though He is not mentioned by name. Maybe she was brought to the kingdom for just such a time. Who else under the sun could have defeated Haman and his wicked plans? He had obtained the king's signature on his diabolical decree.

Esther — Before and After the Crisis

We have no way of knowing how many ways she may have affected events among her people and over the Empire after her victory over Haman. Mordecai was elevated to Hainan's former position of power after Haman was hanged. Evidently Esther had a closer tie with the king, and she was certainly close to Mordecai.

Esther's father and mother were dead, and Mordecai, her cousin, had cared for her as if she were his daughter. If we consider her strong points it is fair to suppose that Mordecai deserved much credit. That young lady was carefully trained by one who knew the ins and outs of life around the capital. He was back of her honor, and it was through her influence that he was elevated to power. His concern for her continued, of course, after she left his house (2: 11).

When plans were being made for Nehemiah to go to Jerusalem and rebuild the walls of that city, the Bible mentions that the queen was sitting by the king (Neh. 2: 6). His success in his worthy work may in some measure have been helped by the queen. Many Jews returned to their homeland and much was done to reestablish their place of dignity and righteousness during the life of Esther. One with her strength of character would not be expected to be a non-entity.

The Providence of God

The book of Esther does not even mention the name of God or refer to His commandments, but the hand of God is evident to all who have faith in Him. When the crisis came to the Jews, Mordecai thought that Esther's elevation might have been for this very purpose. The three days of fasting before Esther went into the king's presence was evidently a season of prayer offered by the people who believed their petitions would be heard.

There were some amazing coincidences, if not providence, on the night before Esther made her special effort to save her people. The king did not sleep well that night. He had some one read from the book of the records of his reign. The portion read included the record of Mordecai's report concerning a secret plan two chamberlains had to kill the king. Early in the morning when he wanted to talk with some nobleman, Haman was in the court. The whole story of that very special day seems to be planned rather than accidental.

It is not every young lady that could have the wealth, prestige, and honor that Esther had and keep any measure of humility, sense of responsibility, and concern for average people. This beautiful queen may never have lost the common touch or the awareness of her duty. She lived for the important things rather than for trivialities.

(Editor's Note: This is the last article we received from our venerable Brother, Irven Lee. He is now in very poor health and unable to preach. He and Sister Lee have been a great blessing to so many for so long. Perhaps a card or letter from **you** would cheer them. We are all indebted to such noble Christians. — Connie W. Adams)

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



DOORS ARE OPENING

The recent, almost unbelievable, events in eastern Europe, and in the Communist world in general, provide a challenge which Christians most not ignore. As I watched the people in West Berlin and the jubilation of East Berliners climbing over the wall, I thought that the removal of this barrier and the evident longing for freedom and change in the eastern bloc nations must also have some meaning in terms of evangelism. The wall has been broken and the iron curtain has been shattered. It is time to lift our eyes to the peoples of these

nations who stand in need of far greater blessings than political freedom or abundance of material supplies. The greatest need of all is freedom in Christ from the bondage of sin. Many of the problems in the world would diminish quickly with the impact of the gospel in the hearts and lives of the people. But plans must be made to go. Who will go? Churches need to be poised and ready to send and supply the needs of those willing to go. Instead of a few men deciding to go and then soliciting the churches for help, would it not be even better for churches with the financial means to seek out suitable men and offer what is needed. Brethren, for forty years we have been content with the knowledge that we did not have easy access to these nations. There still may be some entry problems in many places where such dramatic change is occurring, but we have to get ready.

KINGRY AND CHINA

JEFF KINGRY AND HIS FAMILY have made great sacrifices to get the gospel into China as they worked as teachers. They have spent most of the equity they had built over many years in their home to cover costs related to that effort. They need and deserve some help. Because of their faith and labors, the gospel has taken root in China. It has exacted a heavy price for Jeff and Anna financially. Could some of you help them to lift the heavy burden they bear? Write to them at:

5510 Temple Heights Rd., Temple Terrace, FL 33617.

NATIONAL CHURCH LEADERS CONFERENCE

I am on the mailing list for THE CAMPBELL LIGHT, a publication of Bethany College of Bethany, WV. This is the school that first began in the house of Alexander Campbell (what is now called "the Campbell Mansion"). This school is now under control of the ultra-liberal Disciples of Christ. Here is an excerpt from the November, 1989 issue:

"The annual meetings of the Conference of Regional Ministers and Moderators and the Council of Ministers of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) will be held at the Bethany College Leadership Center Nov. 30-Dec. 5. The conferences bring together the Regional Ministers and Moderators from the church's 36 regions, plus the officers of the church's General Cabinet.

The theme for this year's gathering is The Region as Dynamic Faith Community in Prophetic, Redemptive and Reconciling Ministries to the Whole World. "

This is surely a far cry from a simple appeal to restore New Testament Christianity. I wonder what A. Campbell would say about this? Of far more importance, what would the Lord say about it? I guess I am not much interested in restoring the Restoration Movement.

J. F. DANCER, 175 Van Dorn St., Grenada, MS 38901 — A new congregation is now meeting in Collierville, Tennessee. They began on October 8, 1989. H. Scott (Sparky) Owen is preaching for them. They meet at 91 Walnut St. in Collierville. They did not begin as a result of any problems at another congregation but had planned and talked about it for over a year. When the Burlington church where Sparky formerly preached brought Doug Seaton in to work with them this gave brother Owen the opportunity to work elsewhere. Anyone desiring more information can get it from H. Scott Owen (901) 755-4460 or from Shelby Sims (901) 363-4277.

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Connie W. Adams

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ED BRAND, 1700 Imhoff Ave., Port Arthur, Texas 77642 — I spent five weeks in India in the fall of 1988, working with John Humphries and Darrell Haub. En route I spent three days in Rome with Sandro and Elizabetta Corazza. We have supported brother Corazza for many years. I spoke to the Via Sannio church on Wednesday night. In India our work was in Andhra Pradesh state. We had many sessions with the Indian preachers and then split up and traveled with interpreters to many villages. During the trip there were 44 baptized. At one place we baptized 15 in an irrigation ditch between women washing clothes on the one side and water buffaloes on the other side.

Darrell, John and I have been invited to return next year. India has about 800,000,000 people with over 60,000,000 living in the state of Andhra Pradesh. At present the government allows us to enter on a visitor's visa for no longer than 6 months.

THOMAS BUNTING, Adolf Bergsvei 52-D, 5030 Landaas, Norway — We have several visitors to our meetings who continue to come regularly and study with us some privately as well. In September Shirley and I went down to Stavanger to encourage the brethren in a special meeting. Bjorn Ringdal is now living in Bergen and attending the University of Bergen. He is a great help in the work and with time will be able to assist even more. We received letters from several of you following the article that appeared in SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES. While I have not been able to answer each one personally, we sincerely appreciated your interest in the work and your taking time to write.

RAY VOTAW, Box 801, Springs 1560, South Africa — **DOUG AND SHEILA BAUER** are white Africans from the very heart of Africa. Since becoming children of God in 1962 they have lived through the political transitions of Southern Africa — the Rhodesias, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, etc., and have faithfully planted the seed of the kingdom throughout these times and places of turmoil and upheaval. I have been with them numerous times in these "frontier" regions. They are now in this smelting pot of change — the Republic of South Africa. They have reared six children of their own, all of whom have obeyed the gospel, and I have lost count of the number they have fostered. In the usual Bauer fashion, a faithful church has been established in Pinetown, Natal where they live. Most of his years of preaching, Doug has supported himself in secular work. However, due to Communist inspired disinvestment of the leading countries of the West, Doug is one of some 25% of the labor force in South Africa now without a job. While in good health, now at 57 it will be difficult for him to find employment. Meantime, he is "odd-jobbing" and continuing his gospel work. We recently spent some time with Doug and Sheila in Natal. They had been on a "gospel safari" visiting lonely Christians in isolated places in South Africa. Doug mentioned that it would be wonderful if he and Sheila could... No! I won't say it! Why don't some of you good folk there in the U. S. A. write to Doug and Sheila Bauer about what they would like to do so much. They have come to the kingdom for such a time as this. Contact them at P. O. Box 524, Pinetown 3600, South Africa.

RUBEN C. AMADOR, P. O. Box 924456, Houston, Texas 77292 — Carlos Capelli of Argentina was recently in El Salvador to preach among brethren and was caught in the crossfire of the conflict and had to remain a few extra days. I spoke with Rafael Castillo by phone (he was in San Salvador) and he kept asking if I could hear the noise of gunfire and bombs. They are living in much fear and uncertainty. Besides the war, several brethren have fallen victims to that "strange doctrine" that the alien sinner is not amenable to Christ's law of marriage. Carlos is having to combat it.

STEFANO CORAZZA, Via Tagliamento 9/2, 33100 Udine, Italy — We have baptized an aged man, who is the father of one of our members who was baptized about two years ago. Please rejoice with us about our new brother, Giuseppe.

JEFF ASHER, Dumas Drive Church of Christ, Amarillo, Texas — We have been in Amarillo for sixteen months during which the brethren have been diligent to grow and seek to spread the gospel. Our call-in radio broadcast continues to become more popular and is beginning to bear fruit. We have made contact with many among the liberals who yearn for sound preaching which they no longer hear

except on this broadcast. Studies are in progress with several of these families. For the past four months we have been direct-mailing a first principle teaching paper to 1,000 residences near our building. Last week a family visited as a result of this. It is apparent that the Lord has opened a door for us here and we are doing our best to go through. Pray for us. If you are traveling either east or west, Amarillo is in the middle and a good place to stop and worship with a caring group of Christians.

NORMAN P. SMITH, Route 7, Box 566, Conway, AR 72032 — On Wednesday night, September 20, 1989, 23 souls met for the first time as a new congregation in Conway, Arkansas. On November 1, 1989 we met for the first time in facilities we have purchased for a permanent meeting place. These facilities are adequate for our needs at the present and so constructed that we can expand as the need may arise. Presently we average about 40 on Sunday mornings. The building is located on US Highway 65, 1 1/2 miles north of the junction of I-40 and US 65 in Conway. We meet at 9, 10 and 6 on Sundays and at 7 PM on Wednesdays. We stand opposed to the social gospel, institutionalism and all innovations of men. Warren H. Smith, who for the past four years preached for the church in Marshall, Arkansas, is doing the preaching, with men of the congregation filling in. For further information, write to us at the above address or call Warren H. Smith (329-5620) or Norman P. Smith (327-6063).

WILLIAM C. SEXTON, 4400 N. W. Gleason, Kansas City, MO 64151 — We began our fourth year with the Roan Ridge congregation last July. After three operations for colon cancer in 1988, and I am feeling wonderful. I am grateful to all who wrote, called, or communicated with me that they were praying for me. I'm sure their prayers had much to do with my recovery. In October I was in a meeting with the Oakland church in Topeka, Kansas. It's good to see brethren drive a long distance to support and encourage those preaching the gospel, especially with a small group. The work at Roan Ridge is moving forward on a sound footing. We had two good meetings in 1989, one with John Iverson and the other with Cecil Willis. Both faithfully preached the gospel. The last two nights of our meeting with Cecil we broke our attendance records. We are located 8 miles south of the KC

International Airport, on I-29 on the northeast corner at the 64th St. exit.

PREACHERS NEEDED

TRENTON, TENNESSEE — The Northside church in Trenton needs a preacher. Those interested may write: Northside Church of Christ, 644 N. College St., Trenton, TN 38382 or call (901) 692-2055.

SHERMAN, TEXAS — The church needs a preacher to work with this church of 21 members. Attendance now averages 27. They should be able to furnish \$300 per week toward a man's support. For more information contact Olan Finley at (214) 465-8047.

MORRILTON, ARKANSAS — The Westside church in Morrilton needs a full time preacher. Normal Sunday attendance runs in the 50's. There is a 30 minute radio program each Sunday morning. Some outside support will be needed as the church is able to supply \$200 a week. Contact F. E. Gore, 9 Hickory Hill Rd., Conway, AR 72032. Phone (501) 327-4074.

PREACHER AVAILABLE

THOMAS THORNHILL, 100 Darryl Ct., Jacksonville, Arkansas 72076 — On December 31 I finished seven full years with the McArthur Dr. church in Jacksonville. I have announced my intention to relocate in 1990 and will be available to talk with any congregation which might be interested. I am 55 years of age and have been preaching since June, 1953. The last 8 1/2 years have been spent in Arkansas. Before that most of my preaching was in Florida except for five years we spent working in Bergen, Norway. Those interested may contact me at the above address or call (501) 982-0467 or 982-6413.

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	368
RESTORATIONS	105
(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)	

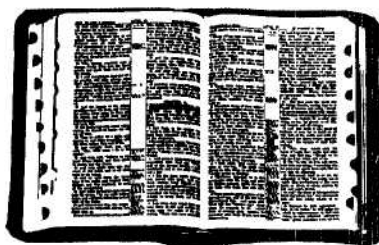
"Reemphasizing Bible Basics"

Florida College Lectureship
January 29—February 1, 1990

Morning Lectures:	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
9:00 a. m. <i>Christ</i>	Head of the Church Harry W. Pickup, Jr.	Center of the Gospel and the Doctrine Connie Adams	Savior of the Church Dale Smelser
10:00 a. m. <i>Gospel</i>	Elements of: Facts, Commands, Promises Berry Kercheville	Obedience of (to): Morris Hafley	Power of: To Save Tom Roberts
11:00 a. m. <i>Church</i>	Structure of: Maurice Barnett	Worship of: Dan Petty	Work of: Hoyt Houchen
12:00 noon <i>Bible</i>	Authority of: C. G. Caldwell, III	Inspiration of: James Cooper	Canonicity of: Marty Pickup
Afternoon Sessions: <i>Holy Spirit</i>	Panel: Indwelling of the Spirit Ron Halbrook	Open Forum Clinton D. Hamilton	
Evening Lectures: <i>Unity</i>	Panel: Indwelling of the Spirit Ron Halbrook Ferrell Jenkins		
Monday Walking in the Old Paths Melvin Curry	Departure from the Old Paths Grover Stevens	Pharisaism in the Way Frank Jamerson	The End of the Journey James R. Cope

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 XXXI

FEBRUARY 1990

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THINK ON THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 1631
Lutz, FL 33549



SCRIPTURAL BAPTISM

It is of utmost importance that any religious action be exactly as God directs, otherwise it is an empty and vain act. Baptism is one thing upon which the religious world has been divided for as long as religious denominations have existed. There is absolutely no justification for men being disturbed over this subject because it is plainly taught in the New Testament. A brief study may help us to see the simplicity and completeness of the subject in the word of God.

There are three important questions about baptism that must be answered before we know whether or not it is scriptural. For a thing to be **scriptural** it must be taught in the scriptures. These questions are: What is the action? Who should be baptized? Why should one be baptized?

The Action. Not everything called baptism is scriptural. We are not interested here in telling of all the unscriptural practices, but only what is taught in the word of God. The word "buried" is a definite action. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death..." (Rom. 6: 4). "Buried with him in baptism..." (Col. 2: 12). This is a scriptural action. It is also true that any substitute action is **unscriptural** (untaught in the New Testament).

The word "Baptize" comes from a Greek term which has a definite action. It means to dip or plunge, and when water is the element, as the great commission indicates, the subject is "dipped" or "buried" in the

water. Besides this, the circumstances surrounding all cases of baptism in the New Testament show that the action was a burial. In Acts 8: 38 Philip and the eunuch "went down both into the water, **both** Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him." Both going into the water to baptize one man would be foolish unless the action was a burial. "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water" (Matt. 3: 16). There would have been no point in Jesus coming "up out of the water" unless he "went down into the water" to be baptized. It is all clear if we understand the action to be a burial. This is the only action that is scriptural.

The Who. It makes a difference WHO is baptized. If he is not a sinner, he does not need salvation, and therefore does not need to be baptized. The subject for baptism is therefore a sinner. He must also be a believer in Jesus Christ as the Son of God (Acts 8: 36; Gal. 3: 26, 27; Heb. 11: 6). In the great commission recorded by Mark, the Lord said: "He that **believeth** and is **baptized** shall be saved..." (Mark 16: 15). If one does not believe, he cannot be scripturally baptized. This eliminates infants and untaught people. Infants are not lost and do not need to be saved. Sin is what separates us from God (Isa. 59: 1, 2), and infants have not sinned. "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed **from the heart** that form of doctrine which was delivered you" (Rom. 6: 17). This obedience must be "from the heart" — by faith. The next verse shows the results of this obedience by faith — "made free from sin." The scriptural subject of baptism is a believer who has repented of his sins, and has confessed Christ (Acts 8: 37; Rom. 10: 9, 10) — no one else.

The Why. It also makes a difference WHY one is baptized. The act has a definite purpose. When Peter and the apostles had preached the first gospel sermon, the hearers cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we **do**?" The word says they were "pricked in their heart" which shows that the preaching had convinced them or made them believers. Peter answered, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ **for the remission of sins**

... " (Acts 2: 38). Romans 6: 18 says, "being then made free from sin..." This is following the obedience from the heart of that "form of doctrine." That is baptism. The purpose in being made free from sin is to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6: 18; 2 Cor. 5: 17). We must be in Christ to be a new creature, and we arise to walk in the new life when we are scripturally baptized "into Christ" (Gal. 3: 26, 27).

We must have the right ACTION, PERSON, and PURPOSE to be scripturally baptized. We must be scripturally baptized to be saved. We must be saved if we hope to escape the everlasting punishment of the Lord. It is important!

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"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Phil. 4:13).

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Editorial

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BUILDING STRONG BIBLE CLASSES

Bible classes are scripturally authorized under the generic command to "teach." Classes are expedients, methods, to that end. If they are worth having, they are worth developing into effective tools for learning. There is evidence in many places in my acquaintance of greater awareness of the need to improve the quality of this work. Teacher training courses have been conducted in a number of places in recent years. People like Rodney and Carla Miller, the Waldrons and others have done much to help educate teachers on better techniques for more effective teaching. The Millers have their material available on video tapes.

Churches like Par Street in Orlando, Florida and Expressway in Louisville, Kentucky have done much to upgrade the quality of their teaching. Classes have become more interesting, students are learning more and attendance has increased because members have become aware that serious effort is being made to provide teaching which is not only Biblically sound, but stimulating to the student.

For many years in far too many places, Bible classes have been poorly conducted. How many times have you been in a class where the teacher gets up and opens with "Now let's see, where did we get to last week" followed by a lengthy discussion of whether it was verse 7 or verse 10 where they stopped. I have sat in classes in Job, Daniel and Revelation, and sometimes Romans or one of the gospels, where the teacher not only did not KNOW what the passage was about, he did not even SUSPECT what it was about. The practice of having each one read a verse and comment is not bad, providing it does not reduce itself to a pooling of the ignorance. "Brother A, what do you think that verse means?" To which Brother A responds "Well, I think it means it says" or "The next verse explains it." And sometimes it does. But Bible study needs to go beyond that.

Often, in our rush to make practical applications, and they must be made, we fail to grasp the context of the passage being considered. What did it say in context to the original recipients of the letter or book? Confusion reigns in a study of Revelation unless that principle is observed. Once that has been established, then it is time for application.

Much of the indifference toward Bible classes is the fault of teachers themselves. A class soon learns whether a teacher is prepared. Some teachers will lec-

ture for 15 minutes and then ask, "are there any questions?" Usually there will not be. By then, many in the class are glassy-eyed and struggling to stay with it. There are times to lecture, but it must be done with careful preparation and in an interesting way. Sometimes one or two students will dominate all discussion, intimidating the rest. Teachers need to study to learn how to elicit response from students. The late Thomas Hughes, who wrote a column on teaching in this paper several years ago, said "Never tell the class what the class can tell you." This is especially true in reviewing. That is a good time to have input from the class which in turn will awaken the minds of those present and make them feel involved.

Questions We Need To Ask About Bible Classes

(1) Is the Bible being taught? Are we spending more time on the comments and observations of uninspired people than on what the scripture says? Bible classes have no defense unless the Bible is taught. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4: 11).

(2) Are workbooks and study aids being abused? I am not opposed to the use of literature unless it teaches error and becomes such a crutch that Bible study is hindered more than it is helped. I have sat in classes where students have dutifully read off their answers as they had filled in the blanks, or in a true or false section, or told how many times a certain word appeared in a section of three or four chapters, and left with the uneasy feeling that the class did not know what the passage was all about. Then I have been in classes where the teacher reads in class the text of a workbook. That makes me wonder, "why?" Cannot the student do that for himself at home and free the class period for discussion of the text? Don't forget that our faith should not stand in the wisdom of men (even good brethren), but in the power of God.

(3) Are small children's classes geared more to baby-sitting than to instruction? Skilled teachers realize that attention spans are short with little ones and that they must vary their approach, but always the objective must be to instill, on a level they can grasp, what the Bible says.

(4) Is the approach so tedious that the student becomes lost in the forest? There is a place for a verse by verse study (I prefer that) but there must be some sense of progress. When a class spends three years on a book with four chapters, it is easy for a class to become so tedious with long dissertations on every word, that the student cannot see the forest for the trees. I am in favor of digging out the meat of the word, but unless the class has a sense of forward progress, it will be hard to maintain interest.

(5) Is the "whole counsel of God" being taught? Are there gaps in the teaching program so that needed subjects or books are being overlooked? We worked a number of years ago with the elders at Expressway in Louisville in trying to work out a five year plan for the adult classes. They offer five adult classes both Sunday morning and Wednesday night. We laid it all out on a huge board. It was easy to see areas of weakness that

way. We could see whether there was a proper balance between Old and New Testaments. Did we offer help on evidences? Was there a proper balance between textual study of the books of the Bible and topical studies to deal with practical issues confronting Christians? It was an eye-opening experience. Are Christians being equipped to take the message of the word of God and apply it to the problems of everyday life.

(6) What is the evangelistic thrust of these classes? Are students near or over the age of accountability being taught what to do to be saved and motivated to act? What of visitors in classes who are not saved? Do we not bear some responsibility to them? Often, teachers, students or both, are insensitive to the needs of these and it is easy for lack of thoughtfulness to close their minds forever.

Do we have classes which ignite the fires of evangelism in our young men and women? Are they being made aware of efforts to save the lost around the world and of what they can do to be a part of such worthwhile activity? Do our classes stimulate Christians to take the knowledge out of the classroom and into the mainstream of life? Do they move Christians to "teach faithful men who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2: 2)?

(7) Are there regularly scheduled teachers meetings where elders can monitor what is taking place, and where teachers can help each other sharpen their skills? Discussion with teachers in such settings can help elders greatly to spot areas of need, stay on top of situations before they get out of hand, and help them to evaluate the attitudes of teachers toward the scriptures and toward godly living. It is also a good setting in which to develop new teachers.

This writer could be mistaken, and I hope that I am, but it appears to me that, as a whole, we are not as knowledgeable about the word of God as we ought to be. We are not the people of the book we once were. I know the usual excuses but they are no more acceptable now than they have ever been. It is still required that we "search the scriptures daily" (Acts 17: 11) and that we "study" (give diligence) to show ourselves "approved unto God, workmen that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2: 15). Both pulpit and classroom must combine in instilling a knowledge of the word of God into the hearts of those who hear us. Eternal issues are at stake.

In the process, let it not be forgotten that God requires "faithful" people to teach others. James said teachers shall receive "the heavier judgment" (James 3: 1). Morally weak, half-baked Christians have no business in the pulpit or the classroom in a teaching role. They need to be genuinely converted first. Shortswearers, mixed bathers, social drinkers, cigarette puffers, profane and vulgar talkers and other worldlings are mighty poor examples of what believers ought to be. Their students cannot be expected to rise to any higher level than the example of their teachers. Did I hear even a faint, distant, "Amen" somewhere?

A COMPENDIUM OF ISSUES

Hoyt Houchen

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Introduction

The purpose of this series of articles is to review and summarize some of the issues (not all of them) which have plagued the church, past and present. Such issues as institutionalism, the sponsoring church and church provision of recreation and entertainment are responsible for the division which has occurred within the ranks of God's people. Some of us, who have been on "the firing line" for about five decades in the struggle to keep the church free from these and other innovations, can make some obvious observations. An attitude is responsible for these and every other troublesome issue that has ever invaded the Lord's church. It is the same attitude that was responsible for the introduction of the Missionary Society and instrumental music in worship over a century ago. This attitude is the failure to regard and submit to divine authority. Every act of disobedience recorded in God's volume of inspiration, from the time of Adam and Eve in the beautiful bowers of Eden, is the consequence of this attitude. All must come to the recognition that God means what He says and says what He means. This includes respecting the silence of the Scriptures. Those, for instance, who use instrumental music in worship attempt to justify their practice on the ground that God did not say not to use it. By not respecting the silence of the Scriptures they thus defy divine authority. The New Testament simply does not authorize the use of instrumental music in worship. This should be reason enough to not employ it in our worship.

Jesus Christ has ALL authority (Matt. 28: 18), and we are to abide in His teaching (2 Jno. 9). Only what He, His apostles and other inspired writers have authorized, are we permitted to do. This applies to the church as well as individuals. Authority has not been given to the church, but to Christ; therefore, the church is not permitted to act in any matter without the authority of its head, who is Christ (Col. 1: 187). When men do not submit to the authority of Christ, they will invariably turn to human reasoning; which in turn is substituted for the authority of Christ. The chief priests and elders questioned the authority of Jesus (Matt. 21: 23). When they could not answer His questions, "... they reasoned with themselves" (vs. 25). Basically, what constitutes authority is THE ISSUE in all controversies within the church. There are issues as we know them, but AUTHORITY is the underlying issue.

Modern innovations in the church are not "new under

the sun. " They are simply the same old ones, but resurrected and dressed in new attire. Nor are we to believe that they will simply fade away if unopposed. Beloved readers, we have a new generation that must be taught; and if we fail to discharge our obligation to make known what the church is and what constitutes its work, then the same condition will exist that did in the days following the death of the heroic and great stalwart warrior of God, Joshua, and his generation. It is recorded in Judges 2: 10: "... and there arose another generation after them, that knew not Jehovah, nor yet the work which he had wrought for Israel. " For the sake of God's truth we cannot allow that tragedy to be repeated. In this same connection, we would do well to observe the admonition of the psalmist to the people of his day: "Walk about Zion, and go round about her; Number the towers thereof; Mark ye well her bulwarks; Consider her palaces: That ye may tell it to the generation following" (Ps. 48: 12, 13). As God's people were to observe the strong elements of Zion (Jerusalem), so we need to carefully observe the identifying features of spiritual Zion (the church) noting its purpose, its organization, its worship and work.

What a challenge presents itself to us older ones, who have been in the heat of the battle, to pass these precious truths on to the next generation! The responsibility lies with us to cause this young generation to realize the impact that unscriptural encroachments have had, and will continue to have, upon the Lord's church.

And, we would not for a moment conclude that "the issues" as we know them (institutionalism, the sponsoring church and the social gospel) are ALL of the issues troubling the church and nothing else matters. A church is not to be considered "sound" merely because it stands for the truth on these specific matters. A church, for instance, may be straight on these issues but "loose as a goose" on marriage, divorce and remarriage. When inquiry is made as to whether some particular church is "sound, " we would do well to ask: "sound on what?" A gospel preacher should not dwell upon the aforementioned issues so often that they become a hobby with him, and the brethren are heard to say, "that is all he ever preaches on — it is the issues, the issues, the issues!" We are fully aware of this danger; however, they should be preached when it becomes necessary to inform those who are ignorant of them, and often enough to remind the brethren that they are still around (see 1 Tim. 4: 16). All issues should be forthrightly dealt with, in order to guard against any innovation that will corrupt the church. Every Bible truth should be preached (Acts 20: 27), so it should be clear to our readers that we are not emphasizing some issues and minimizing others. How often any particular Bible subject is preached upon becomes a matter of judgment. We should not allow "grass to grow under our feet" by neglecting any Bible teaching, whether it be baptism, the identify of the church, the Lord's supper, giving, the life of a Christian or whatever.

We do not want to repeat the mistakes of the past. To illustrate: while we were doing much preaching on why instrumental music in worship is unscriptural, we were saying little, if anything, about what is wrong with a

missionary society. At least, this was generally true. It was assumed that brethren knew what was wrong with it. In the meantime, institutionalism and brotherhood elderships had crept into the church. While Bible principles were being preached, the application of them was not being made. We were preaching that there is no organization larger than the local church, but at the same time some of us who were preaching this were at the same time approving churches making contributions to human institutions such as orphan homes. The application of what we were preaching might have very well minimized our problems. But let us add that the failure to apply the principles we were preaching was not intentional — it was not hypocritical, it was simply a failure to see what we learned later. When many of us learned the truth, we applied the principles that we were preaching. Premillennialism was held more in check because faithful gospel preachers were exposing it. We are confident that the division caused by this false doctrine would have been more severe and widespread, had it not been opposed. The charge to all preachers is to "preach the word" (2 Tim. 4: 2). It is to be preached "in season, out of season, " when it is popular and when it is not popular — when the brethren like it and when they do not like it. All error must be exposed and resisted, that the church will not be contaminated by false doctrine and unscriptural practices.

Brethren, we want to step back and get a proper perspective of what has taken place in the Lord's church in about the last one hundred and fifty years and how history has repeated itself, but we must first examine the New Testament and see what the church is and how it did its work. We choose to entitle this overall view: "A Compendium of Issues. " (More to follow).

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EVANGELISM THAT MAKES SENSE

If there has been any point of emphasis thus far in our study of the church at Antioch described in Acts chapters 11, 13, 14 it is this: God did not pick the Antioch church out of a hat by saying, "Someone has got to make an impact in the world and it might as well be Antioch..." Rather, God used the Antioch church to make an impact **BECAUSE THE ANTIOCH CHURCH WAS READY TO BE USED!** Having committed themselves to growth and stability first at home, they were now ready to sacrifice for the benefit of those in unharvested fields. And they, as a result of their association with Paul and Barnabas, were able to send out two men whom they knew and could trust (13: 1-4).

Look again at that last sentence. **Two men whom they knew and could trust...** Let's take time out from that first preaching journey to reflect upon two important points regarding evangelism that we see in the Antioch model. Two points that are often overlooked.

Principle #1 — From Church to Preacher

First, New Testament evangelism was carried out by qualified men. God never asked the Antioch church to send out men they did not know. In the selection of Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13: 2), the Lord was laying down an evangelistic principle that every church should emulate when it seeks to preach the gospel in distant places. That principle: have fellowship with those you know and trust.

I wonder... (and maybe you have too...) how much money churches pour down rat holes simply because they do not take the time to know the men they support? The fact is: Not every man who writes and asks for support is worthy of support! Common sense, as well as the Antioch example, says that no church should support a man unless they have absolute confidence in him. Either he is known directly or indirectly (i. e., through the recommendation of someone else in whom they have confidence).

Every local church will have to make its own decisions regarding whom they support in other places. It's not my business nor anyone else's. But let me make a couple of observations that may be worthy of further study.

I've noticed a few churches that appear to take a certain amount of pride at being able to say, "We support fifteen preachers!" (Which usually means, we support fifteen preachers one hundred dollars

per month.) Question: Of those fifteen men, how many are really known by the church? Sometimes, outside of an occasional letter posted on the bulletin board, few, if any, have had any real and meaningful contact with the men they support.

Surely it's not always possible to invite every man a church supports to come in and talk with the elders and brethren about their work. But nothing precludes an elder (or someone else) traveling to where the man preaches to visit him and his family and thereby gain a first-hand impression about the work. And nothing precludes a local church paying the expenses of one who travels for that purpose. I know of several churches where this principle is put into practice. They, and the men they support, are the better for it.

What this principle also means is that there may be more wisdom in supporting fewer men with greater amounts than many men with lesser amounts. I'm seeing more and more churches make longer and greater financial commitments to a few men they have confidence in rather than stringing out minimum support to a greater number. It's an area that calls for much prayer as leaders seek to be responsible for resources under their direction. Elders need to approach efforts at outside evangelism by:

1. Asking for God-directed wisdom (James 1: 5).
2. Employing good common sense (Matthew 10: 16).
3. Remembering the responsibilities of stewardship, (Titus 1: 7).

Principle #2 — From Preacher to Church

Second, a church ought not to support a man who is unwilling to communicate consistently. Note in 14: 27 that upon their return Paul and Barnabas gathered the church and "reported all things that God had done with them..."

My good brother, if you are laboring in a place where you receive support from other churches, you should be responsible enough to keep those brethren informed about your work. If nothing else, common courtesy and integrity should demand it. Do not view such as a waste of your time or an infringement upon a busy schedule. If there are churches willing to take the time to commit to your needs and write a monthly check, the least you could do is take the time to communicate in return.

Obviously some preachers know the value of that. Others are rather, shall we say, lax (I was looking for a kind way to say **negligent.**). A man should be disciplined and responsible enough to periodically write a brief report concerning his work. And if a brother does not respond diligently in that area... well, it makes you wonder how diligent he may be in other areas. (I'm not particularly impressed by reading letters on bulletin boards that always begin with: "I apologize for not writing sooner...") I like what brother Aude McKee said as we talked on this subject sometime back. He said, "My attitude has always been pretty simple: if a fellow isn't willing to send a monthly report he shouldn't expect a monthly check. " That's pretty clear.

And I've been there. On the receiving end. And I know that churches appreciate being kept informed. I would trust that if a congregation cared enough about me to render financial support then surely the very least I owe

in return is consistent communication. If nothing more than a page once a month then at least I've shown my appreciation for them. And they appreciate it, too.

Three reminders for every steward of the Word whether receiving support from many churches or from one:

1. **Cultivate credibility in your ministry** (2 Cor. 6: 3- 4a).
2. **Develop appreciation for those who share with you** (Philippians 4: 14-19).
3. **Provide things honest in the sight of all** (2 Cor. 8: 20- 21, 1 Thess. 2: 10).

A Final Word

Every local church needs to evaluate its evangelism in light of the New Testament pattern. For example, what good does it do to argue against the sponsoring church arrangement for violating New Testament examples on how preachers are to be supported and then turn around and give little or no thought on who is supported? Doesn't make much sense to me.

The facts are simple. The Antioch church had fellowship with men they knew. Those men reported back to Antioch regarding their work. Frankly, that's the New Testament pattern. And... it has never been improved upon.

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FINAL REPLY TO DUDLEY ROSS SPEARS

Thank you Brother Adams for your sense of fair play in publishing these articles and permitting me a final rejoinder. It should go without saying that I do not think less of Brother Spears because he disagrees and has taken public issue with me. I continue to respect and hold him in high esteem.

Do I have a clear understanding of divorce and remarriage? I'm sure the answer would depend on whether I agree with Dudley on all aspects of the subject. If I do, then he would say I have a clear understanding; if not, I don't. I repeat from earlier articles that I do not claim to have all the answers on this subject. I've heard great gospel preachers through the years make the statement that it would take a Solomon to unravel some of the situations that are presented in divorce and remarriage. I don't claim to be a Solomon, but I'm proud to know that we now have some Solomons among us. I've heard from quite a few in the past couple of months. Trouble is, the Solomons don't all agree. I think my first response to Dudley reveals plainly what my convictions are on most aspects of this subject.

It is also heartening to know that "average" brethren in some areas are quite equipped to handle the intricacies of Greek grammar.

As to the "catechism," Dudley is the one who quoted Connie Adams as making "a statement with which everyone of us ought to fully agree." That sounds suspiciously like a catechism. But I was gracious and assumed that Dudley really does not believe that. Since he gave the quote, I was certainly within my rights to ask whether he or Connie really believe it. If there is disagreement on that point, doesn't consistency demand that the same treatment be accorded those we perceive to be wrong on that as to those we perceive to be wrong on some other aspect of the subject? Call it "pitting one against another" — call it what you like. It is not an unreasonable question.

Concerning the recognition of scriptural baptism, Dudley is correct. I did not address his point. But I did raise a point about it that parallels our present focus of attention and he did not address it. The fact is, we cannot always recognize scriptural baptism for the simple reason that we do not know people's hearts. We can **only** assume that the one being baptized truly believes and is penitent. And by the same token, some assumptions must often be made as on the subject of divorce.

I have little more to add regarding the "war question," and other such issues. All such involve brethren in sin, according to some. Fellowship exists in regard to most of these issues in spite of such. I am unable to detect any logic or consistency in Brother Spears' comments on this. I think he has his apples and oranges all mixed up.

I did not misunderstand the thrust of Dudley's statement: "If brother Green's use of Romans 14 is right, there can be no wrong position to take on anything..." I reject the notion that such is a consequence of my understanding of Romans 14.

You ask, "which was the wrong party?" Why the party that maintained a distinction in foods was wrong. I do not say thy sinned by not eating meats, but they were wrong in their understanding (Mark 7: 18; Rom. 14: 14; Acts 10: 14-24; 1 Tim. 4: 4), and aren't we to understand what the will of the Lord is (Eph. 5: 17)?

Those who kept certain days were wrong on that question (Gal. 4: 10). I do not believe I am guilty of the judging that Paul warned against (Verses 4, 10, 13) when I conclude that one party was wrong on those issues. It is the brother who draws the line of fellowship and concludes that one party or the other stands condemned by God that is guilty of such judgment. Some seem to think that one must be right on everything to have any hope of salvation. I venture we had all better hope that such is not the case.

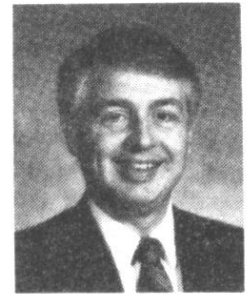
Dudley is especially concerned over whether I believe God might accept some who are in adulterous marriages. To give a specific example, what about the woman I referred to in my previous article whose parents annulled her marriage when she was a youngster and who is now remarried. Is she living in adultery? I don't know for sure. But why don't we just let the Lord do the judging on such matters (Rom. 14: 10-12). Is that a hypothetical case? No, she's a real person in a real situation and it's my conviction that we had best leave such questions to those involved and to God.

The letters I have received from brethren ready to draw lines on practically every disagreement prove little to Dudley. Well they prove to me that if we maintain our present course we are going to splinter into several dozen factions over questions of personal application. Dudley refers to such issues as "unrevealed matters." There is at least some revelation on most all questions that arise; and fully as much or more on some of them (the war question, for example) as on the divorce — remarriage controversy.

DIVINE COMMUNIQUES

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FELLOWSHIP: NO RIGHT TO BE WRONG

DIVINE MESSAGE: "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins" (John 8: 24).

In the midst of controversy, the Christian should first go back to basic indisputable principles. By doing so, he will help insure that the foundation upon which he establishes current positions is sound.

It seems that all of us are grappling with difficult applications of God's teaching regarding "FELLOWSHIP." These are certainly not new issues but in dealing with them some seem to be forgetting ancient Bible principles. I would like to say "up front" that wisdom, study, patience, and love must be involved anytime we talk about fellowshipping or disfellowshipping. Whatever we do, however, must be done within the context of certain truths taught by Christ and His apostles. One such principle is that when essential truth is involved, **we have no right to be wrong.** I am certainly aware that on most of today's topics there is disagreement over what is "essential" to believe and/or practice, but many are making sounds which imitate denominational preachers who teach that what one believes or practices on any Bible doctrine should be tolerated if he is generally pious or usually sound in teaching. The charitable position, they say, recognizes that "there is much good in every faith" and that "we all differ." To fail to recognize "believers" for fellowship is bigoted, intolerant, uncharitable, and even un-American.

This notion grew out of the Reformation period when men were given Bibles and told they should read them. Instead, however, Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, and others formulated systematic written creeds upon which others established faith. When creeds did not agree, many came to justify holding differing beliefs on matters of Bible doctrine concluding that everyone can be right from his own viewpoint.

Now if one is to believe that all religious beliefs are right, he is logically forced to believe that there is no error being taught anywhere. Jesus said, "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves" (Matt. 7: 15). Peter taught, "there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift

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destruction" (2 Pet. 2: 1). John added, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John 4: 1). Paul said, "Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons" (1 Tim. 4: 1). "Satisfaction" with just any belief is not "satisfactory." Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven" (Matt. 7: 21).

In this country we have the "civil right" to be wrong even if we believe atheism, deism, pantheism, polytheism, or idolatry. In one sense we have the freedom to believe or not, to obey or disobey. Even God does not physically force our action while we live on the earth. The leader of Israel expressed it this way: "And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Josh. 24: 15). Such choice is not made, however, in the context that we are exempt from punishment if we make the wrong choice. Paul warned, "To give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with ever-lasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power" (2 Thes. 1: 7-9).

To state it another way, all of us are free to believe what we wish about doctrinal matters, but our choice is not with impunity. God will certainly judge our beliefs and practices. We have no right to believe the wrong things about Christ: "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins" (John 8: 24). God also says we have no right to be wrong about what Jesus teaches us to do. The "Great Commission" clearly states: "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16: 16). That "belief is not just any "belief."

Brethren must also make some judgments about the beliefs and practices of those with whom they are identified. Paul said, "For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged, as though I were present, concerning him who has so done this deed. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Cor. 5: 3-5). And again the apostle taught, "Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them" (Rom. 16: 17).

Surely both Scripture and reason force us to recognize that men cannot believe doctrines that are diametrically opposed to each other and share fellowship. The rhetorical question of Amos must be accepted: "Can two walk

together unless they are agreed?" (Amos 3: 3). Are we to believe that religion is the only realm where conviction which leads to practice does not matter? Can the teacher allow the mathematics student to believe the formula is something other than it is in fact? Will you tolerate the doctor who kills your loved one because he is wrong about either the diagnosis or the medicine? Many have lost life thinking the gun was not loaded. Many young people have died thinking they could not be harmed by drugs. Many have contracted AIDS having thought their partner could not be carrying the virus. "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17: 30).

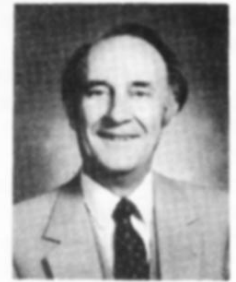
WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

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GUILTY OF THE WHOLE LAW

QUESTION: *How would a person be guilty of violating all the law of God, according to James 2: 10, when he offends in just one point or one commandment?*

ANSWER: Let's first quote James 2: 10 and then we will respond to the question. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." Obviously, this verse does not mean that if a person steals he is also guilty of lying, or if he commits adultery he is also a murderer. James is saying that a person who violates one law of God is a lawbreaker, a violator of the law as a whole. He is "guilty of all," the law as a whole.

We could rightfully say that one who transgresses one law is guilty of the breach of the whole law, though not the whole of the law. For example, two men make a covenant that includes several conditions. One of the men violates one of the conditions in the covenant and thereby becomes a covenant-breaker. He does not violate every condition, nor does he have to, to be guilty of breaking the covenant.

Actually, verses 9 and 11 help to explain verse 10. James said in verse 11, "For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art a transgressor of the law." To James, "transgressor of the law" (vv. 9, 11) and "guilty of all" (v. 10) are the same thing. The law of God is an harmonious unit, emanating from one lawgiver, God (Jas. 4: 12), and those who violate one precept are guilty of violating the law as an unified whole.

Breaking the law in one point is like a seamless garment that is rent, although one piece is torn. It is like


a chain that is broken apart by the breaking of one link or a circle marred by one piece out of place. If any part of a man be leprous, the whole man is judged a leper. If I stub my toe, not only does the toe hurt, but the whole body is affected. As Paul said, "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it" (1 Cor. 12: 26).

James' statement, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, " is a theoretical statement because no one keeps the whole law and offends in only one point. He had previously said, "For in many things we offend all" (Jas. 3: 2). But, IF a man could be perfect, except in one thing, he would still be a transgressor, a law-breaker, and, therefore, guilty of the law as a whole.

The context of Jas. 2: 10 is dealing with partiality to the rich. Some of those to whom James wrote might have reasoned, "Why make so much of this matter of respect of persons? It is only a single offense and it is surely not to be taken too seriously?" But James said, though you keep all the law of God, except impartiality toward persons, ye sin and are guilty of all.

Some of us may look at serving God as accumulating merit points for good conduct. "Lord, look at how well I have followed thy precepts and how faithful I have been to thy law. Surely, all this will overshadow my one sin and make it an insignificant matter. " "No, " God says, "you are a transgressor!"

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
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**"BY ALL MEANS SAVE SOME"
A BELATED RESPONSE TO THE EDITOR OF
THE GOSPEL ADVOCATE**

Furman Kearley, editor of the **Gospel Advocate**, editorialized that the church may support camps, colleges, day care centers, build gymnasiums, swimming pools, etc. because Paul said "By all means save some" (G. A., Nov., 1988). The article appeared just before the Nashville Meeting. I have thought about it considerably before responding.

Was Paul using "all" in an unlimited sense (as some brethren misused "all men" in 2 Cor. 9: 13 and some Pentecostals misuse "all flesh" in Acts 2: 17)? Did Paul mean to include any and every method of gaining converts? This was the position taken in the editorial. **Or, did Paul mean all means that are lawful?** There is a vast difference in saying "anything goes" in evangelism and in saying we may use all means that are authorized. We are not authorized to make converts by means of:

(1) **THE SWORD.** People have often joined a movement because they were physically coerced. History shows that during the Crusades and during the Dark Ages many "joined the church" because of the threat of violence. Some have joined other world religions and even communism for the same reason. When Paul intoned that he might "by all means save some, " the all did not mean without limitations. It was limited to all means authorized by the word of God.

(2) **BOYCOTT.** Without using physical violence one may be persuaded to see things our way if we organize, plot and boycott this product. This method has been used by pro-pornography and women's lib forces. It is also used by anti-pornography and pro-life forces. People have a right to shop where they want. But we have no right to send the message that if you are not converted we will, through boycott and political maneuvers, make you wish you had. This is a means not available to us.

(3) **THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY.** The society was formed in 1849. It was an unauthorized man-made institution, separate and apart from the church. It was designed to do evangelistic work. Consider this statement:

The first charge that was hurled against the Society which was that it was a **substitute for the church.** The Society had no divine authority for its existence; it owed its inception to human wisdom and human opinions. Whereas God left the evangelizing of the world to local churches..., the Missionary Society was, in effect, a substitute for God's plan. It implied an imperfection in the divine plan and suggested that human wisdom could improve upon divine. Therefore, as some men, particularly David Lipscomb, looked at the Society, man could only defend the Society by first defending his right to substitute human plans for the divine. This, in summary, was the most serious charge hurled its way (Earl West, **SEARCH FOR THE ANCIENT ORDER**, Vol. II, p. 57).

Because of Missionary Society a major division took place that led to the formation of the Christian Church which, itself, has divided into two separate bodies.

Brother Kearley tries to make Paul say "the end justifies the means. " Paul said "God forbid!" He had been falsely accused of teaching that we may do evil that good may come (Rom. 3: 8). Any unauthorized practice is "evil. " The editor said, "if the church is... spending money with the clear goal of saving souls then it is justified. " Those who invented the Society wanted to save souls, brother Kearley.

The **Advocate** has a long history of editors who stood solidly against the Society as an unscriptural organization (beginning with David Lipscomb).

(4) **WOMEN PREACHERS.** There is a good deal of teaching a woman may do (Acts 18: 26; Tit. 2: 3-5). Some women in the church taught over the men at the recent "Nashville Jubilee. " There are women who would like to be preachers. The Advocate editor believes the need is more important than the means. Elaborating, he said "What is legitimate church work is not determined by an artificial list of items but rather is determined by the

purpose and the need. " By "artificial list" does he mean a **pattern**? The gospel **needs** to be preached. So how about Missionary Societies and women preachers, brother Kearley? The Disciples of Christ don't believe in a pattern and they have both. They are consistent.

Again he says, "it is not what the church buys... or does so much as why... If the church is... spending the money with the clear goal of saving souls, then it is justified. " That settles it. Missionary Societies and women preachers are justified according to brother Kearley, for they want to save souls. He forgets that before a thing can be expedient it must be lawful. And lest he reply that Paul forbade women usurping authority over men, we must remind him that he is the one who said the need was more important than the means. To forbid women preachers and Missionary Societies would establish the dreaded pattern. If brother Kearley places even one limitation on Paul's statement ("By **all** means save some") he establishes a pattern.

He also used the age old argument that brethren can buy fertilizer for the church lawn but can't support a brotherhood project others deem worthy. But I wonder, is it the case that brother Kearley can take money from the church treasury to buy fertilizer but can't take one dime from the treasury to support Missionary Societies and women preachers in their sincere efforts to save souls? Some liked the smell of the fertilizer argument. Some may continue to like it as they step further into liberalism. Hopefully, there will be some who realize it stinks.

(5) **CROSSROADS/BOSTON METHODS**. I don't question their dedication, but they use a discipling, "prayer partner" method which both brother Kearley and I have opposed. He acted like they had violated a pattern when he objected to their "means. " Is the need more important than the means, brother Kearley? Remember what Paul said?

(6) **THE SOCIAL GOSPEL**. The **Advocate** editor was interested in justifying church supported day care centers, colleges, gyms, swimming pools, etc. Would he include hosting the world's largest pizza, longest chili dog, and biggest banana split as an Assembly of God did in my hometown? They did it for evangelistic purposes. Knowing my brethren, they could outdo this denomination in all three areas. How could the apostles have been so dumb as not to have thought of the means suggested by brother Kearley and the Assembly of God?

Another "All"

We haven't given attention to another "all" Paul used in the verse brother Kearley perverted (1 Cor. 9: 22). Paul said "I became **all** things to all men. " Did he become a homosexual to the homosexuals? An idolater to the idolaters? In his eagerness to open the door for his social gospel projects with an unlimited **all** ("by **all** means save some") he becomes powerless to close it against additional perversions. When Paul became "all things to all men" he meant all things that are **lawful**. When he said "by all means save some" he meant all means that are lawful (authorized). Unless brother Kearley can perform miracles there will be no way he can exclude the "means" we have listed without establishing a pattern and with-

out ruling out day care centers, colleges, camps, etc.

"The Old Reliable?"

The G. A. used to be called "the old reliable. " Brother Kearley has pulled up the ancient landmarks that caused the paper to earn that nickname. In forsaking the old paths he now contradicts what former editors taught, toiled and sacrificed for, by promoting what they fought. If the G. A. was "the old reliable" then, it is the unreliable now.

I am sorely grieved and greatly disappointed that a talented editor of such an influential journal would engage in such loose and dangerous teaching. The effects are sure to be far reaching. (Or it could be that the preaching is just now catching up with the practice). At a time when, seemingly, there has been a renewed interest in unity, it is a cause for dismay to see brethren move farther away from those of us whom they profess to love and with whom they desire unity, those of us who stand where the **Gospel Advocate** once stood, while they move closer to the denominations. Do they truly desire unity with us or with the denominations? By their fruits we will know.

**ACCEPTED
OF HIM**

(2 Cor. 5:9)

Donnie V. Rader

P.O. Box 9
Lexington, Alabama 35648



STEALING

There are a few subjects upon which we do little or no preaching and writing because we assume that brethren have no problems with these. We think that all have a clear understanding and thus there is no real need. Such assumptions are incorrect. **Stealing** is one of those subjects. We generally think of robbery or burglary when stealing is mentioned. However, there are other ways to steal. We shall see in this article that theft is practiced more commonly among Christians than many think.

The Bible clearly addresses the subject in a very specific way. Let's see what stealing is and examine the text and see that it is a sin, the ways that we can be guilty and the answer to the problem.

Stealing Defined

To steal means to "take from another without right, authority, or permission, and usually in a secret manner" (**Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary**, p. 1226). Stealing is not determined by degree. Stealing is stealing whether it be \$50.00 or 50 cents. Stealing is still stealing whether the person or company from whom we steal will ever miss what is taken or not. Stealing is

stealing whether or not the one(s) from whom you steal can afford the loss.

Not only is stealing the small things a sin, but petty theft leads to greater theft. A child who starts stealing from his mother's purse will soon learn that he can steal from the neighbor, then the store and later the bank.

The Bible uses different terms to identify this sin: such as stealing, theft, robbery, extortion and purloining.

Stealing Is A Sin

1. It is forbidden. The eighth of the ten commandments said, "Thou shalt not steal" (Exo. 20: 15). This principle was endorsed in the New Testament by Jesus (Matt. 19: 18) and Paul (Rom. 13: 9). Paul wrote, "Let him that stole steal no more..." (Eph. 4: 28). Peter instructed his readers not to suffer as a thief (1 Pet. 4: 15).

2. Those who steal will go to hell. Paul said that thieves shall not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 9: 9-10). If they don't go to heaven, the only conclusion is that they will burn forever in the fires of hell.

3. It is covetousness. Covet means "To have an inordinate desire for, especially for something belonging to another" (**Funk and Wagnall's Standard Dictionary**, p. 300). Obviously, one who steals first covets that which he steals. Thus, any passage that condemns covetousness will also condemn stealing (cf. Luke 12: 15; Rom. 1: 29).

4. Stealing violates the law of love. Paul demonstrated that love means that one will do no ill toward his neighbor. Thus, love is the fulfilling of the law. Love means that we will not kill, lie or steal (Rom. 13: 8-10). Stealing violates the golden rule of doing to others as we would have them do to us. (Matt. 7: 12).

5. Stealing violates the legitimate means of transfer of money and goods. There are three legitimate means of transferring money or goods, (a) The law of **labor**. Money can be earned and paid for the work done (Eph. 4: 28; Matt. 10: 10). (b) The law of **exchange**. This is when a commodity is exchanged for something of value, whether it be money or goods (Matt. 13: 44-45). (c) Law of **love**. This involves a gift or benevolence (Eph. 4: 28). Stealing does not fit into any of these laws. Thus, it is a sin.

The Ways In Which We Can Be Guilty Those who claim to be followers of Christ can be guilty of stealing just like the world. The example of Judas well illustrates this point (John 12: 6). Again, we may think of robbing a bank or of burglary when we discuss the subject of stealing, however there are many other ways we can be guilty.

1. Taking something "small" while thinking that it doesn't matter or "they won't miss if. While someone may try to argue that taking little things is not stealing, there is a point at which the company, neighbor or friend will call it stealing. The Proverb writer dealt with this concept when he spoke of a man stealing from his father or mother and saying "It is no transgression" (Prov. 28: 24). Ezekiel spoke of those that had gained of their neighbors by extortion (Ezek. 22: 12). Corporate theft (or employee theft) added up to a

billion dollars in 1977 (**U. S. News and World Report**, Nov. 28, 1977). No doubt it has greatly increased in the years since.

Pilfer means to steal petty articles. When this is done, prices are raised to cover the cost and some companies go under. Some think nothing about taking wrenches, bolts, parts, scissors, stamps and other supplies. Time is stolen on the company's watts line for personal calls that have not been authorized. Fax machines and copy machines are used for personal use without permission.

Purloin is another term the Bible uses to identify stealing (Tit. 2: 10). It means to carry far away by dishonest removal. Kubo says it means "misappropriation." The same word is used in Acts 5 where Ananias "kept back" part of the money for his own use.

2. Taking pay for work not done. When one works by the hour and has someone to punch the clock for him after he has already quit work he is stealing. To charge a customer for something he did not receive is stealing. To take more pay than the service rendered is stealing. The Bible is clear in laying down the employee's responsibility in working for the pay received (Eph. 6: 5-8; Rom. 12: 11; Col. 3: 22-24; Tit. 2: 9-10).

3. Not paying your bills. When one buys more on credit than he can handle and refuses to pay, he is guilty of stealing. Preachers are among the worst when it comes to buying books. Some of the bookstores among brethren have had to stop some from buying more because they would not pay their bill. Hundreds of dollars have been written off as bad debt. Brother, it is dishonest to create a debt that you know you can't pay and have no intention of paying. Trying to live beyond our means is one of the reasons why some have more debts than they can ever pay. We must provide things honest in the sight of all men (2 Cor. 8: 21; Rom. 12: 17; 13: 8-13).

4. Gambling. Gambling is stealing by consent.

5. Not respecting copyright laws. Copyright laws govern and protect the rights of the author, songwriter, publisher and producer. To make copies of copyrighted tapes and videos is against the law and is stealing. To duplicate copies of copyrighted books and pamphlets is stealing as well as against the law.

It is true that under "fair use" there are circumstances under which copying or quoting copyrighted material is permitted. However, "fair use" does not permit us to copy copyrighted material as a substitute for the purchase **of the material**. Some churches have been guilty of this in this day of copy machines. They may purchase one copy of a workbook and duplicate enough for the rest of the class. Not only does this violate copyright law, but it is stealing. Even when material is not copyrighted we must consider whether it is honorable and ethical to copy the material when the publisher (whether an individual or a company) is trying to sell the product. For more on the copyright law see Wayne Greeson's article "Theft By Copy Machine," **Guardian of Truth**, July 7, 1988.

6. Not paying others for their work or service. When an employer does not fairly pay his employees or does not give them the pay they have agreed upon, he is stealing from them. God had laws in the Old Testament governing the paying of servants (Lev. 19: 13). Those who

keep back the pay by fraud are condemned (Jas. 5: 4).
7. Deliberately cheating or beating someone out of something or taking advantage of another.
 Bargaining is one thing, but deliberately taking advantage of someone is another. Solomon warned against false balances (Prov. 11: 1; 20: 10).

Why Do People Steal?

Dr. James G. Blakemore, professor of Psychiatry at Vanderbilt School of Medicine says that it is not of necessity. Some steal for the excitement of it. Some realize that they can get by without paying. Others may steal because they think that the world "owes" them something. Some steal out of pure meanness. Whatever the reason, it is a sin.

The Answer To The Problem

A few have advocated that the answer lies in education. Common sense would tell us that such is not the answer. An uneducated man will steal a car. Give him an education and he will steal the factory. Neither is the answer found in giving more money to those that steal. We have already noticed that they do not steal out of necessity. God's answer is a **change of heart** (Matt. 15: 19) and learning to **work with your hands**. (Eph. 4: 28).

Let us assess our lives to see if we are guilty. If we are, the sin must cease. If not, let's determine not to be guilty.

**SIMPLICITY
IN
CHRIST**

P. J. Casebolt

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I

ON DEATH ROW

The term under discussion used to have an ominous, foreboding, final ring to it. Such should still be the case, both for those who disobey civil or divine law with impunity.

I do not know what the statistics are when it comes to the number of criminals on death row compared to their present or past counterparts. Neither do I know what percentage of those on death row finally succumb to their assigned sentence. For the purpose of this study, statistics are not that important to me, and usually people don't pay too much attention to them anyway. I think it is safe to say that more criminals are staying on death row longer, or escaping its consequences altogether more than ever before. And, it may be that this atmosphere tends to make all a bit more indifferent to a number of things (Eccl. 8: 11; Rev. 3: 17).

From the day of birth, man is on his irreversible

journey toward death (Heb. 9: 27). And, despite the fact that two human beings had their death sentences "commuted" (Enoch and Elijah), none of us have any reason to expect that the same will happen to us. The only way we can escape death as others have experienced it, is to be among those still living when the Lord returns (1 Thes. 4: 17; 1 Cor. 15: 51). Even then, we must prepare to leave this present world, relinquish our fleshly bodies, and meet the due rewards of our works.

But, though "the living know that they shall die" (Eccl. 9: 5), one is sobered with the realization that he has reached that plateau of "threescore years and ten" or "fourscore years" (Ps. 90: 10). If never before, that one suddenly realized he is truly "on death row."

While none have a guarantee of tomorrow, and we know that life is fleeting, like a vapor, a flower, or a tale that is told, yet we have some "statistical" encouragement that we shall reach that average milestone in the early seventies. And, while all should make preparation for eternity at the earliest possible time, our hopes of living to a ripe old age may help to keep us going at times.

But, as we enter that cell block reserved for those in the top echelon of fleshly years, we know that the end is near. We can expect to hear the corridor doors clang open any day, and count the cadence of the Grim Reaper's steps as he marches toward "our earthly house of this tabernacle" to take our spirit back from whence it came.

And, while we all have committed the crime of sin, and the wages of sin is death, those who have had those sins washed away in the blood of the Lamb can see victory in death, a glorious resurrection, and be prepared to meet their Maker and Judge in peace (Rev. 7: 14; Acts 22: 16; 1 Jno. 1: 7).

THE GOSPEL ARGUMENT FOR GOD

- Study Notes on the Empirical Argument for the Existence of God
- These Notes are the Outgrowth of the Debates which the Author had with Atheists: One at the University of Illinois (1985) and one at Iowa State University (1988)

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HOLDING BACK

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HOLDING BACK

I am troubled by a problem that I sometimes see in myself, and perhaps you sometimes see it in yourself too. The problem involves some of us who believe with all of our hearts that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and yet somehow we "**hold back**" from talking about Him and His word to people we really care about. And the question that needs to be answered before we can remedy this situation is **WHY?** Why do we hold back from talking about Jesus and salvation?

It could be of course that our faith in Jesus is not as strong as we think it is. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "**We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak**" (2 Cor. 4: 13). This passage seems to suggest that if we really believed in some person or thing we would speak up about it. Why wouldn't the same be true if we really believe in Jesus? On one occasion a man came to Jesus asking that He cast an evil spirit out of his son. Jesus said to him, "**If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief**" (Mark 9: 23-24). Perhaps we need to say the same thing!

Perhaps somehow we have failed to grasp that not only do we need Jesus, but that all the world needs Him in order to be saved. When Peter was answering by what power the lame man at the gate of the temple had been healed he said: "**Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.... Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved**" (Acts 4: 10, 12). Knowing that salvation is found only in Jesus, and really believing that people outside of Him will be lost are two different things. Do we really believe that the only hope anybody has for eternal life is in Jesus? Then we must quit "holding back." We must speak.

Perhaps our problem is that we don't really want to accept any responsibility in this matter. Like Cain we may want to say, "**Am I my brother's keeper?**" In all of our society today there are a lot of people who say, "I don't want to get involved." But when Jesus gave His apostles the great commission as recorded in Matthew

chapter 28 He told them not only to go teach all nations and baptize those who had been taught, but He also said: "**Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you**" (Matt. 28: 20). If I understand this it means that the apostles were to teach and baptize people, and continue teaching all that Jesus had said. But this would include teaching them to teach and baptize. If this is so then each of us has some responsibility to quit "holding back" and start speaking up; to fulfill this commission in very generation.

Or perhaps our problem is one of fear. All of us have areas where we are uncomfortable; where we are at least a little afraid of the reaction of others to us. And often this is true in the realm of religion. Sometimes we don't want to offend people by disagreeing with them about religious things, or make them think we are fanatics. And certainly in our own families we don't want to cause some rift so we "hold back" from gently, lovingly teaching them about Jesus. And yet who do we care more about than those in our own families?

Many of us are not combative or naturally aggressive people, but surely this does not rule us out of telling others about Jesus. I love the example shown in John chapter 1. After some of the disciples of John began to follow Jesus we find: "**One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus**" (v. 40-42). And just a few verses later we read that Jesus told Philip to "**Follow me.**" Verse 45 says, "**Philip findeth Nathanael, and said unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.**" Both of these men had good news and they couldn't wait to share it with people they cared about.

So what is my problem, and yours? Is it instead that **WE JUST DONT CARE?** I pray with all of my heart that this is not true. Somebody cared enough about me and you to bring us to Jesus. Perhaps it was our parents, or a good friend. Who do you care enough about to bring them to Jesus so that they too can be saved from their past sins, and have the hope of eternal life? Let's quit "holding back!" Let's get down on our knees and pray for mercy, and for courage to speak the good news to all who will hear! Let's start praying for the lost too, that somehow we may find those who have honest and good hearts so we can teach them about Jesus. And let's spend some time preparing ourselves to teach by carefully studying and learning more of the word of God and how to communicate it to others. Remember that "**joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance**" (Lk. 15: 7). If you care, tell someone about Jesus!

Please Renew Promptly

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

STATEMENT FROM THOMAS G. O'NEAL

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The following statement was read before the congregation at Vestavia in Birmingham, Alabama on Sunday morning, December 3, 1989. For a number of years Tom has been unfaithful. Before that period of life he was a diligent student of the Bible and a well respected preacher of the gospel. For many years, he wrote a column in this paper. Many prayers have ascended on his behalf. Should any of our readers wish to write him, you may address him: P. O. Box 723, Bessemer, Alabama 35021).

DEAR BRETHREN:

My purpose in coming before the congregation on this Lord's Day is to make acknowledgement and repent of each and every sin of which I have been guilty. I am sorry for the reproach that has come upon the name of Christ as a result of my sins. I ask forgiveness and your prayers that God might forgive me. Should you see fit, I am willing to serve in any way you may in time request.

I ask for your love, understanding, friendship and encouragement. Through a very difficult period in my life, I am thankful for the encouragement of Connie W. Adams, Ron Halbrook, H. E. Phillips and Ida Cogdill Terrell.

I plan to cause this statement to be circulated in other places where I think brethren will have an interest.

Brotherly,
Tom O'Neal

CLARENCE R. JOHNSON, 217 N. Whitford Rd., Exton, PA 19341 — I am pleased to announce that as of January 1, 1990, the Exton church of Christ will be picking up all of my support. I am thankful to God and to those brethren who have helped in my support for the past five and a half years. Reaching the point of becoming self-supporting has been one of my major goals. We also expect to occupy our new worship auditorium by about the end of January, another goal we have been working toward for about four years. The congregation has attained a good degree of unity and oneness, evidence of spiritual growth. We solicit the prayers of brethren everywhere as we seek to expand the borders of Christ's kingdom in this part of the country.

TRUMAN SMITH, 150 Yupon, Vidor, TX 77662—After three years with the Northgate church in Pineville, Louisiana (Alexandria area), my wife and I have moved to Vidor, Texas to work with the North Main Street church. We had intended to remain in Pineville for at least five years, but failing health and increasing age of my wife's parents and my mother, caused us to leave sooner. The work in Louisiana has been a great experience and challenge to us. With the help of Jim McDonald and several other brethren, a small band of saints began meeting in the Best Western Motel in Alexandria in the fall of 1986. Six were present. We began our work with them January 1, 1987. In spite of some moving away and three lost in death, the Northgate church now numbers 26. Visitors are in attendance at nearly every service. The church is better known in the community and the meeting location is good. We believe the potential is good for a more rapid growth. Princeton Simons from Central Texas has moved to Pineville to work with the church. We now look forward to the work in Vidor.

JIM ZACHARY, c/o Eastside church of Christ, P. O. Box 1466, Mountain View, AR 72560 — In 1988 I resigned my work with the Hunter's Run church in Memphis, TN after a confession of sin. Upon leaving Memphis, I moved to central Arkansas and opened a printing and office equipment business. For the past six months I have been driving ninety miles north to Mountain View to preach for the Eastside church. In the past few months we have baptized one,

restored five and withdrawn from one disorderly member. One family has moved in to worship with us, with two more couples scheduled to retire here in coming months. We publish a monthly bulletin, Book, CHAPTER AND VERSE and broadcast a weekly radio program over a powerful 100,000 Watt station, KWOZ FM 103. 3. The broadcast can be heard all over the state, in southern Missouri, and has been heard in eastern Oklahoma and western Tennessee, at 8: 45 A. M. on Sun-days. We recently renovated our auditorium, roofed the meeting house and are working to improve our facilities. I am planning to move to Mt. View to work full-time with the church, though the church is unable to provide full support. Mountain View is a beautiful town nestled in the Ozarks of North Central Arkansas. It is a perfect retirement location and wonderful vacation spot with the Ozark Folk Center and nearby Blanchard Springs Caverns. Come visit us.

WAYNE S. WALKER, 300 Haynes St., Dayton, OH 45410 — During 1989 at Haynes Street, four were baptized, one restored, five placed membership and several members confessed faults. Three members passed away, three families moved away and a few have fallen away. We had a spring meeting with Steve Wolfgang, a summer Bible school with Dale Pennock, a fall meeting with Randy Reynolds, and a winter weekend series with Garreth Clair. In 1990, Lloyd Barker is to be here in the spring, Fred Melton for Bible school, and J. T. Smith for a fall meeting. Attendance on Sundays runs in the 80's with a weekly contribution averaging above \$900. Should you be moving to Dayton, we are located close to downtown, Wright State University, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, and the University of Dayton. Please visit us.

NEY RIEBER, 6413 Zion Church Road, Sanford, NC 27330 — The prison work in this area is still bearing fruit. At Polk Youth Center, 8 were baptized on October 15 and 5 more were baptized on Nov. 17. In our correspondence course work, there are 500 who are regularly doing the lessons with 800 on our active list.

DEBATE ON BENEVOLENCE

On the nights of April 9, 10, 12, 13, 1990, H. L. Collett and Ben F. Vick, Jr. will engage in a public debate. The first two nights will deal with limited benevolence and will be held in the building of the Shelbyville Road Church of Christ, 4915 Shelbyville Road, Indianapolis, Indiana. The last two nights concern church support of such institutions as Boles Home or Potter Children's Home and will be held in the building of the Lafayette Road Church of Christ, 350 Lafayette Rd., Noblesville, Indiana. Ben F. Vick, Jr. will affirm that churches may provide care for non-saints and he will also affirm the right of churches to support such institutions as those named.

FROM AROUND THE WORLD

DUBLIN, IRELAND — Kieran Murphy invited some American preachers to help in special efforts. Ralph Smart, Bruce Hudson and Matt Quails shared the preaching and helped in the distribution of materials. They also did some preaching on the streets twice during their stay. The meeting went very well. Steve Kearney reports that the church in Dublin had increased their support of his work and that he has also been able to replace some other support he had lost.

PAGADIAN CITY, PHILIPPINES — Canute A. Apatan, Jr. reports that after over ten years with the church at Danlujan, a work begun by the late Diosdado L. Aenlle, he has now moved to Sto. Nino District to begin a work in the western part of Pagadian. The work began in 1988, but already has attendance of 40 adults. In a year and a half he has baptized 15. Also, 12 members came from Kawit congregation to help us. Eleven others have been restored.

EL SALVADOR — Carlos Capelli reports the following about his preaching trip which took him to Venezuela and El Salvador, Central America: "The last day of the meeting in San Miguel, November 12, the war exploded in El Salvador. The rebel offensive began after dark on Nov. 11 as FMLN units attacked key political and military targets in the country, including the presidential residence. In San Miguel the rebels took positions and closed all roads with barricades and by digging trenches. For one week there was no bus, no gasoline, no water, no electricity, no food. The government used C47 planes and helicopters to spray rebel positions, causing countless civilian casualties and striking panic among the survivors. Brother Luis Guevara and his family and I were six days in his home without coming out. These are difficult times with much suffering, but the Lord delivered me and, so far as I know other Christians were spared. I was finally able to get safely out. My last scheduled meeting had to be cancelled because of the war."

ARGENTINA —**FERNANDO P. VENEGAS** recently spoke in three congregations in Buenos Aires. They were Boulogne Sur Mer, Moreno and Pte. Derqui. One was baptized during the two weeks of preaching. He said "I was impressed by the good work of the two local evangelists, Sergio Piccola and Jorge Trolla. They have been quite successful in restoring lost souls who have drifted from the fold. These congregations started in the homes of several brethren. Though small in number, each has made great sacrifices in order to build their own meeting places. All of this has been accomplished independently, from their own means. Due to hard economic times, these structures have not been fully completed. The work in Mendoza is doing well."

ITALY — Stefano Corazza has just moved to Rome after 10 years of preaching in Udine and Monfalcone in northeastern Italy. Valerio Marchi will continue in the work at Udine. Stefano will join Roberto Tondelli in an all-out effort to establish another congregation in the city of Rome. Presently, in this city of over 4 million people, there is only one congregation and that is Via Sannio where Stefano's father, Sandro Corazza works. Stefano's new address is: Stefano Corazza, Via Beata V. Del Carmelo, 181, 00144 Rome, Italy.

SOUTH AFRICA — A tent meeting at Mondlo conducted by Paul Williams, Funda Mpanza and Jabulani Khumalo resulted in nine baptisms despite much needed rain and lightning striking nearby. The meeting extended two weeks.

PREACHERS NEEDED

BAKERSFIELD, CALIFORNIA — The church which meets at 2727 Alta Vista Drive needs a faithful gospel preacher. There are about 45 in total attendance. The church is spiritually strong. We can supply \$1100 to \$1200 per month toward support with outside help necessary. Bill Robinson, Jr., Brent Phillips and Doug Clevenger have worked with this church as local preachers. We have had gospel meetings with H. E. Phillips, Gene Frost, J. T. Smith, Bobby Witherington, Bill Moseley, David Watts and David Baker. Those interested may contact Richard Thomas, 10800 Lonon Ave., Bakersfield, CA 93312. Phone (805) 589-3157.



A CHANGE IN WORK PLANS

The editor has agreed to work full-time with the Manslick Road church in Louisville, Kentucky for the year, 1990. I have cut my meeting work for the year to ten meetings. My relationship with this

good church is long standing. We moved to Louisville in March, 1970 to work with this congregation. The work grew in many ways and it was thought wise to begin a new work in Bullitt County which is now known as Hebron Lane where Donald Townsley presently preaches. Manslick Road supported me in that new work until the church was able to assume it's own support, which only took a few months. A number of good men have worked with the Manslick Rd. church through the years, including several younger preachers, some of whom worked in a two-man arrangement for a year. The church has under-written part of my annual income for the past five years in order for me to devote most of my time to gospel meetings wherever we have been invited. This church is served by 6 elders and 7 deacons. The church has supported gospel work around the world and presently assists in the support of 10 preachers. I intend to resume my full schedule of meetings in 1991 and will look forward to those meetings which will be held in 1990.

BOUND VOLUME 29-30

By the time you receive this paper, Bound Volume 29-30 of **SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES** will be ready. Three hundred articles in 584 pages are found in this book. Subject matter covers a wide range of material. Regular columns were written by Jim Deason, Donnie Rader, Herschel Patton (excellent commentary on 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus and Philemon), Colly Caldwell, P. J. Casebolt, Dick Blackford, H. E. Phillips, Ken Green, Wilson Adams, Weldon Warnock and Frank Himmel, in addition to the offerings of the editor and a number of other good men who submitted good material. Bound in blue buchram to match all previous bound volumes, this hardback book will sell for \$12 plus \$2.00 for postage and handling. Indexed for reference, this book is a handy tool in Bible study. Once you pick up one of these bound volumes and begin to look through it, you will find it difficult to put it down. A number of preachers here and in various other countries have written to tell us they find much help in sermon and Bible class preparation. Bound volumes of periodicals are valuable for historical reference and actually appreciate in value over the years. Those who are trying to complete their sets are willing to pay much more than the books sold for initially to secure any of the first ten to fifteen years of this periodical. With only a limited number of them available, they soon become collectors items. You may order yours from STS, P. O. Box 69, Brooks, KY 40109.

UPDATE ON WIMPY

Patrons of **RELIGIOUS SUPPLY CENTER** will be interested in a report on the health status of Mary Catherine Threlkel (known to friends as Wimpy). She suffered a heart attack and was hospitalized for awhile. She is now home and doing better. There are complications with other health problems and she would appreciate being remembered in your prayers. Many calls have come to the book store about her and she has received many cards and letters from people over the country which she appreciates very much.

WOUNDS OF A FRIEND

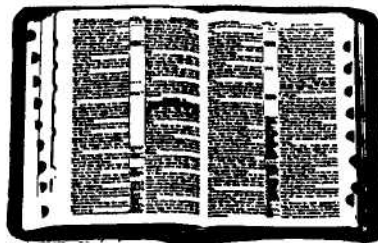
"Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful" (Prov. 27: 6). It is far better to be told the truth by a friend, even if it hurts, than to be slobbered all over by some deceitful person who wants something you have. One is not a friend who cries "peace" when there is no peace. Nor is one a friend who pats us on the back when known facts require a different response. Several years ago, when my first wife was battling for her life, a dear friend who had become unfaithful to the Lord asked if there was anything he could do to help. She replied "Yes, but you can't do it." He was puzzled and asked "Why not?" She said "I need for you to pray and you are in no position with the Lord to do that." There was stunned silence, but it was the truth. Thank God, that friend has repented. It was a faithful wound of a true friend.

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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 XXXI

MARCH 1990

NUMBER 3

THINK ON
THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 1631
Lutz, FL 33549



VIRGIE BEATRICE PHILLIPS 1898-1989

AT 10: 10 pm Saturday, October 7, 1989, Virgie Beatrice Phillips passed from this life to be with the Lord. She died in Morton Plant hospital in Clearwater, Florida while undergoing emergency surgery for a ruptured blood vessel in her stomach. Bob Phillips, her youngest son, found her on the floor beside her bed in her home about 9: 30 am that morning. She did not remember how she got there or how long she had been on the floor. As soon as possible her sons and daughters-in-law were at the hospital and remained until her death.

She prayed for some time that she would not have to suffer long, and would not have to spend her last days in the home of one of her sons or in a nursing home. She did not want to leave her own home until she died. On September 28, just nine days before her death, she celebrated her ninety-first birthday. I called and talked to her on that day from Trenton, Florida where I was in a gospel meeting. Two days before her death, my two brothers and I met at her house to help her with some health insurance. She was all right that day except for a head cold.

Virgie Beatrice Phillips was born September 28, 1898 in a small community called Three Forks, about 17 miles from Bowling Green, Kentucky. In 1915 she was baptized into Christ. That same year she was married to Hollie Henderson Phillips, and to that union five sons were born, of whom this writer is the

oldest. Her husband died in an automobile accident in August of 1951. Two of her sons preceded her in death: Charles Eugene Phillips in 1980, and H. Leroy Phillips in 1988.

Her funeral services were at the Moss-Feaster Guardian Funeral Home, Clearwater, Florida, at 9: 30 Tuesday morning, October 10, 1989. Thaxter Dickey and I spoke to a large assembly upon that occasion. She had requested that I preach at her funeral. Thaxter Dickey is the preacher with the Northeast church in Clearwater where my mother and brothers worship. She was buried in Sylvan Abbey Memorial Park in Clearwater, Florida.

From the time she became a Christian she continued to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord. She read the Bible every day. She was greatly influenced by my grandfather and grandmother Phillips for many years. She taught her children the word of the Lord and implanted in them the moral and spiritual principles that made them all become Christians. She treated her daughters-in-law as her own children.

Mother was the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31. Since her death I have pondered more than ever before her influence upon my life from an infant to this present day. During the last few years of her life she related to me many things that occurred in my early life and spoke of the people involved. As she related these things, I remembered many of them and wondered at her ability to recall them so accurately.

I felt the deepest personal loss of my life as I stood alone beside the casket of my mother and looked upon her beautiful face, frozen in death. A thousand precious memories flooded my heart as I stood there and thanked God that He had let her be my mother. She had brought me into this world, loved me, washed me, dressed me, fed me, rocked me, comforted me, corrected me and taught me the way of truth all my life. She had given all she had to my brothers and me without partiality. She had been the faithful wife of my father until his death, and had shared the burden of rearing five sons to be Christians. All of her daughters-in-law, grandchildren and great grandchildren who have reached accountable age have been bap-

tized into Christ. She was a great and powerful influence upon the lives of all who knew her. She was indeed the salt of the earth, and the light of the world. If I had been inclined to follow an evil way of life when I became a man, I could not have done so because of my love and respect for my mother and father.

How does a man say good-bye for the last time to his mother? I thought of my loss: I will hear her words of wisdom no more. She was a great encouragement to me in preaching the gospel of Christ. She gave much support and encouragement to me in the early days of *Searching The Scriptures*. She paid for many subscriptions for the first few years, and continued to read it thoroughly each month until her death. I will not receive that encouragement from her any more. And most of all, I will no longer have the power of her daily prayers. She prayed for her children and their families daily, and we all shall miss that. How can I honor her and memorialize her life and move more than to do and live as she taught me to do in the Lord — obey her in the Lord?

I held her cold hands so tenderly as I reflected upon their warm and loving care throughout my life. I carefully touched her hair and smoothed her dress about the neckline and arms. I put my hand upon her brow which had reflected her suffering and concern the last few hours of her earthly life. I placed my hand lightly upon her cheek and softly told that form of frozen clay how much I loved her. I tenderly kissed her lifeless brow. I knew she had gone to a much better place, but that lovely body was where she lived when she was with me. Never in my life did I doubt her love for me. My four brothers and I knew she loved each of us in a special way, yet there was never envy. Never did she do or say anything that diverted my faith in her or in God. All who knew her respected her as a faithful, dedicated Christian whose life was amazingly consistent for the seventy three years I had known her. I thought of the time of the death of my father in 1951 and the great loss I knew my mother suffered at that time. I knelt in prayer at my mother's knee, as all the family had gathered at my grandmother's home just before we went to the funeral of my father. I knew my mother derived her strength and comfort from prayer and God's word. That power from God has sustained her for the 38 years she lived without him.

I wrote of my grandmother, Ella Martin Phillips, in *Searching The Scriptures*, December, 1971, page 372: "A thousand precious moments passed in review of my life as it related to her while I stood and looked upon her cold, still body which had given so much warmth to me all through my life..."

"My mother was as a daughter to her. Most of what she is as a mother, wife, and home keeper she learned from my grandmother."

My wife learned how to be a good wife, mother and housekeeper from my mother. Polly loved her as her own mother; mother loved Polly as her own daughter. The influence of my mother's life upon her sons, daughters-in-law, grandchildren and great grandchildren is immeasurable. Only eternity will reveal how many were taught and encouraged to serve God by her life. It

Searching The Scriptures

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may be said of her: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." (2 Tim 4: 7, 8). "Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her. Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all" (Prov. 31: 28-29). The last words I heard from her mother lips as she went into surgery were: "I love you" Good-bye Mother, I love you so much.

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Editorial

Connie W. Adams

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THE GOSPEL FOR THE WHOLE WORLD

One of my favorite songs is "The Gospel Is For All." Remember that line, "Where sin has gone must go his grace, the gospel is for all"? With the Berlin Wall breached, with the Iron Curtain which divided east and west Europe now shattered, with changing situations in other parts of the world, it is time to be reminded of the responsibility Christians have to preach the gospel to all the world.

Scripture Is Clear

Jesus said "The harvest is plenteous but the laborers are few" (Mt. 9: 36-38). He also said "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring" (Jno. 10: 16). This meant that the gospel was not for the Jew alone, but for the whole Gentile world as well. The Great Commission commanded the preaching of the gospel to every creature in all the world to the end of time (Mt. 28: 18-20; Mk. 16: 15-16; Lk. 24: 47). The message would begin in Jerusalem, then spread to Judea, Samaria and unto the uttermost parts of the earth (Acts 1: 8). Paul said the gospel had been preached for the obedience of faith "among all nations" (Rom. 1: 5; 16: 26). That powerful message was to save believers, both Jew and Greek (Rom. 1: 16-17).

They took the charge seriously. Within the lifetime of the apostles, Paul wrote "Their sound is gone out into all the earth and their words to the ends of the world" (Rom. 10: 16-18). He wrote that the gospel had been preached to every creature (Col. 1: 5-6, 23).

God's Plan Sufficient For the Task

In a world without the means of mass communication which we know today, they succeeded in sounding out the message of salvation. Without councils, conferences, synods, conventions or missionary societies, they did it. With no organization larger or smaller than a local church functioning under elders to oversee, deacons to serve, with preachers and teachers doing their part and all Christians supporting the work, the job was done. Local churches were training grounds for men like Timothy and Titus. Thessalonica "sounded out the word of the Lord" (1 Thes. 1: 8). Philippi "sent once and again" to Paul's necessity while he preached at Thessalonica (Phil 4: 15-16). Congregations sustained Paul to preach at Corinth (2 Cor. 11: 8-9). They had no centralization of oversight or funds. None was needed. Congregational organization and individual dedication combined to do the work. What worked then will work now.

Obstacles

Several things get in the way of world evangelism. Consider these:

(1) **Spiritual near-sightedness.** While things necessary to continued congregational activity must be done, it is all too easy to settle into a house-keeping routine. We want things smooth, orderly and comfortable. "There are plenty of lost people right here, why go over there?" Or, "we need to support work close by so we can keep a check on it." It is sad to see brethren become so near-sighted. Nothing does more to keep a fire alive in God's people than to be involved in supporting gospel work, not only at home, but abroad. If members are kept informed and made to feel a part of what is going on, the rewards in the local church are great. Evangelism is the life-blood of the church.

(2) **The miser complex.** It costs to send men and their families to the far reaches of the world. It costs to sustain them adequately over a period of years. Sometimes the cost of living may far exceed what it takes here in this country. By the way, what monetary value would you put on **your** soul? The Lord's money should not be wasted, but it should be **spent** to do the work which God gave the church to do.

(3) **Lack of encouragement** in families for young men to prepare themselves for such work, and for daughters who are willing to go with their husbands to help in the greatest work of all. Parents get in the way. Grandparents do not want to be separated from their grandchildren. They sometimes lay heavy guilt trips on their children for wanting to do the noblest work ever laid on human shoulders. This is a shame. It is natural to love our children and grandchildren and to want to be with them, but it is **SPIRITUALLY ABNORMAL** to hinder competent and dedicated people from doing the Lord's work. Some of the worst offenders are preachers and their wives. Classes in congregations need to emphasize the urgency of this work and plant the idea in young minds which may one day result in more laborers to gather the harvest.

Necessary Considerations

(1) **Know the man you support.** It is not wrong to accept the recommendations of those you do know and trust. But brethren should never support any man to preach anywhere without adequate information as to his ability, soundness in the faith and in personal life, and something about what he is doing and the potential of the work at that place. The ideal is to send out men from your own midst where possible.

(2) **Obtain adequate information** as to what it will take to maintain the man and his family **IN THE PLACE HE IS TO WORK** Don't compare the amount of dollars you spend to support a local preacher with what it will take that man to live in the place he is going. Some countries of the world have an inflation rate which boggles the mind. There are world monetary fluctuations which can greatly reduce a man's buying power overnight. Those who live and work overseas, need to come home every few years to visit their relatives and to see those who support them and give them a personal report of the work. That is money well spent. Churches

should purpose to support faithful men adequately and **for as long as it takes**, provided there is evidence of good being done.

(3) Those supported should **report regularly** to those who are making it possible for them to do the work. And, brethren, get to the point in your reports. The brethren need to know more than how the family is doing, or if your dog had puppies. **What about the work?** Some brethren preach sermons in their reports, all of which adds to the cost of postage. I can tell you from experience that long reports will not be read by very many, especially in congregations which support a number of gospel preachers. Be honest in your reports. Tell it like it is.

(4) **Don't measure all progress by the number baptized.** It is always thrilling to learn of people obeying the gospel anywhere, and especially where we support men to preach in other parts of the country or in other nations. But sometimes it takes a great deal of time and effort to lead one soul to Christ. Italian brethren tell me it usually takes about two years (sometimes longer) of regular study with someone there steeped in Catholicism, to lead that soul to obedience to the gospel. Sometimes, after much effort and months of teaching, the pressures of family and the world prevail and the study ends without obedience. But the effort has to be made. We will have to leave the results with the Lord.

(5) **Remember that doors open and close.** It has been 40 years since there was access to eastern Europe. Now that the door is opening, we must be prepared to go while it is possible. There are other places in the world where doors long open, may close because of political changes which we cannot control. "Now the door is open, Enter while you may" was a line in a hymn brethren used to sing more than they do now.

Brethren, there is so much to do. Let's get on with it.

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A COMPENDIUM OF ISSUES

(2)

Hoyt Houchen

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To properly evaluate changes which have occurred within the Lord's church over the past one hundred and fifty years, it is important that we first observe the church in the New Testament.

Usages of the Term "Church"

(1) The term "church" (Gr. ekklesia) is used in different senses. The church, in the universal sense, is composed of all who have obeyed the gospel. When one is baptized into Christ (Gal. 3: 27), he is also at the same time baptized into one body (1 Cor. 12: 13) which is the church (Eph. 1: 22, 23; Col. 1: 18). Thus, in the general or universal usage of the term "church," it is composed of saints, the redeemed throughout the world. It has no organization upon the earth, has no diocesan bishops (elders) and has no synods (councils). Whenever efforts are made to activate the universal church, they result in organizations unknown to the New Testament.

(2) When there were several local churches in a territory or region, they were identified as the churches of that geographical area. They were groups of Christians assembled for work and worship in a region. For example, there were "the churches of Galatia" (Gal. 1: 2) and "the churches of Judea" (vs. 22). There were no regional or district elders over these churches. Today, we speak of the churches in Colorado or the churches in the northeast or in whatever geographical location we wish to identify groups of Christians; but each local church was autonomous, not being tied together.

(3) The term "church" was often used in a more restricted sense than the universal or territorial. There was "the church which was in Jerusalem" (Acts 8: 1) and "the church of God which is at Corinth" (1 Cor. 1: 2). These are examples of a local church in a specified city. Elders, men who met the qualifications revealed by the Holy Spirit (1 Tim. 3 and Titus 1), were selected and appointed in each local church (Acts 14: 23). The elders of each church directed the affairs of that local church in which they were made elders (Acts 20: 28; 1 Pet. 5: 2). They did not have the oversight of another congregation; neither did they have the oversight of the work of another congregation, nor did they have the supervision of any phase of work of another congregation. There is no example in the New Testament of a sponsoring church (a church acting as a treasury for other churches) overseeing a work for contributing churches. God has assigned each local church to do His work, but not through the agency of another church. Many problems in the last

century and a half (approximate period) would never have arisen had this divine pattern been respected.

Problems in the Early Church

Soon after the establishment of the church (Acts 2), problems arose. Disciplinary action was pursued by the church in Jerusalem in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, who used deception with regard to their money (Acts 5: 1-11). It was a local problem and did not involve any other church as to the action taken. There was no disciplinary board set up through which other churches would function in such actions.

A problem of benevolence arose. The Grecian Jews murmured against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations (the daily distribution to the needy, Acts 6: 1). The matter was solved within the framework of the local church (vss. 2-6). There was no institution established through which the church in Jerusalem or any other church did its work of benevolence. Churches helped needy saints (Rom. 15: 26; 1 Cor. 16: 1-4; 2 Cor. 8 and 9). When one church had more needy saints than it could provide for, other churches sent contributions, but in doing so each one did its own work of selecting its own messengers and sending its contribution directly to the need, not through a sponsoring church or a human organization.

Churches in the New Testament solved their problems by submitting to divine teaching as revealed by the Holy Spirit. The controversy over circumcision was prominent. The question was whether uncircumcised Gentiles (such as Cornelius and his household) should be baptized. Peter explained his conduct in the case of Cornelius and his household to his Jewish brethren in Jerusalem by relating what had been revealed to him, thus settling this question (Acts 11: 18).

But another issue arose. It was now contended that AFTER being baptized, the Gentiles had to be circumcised in order to obtain eternal salvation. This issue divided the church at Antioch (Acts 15: 1). Paul, Barnabas and others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders about this question (vs. 2). The apostles and elders met to consider the matter; and after much questioning, Peter, an inspired apostle, testified that God had accepted the Gentiles and that a yoke should not be put upon them (vss. 7-11). James then brought to their attention that it was prophesied that the Gentiles would be saved (vss. 13-21). Finally, the teaching of the Holy Spirit was summarized that nothing more than the necessary things mentioned (abstinence from things sacrificed to idols, from blood, from things strangled and from fornication) be laid upon them (vss. 28, 29). The question of circumcision was not settled by a church council, as claimed by the Roman Catholic Church (Bertrand L. Conway, **The Question Box**, p. 152). This is an unwarranted use of this chapter and is so affirmed by historians. Mosheim summed up the matter well. "All the churches, in those primitive times, were **independent** bodies; or none of them subject to the jurisdiction of any other. For though the churches which were founded by the apostles themselves, frequently had the honor shown them to be consulted in difficult and doubtful cases; yet they had no

judicial authority, no control, no power of giving laws... it was not till the **second** century, that the custom of holding ecclesiastical councils first began in Greece, and then extended into other provinces" (Mosheim, **Ecclesiastical History**, Vol. 1, p. 72). The issue of circumcision was simply settled by the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Any issue facing the church must be settled in the same way.

Churches of Christ in the New Testament were not in the entertainment business. They did not preach a social gospel. They preached the gospel of Christ, the only power to save the human soul (Rom. 1: 16; 1 Thess. 1: 8; 1 Tim. 3: 14, 15). They sent support direct to preachers (Phil. 4: 15, 16).

Churches Cooperated

Each local church was autonomous and did its own work, as we have seen. The local church with its elders, deacons and all saints within it was the only organization of the church that was known in the New Testament (Phil. 1: 1). Each local church was a complete body and independent of all other churches. Did they cooperate? We believe that they did. How was it done? They did not cooperate by pooling their resources in some central agency, such as a sponsoring church or a human institution, in order to do their work. They cooperated by doing the same work to the same end. As H. Leo Boles well expressed it: "Churches which are fulfilling their mission separate and independently of other churches nevertheless are cooperating with all other churches that fulfill their mission" (Gospel Advocate, January 28, 1932, p. 114).

This is what we see in the New Testament.

(Next: Denominationalism in America and the Restoration Movement).

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(Rom. 4:3)

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MARRIAGE OF THE SONS OF GOD TO THE DAUGHTERS OF MEN

QUESTION: Who are the sons of God and who are the daughters of men in Genesis 6: 2, 4?

ANSWER: The verses state, "That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown."

The sons of God were apparently the pious descendants of Seth who married the daughters of men, viz., women of the world who lacked spiritual devotion and piety. Seth was regarded by his mother, Eve, as a son from God as she said, "For God... hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel whom Cain slew" (Gen. 4: 25). After the birth of Seth's son, Enos, men (evidently, descendants of Seth), began "to call upon the name of the Lord" (Gen. 4: 26).

While the family of Cainites was laying the foundation for a kingdom of worldly arts and business (Gen. 4: 16-24), the family of Sethites began by united invocation of the name of God. Hence, the sons of God would, seemingly, be the Sethites and the daughters of men appear to be the Cainite women.

A bizarre and fanciful theory is that the sons of God were angels who took on the form of men and married earthly women. But Jesus taught that angels do not marry (Matt. 20: 30; Lk. 20: 35-36). If angels could have come and married women of this earth, good angels would not have done so, and bad angels would not have been called, "the sons of God." Though angels are designated "sons of God," (Job 1: 6; 2: 1; 38: 7), it does not follow that angels are meant in Gen. 6: 2, 4. Adam was "the son of God" (Lk. 3: 38), the Israelites were "sons of God" (Deut. 14: 1, NASB) and Christians are "sons of God" (Rom. 8: 14; Gal. 3: 26, NASB). Therefore, the descendants of Seth could well have been "the sons of God."

Several use Jude, vv. 6 & 7, as a proof-text that angels were "the sons of God" in Gen. 6: 2, 4. The verses read, "And the angels which kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation, he hath kept in everlasting bonds... Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, having in like manner with these given themselves over to fornication and gone

after strange flesh...." (ASV).

We are told that "these" in v. 7 modifies "angels" in v. 6. The Expositor's Greek Testament states, "the fallen angels... In the case of the angels the forbidden flesh... refers to the intercourse with women" (Vol. 5, p. 260). It is alleged that the pronoun *toutois* (these) is masculine gender and Sodom and Gomorrah are neuter and do not agree in gender. Hence, "these" could not modify Sodom and Gomorrah, but must refer back to angels.

However, *toutois* is dative plural of *toutos* and Moulton states this pronoun is "masculine and neuter" (*Analytical Greek Lexicon*, p. 407), having, therefore, the same form in both masculine and neuter. Hence, *toutois* (these) can modify Sodom and Gomorrah, and the meaning would be that "the cities about them," Admah and Zeboim (Deut. 19: 23; Hosea 11: 8), were sexual deviants — homosexuals, just like Sodom and Gomorrah. (Zoar, a fifth city in the vicinity, was spared by the intercession of Lot (Gen. 19: 21, 22). Where two or more antecedents are grammatically possible, the nearer one is selected.

Angels sinned by leaving their habitation. There is nothing in Jude, or any other place in the Bible about angels cohabiting with women. The offspring of the ill-assorted marriages of Gen. 6: 4 became giants, i. e., gigantic human beings, men of great renown physically. The word "giants" (Nephilim, ASV) is obviously used for the offspring of men in Num. 13: 33.

The Bible gives us a record of some men who were large in stature. Og, king of Bashan, is called a giant, whose bed was 9 cubits long and 4 cubits wide or 13 1/2 ft. by 6 ft. (Deut. 3: 11). The Egyptian, whom Benaiah slew, was 5 cubits tall (7 1/2 ft.), and Goliath, the Philistine, was 6 cubits and a span tall or about 9 3/4 feet. So, let us not imagine that the "giants" of Genesis 6: 4 were the superhuman prodigy of wicked angels and ungodly women.

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"HOW YE OUGHT TO ANSWER"

"Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man" (Col. 4: 5, 6).

Like the command to preach the gospel, answering questions is a serious matter, and requires sobering judgments as to time and place. But, at least, God did not command us to go into all the world and answer, or even try to answer, every question that people may ask. I would suggest some Bible patterns or principles which may help us in this sometimes difficult but always interesting area of opportunity.

1. **OUR HOPE**—Peter says that we should be ready to answer those questions which have to do with our hope (1 Pet. 3: 15). In 1 & 2 Timothy, and Titus, Paul admonished us to avoid "vain jangling, " "strifes of words, " "profane and vain babblings, " "words to no profit, " "foolish and unlearned questions, " and "genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law. "

All of my preaching life, I have been tempted to preach a sermon spot-lighting some of these "foolish and unlearned questions" which people ask. Such a sermon might appeal to the curiosity of men, but Paul did not tell me to preach such things, but to avoid them. And, beside the reasons given by Paul, Solomon gives a fourfold warning, summed up in the phrase "... he that cleaveth wood shall be endangered thereby" (Eccl. 10: 8, 9).

2. **PRIVATE or PUBLIC?** — Some matters need to be resolved privately (Mt. 18: 15-18; Acts 18: 26). Some sincere, untaught people may ask one of those foolish questions. To avoid embarrassing them and giving publicity to the foolish question, answer it privately, if possible. If a person is trying to solve a personal problem, answer them privately.

3. **'AS THE ORACLES OF GOD'** (1 Pet. 4: 11)—Jesus promised his disciples that they would be supplied with the answers (Mt. 10: 19, 20). Any time that we can form the answer to a question with a quote from the Holy Spirit, let us do so. And, if we would "speak... the things which become sound doctrine" (Titus 2: 1) in the first place, we may not have to deal with a lot of foolish questions in the second place.

4. **RE-WORD THE QUESTION** — Sometimes, through ignorance, inability to word a question properly, or because of an attempt to set a trap, a question may need to be re-worded.

When Peter and John were being questioned, the Jewish rulers asked, "By what power, or by what name, have ye done this" (Acts 4: 7). Now the term "this" doesn't say much, and the Jews were reluctant to admit that a great miracle had been performed. So, Peter took the time to fill in the missing particulars, and then answered the question.

5. **ANSWER WITH A QUESTION** — We should never ask another question just to keep from answering a valid question. But, asking questions is a two-way street. If people are good at asking questions they also need to learn how to answer them.

Jesus often used this method of answering questions, and sometimes it was used to offset efforts to entrap him (Mt. 21: 24; 22: 34ff). The right question may help a person to find their own answer (Gal. 4: 21).

6. **SLOW TO ANSWER** — Sometimes we can redeem the time by not being too hasty (Jas. 2: 19). Make sure that you have heard a matter, and especially both sides of a matter (Pr. 18: 13). While procrastination should not be used as a means of avoiding a question, remember that the one asking the question has usually had plenty of time to think about their question. You are entitled to the same courtesy.

I would especially advise young preachers to heed this point. Sometimes we are eager to answer the questions of brethren (and sisters), and eager to display our Bible knowledge. And, there are several younger preachers who possess a considerable degree of knowledge and ability. But, once you answer a question, you are stuck with the consequences of either defending it, or changing your answer. Don't be ashamed to do either, but be cautious.

7. **MAY NOT SATISFY** — Don't flog yourself every time your answer doesn't work to suit you. Like the word of God, it may not accomplish what we think it should (Isa. 55: 11). Some people think they want the truth, but are not satisfied after they find it. Even the inspired answers of Jesus did not always satisfy (Mt. 19: 16-22). We may do worse, but we can do no better than did the Holy Spirit.

Answering questions can stop the mouths of gainsayers, or tell a soul what to do in order to be saved (Titus 1: 9-11; Acts 2: 37, 38). Make an effort "to find out acceptable words" (Eccl. 12: 9-11). And remember, "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver" (Pr. 25: 11).

May God give you wisdom, "that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man. "

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WHERE ARE WE HEADED?

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"Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves!" (2 Cor. 13: 5, NASV). To survey the spiritual landscape with a view to seeing just where we stand and where we are headed is always necessary. New Testament warnings emphasize the grave danger of departing from sound apostolic teaching (2 Pet. 3: 17; 1 Tim. 1: 3; 6: 3-5; Acts 20: 29; 2 Tim. 4: 2-5; for example). The possibility that we may "drift away" from the truth is real (Heb. 2: 1, 2).

Unfortunately, good men who speak out against error have on occasions been accused of "witch-hunting" and of setting themselves up as "keepers of orthodoxy." Such accusers evidently have a low esteem for those who expose ominous trends and, in some cases, outright heresy. True enough, warnings have a **negative** tone, and controversy is distasteful. Yet it has often been the case that earnest Christians were enabled to continue a **positive** direction toward heaven **because of those warnings**.

Writers in various religious journals have referred in recent months to certain teachings and practices which cause them deep concern. After fifty years of preaching the gospel, I must say that I share some of the same concerns. While length of years preaching does not make one super-sagacious, it does provide a vantage point from which to view happenings among us for half a century. All "senior citizens" in the church cannot have failed to observe changes. None of us should be critical of any legitimate, good thing — anything which does not involve a corruption of the "sound doctrine" of the gospel. Yet it is proper to be alarmed by any changes that lead away from Biblical authority (Gal. 1: 6-9; 2 John 9).

The Content of Preaching

The distinctive, unique nature of the people of God has always been related to the **kind of preaching** to which they have been exposed. The direction churches head is fundamentally affected by the **content** of the teaching heard and followed. Surely there needs to be much more emphasis on preaching that gives a "thus-saith-the-Lord." It should be considered unjustifiable, and intolerable, to go through a whole gospel meeting series with hardly a mention of the gospel plan of salvation, the distinctive nature of the Lord's church and other such basic matters. People who hear us preach ought to learn a lot more about the word of God than they learn about us personally, our families, our experiences, our adventures, our humor.

If there is one thing I would urge our younger preachers to prioritize, it would be to "give diligence" in the matter of "handling aright the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2: 15). It would be to strive ever to speak "as the oracles of God" direct (1 Pet. 4: 11). I would urge them not to fill their sermons with all the latest best sellers that stream from denominational presses, and not to try out every motivational gimmick that comes down the pike. No sweeping indictment is here made of the whole generation of young men as being disinterested in the proper handling of the word. I have been blessed in coming to know and appreciate a number of young preachers whose loyalty to the gospel is unquestioned. They speak the truth with clarity and boldness. They speak with no uncertain sound. They "preach the word." I thank God for them.

Attitudes Toward Controversy

It is a matter of grave concern when brethren frown upon open discussion of controversial issues that disturb and divide the children of God. Doctrinal crises and resulting controversy have occurred from apostolic times until now. Much of the New Testament deals with correction of false teachings and practices. Error does not disappear simply by being ignored. False views do not become harmless by being swept under the rug with the idea that "we should not air our dirty linen for others to see." That sort of philosophy would never have produced First Corinthians, Galatians, Second Peter, Jude, or even Acts of Apostles.

Many of us thankfully admit that it was precisely **because of** open discussions that we were challenged to make a more careful study of issues being raised and, as a result, to take a firm stand for the truth. I am personally grateful to certain men, some of whom are now gone, who were in the vanguard of the resistance to institutionalism and perversion of the work of the Lord's church. They were, in the main, men who risked loss of popularity and even loss of income to say what they were saying. That leads me to an observation also about attitudes toward religious journals that brethren publish. With no intent at all to defend any wrong use of the pen or any bad attitude of any writer, I must say that it is ironic when a preacher discourages the reading of what his own brethren write, but seems to dote on Swindoll, Dobson and other popular denominational false teachers. I would urge our younger preachers not to allow this unhealthy bias to gain control of their thinking, and not to be unduly impressed by writers whose whole life and work is outside of the kingdom of Christ. Subscribing to papers our brethren publish is most certainly not a condition of salvation. Yet it does seem quite unreasonable to develop a bad attitude toward papers they edit simply because they deal with controversial issues when necessary, and because "we just don't like controversy."

Attacking Brethren

There is also the unwarranted assumption by some that every time one refutes another's erroneous teaching he is "attacking" a brother and must surely be devoid of brotherly love. Certainly brethren should avoid vitriolic language and caustic, hostile attitudes as discussions proceed. However, it is illogical and wrong to view a frank discussion of divisive issues as an "attack." The contro-

versy Paul mentioned in Galatians 2 surely was not an "unbrotherly attack." My experience has been that no matter how gentle, kind or respectful one may be in exposing error, someone invariably says he has launched an unloving attack on his brother. That is a risk that one must take when truth is to be defended and error exposed. Let us not forget that Jesus Himself, judging by the standards set by some, spent a lot of time "attacking" His Jewish brethren (as Matt. 23; Matt. 15). **Are Some Immune?**

Is it right to feel that virtual immunity from criticism should be granted to some who espouse error, but not to others? We would be well-instructed by noting Paul's words in Galatians 2: 6. There he mentioned "those who seemed to be something - whatever they were," and stated that "it makes no difference to me: God shows personal favoritism to no man..." (NKJV). Not even his fellow apostle, Peter, was considered to be immune from public censure, for Paul "withstood him to the face." (Gal. 2: 11). It should not be a matter of **who** the teacher is, but rather **what he teaches**. We do not know how old Hymenaeus and Philetus were, nor how long they had been preaching. The important thing was that they "have erred from the truth," and "they overthrow the faith of some" (2 Tim. 2: 17, 18). And Peter had been an apostle longer than Paul, yet "he was to be blamed" because he "walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel" (Gal. 2: 11, 14).

Who Causes Division?

It should be apparent to all that the individual who teaches false doctrine or introduces unscriptural practices is the one who causes division. Yet the strange phenomenon has come about that some actually consider the brother who opposes the error to be the culprit, the cause of division. This mentality would make our **Lord** and His apostles the worst offenders of all. It is naive to think that one will be able to "do the work of an evangelist" (2 Tim. 4: 4) without confronting errors that arise from time to time. What can one do when false doctrine appears? (1) He can recognize the ominous threat and begin preaching against it — "reprove, rebuke, exhort" (2 Tim. 4: 2); or (2) he may just ignore the efforts of the false teacher and allow error to infect more and more disciples; or (3) he can just quit preaching. The right thing is obvious. He must contend for truth even if considered to be a troublemaker and divider of brethren.

Advice From One Who Knew

Paul's charge to a younger preacher (2 Tim. 4: 2-4) is still the Holy Spirit's advice to preachers today: "Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their desires; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths" (NASV).

In 2 Timothy 2: 15 Paul urged Timothy to give diligence to have God's approval, explaining that this approval necessitated "rightly dividing the word of truth." There is an interesting footnote to this in the American Standard Version which, I believe, expresses the correct

sense contextually by saying, "**holding a straight course in the word of truth.**" If we desire to be headed in the right direction spiritually, this is the way. The truth revealed in the New Testament is complete, final and sufficient (John 16: 13; 2 Tim. 3: 16, 17; Jude 3). Let us endeavor to "hold a straight course" in it.

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WAS THE KINGDOM POSTPONED?

Premillennialists tell us the kingdom of Old Testament prophecy is yet future. They say Jesus came to reign as the Messiah but the Jews rejected Him. He therefore established the church as a last-minute substitute (they often call it a "parenthesis"). It will continue until He comes again, at which time He will establish His kingdom. Thus the kingdom was postponed.

The Bible teaches no such thing. In fact this theory contradicts the Scriptures in at least four ways.

First, predictions with a time element cannot be postponed. If I predict that a certain football team will win the Super Bowl, but do not say when, then whenever they win my prediction will be fulfilled. But if I specify 1990 as the year, and my team does not win it until 1995, I cannot say my prediction was postponed; I must admit that it was false.

So it is with Bible prophecy. When Daniel put a time element on the establishment of God's kingdom—in the days of the Roman kings (Dan. 2: 44) — that eliminated every other time, before and after. Either his prediction came to pass as stated, or he must be rejected as a false prophet (Dt. 18: 22). Premillennialists sometimes try to get around this by saying Daniel was referring to a "revived" Roman empire. Not so. The four parts of Nebuchadnezzar's image were four successive world empires. Besides, if Daniel's prophecy refers to a revived Roman empire, why did Jesus try to establish the kingdom in the historic Roman empire? Did the Son of God not understand the prophecy He was trying to fulfill?

Second, the Bible tells us that the church was part of God's eternal plan, not an afterthought. Paul was given grace to preach the gospel "in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3: 8-11).

Third, God knew beforehand that His Son would be rejected and put to death. Isaiah predicted that Jesus would be "despised and rejected of men" (53: 3). He went on in the same chapter to give a remarkably accurate picture of Jesus' death. Earlier the Psalmist had referred to Jesus as "the stone which the builders rejected" (118: 22). One of Peter's Pentecost points was that Jesus

was "delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2: 23).

Did that rejection require God to postpone His kingdom plans? Not at all. Consider Psalm 2. In verses 1-3 the nations and kings are taking their stand against God's anointed. (The New Testament says this refers to Herod, Pilate, the Gentiles, and the Jews' opposition to Jesus (Acts 4: 25-28)). How does that affect God and His plans? "He who sits in the heavens laughs, the Lord scoffs at them. Then He will speak to them in His anger and terrify them in His fury: 'But as for Me, I have installed my King upon Zion, My holy mountain' (verses 4-6). Next is the Anointed's testimony of God's decree: "He said to me, Thou art My Son, today I have begotten thee. " That refers to Jesus' resurrection (Acts 13: 33), following which He ascended into heaven where he was given the nations to rule with a rod of iron (verses 6-9; Rev. 2: 26, 27).

The Jews' rejection of Jesus was not an obstacle to God's plan, it was a key element in its success! "For those who live in Jerusalem, and their rulers, recognizing neither Him nor the utterances of the prophets which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled these by condemning Him" (Acts 13: 27).

Fourth, the Bible teaches that the kingdom is now in existence. "For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son" (Col. 1: 13). "I John, your brother and fellow-partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance which are in Jesus... " (Rev. 1: 9). The kingdom consists of men and women everywhere who are purchased by Jesus' blood (Rev. 5: 9, 10; 1: 5, 6; cf. Acts 20: 28). Many other New Testament passages speak of Jesus sitting on God's throne and reigning (Rev. 3: 21; Acts 2: 34, 35; 1 Cor. 15: 24-26; Heb. 1: 8).

God's word has come to pass. Jesus now reigns in a kingdom "not of this world" (Jn. 18: 36). Are you a citizen in that kingdom?

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A NEW KIND OF PREACHER

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A few days ago a remark was made by a young person about a certain gospel preacher. The young man said that he is "the new kind of preacher." Thinking that I knew what God says about the kind of preacher and preaching pleasing to Him, I inquired what kind of preacher this "new kind" might be. It was then explained that he entertained his audience. Now, I suppose, we all know what must take place to be classified as a "new kind of preacher."

The Outstanding Trait

It is obvious that the trait most outstanding in the mind of that young man, when thinking of that preacher, was his effort to entertain his listeners. I ask all of you, "Is a preacher's ability to entertain his hearers the tiling that you most remember a week later?" Preachers, is it your utmost aspiration when you stand before sin-laden, eternity-bound souls to keep them laughing and, while they are in a jovial mood, to slip in a little Bible unnoticed? Preachers with such a low view of gospel preaching are surely responsible for the secular/carnal standards of listeners like those just mentioned. Before the judgment throne of Christ, will you be responsible for the loss of some, preacher friend?

Although it is appealing to enjoy the applause of people and the popularity that attends this kind of watered-down preaching, it is denigrating in the extreme for one to be so unmindful of spiritual duty and of eternal consequences as to let such carnal desires control the kind of preaching that one does. Do you want to please God or men? (Gal. 1: 10.)

The Greatest Motive

The greatest motive that ever stimulates any to do good, including to preach the gospel of Christ, is love (2 Cor. 5: 14). That love that constrains is a love for the **Lord**, for the souls of men, and for the truth — all based **upon** the abundant love of God for mankind. When that **love** grows **weak**, diminished by a desire to remain popular or to escape criticism, one would do himself, the **Lord**, others, and the truth a service by stepping aside **and** letting someone driven by that all-consuming love speak the truth (Eph. 4: 15). Would not fewer souls be affected by his efforts if he so did, **RESULTING IN THE SAVING OF MORE, NOT FEWER PEOPLE**. Is it possibly time to reconsider Paul's charge to Timothy, found in 2 Timothy 4: 1-4?

A Solemn Task

The task of gospel preaching is shown to be a very serious matter in Paul's charge: "I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Jesus Christ..." (NASV) The interest of the Father and of the Savior is manifest

by the charge being given in their presence. The task's solemnity is again seen in Paul's reference to Christ as judge of the living and the dead. He will judge both the teacher of the gospel and the taught. Tragic it would be for the "new kind of preacher" to be in judgment with some whom he had failed to teach properly, and even more tragic for those who thought so highly of "preaching" that entertained to be together condemned forever to such desolation and agony as torment will hold.

An Urgent Task

The urgency of preaching the gospel is seen in Paul's charge to be urgent (ready) in season and out of season. Unthought and unprepared lessons ought never to be presented, and they will never be presented by men understanding the urgency of directing people to Christ and to heaven. Book reviews and personal experiences have not the power to provide such spiritual direction. This writer does not mean that personal experience or even humor have no value in illustrating points or principles. When a speaker's desire to entertain controls his material and his method, he is under the wrong kind of control. There is no off-season for such teaching; it must be done when people like as well as when they dislike it. It is when people do not like the teaching of the gospel that this "new kind of preacher" will yield to men rather than to God. He will give them what they demand — what will keep them happy, not what will teach them of God and acquaint them with Christ.

A Varied Task

In His preaching he will include every kind of teaching mentioned by Paul to Timothy. In his reproof he will try to point out sin and bring home to the sinner an awareness of sin in life. By rebuking he will sharply reprimand. Neither tone of voice or viciousness of spirit determines godly reprimanding, but the impressing of divine decrees and warnings in a way to convict powerfully. The gospel is designed by God to accomplish that work. He will also exhort — that is, call aside for needed instruction, encouragement, or meeting of other needs. Balanced preaching must include all elements; otherwise, some need will be unmet.

One instance of reproof, rebuke, or exhortation will not always suffice. Repeated efforts in each area will sometimes be needed. The preacher's work will be done "with all longsuffering and teaching." The longsuffering efforts of God with disobedient Israel provide the preacher a model of how he should continue in patience to reprove, rebuke, and exhort.

An Essential Task

The importance and the necessity of gospel preaching is certainly shown in this great charge to Timothy. Such a task demands diligent study of the Scriptures, thorough preparation of lessons, and a balanced approach in preaching. It is also advisable for one to use illustrations, which serve to open the window and let the light shine in. Those illustrations do not have to be drab and uninteresting. Lessons well illustrated will be vividly recalled. There is a distinct difference, however, between good illustrations in scriptural presentations and preaching that entertains. We probably need more of the former, but we need none of the latter.

A BURNING FIRE

(Jer. 20:9)

Jim Deason

Rt. 1, Box 153
Culleoka, Tennessee 38451



A MAN OF A DIFFERENT SPIRIT

Its easy to give in to peer pressure and be like everyone else around you. People expect you to conform to their standards and be "normal." But it takes someone special to be different and Caleb was just such a man. Numbers 13-14 tell his story...

When the children of Israel were delivered from Egyptian bondage they crossed the Red Sea and journeyed to Mt. Sinai where Moses received the Law. From there they traveled north to the edge of the promised Land and Moses sent in twelve spies, one from each tribe, to spy out the land. Their commission was simple, "Go up there into the Negev; then go up into the hill country. And see what the land is like, and whether the people who live in it are strong or weak, whether they are few or many. And how is the land in which they live, is it good or bad? And how are the cities in which they live, are they like open camps or with fortifications? And how is the land, is it fat or lean?" (Num. 13: 17-20).

Caleb returned with a glowing report of the land and counseled, "We should by all means go up and take possession of it for we shall surely overcome it" (Num. 13: 30). But ten other spies had been intimidated and discouraged by giants they saw in the land and cried, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are too strong for us" (Num. 13: 31).

Caleb received a special blessing from God because of his faith. The divine record said, "But my servant Caleb, because he has had a DIFFERENT SPIRIT and has followed me fully, I will bring into the land which he has entered, and his descendants shall take possession of it" (Num. 14: 24). Why was Caleb so different? Did he not see the same giants as had the ten? Was he not with them when they saw the massive fortified cities of the land? Yes, he saw! And the things that made Caleb different are things we need.

CALEB WAS A MAN WITH GREAT CONFIDENCE IN GOD. He had seen the same obstacles as had the ten but, going beyond the vision of the unfaithful, he (along with Joshua) believed in the power of God. "If the Lord is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land ... " (Num. 14: 8), Joshua and Caleb affirmed. To Caleb, the God who had the power to deliver Israel from Egyptian bondage and bring them through the Red Sea also had the power to deliver into their hands the sons

of Anak. There was no doubt. God was on their side. Such faith and confidence made Caleb different. And that same faith will make us different also. With the work of God before us we can't look to our own strength. We must have confidence in God and the strength which he supplies (cf. Phil. 4: 13).

CALEB WAS WILLING TO BE USED. When God commissioned Moses to choose the spies He commanded him to choose men who were already leaders (Num. 13: 2). God could not use the kind of men who would hide among the tents when volunteers were sought. Caleb's willingness to be used set him apart as different (if not from the other spies then certainly from other men). Modern Caleb's do not hide when there is someone to be visited or a Bible class needing a teacher. They don't have to wait to be asked to do something, they are already an example of busy activity in the kingdom. When volunteers are sought their attitude is like that of Isaiah, "Here am I, send me" (Isa. 6: 8).

CALEB DEMONSTRATED COMPLETE OBEDIENCE. Moses' commission was simple... go spy out the land. The task of these men was not to decide whether or not they could take it. God had promised them the land which flowed with milk and honey and by His power they would receive it. Their responsibility was to *faithfully* report all that they had seen while in the land and then to obey God and trust Him for the rest. The ten unfaithful spies demonstrated their faithlessness and disobedience by their bad report of the land. No doubt they were the leaders in the grumbling against Moses (Num. 14: 2) and the effort to appoint another leader to take them back into Egypt (Num. 14: 4). Caleb, on the other hand, followed the Lord "fully" (Num. 14: 24) and thus displayed his "different spirit." Friend, it is not our right to alter God's commands or make judgments on whether or not He will keep His promises. My part, in the language of a familiar hymn, is but to "trust and obey."

CALEB WAS NOT INTIMIDATED BY THE OBSTACLES. Satan has always attempted to set obstacles in the way of obedience to God. Surely the great fortified cities of Canaan and the giants that indwelt them looked formidable, even to Caleb. But, like David, he believed that faithful men are giant killers and that God and one are a majority in any battle. Such faith can overcome seemingly insurmountable barriers. Good people, there will always be "giants" in the land. But when viewed through the eyes of faith these mountains become mole hills. The spirit of Caleb is the spirit of overcoming, not succumbing... and working, not shirking.

Tragically, there have been times when I have been more like the ten than like Joshua and Caleb. Please God, forgive me for the times I have grumbled and complained because of obstacles when I should have wholly trusted in You and gone about to do Your will. And help us all to develop a "different spirit."

Please Renew Promptly

DIVINE COMMUNIQUES

C. G. "Cotty" Caldwell

Florida College
Temple Terrace, FL 33617



TRUST IN THE LORD

DIVINE MESSAGE: Trust in the Lord, and do good; dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness" (Psalm 37: 3).

Having held Gospel meetings in West Berlin and having passed through "Checkpoint Charlie" into the Communist sector, Lynda and I have seen firsthand the atmosphere among those who are subjugated by communist leadership. We were, therefore, intensely sensitive to the news footage portraying men and women openly weeping for joy as the "wall came down." In every age, men have oppressed other men. Evildoers seek to dominate. Good men find themselves searching for peace of mind and comfort of spirit in the midst of burdensome hardship. David experienced these same emotions and God gave some very special counsel to help him overcome:

1) Do not fret (Psalm 37: 1). Jesus would say, "Be not anxious," or "Do not worry." Worry is not only prohibited (Matt. 6: 25), it shows distrust of God and His loving care for man (Matt. 6: 26). It is also futile (Matt. 6: 27-30). Instead of adding to life, it takes from our health. We cannot change what has already happened. Neither can we change the inevitable (our children growing up, our bodies aging, our loved ones and ourselves dying). Most of what we worry about never happens. That leaves only what we can do something about by serving God and responding to righteousness. We must not allow ourselves to be faithless (Matt. 6: 31) or heathenistic (Matt. 6: 31). And we must not allow ourselves to be kept from duty, wasting our time on that which is in the hands of the Lord (Matt. 6: 34). Instead we must seek the rule of God in our lives realizing that God will add these other things as He sees fit to our lives (Matt. 6: 33).

2) Trust in the Lord and do good (Psalm 37: 3). Trust evidences faith. True faith is actively obedient and loyal to its Object. It accepts. It depends. It confides. It expects. It is confident and it is humble.

3) Delight yourself in the Lord (Psalm 37: 4). The worried man evidences that his attention is on material things. The man of God does not delight in that which is perishable. The very first Psalm speaks of the blessed man as one whose "delight is in the law of the Lord" (Psalm 1: 2). Whether we enjoy spiritual things is perhaps the greatest barometer of true spiritual health.

4) Commit your way to the Lord (Psalm 37: 5). All

worthwhile activities require commitment. One cannot be a half-hearted Christian. I personally believe that one reason God requires baptism is because He requires commitment: doing something to evidence surrender and to evidence that substantive change has taken place because of decisive determination.

5) Rest in the Lord (Psalm 37: 7). We must hush our spirits, silence our tongues, and find the peace God promises. Jesus said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11: 28).

(6) Wait on the Lord (Psalm 37: 9). God's Providence may take more than a day. Patient faith is required of all. He will see us through... **IN HIS OWN TIME**. Time is nothing to Him and all that He has for us is worth waiting for. Listen in times of trouble and trauma and give God time to work. Truly He will work for us.

"ONE THING YOU LACK"

Wayne Galloway
1130 Union Road
Englewood, Ohio 45322

Men's perception of Christianity is often very narrow. Some associate being a Christian with "going to church." Some associate it with being baptized, and some associate it with living an upstanding life. But being a Christian cannot be reduced to any single element of service, nor even a combination of elements. Christianity is not a question of **doing** but a question of **being**. If we **are** what we are supposed to be we will **do** what we are supposed to do.

The rich young ruler of Mark 10 seemed to take a rather simplistic approach to his service to God. Jesus responded by identifying the one thing that he lacked, but in that one thing Jesus exemplified a very broad perception of what it meant to serve God, pointing out that it was not equivalent to simply responding to a specified number of particulars (Mk. 10: 17-23). What was it that he lacked? Are you lacking in the same area?

The ruler asked one of the most important questions anyone could ask: "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" It suggests a desire for eternal life and a willingness to do something in order to have it.

Jesus responded by saying, "You know the commandments." He then enumerated six of them: do not murder; do not commit adultery; do not steal; do not bear false witness; do not defraud (probably derived from the command not to covet); and honor your father and your mother.

The rich man's response: "Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up." I believe the man was honest in his belief that he had obeyed completely. But his statement revealed the superficial nature of his interpretation of the law. He had not perceived the depth and real meaning of these laws. Jesus pointed to the intent of the

law against murder in Matt. 5: 21-22. His interpretation implies that the prohibition against murder involved more than just a condemnation of homicide. He extends it to be a prohibition against verbally depreciating an individual by saying to him, "Raca, " (empty-head) or "You fool. " While the young ruler had never committed homicide could he pronounce himself innocent, never having depreciated a person's value? Probably not.

Matthew indicates that he asked, "What am I still lacking?" (19: 20). Do you ever feel like this young man? You worship after the Biblical pattern every Sunday, you have been baptized, you try to pattern your life after what the Bible has to say but still you feel something is lacking.

The rich ruler had come to Jesus in a state of innocent ignorance. He just didn't know any better. He had done what, in his limited understanding, he knew to do, but God's requirements were so much greater. He was like the little child who returns to a parent with joy on his face convinced he had accomplished everything that has been required when in reality he had not even comprehended the requirement. I am convinced that that's the way each of us comes to God asking, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

Jesus said, "One thing you lack; go and sell all you possess, and give it to the poor... and come, follow Me. " What was the one thing he lacked? Self-sacrifice. While it may have seemed to him that he had done all the commandments of the Lord, in reality he had not done the one thing that was basic to all of them. He had not given himself to the Lord. Is this the one thing you lack?

Peter said he and the other apostles had left everything to follow the Lord (Mk. 10: 28). The churches of Macedonia begged to help support the needy saints in Jerusalem because "they first gave themselves to the Lord" (2 Cor. 8: 1-5). Paul was stoned and dragged out of the city of Lystra but went on preaching in the face of death (Acts 14: 19-20). Men could not take Paul's life because he did not have it. He had given it to God. "It is no longer I who live but, Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2: 20).

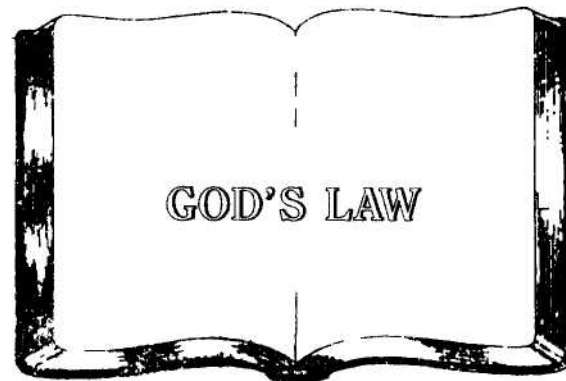
Abraham gave everything, even the life of his son, Isaac (Gen. 22). The rich ruler gave nothing. Abraham left Mt. Moriah with everything (Gen. 22: 16-18). The rich ruler left Jesus with nothing. God gives to those who give themselves.

"Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers, or sisters, or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel's sake, but that he shall receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life" (Mk. 10: 30).

"He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf" (3 Cor. 5: 15).

Yes, our perception of Christianity is very narrow. We search for the minimum that we must do, reduce Christianity to a specified number of requirements and fail to understand it as a religion of being. Only one thing do we lack.

SPECIAL ISSUE — JULY 1990



ON DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

Introduction And Overview

— *Donnie V. Rader*

Can We Understand God's Law?

— *Wilson Adams*

Squaring Our Terminology With The Bible

— *Jim Deason*

The Alien And Matt. 19:9

— *Dick Blackford*

Rom. 2 — Were The Gentiles Under A Law?

— *Max Dawson*

1 Corinthians 7-15

— *Melvin D. Curry*

Is Separation Required?

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What Shall We Do With God's Law?

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THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

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B. G. ECHOLS, 7 Ridgewood Ave., Glen Ridge, NJ 07028—During the last six months of 1989 five were baptized and four were identified with the church in East Orange, NJ. We would like to hear from preachers interested in preaching in Russia and/or Eastern Europe. Write the church at 18 Ridgewood Ave., East Orange, NJ 07017.

TOM KINZEL, 2026 N. E. Vivion Rd., Kansas City, MO 64118—The Vivion Road church is interested in starting a video library consisting of preaching and teaching done by faithful brethren. We would like to hear from those who have such materials available. Please write us at the above address.

MICHAEL C. DIVIS, 7810 Elm Drive, LaVista, NE 26828—We have had 12 responses to the gospel in 1989, six of them baptisms. Over the past four years we have seen 28 obey the Lord in baptism. The LaVista congregation is the largest of only four conservative churches in the state. Carl McMurray and I labor together here and Lynn Hugging labors with the brethren in Lincoln, Nebraska. There are congregations in Beatrice and Grand Island that do not have men laboring with them full time now. We have an active Bible correspondence course with 240 enrolled. We have a "Dial a Bible Thought" in which we offer the correspondence course after a short Bible message. We have several home studies in progress. In 1990 we will lose three families through military transfers and Carl McMurray and family will relocate in Indiana in May. We will have meetings this year with Titus Edwards and Hoyt Houchen. If you are in the Omaha area, come to see us. If you have contacts with any in this area we might reach, please let us know.

JOHN L. NOSKER, 1207 Peachtree Blvd., Richmond, VA 23226—Sunday, December 31, 1989, marked the close of the work of G. Allen Malone, Jr. with the West End church, after nearly eight years of labor among us. He leaves at a time when the congregation is at peace, attendance is good and interest is at a high level, after a fairly recent period of significant growth. The congregation commends him as an able proclaimer of the word and for his capable class and private teaching and his outstanding ability as a song director and teacher of

vocal music. The Malones have begun work with the Clinton Blvd. church in Jackson MS.

CHARLES BOSHART, 2302 Franklin Dr., Texarkana, 75502—The Franklin Drive church wishes to be placed on the mailing list of churches publishing and mailing a bulletin. Address them to: 2301 Franklin Dr., Texarkana, AR 75502. If you wish, and will let us know, we will reciprocate.

EDWARD PATTERSON and H. N. EUBANKS, elders of Northside church of Christ, 520 Mary Esther Cutoff, Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32548—The Northside church is small in number, though we have stood for the truth in this area for the last 23 years. Hundreds and perhaps thousands have passed through our community and many have met with us while on vacation or business in this area. Recently, three have been restored and one baptized. We have had recent visitors who are now ready to break with institutional error. Wallace H. Little began work here on December 1, 1989. He is able and active in the work and is also trying to work with some who left us. We pray for his success. Robert Smith of Dallas, Texas will be with us in a meeting in March.

JAMES H. BAKER, JR., P. O. Box 44012, Philadelphia, PA 19144—Our work in northwest Philadelphia continues. We have been here five and a half years and have barely scratched the surface of what needs to be done. We baptized three into Christ and enrolled 12 in our Bible correspondence course. We had two gospel meetings in 1989: one with Ralph Smart of Maine and another with Roosevelt Johnson of Mississippi. We plan to keep this small church knowledgeable and as pure as possible. We will print flyers, use the local newspaper and person to person contacts. We meet at 6381 Germantown Ave. on Sundays at 10: 15 and 11: 15 AM and on Tuesday nights for Bible study at 8 PM. Our phone is (215) 438-6316.

FROM OTHER COUNTRIES

ITALY—ARRIGO CORAZZA, Via Alessandro III, 47, 15100 Alessandria, Italy — The church here is composed of 15 baptized people.

Five of them are aged and often sick. We are in northwest Italy, 400 miles from the nearest faithful churches which are at Udine and Trieste on the other side of the country. This is a city of 90,000 where Catholicism is deeply rooted. It is difficult to make progress. I have been here since 1986 and much work has been done. We sow the seed in hope and wait for the Lord to give the result. Contributions run about \$130 a week which is good with only five wage earners. Pray for our work.

ALSO, in December, Paul Earnhart, preacher for the Douglas Hills church in Louisville, Kentucky, Larry Paden, one of the elders, and their wives visited some of the brethren in Italy. The Douglas Hills church supports brethren in Rome and Trieste. Rodolfo Berdini lives in Rome but preaches in Aprilia. Gianni Berdini preaches in Trieste and both are supported in part by Douglas Hills. Brother Paden delighted the brethren by preaching to them in Italian. The Earnharts and Padens were favorably impressed with the work they saw there.

NORWAY—TERRELL BUNTING REPORTS FROM BERGEN that three visitors who began last summer are still in attendance and that good Bible studies are under way with them. Help from an individual makes it possible to do some newspaper advertising and teaching which was needed. Terrell is losing \$150 a month support for 1990. \$1800 a year is a big cut in a country where the cost of living is so high. Who can help?

PHILIPPINES—Eduardo and Sol Ramiro of Pagadian City in Mindanao have been in the states for a few weeks. They came with their daughter Grace, who is working in a hospital in Dothan, Alabama. While here, they visited a number of brethren who have preached in the Philippines (including the editor) and brother Ramiro reported on the work in several places which either support him or others in the Philippines. They plan in March to begin a new work in Cebu City, the oldest city in that nation. JOHN HUMPRIES and JERRY PARKS went to the Philippines in February to spend one month preaching on Luzon, Mindanao, Palawan and possibly Cebu.

SOUTH AFRICA—The last report from Paul Williams mentioned 11 baptisms. There was a two-week tent meeting which was hindered by rain, but still one was baptized.

POLAND—In a phone call from Jeff Kingry recently, I was told that in May, Melvin Curry and Buddy Payne from Temple Terrace, Florida will make a trip to Poland to assess present opportunities for gospel work in that nation. We will all await their report with great interest and will try to pass on their impressions to our readers as soon as we can. Already, in this issue of STS, we have word of one church (East Orange, New Jersey) trying to contact any preacher interested in preaching in either Russia or eastern Europe. This is the kind of thing that warms the heart and sets a worthy precedent.

PREACHERS NEEDED

OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA—The Big Lake church needs a full-time preacher. The church is small and there will have to be outside support. Contact James Wagster (813) 763-9612; John Walker (813) 467-1013; or Marvin Walker (813) 763-0948.

FORT WALTON BEACH, FLORIDA—The Mary Esther church needs a full time preacher to work with twenty other Christians. Ft. Walton Beach is located on the Gulf Coast in the Florida panhandle, 30 miles east of Pensacola. Majority of support will have to come from outside. Contact Ron Goodson. (904) 244-2335.

METTER, GEORGIA—The church in Metter needs a faithful preacher. We are located midway between Macon and Savannah just off I-16 and have our own adequate meeting place. There are 12 members and we are able to supply considerable weekly support. Preaching is currently being done by two of the members. Those interested may contact: J. W. Blackburn (912) 685-3459 or write to P. O. Box 832, Metter, GA 30439.

NEW SMYRNA BEACH, FLORIDA—The Central congregation which meets on State Road 44 in New Smyrna Beach needs a mature man to work with the church. Average attendance is in the 40's and increases to the mid-seventies and eighties during the summer

months. We are located 15 miles south of Daytona Beach on the east coast of Florida. The church owns a two-bedroom house which would be furnished along with utilities. Some financial support could otherwise be supplied, though some would have to be raised elsewhere. If interested, please contact Arno Anderson, 2165 Patty Rd., New Smyrna Beach, FL 32168; phone (904) 428-9924; or Walter Sawyer, 1810 Enterprise, New Smyrna Beach, FL 32168, phone (904) 428-2539.

TRENTON, FLORIDA—The rural Midway church near Trenton, Florida needs a full-time preacher. Attendance runs 60-70. Full support. Contact: David Mikell (904) 463-6191.

RICHLANDS, VIRGINIA—The church in this town of about 5,000 in the western part of Virginia needs a full-time preacher. This is where the late Thomas Icard was preaching at the time of his death. We have about 25 in attendance (including children). We can only supply partial support. So much needs to be done in this area. For details call Randy Mitchell (703) 964-5784.

ANTIOCH, CALIFORNIA—The Railroad Avenue church in Antioch is interested in securing a full-time preacher. Tommy L. McClure will be moving during the second quarter of 1990. The congregation is small in number but owns its meeting house. Outside support will be needed. For further information, please contact Glendon McClure at (415) 757-8318 or send written inquiries to P. O. Box 1413, Antioch, CA 94509.



THE LASTING INFLUENCE OF GOOD TEACHERS

Last night we visited a funeral home in Leitchfield, Kentucky to comfort Veachel Morris who had lost his wife, Rae. They had been married fifty-seven years. They never had any children and yet they had many. For you see, this lovely, quiet little woman who always had a warm smile, was for many years a teacher of small children. She was the introduction to Bible classes for many little ones over the years. Just while we were there, several came in who told brother Morris that she had been their teacher. Among her former students are many faithful Christians, including godly mothers, elders, preachers, teachers and their wives. My sisters, if you teach a class of pre-school children, or any class, for that matter, please do it with diligence. Little ears are listening and little eyes are watching and the young minds will grow up and remember. Thank God for people like Rae Morris and all of kindred spirit. She died in hope.

INVESTIGATE

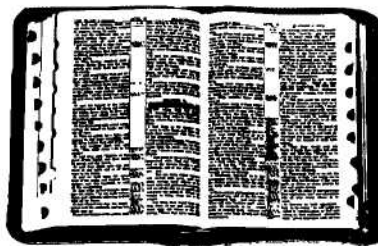
This paper carries notices nearly every month of congregations needing preachers and often of preachers who wish to relocate. We carry these notices as a courtesy and convenience for interested brethren and make no charge for it. Since we carry such as news items, we will only print it once. We often have requests to run these for three months or longer. It is news once. The fact that such a notice appears here does not mean that we know all the details of the work at any place searching for a preacher, or of any preacher who says he is ready to move. We are not in the preacher placement business. Both churches and preachers should always investigate completely. Such action will save many heartaches later and prevent misunderstandings.

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	286
RESTORATIONS	131
(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 XXXI

APRIL 1990

NUMBER 4

THINK ON
THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 1631
Lutz, FL 33549



BUILDING UP THE CHURCH

The deceitful rulers of Jesus' day played their religious roles to the hilt. They maneuvered the people by their rules and regulations so that they were turned away from God. There will always be those who would take advantage of others to serve their own interest. This is true among those who serve the Lord. Sometimes preachers are among the greatest offenders in the church of the Lord. In an effort to win a reputation as a very popular and successful evangelist, some will employ extreme measures to gain their goal.

The Holy Spirit said of the work of a preacher: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. 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. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry" (2 Tim. 4: 2-5).

He is to "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). "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (1 Tim. 4: 16).

Not all preachers strive for this goal. Some seek fame and fortune. They will do most anything to advance this cause. Others become so involved in

sports and social activity that they do very little evangelism. And some seek to win followers in large number by the promotional tactics of the super salesman, eliminating the negative and extolling the positive. They use sermons that please the ears of the listeners; they strive to make them feel comfortable about themselves in their apathy, rather than cause them to become conscious of their sins, and the need to repent and turn to the Lord. This course leads to the attempt to persuade members of other congregations in the area to move where they are preaching.

The practice of soliciting members from other congregations is the pretense of building up the church. They seek to glamorize their labors and claim success and growth for the congregation where they work.

In my judgment one who seduces members from other congregations in the general area where he preaches, is a self centered promoter who does not scruple to boast at the expense of others. One who secretly calls, writes and visits members of other congregations with the express purpose of soliciting them for the congregation where he labors is not building up the kingdom of Christ. He does not edify anyone; he does not teach people to become members of the kingdom of Christ. He is not increasing the kingdom; he only moves members around. He does not understand what his mission is as a preacher of the gospel.

Of course, if a congregation supports and endorses false doctrine and practice, those members who can be taught the truth, should be taught. When they learn the truth they will leave and go where the truth is taught and practiced. But efforts should be made to reach all members of congregations promoting false doctrines. Those people are walking in sin and their souls must be saved.

The work of an evangelist is not to advance the membership of one local church at the expense of others. Just the opposite, an evangelist is to build up the church by converting people to Christ by the gospel. Some evangelists have either lost their divinely chartered course from God's word, or they never knew it.

Please understand this: Any Christian has the scriptural right to move from one place to another, if

he thinks he can increase his opportunities to learn and contribute to the work of the body of Christ at that place. And he may seek to be a member of another congregation. Paul did so. When he came to Jerusalem: "he assayed to join himself to the disciples" (Acts 9: 26).

But that is a far cry from a preacher or some zealous member soliciting and seducing some away from the congregation where they are serving the Lord scripturally.

Some of the highly motivated "personal work" enthusiasts have a reputation for their ability to teach and direct their disciples to use any method to increase the membership of the congregation where they are working. Some of it is high pressure sales, some of it involves an unscriptural organization. "Personal work" that stresses converting sinners to Christ by leading them out of darkness into the light of the truth of Jesus Christ, is important and should be a part of every Christian's life; this is Bible study in homes. But transferring members from one congregation to another is not converting anyone to Christ, and it is not increasing the church of Christ.

I have heard the praise of some preachers for their great accomplishments in this field. When statistics are related, I wonder why the many they baptized have not increased the membership of that congregation. The answer is that most of those baptized have not really been taught. They have been pressured to "be baptized" before they were converted, and they soon fall away because they have not been taught. That is not enlarging the kingdom.

If it is a righteous thing to entice members from one congregation to another, by all means let us all do it. Open the door for teaching and urging evangelists to use all their efforts to urge members of other congregations to leave and become a part of the congregations where they work. I will guarantee you one thing: the social side of life will be emphasized far above all other interests, because that is what entices some members from one place to another. Youth activities, socials, food, sports, young people with the dating format and possible mate matching will be advertised and used as a means of encouraging people to leave one congregation to go to another. But the truth, by which men are made free, will cause one to grow strong in the Lord where he is. Think about it.

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ATTITUDES TOWARD CONTROVERSY

Christians should be lovers of peace. "Follow the things which make for peace" (Rom. 14: 19). The fruit of the Spirit is "love, joy, peace" (Gal. 5: 22). We are to keep the unity of the Spirit "in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4: 3). We are to "be at peace" among ourselves (1 Thes. 5: 13).

But purity of teaching can never be sacrificed on the altar of a mistaken peace. "But the wisdom that is from above is **first pure**, then peaceable...." (Jas. 3: 17). Note the order here. We must never seek peace at the expense of purity.

We cannot have peace with false doctrine. "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines" (Heb. 13: 9). To be "removed" from Christ by a perverted gospel is to incur the anathema of God and is not to be tolerated among those who love the truth (Gal. 1: 6-9). Because we love peace, we are not to be as children, "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine" (Eph. 4: 14).

We cannot have peace with immorality. The works of the flesh "are manifest" and will keep us out of heaven (Gal. 5: 19-21). Friends of the world are called "adulterers and adulteresses" and are said to be at "enmity with God" (Jas. 4: 4). The fornicator at Corinth was not to be countenanced but to be delivered "unto Satan" (1 Cor. 5: 4-5). Peter warned of false teachers with "pernicious (lascivious) ways" (2 Pet. 2: 1-2). Love for peace is not to hinder warning "them that are unruly" (1 Thes. 5: 14).

With all that said, we must ever guard against a quarrelsome and contentious spirit which supposes that one is not sound in the faith unless he is continually embroiled in a conflict of some kind. This mind-set will either pick a fight or else escalate a minor problem into a mountain of controversy. We have seen enough of that to last us a lifetime. There are some guidelines which ought to help us all in moments of stress:

(1) We must exercise **RESTRAINT**. It is easy to react before we have taken time to think. There is a certain dignity which should always characterize the Lord's people. Paul said "the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men" (2 Tim. 2: 24). None of us can afford the luxury of a temper tantrum either in the pulpit or the press. Knee-jerk reactions are nearly always regretted later.

(2) We must also distinguish between what is **MAJOR** and what is **MINOR**. This is not always easy. False teaching and immoral practice are always serious matters, but we need to be sure we clearly understand the

will of God on the subject before we take others to task.

(3) **WISDOM** must ever be the order of the day. Dr. John Thomas, who defected from the truth and founded the Christadelphian heresy became upset with A Campbell because Campbell would not open the columns of his paper for an airing of Thomas' speculative views on the nature of the kingdom and various notions on the millennium. It was the advocating of those very views in England which carried away a large number of brethren. That damage was not done in this country because of the wisdom of Campbell. When issues are advocated openly to the disturbance of an enlarging circle of God's people, then it is time for public treatment to correct public error.

(4) **FAIRNESS** should always be the hallmark of godly people. We should always take pains to understand exactly what is believed by those we oppose and we should go to great lengths, if necessary, to fairly represent them. I have asked every regular writer for this paper, before he began, not to write in anger, and in times of controversy, to be sure he understands what the other brother believes and to fairly represent him. They have all been asked to practice the "golden rule" and to refrain from insulting language or other personal remarks. There have been a few times when some did not observe this as closely as we would have liked, but that is still an objective we reach for. Brother Phillips maintained the same practice during his years as editor of the paper.

It is out of consideration for fairness that we have allowed responsible brethren to reply to articles which they believed to be erroneous in content. Fairness demands that a brother reviewed should be allowed to defend himself. We have consistently limited the number of exchanges so that all could be heard without burdening the reader with an endless exchange.

It is this very practice which has prompted some to charge us at times with "bickering." It is certainly possible for brethren to "bicker." But it is not "bickering" to responsibly differ with the practice or teaching of those in the public eye. Any reader of this paper for any length of time knows that we have had a limited number of exchanges between brethren of opposite views. I have carefully read all of them at least twice before the reader ever saw them. Sometimes I have sent an article back to a writer to do over because I felt he was unfair, or too harsh in his treatment of another. There have been a couple of instances in which I thought the matter of expression was marginal and in the interest of deadlines have allowed a few things to pass which, in retrospect, I would not do again.

But this writer is disturbed by an attitude manifesting itself more and more. It is a spirit which decries any kind of debate or exchange of views as a proper avenue of study. It is closely linked to the "Positive Mental Attitude" approach. My brethren, this was the seedbed out of which the institutional apostacy grew. Before brethren departed from the truth, there was a change of attitude toward the truth. Some truth is embarrassing to some people. Having no genuine love of the truth, they would prefer false teaching and immorality to reproof and rebuke for error when it raises its head. This spirit

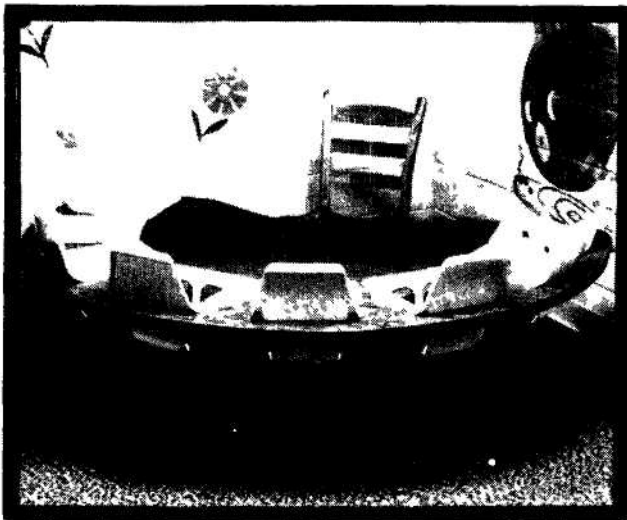
is being expressed in more and more places. Have lines of distinction between truth and error become so blurred that we can be comfortable with whatever is taught? Is everything a pale shade of gray? Are there no absolutes? Is truth so nebulous that it cannot with certainty be ascertained?

This editor is not out looking for a fight with anyone. I have never gone out looking for a debate, but I have never backed away from one when there were issues of truth under fire. I would prefer to always be able to present in these columns articles of simple exposition of Scripture for the edification of our readers. But we will not hide our heads in the sand when the kingdom is on fire. We will get our water buckets and do what we can to extinguish the blaze. Frankly, I fear for the spiritual welfare of any servant of Christ who would do otherwise. We do not court controversy but we will not dodge responsibility either. When we find ourselves at odds with the teaching or practice or others, we will do our best to follow the simple guidelines outlined in this article. "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong" (1 Cor. 16: 13).

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ANTIOCH — THE POWER OF THE LOCAL CHURCH LIVING THE DREAM II

There is no more pertinent and powerful model of a New Testament congregation carrying out God's plan for evangelism first, **at home** (Acts 11) and second, **abroad** (Acts 13-14) than the example of Antioch. And if you have invested your time each month in this series hopefully you, too, have been impressed with what has been seen. Thanks for staying with us. Let's pick up the account in Acts 13: 14 remembering that behind every baptism and success of the gospel in distant places there was the support of the local church at Antioch. **Antioch of Pisidia (13: 14-52)**

1. **The Atmosphere**, vs. 14-15. Antioch. Same name — different place. (Search out a map if you don't have a mental picture of the location). Here was a city tailor-made for Paul: Greek in origin, under Roman rule with a religious environment which was largely Jewish. And who better than one born in Tarsus, a Roman citizen by birth and a "**Hebrew of Hebrews**" to identify with the people of this place? Oh, the wisdom of God....

2. **The Argument**, vs. 16-37. Given the opportunity to speak Paul did so. Addressing his own people ("**Men of Israel**") and Jewish converts ("and you who fear God"), Paul proceeded to preach a sermon his listeners would never forget because in fact, **he** had never forgot- ten. No doubt this speaker remembered vividly another preacher who delivered this same lesson years before: Stephen. Paul would never escape the memories of that day nor the power of that address. Thus in many ways this sermon is modeled after Stephen's message of Acts 7. And so as the apostle preached, the appeal of Stephen sounded as a clarion call in his heart. It was one he would never forget.

In the course of his remarks Paul declared two things: (1) God's sovereign government, and (2) God's saving grace. From the choosing of the patriarchs to the appointment of kings it was God who led His people (vs. 17-21). It was God who raised up David (vs. 22) and it was God who finally brought to Israel a Saviour (vs. 23). And when God's enemies struck down His Son, "**God raised Him from the dead**" (vs. 30). Thus from the beginning to the present day Paul declared God's complete involvement in the plan for human redemption.

Like Stephen, Paul painted a dark picture of Hebrew history. He meant to. Yet he wanted to impress them not so much with their failures but with the fact that God's

grace went beyond their failures to the accomplishment of a divine purpose. In fact, when they in ignorance crucified the messiah, God's grace moved again **"in that He raised up Jesus" (vs. 33).**

3. The Appeal, vs. 38-41. Thus this crucified carpenter had been raised from the dead and declared by God to be the fulfillment of Old Testament promise, the hope of Israel and the Savior of the world (vs. 38-39). There is no escaping the force of the twice repeated statement that only **"through Him"** could forgiveness be found.

The apostle concludes with a word of warning (as promised by the prophets) that some would not believe even though it would be described in their hearing (vs. 40-41). Paul had described it and pointed to the resurrection as the indisputable proof of his message (vs. 30, 33, 37). Paul and Barnabas had gone into this pagan city preaching nothing but the death (vs. 28), burial (vs. 29), and resurrection of Jesus (vs. 30). It was a message that reached the hearts of their hearers (vs. 42-43).

4. The Second Assembly, vs. 44-52. One week went by. Last Saturday's synagogue sermon was the talk of the town (vs. 44). In the schools, market places and shops of the city the talk centered around the arresting words from the lips of two strangers. There was no mistaking the impact of the gospel. **ANTIOCH OF PISIDIA WAS STIRRED TO THE CORE!**

And what caused such a stirring? **"The word of God"** (vs. 44, 46, 48a). The secret of unrest and disturbance, emotions and decisions that had a grip on this city was the preaching of the "Word." Why? What was there about the gospel that caused such a reaction? Simply put, **IT WAS A MESSAGE THAT TOUCHED THE DEEPEST NEED OF THE HUMAN HEART: FORGIVENESS OF SINS.**

Paul and Barnabas had not left one Antioch to come to another only to preach politics, philosophy, housing reform and civil rights. They came with a specified agenda: to preach the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus and point to Him as the only hope of salvation from sin. What we see occurring in Antioch of Pisidia would eventually be played out in every city of the Roman Empire: people coming to grips with sin and sin's solution.

And the irony... On the one hand there would always be **UNBELIEVERS:** the jealous crowd intent on "contradicting the things spoken," blaspheming God's message and persecuting God's messengers (vs. 45, 50). But on the other hand there would always be **BELIEVERS.** Oh, the irony. While some were jealous others were joyful; while some blasphemed others believed (vs. 48). Rather than being blinded by prejudice, those with honest hearts and open minds embraced the gospel with enthusiastic reception. (Has anything really changed in twenty centuries?) Verse 52 closes the chapter and this part of the journey by adding, "And the disciples were continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit."

And what happened to Paul and Barnabas? Verse 50 reports that they were driven out of the city. All of which says simply, you can throw out God's messengers but never the message! The result? "They shook off the dust of their feet in protest against them and went to Ico-

nium" (vs. 51).

Iconium. Another city. Another opportunity. Another article... (I did it again... Do you have this problem?) I guess we could rush through these "field reports" like so many do today but in so doing we would miss the impact of these passages. And what is that impact? That there would be no opportunities any place else if some place did not send and support. That some place was Antioch of Syria. And because of their sacrifice, "the word of the Lord was being spread through the whole region" (vs. 49). Thank God for churches like that. Then... and now. Our study continues. Stay with us.

"A FLY IN THE OINTMENT"

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THE PRIESTHOOD OF JESUS (1)

One purpose of the Old Testament is to help us better understand what Jesus does for us. Like Moses, He is our lawgiver. Like David, He is our king. He is also our high priest. The author of Hebrews fully develops this subject, drawing from two O. T. priesthods.

Perspective

When we think of O. T. priests we naturally think of Aaron and his sons, priests under the law of Moses (Ex. 28: 1). They performed various sacred rites at the tabernacle, offered the people's sacrifices on God's altar, and taught God's law. While prophets and kings represented God to the people, priests represented the people to God. The high priest is of special interest to us in this study. He revealed God's will through the Urim and Thummin in a manner unknown to us. It was also his job to make the annual atonement for sins (Lev. 16).

On the day of atonement, the high priest removed his splendid robes, washed himself, and put on a linen tunic. He began the atonement by offering a bull as a sin offering for himself. Next he took two handfuls of incense inside the veil and burned them, allowing their cloud to cover the mercy seat where God dwelt, lest he should die from drawing near it (this was the only day when anyone was allowed inside the holy of holies). He then sprinkled some of the bull's blood on the mercy seat and on the ground in front of it seven times.

Following the atonement for himself, the high priest made atonement for the people. He first offered a goat, chosen by lot, as a sin offering for the people. Its blood was presented the same way the bull's blood was. The blood of the bull and the goat was also sprinkled on the altars, atoning for them and the entire tabernacle. A second goat, chosen by the same lot, was the "scapegoat." When the high priest finished presenting the sin offer-

ings, he laid his hands on the scapegoat and confessed the people's sins over it. That goat was then sent away into the wilderness. These goats symbolized the two aspects of atonement: blood as the means and forgiveness as the effect. Afterward, the high priest again washed, put his special robes back on, and continued his service by offering burnt offerings.

Fulfillment

Jesus has performed a similar function for us, though in a much superior way. He set aside His godly splendor for a time to take on the form of man (Ph. 2: 6-8). This itself is a remarkable thing, that God the Son was willing to subject Himself to human weaknesses and suffering to save rebellious mankind. What unselfish love! But it had to be done if we were to have any hope. The blood of bulls and goats could not satisfy God's sense of justice as an atonement for sin (Heb. 10: 4). It took the blood of a sinless man, willingly given on behalf of others. Jesus also had to become a man to be our high priest, since every high priest is taken from among men (Heb. 5: 1, 2). Only then could He see human weakness from our perspective and fully represent us before God. Jesus was in this sense perfected by what he suffered (Heb. 2: 10; 5: 8, 9).

While the similarities between Jesus and Aaron are obvious, there are important differences, each of which shows the superiority of Jesus' priesthood. Jesus made no atonement for Himself. He did not need to because He was sinless. In fact, if He would have had to first atone for Himself, as Aaron did, He could not have been the atonement for us. Jesus atoned for us with His own blood, a far superior sacrifice to a goat's blood (Heb. 9: 13, 14). It completely cleanses. There is no need to repeat the offering as under the Law. Jesus' sacrifice was once for all time (Heb. 9: 25-10: 18). (Why, then, do Roman Catholics have mass, a "non-bloody" repetition of the sacrifice?) There is one other important difference: when Jesus went before God, he did not go into a copy or symbol of God's presence, but into heaven itself, into the very presence of God (Heb. 9: 24). (He did this in the first century, not in 1914 as Jehovah's Witnesses contend.) There He remains to mediate for us.

Application

What does all this mean? The answer is in Heb. 10: 19-25. First, it means we have access to God. The Law warned people, even priests, to stay away from God's presence. The gospel invites us to draw near. All Christians are priests (1 Pet. 2: 5, 9). When our hearts are sprinkled clean by Jesus' blood and our bodies are washed with pure water (baptism is the point at which we contact Jesus' blood), we can draw near in full assurance of faith. We must draw near if we are to be saved. This new way which Jesus inaugurated is the only access to God. Remember what He said: "I am the way...; no one comes to the Father, but through Me" (Jn. 14: 6). Drawing near is not just looking for forgiveness. It is searching for help in any time of need (Heb. 2: 16). It is coming to offer the sacrifice of our lips — praise and thanksgiving to God (Heb. 13: 15).

Second, it means we must hold fast. If Christ is the only access to God, where will we be when we forsake

Him? Who would want to go back? Holding fast is maintaining our faith, staying away from sin, and repenting when we do err.

Third, it means considering one another. We are priests. A part of the priestly function is intercession for others. Priests are to be sympathetic and gentle. All of this points to interest in other people. If we realize what a blessing we have in Jesus' atonement, surely we will tell others about it. Surely we will encourage our brethren when they seem to be forgetting and slipping away, or when they are not offering the sacrifices of good deeds (Heb. 13: 16). We will regularly meet together for mutual strengthening. Brethren who quibble about how many services one can miss without "forsaking" assembling have missed the thrust of this passage!

In another article we will consider the other O. T. priesthood fulfilled by Jesus—the superior priesthood of Melchizedek.

ACCEPTED OF HIM

(2 Cor. 5:9)

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MISUSE OF THE TONGUE (Part 1)

The Psalmist said, "I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with me tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me" (Psa. 39: 1). The abuse of the tongue is one area with which we all can identify. We have dealt with a number of sins in this column such as gambling, social drinking, stealing, fornication, adultery and immodesty. None of these will probably hit home any more than this one on the tongue. James reminds us of what we already know: the tongue is hard to control. He said, "But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison" (Jas. 3: 8). While difficult, it must be controlled. The same writer said, "... let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" (Jas. 1: 19). "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridled not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain" (Jas. 1: 26). Peter said that if we love life and want good days, we must refrain our tongues from evil and our lips speak no guile (1 Pet. 3: 10).

Controlling our tongues is not just a matter of good taste or avoiding embarrassment. It has to do with our salvation or damnation. Solomon said, "A fool's mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul" (Prov. 18: 7). Jesus said that man shall give an account of every idle word he shall speak (Matt. 12: 36-37). Can you imagine **every** idle word? Humm... it must be serious!

Let's consider some of the abuses of the tongue.

Lying

Lying is deliberately telling something that is not so.

1. **We are commanded to not lie.** "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor..." (Eph. 4: 25). "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds" (Col. 3: 9).

2. **God hates lying.** One of the six things listed in Prov. 6: 16-19 that the Lord hates is "a lying tongue." The same book says, "Lying lips are abomination to the Lord..." (Prov. 12: 22).

3. **There are different types of liars.** There are common liars who invent their stories just to deceive. They either manufacture, fabricate or exaggerate in order to mislead or impress. I was in grammar school with a common liar. His name was Barney. Every toy I had was nothing compared to what he had at home. If I got a toy dump truck, he had a real one at home. One Christmas I got a model airplane. When he heard, he said he had a real airplane — so big that he had to keep it at the airport. Some are cowardly liars who are afraid to tell the truth. They may tell their lies to cover mistakes or sin. Others are commercial liars whose intent is worldly gain. Ananias and Sapphira lied for money (Acts 5). Salesmen who lie about a product or the condition of the product in order to make a sale are commercial liars. Some are malicious liars. These lie with the purpose of injuring others. Then there is the social liar who had rather lie than hurt someone's feelings. He is the kind that will smile and compliment you to your face, but when you are gone, he will stab you in the back.

4. **Liars will go to hell.** John recorded that "all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone..." (Rev. 21: 8). The proverb writer said, "... he that speaketh lies shall not escape" (Prov. 19: 5).

While we would like to think that Christians would never be guilty of lying, such is not the case. There are some "Christians" who lie like there is nothing wrong with it at all.

Profanity, Vulgarity And Cursing

1. **Profanity** is a common or perverted use of God's name or other terms. One of the ten commandments was a prohibition of taking God's name in vain (Exo. 20: 7). God's name deserves honor and respect. We are to serve God with "reverence and godly fear" (Heb. 12: 28). When we take God's name and other legitimate terms and throw them around loosely in a common manner, we are guilty of profanity.

2. **Cursing and vulgar or coarse language** is directly addressed in the text. If you are to have your life hid with Christ, you must put "filthy communication out of your mouth" (Col. 3: 8). James said that when cursing proceeds out of the same mouth with which we bless our God, "these things ought not so to be" (Jas. 3: 9-10). Paul wrote to the Ephesians saying, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth..." (Eph. 4: 29). "Corrupt" means rank, foul, rotten, worthless and disgusting. In other words, don't let the garbage that the world speaks come from your mouth.

Why do those who curse use the language that they do? Some curse, thinking that it will flavor their conversation. Some are merely trying to gain attention. Others may think it is necessary to fit into the crowd. For some it has become a habit to the point that they don't even realize what they are saying.

3. **Other forms of corrupt speech.** It is not just the use of curse words or a vain use of God's name that is condemned by the above passages. Filthy jokes are just as wrong. Paul said that we are not to be guilty of "filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting" (Eph. 5: 4). The filthiness has reference to that which is obscene. Foolish talking is the kind of talk that only a fool would utter. The jesting is coarse or filthy jokes (cf. NKJV). Jokes and stories can be obscene and coarse and not contain one curse word. While the joke may be funny and get us a laugh or two, it is something unfit for the child of God. Suggestive talk that has immoral and sexual content is nothing but filth. Euphemisms are mere substitutes for the coarser terms. Take a Webster's dictionary and look up such words as Gee, Gosh, Golly, Dam and Heck and see what they really mean.

We are not surprised at all when people of the world use the kind of language we have just described. However, there are some who claim to be Christians that are also guilty. In our next article we will talk about angry words, casual oaths, gossip, grumbling and fussing.

THE GOSPEL ARGUMENT FOR GOD

- Study Notes on the Empirical Argument for the Existence of God
- These Notes are the Outgrowth of the Debates which the author had with Atheists: One at the University of Illinois (1985) and one at Iowa State University (1988)

By Kenneth L. Chumbley

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A COMPENDIUM OF ISSUES (3)

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APOSTASY FORETOLD

That there would be departures from the faith is evident. Paul predicted to the elders at Ephesus that after his departing, "grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them" (Acts 20: 29, 30). A falling away was foretold in other scriptures (2 Thess. 2: 3, 1 Tim. 4: 1; 2 Tim. 4: 1-4). Any student of history knows that apostasy began with a corruption of local church organization. Local church autonomy was infringed upon and violated when the oversight of elders extended beyond the church in which they were elders. The universal church became organized and the hierarchical system of Roman Catholicism resulted, making it a wholesale apostasy.

While it is not our prerogative to question why God does anything, yet we can see His wisdom in not tying local churches together. If churches of Christ were bound together and one should fall, it would affect all of the other churches. Whereas, when churches are independent of each other, if one church should fall away it would in no wise affect the structure, organization or function of another church. If every local church but ONE should apostatize, the one which is left would remain THE church of Christ.

Let us now look at some developments in the nineteenth century.

Religion in America

About the beginning of the nineteenth century there was a religious awakening in America. Migrations to the "new" country made it a frontier, thus a melting pot of religious beliefs. Denominationalism abounded. The great revival at Cane Ridge, Kentucky, took place in August of 1801. It was estimated that twenty-five thousand people camped in the woods close by during the seven days. Methodists, Baptists and Presbyterians were gathered there with their preachers in a joint effort to convert the thousands present. Barton W. Stone and some others had been Presbyterians; but by studying the Scriptures they rejected such Calvinistic doctrines as total depravity, miraculous regeneration and unconditional election. He and five co-workers were tried for heresy in the synods for preaching doctrines contrary to Calvinism. They formed the Springfield Presbytery, but realizing it fomented a divisive spirit, they soon disbanded it. On June 28, 1804 they published "The Last Will and Testament of

the Springfield Presbytery. " The document made a plea for the Bible alone as the standard of faith and conduct. A few years earlier, in the east and northeast, such men as James O'Kelley were contending for the principle that the name Christian be used to the exclusion of all party and sectarian names. They contended that the Bible is a sufficient rule of faith and practice.

Thomas Campbell arrived in America in 1807 and soon broke with the "Seceder Presbyterian Church, " with which he had been affiliated in his native Ireland. He issued his famous document, **Declaration and Address** on September 8, 1808. It set forth basic principles for unity: that the Scriptures are the only rule of faith *and* practice, that sectarianism is evil and that division results from human innovations. He formally withdrew from the Presbyterian group on September 13, 1808 and became an independent preacher. It was he who coined the slogan: "where the Scriptures speak, we speak; and where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent. "

Following his year as a student in Glasgow University, Scotland, Alexander (the illustrious son of Thomas Campbell), with the remainder of the immediate Campbell family sailed for America, arriving in New York on September 29, 1808. Both Thomas and Alexander, though separated by the Atlantic ocean, had reached the same conclusions from their study of the Bible. They denounced such practices as infant baptism and on June 12, 1812, seven persons were baptized in Buffalo Creek, including Alexander, his wife and his father and mother. They joined those who earlier were making efforts to restore the teaching of the Bible as man's safe and only guide. Thousands were reached by the preaching of the Campbells, by the publications of Alexander Campbell and his five great debates. The restoration movement was well under way.

The Restoration Effort

Two main streams of the restoration movement merged when the forces of Alexander Campbell and Barton W. Stone united in 1832. Thus the restoration movement that had its beginning in America soon after the new nation was formed became a strong influence upon people to leave their sectarian creeds and turn to the Scriptures for their authority. Able men such as "Raccoon" John Smith, Walter Scott, David Lipscomb, Tolbert Fanning, Benjamin Franklin, Jacob Creath, Jr. and F. B. and F. D. Srygley entered the scene, thus playing a great role in restoring the teaching of the New Testament. It was a great struggle. The effort to unite people upon what the Bible teaches was not easy then, and neither is it easy now. Though there was fervent interest in things religious, there was nevertheless prejudice, strife, confusion and bitterness among the various religious bodies. They were at war among themselves and, as a whole, were strong in their opposition to the truth. But sacrificing and determined gospel preachers traveling great distances, and often under most trying circumstances, made known the message of truth. They found audiences of eager listeners. Hundreds were baptized in response to the gospel message. Scores of congregations were established according to the New Testament order. But problems were ahead.

A BURNING FIRE

(Jer. 20:9)

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WHO LEADS THIS FAMILY?

She is an attractive woman in her late twenties but her hair is disheveled and her eyes are red from crying. It looks like she slept in her clothes last night (if she got any sleep at all). She had called and wanted to come talk with me and my wife. Her marriage isn't working out. The man to whom she is married has changed. He doesn't listen anymore and she doesn't feel like he is concerned with anything she says. Things have gotten pretty rough and so now they have separated for a while to give each other some space. Can we help her?

This could be one of dozens of situations that I have faced in the last few years. Troubled marriages. Husbands and wives who don't like one another very much anymore. They keep coming and coming—good couples, good people who just can't seem to get along living together as husband and wife. What's causing all of this and what can we do to stop it?

The problems are just too numerous to count. Each situation is different. Financial matters. In-law problems. Selfishness. Too much pride to say, "I'm wrong, I'm sorry, please forgive me." And the list could go on and on. But just here I want to point out something that seems to be a common thread and what I consider to be a major contributing factor to the divorce problem.

In the affluent world in which we live it is becoming harder and harder for young couples to make financial ends meet. Especially since most of them expect so much so soon. The simple purchase of a home is not simple anymore. Transportation costs are high. Food prices continue to rise. All of this creates a great deal of financial pressure. When a young couple gets married they are most often automatically a two-income family because both have usually worked while attending school and this likely continues. It adds to the financial pressure a great demand on their time, meaning that there is less time for them to spend together. Add to this the fact that often the wife's income may be more than that of her husband and the young family is set up to face a major problem— a confusion of roles in the home. Who is the head of the family? Who is to be in subjection? Who bears responsibility for what duties? Sadly, the answers sometimes become a matter of competition rather than of divine revelation.

Our applications may be less than perfect and may sometimes even be seriously flawed but God's word is clear on the matter. Paul declared that "the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church" (Eph. 5: 23) and that wives are to be "subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord" (Eph. 5: 22). The

husband has been given primary responsibility to "provide for his own" (1 Tim. 5: 8) while his wife is to be a "worker at home" (Tit. 2: 5). But because of the Equal Rights Movement and the efforts of the National Organization For Women the majority of our society jeers at the suggestion that women should subject themselves to anyone. It is equally true that more and more men are refusing to take the leadership and corresponding responsibilities that come with being the God-ordained head of the family. These men sometimes force their wives out of their proper roles. Thus, all structure to the family unit is lost.

Some homes seem to exist, and rather happily, without this God-ordained structure. But I am convinced that this is most often not the case. Where there is this confusion of roles, where no one is considered the head and no one is in subjection, leadership often becomes a battle with subjection meaning only that you were the one who temporarily lost the argument. Anarchy reigns in such relationships and any happiness found therein is only fleeting at best. Is it any wonder that in our nation there are three divorces for every four marriages when such conditions exist? In my view nothing is more destructive to the family unit as a whole than a man who will not or does not know how to be the head of his family. Or, for that matter, a woman who refuses to recognize her responsibility to subject herself to her husband as God decreed.

One young woman spoke to me of her husband and said, "I told him not to buy the car, that we couldn't afford it, but he went ahead and bought it anyway." There are numerous problems implied here. Her husband's financial irresponsibility and the inability of each to communicate with the other are not the least among them. But I also saw something else. It became very clear to me as she was speaking that she was trying to rule her husband, not only on this but also on many other matters. Their relationship had degenerated into a tug-of-war for supremacy in their home. A relationship like this, and there are many of them in our society, cannot last. That this is true is proven by our country's divorce statistics.

This young woman is not solely responsible for the problems that exist. Society has taught her well. She is a child of the times. The unisex movement which we heard so much about in the 1960's has born its ugly fruit 30 years later. Maybe preachers of the gospel are also partly to blame for not teaching more on the home and the place of both husbands and wives in God's order.

The only lasting solution that is without exception the answer to the divorce dilemma is to structure our homes after God's pattern. God's way for the family must be taught even if it is so unpopular in our times and causes us to be viewed as old fashioned and out of date. This teaching must not be left to gospel preachers alone but must begin from the cradle. Our girls must be taught how to be faithful, loving, devoted, and industrious wives. Our boys must be taught how to be gentle, considerate, caring, and strong husbands. The happiness of our children's homes, the strength of our society as a whole and, most importantly, the souls of all concerned are in the balances.

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



CHRISTIANS ARE BREAD OF LIFE TO EACH OTHER

In John the sixth chapter, Jesus declared himself to be the bread of life and went on to teach the necessity of eating and drinking of him in order to have eternal life (v. 53). This is done by believing on him and heeding His words (v. 47, 63, 68). Whoever or whatever leads one to become and remain a true believer in Christ (One who eats and drinks of Him) is bread of life to that one. The apostle Paul, in bringing a knowledge of Christ to others, was bread of life to many, not in the sense that Christ is THE bread of life, but as an agent or conveyor of that which enables one to live spiritually. (1 Cor. 15: 1-2; 4: 15; Phile. 10, 19). In the sense that Job was "eyes to the blind and feet to the lame" (Job 29: 15), so those who are instruments of one having either physical or spiritual life may be said to be bread of life to them. On one occasion, in particular, Paul was bread of life physically, even for non-Christians. On his voyage to Rome, when all life was threatened by the storm, the angel of the Lord said to Paul, "Fear not... thou must be brought before Caesar and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee" (Acts 27: 24, also vs. 31-44).

The Scriptures abound in teaching that brothers and sisters in the Lord are responsible for leading others to, and remaining in Christ in possession of eternal life. This is the sense in which we are bread of life to others.

Love for one another requires that we be concerned about the physical welfare of others (1 Jno. 3: 11-17). God expected Cain to be his brother's keeper. But, because of hate instead of love, Cain was bread of death, instead of life, for his brother when he rose up against him and slew him.

God considers those who hate their brother, being unwilling to show compassion for a brother in need, to be murderers. James, in illustrating a working faith, pictures a brother or sister destitute of food and clothing, being supplied, or not supplied, with those things needful to the body (James 2: 15-16).

The life sustaining power of one another is seen in Eccles. 4: 9-12. "Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat; but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken."

When a brother or sister is destitute of life-giving food, drink, clothing, shelter or protection from a destroyer, God expects his children to respond with the life saving things that are needed. Paul taught that Christians are to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love" (Eph. 4: 1-2). Forbear, in the Greek, is "anecho" and means "to hold up, bearing-propping up, as a building."

Truly Christians are to supply life-giving strength, support, protection, and needs to one another. It is personal, individual responsibility. Making a contribution to some caring institution does not meet the responsibility God has placed upon us. Sidney Harris once wrote in his column in the Nashville Banner, "When doing good becomes vast and institutional and even fashionable, then the human element has given way to the 'socio-logical' and we are helping unfortunates instead of men and woman and children much like ourselves."

Bread of Life Spiritually

Not only are we to be bread of life physically to one another, but also spiritually. The true bread of life—Christ, truth, His gospel—which brings eternal life has been placed in "earthen vessels" (2 Cor. 4: 7). Paul was one of them. "He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: (Acts 9: 15); "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 which are sanctified by faith that is in me" (Acts 26: 18). Having converted Philemon, Paul could write "Thou oweth unto me even thine own self besides" (Phile. 19).

Not only were the apostles bread of life in the sense of being instruments by which others believed, but every one, when he/she has been taught, has the responsibility to "teach others also" (2 Tim. 4: 16).

The importance of diligently trying to teach others and lead them to Christ is emphasized throughout the New Testament. Paul is emphasized throughout the New Testament. Paul is an example for all of us of one whose hearts desire, prayers, and efforts were to save others (Rom. 10: 1; 1 Cor. 1: 21; 9: 19-22). Personal evangelism by word and example is a responsibility of every child of God. We can also be bread of life to the lost by liberally supporting preachers of the word. Examine yourself with the question, "Am I bread of life to the lost from this standpoint?"

Christians are also responsible for bringing back to spiritual life those who have fallen, weakened and died. "Brethren if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6: 1-2). See also, James 5: 16, 19-20; Matt. 18: 15-17; Rom. 14: 13-21; 1 Cor. 10: 23, 33; 8: 7-12).

The sight of some brother/sister withering spiritually—Forsaking assembling with the saints, an unholy attitude or disposition, inclined to worldliness, unbridled speech (tongue), drowning in sorrow or disap-

pointment, unhealthy appetite for mammon, etc. —it is time for efforts to teach, admonish, and warn to be put forth by every child of God on behalf of that brother or sister. Are we (am I) really bread of life to a weak, spiritually dying brother or sister? Too often we actually contribute to, and hasten the spiritual death of a brother by indifference, lack of example in our own life, or by unkindness and lack of meekness in our efforts to rebuke and admonish.

The fact that we are to assemble ourselves together, teach and admonish one another, pray one for another, exhort one another, "look not on the things of self but of others," eat the Lord's Supper together, and be truly fellow-soldiers, fellow-servants, fellow-pilgrims, fellow-sufferers and fellow-heirs shows there is power to restore, strengthen, and save in such concern and action toward one another.

"How sweet, how heavenly, is the sight,
When those that love the Lord
In one another's peace delight,
And so fulfill the Word."
"When each can feel his brother's sigh,
And with him bear a part;
When sorrow flows from eye to eye,
And joy from heart to heart."

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SPIDER WEBS AND JONAH'S GOURD

The climate in Florida is especially conducive to spider webs. They are in the cracks and joints of mortar, in the corners of doors and windows, and will attach themselves to almost anything that remains stationary for a few hours. Mostly, they are considered to be a nuisance.

As a boy, I marveled at the cobwebs in the meadows, glistening in the morning dew, like hundreds of miniature ships sailing on a sea of grass. But, I did not understand their purpose in life. They held no special message for a curious country boy.

But, that August morning in Florida, my wife called my attention to a large spider web in our back yard, suspended several feet above the ground between a cabbage palm and a patio roof. I was fascinated by the size and symmetry of this overnight construction project. The web was thirty inches in diameter, suspended in the air by two threads, one sixteen feet long, and the other four feet in length. Two similar strands anchored the bottom of this floating polygon to the ground.

After meditating on this orderly design for several minutes, I faced the day with renewed assurance that the earth and its inhabitants were in good hands—the hands of an infallible Creator.

In ancient Babylon and Persia, the unchangeable decrees of heathen kings were used in attempts to persecute God's people. But in the end, the very nature of these binding decrees worked on behalf of God's people, and against their enemies (Dan. 3: 29; 6: 26; Est. 8: 8).

In our time, it appears that the decisions of the Supreme Court are slanted against the Bible account of creation, and in favor of atheistic evolution. The latter may be taught in the public schools, but the former may not. We need to pray to the "God of Daniel" on behalf of our rulers, and on our own behalf. We need to be instilling into the hearts of our children the Genesis account of creation to fortify and prepare them against those efforts which are calculated to destroy faith in God, and faith in the Bible as the word of God.

But, we need to be heartened by those examples of faith manifested by God's people who "stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire" (Heb. 11: 33, 34). The greater the distinction now between the theory of evolution and the Bible account of creation, the greater the defeat of error when that time comes; the greater the adversity, the greater the ultimate victory of truth over error, of good over evil.

Like Jonah's gourd, the spider web "came up in a night, and perished in a night" (Jonah 4: 10). The gourd served its purpose, and taught Jonah a lesson; the spider web, and a thousand things like it are literally crying out each day to remind us of our Creator, our origin, and our destiny.

They say old soldiers never die, but just fade away. I don't know what happens to old spider webs, but in the brief time that they are here, they catch a few flies, gnats, and mosquitoes, and may cause a soul created in the likeness and image of God to praise Him who created all things.


And in so doing, the spider accomplishes more in one night than do some people in a lifetime.

WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?
(Rom. 4:3)

Send all questions to:

Weldon E. Warnock

100 Carriage Drive
Beckley, West Virginia 25801



NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH

QUESTION: *What are the new heavens and new earth in 2 Pet. 3: 13? Does the statement mean that some will be in heaven and some on earth after the destruction of heaven and earth?*

ANSWER: The expression, "new heavens and a new earth, " basically means "a new order of things. " The context determines what the new order is.

In 2 Pet. 3: 13 the apostle is referring to the eternal abode of the righteous, viz., heaven itself. Peter had just stated, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise... the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (v. 10). Then he writes in v. 13, "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. "

Perhaps the present heavens and earth serve as a figure of the new heavens and new earth to follow. Heaven would be the antetype, the new order in which the people of God will dwell in righteousness. The present order, the type, is physical while the eternal order, the antetype, is spiritual.

The new heavens and new earth are not two different places, but a description of the one and same place. The word "new" (*kainos*) indicates quality or that which is fresh in contrast to that which is worn out. Our present world is worn and old while heaven will be fresh and new.

In other places the phrase, "new heavens and new earth, " has a different connotation. In Isa. 65: 17 and

66: 22 the expression is applicable to the Gospel Dispensation, the Messianic reign, in contrast to the old Jewish Dispensation. In place of the old rituals and sacrifices under Moses, God will establish a new order or new covenant under Christ.

The "new heavens and new earth" in Isaiah would be the same as "the world to come" in Heb. 2: 5. The "world (*oikoumene*) to come" is, according to A. T. Robertson, "The new order, the salvation just described" (*Word Pictures*, Vol. 5, p. 344). The salvation just described is the great salvation in Heb. 2: 2.

Finally, John in his visionary state, sees "a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away" (Rev. 21: 1). Although I cannot be certain, it seems to me that John is describing a new order that would prevail after the church emerges from battle, suffering, sacrifice and intense opposition from the Roman Empire. Old conditions, enemies and powers have passed away. The church comes forth as a bride adorned for her husband in triumph and beauty, ready to evangelize the world.

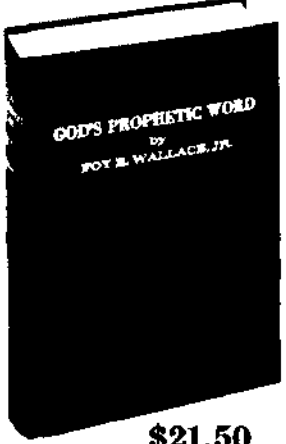
Notice that the new Jerusalem, the church, is coming down from God out of heaven (v. 2), and the tabernacle of God, the church, is with men or among men (v. 3). Coming down from God indicates the church's identity that she is truly of God!

Others suggest that the "new heavens and new earth" in Rev. 21: 1 means the same as in 2 Pet. 3: 13 — the new and eternal order beyond the judgment. They must be right, but the above view seems to have more merit, at least, to me.

GOD'S PROPHETIC WORD

By Foy E. Wallace, Jr.

A compendium on the Abrahamic Promises and the Mosaic, major and minor Davidic Prophecies, consisting of a complete exposure and refutation of the multiple theories of premillennialism, including a review of the claims of British Anglo-Israelism, and the Judaistic system of Seventh Day Adventism.



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SALTWATER DOESN'T SANCTIFY SAINTS

Jeffery Kingry
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Since our return from China and imminent return, I have devoted a large measure of my energies to the attempt of raising brethren's consciousness of the need for evangelism in Asia and Eastern Europe. My efforts have met with mixed results: several men are taking the Gospel in 1990 to places it has not gone before by non-institutional, non-denominational brethren: Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Malaysia, Hong Kong, China, the U. S. S. R., Brazil. With all this added work and enthusiasm, there is a parallel need for churches to make whatever sacrifices are necessary to take the Gospel to the lost.

However, in our enthusiasm, we need to realize an old truism: "Saltwater Doesn't Sanctify Saints." Going across the sea does not bestow on a man competency, devotion, effectiveness, or good sense. If a man isn't an effective personal worker here, he won't do it there. If he is not teaching others here, he won't be any more effective there. If he has problems perpetually with brethren here, then he won't be any more cooperative somewhere else. If he is looking for a way out of his rut here, then in the clutches of culture shock, the pressures to develop a rut are even more compelling over there. In fact, whatever problems might be present in a brother's life here in the relative calm and security of a well-known culture among many helpful brethren, those problems will be amplified and scratched till they bleed in the stress of isolation, responsibility, and hard work required overseas. There is still a responsibility for churches and individuals to use good judgment in choosing whom they send.

Paul was a tested man before he went on his first missionary journey, as was Barnabas. Both men had demonstrated their devotion to God in the face of trial, their love of souls under hardship, and their effectiveness in teaching by actually doing the work and doing it well. Of John Mark's qualifications, however, we read nothing apart from the fact that he was probably the young man who ran away the night of Jesus' arrest (Mark 14: 50-52), a church met in his mother's house (Acts 12: 12), and that he was the nephew of the well-known Barnabas (Col. 4: 10). On the first missionary journey, when things didn't go his way, John Mark "left the work" (Acts 13: 13; Acts 15: 36-39). Who should do this demanding work of foreign evangelism was a cause of "sharp contention" between Paul and Barnabas.

There are brethren today who may be eager to go who should not. With the increased interest in doing this kind of "sent" work, it is imperative that we send the right people.

There are many motivations for leaving the U. S. and traveling to foreign countries in an attempt to do evangelism. Not all of them are noble or godly. Some men want to be a big frog in a little pond. Their idea of their work is to exercise authority over others. Finding this difficult to accomplish in established churches, they move out to the fringes always on the prowl for an opportunity to find or establish a group they can fashion and control. I have seen men like this move into the Eastern Seaboard and Northeast U. S. through the years. At least three kept moving — and lost their faith entirely taking brethren with them into damnation. Others have a Diotrophes lock on the brethren they have in their power, excluding everyone that may threaten their position. That is not after the biblical pattern of Paul's evangelism: "Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand: (2 Cor. 1: 24). What do you look for in a man who wishes to preach overseas? Don't support "loners" who will not work, or have not worked with others. Don't support men who will not share the names and addresses of groups with whom they have worked in the past. Don't support men with a history of division, trouble, and exclusion behind them.

Some men are motivated out of curiosity, a desire for drama, wander lust, and a macho interest to "prove themselves." While these passions may be an incidental part of any traveler, the stakes are too high in this work to merely gratify personal needs. When the novel has become commonplace, the "quaint" is no longer interesting, and the constant demands of the work aren't "fun" anymore, these men will leave the work.

Once a Christian said to me in a level tone, "I have no desire to leave the U. S. and my home." That is a noble sentiment. People who do leave their home behind do not do it because they prefer China or Eastern Europe over the U. S. They leave their home because they love souls more than "the pleasures of Pharaoh's palace for a season." No one motivated by passion will long endure when the passion ebbs.

"A double minded man is unstable in all of his ways" (Jas. 1: 8). He is like a wind tossed wave. When the wind blows against him, he'll "go home." Curiosity and drama do not sustain the saint in the face of the reality of the work. The grass always looks greener, but what is true is that while things are different, they are really the same: the sun falls on all, food tastes, work is hard, the body makes demands. What do you look for? Look for a man who is really intimidated and scared to go but feels compelled by his love of lost souls. Look for someone with a history of working hard to overcome obstacles. Look for a preacher who has demonstrated stability in work and doctrine. Look for a man who loves his home and his family.

If you are thinking about going yourself, please don't go if you see yourself described below: So tied to family and friends at home that you are incapacitated when you are separated from them for any length of time. If you spend all your vacations with your parents. If your wife or children are stubbornly unwilling and uninterested in doing this kind of work. If you are inflexible or fastidious: e. g. you must have your egg done in a precise way each

morning or you won't eat, can't get dressed without taking a shower first, other's tardiness ruin your whole day, become angry when people don't understand you, worry constantly about cleanliness of other people who may touch you or serve you food, can't walk without looking to your feet to see what you might step on or in, become insomniac if your bed doesn't smell like you, don't really like "foreigners," use vocabulary like "nigger," "slant," "polack," or "greaser" when referring to others, get panicky when you are lost, or prefer to stay home and watch T. V. to having a conversation with a friend. Without explanation, if this is you: stay home.

Don't go if you are looking for a "pulpit," a meeting house, Wednesday night Bible study, and individual communion cups. Don't go if the terms "Church of Christ Preacher," or "Church doctrine," or "Restoration mainstream" make any sense to you. Don't go if you are not skilled in teaching others; if you don't know your Bible by heart; if you have never converted anyone to Christ.

Don't go if you are grossly overweight, out of condition, easily exhausted, or in poor health. Don't go if your family needs constant medical attention or you feel the need to be close to a western physician or chiropractor. Don't go if you are physically inactive, unable to walk to get yourself around, or can't travel without air conditioning. Don't go if your children whine to have you carry them when you visit the mall, or sit around in front of a TV instead of playing outside. Don't go if you panic when your child gets dirty.

However, that doesn't mean never go. Prepare yourself for this great work that you might be "a vessel prepared for noble use in the Master's house." Try eating pickles and hard boiled eggs for breakfast, just to see that you won't die. "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the Gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you" (1 Cor. 9: 19ff).

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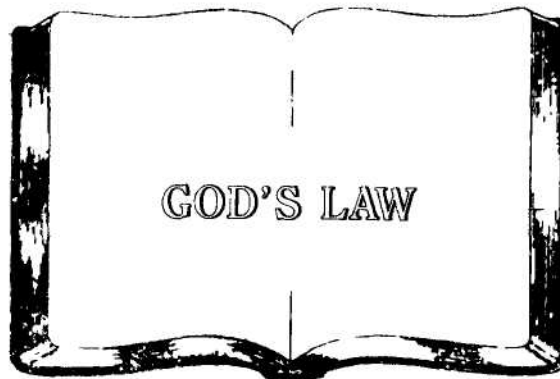
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THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

"... 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, KY40109

DALLAS MEETING SET

Another meeting with institutional brethren has been set for July 12-14, 1990 in Dallas, Texas. It will be held in the Doubletree Hotel in Lincoln Centre (LBJ Freeway at North Dallas Tollway, across from the Galleria). Rooms are available at \$55 per night (up to four persons per room). For reservations call 1-214-934-8400. For further information call Steve Wolfgang (606-236-4204/236-8506) or Roy Lanier, Jr. (214-271-0106). The topics and speakers are as follows:

MODERATORS: Roy H. Lanier, Jr. (Garland, TX) and James L. Sloan (Houston, TX).

1. HISTORY/BACKGROUND (Thursday, July 12, 2-5 p. m.):

Speakers: Hulen Jackson, Dallas; Steve Wolfgang, Danville, KY.

Panel: Hardeman Nichols, Dallas, TX; Adron Doran, Lexington, KY; Ed Harrell, Birmingham, AL; Harry Pickup, Jr., Tampa, FL; Colly Caldwell, Tampa, FL.

2. HERMENEUTICS (Thursday, July 12, 7-10 p. m.): **Speakers:**

Almon Williams, Tampa, FL; Wendell Winkler, Montgomery, AL.

Panel: Melvin Curry, Tampa, FL; Maurice Barnett, Phoenix; Gary Workman, Mesquite, TX; Don Tarbet, Denison, TX.

3. INDIVIDUAL/ CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITY (Friday, July 13, 9-12 a. m.):

Speakers: Cecil May, Kosciusko, MS; Ferrell Jenkins, Tampa, FL.

Panel: Joe Blakeny, Whitney, TX; Buster Dobbs, Houston; Bob Harkrider, Orlando, FL; Marty Pickup, Tampa, FL.

4. WORK OF THE CHURCH (Friday, July 13, 2-5 p. m.):

Speakers: Paul Earnhart, Louisville, KY; Owen Cosgrove, Waxahachie, TX.

Panel: Connie W. Adams, Louisville, KY; Weldon E. Warnock, Beckley, WV; Charles Horn, Whitney, TX; Herschel Dyer, Tulsa, OK.

5. CHURCH COOPERATION (Friday, July 13, 7-10 p. m.):

Speakers: Bobby Duncan, Adamsville, AL; Tom Roberts, Ft. Worth, TX.

Panel: C. W. Lincoln, Seminole, TX; Lewis Hale, Oklahoma City, OK; Jim Ward, San Antonio, TX; David Tant, Atlanta, GA.

6. THE CHURCH AND INSTITUTIONS (Saturday, July 14, 8-11 a. m.):

Speakers: Pat Farish, Dallas, Furman Kearley, Monahans, TX. **Panel:** Foy Vinson, Dallas; Robert Gabhart, Ft. Worth; H. A. Dobbs, Houston; Sidney Ellis, Owasso, OK.

7. FELLOWSHIP (Saturday, July 14, 12-3 p. m.): **Speakers:**

Jimmy Jividen, Abilene, TX; John Clark, Kansas City, MO.

Panel: Maxie Boren, Bedford, TX; Wyatt Sawyer, Ft. Worth; Harold Fite, Houston; Ron Halbrook, W. Columbia, TX.

MEAL SPEAKERS: Curtis Camp, Amarillo, TX; John Banister, Dallas; George Bailey; Hoyt Houchen, Denver, CO; Robert F. Turner, Burnet, TX; Harry Pickup, Jr., Tampa, FL; and Bob Owen, Tampa, FL.

LARRY R. DEVORE, P. O. Box 313, Medina, OH 44258 — Since last report one was baptized at Medina and one withdrawn from. In Sept., 1989 I was in a meeting at South Bend, IN. I will be in a meeting at Ashland, OH April 22-27, 1990. My son-in-law, CRAIG MEYER, and

I have some used books for sale. Send me a SASE and I will send you a copy of the list.

LARRY S. POWELL, 3537 Canterbury Cir., Roanoke, VA 24019 — A group of Christians is now meeting in the Roanoke, VA area. We currently meet in Suite #2 of the Blue Ridge Mall in Blue Ridge, VA, which is located on Rt. 460 West, 9 miles east of Roanoke. The congregation consists of members formerly of the Westside church in Lynchburg, and some members formerly of the Georgia Ave. church in Roanoke. During the past year, the Lord's church in this area has suffered difficult problems, however, now these brethren have united to become the Blue Ridge church and intend to "earnestly contend for the faith" in this area. We meet on Sunday mornings at 9: 30 and 10: 30 and have a Wednesday Bible class at 7 p. m. We invite all who wish to serve the Lord to join us here. For further information please call me at (703) 992-5912, or John Malloy at (804) 385-8275.

KEVIN CAMPBELL, for Morris Rd. church, Gulfport, MS 39503 — The church here needs a total of 1812, 13 or 14 foot pews. If any of your readers knows of someone who has some for sale, they can contact me at (601) 831-4357, or Mike Vickery at (601) 875-2084.

UPDATE ON MALINDA MAYS

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Several months ago an appeal was made on behalf of Malinda Mays, a member of the church at Pound, VA. We are glad to carry the following update on her situation).

This is written to inform those acquainted with Malinda Mays of her present situation. After a two and a half month stay in Duke Hospital at Durham, NC, Malinda has successfully undergone the bone marrow transplant which was her only hope of not having cancer to return within a year. During 1989 she was in the hospital a total of 21 weeks. At present she is at home with her family. She has truly suffered through what can only be described as a nightmare.

She is scheduled for checkups at Holston Valley Hospital in Kingsport, TN every two weeks and at Duke Hospital every three months. She will be undergoing what the medical professionals call "aggressive treatment" for the next five years. At this point she is looking at nine months to a year for total recovery before being able to return to her normal livelihood.

Malinda wishes to thank all those who have lifted up prayers in her behalf as well as those who contributed financially to her needs. She fully realizes that the effectual prayers of righteous people do avail, for she considers herself as living proof that God, indeed, answers prayer. For those interested, her address is: Malinda Mays, Rt. 2, Box 454, Wise, VA 24293.

FROM AROUND THE WORLD

VENEZUELA, SOUTH AMERICA — Ruben Amador of Houston, TX reports that he, along with Valente Rodriguez (Houston) and Jose Soto (Seguin, TX) spent 10 days working among brethren in different cities in Venezuela. They divided up so as to be able to visit more places. All the recent trips have produced a number of conversions and restorations. At the end of 1988 there were three small churches in Barinas, Caracas, and Maracaino. These have about doubled in size. There are now sound churches in Barquisimeto, Upata, Puerto

Ayacucho, Quibor, Rio Claro and San Felipe. There are now five native men at work in that country as preachers.

WEST GERMANY — **STEVE WALLACE** reports "There were 53 present on 29 Oct. at Ramstein. We have had two baptisms and two restorations plus a married couple has placed membership with us. Besides rent and class supplies, the church here supports me almost completely (the church at Mainz being the other contributor). We also publish and mail two bimonthly bulletins and one quarterly. We had three gospel meetings last year with three scheduled for this year. We have had a number of non-Christians visit services recently. The liberal Wiesbaden congregation recently had Bill Smith, an elder from the Whites Ferry Road church in Monroe, LA, as a speaker. I went to hear him. He dealt with Bible authority and denied that examples and necessary inferences are means by which authority can be established. Our conversation between his sermons was cordial and a good spirit prevailed. I was able to ask some needed questions in their question and answer period.

The changing conditions in Eastern Europe led me to schedule a trip to East Berlin and Poland (Prague) to check the possibilities of getting people into these countries to preach the gospel. The trip to Prague was especially encouraging.

SPAIN — **EFRAIN PEREZ** reports "At Badalona we have a preacher training program each Saturday. I also am having some studies in homes of members with visitors sometimes present. The church where **JERRY FALK** and **GREGG PERKINS** work now meets at this new address: Ave., Libertad 23, El Prat del Llobregat, Barcelona. We have contact with a brother in the Canary Islands and plan a trip there in summer. He has offered his home as a place to meet and try to get a congregation started. We also have contact with a couple in Paris (whose father I baptized in Chile) and hope to be able to help get something going with the Spanish speaking people in Paris (there are 500,000 Spanish speaking people in Paris).

PHILIPPINES — **DOMINADO D. ARTEGA**, Tarlac, writes "Our great appreciation to all US brethren who have been coming to the Philippines to help teach and preach the gospel in this troubled country. Some I have met personally were Don Wilson and Jim Puterbaugh of California, Jerry Parks and John Humphries of Kentucky and Walter D. Bunnell of Oklahoma. Their valuable contribution to the Lord's cause here has marked new hope to many parts. Brother Bunnell came here to Tarlac and we were much encouraged and edified. We had 45 present last Lord's day. In 1989 23 were baptized. We need more workers to respond to the many calls for preaching.

BERT ENOSTACION, LA UNION, PHILIPPINES says "I'm happy to report that the work here is progressing both in number and spiritual maturity. Since January we have baptized 12 here. We have home Bible studies, meet preaching appointments, do some campus evangelism, distribute tracts, use a correspondence course in the vernacular and have a 30 minute radio program on Sunday mornings. Through the generosity of an American brother we have been able to get out another issue of the quarterly **SPEAKING THE TRUTH** which is published part in English and part in Tagalog. (Editor's note: I saw this edition of that paper and it is well done). I am thankful to the Seminole church in Tampa, Florida for their continued support. There is much more which could be done if we had the manpower and the resources. We face high prices for nearly everything. A ganta of low class rice in the 80's cost P6. 90. It now costs P22 per ganta.

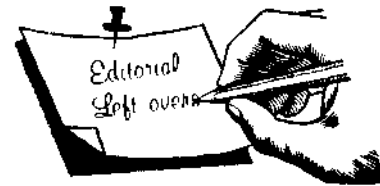
OPPORTUNITIES IN EASTERN EUROPE AND RUSSIA — **JEFF KINGRY** has recently provided me with a flood of materials which provide open doors to enter Eastern Europe and also the Soviet Union. I have in hand copies of letters he had received from Poland, Latvia, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, East Germany and Russia from universities wanting English teachers as well as those equipped to teach other subjects in English. There is now great interest in this and some of the letters almost beg for qualified people to come. Some offer wages and housing in the local economy. It is also possible for American preachers to enter some of the eastern European countries to preach if they have their means of support assured. We have heard lately of some who are thinking of entering these fields which are white to harvest. Much can be done NOW to radiate the light of truth

in places where the yearnings for freedom **have** brought down walls which had stood for 40 years. We must not fail. Brethren in West Germany and also in Italy have recently written to tell of Bible studies with people from Eastern Europe and Russia who are hungry for the word of God. I would be glad to pass on what information I have to any who are interested. Jeff Kingry has a wealth of information in hand and can put you in contact with necessary people, though it should be remembered that he is going in June to Hong Kong to continue to work among Chinese people. We also can look forward to the reports from Melvin Curry and Buddy Payne after their survey trip in May to East Europe. These are exciting times. Challenging times. **WE MUST BE READY AND WE MUST NOT FAIL.**

PREACHERS NEEDED

NEWPORT, NORTH CAROLINA — The church here will be needing a full-time preacher this summer. Those interested are asked to send inquiries to: Elders, Church of Christ, P. O. Drawer I, Newport, NC 28570.

SIOUX CITY, IOWA — The church here has been without a full-time preacher for over three years and would like to contact a faithful man who would be willing to move to the Midwest where congregations are few and small. Sioux City is on the Missouri River, where South Dakota, Nebraska and Iowa meet. There are about 90,000 in the immediate area. There are only nine members with attendance about 14 on Sundays. Anyone coming here would have to have most of his support from elsewhere. If interested, for more information, write or call: Glenn Meyer, Rt. 2, Box 101, Bancroft, NE 68004 (402) 648-7697; or Richard Crawford, 3506 Jackson St., Sioux City, IA 51104 (712) 252-2392. During business hours call 800-373-3246.



ARGUING ABOUT ARGUING

I have always been amused at the logic of those who present their arguments as to why it is wrong to argue. Can you figure that out?

AN UNBELIEVER MIGHT READ IT

Through the years there have been brethren who have gone in for considerable hand-wringing when there has been some difference of view expressed in some of the papers. To those of such mind-set, any such discussion is "bickering" and they remonstrate with "What if this should fall into the hands of an unbeliever?" My response to this is, "What if it does?" Are unbelievers so dense as to think there are never any differences of views among Christians? Such folks should be careful not to ever leave a New Testament where an unbeliever could find it, for he might read Acts 15 where there was "much disputing" among the brethren when they met in Jerusalem over the issue of circumcision. And you surely would not want them to read Galatians, for Paul said some of them had turned aside to a perverted gospel (1: 6-9). In the second chapter he said Peter was wrong and that he had to withstand him "to the face." He even named the lovable Barnabas as being "carried away" with this "hypocrisy." And you surely would not want an unbeliever to read 1 Corinthians with all the problems they had!

Hand-wringing aside, let us never develop better manners than the New Testament. Such a spirit manifests a penchant for compromise. With such, it is peace at any price.

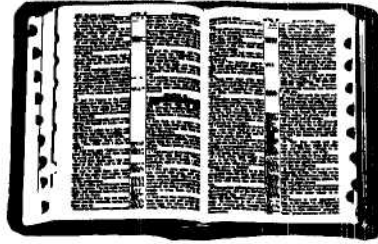
IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

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(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)

SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

"Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me"—John 5:39.



"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so"—Acts 17:11.

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VOLUME XXXI

MAY 1990

NUMBER 5

THINK ON THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

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ANOTHER GOSPEL

"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" (Galatians 1: 6, 7).

Some among the Galatians had been moved away from the gospel of Christ unto "another gospel." It is not "another" gospel in the sense that it is another like the one by which they had been called. It was another KIND that claimed to be as effective as the original one.

The gospel of Christ had its beginning on the Pentecost following the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. "... and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and be buried and be raised the third day that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning in Jerusalem" (Luke 24: 46, 47). The apostles received power to bear witness of Christ in Jerusalem on this Pentecost (Acts 1: 6-8; Luke 24: 45). Isaiah 2: 2-4 prophesied that the "word of the Lord" would go forth from Jerusalem.

The gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1: 16; Ephesians 2: 8, 9; Romans 6: 17, 18; 1 Peter 1: 22). That is the same power that makes men free: "And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free (John 8: 32).

There is only one gospel with this power. "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say

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

A perverted gospel may have all the elements of the true gospel of Christ, but one or all the elements will be perverted. The gospel of Christ in Galatians 1 is the same as in 1 Corinthians 15: 1-4. Paul preached it; they had received it, they could not receive another; and it concerned the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.

There is a constant demand for change in society to keep abreast of the times. This is no less true in religion. The fact that the original gospel is complete, perfect, eternal and powerful to save, makes all other gospels impotent and sinful. They have no power to save, only the one gospel of Christ can save every sinner.

The gospel began in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (Luke 24: 47; Acts 1: 8; Acts 2: Acts 8: 5, 12). Acts 11: 15 refers to Pentecost as "the beginning."

The gospel was hidden for ages in the mind of God (Ephesians 3: 1-6). It was not and could not be known to men until it was revealed by God. Paul said the Spirit searched the mind of God and revealed the mystery in spiritual words by which man could be saved (1 Corinthians 2: 9-13).


Christ became the one through whom God the Father revealed His mind to man (Heb. 1: 1-3). This revealed "mystery" is the truth of which Jesus spoke in John 8: 32: "... the truth shall make you free." It is the word of truth that will sanctify (John 17: 17). This word of Christ is the "doctrine" or teaching of Christ by which we have fellowship with God and Christ (2 John 9-11). If we "walk in the light," that is, if we abide in the words or teaching of Christ, we have fellowship with the Father and the Son, and with all those who so walk (1 John 1: 7).

The importance of the gospel of Jesus Christ is shown by his words in John 12: 44-50. Remember that God speaks to us today through Jesus Christ, and only through Christ (Hebrews 1: 1, 2). Christ speaks to us that which the Father commanded him. Therefore, Jesus said, "He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me" (John 12: 44). He is the

light of the world, and to walk in the light is to walk in Christ, and to walk in Christ is to walk in his word: the doctrine of Christ. "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world." (John 12: 46, 47).

Now he says, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words..." If one does not hear the words of Christ, he rejects Christ, and if he rejects Christ, he does not receive his word, and this word is that which he received from the Father. Therefore, to reject the word of Christ is to reject both the Father and the Son. "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth; but if we walk in the light..." (1 John 1: 6, 7). The gospel of Christ is the basis for believing on him.

He says further: "... the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak." (John 12: 48, 49). The gospel of Christ, which is the doctrine of Christ, came from the Father. It is one gospel with the power to save the world by the grace of God, through faith and obedience to it. (Romans 1: 16; Ephesians 2: 8, 9; Romans 6: 17, 18; 1 Peter 1: 22).



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Editorial

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SAVING OUR OWN

Over the years brethren have asked me a question which has always amazed me. Upon returning from a gospel meeting and reporting that so many obeyed the gospel, someone has been sure to ask "Were they just all young people?" Or "Were they just children of Christians?" JUST young people? JUST children of Christians? I suppose those who raise this question mean to imply that we ought to be evangelizing those who have had no family connection with Christians and that is true.

But I can tell you that there are many parents over this nation and around the world who are Christians and whose children have grown up without obeying the gospel who would give anything if somebody could reach their own children with the truth. Some of these young people have been taken to Bible classes and services since infancy but somewhere around junior high school age, they begin a resistance to the gospel which grows and hardens their hearts. All too many of them finish high school, go to college, or get married, or enter the job market and leave home unsaved.

Brethren who live and work in college and university towns or cities, tell me of many young people who come there to school who never attend a single service and who resist all efforts to help them spiritually. The problem is real and far from insignificant. Many of us are simply not saving our own.

Noah was a preacher of righteousness (2 Pet. 2: 5). Through the spirit of the Lord he preached for 120 years "while the ark was preparing" (Gen. 6: 3; 1 Pet. 3: 20). What was the result of all this effort? In the ark "eight souls were saved by water" (1 Pet. 3: 20). EIGHT SOULS? After preaching 120 years? What a failure Noah was! Right? Wrong! He was eminently successful. You see, not only was Noah saved from the flood which brought destruction on the world of the ungodly, but so were his wife, his three sons and their wives. Every human on the face of the earth today traces his ancestry through one of the sons of Noah. **Noah saved his own.**

Contrast Noah with Eli, a priest, whose sons were vile. The statement is tersely made "And he restrained them not" (1 Sam. 3: 13). He lost his own while officiating for the people. Think of Samuel, a prophet, priest and judge. Much is said about his faithfulness in attending to his own duties before God. But his sons were evil and became the pretext the people used in clamoring for a

king (1 Sam. 8: 1-5). In a lifetime of serving the people well, he did not save his own.

What Bible reader has not been touched by the pathetic moaning of David "Oh Absalom, my son, my son Absalom, would God I had died for thee!" If all the tears of God's people down through time, shed for their own children, could be gathered in one place, they would fill an ocean. David defeated Goliath, conquered the Canaanite tribes, expanded the boundaries of his kingdom from the river of Egypt to the great river, Euphrates, wrote many beautiful psalms and is in the lineage of the Messiah. But he did not save his own.

Call the roll of men whose names became household words, men of renown, heroes of the faith. Yet many of them lost their children. Oh yes, through their years of preaching, writing, debating and devoting themselves to the kingdom, many of them lost their own. There is a great lesson here for those of us who preach. There are many demands on our time. We want to serve. We want to save all we can. But what of our children who would treasure some of that precious time spent with them; time for a picnic, ball game, camping trip, or simple game in the evening around the kitchen table - an investment of time with those we love? While we spend hours locked away in an office with a word processor, writing articles to resolve burning issues of the day, or to prepare material for classes and sermons (all of which are commendable), what of those neglected "prospects for conversion" who are little by little drawn away into another world where we cannot reach them? Could it be that there are preachers, elders, deacons, Bible class teachers and other zealous Christians who are continually searching for "prospects" to lead to the Lord, who could find some in the family room being entertained before the TV or VCR? Do they not wonder about the meaning of life? Do they not need guidance to find their way through the treacherous pressures around them every day? Do they need help to offset the influences of Darwinism, secular humanism, or even Satanism? Do they see religion as your profession and not as a personal commitment to the Lord?

Where are the mothers? Are careers more fulfilling than motherhood? Is an extra paycheck worth it, if through neglect of your own, they lock you out (could some of this be retribution?) and you finally awaken in dismay to the fact that they have no faith in the Lord?

Whole congregations have unwittingly contributed to losing our own. Where there is a history of bitterness and strife, young people growing up in such an atmosphere are turned off by the sham of those who profess to be leaders in Israel. I know of places which have lost a whole generation of young people for this reason. It is difficult for the best of homes to offset such evil work in congregations. Instead of **extended help** to the home in saving our own, they become **extended hindrances** and contribute to the loss of souls.

We have reached the place where I am delighted to be able to answer the question, "Were those converted just children of members of the church?" by saying "Yes, thank God, we were able to save some of our own." Evangelism begins at home.

GUEST EDITOR NEXT THREE MONTHS

Since June, 1973 I have edited every issue of this paper except three. That means that deadlines have been met the first and fifteenth of every month for seventeen years, except for those three months. I am going to take a break for the next three months. DONNIE V. RADER of Lexington, Alabama, who writes a column regularly and who edited two of those three months mentioned, has agreed to step in and put it all together for the months of June, July and August. I am very grateful to him for taking on this work. He is an able preacher, writer, and personal friend and we can all look forward to these forthcoming issues. The July issue has already been advertised as a special on "God's Law On Divorce and Remarriage" and we are already receiving orders for this special. I will look forward, the Lord willing, to resuming my usual work with the paper for the September issue and hope the readers will miss, maybe just a little, my own writing efforts.

**WAKE THE WORLD
AND TELL THE
PEOPLE**



Wilson Adams
891 Autumn Valley Lane
Gambrills, MD 21054

ANTIOCH—THE POWER OF THE LOCAL CHURCH GOING HOME

Acts 14. Another chapter. Another city. Another article... I said in January of last year that we would work for a year on Antioch. We have... and then some! But I trust you're finding our study both stimulating and practical. Practical. That's the key to preaching and teaching. It's searching out biblical truths and then making application. That's what we've tried to do here. And from the various comments I've received I think we're succeeding. Thank you. (And a special thank you to a dear sister who wrote with a positive comment about the series but also included a note of information. "Good series," she said. "But did you know that in every article you misspelled Barnabas?" She's right. I did. Oh well... But if there is any consolation it's this: the editor didn't catch it either!) Moving on...

Galatia

After receiving a mixed reaction to the gospel in Antioch of Pisidia, Paul and his party travel some fifty miles east into the Galatian province. (Don't lose sight of our main point as we survey this section: Without the encouragement and support of the local church at Antioch there would be no trip, no conversions, no open doors. Their involvement in the work of Paul and Barnabas was crucial. We saw that in Acts 13 when they left. We see it again in chapter 14 when they return.) But first: three more cities.

1. **Iconium**, vs. 1-7. Here it was good news/bad news all over again. The good news was that "a great multitude believed" (vs. 1). The bad news was that bitterness, hatred and prejudice surfaced once more (vs. 2).

But look again at verse 1. Paul and Barnabas "**spoke in such a manner** that a great multitude believed..." If that proves anything, it proves that in gospel preaching it's not only **what** is said that is important but the **way** it is said. 1 Cor. 2: 1 reveals that the key to effective preaching is not mere eloquence or oratory but, rather, it's preaching that is authoritative, definite, and posi-tive (and positively negative too!) In other words, it is preaching with conviction. Paul and Barnabas were driven men. They were men of conviction whose message was convicting. We need preachers like that today. We need preaching like that today.

Let's put verse 2 in perspective. How did God's men handle the bitterness, the hatred, the slurs? - Quit? -

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Retreat? - Get their feelings hurt? None of those things. Four phrases in verse 3 detail their reaction:

a) **"They spent a long time there..."** Paul and Barnabas didn't stay here due to success; they stayed due to difficulties. (Read the two verses together and see if you don't get that impression).

b) **"speaking boldly..."** The disfavor of many had no bearing on the tone of their preaching. They neither softened their tone nor changed their message.

c) **"with reliance upon the Lord..."** Surprised? Who else could they rely upon? Who do you rely on to see you through difficult times?

d) **"who was bearing witness to the word of His grace..."** Paul's preaching never changed course. From city to city his theme remained the same: God's grace and man's need.

2. Lystra, vs. 8-20a. Verse 7 tells us that Paul came here "and preached the gospel." (Three times in this chapter it specifically states that he "preached the gospel," vs. 7, 15, 21. What else is there to preach?)

Lystra was a Gentile city. Here Paul employed a means of teaching that our Lord used effectively on every occasion: he began where they were. Rather than detailing Hebrew history and scripture, Paul made his appeal to the existence of the one God and His one plan through Christ. The result? He was stoned and left for dead (vs. 19). **"But while the disciples stood around him, he arose and entered the city"** (vs. 20).

I have no concept of that kind of commitment. Do you? It is impossible for me to fathom what the man went through for Jesus' sake. It was tough enough being away from home... Then there was the grind of travel... Then Mark deserts the team and there is tension with Barnabas... And in every city there is persecution, antagonism, threats and now ATTEMPTED MURDER! (I wonder if Paul thought of Stephen as the stones began to strike his flesh...) How was he able to endure it? Oh, I know the right answers. It's just that I'm not sure I understand them.

3. **Derbe**, vs. 20b-21. More opportunities. More preaching. More converts to Christ. And then something strange: **"they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch."** From Derbe they could have traveled to Tarsus from which they could have secured passage back to Antioch (grab a peek at a map). Antioch meant home, rest and safety. But not now; now they needed to return to the places where they had just been. Their work was not yet complete.

Retracing Their Steps

And so they went back... To Lystra - the very place where Paul had been stoned and left for dead. Had he forgotten? Would you? There are some things you don't forget Gal. 6: 17). Yes, the pain of persecution was still there. That's why it would take a matter of extreme importance for him to return. And he did return. To Iconium - the city from which they had escaped with their lives. (And don't think that because they had escaped that the resentment had cooled). And to Antioch (Pisidia) - where the trouble had all started (ch. 13).

WHY? That's a reasonable question I think. WHY WERE THEY WILLING TO GO BACK TO FACE THE

PERILS OF TRAVEL, THE DANGERS OF RIVERS AND ROBBERS, AND THE THREATS OF ANTAGONISTIC FANATICS WHO WERE DETERMINED TO DEAL WITH THEM SHOULD THEY EVER SHOW THEIR FACES AGAIN? WHY? Simple. Because **the lure of lonely saints compelled them to take the long way home.**

The text lists three reasons for retracing their steps:

1. To **"strengthen the souls of the disciples..."** (vs. 22). In every place there were new born babes in Christ. There had not been adequate time for grounding and teaching. Babies left alone will die. They knew that. They had to return.

2. To **"encourage them to continue in the faith..."** (vs. 22). Fact: it wasn't easy being a Christian in such contrary cultures. They needed encouragement. They needed inspiration. They needed Paul! What could have been more encouraging than to see him who bore the brand-marks of Jesus standing before them urging them on.

3. To **"appoint elders in every church..."** (vs. 23). May a church exist without elders? Yes. These did. But not for long. Question: Just how important did Paul and Barnabas view the appointment of elders in local assemblies? **So important that they were willing to risk their lives to see it accomplished.** Why? Because local churches cannot survive without leadership! Then and now. They had to go back.

Going Home

Acts 14: 24-26. Read it slowly. Let it sink in. **"From there they sailed to Antioch..."** Can you see him? Can you see Paul as he stood on the deck of that ship, bruised, battered and weakened from the brutality of cruelty with the bandages and scars to prove it? But look closer. Look into his eyes. What do you see? Eyes that are sore and tired? Sure. But is that all? Look even closer and you may see the spark of triumph and glimmer of accomplishment. And is that it? No, there is one more thing... These eyes are searching... scanning the horizon for the Syrian coastline and the familiar faces of the Antioch brothers and sisters who had made it all possible. Paul and Barnabas were going home.

And when they had arrived and gathered the church together, they began to report all things that God had done for them and how He had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles (vs. 27).

There were two great meetings for the church in Antioch. **First**, when they "set them apart" and said their good-byes, and **second**, when they came together to welcome them home. What a joyous occasion it must have been. And what did they talk about? The stonings? The bruises? The perils of travels? Surely they did. But more than that; as usual they took the spotlight off of self and placed it on the reason for the trip in the first place (vs. 27b). Something tells me it was an emotional gathering. Something else tells me that it was probably not a short meeting. The chapter concludes fittingly, "And they spent a long time with the disciples" (vs. 28). I'm not surprised.

ACCEPTED OF HIM

(2 Cor. 5:9)

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MISUSE OF THE TONGUE (Part 2)

Our tongues seem to get us into more trouble than anything else. Every reader can identify with the embarrassment of saying the wrong thing and saying too much. We would do well to follow the advice of John Wayne. He said, "Talk low, talk slow, and don't say too much." The Proverb writer says that such a man has wisdom because he spares his words (Prov. 17: 27).

It is not always what we say that causes trouble. We just talk too much at times. We need to learn to bridle and control our tongues. I have collected a few quotes that well illustrate that we have problems with not knowing when to stop. "An ounce of keeping-your-mouth-shut sure beats a ton of explanation" (The American Citizen). "The easiest way to save face is to keep the lower half shut" (Toronto **Daily Commercial News and Construction Record**). "Cutting in on some conversations is about as easy as threading a sewing machine when it is operating at full speed" (Ray Pierce in Dodge City, Kan., **High Plains Journal**).

One way we can learn to control our tongues is to start controlling what we think, Jesus stated that sin first starts in the heart of man (Matt. 15: 18-20). He thinks it before he does it. That is obviously true with our tongues. We say what we think. Thus, if we gear our thinking to that which is proper and right (Phil. 4: 8), then our speech will follow the same course. If we think about lies, curse words, filthy jokes, ugly remarks, gossip, etc. then that is what we will say. Iara Gassen once said, "Be careful of your thoughts; they may become words at any moment."

Having considered the sin of lying and cursing in a previous article, let us now take a look at angry words, casual oaths, gossip and grumbling.

Angry Words

There are times that we say things in anger that we really don't mean. In the heat of an argument when emotions are running high we are prone to say the most unkind things.

1. **Angry words usually stir more problems.** Solomon said, "A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger" (Prov. 15: 1). In the same chapter he said, "... the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things" (v. 28). We can easily hurt feelings, sever friendships, destroy a marriage or split a church. A woman told Billy Sunday that she had a bad temper, but that it was all over in a minute. He replied, "So is a

shotgun; but it blows everything to pieces."

2. **We speak angry words because we are impatient and lack self-control.** Study carefully the contrast in Prov. 15: 28. The next chapter shows that a man that can control his temper is stronger than one that can take a whole city (16: 32).

3. **We must learn to bite our tongues** (Prov. 17: 27- 28). This is true wisdom. The smart thing to do is just not say what you are tempted to say.

Casual Oaths

I am not talking about judicial oaths, but common oaths that are casually made by one who thinks they are not binding. One who continually says, "I swear... and I swear... and I swear..." is guilty of making casual oaths. This is the very thing that Jesus referred to in Matt. 5: 33-37. Some of the Jews evidently thought that they could swear by first one thing and then another without any consequences. Jesus said that such a practice was evil. James echoed the same principle in Jas. 5: 12.

Gossip

Gossip is that idle chatter or repeating worthless rumors about others. Gossip is "when you hear something you like about someone you don't" (Earl Wilson). We can easily identify gossip if someone else is telling it, but its not gossip if we are doing the talking.

"Gossip needn't be false to be evil — there's a lot of truth that shouldn't be passed around" (Frank A. Clark, Al Smith Feature Service). Whether the story is true or not we seem to enjoy passing on a juicy story.

1. **Gossipers are busybodies who meddled where they shouldn't.** Paul spoke of some who would be idle "wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not" (1 Tim. 5: 13).

2. **Gossip should not be spoken.** In the verse above, Paul said that those who pass on idle talk and tattle are "Speaking things which they ought not."

3. **Gossip reveals secrets.** "A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter" (Prov. 11: 13). "He that goeth about as a tale- bearer revealeth secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips" (Prov. 20: 19). Through gossip we tell and learn things that do not need to be known.

4. **Gossip separates friends.** Gossip can easily bring to an end a long time relationship. Careless talking about others can separate us from our friends or separate others who are friends. "... a whisperer separateth chief friends" (Prov. 16: 28).

5. **Whisperers are as bad as fornicators and murderers.** The first chapter of Romans lists "whisperers" in a catalog of sins along with "fornication," "covetousness" and "murder" (Rom. 1: 29). In the sight of God one sin is just as bad as the other. The whisperer is the coward who doesn't have the courage to say to your face what he has been saying to others about you. Whiteside's commentary says he is like a snake in the grass. One who sets out on a campaign to destroy another by the things he can say about him is a whisperer indeed. This happens all too often among brethren. I, like any other preacher, have had some brother call me aside to give me the "low

down" on another brother. It is easy to see that in many cases all they want to do is to destroy the brother or sister's reputation.

6. **Damage is done by gossip.** James compares the effect of the tongue to "fire" and "poison" (Jas. 3: 6, 8). Your tongue can do more damage than setting your neighbor's house on fire or putting poison in his food. People, homes, churches and nations can be destroyed by the tongue.

The damage can be so severe and widespread that it can never be totally undone. A preacher once illustrated to a lady guilty of gossip about how hard it would be to go back and undo the damage she had done. He took her feather pillow and ripped it open and scattered the feathers in the wind, telling her to pick them all up. She replied, "Impossible!" And so it is with gossip.

Grumbling And Fussing

In working out our own salvation we should learn to "Do all things without murmuring and disputings" (Phil. 2: 4).

If we are not careful, we can be guilty of grumbling, griping, complaining, nagging and fussing. It would help us to recognize some of the characteristics of a complainer. (1) He is never pleased. Something is always wrong. Its too much or too little, too early or too late, too hot or too cold. (2) He feels the need to make a comment and criticize. Rather than keeping his thoughts to himself, he thinks others just have to know how he feels. (3) He is self-centered. He is glad to offer his complaint, but offended if he receives one. (4) He doesn't see that he is guilty of griping and complaining. He views it as merely being helpful. (4) The griper nearly always complains to and about his family.

The truth is that no one wants to listen to a griper and complainer. He or she is a pain. Their words speak "like the piercings of a sword" rather than being words of "health" (Prov. 12: 18).

Friend, if you want to enjoy life and see good days, then refrain your tongue from evil and let your lips speak no guile (1 Pet. 3: 10).

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DIGRESSIONS AND DIVISIONS

Serious problems arose among the disciples about the middle of the 1800's. Discontentment with God's arrangement for local churches to act independently of each other was manifested. Refusing to submit to the pattern set forth in the New Testament (no organization larger than the local church), efforts were made to activate the universal church. The result was the formation of a missionary society, through which local churches could do their work of evangelizing. The American Christian Missionary Society was organized in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1849. Advocates of the Society contended that churches could preach the gospel in the world only by such a combined effort. J. B. Briney argued this with W. W. Otey in a debate held in Louisville, Kentucky, September 14-18, 1908. (See **Otey-Briney Debate**, p. 168). The contenders for the Society also claimed that it was only a METHOD for doing what God wants done, thus is not a violation of the Scriptures (Ibid., p. 162). The Missionary Society is an organization larger than the local church, and is a classic example of what follows when men attempt to activate the universal church. Churches were urged to send their funds to the Missionary Society, a central agency, which in turn disbursed the money to evangelists throughout the world. Earl West, an able historian, observes: To assert that the church universal, to do the work God gave it, must, by human wisdom, devise an earthly, central controlling station to direct the operations of the churches is to work on the same principle that led Romanism to the papacy" (**The Search for the Ancient Order**, Vol. 2, p. 63).

Faithful brethren such as Benjamin Franklin, David Lipscomb and Tolbert Fanning opposed the Missionary Society on the ground that it was devised by human wisdom and existed without divine authority. They contended that it was an organization created to do the work of the church. The defenders of the Society de-nounced in bitter terms those who opposed it, accusing them of not believing in "cooperation" or in "mission work" (Ibid., p. 71). Other societies were formed. The Ohio State Missionary Society was organized in 1852. Brethren divided when the Missionary Society was introduced. But still more problems arose.

It is believed that the first instrument of music in worship was introduced by Dr. L. L. Pinkerton at Midway, Kentucky about the year 1859. The use of instru-

mental music in worship became an issue and was destined to result in division. THE CONTROVERSY BECAME HEATED AND BITTER, ESPECIALLY IN KENTUCKY, WHERE MOSES E. LARD, J. W. McGarvey and I. B. Grubbs opposed it. J. W. McGarvey left the Broadway Church in Lexington in 1902 because while he was serving as an elder in that church, the instrument was introduced over his protest. He had opposed the use of the instrument in church worship from the beginning of the controversy until his death. It was opposed by faithful brethren because there is no scriptural authority for its use in worship. The New Testament is silent upon the practice. Moses E. Lard summed it up when he wrote: **In all acts of worship we must do only what is prescribed in the New Testament, or was done with divine sanction by the primitive Christians** (Lard's Quarterly, Vol. IV, 1867, p. 395).

The New Testament authorizes singing only in worship to God (Matt. 26: 30; Mk. 14: 26; Acts 16: 25; Rom. 15: 9; 1 Cor. 14: 15; Eph. 5: 19; Col. 3: 16; Heb. 2: 12; Jas. 5: 13). In these nine references to music in the New Testament there is no mention of instrumental music, nor is there any hint of it. Three reference are made to music in the book of Revelation (5: 9; 14: 3; 15: 3), but they do not apply to worship in the church. They are heavenly visions, the language is symbolical and do not serve as a guide for the worship of God's people here upon earth.

It is argued by those who employ instruments of music in worship that they were used in worship to God in the Old Testament (see Ps. 150 etc.) However, such practices as animal sacrifices, the burning of incense as an act of worship and Sabbath observance are found in the Old Testament too. Does the fact that they are in the Old Testament justify their use today? We are living under the law of Christ, the old law having been abolished by Christ's death upon the cross (see Rom. 7: 1-4; Col. 2: 14; Ga. 5: 4; Heb. 8: 6-13). Regardless of what was done in the Old Testament, we are living under the covenant of Christ and must abide by its authority. It is not a question of what we may like, it is a matter of what does the New Testament authorize?

Encyclopedists and historians alike testify that instrumental music in worship was not introduced until the seventh century A. D. Here are but two of many sources. The New International Encyclopedia states: "The organ is said to have first been employed in the church during the time of Pope Vitalian I (c. 666 A. D.)" (Vol. 13, p. 446). The following is found in McClintock and Strong's Cyclopaedia: "The Greek word psallo is applied among the Greeks of modern times exclusively to sacred music, which in the Eastern Church has never been any other than vocal, instrumental music being unknown in that Church, as it was in the primitive Church. Sir John Hawkins, following the Romish writers in his erudite work on the **History of Music**, makes pope Vitalian, in A. D. 660, the first who introduced organs into churches. But students of archaeology are generally agreed that instrumental music was not used in churches till a much later

date... " (Vol. VIII, p. 739). Thus history affirms that instrumental music in worship began with the Roman Catholic Church by Rome's authority in the seventh century A. D.


When instrumental music was introduced into churches of Christ in about the middle of the nineteenth century it widened the breach of an already divided brotherhood over the introduction of the Missionary Society. Now there was a definite split. Gates summed it up well: The organ controversy was the missionary controversy in a new form, for both grew out of the opposition to human innovations in the work and worship of the church... " (Errett Gates, **The Disciples of Christ**, p. 250).

**WHAT SAITH THE
SCRIPTURE?**
(Rom. 4:3)

Send all questions to:

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UNLEAVENED BREAD AND FRUIT OF THE VINE

QUESTION: Do you teach that unleavened bread and unleavened fruit of the vine MUST be used in the Lord's Supper?

ANSWER: When Jesus instituted the Supper, He chose elements that were used in the Passover feast. In the observance of the Passover nothing leavened could be consumed. However, the rabbis interpreted the prohibition of leaven as that which is fermented from grain rather than that from the grape. Hence, they permitted the drinking of wine at Passover (*The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Vol. 3, p. 902).

The details of the institution of the Passover are set forth in Exod. 12: 1-20. Verse 20 specifically states, "Ye shall eat nothing leavened." Compare Exod. 13: 6-7; 23: 15; 34: 18; Lev. 23: 6; Num. 28: 17 for supplementary passages.

Matthew records, "Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover" (26: 17)? "Unleavened bread" is from the Greek word *azumos* which means "unfermented, free from leaven" (Thayer, p. 13). In his comments, Thayer says, "the (paschal) festival at which for seven days the Israelites were accustomed to eat unleavened bread in commemoration of their exit from Egypt. "

Since the bread Jesus used to institute His Supper was unleavened, it is safe and right for us to do the same. From this standpoint, i. e., from the standpoint of safety and propriety, I teach it is a **MUST**. Why digress from this

practice when it is so easy to have unleavened bread? Think of the alternatives — cornbread, Martha White biscuits with hot-rise, dinner rolls, etc. Where do we draw the line? Let us be content with what we KNOW is right.

Leaven is always used in the Bible, the Parable of Leaven (Matt. 13: 33) being the exception, of evil. Paul wrote, "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven..." (1 Cor. 5: 6-7), and Jesus warned His disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, applying it to their false doctrines (Matt. 16: 11-12). Lightfoot said, "Rabbinical writers regularly use leaven as a symbol of evil" (*ISBE*, Vol. 3, p. 1862). Hence, unleavened bread well represents the purity and holiness of our Lord Jesus Christ.

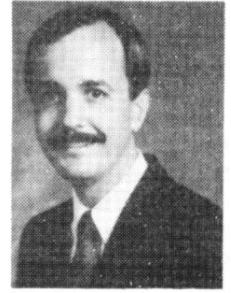
Concerning the fruit of the vine, R. C. Foster wrote, "The fact that all leaven had to be removed from the house two days before the Passover began, is positive proof that the wine which they used was unfermented. The bread was unleavened; for precisely the same reason the fruit of the vine was unleavened... The Gospel writers are very careful, however, and do not even use the word "wine" in telling of the Lord's Supper. They always use the phrase 'the fruit of the vine.' That the ancients knew the art of hermetically sealing up fluids is seen clearly from the incident of the anointing of Jesus by Mary of Bethany" (*Studies in the Life of Christ, The Final Week*, pp. 165-166).

McGarvey and Pendleton stated, "As only unleavened bread was eaten during the paschal supper, that kind of bread must have been used by our Lord, and it is fitting that it should still be used by us in keeping the Lord's Supper, not only for propriety's sake, but because that bread which is emblematic of purity is most suitable to represent the body of the sinless Christ" (*The Fourfold Gospel*, p. 658).

WRITTEN FOR OUR INSTRUCTION

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THE PRIESTHOOD OF JESUS (2)

Jesus Christ is our great high priest. In some ways He serves like Aaron did. Both offered a sacrifice for sin and went in before God to make atonement. Aaron annually took the blood of a bull and a goat into the holy of holies in the tabernacle. Jesus once for all time entered heaven itself with His own blood. Yet Jesus' atonement is so much superior to Aaron's that He must be considered a high priest of an entirely different rank or order. The author of Hebrews says it is the order of Melchizedek.

Perspective

All we know about Melchizedek is recorded in four verses in Genesis (14: 17-20). As Abraham was return-ing from his mission to rescue Lot from some marauding Mesopotamian kings, Melchizedek came out to meet him. He was the king of Salem, possibly an early name for Jerusalem (Ps. 76: 2). He was also a priest of God. He brought bread and wine. He blessed Abraham and praised God for giving him the victory on his recent mission. In return, Abraham gave him a tenth of the spoils. Melchizedek then disappeared from the record, never to be heard from again. The only other O. T. reference to him is in Ps. 110: 4. What could possibly be learned from this brief encounter that would help us understand the priesthood of Jesus? One noteworthy item is that Melchizedek was both a king and a priest. That is a rare combination. In fact, he is the only one in all the Old Testament that held both offices simultaneously. Another interesting thing is that no predecessor or successor to Melchizedek's priesthood is mentioned. As far as history records, his was a one priest priesthood. Abraham seemed to recognize him as special. He gave him a tenth of what he had. He accepted Melchizedek's blessing but refused the offer of the king of Sodom, who was also present (vv. 21-24).

Fulfillment

Jesus was designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 5: 10; 6: 20). What does that mean? The author explains in chapter seven. First, He is a simultaneous king and priest (vv. 1, 2). Second, His is a one high priest priesthood (v. 3).

Psalm 110: 1-3 pictures as a king, sitting at the right hand of God. Verse 4 pictures Him as a priest. Zechariah also predicted Jesus' dual function: "Thus, He will be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace will be between the two offices" (Zech. 6: 13). Hebrews begins with Jesus sitting at the right hand of God (1: 3), ruling with a righteous scepter (1: 8). It then presents Him as a

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priest on that throne (8: 1-4), reminding us that Jesus could not be a priest on earth under the Law since He is from the wrong tribe. (Premillennialists, who say that Jesus will return to earth to set up His throne and reinstate the Law, hopelessly contradict the Scriptures on this point.) The author takes the comparison one step farther. "Salem" means peace. The name "Melchizedek" means king of righteousness. What kind of kingdom does Jesus rule over? A kingdom of peace and righteous-ness!

Did Melchizedek really have no father or mother? Was he never born and did he never die, as 7: 3 seems to indicate? The verse does not necessarily mean that. The point is simply that he is presented in history that way. He quickly appeared then disappeared from the pages of Genesis. As noted earlier, no predecessor or successor to Melchizedek or his priesthood is mentioned. He was unique. So is Jesus. He is the only high priest in His priesthood, abiding forever, holding His priesthood perpetually (7: 24).

This order or rank is much superior to the Aaronic order. The sons of Levi, who ordinarily collected tithes, in a sense paid tithes to Melchizedek antecedently through Abraham, thus recognizing his superiority (7: 4-10). We have already noticed that Melchizedek blessed Abraham, indicating a superiority over him and his descendants (7: 6, 7). The very fact that God did away with the Law and its priesthood to bring in another indicates the latter is better (7: 11-19). Jesus became priest by an oath of God, which no Levite could claim (7: 20-22). Surely Jesus' one priest priesthood is better since He is always available to make intercession for us (7: 23-25). His sacrifice is better, too. He does not have to begin with a sacrifice for His own sins, nor must he repeat the atonement for others (7: 26-28). Besides all that, Jesus is the mediator of a covenant with better provisions (7: 22; 8: 1-13).

Application

What does all this mean to us? The main lesson is do not go back. Hebrews was written to show Jewish Christians how foolish, indeed how fatal it would be for them to turn back to the Law. It has been taken away, replaced by a far better covenant, sacrifice, and priesthood. This warning bears repetition. Many in our day do not seem to understand the difference between the covenants. The Law is used to justify tithing, instrumental music, a separate priesthood, keeping the Sabbath, etc. Some futility look at keeping the ten commandments as the basis of salvation. In Christ we have the best possible provisions. Why turn back to the old system, or aside to anything else?

This study also gives us insight into God's throne. It is not so much a throne of judgment as a throne of grace (Heb. 4: 16). God wants to be our helper, not our enemy. We need not draw near in fear, as when Esther approached Ahasuerus' throne. Our brother, our great high priest sits on God's throne. He is anxious to help us, whether the need is material, physical, or spiritual. This does not mean that we will always get everything we ask. Even the Son did not. The cup was not removed as He requested (Mk. 14: 36). Yet God heard Him (Heb. 5: 7),

and did all He could consistent with His will — He sent an angel to strengthen Jesus. He has the same disposition toward us. The point is, Christ is always available to us. No matter what the time or circumstance, He stands ready to intercede for us, to enable us to draw near to God through Him. Considering our needs, that should be a regular practice.

SIMPLICITY IN CHRIST

P. J. Casebolt

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TO YOUR TENTS, O PREACHERS!"

"To your tents, O Israel. "

This phrase served Israel's purpose on a number of different occasions, for different reasons. Sometimes it served as a rallying cry, sometimes it signaled the tent as a place of refuge, or it just indicated a period of peace and propriety to be enjoyed in the family tent.

When Paul left, Athens and came to Corinth, he found Aquila and Priscilla, "And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers" (Acts 18: 3).

The term "making tents" has come to describe those preachers who either partially or wholly support themselves in the preaching of the gospel. Paul did not resort to this method of supporting himself all of the time, but he did it when it was necessary. I think the time has come when some preachers, especially some younger preachers, need the admonition, "To your tents, O preachers!"

Most of my readers know me through my writings, or have known me personally, so that I do not have to justify my reasons for making this statement. For the benefit of some who may not know me, I have preached the gospel while fully supporting myself, while being partially supported by both myself and the church, and while being supported fully by the church. I would still resort to any of these methods again, if circumstances dictated, so I have no particular axe to grind.

I have seen the church go through various stages and methods of preaching the gospel. Years ago, most preachers conducted protracted meetings, or preached by appointment at different congregations. Many were baptized and many congregations established by this method, but many of those souls were not confirmed (Acts 14: 22), elders were not developed and appointed (v. 23), and churches were not "established in the faith" (Acts 16: 5).

Then, the pendulum began to swing the other way, preachers began to locate with one congregation for periods of time, and for several years, only two or three preachers in the entire Ohio Valley devoted their time wholly to preaching the gospel in protracted meetings. For a time, I was one of those preachers.

With the coming and passing of World War II, some new congregations were established, and some of the older ones had their memberships decimated or deleted entirely. Factors affecting this condition were the war itself, the scattering of disciples due to economic reasons, and some congregations became more conscious of their duty to establish the cause of Christ in other places.

Too often, we get involved in a particular method of preaching the gospel, all of our activities are geared to it, and we become too inflexible to think of trying anything else. While all methods may not work for all preachers/congregations all the time, we would do well to emulate at least the principle employed by the apostles, evangelists, and congregations of the first century.

As already indicated, Paul made tents so that he could preach the gospel. He and Barnabas spent a year with the church at Antioch (Acts 11: 26), went out from there to establish and confirm churches, returned to Antioch from time to time, Paul spent "a year and six months" at Corinth (Acts 18: 11), and spent some three years at Ephesus (Acts 19: 10, 20: 31). Bear in mind too, that Paul was a single man without family obligations (cf. 1 Cor. 7: 1-8; 1 Tim. 5: 8).

Today, there are countless congregations that are not able to fully support an evangelist, but this is nothing new. Most of my preaching in meetings, and many years of located work have been with relatively small congregations, financially unable to support a preacher fully. But, they did the best they could, did the teaching themselves or used the services of partially supported preachers, helped support the preaching of the gospel in other places, and some grew numerically and financially to the point where they could fully support a preacher either at home or in some other field.

It is my conviction that the role of the small congregation and the partially supported preacher has not received due credit, and may even be unjustly criticized at times. Those affluent congregations with their highly paid preachers who view things as it were from their ivory towers may never understand the problems (or opportunities), of those congregations/preachers who live in tents, or survive by making tents.

Many a fully supported preacher gets his support from several small congregations, none of which are able to support a preacher by themselves. On both of my trips to the Philippines, those small congregations without a fully supported preacher were the ones who provided most of my support. Time and again during periods of digression, it has been the small, sometimes rural congregation that has survived the apostasy and provided a remnant to rebuild the walls of Zion and restore the divine order of things.

But I see a different attitude among many smaller

congregations to today. Somebody has gotten the impression that if they are not able to support a preacher themselves, that the brotherhood owes them the most experienced pulpit preacher/personal worker available. The congregation will sometimes build themselves an expensive church building, and "sponsor" a preacher paid for by someone else.

I have not kept count, but I wouldn't be surprised if the congregations advertising for a preacher who has to "bring his support with him," outnumber the congregations who can pay their own way by a ratio of 20 to 1. And, I am not going to sit in judgment on such situations and decide which calls are justified and which ones aren't. But I am going to suggest that maybe it is time for more preachers, especially younger preachers, to consider "making tents" for support while preaching where and when they can.

Sure, the ideal arrangement would be for each faithful and able preacher to be fully supported while he does the work of an evangelist, but anybody who believes that we shall ever attain to such an Utopian state is either ignorant of church history or devoid of common sense. It was not so in apostolic times, and neither shall it be so in our time. As the number of workers increase, so do the number of new converts and newly established churches increase. It is a cycle that will never catch up with itself, though by employing every method at our command, it is possible to preach the gospel "to every creature which is under heaven" (Col. 1: 23).

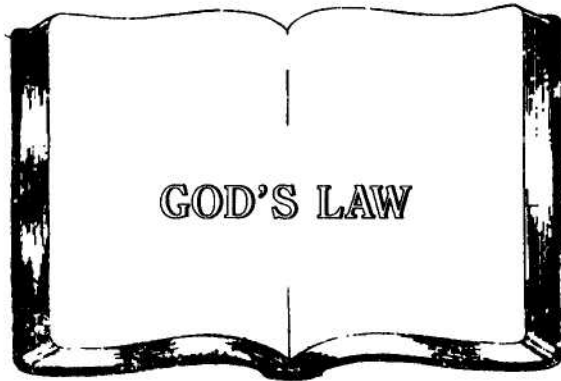
I say younger preachers especially should give serious consideration to "making tents" while preaching the gospel, for some preachers are already too old to re-enter today's complex job market jungle. And, some other preachers are unable to perform much, if any, manual labor. Also, some of these "part-time" preachers are already doing as much preaching, teaching, studying and writing as are some of the fully supported preachers. Another option which the younger preacher has, is that he can always quit making tents and subject him-self to the grace of God and the mercy of the brethren (for better or for worse), at some later time.

At the present time, there are hundreds of preachers out there trying to drum up initial support, or recover lost support, and I see no reason to add to this discouraging situation. No man can give himself "wholly to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine" (1 Tim. 4: 13) any-way, while spending valuable time trying to get or keep enough support to raise his family and pay his bills, and more valuable time worrying himself into hypertension, stroke, or a heart attack.

Yes, there is such a thing as faith, and there are preachers who shouldn't be preaching in the first place, and some not preaching who ought to be. And, there are some congregations which have good preaching and don't appreciate or deserve it, and there are some congregations who should have and would appreciate good preaching if they could get it.

Because of the present distress, my judgment is that more young preachers, and even some older preachers, should heed the cry, "To your tents, O preachers!"

SPECIAL ISSUE — JULY 1990



ON DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

Introduction And Overview

— *Donnie V. Rader*

Can We Understand God's Law?

— *Wilson Adams*

Squaring Our Terminology With The Bible

— *Jim Deason*

The Alien And Matt. 19:9

— *Dick Blackford*

Rom. 2 — Were The Gentiles Under A Law?

— *Max Dawson*

1 Corinthians 7:15

— *Melvin D. Curry*

Is Separation Required?

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A MIND TO WORK

Norman E. Sewell

1932 S. Weller
Springfield, Missouri 65804



I have for many years been impressed with the story of Nehemiah returning from captivity in Babylon to rebuild the walls of the city of Jerusalem. It occurs to me that several things about this story ought to be of great encouragement to us; also of great help in getting started doing the work that needs to be done today.

It is quite obvious that Nehemiah was motivated by a report of despair and affliction among those who had already returned to Jerusalem. He was motivated enough to refrain from saying, "Somebody ought to do something about this," but to say instead, "What can I do about this?" One of the first things he did was to pray about this problem; to recognize the many sins and failures of his generation, and to ask for God's blessings and mercy. Then we learn in chapter two that Nehemiah somehow found the courage to bring his feelings and his desire to go back to Jerusalem to the attention of king Artaxerxes. There is an old saying, "Nothing ventured, nothing gained." It simply means that until we try to do something we usually do nothing. Nehemiah found the courage to ask for the king's blessings to return home, and to receive needed supplies for rebuilding the wall from the king's forests.

When Nehemiah finally arrived in Jerusalem and had surveyed the condition of the city he called the people together and said to them: "**Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach. Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work**" (Neh. 2: 17-18). It seems that a key element in Nehemiah's success was in showing the people the need for this work, and in getting their agreement to his plan. Perhaps we who preach the gospel are often too impatient in wanting things to be done, and to be done right now. So we act without showing the elders or the rest of the brethren the need for these actions, and getting their agreement to help.

To be sure, Nehemiah faced opposition. But despite the mocking of Sanballat and Tobiah, Nehemiah and the people prayed to God and pressed on in the work. All of us want to be liked and respected, and we certainly don't want to be mocked or ridiculed. But unless we press on in doing right in spite of whatever opposition may come,

nothing of God's work will ever get done.

Then comes the verse that I like most in this story. **"So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work"** (Nehemiah 4: 6). When God's people have a mind to work there is no stopping them. In chapter 6 of Nehemiah we read this: **"So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty and two days. And it came to pass, that when all our enemies heard thereof, and all the heathen that were about us saw these things, they were much cast down in their own eyes: for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God"** (v. 15-16).

What could we do if we all **"had a mind to work?"**; if we all had a willingness to spend and be spent in laboring for the Lord? While so many of the examples we get from the Jews are ones that we must not follow, one in the book of Exodus stands out as being good to follow. In Exodus chapter 35 God had given instructions to Moses about collecting the items needed to build the Tabernacle in keeping with the pattern already given. Then beginning in verse 21 we read: **"And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the Lord's offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments."** Then down in verse 29 we read: **The children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the Lord, every man and woman, whose heart made them willing to bring for all manner of work, which the Lord had commanded to be made by the hand of Moses.** " These people in fact gave and gave until they had to be restrained from giving, **For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much"** (Ex. 36: 7).

Our problem as Christians is not generally that we give too much to the work of the Lord. Frequently our problem is that we give too little, of our time and our effort, or ourselves. Somehow we just have not seen the need and determined to play our part in filling that need. Its so easy to expect the elders or the preacher to take care of teaching the lost, or checking up on members who are sick or negligent. And perhaps it is the fault of we who are preachers or elders in failing to do as Nehemiah did in showing the people the need, and getting their agreement and their pledge of help in doing the work. Paul reminded the brethren of their duties to God by saying, **"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord"** (1 Cor. 15: 58). Nothing that we do **In the work of the Lord"** is ever in vain. We may not always see the results we would like, and we may become discouraged along the way because things do not move fast enough to suit us, but just as surely as in the days of Nehemiah we can endure to the end if we only have **"a mind to work."**

**"I WANT
TO KNOW"**

Barney Keith

541 Midfield Street
Birmingham, Alabama 35228



The desire for knowledge is not inherently evil, for an inquiring mind often leads to the learning of truth one did not previously know. One of the nationally circulated gossip sheet papers has for some time televised a commercial that probably has secured numbers of new readers. In it they raise certain provocative issues about upcoming articles in their nosy, nauseating journal. Several readers are shown peering around the side of the paper and saying, "I want to know!"

It is ironic that millions are so eager to know the latest scandal on movie stars, television celebrities, outstanding athletes, well-known politicians, etc., but do not want to know the story of redemption and eternal life. How many people do we hear saying, "I want to know about Jesus Christ and His will for my life?" The multiplied millions yet mired in sin constitute ample proof that people at large do not want to know the truth of the gospel that could mean their salvation (Eph. 1: 13).

Some Who Did Want To Know

The New Testament reveals numbers of people who had inquiring minds concerning the word of God. The Ethiopian treasurer freely acknowledged his lack of knowledge. Unashamedly he besought Philip to teach him the truth about Isaiah's Messianic prophecy (Acts 8: 30-38). Thus he learned the truth about Jesus. He confessed his faith and was baptized. Cornelius also wanted to know the truth. Having sent for Peter, he reverently listened to the gospel. As a penitent believer he was baptized in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 10: 42, 43, 48). The proconsul on the island of Cyprus also wanted to know. Paul supplied the knowledge and the officer believed (Acts 13: 6-12). Add to these the Gentiles in Antioch (Acts 13: 48) and Lydia's household (Acts 16: 14, 15) and it becomes clear that there have been sincere individuals who truly wanted to know God's will. A study of these people reveals that they came to know that belief, repentance, confession and baptism were the Lord's conditions of pardon. Multitudes need that same knowledge today.

Why Some Do Not Have This Knowledge

Various factors account for the lack of knowledge on the part of so many. Consider just a few.

(1) There is the **arrogant assumption** by some that **human wisdom** can provide one with everything of value he needs to know. An overweening pride in the workings of the human intellect robs many people of the ability to know the saving power of the gospel. Such people are not good candidates for being taught that truth

that is found in God's word. The impotence of human philosophy is declared by Paul (1 Cor. 1: 17-30), for he affirms that even "the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men." Secular humanists are classic examples of the people Paul decries in the early chapters of First Corinthians.

(2) Quite often it is their **powerful prejudice** that prevents some from coming to know the truth. This blinding prejudice may have been induced by one's family background, by false religious concepts or by one's educational environment. The plain word of God just cannot be understood by some — NOT because it is couched in such difficult and obscure terms that the average mind cannot comprehend it; rather, it is that some minds close out everything that is not according to what they already believe. In the words of our Lord, "Their ears are hard of hearing and their eyes they have closed" (Matt. 13: 15). Breaking down people's puerile prejudices is the continuing challenge faced by Christians who seek to bring the lost to a knowledge of the truth. Let us not despair in this task.

(3) It is also entirely possible that some do not want to know the truth because they fear **truth would demand changes in their lifestyles**. As long as men "love darkness rather than light," they will not give up their evil deeds (John 3: 19, 20). Repentance, that resolute turning completely around in one's manner of life, is a hurdle many are unwilling to overcome. Maybe the thinking is, The less we know, the better. "With this philosophy they can continue in their sins without a troubled conscience.

Some Essentials

At least two things are essential if one would come to the knowledge of the truth. First, **one must DESIRE to know**, as has already been suggested. Jesus declared, "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching..." (John 7: 17). That individual whose heart earnestly longs to know truth will leave no stone unturned in his diligent effort to learn the truth that is accessible to him in the inspired scriptures. Secondly, along with the desire comes the conscientious effort to **examine all teaching by the correct standard of authority**. The noble Bereans are commended because they "Received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the scriptures daily, whether these things were so: (Acts 17: 11). Too often people rely upon human traditions, denominational creeds and catechisms, subjective feelings and popular theologians. Such will not bring one to a knowledge of the truth! There can be no substitute for opening the Bible, the word of God, and trusting that wisdom which came from the mind of God (1 Cor. 2: 6-14; Eph. 3: 3, 4).

The Real Proof

The efficacy of the truth in the sinner's life is realized NOT at the point he merely desires and searches for the truth, but at that time when he becomes obedient "from the heart to that form of teaching" he has learned in Scripture (Rom. 6: 17). At that point one is "free from sin" (Rom. 6: 18). Jesus spoke of an "honest and good heart" (Luke 8: 15). This is the heart that not only comes to know God's will, but who, knowing it, transcribes it into

his life by obedience and fruitbearing.

We are often led to wonder: Is there anybody out there who is saying, "I want to know?" Indeed there are such people. Let us seek out those honest and good hearts. Let us compassionately share with them our knowledge of the gospel's saving power. May all of us, along with Paul, be able to say truthfully that our "heart's desire and prayer to God" for them is "that they might be saved" (Rom. 10: 1). There are doubtless many still "who have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge" (Rom. 10: 2). We must enlighten them concerning the righteousness of God that is made known in the gospel of Christ (Rom. 1: 16, 17).

Every child of God needs to remember always that our Savior "would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2: 4). Surely we can find someone who is saying, "I want to know."

FORGET "THE APPROACH" **(by just somebody)**

About a month or so ago, one of my best friends asked me what I thought about going to talk to a mutual friend about his soul. I replied that several in his family had said that anyone approaching our friend should use extreme caution so as not to cause him to completely reject the gospel. So, I waited—and so did my friend. A few days ago, he told me that we really needed to talk to our mutual friend because the man, in his early seventies, was lost and either way, we needed to do something.

I called the man, asked if it would be all right to come over that evening, and he assured me that it was fine. Both my partner and I were seated in the family room and after a few minutes of preliminary conversation, I stated our purpose for being there. To the best of my recollection, here is the reply we received. "Well, I'm ready and have been thinking of it for some time now. " We all left and baptized this man into Christ.

While I realize that this is not the way things normally take place in such things, I am made to wonder just how many more are "ready" and waiting for someone to come with the direct appeal that they obey Christ. As we all rejoiced over the incident, I thought as I drove toward home—what if the fellow had passed from this life before tonight. But even a more sobering thought hit me—what if I had died before tonight? How many are now waiting for someone just like you and me to come and talk to them and directly say, "Will you obey the Lord now?"

I know that a tactful approach is important in selling most anything and that applies to appealing to people in the gospel. However, the approach should be forgotten

and the determination to make an approach remembered. We can put off doing what needs to be done until it is too late. This is written by one who is happy that it was not too late for this good man who obeyed the Lord, nor for this writer.

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By Homer Hailey

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CORRECTION

In the December, 1989 issue of STS, I wrote a news item to the effect that Rody Gumpad had called from the Philippines that there had been a typhoon which caused damage to some of the brethren there and that his father-in-law and sister had died and that one of his children had been hospitalized. Brother Gumpad had called Donnie Rader and Donnie had relayed the information to me. I did not take enough care in my reporting. A brother in the Philippines wrote to inform me that while all these events were true, the deaths and sickness were not related to the typhoon. Brother Gumpad did not write the item in question. I did. The error was mine alone and I apologize for any misunderstandings which may have developed either in the Philippines or wherever this report was seen.

—Editor

NEW PUBLICATION

A new 32 page paper, WITH ALL BOLDNESS, will begin in June, edited by KEITH SHARP. The stated purpose is: "to edify the average Christian." There will be one page articles which emphasize the Scriptures. The editor says the new journal "will deal boldly with live spiritual issues but will avoid 'hobby riding' and personal wrangling." Four issues a year will be "specials" with articles centered around a unifying theme. Pre-publication price is \$10 a year. After June 1, subscriptions will be \$12 a year. Write to: WITH ALL BOLDNESS, P. O. Box 681275, Indianapolis, IN 46268.

PAUL BROCK, 5416 Tall Pines Dr., Ridge Manor, FL 33525 — In May, 1988, I retired from local work, mainly because of health. The past year there have been no problems with the jaw and speech. I have preached several places and taught a class regularly, and preached in one meeting. I am now preaching at Cove Bend near Floral City, as well as teaching Wednesday evening. I will be with the North Courtenay church on Merritt Island, where Jere Frost preaches, April 29-May 4. Mrs. Brock continues to recover nicely from her heart attack Feb. 18. We both appreciate the prayers of so many people in so many parts of the country.

VIDEO TAPES OF HALBROOK-FREEMAN DEBATE

RICK HUBARTT, 301 Fern St., Newark, OH 43055 — I video taped the entire debate on marriage, divorce and remarriage which was conducted in West Columbia, Texas between Ron Halbhook and Jack Freeman. I have it all on two four hour video tapes for \$25. Write me at the above address or call (614) 366-7115.

LECTURE SERIES IN OKLAHOMA CITY

The Broadview Heights church in Oklahoma City, OK announces a lecture series, A STUDY OF PHILIPPIANS, to be conducted July 15-20, 1990. Speakers are James W. Adams, Paul Earnhart and Robert Jackson. Congregational singing will be led by R. J. Stevens. For information concerning video tapes, audio tapes, or housing accommodations during the lectureship, please write to: Church of Christ, P. O. Box 12654, Oklahoma City, OK 73157. Phone (405) 946-6301.

SPECIAL NEEDS

YAKIMA, WASHINGTON — The Eastside church in Yakima reports that one of the widows there lost everything in a fire. This faithful sister has no insurance. They are trying to help her secure a mobile home and the church there has done what it can and more help is needed. For any who might wish to help, a trust fund has been set up for NORMA GRAHLSS, Security Pacific Bank, West Park Branch, P. O. Box 2924, Yakima, WN 98907. Phone (509) 575-6733.

ATHENS, ALABAMA — The elders of the Eastside church in Athens, AL have sent out a letter of appeal for help for a special need. Here are excerpts from their letter: "This is to inform you of a special need of one of our families here at Eastside. Brittney Murrell, eight-year-old daughter of Bill and Burnetta Murrell, must have a liver transplant. Bill is one of our deacons. He and Burnetta are both active in our teaching program. They also have two sons, an eighth grader and a fourth grader. Many of you may have known Bill's father, Billy Murrell, who was a faithful gospel preacher for many years. Bill's mother is a member here also.

"Brittney was born with the CMV virus which affected her health

in a number of ways, leaving her hearing-impaired with a diseased liver and enlarged spleen. Her liver has degenerated and is barely functioning. The doctors at Vanderbilt feel a transplant must be done in the next six months, possibly within weeks. Her records have been sent to Pittsburg for review. (Pittsburg is the first choice for actual surgery). If Pittsburg accepts her, Brittney will go there for two to four days of testing and evaluation. Hopefully, she would then be sent home to await an available liver. The doctors feel a successful transplant will solve all her health problems, except for the hearing loss.

"Although insurance is expected to cover much of the medical cost, there are many expenses related to this which will not be covered, including much extra travel and living expenses during recovery in Pittsburg. An account has been opened for Brittney at the Colonial Bank in Athens. Donations can be sent directly to the bank (P. O. Box 1217, Athens, AL 35611).

FROM AROUND THE WORLD

PHILIPPINES — JOHN HUMPHRIES AND JERRY PARKS have safely returned from a month of preaching in the Philippines. They report 29 baptized during this time. Red alerts in certain places prevented them from going to some areas where training classes had been planned. But they were able to preach in Manila, Baguio City on Luzon, Davao City in Mindanao and the island of Palawan. We will look for a fuller report from them later. They felt that the trip was successful and we rejoice that they are safely back home.

ITALY — FRANCESCO FOSCI who preaches at Latina, south of Rome, reports on a meeting he conducted in Canosa in southern Italy in which four were baptized.

STEFANO CORAZZA also reports about the effort he and Roberto Tondelli are making to establish a new work in Rome. Also of interest was this from him: "After the well known developments among Communist countries, Italy has been invaded by thousands of refugees from Russia, Poland and other places. Many of these people wait here to get visas for other countries, as U. S. A., Australia and Canada. A group of these refugees made contact with the church in Aprilia (where my father-in-law, Rodolfo Berdini, preaches). One of their group speaks English. So Roberto Tondelli and I were invited to teach Mr. Peter in English and he translated to the rest in Russian (there are ten in the group). We have had two studies with them and another is set. A big door has been opened to this new world for us and we hope to do good."

Brother Corazza also reports things going well with his father, Sandro Corazza who preaches at Via Sannio in Rome and says that his mother's health is now much better. We rejoice.

SOUTH AFRICA — Paul Williams reports much unrest recently with strikes and other politically related problems some of which has hindered their work for a time. He requests the prayers of brethren everywhere for the work there and for the safety of brethren throughout that country. On the brighter side, he reported that three had been baptized from correspondence course work. Brother Williams has already had one public discussion with a liberal preacher and another is set for May 19 with sessions running from 2 p. m. to 10 p. m.

PREACHERS NEEDED

MCCOMB, MISSISSIPPI — There are two families which have been meeting together for three years. McComb is located in the SW corner of the state, about 86 miles from Jackson and 80 miles from Baton Rouge, LA and 110 miles from New Orleans. Substantial support can be provided but some outside support will be needed. If interested please contact Allan Smith, Rt. 4, Box 101, Summit, MS 39666, (601) 276-7580; or Jimmy Jones, Rt. 1, Box 45-G-1, Summit, MS 39666, (601) 276-3046.

MEMPHIS, INDIANA — The church meeting at 123 Ebenezer Church Rd., Memphis, IN 47143, is looking for a faithful full-time gospel preacher who also has personal work abilities. We have about 50 in attendance and can provide partial support. Bob Buchanan and Ken Leach will be with us in meetings this year. Those interested may call Fred Minton, Jr. (812) 294-4798; or Jim Key (812) 246-3444 or write to the above address.

VALDOSTA, GEORGIA — The church which meets on N. Valdosta Rd. near I-75 is in need of a sound gospel preacher to work full-time beginning in May. They desire someone who is successful in personal work. Some outside support will be needed. The church has its own building. For more information write to the church at: Rt. 12, Box 1335, Valdosta, GA 31601, or call (912) 242-5006 or (912) 244-1574.

AVAILABLE FOR APPOINTMENTS

LONNIE MEREDITH of Louisville, KY is available for speaking appointments in driving distance of Louisville. He requests one week notice in advance. He gives as references, Al Williams, Harold Byers, Jr. and Harold Byers, Sr. You may call him at (502) 637-1784.



PRAYER FOR LEADERS

We recently heard of a good brother who publicly prayed thus for our leaders: "Father, please overlook our leaders in Washington." Well, what do you think?

NON-MORNING PERSONS AND HARDEES

It is common for wives who do not want to be bothered about preparing breakfast for a husband or children, and for some husbands, to justify it all by saying "I am just not a morning person." Frankly, I never have bought that line from anyone. I believe anybody can learn to be whatever kind of person he/she needs to be. It is a matter of will, not genes. But it has been interesting to notice, in traveling over the country, how crowded Hardees, McDonalds and other such places are every work day morning with the husbands of these non-morning wives. It has also been interesting to take some people out for breakfast who soberly aver that they are "not morning persons," and who do not prepare or eat breakfast at home. Just turn them loose at one of those breakfast bars and see what happens, and count the number of trips these non-morning persons who do not eat breakfast, will make. Life surely is interesting.

WRONG SONG

No doubt you have heard about song leaders leading "Oh Why Not Tonight" for an invitation song on Sunday morning, or "Ready to Suffer" just before the sermon. Let me tell you another one. G. Dallas Smith was in a meeting years ago near Fulton, Kentucky. J. B. Cox, then a young school teacher, was the song leader. They were baptizing one Sunday afternoon in a stream and a large crowd had gathered on the bank to watch. Cox began to lead "How Firm a Foundation." Meanwhile, a dark, ominous cloud threatened overhead, the wind began to blow, the smell of rain was in the air and about that time Smith stepped in a hole and nearly disappeared. When he regained his balance and his composure, he lifted his voice above the song and said, "Brother Cox, that song is not appropriate for this occasion. Turn over there and sing **On Jordan's Stormy Banks I Stand.**"

LITTLE FOLK AND SERMON NOTES

Nothing delights me more than those dear little folk who listen raptly to sermons and write furiously to copy every scripture and everything you write on the board or that appears on an overhead chart. I love it when they come to me at the door and show me their notes on my sermon. Some of them have better outlines than I do. Not only does it help them to be attentive and reduces the distractions which wiggly children can cause, but they are learning while at the same time setting a good example for some adults who are not good listeners.

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	378
RESTORATIONS	117
(Taken front 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 XXXI

JUNE 1990

NUMBER 6

THINK ON
THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 1631
Lutz, FL 33549



DEFINE AND IDENTIFY FANATICISM

Occasionally I find that the words of another express my thoughts better than my own words. Such is the case of a description of **fanaticism**.

"... Somewhere the idea got started, and it has influenced most of us, that a fanatic is a wild-eyed, unreasonable, screaming, jumping, ignorant person; and they are easily recognized by their outward appearance and action. Perhaps this is true at times. However, there is an altogether different type of fanatic; and he is the sort who vows and declares that he is not one, and that he hates them, and may even wage war against those he believes to be such. He is a fanatic against the fanatics! This sort may come with stilt and style, with elegance and eloquence, and would likely appear to be very calm, calculating and reasonable. Actually, there may even be times when he appears to be a fully rational and logical being, and a stalwart defender of the faith!"

"... a fanatic is not simply a dedicated and consecrated person. A fanatic or zealot is more readily recognized by his attitude and disposition which shows itself in various ways, more often than not showing how pompous, arrogant, and self-righteous this type is. Those of this attitude and disposition in the Lord's day on earth were described as those who 'trusted in themselves that they were righteous and looked upon all others with contempt.' The fanatic of whatever brand is without fairness and honor: it is his party

right or wrong, and he is bent on the destruction of all those who will not 'line up' and conform with his own ideas and submit to his pontifical judgment! Along these lines, the fanatic is never moved by honor nor fairness, nor governed by reason or logic—their mind is made up and they already KNOW all that they intended to know—they are 'right and cannot possibly be wrong' on any point. A fanatic is a 'one man mob.' "

"The fanatic or zealot is recognized in his 'reviews' or 'observations' of others or their works. His fanaticism does 'heat the mind,' and the very first thing done is to spread this "heat of mind" to others whose fanatical impulses can also be stirred and enraged. So this type of fanatic does not really and actually deal with issues or arguments.... This is indeed the worst sort of fanaticism, which does heat the mind indeed, but heats without purifying. "

"... So the fanatic, the type we are considering, first seeks to arouse and enrage the 'mob' — the people, and move them to 'purge' our holy ranks of such undesirable! Prejudice is skillfully employed; anathemas are hurled against such men, and the 'mob' is told how awful and terrible the views of these men are and what disastrous results will follow! Thus the emotions are aroused, and passions inflamed, and these men are scathed with pontifical condemnation and the campaign to hate, mark, and isolate them is launched. "

(Charles A Holt, **Sentinel Of Truth**, Volume 1, Number 2, October 1965, pages 25, 26)

I know of no one who better fits the description of "Fanaticism" than the author of the above article. He gave a vivid picture of "Fanaticism" in his work in **Sentinel Of Truth** of over three and one half years, beginning in 1965, and his work with **The Examiner**, which he now edits.

Charles Holt follows the contrived pattern of selecting out some abuse or radical person and attributes the consequences of that abuse or extreme person to everyone who does not stand with him. He then selects terms and slanderous names that ridicule and blaspheme all those whom he classifies as the "clergy"

or "board of directors. " and the "dumb sheep" in the pews. He and his associates sneer and vilify those who believe that the New Testament church is an organized functional entity, and operates only as the local congregation (Phil. 1: 1). All of these false and unscriptural terms and allegations are denied by those whom he assaults, but that means nothing to him. Finally, he slips in his despicable doctrine which would negate the only collective working unit of God's people in a locality: the local church. Notice some of the verbal pictures that Charles Holt uses that exhibit exactly his own "fanatic" attitude that is shown in his teaching.

He says the "corporate treasury, " "the church treasury, " as we have it today in "the local church" organization, is borrowed from the Roman Catholic Church and other denominations. He says it is a source of great trouble and evil among the people of God. It is a concentration of power; and power often corrupts. He says it is a vital part of the organization or institution we have found called "the corporate body" or "the local church. " He says it is the funding source for the operation of our institution, with its highly paid staff, its massive buildings, its recreation programs, and all the necessary expenses of a big business. "The operational budget must be bigger and bigger. The largest part of it is spent on ourselves, while the world remains lost in sin and bound for hell! How terrible. "

Charles Holt has supplanted the church with his own church organization. It is called **Truth and Freedom Ministry, Inc.** in Chattanooga, Tennessee. He wants the contributions you are now giving to "the corporate body" or "the local church" so he can fund his operation: **The Examiner**. He begs for money to support his religious organization, and he says it is growing and he wants more and more money to support its appetite.

The following quotes are taken from several issues of **The Examiner** to show that Holt begs for money to support his religious operation while opposing the treasury of the local church. He says: "WE NEED YOUR HELP FINANCIALLY to keep **The Examiner** going to thousands of disciples all over the world... "

"Please help us with a regular contribution to: **Truth and Freedom Ministry, P. O. Box 21584, Chattanooga, TN 37421**. Your gift is also tax deductible. THANKS. " "If you see the need to continue publishing this paper and you able to help financially, then please do so. It is needed now. This is the way the paper has been financed from the beginning. The financial burden is heavy, but with more of you helping we can reach out to more and more saints with this paper. Please help us with a regular contribution if you can. Remember your gift is tax deductible. Send to: **Truth and Freedom Ministry, Inc.. " YOUR FINANCIAL HELP IS NEEDED.** "

Holt's religious "corporate body" sponsored the 1989 Truth And Freedom Forum/Fellowship, a five day/night lectureship, from Wednesday through Sunday, in July, 1989.

Charles Holt has not changed the plan for operation, he has just changed the ORGANIZATION. He wants that "corporate treasury. " He wants as many as possible to surrender their money to his organization instead of the church of the Lord. He does not want "elders, overseers, bishops" to direct its use; he wants to

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direct its use. He does not want the church to spend the money for evangelism, he wants his organization (**The Truth and Freedom Ministry, Inc.**) to spend the money under his control. He mocks the "Corporate Body" (church), but praises his "Corporate Body" (The Truth and Freedom Ministry, Inc.) He doesn't want the "local church" to exist, but he wants his LOCAL BODY to exist. (It operates from Chattanooga, TN and under his control. It has corporate officers and functions from one location.) Charles Holt has simply changed the ORGANIZATION from the Lord's church to his own church, and from the Lord's control to his own control. The money, the operation to indoctrinate and a "Corporate Body" remain the same. He has changed the organization from a divinely ordained body to a humanly devised body.

There are many, many false things taught in **The Examiner** that only serve to destroy the work of the gospel in this generation. May God have mercy upon all who contribute to such an operation!

Editorial

Donnie V. Rader

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THE PREACHING OF JOHN

John the Baptist, who broke the four hundred years of silence left by the prophets, was a true servant of God. His work lasted only two years (H. I. Hester, **The Heart Of The New Testament**, p. 122), but he has enjoyed a lasting impact upon many generations. John worked largely in the wilderness of southern Judea and in the Jordan valley — possibly even beyond Jordan, in Perea (John 3: 26). His task was to prepare the way for the Lord.

Though his years of labour were short, his preaching has inspired many, including this writer. It helps me for I see a contrast in the kind of work that John did and what is done by some today.

What We See And Hear Today

Don't misunderstand. What I say here is not to indict all or even most preachers or listeners. We have a good number of men who preach like John and churches that demand that from their pulpits. However, that is not true in all places. I am not talking about the preaching that is done in denominational pulpits or even among what we think of as our "liberal" brethren. I am concerned about some of the preaching I hear from "conservative" men.

I'm bothered by **preachers** whose messages are weak and say practically nothing. We hear sermons that demand nothing from the hearers. Some preach so that they impress you with themselves rather than God and his word. Something is wrong when preachers are vague or silent rather than speaking out. We have men among us who skirt the issue on a number of questions, lest someone clearly see where they stand. We hear too much preaching that says nothing about the church, hell or worldliness. It is not often that we hear a man make direct application to those to whom he speaks.

There are **listeners** that like what I have just described and would request the same. Some would tell us that the land of preaching that John did won't work today. After all, "You can catch more flies with honey than you can with vinegar." A few stand ready to call the preacher a "legalist" or a "Pharisee" if he takes a stand on an issue. This writer has been criticized (though I take it as a compliment) because some felt like I was preaching to them.

Let's consider John's work in contrast. **A**

Warning About Extremes

As with most anything, we have a tendency to go from

one extreme to another. While we have those who are soft and whose message is vague and says very little, we also have those who are all negative. Some have the concept that every sermon must deal with sin and error. If it does not, the preacher must be a little soft. Such preaching leaves the people "beat down" and discouraged if they never hear words of exhortation and encouragement (2 Tim. 4: 2; Heb. 10: 24; Heb. 6: 9; Heb. 3: 13). It has been said that if the preacher is not stepping on your toes every Sunday, he is not doing his job. Friend, I don't believe it. Are there not subjects that must be preached that will not be stepping on toes? Shall we not preach on the nature of God, evidence of the resurrection or the qualifications of elders?

The truth is that those with this extreme thinking and practice are just as responsible for breeding the "all positive" atmosphere among us as anyone else. How?, you ask. By an imbalance and overkill. People who listen to a rebuke or reproof every Sunday quickly tire of that and begin looking for something more "positive."

The key will be in maintaining a **balance**. If the whole counsel of God is preached, that will not be hard (Acts 20: 27).

John's Work As A Preacher

1. John rebuked. "Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" (Luke 3: 7). John was not haughty or arrogant. He was just blunt. His rebuke was clear. It left no doubt. Does that sound to you like John was trying to catch more flies with honey than he was with vinegar?

John was dealing with the Pharisees and Sadducees who were deceitful and wicked. They needed a stern rebuke. I do not think that we are to conclude that every word that John uttered was one of rebuke or reproof. However, when it was needed, John did it. Yes, there is a time to be very careful, to use tack and kid gloves. And yet, there is also a time to rebuke them **sharply** (Tit. 1: 13).

Preaching that imitates John's will reprove and rebuke as well as exhort (2 Tim. 4: 2). The fact that there are people in the world in sin and in error as well as some of our brethren who participate in the same, demands preaching that will rebuke.

2. John was firm. He was not a reed shaken first one way and then another by the opinions of men (Luke 7: 24). John did not wait to see which way the wind would blow before he would stand. He was firm, even if he stood alone. There were times he did. John gave no uncertain sounds. His message was clear. His audience never wondered where he stood. I look around at some of my own brethren today and I wonder "Where do you stand?", "What are you saying?" It is a shame that after you hear man preach several times you might have to ask "Where do you stand on moral issues, doctrinal things and the work of the New Testament church?"

3. John did not impress men with himself or his appearance. He was not clothed in soft raiment as someone of royal decent (Luke 7: 25), but with a cheap and coarse cloth made of camel's hair (Matt. 3: 14), girded with a rough band of leather. John didn't have that

"preacher look." Rather, he was crude and rough in his appearance. John did not derive his influence from the impression made by his personal appearance. Some preachers just have a commanding appearance, but not John. He impressed people with the word of God that was given to him (Luke 3: 2).

4. **John's message was a plea for repentance which demanded a change.** His message of repentance (Luke 3: 3, 7) called for a change of mind and cessation of sin. It required a complete change of thoughts and lives.

Something indeed is wrong with our preaching when week after week and night after night (in gospel meetings) sinners hear a "sermon" and never hear a call to change their lives, to leave denominationalism or to quit sin. Rather, they are left comfortable in sin. John did not do that! He called for a change from his hearers. Yes, that made them uncomfortable. Yes, that would offend some. Yes, it may not catch many flies. But, I'll tell you what it didn't do. It didn't leave people comfortable in sin. I'm afraid that the kind of preaching done by some today leaves people comfortable in spite of their sin. John didn't do that.

5. **John preached about the kingdom.** In preparing people for the Lord, he preached about the kingdom (Matt. 3: 2). Philip did the same in Samaria. He preached Christ (Acts 8: 5), which included a message about the kingdom (v. 12). you can't truly preached about the Lord without preaching about the kingdom, the church. Too many sermons are preached where nothing is said about the church of our Lord. I don't know what is preached all across the country, but I wonder if we are preaching about the kingdom as we ought. I know for a fact that I haven't heard an abundance of preaching about the church. What has happened to those sermons on the nature of the church, terms of membership, its essentiality, its organization, its work and its worship? And we wonder why there are not more conversions than there are.

6. **John warned of the wrath to come.** When John saw people in sin, duty required that he warn of God's eternal wrath (Luke 3: 7). He announced that God's axe was laid at the root (Luke 3: 9). God was ready to cut them off! He then spelled out the end of God's wrath which would be to burn "with fire unquenchable" (v. 17). John said that because he cared. He warned lest they suffer. Do you think John delighted in that? I think not. But, duly required it.

Sound preaching warns sinners that the axe is laid at the root, and if you don't change you will loose your soul in the fires of hell. That may be the vinegar that doesn't catch flies, but it is the gospel that converts souls.

7. **John made direct application to the people.** John didn't huddle the Pharisees and Sadducees together and talk about the Essenes and the Scribes or vice-versa. He directed his point to those to whom he spoke. He called them a generation of vipers (Luke 3: 7). "It was bitterly, it was uncourtly, but oh, it was truly said" (James Hastings, ed., **The Greater Men And Women Of The Bible**, p. 67)! He did the same with Herod and Herodias (Mark 6). To say "It is not lawful for

thee to have thy brother's wife" (Mark 6: 14) is about as direct as one can be. John never left the people wondering who he was talking about. There are times a preacher needs to tell the listeners, "I'm talking about this church." "I'm talking to you" or "There are some in this congregation that are guilty of this sin."

8. **John's stand cost him his life.** It took courage to tell a king that he was not lawfully married. But, John did it. John Wayne once said, "Courage is being scared to death and saddling up anyway." John had that courage. He saddled up. It irritated Herodias so much that she had him killed. John could have said, "God's law is not clear on this marriage thing" or "It's really a matter of individual interpretation" or "I couldn't have married her, but I wouldn't say that it is wrong for you." If he had, he would have saved his life. But, not John. He took his stand and paid his price.

It Got Results

The strong and straightforward preaching of John didn't run everyone off as we may fear today. It caused the people to ask, "What shall we do then?" (Luke 3: 10). Upon hearing, they were baptized (v. 21). He had converts. It worked! Now, tell me again — what's the saying? "You can catch more flies with honey that you can with vinegar." It worked! Do you want to tell me what the kind of preaching that John did is not for our day and time? It worked! Do you want to tell me that you have a better way of getting the job done? It worked! Say what you like. But, the preaching that gets results first of all demands results.

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A COMPENDIUM OF ISSUES (5)

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MODERN ISSUES

As a result of the missionary society and instrumental music innovations, the advocates and the opposers became two separate bodies. The former were identified as Disciples of Christ and the latter as Churches of Christ. The United States Bureau of the Census listed them in the census of 1906 as two separate religious bodies. Division is inevitable when practices are introduced into the Lord's church without divine sanction.

The Tennessee Orphan Home was established in 1909 in Columbia, Tennessee. Later, other such homes were founded and supported by contributions from churches. It has been clearly seen that in the New Testament, churches did not build and maintain human institutions through which to do their work. Benevolent work was done within the frame work of each local church (Acts 6: 2-6). When there were more needy saints than a local church could relieve (as in the case of a famine), other churches cooperated by sending relief to assist that local church in its care of its needy saints (Rom. 15: 26; 1 Cor. 16: 1-4; 2 Cor. 8 and 9). Neither did churches do their work through a sponsoring church, as we have also seen.

The placing of schools in the budget then became an issue. In 1933 G. C. Brewer wrote a series of articles in the **Gospel Advocate** defending the church support of schools as well as benevolent organizations. The issue became heated when in 1938 he made a speech at the Abilene Christian College Lectureship in which he pleaded with churches to put the college in their budgets. W. W. Otey responded in a series of articles in the **Firm Foundation**. In 1947 the issue was fought in the pages of the **Gospel Advocate** and the **Bible Banner** between N. B. Hardeman and Foy E. Wallace, Jr. N. B. Hardeman was opposed to including the college in the budgets of the churches; nevertheless, he defended the right of a church to make an occasional donation, thus making it a matter of expediency. The church is not in the school business for there is no scriptural authority for the church to support any human institution, whether it be a school, a hospital, a benevolent society, missionary society or a boy scout troop. Let the church be the church and let human institutions be such. If the church can support one human institution out of its treasury, then why not others or all of them? If not, why not? They stand or fall together. Remember, the primary work of the church is to preach the gospel (1 Tim. 3: 14, 15).

After World War II the sponsoring church promotion became popular. The Broadway church in Lubbock, Texas became the sponsoring church for "missionary" work in Germany. In 1947 it began soliciting funds from churches to support Otis Gatewood there. Other sponsoring church arrangements followed. The Union Avenue church in Memphis, Tennessee became the sponsoring church for the work in Japan and the Brownfield, Texas church became the sponsoring church for the work in Italy. Such brotherhood elderships were unknown in the New Testament.

History repeats itself. As division came as the result of the missionary society and instrumental music in the middle of the 1800's, so it soon came again. Institutionalism and the sponsoring church were prominent issues and still are.

The Herald of Truth had its beginning in Abilene, Texas on February 10, 1952. It was a nationwide radio broadcast, sponsored by the Fifth and Highland church in Abilene. One thousand churches were urged to send their funds to the Highland church to support the program. Again, as was true of the missionary society, it was an effort to activate the church universal. It was a brotherhood work, not that of one local church. Those of us who opposed this, and other such sponsoring church projects, were termed "antis." We were accused of not believing in cooperation. Does this have a familiar ring?

With those came other issues, such as the social gospel. Churches all over the country have been and still are providing social and recreational facilities such as "fellowship" halls, gymnasiums and youth camps. It is not the business of the church to provide amusement and recreation for anyone. These things are to be provided by the home, not the church. Sadly, some churches are becoming little more than the social center for the community.

Laxity in the pulpit on moral issues is prevalent. More emphasis is being placed on the positive rather than the negative, but both must be included in balanced preaching (2 Tim. 4: 1-4).

Marriage, divorce and remarriage has become a serious problem. Jesus gave but ONE cause for divorce and remarriage and that is fornication (Matt. 5: 32; 19: 9; Mk. 10: 11, 12; Lk. 16: 18). To assume that one can separate from his spouse and remarry for another cause (as some presume 1 Cor. 7: 15 teaches) is to assume more than what the Bible says. The Scriptures are clear as to who CAN marry: (1) one who has never been married, (2) one whose marriage has been severed by the physical death of his spouse (Rom. 7: 2, 3) and (3) one who has put away his spouse for the REASON (not the excuse) of fornication. The New Testament is silent on the issue of instrumental music in worship. If brethren would also respect the silence of the Scriptures on the issue of marriage, divorce and remarriage there would be no problem. God's law of marriage applies to ALL men, which is evident from the "WHOSOEVER" in Matthew 19: 9. The marriage issue must be settled by the word of God, not by emotions.

The Crossroads movement began in 1967 when the Crossroads church in Gainesville, Florida invited

Chuck Lucas to work as its "Campus Minister." The movement is a philosophy based upon a book entitled "The Master Plan of Evangelism" by Robert Coleman. The idea is that the plan used by Jesus to train apostles should be incorporated into the church. But the role of the apostles was far different (see Matt. 16: 19; 18: 18; 19: 28). Every member involved in this system has a person to serve as his master, known as a "prayer partner." He functions much as a Catholic priest, in that his subject follows his dictates, even to confessing private sins. It is a dangerous movement, contrary to principles taught in the New Testament. It has now been overshadowed by the Boston movement, installed and headed by Kip McKean. Six pillar churches are under the church in Boston: Atlanta, New York, Chicago, Denver, San Francisco and San Diego. The Boston church sends people to take over other churches. This is a corruption of local church government (autonomy) and is the same principle which resulted in Roman Catholicism.

Why do these issues arise? One work of the devil is to disrupt the unity of God's people (see 1 Cor. 1: 10). When divine authority is disregarded, anything is permitted. We now have some who are advocating the "new hermeneutics," contending that we do not establish Bible authority by command (precept or direct statement), by example or by necessary inference. If this teaching is accepted, the door is wide open for every unscriptural practice imaginable. It means we have not seen anything yet. But God-loving, God-fearing and Bible-respecting people will contend for the faith (Jude 3) and "they shall not pass!"

These are a few issues which have and do comfort the church of our Lord. Let the faithful "fight the good fight of faith" (Eph. 6: 17; 1 Tim. 6: 12, 2 Tim. 3: 4; 4: 7, 8; Jude 3) that the church of our Lord be pure from every corruption (Eph. 5: 25-27). May God help us all to stand for the truth.

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MERCY-KILLINGS

QUESTION: *Sometimes Christians are asked by their doctor to make a decision to "pull the plug" on a family member who is critically ill. If the family agrees to such action, are they taking part in murder?*

ANSWER: No man can "play God." To make life and death decisions about the terminally ill are not the prerogatives of mortal men. Life is sacred, and we ought to try to sustain and preserve life rather than to destroy it.

Consider the death of king Saul (1 Sam. 31: 1-6). In a battle against the Philistines, Saul being mortally wounded, pleaded with his armor-bearer to stab him to death in order to prevent a slow death or torture and humiliation at the hands of the Philistines. When the aide refused to kill him, Saul committed suicide by falling on his sword.

Later, as recorded in 2 Sam. 1: 1-10, an Amalekite fabricated a story of how he killed Saul. He reported he did so because Saul pleaded with him, "Stand, I pray thee, upon me, and slay me: for anguish is come upon me, because my life is yet whole (lingers, NASB) in me" (v. 9). This is the classic description for the reasons of mercy-killings, and the response of the Amalekite is exactly that of the practitioners of euthanasia, "So I stood upon him, and slew him, because I was sure that he could not live after that he was fallen" (v. 10). He reasoned, "Since death is certain, I just as well help it along."

David's reaction to the story of the Amalekite was one of severe disapproval. In v. 14 David describes the act as "stretching forth the hand to destroy." He equates the act with assassination and commands the Amalekite to be slain (v. 15). Here is reflected the sacredness of life and the importance of preserving it.

Physicians can be wrong, even with all of their expertise. For example, a four-year old boy had a cardiac arrest while in surgery. The attending doctors said, "There is no possibility of his being anything other than a vegetable." Six months later the only effect was a slight limp. Speech had been regained, alertness and awareness restored and there was no mental regression.

A seven-year old girl was hospitalized with apparent encephalitis. For nearly four months there was no response. The girl was near vegetable-status and the parents were told to return to their normal life. The

parents refused, maintaining their bedside vigil. One evening while the family was gathered around the bed, their daughter came out of the coma and recognized them. Four months later she was back in school.

On the above cases the proponents of mercy-killings would have said, "pull the plug" and in so doing would have contributed to the murder of two little children. Many are influenced by the loose thinking of Joseph Fletcher who argues that euthanasia should be legalized because: (1) Suffering and pain are purposeless, demoralizing and degrading, and (2) Human personality and dignity are of greater worth than life. Wonder how the above little boy and girl would respond to Fletcher's philosophy?

Certainly, modern medical technology has created complex and perplexing moral problems that we have to cope with, but in spite of our advanced techniques to prolong life, who is wise enough to sit in judgment on whether these life-preserving measures should be withdrawn? Too, who has the right, morally speaking? Granted, those who are brain dead, having NO brain waves, and are kept breathing by a ventilator, may be removed from the machine without any doubt of terminating life, but most cases are not that simple. What are the criteria on which to base such a decision? Age? Demented? Incapacitated? Where do we draw the line?

Let's respect life, regardless of its quality, and not be a party to destroying it.

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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FAMILY IS BREAD OF LIFE TO EACH OTHER

The true bread of life is always the Lord Jesus Christ and His Word (Jno. 6). Apart from the Lord there can be no life. The life under consideration is spiritual life, which is eternal.

Of course there are people and things that foster and preserve physical life, which, figuratively, may be spoken of as bread of life (physically). In a previous study, it was pointed out that Christians are to be this to one another, as well as spiritually. In the family there is also this dual responsibility, but we are particularly concerned in this study, about our responsibility to bring about and preserve spiritual life (salvation) on the part of family members. We are bread of life to each other in our efforts to bring each to Christ and to abide in Him. Christ and his word is the true bread of life, but as agents or bearers of "the word of life" by word or deed, we are, figuratively, bread of life to the lost. **Husband and Wife**

A preacher acquaintance of mine of days gone by, now deceased, was approached by a young man asking for his daughter's hand in marriage. His response was, "So far as I know and have observed, you seem to be a fine, upright young man, but there is one thing that is more important to us than anything else, and that is our daughter going to heaven. In this world filled with the Devil's wiles, disappointments, and temptations she, like every one else, will need all the help she can get, without someone being a hindrance and pulling in the other direction. If you will make going to heaven the chief aim of life and help each other to this end, I have no objection to your getting married."

The Bible frequently speaks of the role of husband and wife in helping each other to have eternal life. The first, and perhaps most important, safeguard so far as eternal life is concerned is to have faith at the beginning and choose someone who has faith.

If a believer is married to an unbeliever, the greatest desire and effort should be to convert the unbelieving companion. "For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?" (1 Cor. 7: 16). Peter tells us that a wife's husband may be won by her manner of life, apart from preaching, through "subjection to her husband, chaste conversation coupled with

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fear, modest adornment, a meek and quiet spirit, and trust in God" (1 Pet. 3: 7).

While husband and wife are "heirs together of the grace of life, " their prayers may be hindered by a failure to dwell together according to knowledge (1 Pet. 3: 7). There is added power in united prayer to spiritual life on the part of husband and wife. Jesus said "That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18: 19-20). Hindered prayer is an interference to the spiritual health of both husband and wife. A paramount objective of every married couple should be to help, and not hinder, going to heaven. One of the greatest tragedies in society is the existence of so many worldly homes wherein there is no thought or action concerning eternal life and things spiritual. Besides this situation, there are far too many homes where spiritual sickness and lust are resulting in the spiritual death of so many individuals in the home, even the whole family. Sometimes it is the husband, sometimes the wife; too often both, who are responsible for the spiritual dearth in the family.

Parents and Children

The primary objective of parents should be the saving of their children — be bread of life to them. The children should be a strengthening spiritual force for their parents and for one another.

The saving of both parents and children is behind the commands "Children obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother... that it may be well with thee... Ye fathers provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6: 1-4; Col. 3: 20-21). The word "nurture" in the above verse involves doing for a child all the things needful to it's proper development physically, mentally, morally, and spiritually, even chastening betimes (Prov. 13: 24). "Withhold not correction from the child; for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod and shall deliver his soul from hell" (Prov. 23: 13-14).

God's commending and rewarding Abraham was based on his unfaltering faith and the care and teaching he would give his children. "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him. "

Jews, under the Law, were required to "teach them (God's word) your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou riseth up" (Deut. 11: 19). The teaching and keeping of all the Lord's commandments would result in Abraham and his descendants receiving the wonderful things God had promised them.

It is tragic that many parents who have no spiritual values, by their failure to teach or set righteous examples, are actually "bread of death, " spiritually, to

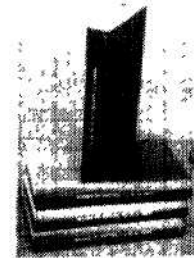
their children instead of "bread of life. " Let us pray that the Lord will send workers (saints) into the field (where this spiritual darkness is) bearing the true bread of life that these might be saved.

The children in homes where spiritual values are recognized and practiced should also be a strong spiritual force in strengthening and encouraging the parents, and one another. How tragic when some member of the family—father, mother, or sibling becomes a stumbling block and hindrance to the spirituality and righteousness of others. "He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind; and the fool shall be servant to the wise of heart. The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise" (Prov. 12: 29-30).

When one member of the family succumbs to the temptations and allurements of the world, through their own lust, peer pressure, or Satan's devices, that one immediately becomes a hindrance to others in the family. They may influence brothers/sisters to follow them. Parents may veer from their steadfastness in righteousness as they seek to condone or justify the sibling that has departed from truth and right. Each Christian needs to realize his/her potential to stumble, and lead others down the path of spiritual death. Each should examine his every action in the light of it's spiritual effect upon others in the family, and in the church. We need to be a tree of life—bread of life—to others, rather than death. Each must answer to God for this responsibility.

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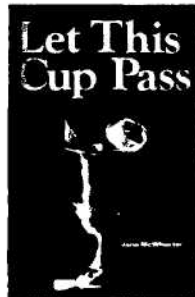
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"SO MIGHTILY GREW THE WORD OF GOD AND PREVAILED!"

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As Paul labored in the gospel at Ephesus, he found some people who had been baptized but not according to the full and true teaching of Christ. When they heard Paul preach the truth, "they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." They were not required first to study the books of men from some human headquarters for several months, but were baptized as soon as they heard and believed "on Jesus Christ" (Acts 19: 1-5). As we labor in the gospel today, we find people who have been baptized according to human doctrines. When they hear the true doctrine of Christ and believe on him, we baptize them immediately. This is urgent because Jesus promised to save people on this basis: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mk. 16: 16). After baptism, they will continue to learn the truth and to grow in it (Matt. 28: 19-20).

True Preaching: Urgent and Controversial

False religions do not understand the urgency of baptizing believers. Human religious organizations enroll people in classes to study the doctrines and commandments of men for weeks and months before baptizing them. To become a Roman Catholic, a person must first study the catechism and human creeds approved by the Pope and the headquarters in Rome. To become a Jehovah's Witness, a person must first study human books and doctrines approved by the President and headquarters in Brooklyn, NY

Paul taught the truth both publicly and privately, and did not avoid controversy. The truth has everything to gain and nothing to fear from public examination. Paul visited synagogues, schools, and other public places where people were willing to discuss and to debate "concerning the kingdom of God" and "the word of the Lord Jesus." By the power of the truth, he exposed the false religions, theories, and claims of men. "**So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed**" (Acts 19: 8-20). Satan could not withstand the power of the truth, but he blinded the minds of many people by appealing to carnal motives, to tradition, to emotions, and to the worldwide success of man-made religions (vv. 23-41).

God's true people today preach the gospel both publicly and privately, and do not avoid controversy. False teachers fear public examination, dodge open discussion, and make excuses for not debating. They cannot withstand the power of the truth but offer men earthly advantages, traditions, emotionalism, and the world-

wide success of their religious organizations. For instance, Jehovah's Witnesses limit the space in heaven to 144,000 people and offer most of us only the hope of carnal life on earth. Traditions are emphasized in Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Episcopal churches. Holiness, Pentecostal, and charismatic groups offer emotionalism. Tradition and emotion are combined in the superstitious claims of weeping statues, visions of Mary, and wine changing into Jesus' blood in Catholicism. Mormons, Catholics, Pentecostals, Jehovah's Witnesses, charismatics, and many other denominations claim their worldwide success proves that God is with them.

But none of these groups is interested in a forum of public study and discussion where BOTH sides can be heard in examining their doctrines and claims. They simply cannot withstand the light of public exposure. Ask the so-called Jehovah's Witnesses whether Christ, Peter, Paul, and others engaged in public controversy in Bible times (Matt. 21-22; Lk. 13: 6-17; Jn. 8; Acts 2; 15: 1-7; 17: 17; 19: 8-9). They say, "Yes, but we don't debate today." A charismatic preacher in Houston, TX named Don Hurley who defected from the church of Christ answered the same question, "Yes, they did but I don't." Almost every denominational preacher must answer the same way.

Our Preaching Today: Urgent and Controversial?

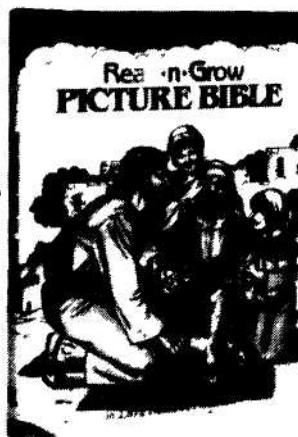
It is a danger sign when brethren today seek some non-controversial way to preach Christ, when they are ashamed of preaching which contrasts truth and error, and when they echo the claim of false teachers that "debates do more harm than good." New Testament preachers did not speak smooth words and fair speeches, but spoke "as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4: 11). Their cry was, "Contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints," **not** "Accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative" (Jude 3). They did not organize public relations seminars on "How to Win Friends and Influence People," but taught brethren how to "answer every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. 3: 15). Their preaching was distinguished by knowing nothing except Jesus Christ and him crucified, by speaking the truth in love, and by boldness and great plainness of speech. Rather than mimicking the fads and fancies of the day, they proclaimed the teaching of Christ as the **only** right way in religion (1 Cor. 2: 2; Eph. 4: 15; 2 Cor. 3: 12; 7: 4; Jn. 14: 1-6; Eph. 4: 4-6).

"So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed." The power of Paul's preaching at Ephesus was not in himself but was in the truth of the gospel. Jesus prayed, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (Jn. 17: 17). Truly, Paul was "not ashamed of the gospel of Christ" but proclaimed it as "the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1: 16). The education of Paul and the eloquence of Apollos amounted to nothing when it came to the power to convert lost souls. God alone gives the increase and He gives it through the preaching of Jesus Christ—"for other foundation can no man lay" (1 Cor. 3: 5-11).

We must guard against leaning on the broken staff of error's appeal. It is not our business to tailor the truth to fit man's temporal or "felt" needs. The gospel is not offered by God under the hamburger slogan, "Have it **your** way." When we preach the whole counsel of God and rightly divide it, it informs men of their spiritual needs and of God's way of meeting these true needs (Acts 20: 27; 2 Tim. 2: 15; 3: 16-17). Our appeal is not to some great human tradition, some "mainstream" historical movement, or some list of renowned "fathers." We must simply "preach the word" (2 Tim. 4: 2). Paul repudiated crafty manipulation through emotionalism or salesmanship, and showed his genuine concern for souls by "manifestation of the truth" (2 Cor. 4: 2). We are not to create a "join-the-parade" and "get-on-the-bandwagon" mentality by picturing the gospel and the church of Christ under the aura of our "worldwide success." Instead, we plead for men to come to Christ because he is "the way, the truth, and the life" — he is the power and wisdom of God — there is no other way to heaven (Jn. 14: 6; 1 Cor. 1: 24).

Like Paul at Ephesus, let us boldly preach the truth of the gospel of Christ. Let us preach the urgency of both faith and baptism for salvation. Let us expose and oppose every false system of religion, every form of sin and wickedness, and "every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God" (2 Cor. 10: 3-5). If such admonitions make us uneasy and if such preaching seems out of style, that is proof we are drifting from the true power of the gospel. If we will preach and teach as God intended, it can be said in our time, "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed!"

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CHOOSING SIDES

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I'm sure all of us can remember playing games when we were children that required that we "choose sides." The process for those games however usually required that two people be chosen for "captains" and they would then take turns choosing the ones they wanted on their team. On those teams the object was that every person who wanted to play could play, and the teams were fairly even in terms of numbers and quality of players. Now we live, as adults, in a situation where we are wanted by both God and Satan and WE must make the choice.

Part of the process of choosing is knowing something of the captain of each team and the benefits of being on that team. Since most reading this have already chosen to serve God, it isn't necessary at this time to go into all the differences between Satan and God, and all the reasons for choosing to serve and please God instead of Satan. It is sufficient to say that while Satan promises "the pleasures of sin for a season" (Heb. 11: 25), the end of that way is everlasting punishment. On the other hand, while God does not promise an easy life here or freedom from problems or suffering, "the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6: 23).

As you read the history of the Jews it is clear that several times God had to call upon His own people to make a choice. Perhaps those examples will help us. In Exodus chapter 32, after Aaron had made a golden calf for the people while Moses was up on the mountain, Moses returned to see the sin they committed. And verse 26 says, **Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the Lord's side? Let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him.** " And following this some 3,000 people were killed because of sin. We might think that surely all those who came out of Egypt would have been "on the Lord's side" but apparently this was not so!

In First Kings chapter 18 we read about the time of king Ahab and queen Jezebel. Jezebel was supporting many prophets of Baal instead of those who were following God. It seems that even the people were confused or perhaps afraid. But then comes the prophet Elijah on the scene to confront not only Ahab and the prophets of Baal, but also to confront the people. In verse 21 he said: **"How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word."** How many of us made the choice to be baptized many years ago but are now much like the Jews of old,

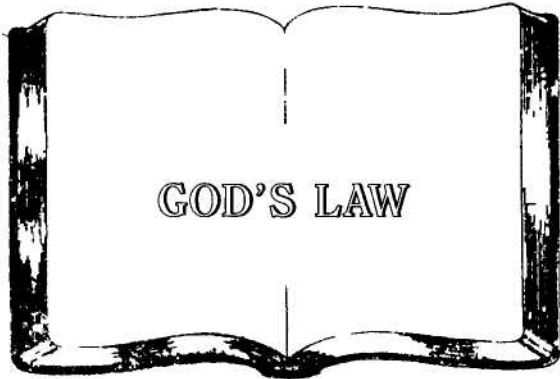
confused or full of apathy? If so we need to wake up and realize that it takes more than being baptized to choose God. Elijah said, **"If the Lord be God, follow him."** And this is part of "choosing sides."

Many people seem to believe that once we have chosen God we are then free to offer any kind of worship or service that may please us. Is that true? No, it is not! When Joshua had finished leading the children of Israel in taking the promised land he said to them, **"Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord"** (Josh. 24: 14-15). Joshua urged the people to choose God, but this included serving Him **"in sincerity and in truth."** Sincerity has to do with the way we serve from our hearts, but truth has to do with serving in keeping with His instructions. Our worship today is no different from this. When answering a question about where to worship Jesus said: **"But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipper shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth"** (John 4: 23-24). Choosing God means we decide to do things His way, to follow His rules, not to do that which pleases us.

But for purposes of this study I believe "choosing God" has to do with getting serious about being Christians. Many act as though being a Christian was a game, and the church some sort of club. Brethren, this is not a game. Neither is this a practice session or shadow boxing. This is the real thing; what life is all about. In the 13th chapter of the Roman letter Paul gave this admonition to the Roman Christians: **"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof** (Rom. 13: 11-14). In a world where Satan seems to be winning most of the rounds, its time to decide whose side we are really on and get serious about living for the one who died for us!

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HEALTH INSURANCE

Concerning his disciples Jesus said, "... they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (Jno. 17: 14). And, while we cannot eliminate those things which are in the world, we can have some control over the practice of worldly things in the church (1 Cor. 5: 10, 11).

Even those things which may not be immoral within themselves, but are still classified under the "cares" of life need to be placed in proper perspective and given their proper priority (Lk. 8: 14; 1 Tim. 4: 8).

There is no question as to the importance of the soul when contrasted with the physical body, and yet the health of the body is important (1 Cor. 6: 19, 20; 3 Jno. 2). Even under the law of Moses, many of the ordinances were nothing more or less than good hygiene to keep the physical body free of diseases.

But health insurance is another thing. While I have known insurance salesmen who used passages of scripture as Mt. 25: 1-13 (the five wise/foolish virgins), and 1 Tim. 4: 8 (providing for one's household), I still know of no scripture that makes health insurance mandatory.

Yet, there is no denying that our medical/hospital system is geared to the matter of health insurance. While there are several million people in this country without any kind of health insurance, they are still affected by the system based upon that commodity. And, preachers in the churches of Christ probably experience more difficulty with health insurance than any other group.

Most employers either provide full or partial health insurance coverage for their employees or at least make it possible for their employees to participate in some group plan. Even many churches provide or make available some form of health insurance for preachers or other full-time employees.

In another article ("To Thy Tents, O Preachers!"), I discuss some of the pros and cons of preachers who support themselves either partially or fully in preaching the gospel. The matter of health insurance may help some younger men decide which direction to go.

Back around 1959 when we moved to Akron, Ohio, Blue Cross told us that our insurance rates would be increased, and in addition to that we would have to pay three months in advance. They put me out of health insurance real fast. Some brethren told us we couldn't afford to be without it, but not one offered to help us afford it, either. When you don't have the money to pay

a premium, you just don't have it, and all the rhetoric in the world won't charge things.

For the next 10 years, we had no health insurance of any kind, until I began working on construction to help support myself while preaching for small congregations. By working so many hours in a quarter, I qualified for health insurance. Not only did I qualify for their insurance, and even had a supplemental policy through Banker's Life. I had insurance coming out my ears.

All this time, some well-meaning brother (generally another preacher), would either tell me or send word to me that I needed to get out of construction work and get back into "full-time" preaching, although I was doing more preaching than were some of the preachers giving the advice. But none of them ever suggested how I might obtain hospital insurance if I gave mine up.

Finally, I did ease out of construction work, and also eased out of health insurance, which we did without for a few years. In the early 80's, I went back to work on construction for six months to get my insurance reinstated, and not only did that, but was able to pay the premiums myself for some three years before losing the insurance due to insufficient hours of work. We have been without insurance for the past few years, but have just recently tried to get some more, and herein lies the crux of this article.

Even though my wife and I have enjoyed fairly good health, we have made the usual trips to the doctors, taken prescription medicines, I had a back injury 20 years ago which hasn't bothered me since, and my wife had surgery several years ago from which she completely recovered.

When Blue Cross approached us a few years back (through the mail), about obtaining a group policy through our checking account, we applied for it. They sent back forms for us to provide our medical history, which we did, and then they dropped us like a hot potato.

About three months ago, our insurance agent said he could provide us with a policy, but it would cost us around \$375 per month, contingent upon our medical history. He advised checking on an HMO, and even gave us phone numbers to call. One HMO didn't even sell individual policies, didn't write group policies outside a 30 mile radius, and the other HMO couldn't help us either. Seems that our state had waived the annual "open enrollment" for 1990, so we tried a group policy through the Farm Bureau where we live.

My policy was approved with three waivers, my wife's policy was approved with four waivers, and besides that, the premiums would increase \$50 over the quoted price, beginning January 1. On top of that, since my wife had gone to a doctor during the 2 1/2 months we waited for the policies to be approved, her policy had to be re-submitted for approval, pending the outcome of her last visit to the doctor as seen through the eyes of the insurance underwriters. A congregation has agreed to pay the premiums for us, provided we can get the insurance at the quoted price. The reason I'm detailing these events is to give a

word of advice to young preachers. If you can do enough preaching to satisfy your conscience and still make a living wage and obtain health insurance through secular employment, I'd advise you to give that option serious consideration.

Or, if you decide to give up secular employment and can obtain health insurance while you are young, and can afford it, be my guest.

But be advised of this one thing. The older you become, and the more visits you make to the doctor, the more difficult it will be for you to obtain any kind of insurance in later years, not to speak of affordable insurance.

All of my life I have planned not to draw social security if it interferes with the amount of preaching I want to do, and I have the good health and opportunity to continue doing that preaching. But now, since the whole country is geared to health insurance and Medicare/Medicaid, I'm not sure what I will do when that time comes. I still intend to preach as long as my voice, mind, and body hold out, but I don't know what options will be available to me in the next few years, given the changing laws regarding Social Security and private health insurance.

I'm not really that worried about what age 65 holds, when James says that we don't even know what tomorrow holds. Neither will there be any hesitation on my part about doing whatever constitutes "seeking first the kingdom of God" when that time comes. I'm not writing these things for my sake, but for the sake of younger preachers who may need to count the cost and make decisions while they still enjoy the advantage of youth, and access to the wisdom and experiences of those who have gone before.

I do not regret, not for one minute, having devoted my life to preaching the gospel of Christ. It is my prayer that all of the younger men who have decided to devote their talents to the furtherance of the gospel, by whatever means and to whatever extent, will be able to echo my sentiments, and to that end these things are written.

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When we are attempting to worship God, we try our best to be serious, even when there is something funny. That is not always easy to do. We can be assured that there will be times something funny will be said or done when no effort has been made in that direction. We all (especially preachers and those who take part in the worship) can relate to having trouble matching our words to our thoughts. I am sometimes amused at some of the wording that is used in announcements and prayers. I sometimes wonder if the people really mean what they say or not. Let me share a few that I have heard.

A very common expression used in prayer concerns a request on behalf of those who are **"sick of this congregation."** I often wonder, does he mean those of this congregation who are **sick** or does he mean those who are sick of this church? Oh well, they both need our prayers.

I don't hear as many preachers using this expression as in years past, but a few will conclude their lessons saying **"If you are here tonight..."** I have often wondered if anyone has **ever concluded that** they weren't there To whom is he speaking other than those that are there?

I was sitting on the front row once when a good friend of mine made the opening announcements saying **"Now for our first item of worship let us absorb the Lord's supper."** I think the word he wanted was "observe." I could just see the cup being passed and each member sticking his finger in the container to "soak up" what he could.

— Donnie V. Rader

PHILIPPINE REPORT 1990

Jerry Parks

1425 Wurtele Avenue
Louisville, Kentucky 40208

After a one month stay in the Philippines, it is good to be back home and to report to you on the activities and results of our recent trip. John Humphries and I left Louisville on February 26th. I returned home on March 28th. John had to return a few days earlier because of another meeting here in the states.

I believe the trip was very productive for several reasons. Thirty two precious souls were baptized into Christ. For this we are truly thankful to God. Since this is the longest that we have stayed in the Philippines, we were able to become better acquainted with brethren in this unique part of the world.

Because of our extended stay, we were able to cover a portion of the three basic sectors of the Philippine Islands: Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. Last year we had planned to go to Mindanao, but were hindered by typhoons.

The first week was spent in the Manila area as we enjoyed the hospitality of brother and sister Victorio Tibayan. We visited places like Tala, which is a leper colony as well as preaching to a group of bank employees and a community of people who make their homes under a highway bridge. Political unrest caused by the assassination of General Florendo and talk of another coup attempt made it necessary for us to check on the advisability of our travel within the country. We checked with both brethren as well as the American Embassy and finally decided that we would go ahead with our travel plans. John traveled to northern Luzon while I flew 600 miles to the southern most island of Mindanao. We were told that it would be safe as long as we stayed in the metropolitan areas. Therefore, John taught classes in Baguio City and surrounding areas while I conducted Bible studies in Davao City.

Since this was my first time to go to Mindanao and since I was not personally acquainted with any of the brethren there, brother J. R. Tibayan agreed to accompany me to Davao. J. R. proved to be a wonderful traveling companion and co-laborer. He has traveled with many American brethren in the past and we soon became the best of friends.

We stayed in the home of brother and sister Joy Notarte and later in the week we stayed with brother and sister Juanito Balbin. Their hospitality will long be remembered and appreciated.

Our Bible classes started at 8: 30 each morning and

QUOTE

"We cannot become what we need to by remaining what we are."

—Max De Pree, Leadership Is An Art

UNQUOTE

would continue till 5:00 in the afternoon. I studied through the book of 1st Timothy which was followed by a Filipino preacher translating the lesson into the local dialect. After that there would be an extended question and answer period which generally stimulated a lot of discussion. There were about 75 preachers who were in attendance throughout the week. They came from all parts of Mindanao, many at great personal sacrifice in order to be with us.

In addition to the teaching we were able to do, we also had opportunity to hear brethren tell of their hardships and the difficulties they face with poverty, drought and discouragement. Various denominations continue to pour money into the Philippines along with their social gospel. It is not unusual to find a big beautiful Catholic, Mormon, Baptist or 7th Day Adventist church building complete with school, medical hall and basketball courts in a community of bamboo houses. This would be a great enticement to people anywhere, but especially in a place where poverty prevails. In spite of such hindrances, brethren continue to preach the word, distinguishing between the Lord's church and the churches of men. Thankfully, people continue to be drawn to Christ by the simple power of the gospel.

After returning to Manila for a few days, brother Humphries and I few to Palawan, a long skinny island on the western side of the Visayas. We conducted classes in Puerto Princesa as well as preaching for various congregations in the area. Brethren attended the classes from as far away as Brook's Point which is 200 kilometers to the south. There were several problems which soon became apparent and we were able to address these in the course of our studies. Before we left, brethren seemed to be in a much better frame of mind

Personal clashes were resolved and unity now seems to prevail among the preachers.

Our last full week was spent in the home of brother and sister Ben Cruz. We conducted classes at Kapitbahayan as well as participating in various home bible studies. We were also greatly assisted by brother and sister Noli Villamor who helped us with some banking transactions. Sister Teresa Cruz took care of our medical needs. Dr. Teresa provides medical attention for most all the brethren in the Manila area. She is a great blessing as most all the brethren are ready to attest.

There is yet much to do in the advancement of the cause of Christ in the Philippines. Others are needed to make the kind of trips that I have just described. This is a source of great encouragement to the Filipino brethren, it provides much needed teaching and an opportunity for a better understanding of the poverty that so afflicts the gracious people of this struggling nation. Poverty is indeed, the greatest physical problem these brethren are facing. It is the cause of most of the medical problems. Diseases like tuberculosis and other health problems are rampant because of the poor living conditions and pollution that fills the air and water.

Brethren, we are blessed abundantly here in the USA. We must not become weary in well doing. The opportunity is there for us to help. Why not consider helping with the support of a Filipino preacher. There are many good preachers who have been preaching for years without any support. Preachers who are living in poverty conditions making great sacrifices in order to continue the work of spreading the gospel. I would be glad to share any information that I have with any individual or congregation that might be interested in helping such a person.

THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

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

WAYNE S. WALKER, 310 Haynes St., Dayton, OH 45410 — The Haynes St. church just recently concluded one of the best attended meetings we've had since I've been here. Lloyd Barker did an excellent job preaching. We have a summer meeting/VBS planned for June 18-22 with David Eakin speaking on creation and evolution. Since the first of the year, three families have identified with us.

Also, we are now helping to support Dan Clarkson at Brookville, OH \$400 a month. My own meeting schedule will find me at Waynesville, OH (April), Booneville, KY (May) and Winchester, OH (June). If you are visiting in or moving to the Dayton area, we invite you to worship with us.

MICHAEL GARRISON, 447 Prospect St. Hudson, NY 12534 — After four years with the church in Franklin, NC, I am to begin working with the church in Hudson, NY on April 15th. When I went to Franklin I was single. I leave Franklin happily married to the former Brenda Jones of Parrish, AL. We met as a result of my preaching trip to Australia in 1988.

The church in Hudson meets at 521 Warren St. (2nd floor). As yet, I have not raised the support needed to live in Hudson, but we move

there in faith that God will provide for us as he always has. If you know of available support, please write to me.

The Hudson congregation numbers about 40. They are zealous about spreading the gospel in this area. Pray with us that much good may be accomplished. When in the area, met with us at 9: 30 a. m. for worship and 10: 45 a. m. for Bible study.

As I write this, I am working with the faithful church in Richlands, VA. They are still in need of a sound preacher. If you would consider the work here, call Randy Mitchell at (703) 964-5784.

FROM AROUND THE WORLD

NORWAY — **THOMAS BUNTING** reports "A teaching ad in a newspaper in eastern Norway (city of Moss) was printing last week. Request for the Bible correspondence course are just now coming in as a result of that ad. Andaktstelefonen (the dial-a-devotion) has given us another new contact. This seems to be a good way to keep the truth before the people. The response remains good nearly 100 calls each week. Today Bjorn Ringdal and I will begin our "door knocking" work. We will be out at least once a week now on a regular basis. As soon as

we get a little break in the weather, Borgar Andersen and I will be out distributing printed material in downtown Bergien. "

SPAIN — EFRAIN F. PEREZ reports "We are having several visitors. We already have 8 adults visiting the services regularly. Our attendance averages 45. I am continuing the Preacher Training Program each Saturday (Sept. - June) with six men. **Valor y Fe**, the little magazine I am printing, is going well. I am sending it to 95 different places. On March 11 we baptized two into Christ. "

PHILIPPINES — ISIDRO MANIBOG AND REUBEN S. AGDUMA — The current 1990 drought (which earlier started in Nov. '89) has now affected provinces nationwide bringing forth hardship, economically and above all the very **need for food** to many poor — even to farming brethren. The land was barren, cracking and many brethren failed to plant rice and other crops for lack of water supply. Grass is burned up. This drought is expected to last for many months. This prompted us to write for your love and generosity to relieve us (especially for food and medicine). Below are the local churches that in one way or another have need. We will be glad to communicate with any of you about this need. May we hear from you immediately. The congregations: 1. M'lang, 2. Kidapawan, 3. Sudapin, 4. Kabakan, 5. Lampayan, 6. Kiamba, 7. Ginatilan, 8. Sudsuwayan, 9. Bulanganon. Contact Isidro Manibog, Church of Christ, Ginatilan, Kidapawan, Cotabato 9400, Republic of the Philippines or Reuben S. Agduma, Church of Christ, Kidapawan, Catabato 9400, Republic of the Philippines.

NEED A PREACH FOR A MEETING?

The Traders Point Church of Christ in Indianapolis, IN is blessed with men capable of preaching the gospel. In addition to J. R. Bronger, the local preacher, Denver Niemeier, Sam Carter and Steve Niemeier work and worship with the church. All of these men are capable of doing the work of preaching including holding gospel meetings.

The Traders Point church has been paying the expenses of Denver Niemeier for the past few years, allowing him to hold gospel meetings for small, struggling congregations that do not have the funds to send for a preacher. The Traders Point church is willing to pay the expenses of any of these men to hold gospel meetings. If there are small churches that would like to have a meeting, but finances make it difficult, this church will pay the expenses for one of these men to do the preaching. Write to the Traders Point Church of Christ, 8220 West 82nd St., Indianapolis, IN 46278.

SONG BOOKS AVAILABLE

The church in Clute, TX (P. O. Box 457, Clute, TX 77531) has about 50 song books (Sacred Selections) in good to fair condition to give away. Those interested should call (409) 265-5283 or 265-2933.

ROGER HENDRICKS NEEDS US

On March 8, 1990 Roger Hendricks experienced some severe chest pains and was taken to the hospital. He had six arteries nearly completely closed, which necessitated immediate open heart surgery. Our prayers have been answered and Roger is back at home and recuperating normally. I am told that the cost has escalated to near \$50,000. Brother Hendricks has a small policy which pays a total of \$8,000. Folks, Roger is a faithful gospel preacher of many years of service. His preaching has been true to the gospel and his life has been one of purity. He is a faithful man. He is now in dire need of assistance. Preachers do not have companies to furnish insurance, nor programs for retirement. Their salaries are not, for the most part, on the level of men who have been with their companies for 25 years and more. Should we not rally around this godly preacher and ease his heart from his heavy debt? Let's do what we can collectively and individually. Make your checks payable to him, 4702 Preston, Midland, TX 79707. — Leon Odom, 505 Sutherland Dr., Tyler, TX 75703

NEW CONVERT NEEDS ENCOURAGEMENT

Steve Wallace writes, "A young man recently baptized into Christ here in Ramstein has been transferred to K. I. Sawyer AFB in Michigan. In as much as I have been unable to locate any conservative work in that area, there is reason for concern about his spiritual welfare. If you would like to write him to encourage him, here is his name and address: James Juranek, PSC Box 121, K. I. Sawyer AFB, MI 49843.

BIBLE STUDY SERIES IN ONTARIO, CANADA

FRANK D BUTLER, 1509 Raby Ave., Shelbyville, TN 37160 — Gary and Laura Allen own a fishing and hunting lodge in Nestor Falls, Ontario, Canada, about 70 miles north of International Falls, Minnesota. Two other families from the area meet with them each Lord's day for worship. These families are trying to reach other Christians who may live within driving distance of their location and also generate some interest in Bible study with residents of the area. In their efforts, they have set aside the week of Aug. 18-25 for Bible Study. Their plan is to meet together each evening at their lodge for Bible study. They have asked me to prepare a special series of lessons for the occasion. We will spend some time fishing and some time inviting their neighbors to meet with us each evening to study God's word. If you are interested, please contact Gary and Laura Allen at Allen's Crow Lake Lodge, Box 250, Nestor Falls Ontario, Canada POX 1K0. Their telephone number is (807) 484-2628.

SOUTHSIDE LECTURES

The Southside church of Christ, 808 Fresa Road, Pasadena, TX 77502 is having its annual lecture program June 11-14, 1990. The theme will be "Presenting Every Man Perfect in Christ. " The speakers are Colly Caldwell, Mike Rosser, Paul Earnhart and Sewell Hall. Congregational singing will be led by R. J. Stevens. For more information call (713) 946-8562.

PREACHERS NEEDED

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE — The Perry Heights church of Christ, 423 Donelson Pike, Nashville, TN 37214, is looking for a preacher. This church of 150 members is self-supporting. A three bedroom house is available. Call (615) 883-3118.

HARDINSBURG, KENTUCKY — This small church (20-22) needs a preacher. It can supply \$10,000 a year. Other support must be raised. Contact Jessie Johnson, P. O. Box 360, Hardinsburg, KY 40143. Phone: (502) 756-2801.

WAVERLY, OHIO — We are a small group of twenty-five searching for a man to work with us full-time. We can provide a small amount of support. We know of three congregations that have stated they would be interested in helping in the support. Waverly is a city of five thousand. If you are interested contact: Phil Foster at (614) 289-2912 or 289-4910. Write to the church at P. O. Box 641, Waverly, OH 45690.

ASHLAND, KENTUCKY — The Carter Ave. church of Christ, Box 1703, Ashland, KY 41101 is presently looking for a full time evangelist. We would like to have a middle age man who is a good personal worker and is truly interested in growing. We are self supporting and a preacher's house is available. Call Charlie Rose (606) 836-3836, John Music (606) 324-6987 or Benton Kilgalin (606) 928-8784.

PREACHERS AVAILABLE

JAMES H. SHEWMAKER, 607-A West Rush; Harrison, AR 72601. Phone: (501) 741-9578. I am 32 years old and married. I have been working with the Capps Rd. church of Christ in Harrison, AR for two years. I have seven years experience in full-time preaching. My wife and I both desire to find a place where we can live for at least five years. You may reach me by contacting my father, Fred A. Shewmaker, 1101 S. W. Dorchester St., Port ST. Lucie, FL 3349983. (407) 340-2161.

TERRY F. SANDERS, P. O. Box 162, Orleans, IN 47452 — I am looking to relocate after nine years of preaching on an appointment basis while supporting myself with secular employment. I am 38 years old, married and have two children. I have experience in all types of work (classes, home studies, radio as well as preaching). Upon request, I will be happy to send a letter which will have more details about myself as well as references. (812) 865-3284.

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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 XXXI

JULY 1990

NUMBER 7

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Searching The Scriptures
P.O. Box 69
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Editorial

Donnie V. Rader

Introduction And Overview

P.O. Box 9 * Lexington, Alabama 35648



This special issue that you hold in your hand is an attempt at an objective study of passages, questions and issues relative to divorce and remarriage. Much is being said (and needs to be) about who teaches what. However, this special is a study of what **God's law** says.

Several months ago Connie W. Adams suggested that, while I was editing the paper this summer, I assemble the topics and writers and put out this special on divorce and remarriage.

The Need

A study, such as this special provides, is needed in view of the fact that there are problems brewing among brethren over divorce and remarriage.

Brethren in various parts of the country have begun to speak out as advocates of the doctrine that says the alien is not subject to the law of Christ on marriage, divorce and remarriage. Churches have been disturbed. Peace and unity have been broken. We have received reports of a few churches that have already divided over the question. One brother, who promised to speak out more, has written a book that was due off the press last month. We can be assured that where it is read it will have some impact and will do damage to the cause of Christ.

Ignorance abounds. Thus, we must study the word and know what the text says. As time goes on there will be an increase of divorce and remarriage both in and out of the church. It is a must that we study and know what God's law says.

The Focus Of This Special

There are a number of issues that surround divorce and remarriage. This special concerns itself with the question of whether the alien sinner is amenable to the law of Christ on marriage, divorce and remarriage or not.

Because there are some who tell us that it is difficult to be certain about what God's law teaches, **Wilson Adams** points out that God's law is simple. We can **know** God's law on divorce and remarriage. **Jim Deason** defines some terms that are important to any discussion of divorce and remarriage. As with any controversy, there are Bible terms that have to be redefined and misused to teach error. The alien sinner's relationship to Matt. 19: 9 is presented by **Dick Blackford**.

This special looks at two passages that are abused to argue that the alien is not under the law of Christ. Rom. 2 is presented by some as proof that the Gentiles were

not under any law; likewise the alien is not under any law from God. **Max Dawson** shows the fallacy of such reasoning as well as what Rom. 2 actually teaches. **Melvin D. Curry** analyzes 1 Cor. 7: 15 and its context, for it is misapplied to teach that the Christian married to a non-Christian is not under Christ's law on marriage and is free to remarry in the case of divorce.

What do we do when a couple decide to obey the gospel and we find that they are in an adulterous marriage? Or, suppose that two Christians living in adultery decide to repent. Is separation required? **Hoyt H. Houchen** gives the Bible answer to these questions.

H. E. Phillips will close our special with a discussion of what we are to do with God's law.

An Appeal To God's Law

Since January 1960, when H. E. Phillips and James P. Miller gave birth to this paper, its intent has been to search the **scriptures** — to make an appeal to God's word. This paper was started to help fight a battle with the error of institutionalism that threatened the church of our Lord.

Now, thirty years later, the policy has not changed. Only now, it is a different issue. We face this issue the same way other issues were handled.

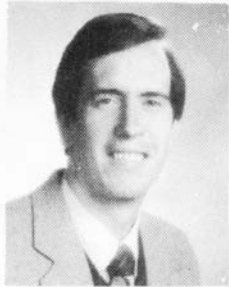
Our intent in this special is to ask, "What does God's law say?" We are not interested in what the "brotherhood" generally believes. We care little about what emotions or family situations may demand. Our standard will not be what some respected brother may say. We are concerned with what **God's law** says.

We must be reminded that the Bible is our only standard. We must believe and speak "according as it is written" (2 Cor. 4: 13). Peter said, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4: 11). We must be sure that we abide within the doctrine of Christ (2 Jno. 9).

We must also be reminded of the noble attitude that the Bereans had. They searched the scriptures to see if what they were taught was so (Acts 17: 11). Oh, how many problems could be solved if every brother and sister would do the same.

What Does God's Law Say?

Jesus said, "**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**" (Matt. 19: 9). While there are other



Can We Understand God's Law?

Wilson Adams

P.O. Box 185 * Gambrills, Maryland 21054

It's a simple question. Either we can or we can't. **If we say we can't**, then we impugn the wisdom of God for revealing a will that is impossible to understand. (I don't believe that, do you?) **But if we say we can**, then we are faced with the responsibility of preaching and practicing that will, regardless of the consequences. Regardless. Unless I've missed something, those are our two choices.

Now that does not argue that every passage in the Bible on the subject of divorce and remarriage is so utterly simple that it requires little effort or study. After all, doesn't 2 Pet. 3: 16 count for something? Peter said of Paul's epistles that they have some things in them that are **hard** (but not impossible) to understand. Yes, there are some scriptures more difficult than others requiring much study in order to arrive at an accurate conclusion. (And accurate conclusions can be reached!) No, I'm not going to over-simplify the case. But, neither am I willing

to lend the impression that God's will on this subject is so clouded in controversy that no one can understand the difference between right and wrong. And some have left that impression (at least with me).

So, what have we said? (1) That we can understand God's will on this subject, (2) that some passages require more study than others, and (3) that we need to be clear in our teaching.

So Why The Difficulty?

It is certainly not because of the lack of divine revelation (2 Pet. 1: 3). God has expressed His will on this subject just like He has expressed His will on every other subject. So why the confusion? Let's note four reasons".

1. **The emotion factor.** There can be no denying the difficulty of confronting a sinner in his/her sin especially when conversion to Jesus calls for a cessation of a sinful

passages that deal with divorce and remarriage, this one well summarizes God's law on the subject.

What do we learn from our text? (1) There is only one scriptural cause for divorce — fornication. (2) The one who puts away his mate and remarries commits adultery. There is one exception to that rule: when one puts away his mate for fornication (cf. Matt. 5: 32). (3) If one who is put away remarries, he commits adultery. There is no exception given to this rule. Therefore, we conclude from our text that the only person who has a right to remarry (in the case of divorce) is the one who has put away his mate for fornication.

This law applies to the alien sinner as well as the child of God. This is a part of the gospel of Christ which is for every creature (Mark 16: 15). Furthermore, in our text, the Lord applies this law to "whosoever."

We Can't Ignore God's Law, Error Or Problems Over Divorce And Remarriage

There are some who try to avoid any real study of this issue because it is so controversial. But, so were the topics of the organization and work of the church in the institutional battle. Some would have us to ignore our differences and not deal with those who advocate their doctrine that the alien is not amenable to the law of Christ. The same approach was tried on the issues of Premillennialism, instrumental music, the missionary society and institutionalism. A unity-in-diversity ap-

proach is not the answer. We must abide within the doctrine of Christ (2 Jno. 9) and contend for the faith (Jude 3).

Anyone with their eyes and ears open is aware of the fact that divorce and remarriage is an issue today. When error is taught, truth is challenged and a battle has begun. As the battle continues there will be problems and divisions to occur. Division is not caused by those who defend the truth. Rather, it is caused by those who circulate their error. Compare Matt. 16: 13-18. There was division over the question. "Who is Jesus?" Who caused the division? Was it Peter and others who contended that he is the Christ? Or, was it those who spoke contrary to the truth?

I appreciate the dedication of those servants of God who have gone before us and fought the innovations and errors that threatened God's people. What they did then has helped make us what we are today. Let us not forget that when the souls of men are led away in error, that those responsible will not only be those who sow their error, but also those who are indifferently silent. Let us gird our courage and speak.

Conclusion

This special is simple and understandable. It will not be difficult for you to follow as some material on the subject might be. As with the general thrust of this paper, it is written for the common man. Churches and individuals will find it helpful enough that they will want to order extra copies to distribute to every member in the congregation.

relationship. Sure, it's an emotional thing. (Do you think it was unemotional for Ezra, or John, or Jesus — Ezra 10-11, Matt. 14: 3-4; John 4: 17-18?) When appeals are made and positions established on the basis of emotion rather than Scripture, we have elevated human sympathy above divine revelation.

2. **An appeal to "names."** There is a tendency sometimes to put more stock in the teaching of men than in the teaching of the text. It happens with subtlety, but it happens (1 Cor. 4: 6).

3. **A feeling that the Scriptures are too difficult to understand.** And why? Because they are? I don't think so. The fact is, I don't get confused reading what God says on the subject of divorce and remarriage; I get confused when I read what some preacher says the Bible says on the subject! (Is there anyone else who can identify with that?) I mean, some people just have a knack for making the straightforward complex!

4. **Strange situations.** I am not a detective. I just preach the Book and encourage people to apply it to their lives. Sure, some situations are not clear (generally because the facts of the case are obscure), but most are clear. And when faced with two people living in a sinful relationship, I have no choice but that of confrontation between a sinful lifestyle and what the Bible commands. When I lose the courage to do that, I'm no longer worthy to preach the Gospel (2 Tim. 4: 1-5).

Now look back over our reasons as to why some have difficulty with this subject. Are they not basically the same reasons men have always used to "reason" away divine will? For example, doesn't a Baptist argue against the necessity of baptism on the basis of (1) **emotion** ("Are you saying that my sweet little ol' Baptist grandmother is lost?"), and (2) **an appeal to names** (quotes from scholars agreeing with his position), and (3) **a desire to make the Bible appear complicated** in regard to baptism, and (4) **a preoccupation with strange situations** ("What about the fellow on his way to be baptized who got hit by a truck?") You see, it's not really that different is it?

What Does the Bible Say?

God has given some very plain and clear statements on the subject of marriage, divorce and remarriage. Beginning in Genesis 2 and reiterated throughout the Bible is God's plan for marriage: one man + one woman for life. And when the issue of "divorce" was addressed in Malachi 2: 16 God said: **"For I hate divorce..."** (That's pretty clear...) And in the previous verses God spoke against those who had, by divorce, (1) broken the covenant with their companion (a covenant witnessed and remembered by God), (2) perverted the responsibility of the home: to raise up "godly offspring," and (3) dealt "treacherously with the wife of their youth" (vs. 14-16). I take that to mean that when two people get married, God intends for them to stay married... and that He remembers their vow of commitment long after they have "forgotten" (Ecc. 5: 4-5)... and that He hates divorce. What do you get out of that passage?

And what did Jesus say? *"What therefore God has joined together, let no man put separate,"* (Matt. 19: 6). (That's pretty plain!) And when faced with the custom of

musical marriages, He added, *"from the beginning it has not been this way."* And in verse 9 He declared further, *"And I say unto you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and he who marries a divorced woman commits adultery."* And Paul stated in Rom. 7: 2-3 that if a woman was married to another man while her "husband" was living, she would be called an "adulteress." And take a look at 1 Cor. 7: 10, *"But to the married I give instructions, not I, but the Lord, that the wife should not leave her husband (but if she does leave, let her remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband), and that the husband should not send his wife away."* Those passages seem pretty clear.

Now unless I've missed something there are only three states in which one can live: (1) the state of celibacy (unmarried), (2) the state of honorable marriage (Heb. 13: 4), or (3) the state of dishonorable marriage (adultery, Rom. 7: 3). I know of no others. Do you?

So... what about those living in the state of dishonorable marriage (one that God does not recognize)? Are they subject to what the Bible says on marriage and divorce? What does the Bible say? Can we understand it? Let's see.

1) John 17: 2. Jesus has authority over "all mankind."

2) Acts 17: 30. "All everywhere" are to repent. Which ones? "All." Who is excluded? No one. Why is repentance necessary? Because there will be a day of judgment (vs. 31). And who will be judged? "The world." And how will the world be judged?

3) John 12: 48. *"He who rejects Me, and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day."* Question: Has the non-Christian living in a sinful marriage relationship rejected the words of Jesus on that subject? HE SURE HAS! If the non-Christian isn't subject to what the Lord said on the subject of marriage and divorce, then how would you explain John 12: 48? Yes, they are accountable. Read it again.

And isn't repentance a prerequisite for baptism (Acts 2: 38; 3: 19)? And doesn't the Bible teach that for one to repent there must be (1) recognition of sin (Acts 2: 37), (2) godly sorrow (2 Cor. 7: 9-10), and (3) a demonstration of change (Luke 3: 8a)? Now apply those three principles to one living in a sinful marriage relationship and you tell me what they must do.

Or look at Romans 6: 1. *"Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase?"* There are some today who say "Yes!" Paul said "No!" (vs. 2).

Or 1 Cor. 6: 9-11. If a man robs a bank because he needs the money to feed his family (emotional argument) and the next week obeys the gospel, can he keep the cash? (When you answer that, you've answered the dilemma of the adulterer.)

Conclusion

You can understand your Bible on this subject. That doesn't mean you won't need to study some passages longer than others, but it does mean that you can read the words of the text and come to understand the difference between right and wrong. I believe that with all my heart. Don't you?



Squaring Our Terminology With The Bible

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Communication is the life-blood to every relationship we sustain. Being able to understand one another in our speech as well as understanding the word of God, is imperative to peace, harmony and unity. When God wanted to divide and scatter the people of the ancient world He did so by confusing their language. Wanting to hinder the building of Babel's tower, God said, "Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech" (Gen. 11: 8). Whenever two people speak a different language, or use the words of their common native language in different ways, communication becomes difficult and results in a lack of understanding. A lack of understanding almost always results in some breach of relationship.

On the other hand, with understanding comes the possibility of agreement and unity. Paul entreated the Corinthians that they might "all agree, and there be no divisions among" them, but that they be "in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1: 10). Basic to this unity was the ability of the Corinthians to understand Paul, the Word of God, and their speech with one another. These same ingredients are necessary to unity among God's people today. Since we have God's Word competently translated into our native language, it is imperative to understand it and one another that we learn to communicate Bible ideas with Bible language.

This appears to be the very reason why the Holy Spirit moved Paul to explain the concept of inspiration to the Corinthians. He said, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, *not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words*" (1 Cor. 2: 12-13). The Spirit inspired words of Scripture teach us the mind of God, making it necessary to understand the meaning of these words and how they are used in their context, in order to understand God's will for us and be united with one another. We must use Bible terms in Bible ways to describe Bible concepts.

In no area of study is the need to use Scriptural language any greater than when discussing the theme of this special issue. In this article I want to notice four key terms and how I believe they are commonly used in Scripture.

Marry

The word "marry" means "to take a wife" or, with

reference to a woman, "to give one's self in marriage" (Thayer, pg. 108-109). "It always refers to a shared life of a man with a woman" (New International Dictionary of N. T. Theology, pg. 579). Having its beginning in the garden of Eden and being regulated by divine law, the institution of marriage has been found in every society and in every age.

In the New Testament the word "marry" or some form of it is used in two ways. First, it is used to describe the action of people who, with the approval of God, enter into this relationship with one another (1 Cor. 7: 9). Describing this relationship Jesus said, "Have you not read, that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh? Consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate" (Matt. 19: 4-6). Thus, are two people who have the divine right to one another not only married, but bound under law to God to one another for life.

The word "marry" is also used to describe the action of people who enter into this shared relationship without the approval of God. Jesus said, "whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and MARRIES ANOTHER WOMAN commits adultery. " One may not have God's approval or be bound to the other woman as emphasized in this text, but according to the language of Scripture, he is certainly MARRIED to her.

"Divorce" or "Put Away"

There are four different but almost synonymous Greek terms used for divorce in the New Testament. The two 111 mention here are APOLUO ("to loose from, sever by loosening, undo; to set free" Thayer, pg. 66. Matt. 1: 19; 5: 31-32; 19: 9) and CHORIZO ("to divide, separate one-self, " Arndt and Gingrich, pg. 898. Matt. 19: 6; 1 Cor. 7: 10-11). Let us notice here that one can be divorced and have the right of remarriage with the approval of God as in the case of one who divorces his wife because she committed fornication (Matt. 19: 9). But the same passage shows that a man CAN DIVORCE his wife without the approval of God, MARRY ANOTHER, but this relationship be adulterous.

The point is this, "... it is a flagrant violation of language and reasoning to argue that a person is divorced and yet married to the person from whom he/she is divorced. A person may be divorced unscripturally, but he/she is yet divorced; and a person divorced from an-

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The Alien And Matthew 19:9

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If the teaching of Jesus on the subject of marriage and divorce in Matthew 19 applies only to Christians, it would appear that one may marry and divorce many times before conversion and after baptism one may "love the one you're with" at that time.

Definitions

Most terms relating to our subject will have been defined in other articles in this issue, so it will be unnecessary to give detailed definitions here. The author gives credit to the reader for understanding these terms. However, it is best that we describe the position that is under examination. Are sinners (those who have

never become Christians by obeying the gospel) accountable (subject to obey) to the teaching of Jesus on marriage, divorce, and remarriage? Or does it apply only to those already in a spiritual relationship with Christ? The author contends that non-Christians are accountable and shall attempt to prove that position by: (1) the context, (2) related scriptures, (3) the meaning of repentance, and (4) parallel illustrations. Also, inconsistencies, absurdities, and consequences of the alternate position will be shown.

The Context

The universality of the gospel causes all men to be

other person is not married to that person. This business of insisting that one may be divorced 'in the eyes of men' and not divorced 'in the eyes of God' is nonsense. God may not approve of a given action (divorce or whatever), but that does not mean that the action does not occur because God does not approve of it. A divorce without unscriptural grounds is yet a divorce and renders the person divorced 'unmarried.' " (**Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage**, Maurice Lusk, pg. 44-45).

To Lusk's statement I would add one thing. A word can only have one meaning in a given context. To use the word "divorce" in Matthew 19: 9 as a civil or societal divorce when referring to one party and a mental process when referring to the other is likewise a "flagrant violation of language and reasoning." The fact is that a divorce in any society is basically the opposite of marriage and is that to which Jesus refers in Matthew 19: 9. It is the repudiating of a person's societal claims and responsibilities to his/her spouse. And such is the breaking of the marriage relationship that is condemned by Jesus in Matthew 19: 6, 9 and other passages.

Adultery

Adultery (from Gr. MODICHEUO) carries a common meaning of sexual relations between a married person and someone who is not their lawful mate. Involved in the idea is that when one has committed adultery he has contaminated, debased, corrupted and defiled that which God has "joined together" (Matt. 19: 6). Adultery can be committed in at least two ways as revealed in Matt. 5: 32 and 19: 9. One, by committing fornication or sexual immorality. Two, by marrying another without God's sanction which, in itself, will involve sexual immorality and is an adulteration of God's plan for

marriage. I believe the term is misused by some when, without reference to sexual immorality, they maintain that adultery is only the act of an unscriptural divorce and subsequent unlawful remarriage.

Covenant

This word in the New Testament signifies a disposition of property and is different from our modern English word which signifies a mutual undertaking or agreement (See W. E. Vine, pg. 250). It often carries the force of a promise or a commandment. In a futile effort to prove that alien sinners are not amenable to Matthew 19: 3-9, some are contending one must agree to keep the New Covenant before being held accountable to it. The error of this reasoning is seen when we use the Old Testament covenant of circumcision as an illustration. God commanded Abraham, "You shall keep my covenant... every male among you shall be circumcised" (Gen. 17: 9, 10), and then warned that anyone not circumcised would be "cut off from his people." Abraham was amenable to this covenant whether he agreed to it or not. Faith in God led him to agree, obey and receive God's favor. Disobedience meant punishment. So also it is with the alien sinner and Matthew 19: 9.

Conclusion

There has been a lot of confusion, if not equivocation, in the language we have used in some of our preaching and writing on this subject. Perhaps this has contributed to the misunderstanding of one another's views and alienation which now exists among some brethren. My brethren, it should not be so. I don't believe it would be if we would square our language with the Scripture and use Bible terms in Bible ways while describing Bible concepts.

subject to it (Mt. 28: 19, 20; Mk. 16: 15, 16; Lk. 24: 47-49). A modern view holds that not all parts of the law apply to every person and that Matthew 19 does not apply to all men till they enter a covenant relationship with Christ. To be sure, there are specific laws that apply to specific people who may qualify. The Holy Spirit's teaching on husbands applies to a man when he qualifies as a husband. His teaching on responsibility to civil government applies to all men when they become citizens. His teaching on murder, theft, lying, etc. applies to all murderers, etc., not just to "Christian" murderers, "Christian" thieves, etc. And his teaching on marriage applies when one qualifies by getting married. As one enters any relationship on which God has legislated, whether citizenship or marriage, he is accountable to God. The alien is not responsible for partaking the Lord's Supper **as an alien**. But he is responsible for entering that relationship where he can partake. If marriage was a relationship that is entered only at conversion then modern advocates would have a point. But marriage and conversion are unrelated. One may do one without doing the other. Likewise, one's responsibility to civil government is not tied to conversion. Therefore it does not become wrong to murder, steal or lie only after one has been converted.

The language of the context shows that Christ's teaching is general and not limited to a specific class. A qualifying phrase would need to be added if the teaching is to be restricted to children of God.

"Great multitudes" were present when Jesus did his teaching in Matthew 19 (v. 2). The Pharisees were part of the crowd. They asked, "Is it lawful for **a man** to put away his wife for every cause?" Jesus asked a question in return. He did not ask whether they meant **a man** who was a saint or one who was a sinner. Thus, it made no difference. He did not ask, "What do your theologians say about it?" (Shammai and Hillel were rival schools of thought). Nor did he ask "What was the law when you entered your spiritual relationship with God when you were born into Judaism?" Instead, he went to the beginning **of** the human race! "Have ye not read, that he who made them **from the beginning** made them male and female... ?" (19: 4). This shows his teaching applied to all. "Marriage is a fundamental principle of the social order, God having it in view from the creation, and hence making male and female" (McGarvey).

Jesus proceeded saying, "For this cause shall **a man** leave his father and mother..." Notice, **a man**. What kind of **a man**? One who has experienced religious conversion? A heathen? He doesn't say, therefore it applies generally. A passage is to be understood in its plain and obvious meaning unless there is something in the context that forbids it. Jesus used the most general terms possible. Man (whoever he is) may not put away his wife for every cause and remarry.

Further, he said "What therefore God had joined together, let no man put asunder: (v. 6). No **man** of what persuasion? One who has become a Christian? One who cares nothing for the things of God? He doesn't say. Therefore it applied generally, in the most common way of understanding, unless he had qualified

it in some way.

Still further, when asked about possible exceptions granted by Moses, Jesus again went beyond religious experiences back to the creation of the human race — "from the beginning it hath not been so" (v. 8).

Then, he used another general word — **whosoever**. "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery" (v. 9). "Whosoever" means anybody.

If Jesus had intended for his teaching to apply generally, what else could he have said? If it be said that the language he uses does not convey it, then it is impossible to convey the thought in human language.

Related Scriptures

When Paul described the "vile passions" of the heathens, he gave a sordid description of gross immorality including homosexuality, lesbianism, and "all wickedness" (Rom. 1: 18-32). If sinners are not accountable to God's moral teaching how could they have been guilty of these? Or, were they guilty? Yes! Paul said they were "without excuse" and "who, **knowing the ordinance of God**, that they practice such things are worthy of death ... "(1: 20, 32).

In Rom. 6: 1 Paul asks, "Shall we **continue** in sin, that grace may abound?" To live (after conversion) in the same manner they had lived (before conversion) would be to **continue** in sin. If it was sin before conversion, then they were accountable.

In 1 Cor. 5: 9-11 Paul said there are people of the world who are fornicators, covetous, extortioners, and idolaters. How could they be if they were not subject to the moral teaching of Inspiration?

After naming various types of sinners (fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, homosexuals, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners), he says they would not inherit the kingdom of heaven. Then he says, "and such were some of you, but ye were washed..." (1 Cor. 6: 9-11). If they were guilty of these before they were "washed, " then they must have been accountable for "where there is no law, neither is there transgression" (Rom. 4: 15).

The Meaning Of Repentance

From its use in both testaments we learn that repentance is seeking God, returning to God, and turning from evil (Amos 5: 8; Mai. 3: 7; Jonah 3: 8). It is a vigorous and decisive break with sin and a complete and resolute return to Jehovah. Repentance is the opposite of sin. "It is the act by which the sinner who has disobeyed the will of God reverses his will and comes back with sorrow from the state of rebellion to the state of obedience" (Wilfred L. Knox, PENITENCE AND FORGIVENESS, p. 25). It is a radical and thorough change of the whole heart. There is a contrition for sin, a breaking of the heart in sorrow (Joel 2: 12, 13). It involves a hatred for sin (Amos 5: 15). Since it is an amendment of life, there must be evidence (fruit) of the change (Jonah 3: 10; Mt. 3: 8). If one "brings forth fruit worthy or repentance" he shows a change in his action. "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Mt. 7: 20). Repentance is best described by the military term "about face." If one has formed an adulterous marriage before

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Romans 2 — Were The Gentiles Under A Law?

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The Jews needed a Savior. This is what the second chapter of Romans is all about. The Jews needed a Savior because they were guilty of sin. They had violated the law God had given them (Rom. 2: 17, 23). The Gentiles also needed a Savior, because they too had sinned (Rom. 3: 9). But, what law had the Gentiles violated? They had not transgressed Moses' law, for that law was given only to the Jews. It cannot be true that Gentiles were under no law, for if that were the case, they would have no sin (Rom. 4: 15). They must have been under law, but what law?

Some time ago, a young Christian commented on the condition of Gentiles during the time of the Mosaic age, as "not being under any law." What would give anyone such an idea? The answer may be that we have represented the "Bible ages" in such a way that a false impression has been conveyed. We have produced charts that represent the Patriarchal, Mosaic and Gospel ages. One sees the beginning and ending of each of the periods, and though he may conclude the gospel is for

all men, he knows that the law of Moses is not for all men. He sees the Patriarchal age ending at Sinai, and wonders about the Gentiles. He wonders, "What law were Gentiles under since the Patriarchal age ended and the Mosaic age began?"

Such charts may accurately represent God's dealings with Abraham's seed, and explain how salvation came by Christ. To this end, they serve a useful purpose. However, they do not adequately deal with the Gentiles before the cross. Some have erroneously concluded that God was not dealing with the Gentiles at all once the Mosaic age began. This conclusion will not stand the test of the scriptures.

As a solution to the problem of Gentiles and law, some have suggested that the Gentiles were under something called "the law on the heart." This is variously described as "an inherent law," as "unrevealed law," as "law inbred within man," or, as "native instinct." However it may be expressed, some claim such a law is under consideration in Romans 2: 14, 15. Though the advocates of "inherent

conversion and continues in it after conversion, where is the fruit of his repentance? If the sinner is not accountable for his adultery, why does he need to repent for sins?

Parallel Illustrations

If one worships the same idol after baptism that he worshipped before baptism, it is still idolatry. If he takes the Lord's name in vain after baptism in the same words in which he did it before baptism, it is still cursing. If one tells the **same** lie after baptism that he told before baptism, it is still lying. If one steals the **same** car after baptism that he stole before baptism, it is still stealing. If one covers the same things of his neighbor's after baptism that he coveted before baptism, it is still coveting. **And**, if one commits an illicit sexual act after baptism with the **same** woman he was supposedly "married" to before baptism, it is still adultery. Why change the rule when we come to adultery?

Conversion will not change idolatry into a wholesome practice. That is no conversion at all. Nor will it change the same acts of cursing, lying, stealing, coveting, or adultery into that which is acceptable to God.

Inconsistencies And Absurdities

To say that non-Christians are not accountable to Christ's teaching on marriage in Matthew 19 is to say God does not recognize their marriages and thus he did not join them together. It is to say that God only begins

to recognize marriages at conversion. Prior to that time they would be as animals (amoral). Thus, if one mate is converted and the other is not then God would only recognize a "half marriage." This is an absurd consequence about which the Bible knows nothing.

If one is not accountable before becoming a Christian, what if a Christian turns his back on Christianity and completely renounces it? Does he cease to be accountable again until he repents?

What if a heathen married four women in one ceremony and later he and his wives hear the gospel and are baptized? Is his relationship with the four women sanctified at conversion if he was not previously accountable to Christ's teaching on marriage in Matthew 19? One might say the man had no right to marry four women. But that would be saying he was accountable. If what some are teaching about Matthew 19 is true, these are some very real consequences.

Conclusion

One becomes a sinner by sinning (violating the law, 1 Jn. 3: 3, 4). The reason the Corinthians were called fornicators, adulterers, etc. before they were "washed" is because they were subject to God's marriage law. God commands **all men everywhere** to repent. That means aliens are accountable to the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 19.

law" may say things that *sound* like what Paul said in this text, they do not *mean* what Paul meant.

What did Paul mean when he spoke of "the work of the law written in their hearts?" The word "law" is found five times in Romans 2: 14, 15. What law(s) is under consideration? Let us first look at the verses preceding Romans 2: 14, 15. In the first 10 verses of Romans 2, Paul discusses how the Jews had committed the same sins as the Gentiles, and affirms both would face the same consequences. This is consistent with the fact that God does not show respect of persons (vs. 11). In verse 12, Paul speaks of those (the Gentiles) who have "sinned without law." This statement must be understood in its context as being a reference to the written law, the Law of Moses. It could not be that they had "sinned without law" in an absolute sense, for Romans 4: 15 teaches that if there is no law there is no sin. Verse 12 also discusses those who sinned "in" the Law of Moses. Verse 13 uses the word "law" twice, again referring to Moses' Law. Paul demonstrates that it is not enough to merely hear the law. One must be a doer of the law. Verses 14 and 15 use "law" five times. Obviously, the Law of Moses, the written law, is under consideration in at least four of these five occurrences.

Note that it is "*when* the Gentiles... do... the things contained in the law" that they "shew the work of the law written in their hearts." Paul says nothing about this being true of all Gentiles at all times. He does say that under these conditions they "are a law unto themselves." In the context, Paul seems to be saying that some of the Gentiles had more nearly conformed to God's expectations than had some of the Jews. Having adopted some of the things found in the law, they had a means by which they might both approve and condemn themselves. Paul says the Gentiles "do by nature the things contained in the law." What does "nature" mean in this context? Does it refer to an endowment at birth? If so, they why was it necessary for God to give special revelation to the Jews concerning these things? If men are born with knowledge of these things, God does not have to reveal them to the Jews, nor to anyone else! The word "nature" is the same as that used in (Eph. 2: 3), "... and were by nature the children of wrath..." We have correctly understood this to indicate what man does by custom, practice or habit, not something inherent at birth. Man does not inherit sin, but he can bring himself to the point where he becomes, "by nature," a child of wrath. Thayer (p. 660), commenting on the word used in (Eph 2: 3) says, "a mode of feeling and acting which by long habit has become nature." By long habit and practice of sin, one is said to be "by nature" a child of wrath. As with sin in Ephesians 2: 3, so with law in Romans 2: 14. Gentiles do "by nature" (by long habit and practice) the things contained in the law. Man is neither born with sin nor law in his heart. Both sin and law are things learned by man. At most, Romans 2: 14, 15 proves some Gentiles practiced some of the things found in the law, and these practices become a norm by which they made judgments among themselves. No hint of man being born with "law on the heart" is found here.

Another question may be raised, "can man know what

is required of him without revelation from God?" If so, then Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians 2: 9-13 is devoid of meaning. A partial quotation will suffice, "... even so the things of God knoweth no man..." Man needs revelation to know what is in the mind of God. To this end Jeremiah wrote, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct this steps" (Jer. 10: 23). The advocates of "inborn law" would have us believe otherwise.

Before the time of Christ, Gentiles were under law to God, but it was law revealed from heaven. Romans 1: 18-32 speaks with unmistakable clarity. How could Gentiles hinder the truth if truth had not been revealed to them? How could they "change the truth of God into a lie?" How could the Gentiles reject knowledge if knowledge had not been given to them? While it is true, that from created things the Gentiles could conclude that deity exists, and from conscience conclude they were accountable to deity, they could not from these sources gain knowledge of God's will. These people knew the "judgment" of God (vs. 32). The Greek word used here is "dikaioma," an "equitable deed; by implication, a commandment, requirement" (**The New Englishman's Greek Lexicon**, p. 178). The NASB correctly translates the word "ordinance." Such language would not be used of persons who are not under law. To believe that Gentiles knew all these things by peering into their own hearts requires naivete "gone to seed." God's ordinance said one thing, their own hearts said another (vs. 24). Thus, they were without excuse (vs. 19-21).

Subsequently, one may question, "If God gave law to the Gentiles, why doesn't the Old Testament give us a detailed account of it?" The primary purpose of the Old Testament scriptures is to show us the working out of God's promise to Abraham. This does not demand an account of God's dealings with the Gentiles. It does require an account of God's dealings with the fleshly seed of Abraham. However, the Old Testament often provides glimpses of God's dealings with the other nations. Melchizedek was priest and king (Gen. 14: 18, 19). Abimelech was king over a righteous nation, and respected God's marriage laws (Gen. 20: 3-8). Abimelech II had respect for the same marriage laws and taught them to his people (Gen. 26: 6-11). Jethro, a priest of Midian, rejoiced to hear of Jehovah's goodness and Israel's deliverance. He offered burnt offerings to God and gave advice to Moses (Ex. 18: 1-27). Balaam, a prophet of Midian, gave revelation from God (Num. 22-24). David and Jeremiah spoke of all men being under the reign of God (Psa. 96: 1-10; 117: 1, 2; Jer. 10: 7). Jonah, a prophet to Nineveh, brought Gentiles to repentance with a message from God (Jon. 3: 1-10). Amos (and other prophets) spoke against Gentiles (Amos 1, 2). Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, learned that "the Most High ruleth over the realm of mankind" (Dan. 4: 30-37, NASB). Belshazzar was guilty of the same sins as Nebuchadnezzar, and Daniel says he knew better than to do as he had done (Dan. 5: 17-23). Darius, king of the Medes, not only had knowledge of the true God, but published a decree to the whole world that all men should fear God (Dan. 6: 25-27). Each case cited is found

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1 Corinthians 7:15

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First Corinthians 7: 1 begins, "Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote" (see also 7: 25; 8: 1; 12: 1; 16: 1). Because this entire seventh chapter consists of Paul's answers to questions that do not actually appear in the text, the interpreter must proceed with caution. There-fore, what we assume about the Corinthians' questions affects our understanding of Paul's answers. Further-more, we are looking for answers to our own questions about divorce and remarriage, and these questions may or may not correspond to the ones the Corinthians were asking Paul. We must be careful, therefore, not to read more into Paul's statements than he intended.

Chapter seven consists of four distinct parts: matters concerning abstinence and continence (vv. 1-9); matters concerning separation/divorce (vv. 10-16); matters concerning the Christian's calling (vv. 17-24); and matters of judgment for the Christian's benefit (vv. 25-40). Obviously, our attention will focus on 7: 10-16.

In 1 Corinthians 7: 10, Paul says, "Now to the married I give charge, not I, but the Lord. " However, in 7: 12, he writes, "Now to the rest say I, not the Lord. " The dissimilarity of these two statements at first is puzzling. Paul seems to contrast the sovereign authority of Christ with his own personal opinion, but he defers the discussion of judgmental matters until the end of the chapter (vv. 25-40). Actually, he is asserting his apostolic authority in 7: 12 in light of Jesus' assurance that the Spirit would "guide" the apostles "into all truth" (John 16: 13; see 1 Cor. 2: 6-13; 14: 37). Also, in some sense he distinguishes between "the married" and "the rest. " To say that he is referring to "the rest of their questions" breaks the flow of thought in the context. Note the sequence: "I say to the unmarried and to widows" (v 8), "unto the

married I give charge" (v. 10), and "to the rest say I" (v. 12). The simplest explanation is that Paul uses the generic category of "the married" to instruct Christians not to initiate a divorce, and he uses the specific category of "the rest" to single out those who had a problem because of "mixed marriages. " The Lord himself generically condemned the initiation of divorce except in the case of fornication, but He did not specifically discuss the matter of the desertion of a believer by an unbeliever. Therefore, nothing in these statements suggests that Paul is appealing to two distinct laws of marriage — one that applies only to believers and another that applies to mixed marriages between believers and unbelievers.

In verses 10-11, Paul addresses "the married. " He is responding to a question about separation or divorce, specifically concerning whether a Christian would be better off unmarried than married. Later on, in fact, he even affirms the desirability of the unmarried state during "the present distress, " saying, "He that is unmarried is careful for the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord: but he that is married is careful for the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and is divided" (vv. 32-34; see vv. 27, 40). His answer to this question is straightforward, "Do not depart! If you do, remain unmarried or be reconciled to your mate. "

In verses 12-16, Paul is answering a question about whether God recognizes the marriage between a believer and an unbeliever. The scruples of Jewish Christians about matters of ceremonial "cleanness" and "uncleanness" may have been in their minds (see Ezra 9: 2; 10: 1-44; Acts 10: 9-15; 2 Cor. 6: 14-7: 1). He responds by saying that both the marriage itself and the children born to the union are legitimate in God's eyes. A. T. Robertson summarized Paul's emphasis well, "Clearly he only means that the marriage relation is sanctified so that there is no need of divorce.... If the relations of the parents be holy, the child's birth must be holy also (not illegitimate)" (**Word Pictures** 4: 128). This interpretation best explains Paul's use of the terms "sanctified" and "holy" in verse fourteen.

The words of Paul that give us the most concern are found in verse fifteen. He says, "Yet if the unbelieving departeth, let him depart: the brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us in peace. " The range of interpretations of this verse is quite broad, and some important matters need to be given close attention.

after the call of Abraham.

Gentiles had opportunity to know the true God. Rejection of such knowledge of God does not change the fact that God had made his will known among the Gentiles. Gentiles could have some knowledge of God and righteous living in at least three ways. First, God gave revelation unto some by prophets and priests. Second, those who received revelation cause it to be passed from one generation to another. Third, by observing the Jews, the Gentiles could learn of God and principles of right living. The Biblical conclusion is clear. God has always had law to which he holds men accountable.



Is Separation Required?

1833 S. Fairplay Street * Aurora, Colorado 80012

Hoyt H. Houchen

First, the question assumes that a condition of adultery exists, and in such a case, must the man and the woman separate? The answer to this question cannot be decided upon the basis of emotions or human reasoning. The answer must be determined by what the Bible teaches.

Second, to arrive at a safe conclusion two things are involved: (1) what constitutes adultery — a sinful relationship? and (2) if it is, what is required in repentance?

When a man a woman who love each other marry, having the scriptural right to do so, a union is formed and God intends for it to continue for as long as both shall live. Marriage being designed. and originated by

God (Gen. 2: 18-24) must not be broken by man (Matt. 19: 6). It is sacred and holy. It is not instituted by man, the state nor by Christianity. It is of divine creation and symbolizes the union that exists between Christ and His church (Eph. 5: 31, 32). This holy relationship must be respected by man, and therefore is not to be looked upon lightly or with disdain. Being of divine origin and being a holy relationship, it is therefore to be regulated by the laws of God. He has decreed marriage for man's good and happiness. A scriptural marriage is one which God approves because it is in conformity with His laws which govern marriage. Conversely, an unscriptural marriage is one which God does not approve because it does not conform to His laws. Man can no more stipulate the

First, there is the problem concerning the meaning of the departure itself. Is it still in progress, or has the divorce been finalized? The present tense ("Departeth," **chorizetai**) "indicates the heathen partner's state of mind," i. e., "The unbeliever is for separating" (Robertson and Plummer, **First Corinthians** 143). There is no indication that a divorce has been finalized and that the believer is now a free person outside of the marriage bond.

Secondly, to whom or what is the believer "not under bondage?" To God? To God's law? To try to save the unbeliever? To marriage obligations? To the marriage bond? Paul uses the Greek perfect tense in the statement "the brother or sister *is not under bondage*" (*ou dedoulotai*). Lenski comments on this construction, "The perfect tense reaches back to the day when the unbelieving spouse entered upon the destination and states that from that moment onward the believing spouse has not been held bound" (**Corinthians** 294-95). Therefore, I agree with the explanation of Robertson and Plummer, "All that 'he is not bound' clearly means is that he or she need not feel so bound by Christ's prohibition of divorce as to be afraid to depart when the heathen partner insists on separation" (143). Paul is trying to assure Christians that if their unbelieving mates depart, such actions do not disrupt the "peace" in which they have been called. Some marriages between believers and unbelievers inevitably end in divorce because the partners are moving in completely opposite directions, and only one is headed the right way. The decisions that Christians must make in such tense situations will affect their future well-being; therefore, they may take consolation in the fact that "God hath called us in peace" (v. 15). There is no reason

for believers to feel deprived of a good conscience in intolerable entanglements. As much as I wish he had, Paul does not touch on the question of remarriage in this passage. What we believe about the right of a Christian who has been divorced by an unbeliever to marry again must be learned from other scriptures.

Thirdly, in verse sixteen, does Paul imply that the believer may or may not save the unbeliever? I, for one, would answer the question in the negative, but the other possibility remains open (see 1 Pet. 3: 1-6).

Now, if one cannot decide all these matters with certainty, how can he affirm positively that this passage permits a Christian to marry again if deserted by an unbelieving mate? Does not respect for biblical teaching demand that we follow a safe course?

Some argue concerning 1 Corinthians 7: 15, "Paul gives no reason **why** the unbeliever left." Whatever the reason may be, they say, the believer is "not under bondage in such **cases**" and is free to marry again. These brethren believe in God's ideal for marriage and that adultery is sinful, but consider a hypothetical scenario that shows what this interpretation permits. What if the unbelieving mate divorces his believing wife because she has committed adultery with another man. Since their "mixed marriage" is not governed by the restriction of Matthew 19: 9, according to those who hold this position, the believer is now free to marry again. Common sense tells me that there is something wrong with this kind of reasoning.

I am bound by God's repeated request to preach, "Do not divorce! Marriage is for life!" Everything I say and do as a Christian should reinforce this truth. Therefore, I, for one, cannot use this passage to encourage individuals who are divorced and in questionable circumstances to remarry.

conditions of marriage or divorce than he can about how to become a Christian. God, in His divine revelation to man (the Bible), has set forth those conditions which make a marriage right; therefore, man is forbidden to alter those conditions. He must not venture to change with his unholy hands that which God has made sacred and holy. The same God who made the rules for entrance into the church and the rules that govern the church, also made the laws which govern marriage.

What constitutes a sinful relationship in marriage? Jesus taught in Matthew 19: 9: "... Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marryeth her when she is put away committeth adultery." Thus, he who puts away his mate for a cause other than fornication, and marries another commits adultery. like-wise, when one marries her who is put away also commits adultery. It is a violation of God's law on marriage and divorce, therefore it constitutes an adulterous and sinful relationship. Individuals who continue in this relationship are LIVING in sin. Paul wrote to the brethren in Colosse: "Put to death therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry; for which things' sake cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience: wherein ye also once walked, when ye LIVED (emphasis mine, H. H.) in these things" (Col. 3: 5-7).

The relationship of the alien to the laws of God on marriage is dealt with by another author in this special issue. But let us observe that brethren seem to have less difficulty in understanding what the relationship is when two people divorce and remarry for an unscriptural reason AFTER they became Christians, than they do about two people in that situation BEFORE they became Christians. Brother R. L. Whiteside very ably commented: "It is argued that aliens may divorce for any cause, and remarry; and then all their sins, including their loose marriages, are forgiven when they obey the gospel... If their marriage was a sin, can they repent of that sin and still continue in it? If they were living in adultery, are we to be told that obedience, or rather a form of obedience, of the gospel changed adultery into a virtue? Where would such a theory lead? If a man steals a car, rides it to meeting, and then goes through the form of obedience of the gospel would that act make his possession right in the sight of God?"

"It is argued also that, as the alien is not in a covenant relationship with the Lord, the Lord takes no notice of what he does; and that, not being under the law, he violates no law. But if that sort of reasoning is true, *what makes* an alien a sinner at all? Shall we teach the alien that, no matter what he does, he commits no sin? If he commits no sin, wherein is he a sinner, and why does he need a Savior, and how can he be baptized for the remission of sins? Here we leave the matter for the reader's reflection till another time." (**Gospel Advocate**, July 18, 1935).

All sinful relationships must be repented of whether they exist among people out of the church (aliens) or

those in the church. There is no double standard. Repentance stands squarely between Godly sorrow and reformation of life and applies to all — aliens and children of God. John the Baptist told the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to him to, "bring forth therefore fruit worthy of repentance" (Matt. 3: 8). The fruit of repentance is seen in a changed life. The Jews on the day of Pentecost asked Peter and the other apostles, "brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2: 37). Peter commanded them to repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins (vs. 38). Their repentance is seen by their fruit. "They then that received his word were baptized: (v. 41). In Acts 8: 22, Simon, an erring child of God, was told to repent and pray. In either case, whether one is a child of God or an alien, he must repent and repentance demands a turning away from sin (ceasing to continue in it), bringing forth fruit worthy of repentance. Any sinful relationship should be severed, including an adulterous marriage. Herod was living with Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. John told him, "It is not lawful for you to have her" (Matt. 14: 4). It should be obvious to all as to what would be necessary for this sinful relationship to cease. It would have to be dissolved.

In Ezra 10: 1-19 we are told of Israelites who had transgressed the law of God by marrying foreign women. Concerning this matter, "Ezra prayed and made a confession, weeping and casting himself down before God" and "the people wept very sore" (v. 1). They confessed their sins and said, "yet now there is hope for Israel concerning this" (v. 2). Then they said, "Now therefore let us make a covenant with out God to put away all the wives, and such as are born to them... and let it be done according to God's law" (v 3).

God's law of pardon is equally strong for both the alien and the erring child of God. The blood of Jesus washes away all the sins of the obedient alien (Acts 22: 16) and those of the penitent child of God (1 Jno. 1: 7-9). As repentance is required of the erring child of God, it is also required of the alien who comes to God. In either case, repentance requires the dissolving of an adulterous relationship, if it exists. Please consider: if an alien who has been baptized, can continue to live in an adulterous relationship that began BEFORE his baptism because the blood of Christ has washed away his sins, then we ask: why cannot the child of God continue in an adulterous relationship AFTER he has repented and prayed? (Acts 8: 22). The blood of Christ washes away his sins too, so why the difference?

When learning the truth that the word of God teaches, sincere people who are earnestly trying to go to heaven will dissolve any unscriptural relationship in which they find themselves. We acknowledge that it is not an easy thing to do. Much heartache and sorrow are sure to follow, but by doing the will of the Lord, precious souls will be insured of a home with God forever.

The grace and mercy of God have not been considered in this treatise, because they are not in the realm of human beings. How far down the hand of God's grace and mercy will be extended at the day of judgment, we do not know. It must reach a long ways down to include any of us. Man has no prerogative in this matter. Our responsibility is to teach the truth of God's word. We must plead the law of God, and if there is any clemency, it belongs to God the



What Shall We Do With God's Law?

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Every man's conduct will determine where he will spend eternity. How he thinks, acts and speaks, as measured by the word of God, will be the basis of his judgment before God (Rev. 20: 12; 2 Cor. 5: 10; John 12: 48).

By what standard are we to determine which thoughts, words and deeds are right and which are wrong? If each individual is to become a law unto himself, where will we find unity, justice, peace and righteousness? Right and wrong are determined by law.

Sin is defined by the law. When we talk of law, we necessarily talk of sin, because sin is the transgression of the law (1 John 3: 4). In the absence of law there is no sin. "... for where no law is, there is no transgression" (Rom. 4: 15). Now if one says he has not sinned, he deceives himself and makes God a liar, and the word of God is not in him (1 John 1: 8, 10).

Characteristics of God's Law

God is not a man and we should not assume to deal with Him and His word as if He were a man (Num. 23: 19). God's thoughts and ways are as far above man's as the heavens are higher than the earth (Isa. 55: 8, 9).

The law of God is the word of God, the gospel of Christ, the truth, the faith once delivered. Isaiah prophesied that "out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isa. 2: 3). Jesus told Peter that he would be given the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and "whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. 16: 19). Actually, what Peter and the apostles bound upon earth, was already bound in heaven, and whatsoever they loosed upon earth, was already loosed in heaven. Since man had nothing to do with the law of God (Gal. 1: 6-8), he can no more abolish the law of God than he can abolish God Himself. Jesus said, "heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24: 35). Peter said the word of God lives and abides forever (1 Pet. 1: 22,

great judge of all, not us.

God has joined the man and woman when the marriage is scriptural, and no man must dare to sever that tie (Matt. 19: 6). Unscriptural marriages have not been ordained by God, nor have they been made by God. Since they were made by man they must be severed by man.

May we always be governed by the word of God, and not by our own reasoning and emotions.

23, 25).

God's law is powerful (Rom. 1: 16; Heb. 4: 12). It 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). The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul... " (Psa. 19: 7). It will abide forever (Matt. 24: 35; 1 Pet. 1: 23, 25). It is unchangeable (Gal. 1: 7-9). It is to be obeyed (Jas. 1: 25), and by which we will be judged (Jas. 2: 12). Those who wrest the scriptures will be destroyed (2 Pet. 3: 16).

Law is authority. Christ was given all authority in heaven and in earth to last until the end of time (Matt. 28: 18; Heb. 1: 1, 2; Eph. 1: 22, 23; 1 Cor. 15: 24-27).

How Many Misuse God's Law

1. Some completely reject the idea of being under law of any kind. They do not want to obey any law, nor do they want to be bound to any restrictions that inhibit their free indulgence in whatever carnal course they want to pursue. They reject any requirement that imposes upon men the act of repentance that requires them to forsake something they do not want to give up.

2. Some turn away their ears from hearing the law (2 Tim. 4: 4). "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination (Prov. 28: 9). Many do not want to hear the law of God because they do not want to do what is required of them.

3. Some make the law of God conform to human situations. Every kind of hermeneutical tactic is employed to make divine law yield to the needs and wishes of man, rather than for man's life to conform to the divine will.

4. Some insist that God's law must be adapted to the times and problems of the age. Many believe that the law of God changes from one generation to another as the mood and life style swings in human life from one extreme to another. Most people think that the law of God changes with our own moral standards.

5. Some say that the law of God is very flexible and the interpretation of it is the important thing. People have a right to their own interpretation of the law of God, and if they differ, neither is necessarily wrong. There may be different conclusions from the same law.

Many now turn to the fathers for interpretation of the law. When some issue is discussed in the light of the law of God, some brethren must turn to the preachers and elders of a former generation and try to bind their ways upon us today instead of the law of God. 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). "... when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" (1 Thess. 2: 13).

6. A challenge to the technical wording of the law. The law of God is expressed in the words of God, and no one knows His mind but what is expressed by the Spirit. "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God... Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Cor. 2: 11, 13). By redefining the words used in the law of God one thinks he changes the meaning to conform to what he wants the law to say.

What Can We Do With God's Law?

1. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a work- man that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2: 15). We need to spend more time searching the scriptures to know the will of God. That is the only standard by which we can prove all things, and hold fast that which is good (1 Thess. 5: 21).

2. Rightly Divide it. "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). The distinction must be made between the old and new testaments, between the first days of inspiration and confirming the word, and the days following the apostles. Distinctions between customs and require- ments, things permitted and things required. The proper use of commandments, necessary conclusions and apostolic examples.

3. Using God's Law in Current Problem. What shall we do with God's law? This question against the back- drop of the divorce and remarriage issue will provide a variety of answers. It boils down to one of two things: 1) men will utilize every scheme and evasion of the law and do what they want to do. Of course, those who want to retain some resemblance of respect for the law of God will use the more subtle evasions that appear to be obedience. 2) men will do the will of God from the heart. Only those who obey His will have the hope of heaven (Matt. 7: 21-23; James 1: 25).

God has spoken His will to man. For example: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned (Mark 16: 15, 16). God's law is clear. It says that the believer who is baptized shall be saved. That is it! The conditions can never be less than this, and there is never an exception. The person who is saved according to the law of God must be a baptized believer of the gospel.

Peter told the believers on Pentecost to "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of

the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2: 38).

Now what are we going to do when someone wants to be saved, and he does not mind doing the first part, but he does not want to be baptized? What are we going to do with God's law? Some may tell you that God is not interested so much in baptism, because Paul said he was not sent to baptize (1 Cor. 1: 17). That is perverting God's law. It is setting one statement against another, reducing God's word to a mess of contradictions. I do not want to oversimplify the problem. I am illustrating how men misuse God's law to serve their own ends. No man knows the mind of God but the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 2: 13). All we know about what God wants is revealed in His word.

The divorce and remarriage problems are putting a test to our use of God's law. Most of us recognize that God's law is the only standard of authority in resolving the matter. But how is it to be used? Obey it with an honest and good heart.

When all is said and done, we come back to the problem to be resolved by the law of God. The law of Christ says: "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" (Matt. 19: 9). That is what God's law says. The language is not equivocal. The Holy Spirit knew exactly what to record and how to say it. NO power known or unknown can change one word of God's law. When time is no more and the myriads of adulterous marriages come before the judgment seat of Christ, and the books are opened from which the dead will be judged, the language will be the same. No doubt millions will say, "But I thought... " "They told me... " "I didn't know... " The saddest thing about all this is that most of the people will not listen to anything that God's word says about divorce and remarriage. The preachers and leaders of the people insist in leading them into eternal damnation by perverting God's law.

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THINK ON
THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

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PRACTICE WHAT YOU PREACH

The Holy Spirit placed as much emphasis upon practicing the truth as in preaching it. Paul said, "Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?" (Rom. 2: 21, 22). We are concerned about why our preaching is not more productive in terms of men and women obeying the gospel. We seek about to find new ways and methods of getting people interested in our preaching, but not much works. Why? It just may be that far too many preachers and elders are not practicing what they preach.

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

Jesus said these things to point out the contemptible practice of the scribes and Pharisees, and to emphasize the need for doing what we teach others to do. James said it is not enough to be hearers of the word, we must be doers. The above passages from the word of God point out that we must practice what we teach and refuse to do what we teach is forbidden by

God.

Doctrine is absolutely worthless if not practiced. What one has learned, however good and true it may be, does not benefit him at all unless applied. The scribes and Pharisees were condemned by the Lord for saying and not doing. In the New Testament we have the right book, or we have no guide at all in spiritual things. The apostle Paul makes it plain that no other doctrine can be preached. "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1: 8, 9).

We must practice what we learn from the gospel if we are to be blessed by God. "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (James 1: 22-25).

Jesus said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7: 21).

We preach that one must know the will of God to be saved. While we preach this, many members of the church make only a token effort to learn what the Bible teaches. Programs are used to try to "pressure" members to be "daily readers," but usually to no avail. Until we can get the same attitude toward the Bible that most have toward the "funny" paper or the sports page, we will continue with the same problems of not much knowledge of the Bible among members. We preach that the following passage is to be obeyed. "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17: 11). But many avoid the opportunities to learn in Bible classes and in studying

for themselves what the truth really is on a given subject. Unless we begin to practice what we teach in this matter, we will never be able to teach others the truth. We will never know it ourselves.

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

While we preach that the gospel is the power of God to save the sinner, we do very little to preach it. One may be close in his association with one who has never heard the gospel of Christ, and while he preaches the truth above, he never once tries to use this power upon his friends. I wonder if such can really be convinced that he will be saved when he does not do the will of his Father in preaching the truth to those around him.

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

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

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QUOTE

“Rare is the person who can weigh the faults of others without putting his thumb on the scales.”

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UNQUOTE

”

Editorial

Donnie V. Rader

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THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

I do not use the name "church of Christ" in a denominational or sectarian sense. I refer to the church which is of Christ. I am talking about the church that belongs to Christ — his church. That, obviously, will be the church we read about in the New Testament.

The church that we read about in the Bible is indeed of Christ, for Christ and the church are inseparable. When Paul wrote about the church he said, "... I speak concerning **Christ and the church**" (Eph. 5: 32, Emphasis mine DVR). Even a casual consideration of the parallel between Colossians and Ephesians will connect Christ and the church. One book gives emphasis to Christ, while the other emphasizes the church. Yet, there are many parallel statements in the books. Again, we conclude that Christ and the church are inseparable. One cannot truly be of Christ without the church. Neither can one be in the church without being of Christ.

The church about which I write is truly the church of Christ, for **he** built the church (Matt. 16: 18). He purchased the church with his own blood (Acts 20: 28). For that reason, it belongs to him.

What Is The Church?

Sometimes, we use the term "church" in ways that really do not harmonize with Biblical usage. We talk about the building (the meeting house) being the church. However, we know better. The term "church" refers to people (Acts 2: 47).

The church is people who are saved. The church and the saved are the same. Read carefully Luke's record: "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2: 47). Those that were being saved were added to the church by the Lord. Thus, we conclude that the saved and the church are the same. The apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesians saying that Christ "is the saviour of the body" (Eph. 5: 23). What is the body? The same writer answers by saying it is the church (Eph. 1: 22-23; Col. 1: 18). Therefore, the passage is saying that Christ is the saviour of the church. That is, he will save the church. There is no promise of salvation to anyone out of the church. Again, those that are saved are the church, and those in the church are the saved.

The term "church" is translated from the Greek word **ekklesia** which means "the called out." We have been called out of darkness (1 Pet. 2: 9) by the gospel (2 Thess. 2: 14) to be saints (Rom. 1: 7). Those who have answered this call are in the church for it is the called out.

What do we conclude? We **necessarily** conclude that

the saved and the church are the same. If one wants to be saved, he must be in the church.

How The Term Is Used

The term "church" is used in more than one sense. (1) It often refers to the body of Christ that includes every Christian in the world. When the Bible says there is one body (Eph. 4: 5), it refers to the church in this sense. Passages such as Matt. 16: 18, Eph. 1: 22-23; Col. 1: 18 and Acts 2: 47 use the term "church" in this way. The Christian in Hong Kong is a member of the very same church as one in North America.

(2) The term is also used to refer to a congregation in a certain locality. We read about the church at Corinth (1 Cor. 1: 2), at Ephesus (Rev. 2: 1), and at Laodicea (Col. 4: 16). In this sense there are a plurality of churches. In fact, Paul spoke of the "churches of Christ" (Rom. 16: 16).

Its Origin

Unlike the denominations of the day, the church of Christ did not originate with man. It is divine in origin. Jesus said, "... I will build my church..." (Matt. 16: 18). The book of Ephesians presents the church as God's eternal purpose in Christ (Eph. 3: 10-11). God's plan (which is the church) was in his mind before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1: 4).

If the church of Christ is not what man thinks it ought to be, it will be because it was built upon the wisdom of God and not the wisdom of men. God's wisdom and thinking is much higher than that of man (Isa. 55: 8-9).

When Was It Established?

Our Lord established his church on the first Pentecost following his resurrection (Acts 2). This was in 33 A. D. All references to the church (or kingdom) prior to that day spoke of it as being established in the future (Isa. 2: 1-4; Dan. 2: 44; Matt. 3: 2; Matt. 16: 18; Luke 22: 18; Mark 9: 1). All references to the church (or kingdom) after that day spoke of it as already being established (Acts 8: 1; 13: 1; Col. 1: 13; Eph. 4: 5). In fact, on that very day (Pentecost), for the first time, those being saved were added to the church (Acts 2: 47). This passage is the first reference in the New Testament that speaks of the church as being established. Later Peter looks back to this day and calls it "the beginning" (Acts 11: 15).

This was in accord with prophecy of old. Daniel prophesied that the kingdom would be established in the days of the Roman empire (Dan. 2: 31-45). The same prophet said that it would be after the Son of man (Jesus) would ascend to the Ancient of days (the Father) (Dan. 7: 13-14). The ascension took place just a few days before the events on the day of Pentecost.

Isaiah said that the kingdom would be established in the last days in the top of the mountains which he identifies as being Jerusalem (Isa. 2: 1-4). The events of Acts 2 took place in the last days (Acts 2: 16-17) in Jerusalem (v. 5).

Membership

1. Membership in essential. If the church is the saved and the saved is the church, then it is absolutely necessary that one be a member (cf. Acts 2: 47). To be "in Christ" is the same as to be "in the body" (cf. Eph. 1: 7; 2: 13, 16). Thus, membership in the church is necessary to be in Christ where we can avail ourselves of salvation

(2 Tim. 2: 10).

2. **The terms of membership.** One does not become a member of the Lord's church by "joining" the church or by the vote of those who are already members. In contrast, Acts 2 shows that those who believed on Christ (v. 36) and repented and were baptized (vs. 38, 41) were saved and added to the church (v. 47). When they were baptized, they were baptized into the one body (1 Cor. 12: 13). These terms are simple and easy enough that any accountable person can become a member of the body of Christ.

3. **What the members are called.** Those who are members of the body of Christ were called "Christians" in the first century (Acts 11: 26). Other terms that are used are "saints" (Rom. 1: 7), "children of God" (Gal. 3: 26), "disciples" (Acts 11: 26) and "brethren" (Jas. 1: 2).

There Is Only One Church

The apostle Paul said, "There is one body" (Eph. 4: 4). What is the body? It is the church (Col. 1: 18; Eph. 1: 22-23). Therefore, we conclude that there is one church. Oh, I know that there are many churches that have different names, doctrines and practices. However, the text says there is only one. The same text says there is one God. But, there are many false Gods. Yet, there is only one true God. Likewise, there is only one church that is right.

Since there is only one true church and membership is essential, don't you want to be a member?

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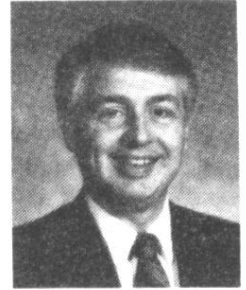
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SUDDENLY, BUT WITH WARNING

DIVINE MESSAGE: "Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets. A lion has roared! Who will not fear? The Lord God has spoken! Who can but prophesy?" (Amos 3: 7, 8).

GOD ACTS SUDDENLY. In the natural realm, God often acts suddenly and unexpectedly. Sometimes he moves silently. At other times the silence is broken by great swelling sounds. Lightning stabs through the blackness of night and the thunder reverberates from the tops of the mountains. Although one may be in the midst of a storm, there always seems to be a suddenness to it all. The heavens light up and the earth shakes beneath our feet.

The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were surprised by the suddenness with which God stormed down the fire and brimstone which swept them all from this life (Gen. 19). On the night of the "Passover" in old Egypt land, the angel of death worked silently and unperceived. One wail of sorrow after another arose from one end of the country. The children who slept peacefully in the evening were taken away suddenly (Exodus 12: 29-30). Pharaoh's squadrons saw no danger in pursuing the fleeting Israelites right into the bed of the Red Sea. Suddenly, when all were surrounded by the sea, the walls gave way and water rolled in upon them to sweep them away (Exodus 14). When Sennacherib's supposedly invincible army went to sleep that night in the invaded land of Israel, the mighty king little dreamed that 185,000 of his best soldiers would never wake up again (2 Kings 18: 29). When Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Spirit in the days of the apostles, they had no idea that they would never walk out of the room alive (Acts 5: 1-11).

SUDDENNESS IN OUR EXPERIENCE. We see sudden changes and acts of destruction all around us today. Human lives by the tens of thousands are being snuffed out on the highways. Riots, wars, disease, and all manner of accidents take men away from the land of the living. The words of the preacher of old can well be applied to this sudden loss of life: "For man also does not know his time: Like fish taken in a cruel net, like birds caught in a snare, so the sons of men are snared in an evil time, when it falls suddenly upon them" (Eccle. 9: 12).

So will Christ come again, unexpectedly and suddenly. That event will affect every one who is living and all who have died. The dead will be raised and all will

suddenly view the revelation of Jesus from heaven. Why does it seem so hard for some to realize that Jesus will return? Why is it that even many Christians show no apparent concern?

A PRINCIPLE: SUDDENNESS WITH WARNING. Amos the prophet, speaking of God's coming judgment against Israel, stated a principle by which God has always dealt with men: "Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets" (Amos 3: 7). The function of the prophet was to speak for God. God told his judgments to the prophets in order that they might warn the people to turn in penitence unto God.

In those cases of sudden judgment already cited, the principle was faithfully followed. God sent warning messages to Sodom and Gomorrah, Egypt and Assyria. Just as surely, the powerful workings of the apostles warned all (including Ananias and Sapphire) that God would justly condemn those who tempted Him.

And God has warned us today. We cannot help but be impressed with that warning if we give but a cursory examination to God's word. Those who are disobedient will receive fiery destruction suddenly when Christ comes. There will be no need to shout, "I did not know it was coming." The warning has been given. The judgment will come. It behooves us to be ready!

SOME WARNINGS AGAINST IGNORING WARNINGS. King Agrippa was depending upon nothing happening suddenly. He was warned but did nothing: "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian" (Acts 28: 28). Felix's reactions were similar: "When I have a convenient season I will call for you" (Acts 24: 25).

The writer of Proverbs also cautioned against ignoring warnings. "Cease listening to instruction, my son, and you will stray from the words of knowledge" (Prov. 19: 27). "For the commandment is a lamp, and the law is light; reproofs of instructions are the way of life" (Prov. 6: 23). "By pride come only contention, but with the well advised is wisdom" (Prov. 13: 10).

These are Divine warnings, all inspired by God and tested by time. They're yours to do with as you wish. They are red lights on your dash board. Heed them and safety is ours to enjoy. Ignore them and we'll be stranded at the side of the road.

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"THE MATTER OF PEOR"

In the last days of Moses, the children of Israel went out to avenge themselves of the Midianites, but the women of Midian were spared.

"And Moses said unto them, have ye saved all the women alive? Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord" (Num. 31: 15, 16).

Some 1500 years later, there was plague in the congregation at Pergamos because "the matter of Peor" had either been forgotten or ignored (Rev. 2: 14).

Now, some 3500 years later, the Lord's church is once again being infiltrated, vexed, compromised and weakened by the very same wiles which beguiled God's people in the matter of Peor (Num. 25: 18).

The story of Balaam is a familiar one, but brethren, we had better take another look at it if the "examples... for our admonition" are going to do us any good. And, it is ironic that the apostle Paul had reference to this very matter when he sounded such a warning (1 Cor. 10: 8).

While the original account of Balaam is found in Num. 22-24, like any Bible subject, we need to gather pertinent information from other passages of scripture. Chapter 25 and 31 give us some of this additional information. But, the New Testament gives us some insight into Balaam's obituary which is not recorded in the Old Testament.

Peter tells us that Balaam "loved the wages of unrighteousness" (2 Pet. 2: 14). Jude says, "and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward" (v. 11). Jesus condemned those in the church at Pergamos "that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication" (Rev. 2: 14).

The Moabites feared the strength of Israel, and sought ways to weaken or neutralize that strength. Balak knew that he could not resist the strength of Israel in open confrontation, so he sought a curse against God's people by bribing Balaam with "the rewards of divination" (Num. 22: 7, 40).

Failing in this, Balak found a way to neutralize the strength of Israel "through the counsel of Balaam" by mingling the Moabites with the Israelites through fornication, both literal and spiritual. When "the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of

Moab, " this led to idolatry on the part of Israel, which is spiritual harlotry (Ezek. 23).

The world of today portrays the same adversary to the church as Moab did to Israel, and the same pattern of attrition is evident in both instances. "For they vex you with their wives, wherewith they have beguiled you in the matter of Peor... " (Num. 25: 18). Satan of today would compare to Balak, the prince of Moab, and Paul warns, "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (2 Cor. 11: 3).

Brethren, if we allow fornication and adultery to infiltrate the ranks of spiritual Israel, we will be no less vulnerable to internal moral decay than were ancient Moab and Rome. The high divorce rate of the world has been hammering at the gates of Zion for the past several years. Now, by propaganda comparable to "the counsel of Balaam, " our ranks are being infiltrated and weakened without the enemy having to fire a shot, wield a spear, or furbish a sword.

We are making the mistake again of allowing the forces of apostasy to take the initiative and choose the site where the battle is to be pitched. We permitted the battle of the 1800's to be pitched on the grounds of instrumental music instead of on the real issue of how to establish scriptural authority.

Beginning in 1950's, we allowed the sentimental issue of "orphan" homes to become the focal point of all our battles against institutionalism, while the forces of digression undermined the principles of scriptural authority and got their schools and other projects into the mission and budget of the church.

Now, I believe that we are making a tactical error by allowing the champions of unscriptural marriages to pitch the battle at 1 Cor. 7: 15. They will confuse the issue with the Greek, and force us to at least tacitly admit that divorce and remarriage are found in this passage if we give enough time and respectability to their efforts.

The issue of whether or not alien sinners are subject to God's law on marriage hinges not on 1 Cor. 7, but on the definition and practice of repentance. When we get everyone under the command to repent (Acts 17: 30, 31), and define that subject the way we and the Bible have always defined it, then the fornication of 1 Cor. 5 will still be fornication, and the fornicators and adulterers of 1 Cor. 6: 9 will still be just that until they turn again, and "bring forth fruits meet for repentance. " The repenting still needs to be done **before** baptism, and not just wait until after baptism and say that we are sorry for some things we did before baptism, while continuing in those same sins.

We need more men and women, including elders and preachers, with the spirit of Phinehas (Num. 25: 11-13), who will wield the sword of the spirit and help to stay this plague in the camp of Israel. If not, more than "twenty and four thousand" are going to fall this time.

Yes, there were some "princes" and chief people involved in "the matter of Peor, " both among the Israelites and the Moabites (Num. 25: 14-18). But, that was true "in the gainsaying of Korah" (Jude 11), in the digres-

sion of the last century, in the institutional and Crossroads digressions of this century, and now again in this 20th century "matter of Peor. "

One last act of Moses was to "avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites" before being gathered unto his people (Num. 31: 2). Brethren, it is high time that some of us "stand to the covenant" (2 Ki. 23: 3), before being gathered to the judgment.

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THE WAY TO "STAND FAST"

The need of Christians to "stand fast" is a recurring theme in the New Testament, and warnings against backsliding abound. To some Christians, the responsibility to be faithful seems overwhelming — even impossible. God does not, however, require the impossible in telling His children to "set your mind on the things that are above" (Col. 3: 1, 2). Nor is it unreasonable to believe that a sincere disciple of the Lord should be able to make the same affirmation Paul made when he said, "I can do all things in Him that strengthened me" (Phil. 4: 13). So, despite the various obstacles along the way, one **can** be true to his confession. He **can** be "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might" (Eph. 6: 10).

Help From Galatians 5

Galatians 5 begins with the admonition to "stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage." In the verses to follow several things are found which could definitely have helped the Galatians to remain steadfast. The purpose of this article is to point out four of them. With so many potent influences working to undermine and destroy the Christian, we are so greatly blessed by having our Father guide us, by the Spirit's word, in the way that is right. Safeguards to prevent our falling away from Christ should be appreciated, and used, by those who anticipate an entrance into heaven. Too much is at stake for any to be unconcerned about the necessity of standing fast. What can one do?

1. **We can constantly remember our hope.** The wonderful hope granted to us when we obeyed the gospel of Christ can be a powerful force in helping us to stand fast. Paul writes: "For we through the Spirit by faith wait for the hope of righteousness" (Gal. 5: 5). God, Who cannot lie, has promised eternal life to those who obey His Son (Titus 1: 2). How uplifting and moving to have that hope which is an "anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast" (Heb. 6: 19). If we will just not forget who we are, how we became such, and what awaits the faithful in heaven, we will have sufficient motivation to "continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel" (Col. 1: 23). All the gimmicks and devices people can offer as inducements to faithfulness are meaningless and unnecessary to one who has a clear vision of his hope in Christ.

2. **We can remain busy and active.** Paul reminds the Galatians that the very thing that avails anything in Christ is "faith **working** through love" (Gal. 5: 6). No one

will simply coast into his eternal reward. Knowing this, dedicated disciples **find** time for things that pertain to the kingdom of God. They do not get so immersed in mundane cares and activities that they have no time for spiritual duties such as attending worship faithfully, helping someone in need, trying to teach others the gospel, studying the word, praying, and such like. In our effort to stand fast in the Lord there can be no substitute for a faith that works. The danger of falling into sin is not nearly as great when we busy ourselves in things that are right.

3. **We can expect and be prepared for opposition.** Christians must face the reality that they will encounter people who will seek to hinder them from standing fast. Paul, seeing the danger in which the Galatian brethren stood, raised the question, "**Who hindered you... ?**" (5: 7). Those who "were running well" at one time were no longer doing so. Paul knew that **somebody** had influenced them. Who? In this case Judaizing teachers were telling Christians they had to submit to parts of the Mosaic law to be saved. But it is still possible for one to be hindered by various types of people. Who? It may be friends who follow false religions. It may be companions whose chief concerns are frivolity, lustful conduct and just generally having a "big time." Possibly, it is an instructor, a teacher who has great influence over the thinking of a young Christian. Anyone will have trouble standing fast if his constant companions are sensual and ungodly. It is still true that "evil companionships corrupt good morals" (1 Cor. 15: 33). Are you being hindered from faithfulness to the Lord? Take a close look at "WHO" is responsible, and beware!

4. **We can make a more determined effort to "walk by the Spirit."** The instruction of this chapter is to "Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (5: 16). It will be either "after the flesh" or "after the Spirit." Those are the only options. The Spirit has given us the perfect handbook, as it were, for the kind of behavior God approves — the Bible, the word of God. It may be that the amount of time some of us spend with the word of God is negligible. We must give diligence to handle the word aright if we would truly understand "the life that now is" and "that which is to come" (1 Tim. 4: 8). Refreshing our minds daily will go far toward helping us to avoid falling — provided we **walk** by what we have learned.

It is in this section of the book that Paul draws a sharp contrast between "the works of the flesh" and the "fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. 5: 19-23). Ours is an age that accentuates "the flesh" in such blatant disregard for "the Spirit." We definitely need to teach our children what this passage involves. The ability to stand fast belongs only to those who strive to "walk after the Spirit."

None can dare to say that it is always easy to stand fast, but one **can** do so by making use of the avenues God opens up to him in this and other passages of scripture. Let us be firmly convinced of this fact. We **can** indeed "be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord," and can surely rejoice in the knowledge that our "labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15: 58).

WHO IS REALLY THE TROUBLEMAKER?

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"Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, 'Is that you, O troubler of Israel?' And he answered, 'I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house have, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord and you have followed the Baals. Now therefore, send and gather all Israel to me on Mount Carmel, the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table'" (1 Kings 18: 17-19).

When conflict arises between two parties, one of the first things that happens is that insults are hurled and fingers of blame are pointed. This is seen in such secular matters as labor disputes between management and workers, whether it be mine-workers or professional baseball players. Not only does this happen in secular matters, it is also true in the spiritual realm, in the kingdom of God. For example, when a brother exposes error, often he is accused of being a troublemaker. It is true that in many cases, others will yell "Foul!" because one exposes error rather than giving a hearty "Amen!" to the fact that error was exposed. This non-confrontational attitude is disturbing. If error is being taught and/or practiced then it needs to be exposed. Spiritual softness and weakness is reflected in those who would say otherwise (cf. Eph. 6: 11-14, 1 Tim. 6: 12). One would do well to consider the events recorded in 1 Kings 18, and through a close examination of what occurs there should come to the correct answer of the question which is the title of this article.

Which One Was The Troublemaker — Elijah or Ahab?

In order to properly understand the circumstances in 1 Kings 18, it is necessary to realize that these events took place some 62 years after the kingdom divided (1 Kings 12). The Northern Kingdom (Israel) was taken into idolatry by its first king, Jeroboam. Afterwards, every king which followed Jeroboam was evil (see a listing of Jeroboam's successors in 1 Kings 15: 25-16: 34). Among these wicked kings was Ahab. However, Ahab was not content just to follow in the idolatrous steps of Jeroboam. Along with his wife, Jezebel, Baal worship was introduced to Israel, with altars and temples being built for Baal. It is in view of this that Elijah bursts on to the Biblical stage in 1 Kings 17. Consider the contrast that can be made between these two as the setting is now in place.

Elijah was a prophet of God from Tishbe and everything he did was according to the words of God. He said, "AS THE LORD GOD OF ISRAEL LIVES, BEFORE WHOM I STAND, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word" (17: 1; caps mine). He was fed by ravens at the brook Cherith "according to the word of the Lord" (17: 5). As he traveled from there to Zarephath, a promise was given to a widow and her son "according to the word of the Lord which He spoke by Elijah" (17: 16) that neither her flour nor her oil would be used up. When Elijah was told to go and present himself before Ahab, he did just that (18: 1-2). Even when he seized and executed the prophets of Baal (18: 40), it was according to the word of the Lord for the Law given through Moses required that false prophets be put to death (Deut. 17: 2-7). Surely it can be seen that what Elijah did was right because he obeyed in each of these "according to the word of God. "

On the other hand, Ahab is just the opposite. It was Ahab who "did evil in the sight of the Lord, more than all who were before him" (16: 30). Ahab "set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal, which he had built in Samaria" (16: 32). In fact, Ahab "did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger" than any other king who came before him (16: 33). 1 Kings 21: 25-26 also might be considered to show the evil reign of Ahab.

This contrast has been presented here for one simple purpose: in spiritual matters, the one who causes trouble is not the one who exposes error (assuming proper motives and actions), but the one who practices error. That is exactly what Elijah told Ahab in 1 Kings 18: 18. Ahab was the troublemaker because it was he who had followed Baal. " Furthermore, other examples can be cited which teach the same lesson. Moses was not the one causing the problems when he rebuked Aaron and the Israelites at Mt. Sinai for their idolatry (Exo. 32: 25-28). Aaron and the people caused the trouble themselves. When Nathan exposed David's sin with Bathsheba, it was not Nathan who was the troublemaker because he was not the one who had sinned (2 Sam. 11-12). David sinned and brought the trouble on himself. Finally, Peter, not Paul, was the troublemaker in Galatians 2. Peter was the one who "played the hypocrite" and influenced others to do the same (vv. 11-14), therefore he brought trouble on himself.

Applications Of The Principle

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC: In the late 1800's, when instrumental music was being introduced into Christian churches (as they were called then), voices opposed to the introduction of mechanical instruments were heard. Those who called for "the olds paths" (Jer. 6: 16) — brethren like Moses E. Lard, Ben Franklin, etc. — were branded as legalists and troublemakers. Who were really the troublemakers? Those who "forsook the ways of the Lord. " They were the ones who introduced into worship an element that the New Testament did not authorize. Trouble among churches of the Lord came when false practices started, just as in the days of Elijah and Ahab. It is not the one who is contending for what the Bible teaches (congregational a cappella singing — Eph. 5: 19, Col. 3: 16) who is the troublemaker, but instead the one who departs from this pattern.

INSTITUTIONALISM: In the late 1940's, the 1950's, and the early 1960's there were those who wanted to include works for local churches that were not authorized. Again, just as in other times, those who stood opposed to these innovations were heard from. Because of their stand, brethren like Roy Cogdill, Frank Puckett, Curtis Porter, John T. Lewis, James W. Adams (and many others who could be named here as well) were marked as troublemakers. But in reality, who caused the trouble? Those who caused the trouble were those who departed from the pattern of each local congregation being overseen by its own elders (Acts 20: 28), doing its own work (Eph. 4: 12), and being supported out of its own treasury (1 Cor. 16: 1-2). Isn't it ironic now that those who introduced these false practices forty years ago are now reaping what they have sown? When the ways of the Lord are forsaken, one gets more "trouble" than he ever bargained for!

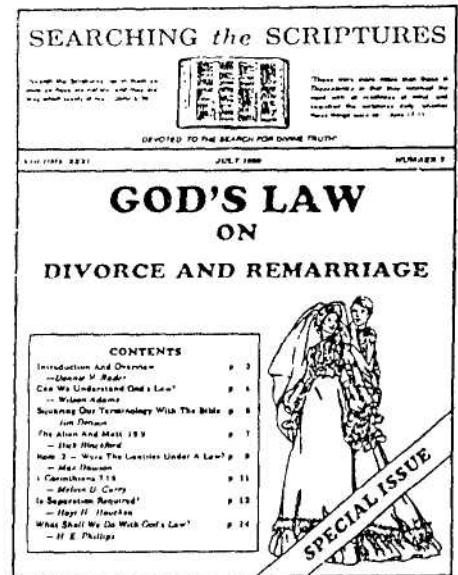
GRACE-FELLOWSHIP MOVEMENT: In the last twenty-five years, there were those who wanted to widen the door of fellowship to include, for all practical purposes, those who believed in Christ and were baptized for the remission of their sins, regardless of what they did religiously afterwards. Fortunately, this heresy had some opposition. However, those who unsheathed their swords in opposition were labeled as troublemakers. Consider the question again: who were the troublemakers? Those who were really causing trouble were the ones who perverted passages about fellowship, the gospel and doctrine, and stretched them beyond context. The Bible says, "Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son" (2 John 9). Those who stood (and do stand) for this are not troublemakers, no matter how heated the battle may be. The troulbers are those who want to accept into fellowship those whom God does not.

MARRIAGE-DIVORCE-REMARRIAGE: Much has been said and written on this subject, especially in recent years. False teachings abound on it, which is manifested in the staggering divorce rate in the country and in the church of our Lord. But isn't it strange when one exposes these false teachings and false teachers, that he is branded "O, troubler of Israel!" At the risk of being redundant, let me ask again: who is the troublemaker? The troublemaker is not the one who quotes passages like "Whatever God has joined together, let not man separate" (Matt. 19: 6), or "For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband" (Rom. 7: 2), or "A wife is not to depart from her husband. But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And a husband is not to divorce his wife" (1 Cor. 7: 10-11). Any Christian who will stand on these passages is not the one causing trouble in the current conflict over this matter. Furthermore, the Christian who will stand on "... except it be for fornication..." and stick to what Matt. 5: 32 and 19: 9 teach is not the troublemaker. Trouble comes when these passages are departed from. It is a sad day for the "Israel of God" (Gal. 6: 16) when one who

would stand on these passages without compromise and expose those who do not, is called the troublemaker rather than the one who teaches error. Since this is in fact the case with some, then nothing has been learned from the words of Elijah to Ahab!

Whenever controversy arises, one must learn to "see as God sees" and "think as God thinks" (1 Sam. 16: 7, Isa. 55: 8-9). When that is learned, then truth will be seen as truth and error will be seen as error. Furthermore, from that perspective one will then realize that trouble comes, not from the Elijahs of today (those who teach and practice the truth on these and other matters), but from the Ahabs of today (those who have forsaken the ways of the Lord). Furthermore, the Christian who stands in the truth will not mind if the battle waxes hot at times, for he realizes that truth has to be proclaimed and error has to be exposed in order for souls to be saved. Now, one final question to each person who is reading this article: which one are you, an Elijah or an Ahab?

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MODESTY LOOK YOUR SUNDAY BEST

Kenneth E. Thomas

401 24th Street W
Bradenton, Florida 34205

Therefore I desire that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting; in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works" (1 Timothy 2: 8-10). "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense, either to the Jews or the Greeks or to the church of God... Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ" (1 Corinthians 10: 31-33; 11: 1).

A Casual Society

Our society has become so casual that it is a shame and a disgrace! Common courtesy and good manners are not evident in the lives of many today. Respect for one's elders is practically nonexistent in some cases. Ours has become a youth oriented society to a great degree. Older folks often become transparent insofar as being given the respect and recognition they are due. Often young folks will about knock the older off of their feet as they push by to get outside to play after worship services. Some people both young as well as old, will not yield for an automobile when walking on the streets and highways. I have had to stop because of oncoming traffic due to a couple walking on the wrong side of the road when I had the right of way. Recently I had the audacity to toot the horn hoping that a couple would move out of the traffic lane and the man "shot me a bird" for my actions. Children as well as some adults have such poor manner as to break into other folk's conversations without so much as a "pardon me" or "excuse me please"! Some folks nowadays even in the Lord's church could care less it appears how they look in the assemblies of the saints or outside of them for that matter.

Some folks don't know the difference between Emily Post and Maynard G. Cribbs insofar as lifestyle and attitude. Neatness and orderliness (modesty) are of little or no importance to many, and some among that number wear the name of Christ.

I haven't forgotten my subject at all, I would point out that modesty means more in one's life than the amount of clothing one has on, or off, for that matter. Modesty in addition to clothing and how it is worn is an attitude as well as conduct or deportment. This is especially important for one who wears the name of Christ (2 Timothy 2: 19).

At the beginning of this article I gave what an apostle of Christ enjoined upon Christians. "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all **to the glory of God. Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God... Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ**" (1 Corinthians 10: 31-33; 11: 1).

Let Us Define Modesty Some More

"Placing a moderate estimate on one's abilities or worth, b. neither bold or self assertive: tending toward diffidence. 2. a modest nature. 3. observing the proprieties or dress and behavior" (Webster pg. 733).

From the above one can easily see that a modest person is no braggart nor an egomaniac. Paul warns us against thinking too highly of ourselves (Romans 12: 3). Humility is a part of our being modest.

Have You Ever Been Ashamed?

It is very difficult to say what needs saying about modesty in our assemblies as it applies to how we dress especially. One must avoid getting folks into a kind of a contest to see who can out-dress others. I have known of this happening and it is as disgraceful as are some who pay little or no attention to how they look to others. But...

What would you think, and what would you suggest be done if a brother got up in our assembly to "to serve the Lord's table" who reeked of cat urine, and was covered with cat hairs? What if he had unkept, dirty, unshined shoes and had walked on his trousers' cuff until they were worn through? I wonder, what do you think? His appearance isn't like it is because he is in poverty. However, even one in poverty can be neat as well as clean! The poor can still practice biblical modesty.

By the way, the picture above describes pretty well a man in a congregation of the Lord's people at one location. Why surely everyone will say that such a situation in the church must be handled. Such cannot be allowed to transpire! I will assure you no matter how accused of setting a dress code. If he and his family leave over suggesting that he "clean up his act, " they will be accused of running him off and of despising the brother and being in violation of James 2: 1-9.

The Lord Set No Dress Code As Such What is stated in 2 Timothy 2: 8-10 is to my knowledge the only place where modesty is mentioned. Much judgment must be used as we approach this subject. We must be very careful that we do not consider everything we dislike, immodest. However, there comes a time when something cannot be called modest by any form of rationalization one may use. The Christian will be careful not to come near the line, let alone to step over the boundary, for he/she cares what people think since he/she wears the name of Christ.

God Looks On The Heart

The fact that God looks on the hearts of men, and does not judge by the appearance, doesn't mean what some want it to mean at all. They want to be able to dress (or undress) in some cases as they please and hide behind the passage in 1 Samuel 16: 7. It will not hold water. When Adam and Eve sinned in the garden, God made

them coats of skin to cover their nakedness. (Genesis 3: 21).

The only time clothing did not matter it appears was before sin entered into the world. It is too bad that folks nowadays aren't more ashamed of their nakedness. As soon as Adam and Eve sinned and realized they were naked they attempted to hide from God's sight. Probably about all that keeps some folks from going nude today is we have laws forbidding such.

It is altogether possible, of course, for one to be fully clothes and that with the finest money can buy, and still not be the kind of person with whom the Lord is well pleased. However, you can learn much about the inside of a person by what you can see on the outside.

The Harlot's Attire Proverbs 7: 10

Before leaving this point, let us just notice that one may dress in such a way as to be identified with one of the oldest as well as ungodliest trades, that of an harlot. Young ladies and some older are in need of being careful how you adopt some of the styles of today. Some styles are associated with women in the entertainment world who advocate what has become known as "free love." It is anything but free!

How do you suppose Judah knew to proposition his daughter-in-law? It was not for some time that he learned she had played the harlot (Genesis 38: 24). Judah took her to be a harlot (whore) because of the way she dressed her body and presented herself.

Quietness And Subjection

I have touched on this already, but let me call your attention again to attitude in connection with modesty. This is a virtue which evidently impresses the Lord, as it is said to be "very precious in His sight." Read the passage with me. "... wives be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word, by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. Do not let your beauty be that outward adorning of arranging the hair, of wearing gold, or of putting on fine apparel; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God" (1 Peter 3: 1-4).

When Will Women Learn?

It seems that women refuse to learn how they are more apt to be appealing to men. I speak as a man, it is by being more like the woman described above.

The so-called women's liberation movement has done much to undermine God's will for women in general, and women who desire to be faithful Christians in particular. A godly woman who is satisfied with her God-given restrictions, (1 Timothy 2: 11-12; 1 Corinthians 11: 3), is a satisfied fulfilled woman. Most important of all, she is pleasing to God.

Therefore a boisterous, bold, assertive woman is immodest regardless of how well dressed she may be. Let me hasten to say I do not believe this is limited in application to women. Modesty involves both sexes.

Role Reversals Displease God

Paul wrote to Titus concerning that which constituted sound doctrine as to the attitude and conduct

which should characterize a Christian whether young or old, male or female. "... that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience; the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things, that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed. Likewise exhort the young men to be sober-minded..." (Titus 2: 2-6a).

The word chaste used above according to Webster is one of the synonyms for modesty. Let us sum up some of what we have learned thus far in our study of modesty. We have learned that to be modest we must accept our God given roles in the home and in society. We must not reverse those roles. We must be a kind, neat, orderly, mannerly, humble and obedient disciples of the Lord. We must not be rude, loudmouthed, undisciplined people. We must not blur the sex distinction neither in our appearance (dress) nor in headship or authority. Children will be in subjection to their parents. Styles of clothing will be dictated by modesty, not by fashion if said fashion is out of reason price wise or is out and out immodest!

Is This Subject All That Difficult?

Why do you suppose the subject of how we conduct ourselves as Christians, and how we clothe our bodies continues to be such a difficulty among us? Can anyone misunderstand what scripture teaches on this important subject? Sure, judgment enters into our application of the principles of modesty, but really I think it is an unwillingness in many cases to renew our minds, and to be not conformed to this world... (Romans 12: 1-2). We must learn as the apostle by inspiration said, "to... seek those things which are above... Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3: 1-2). We must learn as we are admonished to think on things that are true, noble, just, pure, lovely... of good report.... " (Philippins 4: 8).

The Results...

We will look and act our best both in our assemblies or wherever we may be, for we are the light of the world (Matthew 5: 13-16).

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THE COLLETT - VICK DEBATE

David D. Bonner

On the nights of April 9, 10, 12, 13, H. L. Collett engaged Ben F. Vick, Jr. in a debate on church benevolence to saints and non-saints, or just to saints, and whether churches can donate to Boles Home and Potter Children's Home. The first two nights were in the building where Vick preaches (Shelbyville Rd. in Indianapolis, IN). The last two nights were in the building where Collett preaches (Lafayette Rd. in Noblesville, IN). Approximately 125 to 150 attended each night. One reason audiences were as small as they were, besides just lack of interest, is that Vick is a very "conservative liberal." He opposes "homes" under elderships, most of the social gospel, all "human organizations" in the church budget EXCEPT for the benevolent ones he calls "homes." There were several preachers of his "stripe" who attended from afar and I was impressed with both their sincerity and conservatism. Wherever they are, they are an island. It will be interesting to see where they are in ten years or so. They are much closer to us than they are to the run-of-the-mill liberals.

Vick had debated some before. This was Collett's first debate. Both men did a good job of presenting their convictions. Good conduct prevailed in the audience and interest was high. As I was moderator for Collett (Mark Bass of Illinois was moderator for Vick) many have asked me who won! My reply is, THE LORD. When truth and error come together, if truth in fact is presented, error is no match. Space would not allow a full discussion of the debate but I'll make just a few points.

Vick, on the subject of benevolence, argued James 1: 27 as being for both the individual and church. He argued Gal. 6: 10 as church benevolence and that it was the same case as 1 Cor. 16: 1-3; 2 Cor. 8, 9. He also used 2 Cor. 9: 13 ("all men") to try to prove church benevolence to non-saints. H. L. adequately showed that even the grammar of James 1: 27 would not allow church action. He showed, by studying all of Gal. 6, that it was BOTH individual and the good was SPIRITUAL. On 2 Cor. 9: 13 H. L. showed the "UNTO THEM" was the "poor among the saints" (Rom. 15: 26) and the "ALL" was the other saints primarily in Jerusalem (Jews) who would have their prejudice broken down toward the Gentile. H. L. also met the tears on the occasion by showing the MARCH OF DIMES will not care for heart patients or even orphans BECAUSE it is not their work. He showed the same is true for each local church of Christ. Benevolence is not the local church's work. Vick argued O. T. Israel robbed God (Mai. 3: 8) and inferred no benevolence to the non-saints was just that. This

really backfired on him when Collett showed we rob God when we use the church treasury in an unauthorized way (for the non-saint). Vick used the argument about a non-saint attending who got sick in the assembly and said then we could not call the 911 number for an ambulance or use "church water" or a towel to wipe his brow. Collett said the first saint who got to the sick man would both call 911 and wipe his brow AS AN INDIVIDUAL but Vick's brethren in order to have church action to decide to do the same would have to call an eldership meeting to make the decision and before the decision could be made, the man might die.

On the Boles Home part, Collett asked Vick where in the Bible any local church ever donated to a family, showing the church made distribution to each man as any man had need (Acts 4: 35). Vick reasoned to help a child the church would have to give to his father. This was a subtle way of trying to get the non-saint in the church budget. Collett asked Vick if the church donated to ONE WIDOW, would that be donating to a WIDOWS HOME. Vick said YES. This backfired when Collett showed FAMILY is a collective word and one person can't make up a family. Vick does not believe in missionary societies in the church budget or works of a church under a board. This also backfired when Collett read from a Boles Home publication which states, "BOLES HOME IS A MINISTRY OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST." and the same publication shows Boles Homes is under a board. Collett showed the Southern Baptist Convention receives funds from local Baptist Churches and owns and operates orphan homes, Bible colleges, and evangelizes. He then showed the Oregon Christian Missionary Society also receives funds from Christian Churches and owns and operates both orphan homes and Bible colleges as well as evangelizes. He showed the American Christian Missionary Society (started in 1849) was under a board and evangelized. Then he showed BOLES HOME is the name of a CORPORATION to provide a home for destitute and dependent children, AND they "see" their "task as missionary in nature" (from one of their publications). Collett showed Boles Home is not like a missionary society but IS A MISSIONARY SOCIETY. By definition a missionary society is an organization or society designed to do the work or mission of the church. To those who view GENERAL benevolence as the mission of the church, an organization or society to perform this work "FOR CHURCHES OF CHRIST" is surely a missionary society.

Vick argued if Gal. 6: 6 is not authority for church support of preachers then Collett could not get his salary from the church. Collett showed 1 Cor. 9 and other passages would include church support of preachers. Collett showed Gal. 6: 6 is on the subject of the taught one having fellowship with the teacher in all good things which he teaches by living the teaching. It is not on paying a preacher.

We really believe Vick and his people generally are sincere. If they could just learn how to establish Bible authority and learn how the word church is used and how a local church may function, there might be great hope for many of them. We feel close to Vick and his people and hope they will come to the truth. Truth was taught. H. L.

Collett was well prepared having made well over 200 charts. Robert Bond flipped his charts and Larry Ritchie kept his time.

In conclusion, possibly the strongest argument Collett made, after Vick had made many of his points, was to state that about ten years ago he changed from Vick's basic position having preached it for 12 years. And why did he change? He stated he changed because of the same kind of arguments the audience had just heard Vick make, which will not hold water. Collett asked Vick if he sent funds to an organization which helped the needy (orphans and widows), would that be obeying James 1: 27. Vick said "YES. " Collett then affirmed he sends to the SOCIAL SECURITY department of the U. S. Government which helps over 38,000,000 orphans, widows, and aged men so that

ought to take care of James 1: 27 for him. Then Collett showed that does not take care of James 1: 27 for "VISIT" has to do with PERSONALLY inspecting with the eyes for the purpose of doing good. Collett also asked Vick if an orphan child were still an orphan after a husband-wife adopted him. Vick said "NO. " Collett then asked if a child were still an orphan when taken in by BOLES HOME. Vick said "NO. " Collett showed if that is so, then no person or church obeys James 1: 27 by donating to Boles Home since they are not orphans. Collett had charts contrasting a natural family with Boles Home, which Vick claimed was a substitute family, with about sixteen points of contrast. This made Vick's position absurd. How can a rich board have poor kids in a family?

I believe debates do good and appreciate all the work H. L. put into this one. May honest people seek (Jn. 7: 17).

WHAT WILL YOU LEAVE BEHIND?

David A. Padfield

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Evansville, Indiana 47714

During every funeral sermon I remind the audience that funerals are for the living, not the dead. Words spoken in the hour of death can encourage the living to remain faithful to the Lord. After the first martyr gave his life for the Lord, Luke tells us that "devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him" (Acts 8: 2).

Acts 9: 36 tells us of Dorcas, a woman "full of good works and charitable deeds. " While at Joppa, she grew sick and died. The disciples washed her and placed her in the upper room. When Peter entered the room "all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them" (Acts 9: 39). This godly woman was remembered by the things she left behind. Revelation 14: 13 says our works will follow us. When you die, what will you leave behind?

All Worldly Possessions

"We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out" (1 Tim. 6: 7). If this is true, then why do so many people get all wrapped up with "possessions"? Our Lord asked, "What is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16: 26).

What would you have if you gained the whole world? Whatever it is, it will not endure when the judgment is passed (2 Peter 3: 10).

What would you give in exchange for your soul? Whatever it may be, this is one transaction you will eternally regret. Judas sold his soul for 30 pieces of

silver (Matt. 26: 14-16), many Christians today will sell out for far less. Some will sell their soul for a few more minutes sleep on Sunday morning, or another hour of TV on Sunday night. Gospel preachers have been known to exchange their hope of eternal glory for the praise of men (2 Tim. 4: 3). Elders will sometimes compromise the purity of the local congregation to keep the large crowds. Your Spouse

When you die, all that your spouse will have left of you are memories and pictures. Don't wait till your spouse dies to express your love for them. Flowers at the graveside might make you feel better, but your spouse could only have enjoyed them in life.

Among the many laws stated in the Pentateuch, I have found Deut. 24: 5 to be one of the most quaint. It says, "When a man has taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war or be charged with any business; he shall be free at home one year, and bring happiness to his wife, whom he has taken. " God intended for the home to be pleasant for both parties.

Your Children

The Psalmist tells us our "children are a heritage from the Lord" (Psa. 127: 3). How are you treating your "gift" from God?

You bought life insurance so your spouse can meet the financial needs of your children, and this is to be commended. On January 28, 1986 Christa McAuliffe died aboard the space shuttle Challenger. Some of her friends had purchased a \$1 million life insurance policy for her children. But that money could not dry a single tear from her children's eyes.

I am saddened by parents who get all wrapped up in material things so they can give their children "the best of everything. " My sons often drag me outside to play baseball (I hate baseball), but, I know they would rather spend 30 minutes with me than have a new bicycle.

Your Friends

What will your friends think when they read your obituary in the paper? Will they be surprised to find out you were a Christian? Will the reputation of the Lord's, church be harmed? Our death will affect them, for "none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself (Rom. 14: 7).

How will you be remembered in death?

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY SAVIOR

Norman E. Fultz

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Kansas City, MO 64166

It is good business, to say nothing to the legality of it, for a company to proclaim itself an "equal opportunity employer," and it is good politics for a candidate for public office to claim he'll fairly represent "all" the people.

It is certainly not an ennobling attribute for one to be characterized by respect of persons shown toward any other human being. Yet we are accustomed to seeing it, or hearing it charged against others in our society — in the realm of employment, in the courts of law, in religion, or sometimes even in the home. But it is a fault to him who shows it, and while few, if any, are completely devoid of it, he is the nobler person who can rise above it in his dealings with his fellows.

From a word which basically means "to receive the countenance," respect of persons is partiality or discrimination based upon outward circumstances, a failure to properly consider the intrinsic merits of individuals. It usually prefers as the more worthy those who are privileged by reason of wealth, social standing, culture, or position of power or influence. However, there may also be reverse partiality or discrimination. The Bible, the revelation from a God with whom there is no respect of persons, addresses itself to both kinds. Favoring the rich and despising the poor who might come into the assembly of worship is declared by James (2: 1-9) to be sin. But under the Mosaic covenant, its adherents were warned against both "respecting the person of the poor" and "honoring the person of the mighty" in the giving of judgment (Lev. 19: 15).

In six different contexts the New Testament declares that there is no respect of persons with God and Christ. **Truly we have an equal opportunity Savior.** Jesus

came to seek and to save the lost; whether high-born or low-born, whether rich or destitute, cultured or barbaric, and whether black, brown, yellow, red or white, Jew or Gentile. "For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth in him shall not be put to shame. For there is no distinction between Jew or Greek: for the same Lord is Lord of all, and is rich unto all that call upon him: for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. 10: 11-13).

With God, there is no respect of persons in His calling. Peter showed this at Cornelius' house (Acts 10: 34-35). Regardless of one's station or standing in life, God's power to save is in the gospel (Rom. 1: 16-17), and by it He calls "to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thes. 2: 14). God's saving grace is declared through the word of His grace, drawing to Him those who hear and learn, then instructing them in godly living (Acts 20: 32; Tit. 2: 11-12; John 6: 44-45).

His expectation of His servants in worship is for all the same. The admonition to believers to "have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with respect of persons" (James 2: 1) is in a context dealing with worship. God desires the worship of those who will "worship in spirit and in truth;" that is, from one's heart as directed by truth, God's truth (John 4: 24; 17: 17). It is not mine, as His child, to offer Him what "I like" but rather what "He likes." And what He likes can be determined only by His revelation.

Of all, with no respect of persons, He expects the same kind of life — one of godliness, in which the lusts of the flesh are mortified (put to death), and priority is given to His kingdom and righteousness (Col. 3: 3-25; 1 Pet. 1: 14-17; Mat. 6: 33).

God's judgment will be without respect to the person of any. So Paul reasons in Romans 2: 1-11. That all shall be judged is amply declared, and it will be righteous judgment by a righteous judge, Jesus Christ "who will render to every man according to his works" (Acts 17: 30-31; Rom. 2: 7-11; 2 Cor. 5: 10).

So, dear reader, know this. The God whom we serve is without respect of persons. And whatever your external circumstances, He loves you and will receive those who come unto Him through Jesus (John 14: 6). "Whosoever will may come."

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

FROM AROUND THE WORLD

STEVE DIAZ, 19115 Livingston Ave. Lutz, FL 33549 — I have recently returned from a three-week stay in the Barcelona, Spain area, visiting with the brethren and looking over the possibilities of going to preach the gospel in Spain. Efrain Perez preaches for the brethren in Badalona (north end of Barcelona). Jerry Falk and Greg Perkins are working with the brethren in El Pratt (southern end of Barcelona). While I was among the brethren, there were three baptisms. On a trip to Zaragoza, Spain with brother and sister Perez, we made contact with a brother and sister who did not want anything to do with denominational practices of what used to be the church of

Christ in Zaragoza. This church now calls itself the Evangelical church of Christ, uses musical instruments, and has a Baptist preacher who, of course, does not teach the gospel plan of salvation. This brother and sister are anxious to start a sound church in Zaragoza. In addition, the church that meets at the US Base just outside of Zaragoza, has said they could use my help, if I move in the area.

Brethren, I would like to move to Zaragoza, Spain to preach the gospel and I need your help. Because of schooling, my time to raise support is limited. If you can help with one-time or monthly support, please let me know as soon as possible. My phone number is (813) 949-8942.

THE GOSPEL ARGUMENT FOR GOD

- Study Notes on the Empirical Argument for the Existence of God
- These Notes are the Outgrowth of the Debates which the author had with Atheists: One at the University of Illinois (1985) and one at Iowa State University (1988)

By Kenneth L. Chumbley

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PAUL WILLIAMS, P. O. Box 324, Eshowe, 3815 South Africa — Lungile Simelane asked so many intelligent questions on her first three correspondence lessons that I determined to visit her. I was impressed by her intelligence and her honesty. She was anxious to be baptized into Christ. She explained that a teacher had asked her to burn the mail which had come to the school and had been unclaimed. Because there is no rural mail delivery, most country people use schools or shops as addresses and collect their mail there. As you can imagine, there is a good bit of unclaimed mail. As Lungile looked over the letters she saw a correspondence course lesson. She decided to keep it, filled it in and sent it to us. The result was that she learned the truth and was saved.

Sibusiso Ngcobo arrived at my back door on April 12th at 8: 30 a. m. He had left his house a little after 4 a. m. and had walked over mountains and through two rivers for almost 15 miles. He came to be baptized into Christ.

FROM THE USA

JEFF ASHER, 5416 Dumas Drive, Amarillo, TX — Since January four have been baptized into Christ. Also eight others have been restored or identified. Three of those were a family which came to us from Minnesota, four have come out of liberal churches in our area and one came out of a "one cup" church. These latter saints were reached as a result of our call-in radio program. Our gospel meeting with A. W. Goff was a great success. Our attendance was high. There were lots of visitors and the results are evident.

TOM MOODY, P. O. Box 26, Milton, VT 05468, Phone: (802) 524-7016 — It has been a joy to work with the saints here in the pleasant setting of northern Vermont. The church in Milton has progressed steadily. There are now around 70 in attendance, and much knowledge and zeal is evident. We have had three baptisms since November. My wife, Cheri, is facing heart surgery within several weeks. As a child, Cheri had surgery for an uncommon condition called subaortic stenosis. She is having a recurrence of that problem plus damage to the aorta valve. When doctors have determined the approach they want to take, Cheri will be scheduled for surgery in Boston. Please keep Cheri in your prayers.

RUBEN C. AMADOR, P. O. Box 924456, Houston, TX 77292-4456 — Beginning in June I will be giving of my time to the Spanish-speaking churches who need and ask for my help. Due to the many doors that have opened in Mexico, Central and South America, I am persuaded that I can expand my work to assist many more churches. Minnie and I plan to use Houston as our base. When we return to our home here I will continue to work on several written works that I have and in the translation of several in English. There is a big need, as you know, for written Spanish literature. I am finishing my eighth and last year with the Judiway Street church this month. In making these changes, I am needing your help. I am having to replace part of my personal support by the end of May (1990). If you can assist me in this area, I would appreciate having the opportunity to discuss with you in person or at least by phone. Additional help is needed for travel expenses.

GENE TAYLOR, 3208 Baldwin Drive W., Tallahassee, FL 32308 — The Westside church of Christ in Tallahassee has sold its previous building and has built a new meeting place on the northeast side of town. The new facility is located at 4015 Centerville Road, Tallahassee, FL 32308. Its new phone number is (904) 422-3720. Since the new building is in the northeast section of the city, the congregation will no longer use the "Westside" designation, but will simply use "church of Christ." The church here is strong and growing. Our attendance has increased steadily over the past few years and continues to grow. We are looking forward to the challenge our new location gives us. Tallahassee is growing rapidly and the new building is in the center of the largest area of growth. If you will be visiting in Florida or if you, or a son or daughter, will be attending one of the universities or colleges in our city, please visit us.

KEITH WARD, 2214 NW 31st Ave., Gainesville, FL 32605 — The Northeast church of Christ began meeting in our new building at 2214 NW 31st Ave., Gainesville, FL 32605, April 15, 1990 and will henceforth be known as the Glen Springs Rd. church of Christ. In the mid-80's, when we were outgrowing the old building, means were sought to keep us together due to the love that binds us. Plans were made, delayed, stymied, redone, delayed again, until we wondered if our dream would ever be. Our numbers have increased 15 percent. We began supporting Joe Rose and Jerry Accettura, particularly in the area of personal work. Any who have family in the area or who plan to attend the University of Florida may contact us at the above address. If you are traveling through, the office phone number is 378-8031 or you may contact Larry Wright at 375-8490.

DAN HUDDLESTON, c/o Southside church of Christ, Highway 96 South, Silsbee, TX 77656 — I was formerly a preacher for the institutional folks. Approximately two and one-half months ago, I managed to drop the blinders of institutional prejudices and make an in-depth study of the issues that divide the church. As I studied with an open mind, I found the answer. Institutionalism is based on liberalism and false doctrine. This is why they are plagued with so many problems. I could easily recognize that church support of man-made institutions was unauthorized by God, thus, a sin. I have repented of my sins and involvement with the liberals. To help right some of these wrongs, and possibly bring others to the truth, I preached the truth publicly on the issues in Buna, TX. Of course, a meeting was called and I was fired. I have made a public statement and placed membership with the brethren at Southside in Silsbee, TX. (Editor's note: Those who know Dan and may be contacted include: Wayne Wise (409) 385-6926 and Jim McDonald (214) 569-6550).

LARRY BRAYALL, P. O. Box 241, Corinna, ME 04928 — There is a small group of Christians who meet at 31 Mill St., Dexter, ME. The work here was started by a brother in the late fifties by Ralph Smart. Dexter is a small town of 3000 to 4000 people. You may have seen one of their main factory products in your area: the Dexter shoe. There are 21 Christians plus children who meet here. Since 1970, when I first obeyed the gospel, a number of families have moved away. The building we have could easily seat 80 to 100 with plenty of classroom space. In 1987 the brethren agreed to give me a chance to preach for them. It hasn't been easy, but the Lord has given me strength to keep going. The thing that makes it most difficult is my lack of support. For the past three years I have worked three and four days a week to off-

set my lack. Presently, I receive \$550 per month. \$250 from the brethren here and \$300 per month from the brethren in Annandale, VA. If you can help with the support of the work here or if you wish to learn more about the work, write me or Rea Pennock, P. O. Box 203, Palmyra, ME 04950. My phone number is (207) 278-8465.

ALAN YEATER, 290 Warfield Blvd., Clarksville, TN 37043 — Our work with the Warfield Blvd. church continues to be a great source of encouragement. The attendance and contribution have increased over the last year. Some new Christians have moved and we anticipate at least three more military families will move in the near future. This church has taken on more of my support every year. Peace prevails and work abounds. Our meeting place is conveniently located for I-24 and other major highway travelers. Clarksville is the home of Ft. Campbell and Austin Peay State University. Please notify us prior to or immediately upon arrival of any incoming military personnel and of any APSU students you would like us to contact. Phone numbers are (615) 647-4007 or 647-1234.

LECTURESHIP

J. R. BRONGER, 8220 West 82nd Street, Indianapolis, IN 46278 — The Traders Point Church of Christ in Indianapolis is to conduct a series of lessons on the subject of **New Concepts As Seen In Some Churches Of Christ Today**. The meeting will run from August 23 through 28.

THURSDAY — AUG. 23: "A New Concept Toward Bible Authority" (The call for a new hermeneutic) — Mike Willis (7: 30 P. M.)

FRIDAY — AUG. 24: "A New Concept Toward Sin" (New names and remedies for sin) — L. A. Stauffer (7: 30 P. M.)

SATURDAY — AUG. 25: "A New Concept Toward Controversy" (Positive preaching only, no name-calling) — Denver Niemeier (7: 30 P. M.)

SUNDAY — AUG. 26: "A New Concept In Parenthood" (Permissiveness toward indulgence, sin, the questionable) — J. R. Bronger (10: 30 A. M.)

SUNDAY—AUG. 26: "A New Concept Toward Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage" (The no-commitment generation wrestles with Bible demands) — Robert C. Welch (6:00 P. M.)

MONDAY — AUG. 27: "A New Concept Toward Error" (Grace/unity position, no-debates, tolerating "sincere" error) — Jerry Sayre (7: 30 PM.)

TUESDAY—AUG. 28: "A New Concept Toward The Church" (No local organization, structure, or identity) — Eddie Paden (7: 30 P. M.)

HARRY PICKUP, SR. DEPARTS FROM THIS LIFE

It is with sadness that we report that our brother, Harry Pickup, Sr., passed away June 4, 1990. Funeral services were held June 7, 1990 in Tampa. Bob Owen, Charles Goodall and James Finey spoke at the services. Brother Pickup would have been 90 on August 9, 1990. We extend our sympathy to his wife, Elizabeth and daughter, Jean Zellner, and his son, Harry Pickup, Jr.

THE GOSPEL AND COMMUNIST COUNTRIES

PHIL MORGAN, 7202 Madison Ave., Indianapolis, IN 46227, Phone: (317) 787-7059 — I understand that many colleges and universities in the Communist countries of Europe and Asia desire Americans who will come and teach English to their own students who have already been introduced to our language. Extensive training may not always be necessary (depending on where you go), but certainly any you get will be advantageous. What a wonderful way to take the gospel, and a Christ-centered family, where many people have never seen or heard its power.

Special training in how to teach English to speakers of foreign languages is available in 158 institutions nationwide. Many, many more schools offer valuable courses, even though a specific program for this subject is not in place. All Christians who would like to expand the ways they might be useful in future gospel work might want to follow up on this opportunity.

The **Directory of Professional Preparation Programs in TESOL in the United States: 1989-1991** provides basic information about college and university programs in the United States leading to a degree or certificate in the teaching of English to speakers of other languages (TESOL). "

Interested people would be welcome to any specific information from my copy of this book; or if you would like to get one of your own,

the cost will be \$20 plus postage (order must be pre-paid or charged to Mastercard). You can order from: Publications Department, TESOL, 1600 Cameron Street, Suite 300, Alexandria, VA 22314-2705. Phone: (703)836-0774.

HEALTH PROBLEMS AND FINANCIAL NEEDS OF OTIS JORDAN

JACK HOBBY, P. O. Box 1134, Titusville, FL 32781 — Otis Jordan, faithful gospel preacher, has a growth in his throat which has sidelined him from full-time preaching. As a result, he has lost his health insurance through being unable to maintain the premiums. For financial reasons he was unable to go to the doctor about the growth until recently (as far as having anything done about it). The church here has assisted him (\$1000.00). We are sending him \$200.00 in May and again in June. Otis is that amount short of routine living expenses monthly. We plan to stand by him and do what we can as long as the need exists. I personally feel others would gladly lend a good brother a helping hand if they but knew — especially those who know him and his work over the years. His address is: Route 1, Box 273, McAlpin, FL 32062. His phone number is (904) 963-2851.

BOOK WANTED

MICHAEL J. DAVIS — Rt. 15, Box 748, Bedford, IN 47421 — I am looking for a copy of **RACHEL REASONNER: A Scriptural Woman** by the late Daniel Sommer. If you have one, please contact me at the above address.

SEEKING SERMONS TO PUBLISH

MIKE HUGHES, P. O. Box 2481, Corinth, MS 38834 — We are still trying to get some sermons together from faithful gospel preachers to publish possibly this fall. If you have three or four you would be willing to share with others, either send them to me on hardcopy (paper) or you can send them IBM format using Word Perfect, WordStar or ASCII formats.

PREACHERS NEEDED

TRUMANN, ARKANSAS — The Melton Ave. Church of Christ, located 55 miles Northwest of Memphis and 15 miles Southeast of Jonesboro, AR, desires a preacher to work with us. We are a congregation of 55 members, self-supporting with and average attendance of 80. Those interested should write to the Melton Ave. Church of Christ, P. O. Box 147, Trumann, AR 72472. Our phone numbers are: **483-2114, 483-7749** or 483-7025.

MUSKOGEE, OKLAHOMA— The church at Muskogee desperately needs a preacher to work with them. There are about 20 women and children. They can only pay \$200.00 per month at the present. Muskogee has a population of 67,000. Will you accept the challenge? Contact: Randall Elrod, 21421 E. 34th St, Broken Arrow, OK 74014 or call (918) 355-1154.

DETROIT, MICHIGAN— The Downriver Church of Christ, located in the Southern suburbs of Detroit, is seeking a preacher. There are approximately thirty meeting in the Holiday Inn. Paul Ayres is presently working with them, but he and his family are planning to start a new work in the Fenton/Flint, Michigan area this summer. The church at Downriver can provide partial support. For more information call Milton Smotherman at (313) 479-4359.

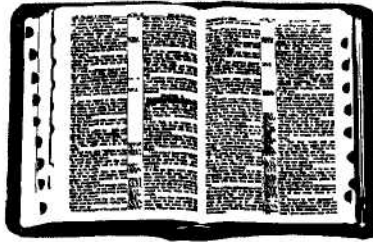
JACKSONVILLE, ARKANSAS — The church meeting at 1807 McArthur Drive is going to need a preacher by the 3rd Sunday in August. The attendance is around 40-45 and the contribution averages around \$550.00 a week. Partial support can be provided. Those interested should contact Norman Legg (501) 982-7652 after 5 P. M. weekdays or weekends. Write to: Church of Christ, 1807 McArthur Drive, Jacksonville, Arkansas 72076.

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	183
RESTORATIONS	55
(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 XXXI

SEPTEMBER, 1990

NUMBER 9

THINK ON THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 1631
Lutz, FL 33549



WHAT JESUS SAYS ABOUT HIS WORDS

If the Bible is truly the word of God, it is perfect, complete and indestructible. If it is not what it claims to be, it is the greatest fraud ever perpetrated upon the human race. The attitudes that men have toward the words of Christ do not change them, but most of these attitudes will cost millions their souls in eternity.

God has spoken. He has spoken to us in this age through Jesus Christ, His Son (Heb. 1: 1, 2). Jesus said his words came from the Father. "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works" (John 14: 10). "For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak" (John 12: 49, 50). Jesus said in his prayer to the Father: "For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me" (John 17: 8).

Jesus said his words would never pass away, but would abide forever. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24: 35). "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the spirit unto unfeigned love of the

brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: "... But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (1 Pet. 22, 25).

Jesus said his words were Spirit and life, i. e., his words gave life. "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). When many of the disciples of Jesus turned back and walked no more with him, he asked the twelve, "Will ye also go away?" "Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6: 66-68). The words of Jesus are the words of eternal life: they produce eternal life. The words of no other person will produce eternal life.

Jesus said that his word would judge men. "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12: 48). God has appointed a day in which He will judge the world by Jesus Christ, and He has given assurance in that He raised Christ from the dead (Acts 17: 31). "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel" (Rom. 2: 16). The basis of judgment is the gospel, the word of God. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ' that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5: 10). Right and wrong, 'good and bad must be determined by the law of Christ (Gal. 6: 2), which is the word of God. "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works" (Rev. 20: 12).

Jesus said that those who love him will keep his words. "... If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14: 23). "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14: 15). To abide in Christ one must let the words of Christ abide in him. "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you"

(John 15: 7). Everyone who lets the words of Christ dwell in his heart and life, Christ abides in him and he in Christ. He is also loved by the Father and the Son.

The words of Christ are the words of God, because Christ is God (Heb. 1: 8). These words of Christ were received from the Father (Heb. 1: 1, 2; John 12: 49, 50). Christ gave these words unto the apostles whom he had chosen through the Holy Spirit (Acts 1: 2). Christ told them to: "... tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Lk. 24: 49). Just before he ascended into heaven, Jesus promised his apostles: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1: 8). They obeyed him. "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place"... "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2: 1, 4).

Jesus had before promised the twelve that "the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14: 26). The Holy Spirit would make them remember every thing he had told them, and he would teach them all things. Since the Father, the Holy Spirit and Christ are all God, the words of Christ from the Father, through the Holy Spirit are the words of God.

Jesus also told his apostles, regarding his words to them after he ascended back to the Father, that the Holy Spirit would enable them to bear witness of him with the unity and completeness of his revelation. This is stated in John 16: 12-15: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you."

The words of Jesus are powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword. They give life — eternal life — or they give death — eternal death. They are able to invoke the love and fellowship of both the Father and the Son. The words are a complete body of truth, which will allow no tampering by the hands and mind of any human being or body of men. No man can add one letter to the divine truth given by Christ, nor can one jot or one tittle be taken from his revelation. It stands complete, holy, invincible, immovable and indestructible. Man can do but one of two things with the words of Christ: disbelieve and reject them, or believe and obey them. There is no middle ground. The first will go away into eternal punishment; the second will enter into eternal life. "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2: 16).

**"Behold, I have set before thee
an open door ..."** —Rev. 3:8

Searching The Scriptures

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Editorial

Connie W. Adams

P.O. Box 69
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VICTORY OVER TEMPTATION

The reason that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" is that all accountable people, whether Jews or Gentiles, have yielded to temptation. That is not because we were so created that we could not help ourselves. We were not born "totally depraved" so that we could not think a good thought or do a good deed. We were made with the power of choice. If man has no such power of choice, then it would take an arbitrary act of God to save him and there would be no point in preaching the gospel to him if he is so constructed that he cannot respond favorably to it.

The common excuse of sinners is "I just could not help myself." Or, "that's just how I am." It never seems to occur to them they could help themselves and that "the way" they are, just might be wrong, and subject to correction. No murderer just had to do it. No fornicator just had to commit the act. No liar just had to lie. No drunkard just had to drink. NO drug addict just had to do it. No homosexual just had to be that way. It was not in the genes, folks, it was in the will.

Don't Blame God

"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man; But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (Jas. 1: 13-15). This passage makes it clear that, while God allows us to be tested, he does not seek to ensnare us to sin. Responsibility for sin, which brings forth death, is squarely on the shoulders of the one who allows himself/herself to be enticed and to permit lust to conceive producing sin.

The Nature of Temptation

All temptation falls into one of three categories: (1) the lust of the flesh; (2) the lust of the eyes; and (3) the pride (or vainglory) of life. These were the avenues of temptation presented to Eve in the Garden. She chose to yield to temptation, thus sinning, and tempted Adam who also chose to yield. But the second Adam, Jesus Christ, made a different choice when faced with the same temptations.

The Triumph of Christ Over Temptation

Since our Lord was tempted in all points, "yet without sin" and "leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (Heb. 4: 15; 1 Pet. 2: 21), we would do well to observe how he met and gained victory over temptation.

Matthew 4: 1-11 gives the account of the wilderness temptation which followed the forty days of fasting.

The first temptation was an appeal to the lust of the flesh. Jesus was hungry. Satan, the tempter, challenged him to use his miraculous power for selfish ends. "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." There was no doubt that he who a little later would turn water into wine, could make stones bread. Jesus responded by an appeal to the authority of **scripture**. He said "**It is written**, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

This was a reference to the time in the wilderness wanderings when God gave Israel manna from heaven. He gave them instructions as to how much they could gather for a day's provision and said if they gathered any more that it would breed worms and stink. Some gathered more and that is exactly what happened. The lesson was simple: they were not just sustained by the manna they gathered, but by obeying the voice of God. Obedience to his word was the source of their sustenance. Jesus knew that and met the first temptation by an appeal to the authority of scripture.

The second temptation was an appeal to the vain glory of life. Satan sat him on a pinnacle of the temple overlooking a sheer drop which would have taken his life, had he jumped. Satan said "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down, for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." Here the temptation was to glorify himself by calling on angelic helpers to protect him in a daring stunt. Here Satan quoted scripture but perverted its application so as to tempt, or test God. Jesus met this temptation by an appeal to the **harmony of scripture**. He said "It is written **again**, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Scripture is harmonious. One verse is not to be used to nullify another, or to counteract the whole tenor of divine truth.

Many problems would be solved both doctrinally and practically if all would recognize the harmony of the scripture. God does not give us conflicting duties. Often, in the plan of salvation, only a part of what he has required is taught to the exclusion of all else revealed on that subject. That is the trouble with the "faith only" folks. What God said on that subject is all true, but he said other things as well on salvation. An understanding and harmonious use of the word of God would help us all to gain the victory over the temptations of Satan.

The third temptation was an appeal to the lust of the eyes. Satan showed him "all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them" and promised to give these to him "if thou wilt fall down and worship me." Our Lord responded by a proper **application of scripture**. "Then said Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan" **for** it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. "For" is the word GAR. The scripture was written to the end that all might only worship God and serve him. Note the two different words: worship (form of PROSKUNEO) and serve (LATREAO).

It is one thing to recognize the binding authority of scripture, another to see the harmony in what God said, and yet another to make an application of it to the

situations of life. Since man is made to glorify God by both worship and service, any veneration of the Devil or attempt to advance oneself by yielding to the lure of those who serve the Devil, is a repudiation of what is written to lead us to worship and serve **only** God. What many pulpits need urgently is **application of scripture** to the various issues we face and touching the sins of the times which are devouring all too many of the Lord's people. We need to tell people what is written, put in context with what else God said on the subject and then explain "for it is written" and make the application to life.

This is how our Lord won the victory over temptation and that is how we can do it.

WELL, DONE

The editor is much indebted to **Donnie V. Rader** for editing the paper for the months of June, July and August. This help from him could not have come at a more needed time for me, personally. Family sickness and other trials have placed us under unusual stress the past few weeks and it would have been very difficult to have maintained the deadlines essential to the operation of the paper. Brother Rader has done his work exceptionally well. The July special issue was much needed and has been well received. We have enjoyed an extra large circulation of that issue and orders for extra copies are still coming in. Our thanks not only to him but for those who contributed the excellent study material which went into that issue. Not only was the content of that, plus the other months, very good work, but Donnie's knowledge of layout made for some eye-catching improvements. If you appreciated his work these past three months, why not drop him a note and tell him. His address is P. O. Box 9, Lexington, Alabama 35648.

In spite of the difficulties of the past summer. I have missed my work with the paper and am glad to take it up again. These are critical times in so many ways, and there is a need for this paper and the truth being taught by this means. If you share that view, please help us to get it in the hands of as many honest hearted Christians as possible.

WILMA ADAMS

With much sadness we report the death of Wilma Adams, beloved wife of my brother, J. Wiley Adams of Warner Robins, Georgia. She was stricken while they were in a meeting at Thorn, MS and she passed away on July 28 in a hospital in Tupelo, MS. Beautiful and comforting memorial services were conducted in Warner Robins by Tom O'Neal, Sewell Hall and Andy DeClerk, and also in Hopewell, VA by John Nosker, Paul Casebolt and Weldon Warnock. Burial was at Sunset Memorial at Chester, VA. A more extended notice will appear later.

Using the
**SWORD OF
THE SPIRIT**



Ken Green
2212 Jordan Lane, S.W.
Huntsville, Alabama 35805

NOTHING SHALL OFFEND THEM

"Great peace have they who love thy law, and nothing shall offend them" (Psalm 119: 165).

Peace is one of the most sought after commodities in our world and age. We pray for peace on the national and international levels. We seek peace in our families and with our neighbors. But the peace that is most ardently pursued, and which, to most folks is the most elusive is inner peace. It is this peace within one's own soul that the word of God speaks of in this passage. True peace does not come in a bottle of pills, a pint of booze, a yoga position, or on a psychiatrist's couch. It is the heritage of those who love the law of God.

Furthermore "nothing, " we are advised, "shall offend them. " This doesn't mean that nothing will hurt their feelings, or that they will not meet with anything they do not like. The word "offend" in the Bible generally means to cause one to stumble. As the NKJV translates the verse, "nothing causes them to stumble. "

Such assurance is not given to those who **know** God's law; but to those who **love** God's law. One may know the Book from cover to cover and not have great peace. But even a new convert can enjoy this blessing if he loves the law of God, and nothing will become a stumbling block to him.

What are some of the things that often cause people to stumble?

Many are caused to stumble by tribulations, persecutions, and revilements. The Christian should realize that he will have to undergo a certain amount of such. "Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3: 12).

Jesus said, "Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you, and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven, for in like manner their fathers did to the prophets" (Luke 6: 22, 23).

But rather than rejoicing, many Christians "believe for awhile and in time of temptation fall away" (Luke 8; 13). They grow weary and weak and cast off their confidence. It is my conviction that even tribulations, persecutions, and revilements will work together for good for those who love the Lord... (Rom. 8: 28).

"Great peace have they who love thy law, and nothing shall offend them. "

Many are offended when their doctrine is questioned — I use the word now in the sense of getting

upset or miffed. The fastest way to ruffle some people's feathers is to call in question what they believe, practice, or teach in religion. Why is this the case?

As I study the word of God, I find that Jesus never became angry when His doctrine was questioned. Matt. 22 gives several examples of our Lord entering debate with the religionists of His day. He did not shun the opportunity to pit truth against error. As a result the people marveled (v. 22), the multitudes were astonished (v. 33), and as far as the false teachers, "... no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore" (v. 46).

The apostles did not fear controversy. They thrived on it. They invited questions. Peter did not become offended when he was questioned (Acts 4: 7), but boldly proclaimed, "If we this day are judged for a good deed done to this helpless man, by what means he has been made well, let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole" (verses 9, 10).

Honest men and women of the Bible did not become irritated or miffed when their doctrine was called in question. Apollos, an eloquent man and one mighty in the Scriptures allowed Aquila and Priscilla to explain the way of God to him more accurately (Acts 18: 24-26). The Bereans "were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so" (Acts 17: 11).

Well, who was offended when their doctrine was questioned? Then His disciples came and said to Him. 'Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?' (Matt. 15: 12). It was the false teachers who got their dandruff up. And the Lord's counsel was, "Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a ditch" (verse 14).

"Great peace have they who love thy law, and nothing shall offend them. "

Many are made to stumble by unloving, uncar- ing, or unthinking remarks made by brethren. Have you ever considered what the outcome of the story of the prodigal son would have been if the older brother had seen him before his father did? Unfortunately, that is what often happens. The brethren get to some folks before they get home to the Father. And sometimes when they make it home, the brethren then manage to run them off.

Of course, some people are just too sensitive and easily offended. Like the woman who "quit church" because a sister turned around and made a face at her. The sister said that she didn't realize it if she made a face. Or the fellow who walked up to a couple of brethren carrying on a private conversation and told them, "If you've got something to say about me, just say it to my face!"

But many in the church are very careless about what they say and how they say it. One preacher told of being asked to speak at a mid-week service he visited while

traveling. He said the man who led the dismissal prayed, "Lord, help these preachers to talk where we can understand them. I couldn't understand a word he was saying!" Then the first lady out the door dressed him down for saying three-thousand were baptized at Pentecost, and the Bible says **about three-thousand**. The local preacher told him not to be concerned. "We've just got two nuts in this church and you met both of them tonight!"

One must just resolve to overlook a whole lot. "Great peace have they who love thy law, and nothing shall offend them. "

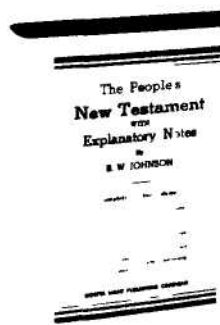
Some are caused to stumble by the indifference of others. One young convert who showed great zeal in teaching the lost was told that he would soon settle down. Many such babes have been turned off by the spiritual apathy of those who should lead and encourage them. Our Lord said, "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matt. 18: 6).

But before any Christian allows himself to be side-tracked by others who are not all they should be, consider Jesus. He is our example. If He did not become disillusioned by the indifference of others... if He did not declare, "Hey, why should I die for people like these!" then why should I be discouraged?

It should be also remembered that while there are too many in the church who are apathetic and lukewarm; there are many who are dedicated and concerned. Let's not develop an Elijah complex. God still has His seven-thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal.

"Great peace have they who love thy law, and nothing shall offend them. "

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RATIONALIZING

After the conquest of Canaan, Israel was ruled by a series of judges. These were primarily military leaders, called to deliver the nation from neighboring oppressors (Jud. 2: 16), though at least some of them also judged in the judicial sense. The last of the group was Samuel, who spent his childhood in the house of Eli the priest.

When Samuel was old he appointed his sons as judges over Israel. But the nation had grown tired of this arrangement. They were ready for a king. Moses had earlier predicted that this time would come (Dt. 17: 14-20). Though God granted their request, He was not pleased with it. He said it was a rejection of Him as king of Israel, and was but another in a long string of acts of disobedience in the nation's young history (1 Sam. 8: 7, 8).

The point I want to make in reviewing this bit of history has to do with Israel's approach to Samuel with their request. "Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah; and they said to him, 'Behold, you have grown old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations'" (1 Sam. 8: 4, 5). The elders did their best to make their desire to disobey seem reasonable. This is called "rationalizing," providing plausible but untrue reasons for conduct. Take a look at their arguments.

First, there was Samuel's age. The Philistines were on the attack again (9: 16). Samuel had grown old, and the insinuation was that he was no longer up to the task of leading Israel effectively. That may have been partially true. He likely appointed his sons as judges to lessen his load. The rationale was that since a change must be made anyway, why not take this opportunity to alter the form of government as well?

Next there was the misconduct of Samuel's sons. Verse three says, "His sons, however, did not walk in his ways, but turned aside after dishonest gain and took bribes and perverted justice." The Israelites had a legitimate complaint against them. Their thinking was that Samuel's sons were unacceptable as rulers, and since a change must be made, why not make it a change to a king?

Finally there was the matter of being like the surrounding nations. At first glance that seems like a weak argument, but perhaps a reasonably good case could be

made. Israel was God's chosen people. To the extent they were respected, God would be respected. Yet the nations around them might not recognize a nation with no king, therefore a king was necessary to God receiving the honor He deserved. Sounds better all the time, doesn't it!

Human nature has not changed. When we have done something wrong, or are about to depart from God's revealed will, our tendency is to make a defense instead of a confession. If possible we blame it on someone else, as Adam and then Eve tried to do. Or as in our text, we suggest all kinds of reasons why it is not so bad. And if we are convincing enough we may even decide we have God's approval!

A man excuses himself for stealing from his employer, who has surely not paid him what he is worth. A man and woman, young or old, suggest that the financial advantages of living together makes it acceptable, even though they are not married. (Besides, all a married couple has that they do not is "a piece of paper.") Temper tantrums are OK since psychologists tell us holding our frustrations in may produce worse effects. A husband is convinced that his divorce will be acceptable to God even though he did not put his wife away for adultery. After all, God would not want him to go through life unhappily married. A woman spurns the idea that she must be careful how she dresses — if a man lusts that is his problem.

Brethren anxious to support Boy Scouts and ball teams from the church's treasury tell us these things are good works. Centralization of churches is necessary to effectively compete with the denominations. Surely instrumental music in worship is not so bad — why even David used it. And on and on it goes...

Take another look at our text and learn two things about rationalizing. First, all it does is cloud the issue. Yes, Samuel was old, but that did not justify a wholesale departure from God's form of government. Yes, his sons were dishonest. But what guarantees were there that a king would not be even more so? Were these the only possible candidates for judge? As to the matter of the other nations, what they were doing was irrelevant to Israel's situation. She was a unique people. God had promised to bless her above all others if she would keep His covenant.

Samuel's age, his sons' character, and the form of government of other nations were not the issues. Whether God's will would be respected and obeyed — that was the point in question. Likewise, all those little things that we bring up to defend our misconduct — even if true — do nothing but cloud our minds. Again the real issue is whether God's pattern will be respected and obeyed.

Second, all such rationale does not excuse disobedience. In spite of these high-sounding reasons, God was displeased. He is able to see through the smoke screen. "For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart (Heb. 4: 12). Be not deceived.

Things Most Certainly Believed

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REFUSING TO RETIRE

Many older congregations are quite naturally experiencing an older median age along with what is perceived as attendant problems. Take a count of the number of retired persons within your group, there are considerably more than you thought, probably. The Social Security Act made retirement possible for every wage earning citizen. Work place retirement programs have augmented S. S. retirement incomes to make, in most cases, after work years financially stable. Medical techniques and health care have added years to life generally, three score and ten is often exceeded. These factors of longer retirement years and stable income have made a contribution to a philosophy of leisure playing often to the tune of do your own thing. Does this freedom from confinement to earning obligations, retirement, impact spiritually, our relation to the church? Thoughtful consideration says, no doubt about it.

While all the desirable aspects of retirement may be in place and one may truly be in the "golden years," what about spiritual retirement? Can one in any sense retire as a Christian. Can we go on S. S., i. e., Spiritual Security to the extent of relying on past accomplishments. Be reminded that use and be used is the criteria of saving faith. The extended usefulness that has become characteristic of the professional realm needs to extend to the spiritual. It has been said, "I would rather wear out than rust out." Are we wearing ourselves out spiritually or are we simply rusting out? The answer may well determine whether we go to heaven.

Retire from the work place? Certainly, if this is your choice. However, the overriding vocation of the Christian entails an ongoing "walk" (Eph. 4: 1). Being a Christian, with its attendant duties and privileges, is to be our consuming passion, our hearts dedication, our life pursuit and the only retirement for this is in Paradise. Let us be challenged with the beauty of age and maturity, respectful of its calling, aware of its opportunities and of our own increased effectiveness in the sunset years of life.

Congregations that are counting an increasing number of saints in their mature, "golden years" are richly blessed. Age is not necessarily a handicap, unless we determine to make it so by our own attitudes and failures causing us to see ourselves as something out of the ordinary. What a treasure of wisdom, experience, and knowledge at beck and call where this is the case. Older people are not stigmatized by age, any more than

congregations largely made up of such. The key may very well lie in tapping the resources. The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness" (Prov. 16: 31). "The glory of young men is their strength: and the beauty of old men is the gray head: (Prov. 20: 29).

Within each there must be the recognizing of ongoing usefulness. The key to this is developing the right attitude toward God, life, and self. How we see ourselves in relation to the Lord's will is of great importance. With the adding of years, do I continue to see myself as having something to offer in service to the Lord? Maybe some of the things which are considered as those we are no longer able to do simply need reviving. None, aged or others, can tolerate weariness in well doing. As long as the capacity for usefulness exists, the Lord requires.

Preparation for retirement in heaven is the theme of Matthew 25, the parables of virgins and talents. In each case the emphasis is upon the individual. Diminished capacity for doing only changes what is expected, it does not relegate to retirement. Expectation is still there respecting activity. Capacities in some measure makes for some level of usefulness. How wonderfully we are made, body aches and pains do not necessarily transfer to the mind. Thankfully, the capacity of mind, perception, understanding and comprehension often continue indefinitely. The secret for this may well be in the adage "use it or lose it." Glory years may be perceived as past but not the capacity to glorify our Father. "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3: 12).

There is a real challenge before all, we who are older especially. Revival is periodically necessary both individually and congregationally. Individually, the revival of spirit and power of response is within our capacities. Congregationally, the effect of revival is dependent upon the individuals who make it up. Faithfulness, the response of heart and life to the hearing of the word of God (cf. Rom. 10: 17), is the specific challenge, knowing full well that faithfulness must be unto death (cf. Rev. 2: 10). Let us challenge our beloved older, drawing from the deep well of wisdom and understanding, from the sweet and bitter experiences of life they have. My older brother and sister, show and point the way of letting the Lord rule and guide, encourage those that are following in the faith that withstands. Show, as only you can, there is a confidence in Christ that does not wane with increasing years. Continue so as to be among the company along with Paul able to say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4: 6-7).

Retirement from the "hum drum" and mundane is wonderful. It should increase opportunities for spiritual productivity, increased usefulness. Only this can justify the very fact of life. Remember, retirement for the child of God is in Paradise. By God's grace and continuing faith and dedication on our part, it shall be ours.

**SIMPLICITY
IN
CHRIST**

P. J. Casebolt

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"EIGHT SOULS"

"... wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water" (1 Pet. 3: 20). Even as Noah and his family were saved by water, Peter says that in a figure we are saved by baptism (v. 21).

By a combination of water, the ark, faith, and obedience, eight people were saved in Noah's day (Heb. 11: 7). In our time, a combination of water, faith, obedience, and the "operation of God" saves us (Mk. 16: 16; Col. 2: 12). And, if there were only eight people left on the earth, that is how they would have to be saved according to the Bible.

Of course, the majority of the human race rejected God's plan in the time of the flood, and so it is today (Mt. 7: 13, 14).

This story is not about the ark, but about a small congregation of eight souls who assemble on a narrow, rough, winding country road in the hills of West Virginia. But it could be about a small congregation anywhere in the world, and it involves you and the congregation where you attend.

The present church building was erected in 1897, and the tombstones in the adjacent cemetery reflect that era. I've wondered why the remaining eight souls didn't just disband, close the doors of the old church building and assemble elsewhere, in spite of the inconvenience it would cause them.

After this, my second meeting with them in the past eight years, I think I know the answer to that question.

One old brother has been a fixture in this congregation for several years, but not just an inanimate fixture like a pew or a pulpit. Though in his late eighties, he drove several miles to meeting each night, greeted the visitors with a warm handshake and a smile, then sat on one of the front pews and listened to every word of every sermon.

I knew the old brother came to the building early each evening, but I didn't know just how early until Friday night of the meeting. Due to my schedule that day, I arrived two hours early, and planned to just park under the trees, study my lesson, and maybe later browse through the old cemetery to the background of springtime sights and sounds.

Then came the old brother, an hour and a half before meeting time. He first opened the building, looked around inside, then came outside and made a trip or two around the building, looking here and there. I wondered how many times he had followed this pattern,

especially in recent years. He has been a widower for several years, and I realized that evening that his part in this small congregation was what he lived for, the foundation, center and substance of his life. I also saw one good reason, maybe the main reason, that this congregation had not ceased to function.

On this particular evening, the old brother gave me a tour of the cemetery and filled me in on some of the history of the congregation and the community. Both he and I knew that someday soon, his mortal body would be carried into this cemetery by others, and laid to rest awaiting the resurrection.

The last night of the meeting, the song leader asked if there were any remarks or announcements that anyone wished to make. Sometimes I cringe at such an invitation, but this night I was glad the request was made. The old brother had said very little during the entire meeting, but this night he had a few words to say.

Without facing the audience, which was comprised of 14 souls including myself, the old brother's voice echoed within the four bare walls of that Spartan building. He thanked the visitors for helping them to hold forth the word of life in that community which had been blinded to the truth by the wiles and messengers of Satan. He appreciated our coming to help dispel some of that darkness by preaching and supporting the gospel, and giving the congregation another opportunity to invite their neighbors to prepare for a home in heaven.

Then, he looked straight at me, and thanked me for my efforts to preach the gospel, and I thought I detected tears in his eyes, but maybe they were the ones in mine. I couldn't see too clearly. But I thanked him for his kind words, out loud, and right on the spot. I wouldn't have missed that three-minute sermon for anything in the world.

But, in the beginning of this article, I said that this incident involved you and the congregation where you attend.

Within a fifty-mile radius of this small building, there are at least fifty congregations of the Lord's people. Several have a membership of 50-100, and a few have memberships of 200-300 people. Had just one or two members from each of those congregations attended each evening, that small church building would have been filled to capacity. Not only would the congregation have been encouraged, but the visitors would have been edified each night, and those who came the last night would have heard that eloquent exhortation delivered by an old brother who may not have many more words to say in this life.

Brethren, I'm not advocating that we view church buildings as a shrine, to be preserved like a museum. But as we travel in our comfortable vehicles over smooth roads, and enter expensive church buildings and sit in comfortable pews, let us not forget that we have brethren trying to worship and serve God under adverse and often discouraging circumstances. What are you and the congregation of which you are a part doing individually and collectively to establish or encourage the cause of Christ in other places?

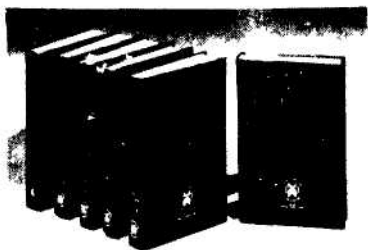
Congregational autonomy is a good thing, and dis-

charging our primary responsibility to our own families and our home congregation is a trait to be desired and admired. But selfishness and unconcern for those who serve the Lord under more adverse conditions are traits which should not be once named among us.

The time may yet come in our lives when the words of the Lord will hold more and more meaning and comfort: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Mt. 18: 20).

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WHY I AM NOT A NAZARENE

J. R. Bronger
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In June of 1972 my wife, Sue, and I were baptized into Christ for the remission of our sins (Acts 2: 38). Like many of our brothers and sisters in Christ we came out of religious error. Our involvement was with the Church of the Nazarene, headquartered in Kansas City.

I was not raised in the Church of the Nazarene. I joined the Nazarenes after my "conversion experience" in their Sunday evening "evangelistic service." That evening began with special singing that touched the heart with love and need. This was followed by a soul-thrilling sermon concluding with an "altar call." I, with a broken heart over sin and tear stained cheeks, made my way to the altar. Falling on my knees I began to pray that God would somehow save a wretch like me. I truly wanted to accept Christ. What began with tears ended with tears. Just four short years later I left dear friends, never to be a Nazarene again.

I did not leave the Church of the Nazarene because I found the people to be insincere hypocrites. Nor did something happen to offend me personally. I left because error condemns one, regardless of sincerity (Matt. 15: 14; 2 John 9-11); and the Nazarene Church was founded and does flourish upon error. Church desired that His followers be ONE (John 17: 20-21), yet the Nazarene Church exists, as does any denomination, because man disregards the prayerful wishes of Christ. These Bible truths cut through all the external good works being done by Nazarenes (Matt. 7: 21-24), therefore I left the Nazarenes to become a Christian, and only a Christian. I was a member of a denomination that began less than 100 years ago. "In Oct., 1895 a number of persons under the leadership of Phineas F. Bresee, and J. P. Widney, formed the First Church of the Nazarene at Los Angeles, CA." (Church Manual, pg. 17). These men agreed on this name after about nine years during which a number of people "Interested in promoting the Wesleyan Doctrine and entire sanctification organized and held weekly religious services." (Ibid. pg. 1) Ignoring this secular history, I sought to be a "hyphenated Christian." I felt that Paul must have been a "Nazarene-Christian" based upon Acts 24: 5, where he is called a "Ringleader of the sect of Nazarenes." I even heard preachers say that since Jesus was "Called a Nazarene" (Matt. 2: 23), then believers should be called Nazarenes.

Jesus was a Nazarene because He was from Nazareth, and "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets." The name seems to have been given to the followers of Christ by their enemies as a name of asper-

sion. The early disciples were given the name Christian (Acts 11: 27). This is the name that glorifies God (1 Peter 4: 16). Even after Paul was accused of being a "Ring-leader of the sect of the Nazarenes" he tried to persuade Agrippa to become a Christian not a Nazarene (Acts 26: 28). How can we do that which the apostles of the Lord would not do? (Phil. 4: 9). I could not, therefore I left the Nazarene Church.

I made my way to the altar, described earlier, because this is what I had been told to do. I truly wanted to be saved, expressing this desire, I was told: "Lay it all upon the altar, call on the name of the Lord, keep nothing back, pray through, leave it to God..." I was only told what they were led to believe by their Church Manual (pg. 30). There was much shouting and loud praying. The preacher, and others gathered around me, laying their hands on me, weeping openly and praying for me. After awhile, I felt an emotional relief, like nothing I ever felt before. I jumped up and lifting hands toward heaven, shouted: "I'm saved, thank you Jesus. " I began to work diligently, I scheduled recreational events, home prayer meetings, I participated in the Nazarene Young People's Society (N. Y. P. S.). Much later I was baptized.

After reading through the book of Acts, I went to our "Minister of Music, " an ordained preacher and a close personal friend, telling him I wanted to be baptized. The only reason I could give was "Peter said to be. " (Acts 2: 38). After consulting with the "Pastor" I chose to be immersed. This might surprise those who do not know that the Nazarene Church offers you an option. "We believe that Christian baptism is a sacrament signifying acceptance of the benefits of the atonement of Jesus Christ to be administered to believers... Baptism being the symbol of the New Testament, young children may be baptized... Baptism may be administered by **sprinkling, pouring, or immersion.** " (Church Manual, pg. 33).

A greater injustice has not been done to the Lord's plan of salvation than done by the Church of the Nazarene. I do not know what happened to me that Sunday evening, but it did not save me. No one was ever saved by praying through at an altar. Search the New Testament and you will never find the sinner being told to pray for salvation. You will never find salvation coming as a result of shouting, crying or praying. You will never find where the Bible says that baptism is a symbol, or that one is saved at the point of faith.

One "Calls upon the name of the Lord" when he arises and is baptized as the servant of God said in Acts 22: 16. Saul had been a believer for three days, he had engaged in prayer, nevertheless he had yet to have his sins washed away (Acts 9: 5-11). He did not receive forgiveness until he was baptized (not sprinkled or had water poured over his head) for the remission of his sins (Acts 2: 38, 22: 16).

The same is true today. No one is saved without being baptized in water. The Nazarene Church ignores this. Consequently, they, like the Pharisees: "Shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to

go in. " (Matt. 23: 13). How can one teach contrary to the gospel of Christ? I could not, therefore I left the Church of the Nazarene.

It was devastating to realize that I had been deceived. To discover that your sincere efforts to serve Christ are contrary to His Will (2 Jn. 9-11) is overpowering. About this time I begin listening to a call-in radio program, hosted by Ken Green, evangelist with the Southend Church of Christ, in Louisville, Kentucky. My wife and I decided to attend the services of the Southend church one Sunday morning. Having secured a substitute for my Sunday School Class, I confided in a close friend that I planned to visit the church of Christ. He responded: "You will never be back. " He was correct, I left the Nazarene Church a few days later.

Letters of explanation were written to all with whom we had been close, listing many reasons why we had to separate ourselves from the Church of the Nazarene. I also wrote asking that if I was incorrect in my understanding of various doctrinal matters, to please let me know. **NO ONE RESPONDED!**

Within three years of my coming to Christ, I was preaching the gospel "full-time. " I concluded that there must be many others like I had been; empty souls "hungering and thirsting after righteousness. " Men and women, not knowing the possibility of serving Christ without denominational fetters.

Perhaps you know some Nazarene that would desire to know these truths. If so, please give them this article. Or possibly, you yearn to cast off human bondage. Then leave denominationalism! Like others before you, "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22: 16). Forgiveness is much too precious to reject. That is why I am not a Nazarene.

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**THE DEITY OF CHRIST — WHILE ON EARTH
A STUDY OF CHRIST'S HUMANITY**

**Dudley R. Spears
2081 Old Scottsville Road
Alvaton, Kentucky 42122**

Paul's statement to the Philippians, "Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus" was written to the church in Philippi collectively. The phrase, "in you," is plural. It literally means "among you." There is no greater motivation to be and remain united than this. Ralph Martin wrote, "Thus in you does not imply the inculcation of personal virtue based on a moral example, but means 'in your church fellowship, ' so sorely harassed by strife and plagued by arrogance. Paul, by the citation of the hymn to Christ in verses 6-11, would show, in an unforgettable and convincing manner, that the community to create which the Lord of Glory came, died and rose again, must share His spirit, and be controlled by the pattern of self-effacement and humility which His incarnation and cross supremely exemplify." (*The Epistle to the Philippians*, pages 94-95).

Brotherly love, unity and peace are further encouraged as Paul described Christ for his hearers. "Who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped." The eternal deity of Christ is couched in these simple and few words. We understand Paul to mean unquestionably that the basic nature of Christ has been, is, and ever shall be pure deity — nothing less. Harold J. Berry remarked, "The word translated 'form' in this verse is the word *morphe*. This word emphasizes a permanent, inner form that exists as long as the person exists. Since Christ is eternal, we know that He will always exist. Since He will always exist, He will always be in the 'form of God.' This verse proves that Christ has a divine nature; therefore, He is God." (*Treasures From the Original*, page 25.)

The fact that Christ divested Himself of being equal with God does not allow an understanding that He became less than God while in the flesh. He simply did not regard such station as a thing to be grasped or held to. He emptied Himself by that which He voluntarily assumed. "He emptied Himself, **taking the form of a bond-servant**, and being made in the likeness of men." Any form of human life would have been humiliation for Christ. But, He so totally and perfectly humbled Himself that He took, not the form of royalty, but the form of a bond-servant. The word form here is the same word which describes His eternal deity. But this is modified also by the phrase, "being made in the likeness of men." The word likeness here is a word meaning a temporary and provisional form. It was the fleeting form of Christ on earth—the likeness of men. Thus, He became in time

what He was not in eternity — He became God/man in the fullest.

Modernists, some materialists, and rationalists have twisted the emptying of Christ to mean that He ceased to be deity while in the flesh. Outwardly, Christ became a man but inwardly He remained God. Since His native essence is eternal deity, it would be impossible for Him to give up or divest Himself of equality with God. He could modify it by an unforced and willful assumption of the likeness of men but that was only temporal. His eternal nature is Deity and Paul wrote, "In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead (Deity) bodily" (Colossians 2: 9). The form (*morphe*) or inner Being of Christ is God. The fashion or appearance (*schema*) refers only to outward form. While in the flesh, Jesus did not lose what He eternally possesses. Jesus is the perfect blend of deity **and** humanity. Thus, He is Lord, over all, and through all and remains the "same yesterday, **and** today, and forever" (Hebrews 13: 8).

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WHY NOT?

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Jesus was probably at Capernaum when the Pharisees and scribes came to Him asking, "Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with defiled hands" (Mark 7: 5)? While the criticism dealt with the disciples of the Lord, it constituted an implied criticism of Christ. Rather than answer their question directly, Jesus addressed a more serious question to them: "Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition (Matthew 15: 3)? The Lord pointed out that the law of Moses required that destitute parents be provided for by their children but the Pharisees and scribes excused themselves from such responsibility by saying that what they had materially was "Corban" meaning "Given to God" so they had no obligation to their parents. Jesus then charged His enemies with "making void the word of God by your tradition." The traditions which they were observing and binding were such as they had delivered, not God. Jesus said, "Full well do ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your tradition." In the context of the controversy, Jesus also said, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoreth me with their lips, But their heart is far from me, But in vain do they worship me, Teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men." (For the record of whole incident, see Matthew 15: 1-20 and Mark 7: 1-23) Notice the seriousness of the conclusion that is drawn by Christ. Service that is professedly directed toward God is made vain if it is based on the traditions and doctrines of men. We must have divine authority for what we do in the service or worship of God. No doubt, this principle still stands today.

Just as a "Why Not" question was directed to Christ regarding His disciples' failure to observe the "traditions of the elders," so, today, there are questions directed to those who are intent upon following Christ.

Why Not?

The question may be heard, directed to one who is a member of the church of Christ, "Why don't you folks formulate a discipline setting forth your particular doctrines like the other denominations do?" Passing over the implication that the church of Christ is a denomination, which the Lord's true church is not, my answer is simply this: We do not need to formulate a discipline or manual setting forth our particular doctrines. Jesus has already given us such a book in His last Will and Testament, the Gospel of Christ. The apostles, who were responsible for making His Will known, were assured that the Holy Spirit would guide them into all the truth (John 16: 13). We must not add

to that which has been revealed, nor can we take away from it. (See Revelation 22: 18, 19). By that which is given in the "scripture," the teacher of God's Word, "the man of God" has all that is needed "for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness." He is indeed "furnished completely unto every good work." (See 2 Timothy 3: 16, 17). James speaks of the gospel as "the perfect law" (James 1: 25). If we were to formulate a discipline and it contained more or less than is found in the Gospel of Christ, it would contain too much or too little. If it contained exactly the same as is found in the Gospel, then what would be the need for it?

Why Not?

A friend or neighbor may ask, "Why don't you wear a denominational name like everybody else does? Why do you have to be different? In response, we answer, can there be any doubt that the name Christian was worn by followers of Christ in the first century? James wrote, "Do not they blaspheme the honorable name by which ye are called" (James 2: 7)? The fact that the term "blaspheme" was used in connection with this "name" lets us know that the name in some way involved deity. We do not "blaspheme" human beings or human names. Luke tells us that "the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (Acts 11: 26). The name Christian was not found mentioned in scripture until both Jews and Gentiles were received into the Lord's church. King Agrippa was convinced that Paul was trying to lead him to become a Christian. "And Agrippa said unto Paul, With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian" (Acts 26: 28). Paul did not endeavor to correct him, as though he had a misconception. Further, Peter helps us to understand that in wearing the name Christian we do honor both to the Father and the Son. He wrote, "but it a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name" (1 Peter 4: 16). Denominational names do honor unto men or particular doctrines or practices or concepts. True followers of Christ do honor unto Him. We do this not only by following His example and teaching but also by wearing His name.

Why Not?

"Why don't you have women preachers or women bishops in the church of Christ?" another may ask. Please, bear in mind that this is not a question that we are left free to take a vote on, to decide one way or another. The matter is resolved for us by the Lord. Speaking through the apostle Paul, He said, "But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness" (1 Timothy 2: 12). A woman cannot be a preacher or stand before a Bible class with men in attendance without violating this passage. Nor can a woman serve as a bishop and show respect for this message. The word "bishop" is a translation of the Greek word "**episkopos**" which literally means "overseer." A woman who serves as a bishop is doing so in violation of clear teaching given by the Lord. Only men may serve as bishops (1 Timothy 3: 1) if the Lord's will is to be respected.

Why Not?

"Why don't you folks honor preachers with such titles as 'reverend' or 'father'? The answer: the Lord denounces

such pride as is manifest in titles of exaltation. (See Matthew 23: 5-12) He mentions only three terms: "Rabbi, " "father, " and "master. " But it is not just these terms that are objectionable to the Lord but the vain spirit manifest in them and other like terms as well. Oh, how puffed up with pride a man has become who demands or desires to be addressed as "Reverend. " The man who turns his collar backward "to be seen of men" is undoubtedly in violation of the same principle as those who made "broad their phylacteries and enlarge (d) the borders of their garments. " The Lord's concluding thought in the context is that only those who humble themselves shall be exalted. **Why Not?**

"Why don't you people use mechanical instruments in worship. " The answer. The New Testament authorizes only vocal music in worship. There is approved example of vocal music in worship (Matthew 26: 30; Acts 16: 25) and exhortation or command to render psalms, hymns and spiritual songs in "singing" (Ephesians 5: 19; Colossians 3: 16). Notice the terms "speak-ing" and "teaching" and "admonishing" in these last two passages. These expressions support the idea of singing or vocal music, not mechanical instruments of music.

Again, may we remind you that service or worship rendered by the authority of men does not meet with

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(SPECIAL ISSUE —JULY, 1990)

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**CATHOLICISM'S CENSORSHIP OF
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In the 1450's Johann Gutenberg introduced the movable type method of printing to the Western world. In fact, the very first book to be printed by Gutenberg was Jerome's translation of the Latin Bible. The science of printing spread like wildfire, with scores of different translations and editions of the Bible leading the way.

The ease and speed of producing copies of the Scriptures, almost immediately attracted the attention of the bishop of Rome, who in 1467 issued a decree that any books to be printed, must first receive permission or approval from the bishop of the diocese, before they could be published. Thus, was introduced the custom of an **"Imprimatur"** meaning "It may be printed, " with the name of the churchman giving his approval. This procedure continues to the present time.

We now copy an excerpt from the bull **Inter sollicitudines**, Session X of the Fifth Council of the Lateran, May 4, 1515:

"Many complaints have come to us and to the Apostolic See that some masters in the art of printing books translated from the Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, and Chaldaic into the Latin language and different vernaculars, which contain errors in matters of faith and teachings contrary to the Christian (Roman Catholic - LWM) religion; also attacks on persons holding positions of dignity and trust, the reading of which is not only not conducive to the intellectual well-being of the reader but also leads to grave errors in matters of faith and morals, whence have arisen numerous scandals and daily greater ones are to be feared. "Wherefore, that that invention, so advantageous to extending the glory of God, to the increase of the faith, and the diffusion of the arts and sciences, may not have the contrary result and become an obstacle to the salvation of souls, we have deemed it advisable to direct our attention to the printing of books, lest in the future thorns grow up with the good seed or poisons be mixed with the medicine. Wishing, therefore, to provide an opportune remedy in regard to this matter, we, with the approval of the holy council, decree and ordain that in the future no one shall presume to print or cause to be printed, in Rome or in any other city or diocese, any book or any other writing whatsoever unless it has first been carefully examined and its publication approved by our vicar and the master of the Sacred Palace, in other cities and dioceses by the bishops or by competent persons appointed by them and by the inquisitor of the city or diocese in which the

books are to be printed. This approval must be given over the personal signatures of the censors, free of charge and without delay, under the penalty of excommunication. Those who act contrary to this constitution shall, besides the loss and destruction of such books by fire, the payment of 100 ducats toward the construction of the Basilica of St. Peter, and suspension from the printing of books for a period of one year, incur the sentence of excommunication, and, should they continue in their obstinacy, they shall be punished by the bishops or by our vicar with all the penalties of the law, so that from their example others may be deterred from committing similar offenses." (Emphasis mine -LWM).

It was two years later (1517) that Martin Luther made his open break with the Roman Catholic church. The Council of Trent was convened in 1545, and continued intermittently until 1563, for the primary purpose of repairing the damages sustained to the Roman Catholic church, by the efforts of Luther. In the last Session of this Council, a list often rules were drawn up, and approved by Pius IV. We copy below, only the 1st, part of the 2nd, and part of the 10th:

I

"All books which have been condemned either by the supreme pontiffs or by ecumenical councils before the year 1515 and are not contained in this list, shall be considered condemned in the same manner as they were formerly condemned.

II

The books of those heresiarchs, who after the aforesaid year originated or revived heresies, as well as of those who are or have been the heads or leaders of heretics, as Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, Balthasar Friedberg, Schwenkfeld, and others like these, whatever may be their name, title or nature of their heresy, are absolutely forbidden. The books of other heretics,

however, which deal professedly with religion are absolutely condemned..."

X

"... "Those who circulate books in manuscript form before they have been examined and approved, shall in the judgment of the Fathers delegated by the council be subject to the same penalties as the printers, and those who possess and read them shall, unless they make known the authors, be themselves regarded as the authors..."

Pope Pius IV, issued the very first "Index of Forbidden Books," with a new one issued in 1564, which was authored by the "Fathers" of the Council of Trent.

In 1571, the "Congregation of the Index" was established as an executive arm of the Papal government, to accommodate all matters having to do with "church control of literature."

As late as 1917, the "Congregation of the Index" merged with the "Congregation of the Holy Office" with the Pope serving as chairman.

My copy of the "Index Librorum Prohibitorum" was published by the Typis Vaticanis" in Rome, in 1900. It is written in Latin and contains 316 pages.

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THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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P. J. CASEBOLT, Rt. 1, Box 210, Middlebourne, WV 26149 — Lord willing, I will be leaving Elk Fork, and begin working with the church in Middlebourne, effective Sept. 1. My zip code, and possibly my phone number, will remain the same. I have meetings scheduled at South End, Louisville, KY (Sept. 16-21), Tomlinson Run, PA (Oct. 22-28), and Pine St., New Martinsville, WV (Dec. 2-7).

NORMAN E. SEWELL, 824 S. Pine St., Harrison, AR 72601 —After almost 15 years with the Southside Church in Springfield, MO, Jo Ann and I have moved to Harrison, AR to work with the Capps Road church. Leaving Springfield was like leaving family behind.

We are off to a good start in Harrison among friendly and helpful brethren. Many people visit this part of the Ozarks because of the many attractions both in Branson, MO and Eureka Springs, AR area. You would be most welcome at Capps Rd. Since the building is a little hard to find, give us a call for directions and times of worship. Our

phone numbers are: (home) 501-741-9104 and (office) 501-741-5151.

FT. WALTON BEACH, FL — On August 1, the Mary Esther church began meeting in its new location at 6 Lane Drive (one block north of U. S. Hwy 98 on Doolittle Blvd). Six have recently been restored. In May, Jerry Fausz, formerly of Pensacola, began full time work with us as evangelist.

JAMIE RHODEN, 8150 Driggers St., Jacksonville, FL 32220—The Marietta church enjoyed a good meeting June 10-15 with the venerable Yater Tant of Alabama. We had good crowds with a number from the neighborhood who are good prospects for further teaching. This was the 7th meeting brother Tant has held at Marietta. His lessons were timely, full of wisdom and wit. His age has not affected his mental powers. We have scheduled a meeting with him when he is 100 years old, in 2008. He will be with us either in body or in spirit.

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DEBATE ON BAPTISM

DAVID A. PADFIELD, P. O. Box 14033, Evansville, IN 47728 — As an outgrowth of a recent meeting at Casey, Illinois, and through the efforts of a young Christian, I will be engaged in a debate the first week of November with Don Phillips of the Terre Haute First Baptist Church. This church is 153 years old and is of the American Baptist persuasion. They have 1,000 members on roll. Don Phillips is 52 and has been preaching for many years. He has debated before. He has been kind enough to offer the use of their meeting house for the debate. The subject will be the plan of salvation. I would like to see Mr. Phillips come to Evansville for a debate after our discussion in Terre Haute.

KARJOR A. CALDWELL, 2344 Hubbard Ave., Memphis, TN 38108 — I am a black preacher working with the church meeting at 1119 East Trigg St. in Memphis. I am 32 years old and have been a Christian since 1976. With the help of the late Conway Skinner, in 1979 I enrolled in Florida College. After a year with the church in Guntersville, AL, I spent some time in military service. Upon release from that, I went back to Tallahassee, FL where I was a member of the Southside congregation. A talk with an elder of the church from Alabama convinced me that I ought to devote the rest of my life to preaching the gospel. East Trigg St. church is small with about 20 members. My total support is \$900 a month and I furnish my housing, utilities and business expenses. I need more support than this and would appreciate your consideration. For references, contact: Gene Taylor (904) 576-4010; Ron Daley (313) 941-7199; Charles Davis (501) 879-3586; Roosevelt Johnson (601) 327-0171; Bob Bunting (901) 373-9250.

JON A. DROBNER, 62 Deerpath Dr., Flanders, NJ 08034 — After nine years in the Cherry Hill/Moorestown, NJ area, I began work on July 23, 1990 in Succasunna, NJ. I will need some outside support. Anyone interested will be supplied with details and references. My phone number is 201-879-8176. The church in Moorestown will be looking for a man to come and work with them. He will have to bring most of his support. Anyone interested should contact Don Main at 609-662-4377, or write to the church at P. O. Box 2733, Cherry Hill, NJ 08034.

JOE MCDONALD, 4924 N. W. 18th, Oklahoma City, OK 73127 — I have unedited video tapes of the Dallas Meeting for \$55 (plus \$1.60 postage). Audio cassettes are available for \$35 (plus 1.25 postage).

JOHN W. PITMAN, P. O. Box 9, Louisa, KY 41230 — The church here meets on State Rt. 3, south 1/2 mile from the Louisa Fort Gay Bridge. Two meetings have been held this year and two more are planned. The church numbers 10 members. We bought a few acres, 11 miles out of Louisa and plan to make our home in this valley. I will lose \$250 in support after December. For information call 606-673-4421.

SPANISH-SPEAKING CHURCH IN TAMPA

R. ROLAND AMADOR, P. O. Box 291274, Tampa, FL 33687 — The Nebraska Avenue church has agreed to allow us the use of their building to begin a Spanish-speaking church. The new congregation met the first time Sunday, August 5, 1990. Bible classes are at 11:45 A. M.; Worship at 12:30 P. M.. Thursday night Bible classes are at 7:30. We meet at 4608 Nebraska Avenue at Curtis. All gatherings will be conducted in Spanish. You can help us by informing your Spanish-speaking acquaintances of our efforts. Ruben C. Amador (my father) conducted a meeting August 16-19.

PREACHERS NEEDED

TORONTO, OHIO — The church which meets at 1300 Dennis Way in Toronto, OH needs a sound gospel preacher to work with them on a full-time basis. Average attendance is 40. Substantial housing and support is provided. If interested, please call Larry Sapp (614-544-5487, or write: Dennis Way Church of Christ, 1300 Dennis Way, Toronto, OH 43964.

PORTAGE, INDIANA — The church in Portage needs a preacher for a self-supporting work with about 80 in attendance. Contact Joel or Rich Gandy (219) 926-6690.

DULUTH, MINNESOTA — The church in Duluth seeks a new beginning. In 1969 an extensive effort was made in "door knocking" by 15 people who donated their time. A number of contacts were made and Bible studies set up. We believe the church has a future here. A 4-bedroom house in the country is available for living quarters. Support would be needed. Interested in a challenge? Let's exchange correspondence and references. Call 218-728-3233 or write to: Church of Christ, 318 N. 18th Ave. East, Duluth, MN 55812.

FROM AROUND THE WORLD

JAPAN — **RANDY S. REESE, SR.** reports "Mrs. Matsuda, a member of my Friday class here, has arranged for a discussion on the subject of Christianity and Japanese Buddhism, between myself and Professor Taiko Yamasaki, the head priest of Joko-in Temple in Kobe. He is also Dean of the Department of Esoteric Studies at a university in Kyoto. This discussion will take place in the fall.

SPAIN — **EFRAIN P. PEREZ** reports five baptisms at Badalona and seven baptisms at the Prat congregation. 80 were present on a recent Sunday in Badalona. The first year of a preacher training program has been completed. Home Bible classes are conducted four days a week.

NORWAY — **TERRELL BUNTING** has lost \$300 a month in support in his work in Bergen, Norway. It is urgent that this be replaced. The cost of living is very high in Norway. Also, it is not easy for American preachers to enter that field now. Here is a man who wants to spend his life in that country and speaks the language fluently. Who can help? With all the interest in eastern Europe, China and other places where doors are opening, let's don't forget those who are laboring in such fields as Norway. Write to Terrell Bunting, Bronndalen 89, 5070 Loddefjord, Norway.

PHILIPPINES — **REY O. UGALE REPORTS** For the past four months 4 were baptized into Christ, 3 placed membership here and one was restored. I was a song leader for the recent Bible lectureship at Manaring, Ilagan, Isabela (May 21-23) with 7 baptized (including a denominational preacher, Ernesto Tuppil). Speakers were: Andrew Gawe, Rody Gumpad and Bert Enostacion and others.

ANDREW GAWE writes that his father, Juan Gawe, gospel preacher of Baguio City died on June 29, 1990 at the age of 77. During the four days and nights of mourning, brethren from two congregations in the city conducted preaching and singing for the many visitors who came to console the family.

The recent earthquake which struck Luzon did great damage. Andrew Gawe and family in Baguio City are all right, though their house had very slight damage. Two families of Christians there lost their homes. In other places near the epi-center, there are 35 families of Christians who are homeless and one family lost a child in the wreckage. Some places had sink holes one meter deep where their houses once stood. This is based on information received by phone from Noli Villamor of Manila in a call to him from John Humphries of Louisville.

ROMEO S. QUESADA of Ipil, Zamboanga Sur reports five baptisms there recently. Through two members at Ipil, an opportunity has opened for brother Quesada to help start a new work in Guinabucan, a village in an area of gold tunneling. He lacks the necessary help to do this at the present.

ITALY — ROBERTO TONDELLI reports that two women were baptized during April at Pomezia. Studies continue with them and with some of the family members.

STEFANO CORAZZA and GIANNI BERDINI visited the church in Poggiomarino (near Naples) in April. Stefano reports "Gianni was invited to hold a gospel meeting and asked me to go with him... The preacher died 4 years ago and now his son, Elio Ruggiero (age 21) is carrying on the preaching work. I've been impressed by Elio's spirituality and capabilities. The church supports him with \$260 and I exhorted them to increase their support (attendance is about 50) to let Elio live by the gospel. He lives with his mother. The church there has a great potentiality in the young people and Elio can do a wonderful work among them.

RODOLFO BERDINI has been ill with viral pneumonia.

SOUTH AFRICA — PAUL WILLIAMS of Eshowe reports the recent baptism of nine people. 82-year-old **MILDRED DARK**, widow of the lamented Harris J. Dark, was there in May and conducted classes for girls and women for three days. Williams said "Her cheerful, optimistic spirit and well-balanced spirituality set a goal for the ladies here. "

FERRELL JENKINS was here in May and spoke at several places in S. A.

EARPS AND YOUNGS TO PRAGUE, CZECHOSLOVAKIA

As a result of a three week trip to Eastern Europe in May along with Buddy Payne, Melvin Curry, Scott and Tim Smelser, the Thomas Earp family and the Jeff Young family have decided to move to Prague, Czechoslovakia, a city of 1. 7 million with a solid base of English speaking citizens. It is a good center from which to reach out to others areas of the country. The response we received in Prague was remarkable. In less than five hours, we handed out well over 250 Bible correspondence courses. We obtained the names and addresses of several who are interested in the gospel.

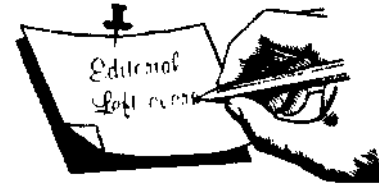
A letter from them states "Our two families plan on moving to Prague in early September. Our objective is to establish a strong church there, learn the Czech language and reach out to other areas. "

Tom and Christine Earp have been married five years and have a 5-month old son (Austen). They have been worshipping with the Northeast church in Tampa. Tom has a Masters degree in communication and has taught at the university and college level for the past four years. He has preached on a part-time basis and taught Bible classes.

Jeff and Melanie Young have been married six years and have a six months-old son (Winston). They have been worshipping with the Roswell, Georgia church where David Tant preaches. Jeff has a Masters degree in Economics and has also taught at the university level. He was converted from Catholicism in 1978 and has preached both full and part-time since.

They give Buddy Payne, Melvin Curry and David Tant as refer-

ences. Both families need our prayers and support financially for their work. The three men given as references will be able to furnish addresses where these can be reached. We regret that we could not include this notice before their departure date. But the need is urgent. These are exciting times. Let us thank God for those who see open doors and have the faith to enter while it is day.



A LITTLE LIBERALISM

The recent meeting in Dallas between institutional and non-institutional brethren made one thing very clear. In spite of pleasant-ries, good spirit, and several speeches from the institutional side with which most of us would agree in large part, the fact remains that these brethren want a little liberalism — not a lot, mind you, just a little. Many of them oppose a gymnasium but want to keep the kitchen and fellowship hall. They are not all together on what to do about church supported institutions. Some oppose them altogether, others want church supported hospitals in third world countries as an evangelistic tool. Some oppose the college in the church budget but want the institutional benevolent institution in the budget. Some would like to have the friendship and cooperation of non-institutional brethren but keep their pulpits closed to the whole truth. Some can ably present the truth on Bible authority and how it is established but deny the power thereof in application to institutions, sponsoring churches and church funded recreation.

It appears to this writer that they are willing for the camel to sleep with his nose in the tent but are horrified at his hump and want to keep that out.

"JUST AN ORDINARY GUY"

Not long ago a preacher in a meeting in Louisville was discussing the humanity of Jesus. He was developing the point that Jesus was subject to temptation even as we are and that he had the power of choice. With that, we have no quarrel. He was "tempted in all points ... yet without sin. " But then to say "But while he was here, ladies and gentlemen, he was a man; just an ordinary guy, ordinary man like you and me" smacks of irreverence. Other statements raise serious questions about the deity of Christ on earth. While Jesus had a fleshly body subject to pain, hunger and weariness, that he could laugh, weep, experience anger, is without dispute. But the one who walked on the water, stilled the tempest of the Sea of Galilee, knew what was in man, and spake as "never man" had spoken, was not just an "ordinary guy. "

"And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth" (Jno. 1: 14). While he was here in flesh, there was a glory which was seen and he was here full of grace and truth. Just an ordinary guy?

"For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2: 9). Just an ordinary guy, like you and me?

"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh... " (1 Tim. 3: 16). Just an ordinary guy?

It is bad enough for some speakers to refer to Noah, Abraham, Daniel, or any of the apostles as "guys" or "dudes" but to refer to Immanuel (God with us) in these casual terms goes far beyond bad taste. The deity of Christ is a far greater concern. That is a foundational principle of the whole gospel system and anything which raises a doubt about it or deprives him of it is fundamental error of the deepest dye. I would like to think that the speaker just got carried away and said more than he really wanted to. Time will tell.

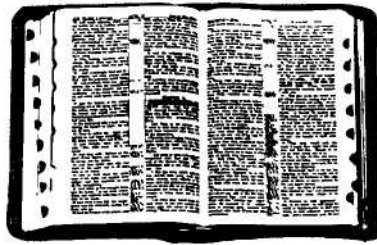
IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	281
RESTORATIONS	70

(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)

SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

"Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me"—John 5:39.



"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so"—Acts 17:11

"DEVOTED TO THE SEARCH FOR DIVINE TRUTH"

VOLUME XXXI

OCTOBER, 1990

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THINK ON
THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

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WHAT DOES BAPTISM DO?

The New Testament plainly teaches that baptism is a condition for the forgiveness of sins. It is incredible that a baptized believer would contend otherwise. Upon the day of Pentecost, Peter told the multitude of people from many nations to "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..." (Acts 2: 38). One is baptized "that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3: 19). "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22: 16). **Baptism is for (in order to) the remission of sins.**

In the first century everyone who was taught about baptism had heard the gospel and was convinced that *he* was a sinner and needed the forgiveness of his sins. He was taught that Jesus had died for his sins, was buried and arose from the dead on the third day. He believed that Jesus was the Son of God and had been made both Lord and Christ. He was taught to repent and be baptized as conditions of faith for the forgiveness of his sins.

The **gospel** is the **power of God** unto **salvation** to the Jew and Greek (Rom. 1: 6). The gospel is addressed to all nations alike. The word of God says "for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" (Rom. 3: 23). That means that all men are amenable to the law of Christ, which is the word of God. Otherwise, they would not be sinners and the gospel could no more be preached to them than to infant children.

Ananias said to Saul, "And now why tarriest thou?

arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22: 16). Baptism is a burial of the old man that the body of sin might be destroyed, "that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Rom. 6: 6). Baptism is described as "circumcision" of the heart, made without hands (not of flesh), "in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ" (Col. 2: 11). "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead" (Col. 2: 12). "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses" (Col. 2: 13).

Are non-Christians accountable to the law of Christ? If not, they are not guilty of sin. Sin is the transgression of the law (1 John 3: 4). The law under which men live today is the law of Christ (Gal. 6: 2; Isa. 2: 3), which went forth from Jerusalem, if they are not under law, they are not sinners. For what then are they baptized? If baptism is for the remission of sins; those who are subjects to baptism must be sinners, otherwise they are not subject to baptism. Jesus said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Matt. 28: 19). All nations include Jew and Gentile. "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16: 15, 16).

Repentance Essential To Scriptural Baptism

Repentance is a **command** of God for all men, Jew and Gentile alike. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:" (Acts 17: 30). Peter said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." (Acts 2: 38). "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24: 47). All men must repent or perish (2 Pet. 3: 9). That makes repentance a condition of scriptural baptism.

Repentance is a change of the will from sin to right-

eousness. It is a resolve to forsake all sin and diligently pursue the will of God. Repentance begins with a knowledge of sin and the conviction that one is a sinner. This conviction makes him sorry for his sinful conduct. Godly sorrow for sin leads to repentance (2 Cor. 7: 10). If one does not realize that his conduct is sinful, he will not repent and turn from it. Baptism will do him no good because he has not stopped his sin — he has not repented. The knowledge of the goodness of God leads to repentance (Rom. 2: 4). The judgment of God causes men to repent (Acts 17: 30, 31; 2 Cor. 5: 10).

Repentance is a function of the will that determines to abandon sin and do the will of God. True repentance does not ask what consequences will follow; there is no effort to cover the sins; no self-justification. There is no merit past deeds and no worth in present standing. It strikes one low by the consciousness of his sin against God. His deeds of sin become despicable and revolting to him. He is willing to do whatever God requires of him, no matter how painful. The prodigal son repented when "he came to himself. He said, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee... (Luke 15: 17, 18). Only God's word will produce true repentance.

Many people have never repented because they have not been convinced that they are sinners; some have never understood what repentance is. Many will not repent because they do not want to quit their sins. Many have calloused hearts that will not be opened to the truth.

Bible repentance requires the knowledge of sin, and the conviction that one is a sinner. It is a deep sincere regret for the sin; a resolution to stop sinning NOW!; a reformation of life and a restoration of all things possible to right conduct before God.

This condition of the heart and life of an individual must exist before scriptural baptism is possible. This changes the life of the person so that he stops his sinning. Baptism changes the relationship of that person from darkness to light; from the power of Satan to God; from the world into Christ. It does not change any other relationship upon the face of the earth.

The person who does not abandon his sinful life has availed nothing in his baptism, because his baptism was not preceded by repentance.

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Editorial

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WILL GOD CONTINUE TO BLESS AMERICA?

For most of the readers of this paper, it goes without argument that this nation has been abundantly blessed by God. The nations of earth have long envied the freedoms we enjoy and the economic blessings associated with them. Over the years we have been hosts to many visitors from other nations and these with one voice have told us how wonderfully blessed we are. The freedom to preach the gospel has contributed much to the general good of the people whose lives are either changed into the image of Christ, or who benefit from the godly influence of those who live righteously. Godly people are better employers, employees, family members, neighbors and citizens.

Bible Principles

The Bible has much to say about God's dealings with nations. God foresaw a time when "the iniquity of the Amorite" would be "full" and therefore it would be just for them to fall and for their land to be given to the seed of Abraham (Gen. 15: 13-16).

"Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov. 14: 34).

"The wicked shall be turned into hell and all the nations that forget God" (Psa. 9: 17).

"He is the governor among the nations" (Psa. 22: 28).

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord" (Psa. 33: 12).

"There is no king saved by the multitude of an host... a horse is a vain thing for safety" (Psa. 33: 16-17).

"The Lord is high above all nations and his glory above the heavens" (Psa. 113: 4).

Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon lifted up his heart in pride and was deposed "till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will" (Dan. 5: 18-21).

Concerning a later Babylon which oppressed the people of God, John wrote "For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works; in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliriously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: FOR STRONG IS THE LORD GOD WHO JUDGETH HER" (Rev. 18: 5-8).

It is clear from such passages that God proposes to bless nations which promote righteousness and to curse those who fail to do so. The rise and fall of nations historically document this principle.

Well, then, will God continue to bless America? Our answer has to be qualified.

1. Yes, he will continue to bless America IF WE DON'T FORGET HIM. When the secular humanist brazenly shouts "No deity will save us, we must save ourselves" he not only leaves himself without moral and spiritual direction, but he also contributes to the down- fall of our nation. To the extent that this philosophy prevails in education, in government and in business, to that degree we lose the strength to stand. When a whole nation is educated as to origin of life, meaning of life and ultimate destiny of humanity without a single reference to the Almighty, then we are digging our national grave. If the humanists are right, there is no God, no revelation from God (that makes the Bible a farce), no absolute standard of right and wrong and everyone becomes a law unto himself. We are then not far removed from the law of the jungle. Theism was the pillar of our constitution and our judicial system. But that is no longer held to be so by all too many in places of authority. "In God we trust" has been replaced by "in man we trust. " When we forget that "it is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps" (Jer. 10: 23) we have built the props and set the stage for national ruin. It is a strange twist that in the nations which are tasting freedom for the first time in forty years, there is a hunger and thirst for the word of God while this nation, so blessed by God, struggles with spiritual apathy and moral decline. We had better do all we can to implant the truth of the gospel in these nations for it may well be that our children or grandchildren will be dependent on believers in these awakening nations to evangelize this nation of ours.

2. Yes, God will bless America IF WE CAN PRE- SERVE THE FAMILY. The family is the basic unit of all orderly society. No civilization has ever survived the deterioration of the family. Is anyone in doubt as to the decay of the family in America? The divorce rate is frightful. It permeates every sector of society. Children of broken homes are apt to repeat the same mistakes they have seen in their own parents. In traveling over the country in meetings the last few years, I ask school teachers I meet "How many of your students have the same last name as their registered parent?" The answers have ranged from 50-90% who have a different last name! Some of these children have been through more than one family break up.

God's plan for the family is simple. Man is head and breadwinner. Women is helper and home-maker. Children are to be brought up in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord" and to be "obedient to their own parents" (Eph. 6: 1-4). Col. 3: 18-21 says it all in a few words. National survival is much dependent on family survival.

3. Yes, America will be blessed IF THE SALT DOES NOT LOSE ITS SAVOR. Jesus said "Ye are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has lost its savor, it is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under foot of man" (Mt. 5; 13-16). Godly people are salt to

save the rest. But when we lose our identity and become like the world around us, we have lost our power to save others. If you don't think that many Christians have lost their savor, you haven't been paying attention. All across this nation there is a worldly broadmindedness, a spiritual malaise, among those who wear the name Christ. Like Israel at Sinai, "the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play." God would have spared Sodom for 10 righteous souls and could not find them. What his number is for us, I do not know. But when there is not enough salt left to season and preserve this nation, it will fall.

Thoughts in the Forum

A few years ago, I stood in the ruins of the Roman forum along with H. E. Phillips and observed the crumbled reminders of a once powerful empire which ruled the known world for a long time. In the height of its glory, it appeared invincible. But as we stood on what once was the boulevard of the empire, once adorned with ornate temples to the gods, and down whose wide vistas marched the conquering heroes of Rome, along with their forlorn captives in tow, and the plunder of the nations, I was then brought back to reality by a lizard slithering along the crumbled foundation of a once magnificent structure. I picked up a couple of small stones for souvenirs. And I wondered if one day, some tour guide speaking a foreign language would stand in Washington, D. C. and point out the ruins of the Washington Monument, or the Lincoln Memorial, or the Pentagon, or, yes, the White House, and relate, in a canned speech, the story of a once proud and mighty nation which was the envy of the world in the height of its power. Yes, I wondered that, as I stood in the forum in Rome.

Will God continue to bless America? That all depends on whether we forget Him, what happens to the family and whether or not our salt loses its savor. Does your spirit of patriotism well up within you? Let me tell you the most patriotic thing you can do for your country: BE A DEVOUT CHRISTIAN with all that involves. That will do more to secure the present and future well being of this nation than all the diplomacy, or sophisticated weaponry we can devise.

PRAYERS REQUESTED

Georgia Dean Cope, beloved wife of James R. Cope is critically ill. The prayers of all Godly people are requested on her behalf.

A card or letter would mean a great deal to the Copes who have helped so many for so long.

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LIVING IN THE REAL WORLD

DIVINE MESSAGE: There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. (Rom. 8: 1-2).

I am not certain that most people know what the real world is. Most seem to think it is only what we now experience (our things, relationships, and activities). To most people that includes what happens to their emotions and attitudes as they experience the day-to-day affairs of life. But to many of them it does not include values and traits of character. What is real is tangible to them, either by touch or by emotional reaction.

Reality includes the things of the spirit. In fact, the things of the spirit are the most real of all despite the denials of those who live only for the moment and either doubt or deny the reality of God and the realm in which he lives. An individual who only takes care of the things of his body and his physical experience is only half a man. Actually he/she is less than half a person because the things being overlooked are the permanent, eternal, enduring aspects of being. The things of the flesh are fleeting. We must realize that we are sojourning in a temporary environment (Heb. 11: 13-16) and that the most real of all is the everlasting heavenly realm despite the denials of those who live only for the moment.

In Romans 8 we are exposed to the two distinct ways to live: by the flesh or by the spirit. There is a real distinction between walking according to the flesh and walking according to the spirit. Both of these ways to live have to do with the quality of man which has to do with his spiritual character but one way of living attempts the impossible: a denial of the intrinsic impact of "spiritual" things upon one's life. In other words, while some may try, none can escape dealing with the real realm of the spirit, that which goes beyond the fleshly part of man. Neither can any escape the continuing battle or conflict between the flesh and the spirit (Gal. 5: 16-17).

I do not deny that flesh is real, even though I affirm that it is temporary. Some philosophers and religionists have denied the reality of flesh (and/or all material existence). Such is futile and reaches to the absurd.

Sometimes in the New Testament the word "sarx" ("flesh") refers to the literal body made of flesh. More often, however, especially in the writings of Paul, it refers to all that which impacts us from the human point

of view. Here it refers to allowing our lives to be directed and dominated by the dictates and desires of our present condition (passion, pride, ambition, etc.). One who walks after the flesh seeks to gratify the desires of the flesh. Paul says that the mind of the flesh is death and is hostile to God (8: 6, 8). He says that those who live in the flesh cannot please God (8: 8). And he says that Christians are not in the flesh (8: 9). In another passage, he even provides a list of sins which illustrate this approach to life... adultery, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like. He concludes by saying that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God (Ga. 5: 19-21).

Spirit is also real. The word "**pneuma**" ("spirit") is used no less than 20 times in this one chapter. The Holy Spirit directs the life of the individual who properly lives according to the spirit, but most often in this text Paul is contrasting the fleshly manner of living as opposed to the spiritual manner of living. To walk after the spirit is to give proper consideration to the things of the spirit. It involves understanding and being responsive to one's spirit and his spiritual well-being. It suggests looking after the things that fit the spirit for acceptable service to God, life on earth and that will prepare it for the joys of eternal life.

Sometimes, particularly among young people, a comment will be made about being a Christian and some unbelieving youth will say, "Oh, why don't you get real!" When one says, "GET REAL," he means that to him it is fantasy to think that one can be spiritual and deal with life as it is. The truth is, my friend, that the unbeliever is the one not dealing with reality.

The ancient philosophers questioned the definitions and qualities of abstracts such as "truth" or "love"... but none could question the reality of their existence. Even so, one cannot reasonably question the reality of the spiritual quality of man. Certainly, a first step toward dealing with the spiritual part of man is accepting the fact of it. Only then can one come to grips with how to deal with that reality.

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WILMA ELIZABETH HOBBS ADAMS A VIRTUOUS WOMAN (June 10, 1928—July 28, 1990)

I sit here alone with a broken heart. It is hard for me to write because Wilma my beloved and beautiful wife, is no longer at my side. For more than 45 years she was always at my side. She died on July 28, 1990 of a pontine hemorrhage, a stroke at the base of the skull in an area which controls various body functions such as hearing, sight, blood pressure, swallowing. Rarely is there ever any recovery from this type of stroke and, if so, the quality of life is to have no real use of oneself. How merciful that my dignified Virginia lady was spared from that which would have been worse than death for her and her family.

We were in a gospel meeting with the Thorn church of the Lord at the time she was stricken. This is near Houston, Mississippi. We were staying in the home of the Leroy Clarks. What a wonderful week it had been. Crowds were good. Singing was good. A lot of visitors from the area had come each night and some from a long distance. We had one more night to go.

The Clarks had a group of brethren into their home after services Thursday night for refreshments and association. It was so pleasant. Shortly after the guests departed Wilma had a dizzy spell, as she had been having from time to time lately. Thinking it to be an inner ear problem she took one of her pills for that problem. Her condition progressively grew worse until about 4 A. M. Friday. She told me she thought she had had a stroke. We summoned an ambulance from nearby Houston Hospital. On the way to the hospital she lost awareness and she never was conscious again. At Houston Hospital she was treated at the emergency room to no avail. On the advice of the doctor there she was sent immediately by helicopter to North Mississippi Regional Hospital at Tupelo 35 miles away.

Brother Clark took me to Tupelo while his wife and Allen Malone loaded my car and called various members of the family for me. They later came up to Tupelo with my car and things. All the children were on the way soon. Allen finished the meeting out in my place.

Wilma lingered on until Saturday at 2: 45 P. M. Three of the grandchildren (Stan and Carla's boys) had come from Texas and were allowed in to say good-bye to "Mamaw" shortly before she expired. Then, with all our children gathered around her as I held her hand and as blood pressure dropped very low, her pulse went into a straight line on the monitor. Wilma had departed peace-fully and without struggle from this life to be with the Lord and all those saints who had gone on before. We all kissed her brow and said farewell. It was so comforting to have also at her bedside with us Tom O'Neal, Martin

Adams, and Allen Mai one. The Clarks kept the children in the waiting room. We all wept.

We brought her back to Warner Robins, Georgia where we have lived and labored with the Westside church for 19 years. A beautiful service was held at McCullough Funeral Home July 31st at 2 P. M. The service was conducted by Tom O'Neal, Sewell Hall, and Andy De Klerk. Beautiful congregational singing was ably led by Duane Combs and Allen Neely. It was a service of praise to God, tribute to a wonderful woman, wife, mother, and grandmother, and an appeal to the lost to get right with God.

Her body was then taken to Hopewell, Virginia, her home town and mine, for another service at Gould Funeral Home on Thursday August 2nd at 2 P. M. This service was conducted by John Nosker, Paul Casebolt, and Weldon Warnock with Connie W. Adams conducting the graveside service. Again the singing was congregational with Allen Malone leading. The service was comforting and uplifting. We laid Wilma's body to rest about 4 P. M. in nearby Chesterfield County at Sunset Memorial Park in the family plot. Connie's closing remark before the final prayer was: "Sweet, sweet Wilma, we will all miss you."

Unique to the occasion was the use of our three sons, our son-in-law, and the three older grandsons as pallbearers. Also in final tribute, a memory rose was placed on the casket by each of the grandchildren. Wilma is survived by her husband, Wiley, a daughter, Paige Deason, three sons, Arthur W., Stanley W., and Keith W. Adams, and preceded in death by a baby daughter, Karen Ruth. There are nine grandchildren.

Wilma will be missed by all who knew her and loved her. No gospel preacher has ever had a better, more supportive wife. Her loss is like cutting off my right arm. There are so many things I could say but I must be selective. They are in my heart forever whether or not they are written down. Many beautiful memories will sustain us in the days ahead.

It was Wilma who encouraged me to devote full-time to the preaching of the gospel. It was she who helped me more than anyone else to achieve this goal. Patiently she tended to our family and urged me on in this noble work. She was my most attentive listener as well as my most concerned critic. She always followed me in the scriptures as I preached or taught and took notes on my sermons as though she had never heard them before. She was a wonderful example to her family and to the whole church wherever we were. She had no patience with women who complained about being the wife of a preacher. She counted it an honor to serve the Lord by helping me to preach the gospel and become an elder in the church.

Her efforts to help me in the preaching of the gospel must not be wasted. With God's help they shall not be. I must continue on in the work of the kingdom of God. I know I will never be quite the same again. I will never get over missing her. But she would say if she could, "Wiley, preach the word. You are my preacher man."

And so I will do this for whatever time I have left and finish my course as she did hers and keep the faith until

that day, whether soon or late, when I shall be laid at her side to await the resurrection and to enter into Heaven's gates together—**together still, forever.**

"Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies?" (Proverbs 31: 10) Well, Wiley Adams did find such a woman and her name was **WILMA**. Good-bye, my love—for now! —In loving tribute, J. Wiley Adams.

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WHAT JOB DIDN'T KNOW THAT WE DO

Paul said that he knew how to abound and how to be abased (Phil. 3: 12). Another man who knew this, probably better than Paul, was the Old Testament patriarch, Job. His classic story is well-known to us. Job was a good and godly man of deep integrity. He loved God and served others. He was a wealthy man; one who was generously blessed by God. He was a devoted family man.

Then, because of Satan's sneering challenge, God permitted His devout servant to be stricken. Through a series of calamities, he suffered loss, pain, disease, and depression that has probably never been surpassed by mere mortal man. In one day he lost his servants, his possessions, and his ten children.

Though Job persevered through all his trials (James 5: 11), he did not respond stoically to them. His emotions were deep, pitiful, and clearly evident. He wished he had never been born (3: 3-10); or had died at birth (3: 11-19); or could die immediately (3: 20-26). He felt totally help-less to deal with his state. He felt trapped (19: 8); lonely (19: 19); weak (19: 20); and friendless (6: 14-22). The three friends who came to offer help proved to be miserable comforters (16: 2).

This article may be read by some whose suffering is also great. You may be experiencing great physical pain, emotional anguish, affliction, or bereavement. If this is not one's situation today, it may be tomorrow. But you and I have an advantage over Job. We may know some things that he did not know.

Job did not know the plan of God. He didn't know what had taken place behind the scenes; how Satan had raised the question, "Does Job fear God for nothing?" (1: 9-12; 2: 4-6). Job knew that God was sovereign and almighty. This was part of his problem. Why would He send this suffering?

If only he had known what we know: the conversation between Satan and God and the purpose God had in permitting his suffering. I believe that such knowledge would have been helpful to Job.

You may say, we do not possess that information when it comes to our own suffering. We cannot know with assurance the purpose and plan of God. We must suffer in the dark.

Yet we do not have to suffer in complete darkness. We can know that God loves us. He has proven this in the most unmistakable way (Rom. 5: 8). So whatever happens, no matter how great the tragedy, we know something that Job did not know. "When I survey the wondrous cross, on which the Prince of glory died, my richest gain I count but loss, and pour contempt on all my pride. Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were a present for too small; love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.

Job did not know about Jesus. It is true that some information along this line was revealed to him. He said, "For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth..." (19: 25). But he did not have full knowledge of his Redeemer.

As a result, he thought God was his adversary. He concluded that God was uninterested in his cries of anguish and was unable to feel his tears and pain. He cried, "Nor is there any mediator between us, who may lay his hand on us both" (9: 33). He did not know of an advocate who would plead his case and stand between him and the Father (1 Timothy 2: 5, 6).

Isn't it wonderful that when the surgery is over, and the news is bad; the body aches; all you see is the hoses and tubes and tapes and bandages; you can't read the Bible and you really don't care to; you don't feel like praying just then; to know that Jesus cares, and He understands.

Or it may be that you are simply burdened with cares. Your family and friends cannot help you. No one can feel the burden you carry. You suffer alone. But to know you have a Mediator before the throne of grace; and even when your prayers are simply groans and tears, there is One who intercedes for you. He lays hands on you and the Father, and He does not let go when your grip grows weak. This is something that Job did not know.

Job did not know of the resurrection as we do. He had some understanding of this hope. He spoke of trees cut down that later revived and budded (14: 7-10). Some revelation of the resurrection was given: "So man lies down and does not rise. Till the heavens are no more, they will not awake nor be roused from their sleep." This implies that when the heavens are no more they will awake and be roused. Later he exclaimed, "And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God..." (19: 26). But Job did not have the information with which we are provided of the resurrection (1 Cor. 15).

Job asked the question: "If a man die, shall he live again?" (14: 14). Jesus definitively replies, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die" (John 11: 25, 26).

Until Jesus made that wonderful pronouncement, people could only wonder, or fear, or perhaps wish. But now we can know. Job did not know that the empty tomb would proclaim victory over Satan, sin, and death. Our

view of temptation, pain, and anguish should be different from Job's. He did not know what we know about the resurrection.

Job did not know where to find God. "Oh that I knew where I might find Him, that I might come to His seat!" (23: 3). Today we could tell Job where to find God. "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1: 14). "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14: 6).

In Christ we see the righteousness, the compassion, the goodness, and the severity of God. In Him we behold God's love for sinners and hatred of every false way. At Calvary we see the ultimate revelation of His concern and His plan for fallen man. In the gospel we learn the means by which we may be washed and reconciled (Romans 6: 3, 4). What a difference Jesus makes.

The book of Job, like other things written aforetime, was written for our learning. We should read the book, feel with Job, and learn from him. But let us be ever thankful that God's perfect revelation has been given that we may have knowledge to sustain and give us hope that Job did not have.

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**Harry W. Pickup, Jr.
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It is not easy for me to write about Dad — for a number of reasons. Some of them are too personal to mention. A main reason is that a public writing extolling his virtues is something that he honestly would not have preferred. Such would be out of character of the man. Therefore, what I hope to do is to concentrate on a few things about him that are interesting and, hopefully, encouraging to others.

He passed away June 4, 1990. If he had lived until August 9, 1990 he would have been 90 years old. He began life in Brooklyn, New York, a fact that was always amusing to him since he considered himself essentially a "good southern boy." He spent most of his life in cities; but, contrastingly, some of his fondest memories were of preaching in remote, rural areas during depression days in middle Tennessee and in the villages of North Carolina in World War II days.

While not a retiring personality Dad was never the "first," "chief" or "president" of anything. He was a partner to all who were engaged in doing right. When volunteers were needed from the rank and file one could always "count him in." He was a helper to all brethren who were seeking to please God. His aim was to glorify God; his ambition was to help the people. He was a "partner" to all truth preaching preachers. He was a "helper" of L. R. Wilson, James R. Cope and Bob Owen, all presidents of Florida College, in their work of establishing and maintaining the College.

Dad was a "common" man among many "common" people. The word "common" here is used in the New Testament sense of the word. Remember: it was the "common people who heard Jesus gladly." Dad preached to the "common" people — and they both enjoyed and benefited from his preaching. He viewed himself as "made like unto his brethren in all things." And, he was viewed by the people in this manner. He experienced life in the manner of the "common" man. Folks from all walks of life felt comfortable with him. In his early adulthood he supported himself and his family by working with his hands; his latter working days were spent in the same manner. He could preach with his brain but he could also build with his hands. He preached and lived the "common faith." He understood the needs of ordinary people because he lived as they did sharing in the anxieties and difficulties, as well as the joys from life's common ventures. He never viewed himself as unique or different in the secular sense and the "common" people respected and loved him greatly. Perhaps the moral in this point is that it is good to be as fine an "average man" as one can be.

Dad was experience oriented — things happened to him. He generated reaction. Dogs and other animals couldn't leave him alone. Children turned to him. Ordinary folks responded to him. Successful people took note of him. He made things happen by his natural interest in people and their affairs.

Life was interesting to him. He was never bored; he was never boring. His early preaching days at the Tennessee State Penitentiary furnished him with many entertaining and instructive stories. He helped quell public unrests in LaGrange, Georgia in the early 30's due to the cotton mill strike. The entire church was composed of Calloway Mill workers. The church building had been purchased inexpensively from the Mill; his family lived in a house furnished by the Mill. Of the 3 elders, 2 were supervisors and remained loyal to the company; the other was the president of the union, the man who called the strike. The "Park Avenue church of Christ had its greatest growth," he said, during those trying days and was the only religious group in the Mill section not suffering extreme adverse effects from the strike. He liked to tell the story of the Ministerial Alliance inviting him to address them to explain why the church of Christ was not divided as were the denominations. His explanation was to preach a sermon from Ephesians 4 and thoroughly explain "the unity of the spirit." When he moved from the town, the community was almost as sorry to see him go as the church.

While preaching in Gainesville, Florida he held many meetings in Alachua, Levy and Gilchrist counties. The meetings were mostly with brethren who were few in number and limited in strength. He preached the longest meeting of which I know in modern times. The tent meeting lasted one day short of seven weeks. He baptized more than 50 people. The meeting ended because the Gainesville church could no longer spare him.

The University church in Gainesville, Florida were thrilled that their preacher was invited by the University of Florida to give the baccalaureate sermon to the prestigious University of Florida Development Junior High School. He amused the academic audience by stories which poked harmless fun at superficial culture and stuffy formality. This embarrassed the brethren but the "common folks" enjoyed it. Most importantly, he got everyone's attention by preaching plainly and distinctly the saving gospel, including a critique of denominationalism.

I never heard a more pointed preacher than Dad — including the few times he had opportunity to preach to his own mother. Strangely to many, few folks were offended by him; everyone understood that they had heard what the preacher believed was the truth of almighty God in clear and understandable language, he was impartial in wielding the "sword of the spirit" against what he thought was untrue, unrighteous or unwise. I felt his impartial handling of the truth when in Phoenix, Arizona he publicly rebuked me for playing the card game, Canasta. What made it worse to me was that he was so convincing in his interpretation that he convinced my card partners who also became my critics! That was my Dad.

He was among a group of preachers who arranged to present a Bible to President Harry S. Truman when he lived in Arlington, Virginia. The children of a famous Georgia black preacher grew up calling him "the milk man" because each Monday, after he deposited his check and had seen to his own family's needs, he brought that family their weekly milk supply. He purchased a lot and a house on a handshake; neither person ever had reason to regret the sale. He could discuss finances with a banker friend, medicine with a physician friend or the need to be saved from sins with a hitch-hiker, many of whom he gave rides.

Throughout his life he had one overriding "aim"; "we make it our aim... to be well pleasing unto Him." There are 3 shades of meaning to the Greek word translated by "aim": 1) Goal, 2) Ambition, 3) Point of honor. His eyes were set straight for the target of obeying God's will. For him personal success was measured according to whether or not he fulfilled God's purpose and helped the people. It was a point of honor with him to carry out his duty toward God.

It gave him great pleasure to know that he served God as a partner among such "common people" as Paul, Peter, John, Dorcas, Hardeman, Wallace, Hailey, Puckett, Evans, Cravens and a host of Christians with whom most of the church are not familiar.

I have not intended to give a personal evaluation of the character of the man whom I called "Father" but in closing I would like to suggest this: like Abraham he was totally unconcerned about the carnal world and thoroughly concerned with seeking "the heavenly city whose builder and maker is God." The honor of being a Christian was the only honor he cared about. The riches of the grace in Christ Jesus was the only wealth he sought — the only acclaim he ever sought was the approval of God, the trust of his brethren, and the good will of his fellow man. He was absolutely void of personal pride and human ambition; he was completely indifferent to human achievement. He was the friend of God, a son of Abraham, the child of the king, completely happy to wear the clothes of a servant.

SIMPLICITY IN CHRIST

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COMPUTERIZED RELIGION

We have entered the age of computers, word processors, fax machines, and answering machines. And, unless the system self-destructs, I see no way to extricate ourselves from the maze of technology which surrounds us.

The sad thing is, that with each step forward in our state-of-the-art society, it seems that we take a step backwards in our efforts to maintain some measure of personal touch with other members of the human race. My meager bank account has been through four mergers in about as many years, and the fifth "mystery of iniquity doth already work." Each time, the service gets more impersonal, and the problems more difficult to resolve.

I still can't get enthused about trying to carry on a conversation with some distant answering machine or a squawking box three feet from my car window at some drive-in, fast-food lane. I've always felt that man was created to have dominion over his environment, and not the other way around.

I don't think I'm imagining things when I see a trend to computerize religion. Sectarian churches, with their social gospel and other "of this world" characteristics, have succeeded in lowering religion to nothing more than a formal, mechanical function suited more to clones and robots than to human beings.

In "visiting" the fatherless and widows, we have practically institutionalized ourselves out of touch with other members of the human race. Even after food, shelter, and clothing have been provided, there is nothing that can take the place of a warm smile or touch on the part of the giver, or a warm glow of thanksgiving in the eyes of the receiver.

Neither am I imagining things when I say that some preachers/ congregations are creating an impersonal atmosphere in the areas of worship, edification, and the preaching of the gospel. Others have noticed the change, too.

I have nothing against computers, overhead projectors, flannel boards, chalk boards per se, or the prudent use of any such aids in the dissemination of truth, facts, or pertinent information. But when we allow any such aid to come between us and our intended goal, we need to back up and see where we lost touch with reality and the rest of the human race.

I have seen a few preachers who could use an overhead projector smoothly, and not detract from the

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message. Such a medium could be ideal for debates or special classes/subjects. Even then, we need to turn the thing off whenever necessary to keep in contact with the audience. I have seen some attempts to use an overhead projector that were disasters at worst, and a comedy of errors at best.

No two preachers have the same delivery or personality. If they do, at least one of them needs to quit mimicking the other, and be himself. We need to determine our capabilities, improve on them as best we can, and live with them. Advice and suggestions from brethren should be sought and considered. Even then, we need to learn how to preach a sermon once in a while without the usual props and visual aids. The electricity could go off, or we could end up in a situation where we don't even have a pulpit- to hide behind. I've been in places in the Philippines, and even in America, where a preacher would look stupid with a magic marker in one hand and a sheaf of transparencies in the other, with an audience waiting to hear the word of God.

Some brethren seem to think that they can solve every problem/opportunity facing a congregation relative to budgets, benevolence, worship, evangelism, edification, or business meetings by programming some information into a computer or displaying the results on an overhead projector. Records and bookkeeping are one thing, but some things just cannot be reduced to solutions by modern technology. People and spiritual matters need to be treated as such.

And in all of our efforts to preach the gospel, we would do well to keep a Bible somewhere on the premises.

WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

Send all questions to:

Weldon E. Warnock

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THE SCRIPTURES MUST BE FULFILLED

QUESTION: I notice in my Bible the expression, "that it might be fulfilled," about forty times in the New Testament. In Matt. 26: 54, Mk. 14: 49 and Acts 1: 16 it says the scriptures **MUST** be fulfilled. Does the word "must" mean the same in these passages as it does in Acts 16: 30 when the jailor said, "What must I do to be saved?" I have heard preachers say the word "must" does not mean "can" or "could," but "necessity," and that one "has to" do what the Bible says. My question is this: If the word "must" means the same in all these places, does that mean that the prophecies "have to" or "must" be fulfilled?

ANSWER: Yes, the word "must" means the same in all the above passages. The Greek word translated "must" is *dei*. In Acts 1: 16 it is *edei*, 3rd person singular imperfect of *dei*. Thayer says of this word, "It is necessary, there is need of, it behooves, is right and proper" (P. 126).

In reference to Acts 16: 30 Thayer states, "necessity in reference to what is required to attain some end." Concerning Matt. 26: 54 where Jesus refers to his need of being arrested and eventually crucified, Thayer says, "necessity established by the counsel and decree of God, esp. by that purpose of his which relates to the salvation of men by the intervention of Christ and which is disclosed in the O. T. prophecies... in this sue, esp. of what Christ was destined finally to undergo, his sufferings, death, resurrection, Ascension" (p. 126).

Hence, just as the jailor **MUST** obey the gospel in order to attain salvation, Jesus **MUST** die, must fulfill prophecy, in order to provide salvation for lost mankind. There was no alternative! Jesus' death, resurrection and Ascension were a **NECESSITY**>

Though prophecy had to be fulfilled in regard to Jesus, as scripture cannot be broken (Jn. 10: 35), he still exercised his volition (cf. Jn. 10: 15). His suffering in death was voluntary. Commenting on Mk. 14: 49 Lenski says, "God is carrying out his prophetic plans, therefore Jesus is voluntarily putting himself into his captor's hands" (*Mark*, p. 651). Though *dei* denotes necessity, it does not preclude the free exercise of the will. **Foreknowledge and Human Volition**

QUESTION: Since many of the prophecies have to do with choice or volition, and they must be fulfilled, how do you harmonize the Bible? Now I believe that man has choice, but if God says a person is going to do something,

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and God can't lie, does this not remove the choice of that person?

ANSWER: God, who is all-knowing or omniscient, is able to see into the future what choice or decision a person will make or what his actions will be. God is not responsible for the decision or the act of the person, but he simply foresees what will transpire. To prophesy that an individual is going to do something in no way removes the choice of the person.

When Peter said of Judas in Acts 1: 16, "this scripture must needs have been fulfilled," he didn't mean that God had a hand in Judas' fall, but rather that a prediction of God would be fulfilled. Lenski wrote, "God did not decree the betrayal; Judas determined that himself. God foreknew that ungodly determination, foretold it, however only in a general way, and so Judas fulfilled the prophecy" (Acts, p. 44).

God foresaw and prophesied that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5: 2). Joseph and Mary made the choice to journey to Bethlehem, although taxation was the compulsion for the trip (Lk. 2: 1-5). Prophecy necessitated their being in Bethlehem, but choice took them there.

Isaiah speaks of Cyrus delivering God's people about 150 years before it happened (Isa. 44: 28). This prophecy had to be fulfilled because the Lord spoke it, but Cyrus made the decision. God correctly predicted Cyrus' action by foreseeing what his will would be.

Jesus said Peter would deny him three times before the cock crowed twice (Mk. 14: 30). Jesus wasn't responsible for Peter's denial, nor the rooster's crowing, but he, by divine foreknowledge, was able to accurately predict it. From the standpoint of the prophecy, Peter had to deny the Lord and the rooster had to crow. But from Peter's standpoint, he was not compelled by God to deny Jesus Christ. He had choice, but through fear he yielded to the flesh. As to the rooster, his instinct could have cause him to crow a half-dozen times before Peter denied the Lord, but it didn't, so they fulfilled what Jesus stated. There was no guess work about it. Jesus knew the future.

God said, "... for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning..." (Isa. 46: 9-10).

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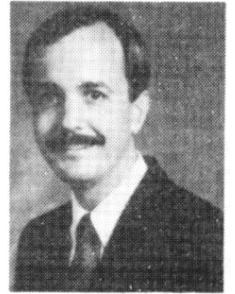
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'GOOD OL' NOAH'

One of the songs I remember from childhood Bible classes is "Good Ol' Noah," sung to the tune of "01' MacDonald." We sang about how Noah took on the ark two cows and horses and pigs and sheep and goats and ducks and chickens and whatever other animals we thought we could imitate.

"Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babes..." To say that Good Ol' Noah built the ark like God told him to is to say a lot. Read Genesis 6, then think about it.

Good Ol' Noah built the ark...

Despite living in a wicked world. Noah's world was sensual. People chose their mates primarily on the basis of looks (v. 2). Noah's world was brutal (v. 4). The Nephilim were bullies or tyrants (Strong). Noah's world was corrupt (v. 11). Man had become a master of perversion. "Every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Beautiful, wholesome things were twisted into ugly, ungodly forms. Verse 6 says it all: "And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart."

Amidst this perversity stood blameless Noah, who refused to become the product of his environment. He walked with God, obeying His every command. Too many are quick to excuse sin on the basis of one's upbringing or surroundings. These may contribute, to be sure. However, since Satan is the ruler of this world (Jn. 14: 30), each of us must rise above our environment if we are to serve God. Is our world any more ungodly than Noah's, or righteous Lot's, or Paul's (Rom. 1)?

Despite any questions he may have had about what God was doing. Put yourself in Noah's place. What question might have run through your mind when God announced the flood? Would God really destroy His creation? How could a loving and merciful God punish so many people? What about the sincere people who are simply misguided in their lives? What about the innocent children? How would God bring a flood (the Bible does not mention rain prior to the flood)? And what evidence was there, apart from His word, that God would destroy the world? There was no noticeable change; everything looked the same right up to the day the flood began.

I do not know whether such questions occurred to Noah. If they did, I do not know whether he had the answers. I do know that many people today wrestle with such questions. Yet when all was said and done, Noah

had but two choices: take God at His word and obey Him, or ignore what He said. You and I have the same choices. Good Ol' Noah obeyed.

Despite the enormity of the task. I confess that the prospect of building any kind of a boat that would float for a year would be an enormous task for me. Well what about one that is time and half the length of a football field and three stories high? And do you suppose the local lumberyard had a good selection of pre-cut gopher framing and other ark supplies? God knew this was a great task. He gave Noah 120 years to complete it (Gen. 6: 3; 1 Pet. 3: 20).

It is much easier to begin a thing than to keep up interest in it over the long haul. If Noah was like we are, he started out like a ball of fire. But as the weeks and months and years went by, surely not everything went smoothly. This board didn't fit, that one warped after he had it in place, etc. Who gave him the motivational speeches and pep talks? Who picked him up when he was down, when it just didn't seem like he was getting anywhere? And remember, Noah was nearly 500 years old when he began this project! Yet Good Ol' Noah finished the job. How about you?

Perhaps you are thinking. "Yes, but Noah had some help: Shem, Ham, and Japeth." No he did not, not at first anyway. Shem was not 100 years old until after the flood (Gen. 11: 10), which means Noah was twenty years or more into the building when he started his family. Have you ever tried to build something with small children "helping?" That is the kind of help Noah had.

Despite opposition to his preaching. Noah was not only a builder and a father, but also a preacher of righteousness (2 Pet. 2: 5). The Bible does not record opposition to his preaching, but who can preach 120 days, much less 120 years, without being opposed? The lack of conversions proves that Noah's generation rejected his preaching.

What did those people say when Noah preached God's standard of conduct and warned of a destructive flood; when Noah declared that the only way to be saved was to repent and get in this ark he was building? "Get with it, Noah. Your standard of morality is archaic. You're living in the Garden of Eden age. We live in more advanced times." Some probably accused him of believing in "boat salvation." Surely someone asked, "Is not one boat as good as another? What makes you think you and the others on your boat are the only ones who are right?"

Only seven souls joined Noah in the ark. Over a 120 year span, that averages about one conversion every seventeen years! What church among us would support a man who baptized that few people? Yet Noah did save his entire family, a great accomplishment considering the wicked world in which they lived. The truth is, the success of preaching cannot always be measured by the number of conversions (Eze. 2: 4, 5).

Exactly as God said. "Thus Noah did; according to all that God had commanded him, so he did (v. 22)." Human wisdom might have called for some changes. Pitch coating is not very aesthetic. A second or third door would have facilitated loading and unloading and

provided emergency exits. What architect in his right mind would call for only one window? How could that possibly provide enough light and ventilation? Noah could have changed one of these things as easily as another. When he was finished altering the plan he could have still called it "God's ark." But do you think it would have survived the flood?

What element of God's plan for us has someone not changed? Folks tamper with God's requirements for salvation, the organization and work and worship of the church, God's moral standard, His plan for the home, etc. Of course when they are finished, they still call it "God's plan." But the resulting product is no more an expression of faith than a revamped ark would have been. "By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith" (Heb. 11: 7). Good Ol' Noah.

TOTAL DEPRAVITY AND BAPTISM

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It may be impossible to overestimate the influence of Augustine and Calvin on the Protestant denomination-alism of today. Augustine held man totally depraved, that is, sin-sick in all his parts so that he can not respond to God's will in any positive way. For Augustine man's sin-sickness was inherited genetically from Adam. This view pretty much dominated the period of the Reformation. The Catholic church taught it as well as Martin Luther. But it was John Calvin who popularized the view so that today it is associated with his name. Members of the Lord's church strike the wall of Calvinism as they try to teach their friends of the need of baptism.

When Christians teach the Biblical doctrine of baptism as the **time** that God gives salvation those influenced by Calvinism deny it emphatically. Perhaps in this article we can gain some insight into why they cannot accept baptism as the time at which God gives life to the sinner.

In The Five Points of Calvinism Defined, Defended and Documented David Steele and Curtis Thomas define total inability or total depravity as follows:

Because of the fall, man is unable of himself to savingly believe the gospel. The sinner is dead, blind, and deaf to the things of God; his heart is deceitful and desperately corrupt. His will is not free, it is in bondage to his evil nature, therefore, he will not—indeed he cannot—choose good over evil in the spiritual realm. Consequently, it takes much more than the Spirit's as-

sistance to bring a sinner to Christ—it takes regeneration nature. Faith is not something man contributes to salvation but is itself a part of God's gift of salvation—it is God's gift to the sinner, not the sinner's gift to God (p. 16). Note the following elements in this definition:

1. Man is totally unable to believe the gospel because of the fall.
2. His will is in bondage—he cannot choose good over evil.
3. The Spirit must therefore make the sinner alive and give him a new nature.
4. Faith is given to men by God since man is totally unable to believe on his own.
5. This faith is given to man against his will.

Some today still hold that men are totally unable, that they cannot respond to God's grace apart from a direct operation of God. You may hear them speak of their "experience." In this experience, according to Calvin, faith is miraculously given so that the recipient is saved. He receives faith, is born again (or regenerated) and thus saved all in one process. Faith is a gift given by God against a man's will.

Others, although influenced by the teaching of Calvin, deny the doctrine of total inability and the Calvinistic idea of faith being given by God. They believe man is a free-will creature and that he has the ability to exercise faith on his own power as a result of hearing the gospel. Here faith is man's voluntary trust in what God has done in Christ for man's forgiveness.

It is easy to see why Calvin would have placed baptism after salvation. Baptism is a positive response of man, but man is totally unable to respond positively unless God enables him, an enabling which involves being made alive or regenerated by the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit. Thus, salvation precedes baptism.

It is difficult to see the theological justification for denying baptism as the time of salvation for those who deny Calvinistic inability and define faith as man's voluntary trust in Christ. There is no longer a theological reason why faith must be the time of regeneration. The way for baptism as the time is open.

G. R. Beasley-Murray, a British Baptist, in his noteworthy **Baptism in the New Testament** defines faith in terms of voluntary dependence upon God. Commenting on Romans 10: 17 he says, "Faith believes something about Jesus, it receives the message of his death and resurrection; but 'believe' is paralleled by the term 'confess,' which involves both a statement of belief and a dependence on Jesus confessed as 'Lord' (p. 267). Beasley-Murray's acceptance of man's ability to exercise faith apart from a miraculous infusion allows him to see baptism from a new perspective. Thus he can say, "Baptism saves, not because water washes dirt from the body, but as the occasion (time, WTG) when a man is met by the Risen Christ" (p. 265). He continues "... the baptized in his baptism is related to the redemptive act of Christ, and so experiences the cleansing power of the blood of the cross" (p. 265). Commenting on Titus 3: 5 and Jno. 3: 6, 8 he states: "Bap-

tism is thus represented as the occasion when the Spirit brings to new life him that believes in the Son of man lifted up on the cross to heaven" (p. 278). The 'grace' available to man in baptism is said by the New Testament writers to include the following elements: forgiveness of sin, Acts 2: 38 and cleansing from sins, Acts 22: 16, 1 Cor. 6: 11; union with Christ, Gal. 3: 27, and particularly union with Him in his death and resurrection, Rom. 6: 3ff, Col. 2: 11ff, with all that implies of release from sin's power, as well as guilt, and the sharing of the risen life of the Redeemer, Rom. 6: 1-11; participation in Christ's sonship, Gal. 3: 26f; consecration to God, 1 Cor. 6: 11, hence membership in the Church, the Body of Christ, 1 Cor. 12: 13, Gal. 3: 27-29; possession of the Spirit, Acts 2: 38, 1 Cor. 6: 11, 12: 13, and therefore the new life in the Spirit, i. e. regeneration, Tit. 3: 5, Jn. 3: 5; grace to live according to the will of God, Rom. 6: 1ff, Col. 3: 1ff; deliverance from the evil powers that rule this world, Col. 1: 13; the inheritance of the Kingdom of God, Jn. 3: 5, and the pledge of the resurrection of the body, Eph. 1: 13f, 4: 30 (p. 264). Whether my reconstruction of the removal of the theological difficulty is the motivation behind Beasley-Murray or not, it is obvious from these quotations that he has moved way past the old Calvinistic limitations. *

Once one denies the old Calvinistic doctrine of total inability and defines faith as voluntary dependence upon God the whole of the Calvinistic system crumbles. A few years ago Louisville's Southern Baptist Theological Seminary found itself embroiled in a controversy with long time professor Dr. Dale Moody. Dr. Moody was rejecting the "once saved always saved doctrine calling it "a Baptist heresy." He objected on the basis of Heb. 6: 6. Once faith is defined as a voluntary free will action of man it can be begun and ended on the basis of an individual's decision.

I don't expect any major doctrinal changes within denominationalism, but I do think we need to be sensitive to these issues, use them in our work of teaching others and be warned of the long term impact of false teaching.

*Beasley-Murray stops short of using the word "necessary" when considering baptism. "Since," he says, "the word has given rise to so much misunderstanding" (p. 302).

Good Homes In A Wicked World by Irvan Lee. This book is based on a series of lessons given at various places on the family's place in the present world. (IL)

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WHEN A "JEHOVAH'S WITNESS" KNOCKS

Ron Halbrook
654 Gray Street
West Columbia, Texas 77486

(Introductory Note: The church in West Columbia, TX has a newspaper column called "New Testament Christianity." We ran the following article to let people know that we are ready to help them. An honest J. W. would agree to the proposed study, and the proposal helps people get dishonest J. W.'s off their doorsteps.)

1. When talking with a "Jehovah's Witness" at your door or anywhere else, be kind, considerate, and courteous. Treat them as you wish to be treated (Matt. 7: 12). Do not curse at them or persecute them in any way. Losing control of your temper or tongue only reinforces prejudice in their heart. "Let your speech be alway with grace" (Col. 4: 6). "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men" (Gal. 6: 10). Remember with compassion that the "Jehovah's Witness" has an eternal soul, though his doctrine denies it, and that he will spend eternity in heaven or hell (Matt. 24: 46).

2. Give them this article to explain a proposal for a fair and balanced study. DEAR FRIEND OF THE "J. W. " RELIGION, the person handing you this article wants to study with you in a format of open discussion. Ron Halbrook will be invited into our home to share in the study sessions. He will be present at each study with the representatives of the "J. W. " religion, SO THAT BOTH SIDES OF EACH SUBJECT OR ISSUE CAN BE FAIRLY PRESENTED. Ron Halbrook and the J. W. " representative must agree to conduct each study directly from the Bible, rather than studying the literature of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. Every- one agrees to be patient and courteous in these studies.

The subjects for study are: (1) THE FULL DEITY OF "THE WORD" WHO CAME IN THE FLESH AS JESUS CHRIST — Jn. 1: 1-14; Heb. 1: 1-14. (2) DID GOD GIVE HIS PEOPLE IN THE GOSPEL AGE THE NAME "CHRISTIAN" OR "J. W. "? — Acts 11: 26. (3) IS GOD'S ONLY NAME "JEHOVAH"? Isa. 9: 6; Matt. 28: 19. (4) WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED? — Mk. 16: 16; Acts 2: 38. (5) DOES THE SOUL OR SPIRIT SURVIVE DEATH? — Matt. 10: 28; Lk. 16: 19-31. (6) WILL ALL CHRISTIANS GO TO HEAVEN OR MUST SOME STAY ON EARTH FOREVER, AND IS PUNISHMENT IN HELL ETERNAL? — Matt. 25: 46; 1 Pet. 1: 1-5. (7) DID GOD ORDAIN THE J. W. " ORGANIZATION AND HAS IT MADE FALSE PROPHECIES? — Deut. 18: 21-22; Phil. 1: 1.

When the true prophets of God pled, "Come now, and let us reason together," they invited their opponents, "Produce your arguments" (Isa. 1: 18; 41: 21 NWT). God's

true people are interested in the same open study today.

3. DEAR FRIEND OF THE "J. W. " RELIGION, the person handing you this article believes it would be fair and helpful if a public discussion could be held on the subjects listed above. Such public study is approved by Elijah, Isaiah, Jesus, Paul, and Ron Halbrook (1 Kgs. 18; Isa. 43: 9; Matt. 22; Acts 17: 17; 1 Pet. 3: 15).

4. If the "J. W. " wants to leave some literature, say you will take it if he will be fair enough to read something you have. If our readers will contact us now, we will supply them with tracts to keep on hand to exchange with a "J. W. " If he wants you to pay or make a donation for his literature, point out that you are not asking any pay or donation for what you are offering in exchange. If they offer a larger book and want money on that basis, tell them to come back later and you will make an even exchange. Let us know and we will supply what you need.

5. If they **refuse** this clipping, **refuse** a private study of both sides, **refuse** public discussion, and **refuse** to exchange literature, **kindly close the conversation and gently close the door.** You have done what is right and fair, your conscience is clear. You will know they are unfair and dishonest in asking you to examine your beliefs because they will not examine theirs. 'The legs of the lame are not equal' (Prov. 26: 7; Rom. 2: 21).

6. Clip and save this article for future use. Make copies — distribute them far and wide. Contact us for free tapes and tracts on "J. W. " doctrine.

EXCUSES
"MY PARENTS MADE ME GO,
AND I HATED IT!"

Wallace H. Little
357 Honey Cove
Ft. Walton Beach, Florida 32548-5212

So said the young bride, with her non-Christian husband sitting along side of her. He was more interested in the Bible than was this young woman who had been baptized eight years earlier.

"Your parents made you wear appropriate clothes for the weather, and you didn't end up hating clothes, and going around naked. Your parents made you go to school, and you didn't end up hating school, for you are attending college now. Your parents made you eat the right kind of food for your health, and you didn't end up hating that food. I saw you eating some of it for lunch. Your parents made you take medicine when you were sick, and you didn't end up hating medicine. I saw you take some for your illness. I don't know why you walked out on Christ. But this much I do know: it wasn't because your parents 'made you go to church.' Stop using them

as an excuse to justify **your** unfaithfulness!"

She simply had not **made the "big decision."** She had never been committed to **Christ.** **Mark 12: 29-31** reads: "... Hear, O Israel; the **Lord our God** is one Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord thy **God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength:** this is the first **commandment.** **And the second** is like, namely this, Thou **shalt love thy neighbor as thyself...** " In Matthew 22: 37-40, **we find added, "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."**

Unless we put God first in our lives, He will accept no position. In Judgment, "my parents made me go to church, and I hated it" will be no defense when we stand before Him with Whom we all have to do (Heb 4: 13).

Have you made the "big decision" and committed yourself to God as your primary function in this life (Eccl 12: 13)? Have I? Or, are we using others as excuses for dodging our responsibilities?

How will God accept our excuses?

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

DAVID A PADFIELD, 2612 S. Villa Dr, Evansville, IN 47714 — The congregation on the East side of Evansville has just moved into a new meeting house. Though small, it is larger than the storefront we rented for four years. It cost less than \$75,000 and our monthly payment is just a little more than we paid in rent. We now have 55 in attendance on Sunday mornings. Our new address is: 2514 Jeanette, Evansville, IN 47714. I have just lost some of my outside support and next year will lose another \$800 a month.

I have signed debate propositions with Don Phillips, an American Baptist from Terre Haute, Indiana. The church where he preaches has over 1,000 members. He has agreed to have the debate in their building. It is set for November 8 and 9, 1990. Propositions deal with water baptism and "salvation at the point of faith." He has also agreed to another discussion here in Evansville next year.

PAUL M. CALDWELL, SR., P. O. Box 306, Ashcamp, KY 41512 — In September, 1990 we began our fifth year of evangelistic work in the Appalachian mountains of Kentucky. We are elated by the good progress noted visibly as well as the fact that the word of the Lord is always productive of good wherever it is preached.

DALE HENDRICKS, 1450 Johnston Rd. #45, White Rock, BC V4B 5E9 — Lark Dawson, one of our members has just moved to the island of Hawaii to operate two bed and breakfast houses. She says she knows of four other families in that area who are interested in beginning a work there. Hawaii (the Big Island) is about the size of Connecticut and has a population of 100,000. About 40,000 live in the Hilo area on the east coast and about 40,000 on the west coast surrounding Kailua-Kona. Lark is interested in contacting a gospel preacher who might be interested in moving to Hawaii to help plant a church there. The only other conservative work is on the island of Oahu where Don Givens preaches. If interested in more details, contact Lark Dawson, 77-6530 Naniolu Dr., Kailua-Kona, Hawaii 96740 (808) 322-2049, or the writer at the above address in BC, or call (206)354-6031.

FRANK CHUMLEY, 5327 South Tryon St., Charlotte, NC 28217 — After nine years and three months with the Kemper Heights church in Madison, TN, Jean and I moved to Charlotte, NC in February to work with what was known as the York Road church. Attendance has reached a high of 54 on Sunday morning and we have resumed a Wednesday night Bible study. Some of the members live 40 miles away. We have decided to change our Sunday meeting times to 9, 10 and 11 A. M. I would appreciate receiving bulletins which are mailed out.

PREACHERS NEEDED

CANEYVILLE, KENTUCKY — Caneyville is located about 35 miles north of Bowling Green, KY. Average attendance is 55 on Sunday morning. Write to: Church of Christ, Caneyville, KY 42721.

PISCATAWAY, NEW JERSEY — The church which meets at 258 Highland Ave. is looking for a full-time preacher. We have about 55 members in attendance with no elders or deacons. We need a strong man, mature in the scriptures, faithful and dedicated in preaching the gospel. We have a house for residence and can supply partial support. Those interested may call Richard Pflaum (201) 359-1928; or Eugene Osinski 846-4880.

SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA — The church which meets at 2310 Chapala Street has dwindled in number to the extent that we can no longer support a preacher. Since Jimmy Haynes moved to Aurora, CO last August, we have been having men from nearby churches speaking for us. We have three employed men, two retired men and the rest of our members are women. The church is spiritually sound and no trouble exists. If there is a sound preacher out there who is willing to find support and come to Santa Barbara, contact Jack Bradford, 696 Rossmore Road, Goleta, CA 93117. Phone (805) 964-1049. We can supply \$300 a week toward support. Please consider: a two bedroom house rents for \$1200 to \$1500 a month.

FROM AROUND THE WORLD

BARCELONA, SPAIN — **ROYCE CHANDLER reports:** The Perez family moved to Spain in February, 1989. Efrain encountered a small group of 10-12 Christians, the result of institutional brethren. They were demoralized, completely disorganized, and knew little about the Lord's church or other Bible subjects. After talking and studying with them, they agreed to Efrain's offer to work with them full-time. He immediately began arranging studies, calling on those who had left the Lord, organizing classes for children, teaching on New Testament worship and the nature of the church, and began a weekly program to train any interested men how to teach and preach. It is the same program of "preacher training" he used in Chile, which resulted in twelve men giving themselves to preaching and working with local churches in that country.

After a year's work, the church has grown tremendously. They now have around 40-45 in attendance, have a solid core of adults who are capable of helping in a stable, mature fashion with the work, enjoy a wonderful group of young Christians and children who promise strength for the future, have good contacts in the cities of Grenada, Madrid and Zaragoza, and there are seven men attending the

preacher training classes each week.

In June, 1989, the Perezes were joined by Gregg and Georgia Perkins, and Jerry Falk. They located on the opposite side of Barcelona (El Prat) and began work to make contacts while working on their grasp of the Spanish language. Starting from scratch, they now have a small group of 15-20. In April and May they baptized nine souls. These are in addition to seven Efrain baptized in the same time period. So much for any idea that Spain is a difficult place for the Lord's work!

As uplifting as this might sound, remember that these Christians are all located in the one area in and around Barcelona, there are still thousands of other cities and villages that have no Stephen to ask, "Do you understand what you're reading?" — No Stephen to hear them respond: "How can we, except someone teach us?" (Editor's note: The August report from Efrain Perez tells of another being baptized there. Along with other workers in foreign fields, he is caught in a squeeze with increasing prices and a devalued dollar. His rent has increased 7% in the past 14 months, while the dollar has fallen from 120 Peseta per dollar to 98 Peseta per dollar. In the same time frame, gasoline has risen from \$2. 80 to \$4 per gallon. He said tersely, "We are at the limit. " Can anyone help relieve this need? Contact Efrain E. Perez, Apartado 27026, 08080 Barcelona, Spain.)

PHILIPPINES — JULIE NOTARTE reports four baptized from a recent preaching trip to Samal Island off the east coast of Mindanao, and one baptized at Digos, Davao de Sur. Times are very hard for him and many of the brethren in that area because of a severe drought which devastated crops. Many are hungry and some lack medication (or money to obtain it) with much disease among the people. In recent times the brethren in Davao region and also Cotabato have suffered much. There are many worthy men in need of support for gospel work. The struggle for basic survival has limited the time some used to spend in gospel work. I have received a number of anguished appeals from brethren I have known for 20 years. Such men as Juanito P. Balbin, Julie D. A. Notarte, Ricardo dela Cruz, Virgilio Villnueva, Dominador J. Neniell, Isidro V. Manibog and other worthies are working with limited resources. Civil turmoil and economic necessity has scattered some of the brethren from areas where there were fairly large and active churches. The troubles seem to mount in that island nation. But there is yet a great harvest of souls to be gathered and it is urgent that faithful and proven men be allowed to continue devoting their lives to the work of the gospel.

COLUMBIA AND ECUADOR, SOUTH AMERICA — CARLOS CAPELLI of Buenos Aires, Argentina recently visited brethren in Columbia and Ecuador. He says there are nine churches in Columbia preaching sound doctrine. One was baptized at Chapinero. He mentions six congregations by name in Ecuador but was only able to visit two places.

ITALY — Much work is still under way in Italy. Brethren here, as in some other places are in a real financial bind. In the last year the rate of exchange has fallen from 1, 480 liras per dollar to 1, 138 liras per dollar. Gasoline is now \$5 per gallon (and Americans are complaining!) A serious blow is that Stefano Corazza will lose \$1,000 a month support in January, 1991. His work is badly needed and it is urgent that this be replaced. He and Roberto Tondelli are presently engaged in establishing a new work in Rome.



SALVATION AND WORKS

I receive a publication called THE GRACE EVANGELICAL SOCIETY NEWS edited by Robert N. Wilkin of Wichita Falls, Texas. In response to a letter to the editor in the May, 1990 edition, he said "What we do not do is link our deeds with either our salvation or our assurance. The Scriptures are clear that the only condition of eternal life is faith in Christ. " Later he said, "To call people to clean up their lives as a condition of eternal salvation is to distort the gospel by introducing works and human merit. "

Two passages came to mind as I read these pronouncements: (1)

Heb. 6: 9 "He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him. " (2) Titus 2: 11-12 "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope... " **CROSSROADS AT THE CROSSROADS**

A recent item from T. Pierce Brown of Wartrace, Tennessee, tells of what he witnessed at the Spiritual Growth Workshop in Orlando, Florida on July 28, 1990. He reports that the elders of Crossroads Church of Christ, of Gainesville Florida stood before the assembly and "confessed their error and asked forgiveness for their part in allowing the abuses to develop in what has been known as the 'Total Commitment Movement' and The Crossroads Movement'. "

The impetus of the movement has shifted to Boston where it has gone far beyond the wildest imagination of any of those who were first involved. There is no way to recover all that damage. But it is commendable that these men have recognized the great harm which has come from what began with them. It is to be hoped that they will continue to study and come all the way back to the truth of the word of God and that they will lead that congregation to follow the New Testament pattern in all things.

THE ONLY GAME IN TOWN

On October 9, 1990, Randy Mayeux of the Preston Road church in Dallas, delivered a speech at Lubbock Christian University which has evoked serious repercussions among some of the institutional brethren. Wayne Jackson of Stockton, California really took him to task in the April-June 1990 edition of IN WORD AND DOCTRINE. According to Jackson, Mayeux referred to a tract, CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE ALIKE? as an "ignorant" viewpoint inasmuch as the Scriptures cannot be uniformly understood. He equated the use of instrumental music with such expedients as Sunday school and multiple communion cups. He said that the division with the Christian Church in the 1800's was mostly economic (some could afford an instrument while others could not). He said he teaches that baptism is for the remission of sins but that his "heart inclines otherwise. " He praised Charles Swindoll and acknowledged that he, himself, has personal inclinations toward Calvinism. He told of a Herald of Truth family conference in Texas recently during which a woman "preached" to 900 people, and, he said she "was dynamite!" He concluded his speech by asserting that in the 1990's "diversity will be the only game in town!"

This is the same man who spoke at the Nashville meeting and riled some of the institutional men present with his far-out ideas. Concerning some of the speeches of non-institutional brethren, he said he did not understand our lingo, that we just don't speak the same language. No, I guess not.

HOWS THAT AGAIN?

According to my friend, TOM SHIFLETT, of Springfield, Missouri, a newcomer in a Missouri town asked a long-time resident "Is there a criminal lawyer in this town?" To which the resident replied, "Yes, I think so, but we haven't caught him at it yet. "

A. C. GRIDER AT REST

A. C. Grider passed into eternity September 15 at the age of 78. Funeral services were conducted in Louisville, Kentucky. By J. T. Smith and the Editor with burial at Hebron Cemetery in Bullitt County, near his residence. This grand soldier of Christ will be greatly missed. Our love is extended to his beloved, Hallie and daughter, Jane. A longer notice will appear later.

CWA

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH	
BAPTISMS	345
RESTORATIONS	125
(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"

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THINK ON THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 1631
Lutz, FL 33549



THE MENACE OF MULTIPLE MARRIAGES

Considerable discussion and writing has been done with reference to the divorce and remarriage controversy. I am convinced that the heat of this discussion is because so many are involved in it, and much effort is expended in finding some way to justify the victims. I do not have all the answers to the many human situations, but I know where final authority is. I think I know how to determine right and wrong. Christ is head over all things to the church. He is the final authority: the one lawgiver (James 4: 12). There is one perfect law of liberty, the royal law (James 1: 25; 2: 8), the gospel of Christ (Gal. 1: 6-9). This perfect law will perfect the man of God unto every good work (2 Tim. 3: 16, 17). If believed and obeyed it will resolve every problem.

The way of truth, by which men are made free, does not give a dozen ways for solving the divorce and remarriage problems. Two ways that are contradictory cannot both be true; they both may be wrong, but truth is not contradictory. Consequently, a position that entitles a man and woman, joined in marriage by God, to divorce for any cause and remarry cannot be in harmony with the position that a man and woman, joined in marriage by God, must remain together for life, except for the cause of fornication. The two views are as far apart as the east is from the west.

The Nature Of Marriage

Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled. (Heb. 13: 4). God is the author of marriage and He controls it by His word. A man and woman who are not

bound by God to another may marry and form a home in which children are born and reared. Marriage is a physical, fleshly union; it is not a spiritual union. They are no more twain, but one flesh (Matt. 19: 6). Death ends all marriages (Rom. 7: 3). Our relationship to Christ is not terminated at death.

Sexual sins: adultery, fornication, polygamy and homosexuality, are as sinful as lying, stealing, murder and idolatry. Any one of these sins will cost the sinner his soul in eternity, unless he repents and turns from it. Baptism is a condition of faith by which past sins are forgiven. Baptism does not provide for the forgiveness of continuing or future sins.

What Jesus Taught On Divorce And Remarriage

Following is the plain teaching of Jesus on divorce and remarriage:

"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" (Matt. 5: 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" (Matt. 19: 9).

"And he saith unto them. Whosoever shall out away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery" (Mark 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" (Luke 16: 18).

He said of his word: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24: 35). As long as these scriptures stand in their context in the word of God, divorce and remarriage for every cause cannot be right.

Jesus made it very clear that divorce and remarriage is adultery. If a man puts away his wife for fornication, she is guilty of sin (adultery). If he puts her away for any other cause and marries another, he commits adultery. Any man who marries that one who

is put away, commits adultery, and there is no exception clause. Any wresting of scriptures that contradicts or nullifies these plain statements of Jesus is false doctrine.

Does Baptism Wash Away Adulterous Marriages?

Now some are teaching that baptism "washes" away all previous marriages of non-Christians, divorced for whatever cause, and the spouse with whom he/she is living at the time of baptism is the scriptural spouse for the rest of their lives. What passage of scripture would authorize such in any way? Baptism washes away sins of which one repents. Repentance demands the cessation of all sins.

A man and woman divorce for any cause, and they both remarry. They are not Christians. Is either of them sinning? If not, why teach them the gospel and urge them to be baptized? Baptism is for penitent believers who want to be saved from sin. But if the man divorced his wife for fornication and she married another man, are they sinning? If not, why preach the gospel to them and urge them to obey it. If they are not amenable to the gospel of Christ, they are not sinners.

But if we say they are sinners, we admit that they are amenable to the law of Christ. Now if they are sinners, what will repentance require of them before they can be scripturally baptized? They must cease the sinning before being baptized; they must not let sin reign in their hearts and bodies from that time forth. Their sin is adultery. When they were married the first time, God joined them together, and what He joined together man cannot put asunder. Whatever they do and wherever they go, they are still joined by God as husband and wife. If they are divorced and married to another, they are committing adultery with the spouse of another. That makes them guilty of adultery in the sight of God. They must stop that sin before being scripturally baptized. God still holds them yoked to the spouse they first married.

All men are amenable to the word of Christ — to all of it (2 John 9; 1 Cor. 4: 6; Rev. 22: 18, 19). What is true of the book of Revelation is true of every part of the word of God. All men do not have the same responsibility, but the law of the Lord on marriage is the same to every man and woman who enter marriage, whether saint or sinner. Aliens are amenable to the law of Christ on fornication and adultery (1 Cor. 5: 9-11). The Corinthians were guilty of the sins of fornication and adultery before they became Christians (1 Cor. 6: 9-11).

If aliens are not amenable to the law of Christ on marriage, they have no law governing their relationship. The husband does not sin against God if he refuses to love and provide for his wife. He may beat her, sell her to other men (aliens) as a prostitute. He may even shoot her: he does not sin against God because he is not under the law of Christ. The wife may do what she pleases in the marriage relationship because she cannot sin against God. Such is a ridiculous doctrine! I will not charge anyone with believing this asinine doctrine, not even those who are trying to justify adulterous marriages. That simply cannot be proved by an honest student of the Bible. He has to have a prejudice the size of a mountain to believe the word of God teaches it.

Searching The Scriptures

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But what about the homosexuals or lesbians who "marry" each other? Are they sinning against God? God gave them no law of marriage. If some accept this relationship as acceptable with God, and I have an idea that most all among us would codify this arrangement as sin, because they are aliens, what are they to do when they are baptized? Should they remain with the partner they had after baptism?

What about the man who has two or three wives at the same time, should he keep all his wives when he is baptized? If not, which one should he keep, seeing that he had them all when he was "baptized." What difference does it make since they are not under any law of Christ on marriage? The further down this road one goes, the more unbelievable it becomes. Certainly, all men are under the law of God for marriage. God created marriage and gave the law that governs each in that marriage; and it does not depend upon whether they were Christians at the time they were married or not. Marriage is not a function of the church.

Editorial

Connie W. Adams

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Brooks, Kentucky 40109



A. C. GRIDER — A LEGEND IN HIS OWN TIME

On Saturday, September 15, at about 9 A. M., the spirit of A. C. Grider took its flight from the form that had become so familiar to people of God. He was 78 and had preached the gospel for over 50 years. He and his beloved, Hallie, had been married for 56 years. Funeral services were conducted at the Expressway meeting house in Louisville, Kentucky on Tuesday, September 18 by J. T. Smith and the editor of this paper. Many friends were present, including a number of gospel preachers and elders. He was laid to rest in Hebron Cemetery in Bullitt County, Kentucky. Only two graves separate his burial plot from the place where my first wife, Bobbie, is buried and where I will be buried when the time comes.

A. C. Grider was my friend. He and sister Grider lived only a mile from our own residence. As members of the Manslick Road congregation, we were often together. Until the last year he taught a class there on Wednesday nights and during the winter months when I have taught special classes, they were always in attendance and added much to the occasion for all. We usually ate together on Friday after the morning class.

His preaching spanned half a century and took him to several states for local work, and even more places for gospel meetings and debates. His last "full-time" work was at Chapman Acres in Huntsville, Alabama. His "retirement" upon moving to the Louisville area for remaining days, consisted of preaching on Sundays at Charlestown, Indiana at both morning and evening services, teaching a Bible class and preaching on the radio, teaching a Wednesday night class at Manslick Road and holding 8-10 meetings a year. After he had been doing this for about a year, someone asked him what was the difference in that and what he did in "full-time" work. His ready answer was "About \$300 a week."

Every preacher who heard him on the radio, or in a meeting, or in a debate or who spent much time with him, has his own A. C. Grider story to tell. He conducted 40 debates with all sorts of teachers of error. One brother was apprehensive about one of his opponents and asked brother Grider if the man was a "representative man." Brother Grider responded by saying "Yes, he represents the devil." While many humorous incidents surrounded his life and work, he was a keen Bible student, loved the souls of men, hated error with all his being, and led hundreds of souls to obey the truth. His radio preaching was especially effective. It was plain

and simple, but powerful. Some criticized him for being too hard on error, but none was ever more successful in converting people from radio preaching than he.

Any debater who underestimated A. C. Grider soon regretted it. While a master at wit and repartee, he was a serious student of the Bible and had the ability to reduce issues to simple terms which all could understand.

In 1962 he debated Guy N. Woods in Louisville on sponsoring churches and church support of benevolent institutions. Several preachers in the Louisville area had left the truth and were making a determined effort to sweep the churches of the area along with them. Brother Grider preached at what was then known as the Preston Highway Church. He saw what was developing and led the way in opposing these men. He exposed them in his bulletin and on the radio. The result was that they persuaded Guy N. Woods to come and debate brother Grider. He attempted to belittle brother Grider, then tried to be witty, all of which was a mistake. That debate was a turning point in this area and is one of the main reasons there are now more churches in the greater Louisville area standing in the old paths than there are of the institutional variety. Sound churches in this area owe a profound debt of gratitude to him.

At the funeral service, I read a number of passages which readily come to mind in thinking of my friend, A. C. Grider. Psalms 1 was read. Then the following:

"Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way" (Psa. 119: 104).

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mk. 16: 16).

"... that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3).

"Knowing that I am set for the defense of the gospel" (Phil. 1: 16-17).

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4: 7-8).

I closed with the victory statement of 1 Cor. 15: 50-58.

J. T. Smith spoke affectionately of the impact A. C. Grider had on his own life and then pointed out some practical lessons he had learned from him as a preacher, debater, husband, father and friend.

The older generation is passing away. Those of us who enjoy the fruits of the labors and struggles of such soldiers of Christ as A. C. Grider was, must not forget the price that has been paid to assure the blessings we take for granted.

We will miss our friend and brother. Sister Grider, daughter Jane, son-in-law, Lee Ashbrook and grand daughters Kelly and Melody have many precious memories to comfort them.

"Soldiers of Christ, Arise, and put your armor on."

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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
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**WHAT THE WORLD SHOULD SEE
WHEN IT LOOKS AT US**

Why should we care what the world thinks of us? We are not to be motivated by peer pressure or what the majority thinks. If they don't like what they see they can lump it!

There is a sense in which we must disregard what the world thinks in order to gain Christ. Paul's fleshly attainments (and ours) fall in this category (Phil 3: 4-8). But let us not forget that we were sent to preach the gospel to the world. Whether those in the world are converted may depend largely on what they see.

1. The World Should See A Humble People

If they see an arrogant bunch who think they are better than every one else, they won't be attracted. This was what the Pharisees offered. We often hear it said that "they think they're the only ones going to heaven." I have never read where people said such things about Christians in the first century, or where those Christians had to face such an objection. It was not because those Christians taught an ecumenical doctrine, but their focus was on the truth (not themselves) being the only right way (Eph. 4: 4-6). We can proclaim the truth with boldness (Eph. 6: 19) without having a self-righteous, know-it-all attitude.

2. The World Should See A Thankful People

Thankful people are usually sacrificial. In the kindnesses we show to those of the world, in our thankful disposition, we show that we are not taking credit for what we have. We should be pointing to another source. A number of us have accumulated wealth. If we flaunt our wealth or are stingy, the world will prejudge all those in the kingdom. It is easy to get a benevolent feeling during the latter part of December. Organizations often compete for the limelight. But I am speaking of what you do as *an individual*, apart from organizations. Many in the world receive charity from a faceless organization. Recipients are not really seeing the light of a Christian (Mt. 5: 13-16). Our generosity should not be seasonal (around Thanksgiving and X-mas).

It is the sacrificial people who have kept our hope alive. The Bible teaches that Christ's kingdom would never be destroyed (Heb. 12: 28). That meant he would always have some faithful people somewhere. We can be thankful for the early Christians toil and sacrifice, for the fact that there were Christians struggling through

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the Dark Ages, and for the men and women of the restoration movement who kept the torch burning. We are a fortunate people. Let's act like it.

3. The World Should See A Loving People "*By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another*" (Jn. 13: 35). Jesus said how we treat other Christians goes much farther than we realize. It sends a strong, clear message to the world. Here is the SON OF GOD(!) telling us how the world will know. Have we failed to emphasize this aspect as we should? Issues need to be discussed, but it will all be in vain if we haven't given equal time to what Jesus said in John 13: 35.

Do we remain aloof from each other during the week, only seeing each other periodically? Those first converts "had favor with all the people" partly because of how they treated each other (Acts 2: 43-47).

4. The World Should See A United People Jesus taught that being united will help the world to believe (Jn. 17: 20-21). What does being divided do? If people of the world see bickering, enmity, and mistreatment, what will they think? They will see nothing distinctive that cannot be seen in the world. Paul told the Corinthians, *for ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you jealousy and strife, are ye not carnal, and do ye not walk after the manner of men?*" (3: 3).

6. The World Should See A People Who Speak The Truth In Love

"But speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things..." (Eph. 4: 15). We are to love truth. We can't be saved if we don't (2 Thes. 2: 12). But Eph. 4: 15 is discussing the manner in which we speak it. "In love" is a prepositional phrase modifying "speaking." In dealing with false teachers we will need great boldness and plainness of speech, and at times even sarcasm. Jesus exposed false teachers of his day with irrefutable logic and finally with great sarcasm (Mt. 22: 22, 33, 46; 23: 1f). That was called for, but it was not the general manner in which he dealt with people. If we delight in insulting and embarrassing others they will not see the general demeanor displayed by Jesus. Though our arguments may be unanswerable, if folks aren't convinced that we really love and care for them we will be as "sounding brass or a clanging cymbal" (1 Cor. 13: 1f).

6. The World Should See A People Who Love Truth And Will Stand For It

Paul said we can't be saved if we don't love truth (2 Thes. 2: 10-12). He prayed for boldness in preaching and said he was not ashamed of the gospel (Eph. 6: 19; Rom. 1: 16). We must not mistake the denominational world's counterfeit for love (a lack of conviction — anything goes) for the Bible brand. The Bible kind is not a lovey-dovey, honey-coated, stand-for-nothing thing. We can challenge error without being nasty. There are good people who are searching for what we can offer. CONCLUSION: Does it matter what the world thinks of us? Yes, and these are some areas that should concern us. The world should see more than the truth on our lips. They should see it in our lives. Will our lives blind them to what we are saying?

"Ye are the salt of the earth..." (Mt. 5: 13-16).

**SIMPLICITY
IN
CHRIST**

P. J. Casebolt

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PLAGIARISM

Our subject is defined as To steal or purloin and pass off as one's own. " And, let me hasten to add, lest I be guilty of the practice, that I got my definition from Webster.

Some thief waits for a musician, a poet, a novelist or some other artist to do all the work, then steals the product of their efforts. Sometimes this is accomplished by waiting a respectable time until everyone has forgotten where a thing originated or to whom it belongs, then reviving it. In the realm of nature, there is the bird which will wait until a nest is built, then lay its own eggs in the completed nest of another bird, or take over the nest completely.

Most brethren who sponsor projects or doctrines foreign to the word of God plagiarize such from denominational sources. Unsuspecting brethren don't know the difference, and those with whom the idea originated either can't, or don't want to do anything about the matter. In some cases, the vehicle was either worn out or its previous owners thought it was a "lemon" and just abandoned it. Brethren then wait a respectable time, generally a period in which such things are not mentioned from the pulpit, and then revive the idea for a generation which thinks it is something new. Even some of the promoters themselves may think they have found something new, but that does not excuse them from searching out the origins of that which they advocate.

I would gladly give credit to the source if I could recall it, and I probably won't quote it exactly anyway, but I remember reading somewhere that Catholics borrowed some practices from Paganism, Protestants borrowed from Catholicism, and digressive brethren either borrowed or stole the same practices from Protestantism. One thing is sure, anyone who can see or hear would know that the principle contained in that statement is often true.

When I first began to preach, there were times when I was hard-pressed to come up with a new radio or pulpit sermon, and appreciated any help I could get. But I have never been able to figure out why preachers, elders, or congregations want to borrow or steal something from the world when they already have written authority to "speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pat. 4: 11).

Anytime I can get a sermon title, a phrase, or a point enclosed in quotation marks from an inspired source, brother I am going to do it. Then I feel securely fenced in by those quotation marks, and the Devil himself can't touch me.

WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

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REVELATION TWENTY

QUESTION: *In Revelation 20, what does the following mean: (1) thousand years, (2) bottomless pit, (3) key of bottomless pit, (4) the binding of Satan for a 1000 years, and, (5) the first resurrection?*

ANSWER: We will endeavor to answer each point of the querist's question in the order given.

1. Thousand years. This is a symbolic number denoting *completeness*. It is not a cycle of time or calendar years. The book of Revelation was communicated to John by an angel through signs and symbols. "And he sent and signified it by an angel" (Rev. 1: 1). "Signified" means it was transmitted by code. Hence, the thousand years are not literal, but figurative. The context also, shows this to be true.

Deuteronomy 7: 9 states that Jehovah "keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keeps his commandments to a thousand generations." Obviously, God would not forget his covenant with those beyond a thousand generations. The "thousand" is symbolic of completeness. In other words, the Lord fulfills his covenant at all times, yea, forever.

God said, "for every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills" (Psa. 50: 10). The THOUSAND hills are as all inclusive as EVERY beast. Every beast is the Lord's and all cattle upon every hill, that is, a thousand hills.

Hence, In Rev. 20 the martyrs living and reigning for a thousand years means they have complete victory over the trials and troubles of this life.

2. Bottomless pit. The reference in Rev. 20: 1, 3, from the Greek word *abussos*, means the abode of demons, the abyss, the lower regions from which they come. It is found seven times in Revelation (9: 1, 2, 11; 11: 7; 17: 8; 20: 1, 3). Compare Lk. 8: 31 where the translation is "deep."

Peter uses the word *tartaros* (signifying to consign to Tartarus) into which the angels that sinned were cast. Also, *abussos* denotes the receptacle of the dead (Rom. 10: 7).

3. Key of bottomless pit. "Key" is figuratively used in the New Testament to "denote power and authority of various kinds" (Thayer, p. 348). Thayer proceeds to enumerate power to open or unlock the pit (Rev. 9: 1), to shut (Rev. 20: 1), to bring back into life from Hades (Rev. 1: 18), the ability and opportunity to obtain knowledge (Lk. 11: 52) and the power of David of receiving into the

kingdom or excluding from it (Rev. 3: 7).

Of course, we need to also mention the "keys of the kingdom" (Matt. 16: 19) by which the door to the kingdom would be opened to the Jews and Gentiles through the proclamation of the gospel.

The keys of the bottomless pit would be the power over that domain, which power belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ, but exercised through the angel that has the key in the passages in Revelation.

4. The binding of Satan for a thousand year. Satan's binding is symbolic of the cessation of persecution and deception by the Roman Empire. The "thousand years," as already suggested, denotes *completeness*. Here, it has reference to the complete success of the Cause over oppression, tribulation and idolatrous practices. Satan was cast into the abyss "that he should deceive the nations no more" (v. 3), namely, through Caesar-worship. When the Roman agencies were vanquished, Satan was destroyed. However, he continuously works through other means and forces. New oppressive powers and false religions have arisen to take Rome's place. Perhaps, this is what is meant by Satan being "loosed for a little season" (v. 3). We cannot know for sure.

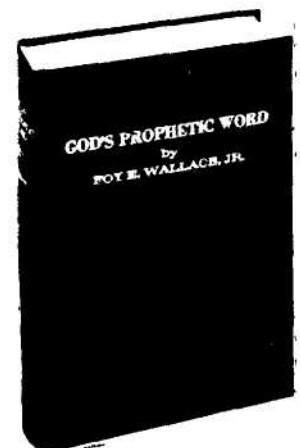
5. First resurrection. Those beheaded for the witness of Christ were placed on thrones (v. 4). This is termed "the first resurrection" (v. 5). It is a resurrection of a cause, spiritual and figurative in nature. It is the same character described in Ezek. 37: 1-14. There, Israel was in the grave of captivity in Babylon. Their return to Palestine from exile is depicted as a resurrection—a resurrection out of captivity.

Likewise, taking the martyrs from under the altar (cf. Rev. 6: 9) and placing them on thrones was a resurrection out of persecution and martyrdom. It showed the living saints who were suffering or faced severe tribulation that there is victory through Christ. His Cause will triumph!

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DANCING

One of the questions that many Christians deal with (especially teenagers) is "Is it right or wrong to dance?". The answer that is given must conform to the word of God.

"Dancing consists in the rhythmical movement of any or all parts of the body in accordance with some scheme of individual or concerted action which is expressive of emotions or ideas" (Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 7, P. 49). Our concern is with what is called the modern dance. There are two basic types. One involves *touch*. In it, there is close bodily contact and movement. The other involves **sight**. This type of dance places the partners apart and includes bodily movement as each partner interprets the music.

When we ask "Is it right to dance?" we are asking if it is right to waltz, to disco, to go to the prom, dance at a party, to participate in the ballroom dance or any other kind of dance that is described in the above quote. Let's consider a few basic points about dancing.

It Doesn't Fit The Dancing Of The Bible

It is sometimes argued that there were people who danced in the Bible. This is an effort to justify the modern dance.

1. *Some dancing was done as an expression of worship and joy.* Miriam would be one example (Exo. 15: 20-21). David danced in celebration of the slaughter of the Philistines (1 Sam. 18: 6, cf. 1 Chron. 15: 29; Psa. 149: 2-3; Psa. 150).

2. *Some dancing was lustful and lewd.* When Moses came off the mount he saw naked people dancing in connection with their idolatry (Exo. 32: 19-25). The daughter of Herodias loosely displayed herself before the king (Matt. 14: 6; Mark 6: 32).

3. *Points to remember:* The dancing we read about in the first points was not performed for mere amusement or pleasure, but some extraordinary event caused them to dance as a sign of worship and joy. Men and women danced separately and not together. There is not any record of the Lord or his apostles dancing.

What Is The Appeal?

Dancing is the language of the body. Look again at the definition given at the beginning of this article. Even in the Bible the dance portrayed ones thoughts and intents. This principle is just as true with the modern dance as it is with any other.

The obvious appeal is *sex*. Christian Dior (the designer) once said, "For the first time I have done away

with corsets, even for dance dresses. I have often heard men complain that in dancing they couldn't feel a living form under the woman's corsets." A physicians magazine *Medical Review Of America* stated, "There can scarcely be any doubt that dancing came about as an adjunct of sexual stimulation." Dr. J. P. Gibson (MD) said, "Among those who dance it is noteworthy that very few girls spend much time dancing with other girls. Neither do men dance very much with their own wives, nor brothers with their own sisters... the secret of the popularity of dancing (or is it a secret?) is the exciting, sexual stimulation resulting from the close embrace of male and female, whether it be music in dancing or without music in petting and necking."

The New York Times Magazine (Feb. 18, 1979) analyzed the drawing power of the discos as being "progressive sexuality" and the promoters pinpointed "sex-appeal" as the life-blood of the fad. Dr. E. S. Sonneur, a nerve specialist in Chicago, wrote, "As a medical man I flatly charge that modern dancing is fundamentally sinful and evil. I charge that dancing charm is based entirely on sex appeal. I charge that dancing is the most advanced and the most insidious maneuvering preliminary to sex betrayal..." (*The Carnival Of Death*, pp. 68-69).

If the bodily contact and the lewd gyrations were removed from the dance it would be killed. If the males and females were separated during the dance, the dance would be killed.

Think of the atmosphere at many of the dances. There is close physical contact, soft lights, music, swaying of the bodies and lyrics that leave nothing to the imagination. In that atmosphere how could one not have unlawful thoughts and desires.

Dancing Is Condemned By Clear Statements

1. *Lasciviousness* is a work of the flesh that will condemn the soul to hell. (Gal. 5: 19-21). Thayer says it means "unbridled lust... shamelessness... wanton (acts or) manners, as filthy words, indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females..." (pp. 79-80). The New American Standard Version translates it "sensuality." If any statement describes the modern dance it is Thayer's definition of lasciviousness.

Anything that stimulates us to think wrong is wrong — whether it be a television program, a song, a joke, a book (such as romance novels), looking at scantily clad bodies (whether pornography or some advertisement), immodesty or sexual motions and gyrations on the dance floor.

2. *Revellings* is also condemned in the same text (Gal. 5: 19-21). This term suggests "feast and drinking-parties that are protracted till late at night and indulge in revelry" (Thayer, p. 367). This description fits most, if not all, dances. Liddell and Scott say it means "carousal, merrymaking... with music and dancing" (p. 402).

3. *We are instructed to flee from the kind of things associated with dancing.* Young Timothy was told to flee *youthful lust* (2 Tim. 2: 22). The Corinthians were commanded to flee *fornication* (1 Cor. 6: 18). The disciples were taught to pray for the Lord's help in steering clear of temptations (Matt. 6: 13). How could a couple on the

dance floor claim to be fleeing (running) from lust and temptation?

Its Fruits

Jesus said, "For every tree is known by his own fruit... " (Luke 6: 44). The evils of dancing can easily be seen when we consider what it leads to.

1. *Fornication.* No, not all who dance are lead to fornication. But, some are. In that the appeal is sexual, one can easily see how dancing can lead to fornication.

2. *Frustration.* In cases where the couple stop short of fornication, frustration is created because unlawful desires have been created and are not fulfilled.

3. *Prostitution.* The Vice Commission of Chicago searched to find the answer to the downfall of so many girls. They talked to three hundred prostitutes and asked what led them to their downfall. Eighty-five percent (85%) said that the first step was caused by the modern dance. A matron of a home for such women in L. A. said that "seven-tenths of the girls received here have fallen through dancing and its influence. " Another matron estimated eighty percent and another ninety percent. Dr. Frank Richardson said, "Dance halls are modern nurseries of the divorce courts, training shops of prostitution and graduating schools of infamy and vice. "

Friend, if you are going to dance, get ready for the fruits that go with it. Solomon said, "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?" (Prov. 6: 27).

Conclusion

Dr. A. C. Dixon said, "The modern dance is the fine art of covering with music, indelicate, immodest and oft times indecent attitudes and postures between men and women. It is too bad for reformation. Its only remedy is extermination" (*The Carnival of Death*, p. 70).

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MOMMA'S TRAINING

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Death has come as an unwelcome intruder into our lives, and snatched away a vital part of our existence. I do not suppose there is any more empty feeling than losing the one who helped mold you and shape you and who **carried for** you nine months, and endured emotional, physical, and social pain for your well-being. It sure does deeply hurt to lose your momma. I lost mine and I feel so lonely, empty, and yes, a little angry (not at God, or at anyone) simply angry that one so much a part of happy life, could fall prey to the terrible unexplained, maladies of this life. We are all assured that she is in that much better place and that she is waiting on the other side for her children, husband, grandchildren, other relatives and friends to come home and join her.

I knew her as momma, others knew her as Wilma Adams, or Wiley's lovely wife. But, by whatever name anyone knew her, the outcome was still the same. They loved her and respected her quiet demeanor. I do not wish for this article to simple be an obituary. Others have lost their mothers and they hurt just as I do. When my momma died, a big empty hole was left, not only in our lives but also in the lives of hundreds of Christians who looked up to her, respected, and loved her. Just as Dorcas, in Acts 9: 36, she was "full of good works. " Countless people have written or spoken to us about the many kind things she did for them. Godly women everywhere should heed the example of Wilma Adams and be about the business of serving God and helping their families and husbands be all they can be, in services to God.

MOMMA TRAINED HER CHILDREN WELL. I cannot ever remember my momma raising her voice in anger to any of her children. Oh yes, she corrected us, but not by throwing tantrums and yelling. She had a unique snap to her fingers that made you know when she was serious. She had the ability to appeal to the best in all of us. She could get us to answer our own dilemma, by saying; "You don't want to do that, do you?" She firmly believed that the raising that she and dad gave to us, would win out over the obstacles of this life, if we lived long enough. This has been borne out in all of our lives. Her four children and nine grandchildren truly do rise up and call her blessed. One of the first things that momma taught all of us children, was how to pray. She hand embroidered the NOW I LAY ME PRAYER for us, and hung it over our bed. This prayer was more than mere words to her. One phrase sticks out even more to me now, in light of the reality of the suddenness of her death. It is the phrase; "if I should Die Before I wake, I pray thee, Lord, my Soul to take... "

MOMMA TAUGHT US KINDNESS. She loved us fervently and protected us, but was never unkind or cutting. She had an aristocratic Virginia dignity that, when aroused, could quietly remind you of what you were doing, and you need to "back off," if you were wrong. Momma told us in later years, repeatedly, to not let ourselves stoop to the level of those who would abuse us and say all manner of evil against us, without cause. She taught us to hate the evil but love the soul of the one in sin. She told us; "you don't want that person to help send you to the bad place, do you?" She taught us to pity the evil doer and get about the business of going to heaven. Her kindness was demonstrated in the care she took to make things by knitting, embroidery, and cross stitch. Her love for the beautiful shows in the legacy of her glass collection. She was gentle, loving and kind and such a classy lady.

MOMMA TAUGHT US WHAT BEING A GODLY WIFE WAS ALL ABOUT. She and daddy were married for 45 years. **WHAT A LOVE STORY!** He truly found his "million dollar baby, in the five and ten cent store," as the old song goes. She worked at the candy counter and he worked at the plant. She was from an Episcopal background, he from a Christian church background. They dated and much of that dating centered around going to meetings and church services. He taught her to obey the truth, and she did. She told her parents that she was going to be baptized and become a Christian, and they were very upset. She stated, that if she loved them more than she did Christ, she was not worthy to be a Christian, and she must do what was right. They strongly disapproved, but she obeyed Christ, and never looked back in regret. My dad later realized his baptism was not right and obeyed Christ. From the beginning of their married life, Wiley and Wilma Adams had deep spiritual roots. Momma recognized early, that the young man she loved so much deeply wanted to serve God by preaching the gospel. She watched his pride and pain, when his younger brother went off to learn about the Bible at Florida Christian College. He didn't see how he would ever be able to be a full-time preacher. After all, he was older, had two children and a promising career going for him in research at the plant. But his sweet wife knew where his heart was and wanted him to serve God as best he could. So they began a plan to help him to do what they both wanted him to do. Others thought them frivolous but they knew what they wanted to do and they were going to do it. So they both worked to pay off everything and save to go to college with two children. After two years at college they had another child (me). Many times during their time at FCC, they would discuss whether they should continue. She would say: "Wiley, we haven't missed a meal yet, have we? the kids and I will be all right. Let's not quit now, we will always regret it." So they stayed and finished and she was so proud of her "preacher man."

She was the ultimate preachers' wife and more preachers' wives would do well to stop hindering their talented husbands from preaching the message, and start helping and encouraging them.

MOMMA TAUGHT US HOW TO BE HAPPY WHEN

ABASED. Momma never whined about not having things. She would do without so we could have nice things. There were times when things were very scarce, but she sheltered us from her concern. She firmly believed that if we put the kingdom first, we would make it, and you know, we always did. She was daddy's best ally. They were a team, and in a different way, now, always will be, even though she is at rest. When a congregation asked dad to come preach for them, they got the best. Momma was an excellent teacher of young children and young ladies, but never sought the spot-light. She was a confidant to many, and carried the secrets of many people to her grave. She was honorable and trustworthy and the heart of her husband trusted in her. They talked with one another often and in the last few years had developed a system of filing problems, which helped them to cope with the stresses of life among brethren.

When I got the call, from my brother-in-law, to come to Tupelo, Mississippi, because my momma had suffered a severe stroke, my heart felt as if it would burst. Before we left Texas, I paused, alone, and prayed that momma would not have to suffer pain or be in a vegetative state. As we drove 12 hours to be with her and daddy, I felt as if my world was coming apart. It was unbelievable that the lady we had vacationed with two weeks earlier, and who had been so full of life and fun, could now be at death's door. Not knowing whether she would be alive or not, we arrived to hear that she was alive, but unresponsive. I went in to see her and tried to get her to respond. I tickled her foot, and squeezed her hand and told her I was there with her. She showed some response, but it was obvious that the stroke had taken a tremendous toll. Even through all of this she was able to respond with tears. Her heart rate raced when she heard that all of her children were there, even her oldest son. I spoke to her and told her how much I loved her as did, my sister Paige, brother Keith, and brother Art. The in-laws, Jim and Carla also had time to speak with her. My three sons spoke to Mamaw and told her they loved her and later came and told her good-bye. When her pressure suddenly dropped, the family was quickly summoned and told by the doctor that her time was short. So we all gathered around her and held hands, and as a family, waited on our momma. Her family was together, as she had raised us to be, and we were facing things head-on, as she had trained us to do. Finally, daddy leaned over and kissed her and told her she could stop fighting if she wanted to and go wait on the other side for us. Within a few minutes, she had done just that. She slipped peace-fully and painlessly away to the only one she loved more than us. One of my sons, stated it like this, Mamaw is helping Jesus get things ready for the family to come over. "I do not know if that is the way it happens, son, but I like the thought."

At the funeral, the song, **SEND THE LIGHT**, was sung congregationally. Even the family sang, just as she would want us to do. The song was one she cherished, and will continue to be an anthem for our family, as we go out to preach the gospel, with a firmer resolve than ever. Her favorite song was the **NEW SONG**, it was sung

superbly by all. The funeral director stated that momma's funeral was uplifting to him. He didn't even know her well, but she had the same effect on him as she had on others. She could lift you up, when you felt your lowest.

Momma's death shows the urgency of being prepared EVERY DAY. She walked with her Savior in a daily way. She was prayerful and penitent. She studied and read all of the time. She enjoyed life, especially family times. Oh, how she loved to see her kids and grandkids. We knew we were loved because she expressed it to us so well. Each of us carries our special pouch of cherished memories. These will keep us going. Her wit and sense of humor and beautiful smile will be cherished by us all. We will never eat a Christmas dinner, without thinking of her. That is as it should be. As brother Andy DeKlerk said at the funeral; "Go to your garden of memories, and visit with her a while. " We will certainly do that often.

But, she would want all of us to know, as she stated many times, when she was among us; "your race is not over until it is finished. " We are not finished, and God being our helper, we will wear ourselves out, as she did, serving God and helping bring lost souls to Christ. SEND THE LIGHT AND LET IT SHINE. In doing this we will honor God first, and momma and others we love second.

Young ladies who may be reading this, Please, if you are a preachers wife, encourage him to preach and stand beside him in his efforts. You may not get a degree, and you may not go down in earthly history, as some great woman, but you will go down in the spiritual hall of fame, as a virtuous woman, just as Dorcas, and my momma, WILMA ADAMS>

It is my birthday. 38 years ago through much pain, and waiting, my sweet momma brought me into this world. For the first time she will not be there to wish me happy birthday. It hurts and feels empty, but through it all, momma has given me a gift. The assurance and hope that she is in the better land, and that we, her family, can also be there, too, if we live and act as we were raised to do. THANK YOU MOMMA, AND UNTIL WE MEET AT HIS FEET AND SING THE NEW SONG TO-GETHER, WE WILL CONTINUE TO "SEND THE LIGHT. " —Your loving son, Stanley, August 26, 1990

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"HERE AM I; SEND ME"

**Greg Litmer
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After devoting my life to preaching the gospel of Christ for almost fourteen years (I realize that still makes me a pup in the eyes of some), I have noticed a situation that does not seem quite right to me. Each month as the magazines published by brethren cross my desk I take note of several congregations looking for a preacher to come and work with them. The vast majority of these congregations are small, struggling groups that are able to supply only partial support. It is obvious that most of them do not have elders, and many are comprised principally of women and children. Even as I read these notices experience has taught me that most of them, if they can find a man to work with them at all, will get a young man, possibly one for whom this will be his first work. He will have difficulty raising sufficient support because few brethren know him and will probably have to try to get by on less than he really needs. All the struggles that a small congregation has will be laid on his inexperienced shoulders, and they will be problems of all kinds. There will be the personal problems of brethren, perhaps problems related to marriage, contrary brethren to deal with, false doctrine to confront, and the disappointment and depression that comes when you are working hard and seeing few results. Many times a young man, lacking experience and having no one there to guide him and help him, won't really know how to keep himself busy, how to properly discipline himself to see to it that the work he needs to do gets done. Sadly enough, many times this first work of the young preacher becomes the last work of the young preacher, or he gets beaten down so far that it takes a long time for him to get back to his spiritual level before he began. That young man who entered into his work with great expectations becomes discouraged and disillusioned.

Brethren, I would be interested in knowing what you think. Doesn't this seem backward to you? Wouldn't it make more sense for the older, more experienced, seasoned gospel preacher to go to these kinds of congregation? Wouldn't it be easier for a man who is somewhat better known by virtue of his labor in the Lord over the years to raise the support he needs? Wouldn't it just make more sense over all?

As I look through the New Testament, particularly the book of Acts, I see the Apostle Paul going from place to place, establishing new congregations, helping them to get firmly rooted in truths of the gospel, and then perhaps, leaving a man with them or sending a man to them. I think of Timothy being left by Paul at Ephesus in 1 Tim. 1: 3. I think of Paul leaving Titus in Crete (Tit. 1: 5) to set things in order. Would this not make more

sense? Should there not be more Pauls to Timothys today? Many times today, brethren, when the Lord says in effect, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?, the best equipped men are not the ones saying, "Here am I; send me."

When there is a well established congregation, with a stable eldership and sufficient funds to support a man as he should be supported, shouldn't the younger men be the ones to go there? Shouldn't they be the ones to gain the benefits of working under the leadership of godly men of experience? Shouldn't they be the ones to get their feet firmly on the ground as evangelists without having to deal with all the problems of a small struggling work alone?

I know that there are those who say that beginning in that kind of a work is good training, it helps to weed out those who are not truly committed to the work. I know also that there are those who feel that having "put in their time: in a small, struggling work with insufficient support, they have earned a more stable situation and I understand that kind of feeling. However, I must respectfully disagree.

Recently I had a discussion with a business man who was not a member of the body of Christ. He told me of a friend of his who is a preacher in a large denomination. He told me of his friend "moving up" within his church, going from a small church to a larger one, to yet an even larger one, or as he put it — to better churches. Each time there was a raise involved, more security and better benefits. And he couldn't understand why I would go from one of those larger congregations to a smaller one where I actually had to go out and raise support. My answer to him was that the Lord's Church didn't work the same way the denominations did and that first century evangelists didn't see their work as "moving up" in the world. As a matter of fact, the world didn't matter all that much, I think I was right, what do you think, brethren?

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A controversy concerning the book, THE SATANIC VERSES, by British novelist, Salman Rushdie has been brewing since its publication in September 1988. It was banned in a number of countries. Although Rushdie's book is a work of fiction, Muslims feel that it ridicules the prophet Mohammed. A number of people were killed and others wounded in protests concerning the book. The Ayatollah Khomeini publicly called for the assassination of Mr. Rushdie. "Iran's Ayatollah Rudhollah Khomeini on Sunday rejected the apology of British writer Salman Rushdie and exhorted Muslims around the world to "send him to hell' for the novel... A bounty of \$5. 2 million has been put on Rushdie's head by Iranian religious leaders since Khomeini issued the death sentence." (SALT LAKE TRIBUNE, February 20, 1989).

The controversial novel retells, in fictionalized form the story of Mohammed, the founding of Islam and the creation of the Koran.

Koran translator, N. J. Dawood, who translated it into English gave the starting information concerning its origin. Here, I quote:

"For Muslims it is the infallible word of God, a transcript of a preserved in heaven, revealed to the Prophet Mohammed by the Angel Gabriel... According to Muslim tradition, one night in Ramadhan about the year 610 (A. D.), as he was asleep or in trance, the Angel Gabriel came to him and said: 'Recite!' He replied: 'What shall I recite?' The order was repeated three times...

"The Koranic revelation followed each other at brief intervals and were, at first, committed to memory by professional remembrances. During Mohammed's life-time, verses were written on palm-leaves, stones and any material that came to hand. Their collection was completed during the caliphate of Omar,... " (THE KORAN, 1968, Introduction, pp. 9-10).

Parallel to Koran's existence was the Book of Mormon by Joseph Smith, Jr. In the published account of his life, Joseph Smith related that he became very disturbed when he was a youth because of the "strife among the different denominations, " and this "cry and tumult" led him to ask God "which of all the sects were right—and which I should join. " He was told that he must "join none of them, for they were all wrong... that all their creeds were abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt... " (Pearl of Great Price, Joseph Smith, 2: 8-19).

Comparing Mormons attitudes with Muslims, Mohammedanism is more noble than the Mormons. Because Muslims were honest enough to accept the KORAN and reject the Bible; while Mormons are two-faced people in accepting the Book of Mormon and the Bible but put more value in obeying the Book of Mormon than the Bible!

To contemplate the same claim, here in the Philippines, Felix Manalo, the so-called 'Last Messenger' of God believed by the Iglesia ni Cristo, who founded it in 1914. The Iglesia ni Cristo (or Church of Christ-1914), is not in any way related to the TRUE church of Christ in the New Testament) advocates to read the PASUGO, their official publication rather than the Bible itself. The PASUGO is being accepted by these people to be the "voice of God. " One of their books explicitly explains it. Here I quote: In English:

"How can he inform us about the prophecy that he was sent? He taught the prophecy and preached it to all the places and it could be read as written on magazine—PASUGO. Why PASUGO and not in the Bible? Because information regarding the 'Last Messenger' can not be read in the Bible because the Bible is already written. "

Willingly, members of this deluded sect admitted that Mr. Felix Manalo as the 'Last Messenger' is NOT IN THE BIBLE! Therefore, what the Iglesia ni Cristo-1914 claims and teaches is FALSE! Why? Because it is NOT FOUND in the Bible! Here, like the Mormons, the Iglesia people trust more on PASUGO than what the Bible says.

The Apostle Paul writes, "your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (1 Cor. 2: 5). But instead of trusting in God's marvelous power, they trust man's wisdom and therefore, "go beyond" the written word (1 Cor. 4: 6). Jesus explains why people "err" from the truth, because they are ignorant of the "scriptures" (Matt. 22: 29).

PASUGO writers, like Mr. Benjamin Santiago, Sr., criticize the Roman Catholics for not reading and studying the Bible. The Iglesia ni Cristo-1914 is no different from the Roman Catholics in attitudes towards the Bible. Before, Roman Catholics said it is wrong for Catholic people to read the Bible. Today, the Iglesia ni Cristo-1914 has followed the same tread. During services ONLY the preacher has a Bible. Members of the sect listen to the "de cajon" sermons (manual patterned lessons) prepared by the central office for its preachers. There is NO "exhorting one another" (Heb. 10: 25), and there is NO "speaking to one another" (Eph. 5: 19; Col. 3: 16).

The INC-1914 hierarchy discourages its members to read the Bible, but instead admonishes them to read the PASUGO! The central office does not distribute the PASUGO free to its members, it is FOR SALE! The cozeness of the Iglesia ni Cristo is seen here as it is a MONEY MAKING BUSINESS! PASUGO is published monthly and it is worth 5 pesos each. The Iglesia ni Cristo claimed that they have a 1. 6 million members, with a simple accounting of it, the INC will have an easy

gross income per month of 2 million pesos from PASUGO subscribers only.

The PASUGO is the virus carrier for the many false teachings upheld by the Iglesia ni Cristo. They teach that Felix Manalo is the 'angel from far east'; that Christ is not God but a pure human-being; they deny the Deity of the Holy Spirit; they deny the New Testament as a sufficient guide in matters religious; they deny the continuity of the Lord's church, they claim that the true church of Christ in the first century died as a result of the Roman Empire's persecutions and was restored in the Philippines by Felix Manalo in January, 1914. Concerning the church's contributions, they have:

- a. Karaniwang Abuloy (ordinary contributions)
- b. Tanging Handugan (special offering)
- c. Tanging-tanging Handugan (very special offering)
- d. Abuloy sa patay, at iba pa. (contribution for the dead, etc.)

(Note: These contributions are being done twice a week: Thursday and Sunday).

Truly, PASUGO is not an authoritative magazine from God, but as Peter said; "with feigned words they will make merchandise of you" (read, 1 Pet. 2: 1-3). However, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God..." (1 Pet. 4: 11). Let this admonition be in you dear reader: "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets and teachers are now out into the world" (1 John 4: 1).

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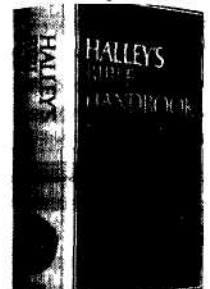
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"Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good" (Gen. 1: 31).

"Truly, this only I have found: That God made man upright, But they have sought out many schemes" (Eccl. 7: 29).

"You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, Till iniquity was found in you" (Ezek. 28: 15).

Adam and Eve Chose To Sin!

"So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate" (Gen. 3: 6).

Mankind In General Chose To Sin!

"Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6: 5).

"But every one shall die for his own iniquity;... " (Jer. 31: 30).

"The soul who sins shall die... " (Ezek. 18: 4).

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6: 23).

Infants and Little Children Have No Sin!

Jesus said: "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18: 3-4).

"The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies" (Psalms 58: 3).

Summary of Above Passages of Scripture!

(1) God made man upright! But man chooses to disobey God, and as a result loses his soul... unless man believes and obeys the good news of Christ, in order to salvage his soul!

(2) Adam and Eve were told that they would "die," the day that they ate of the forbidden fruit! Death means separation! They would be separated from God! Driven from the Garden! They died spiritually! (Not physically). They continued to produce children.

(3) However, due to Adam and Eve's sin, **physical death**, came upon the human race. We all must face physical death and the grave. But through Christ, the faithful are enabled to escape **spiritual death**.

(4) Mother Eve succumbed to all three incentives to sin! (a) Lust of the flesh, (b) Lust of the eye! And (c) The pride of life! Every sin that you or I commit, appeals to

us through one or more of these three incentives!

(5) When we are old enough to "speak lies," we are sinning! Prior to this stage of development, the infant or little child is pure, spotless, angelic! Since the Devil is the "Father of lies" (John 8: 44), when we begin to tell lies, we are imitating Satan, and have become demonic instead of angelic!

(6) The adult person must determine to humble himself; to become child-like in disposition and attitude; if he/she is to become a suitable subject for the kingdom of heaven.

(7) In view of the first Scripture passages given above: (a) Man was created **good**, but became evil, (b) Ezekiel described man as perfect until **iniquity** was found in man. (c) Little children are eligible for heaven, (d) Adults must become **as** or **like** little children.

Remember: Scripture does not contradict Scripture! Therefore, we must apply or understand any otherwise obscure passage, in harmony with clear statements of Scripture! In view of this, continue to reason with me, as we approach Psalms 51: 5.

The Israel of God Were Forbidden To Marry Gentiles!

"In those days I also saw Jews who had married women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab" (Neh. 13: 23).

"Should we then hear of your doing all this great evil, transgressing against our God by marrying pagan women?" (Neh. 13: 27).

"Nor shall you make marriages with them. (Gentiles-LWM). You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son. For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so the anger of the Lord will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly" (Deut. 7: 3-4).

What Had Occurred In David's Family Lineage?

Ruth, a woman of Moab, had been taken as wife by Mahlon, the son of Naomi and Elimelech, of the town of Bethlehem, of the tribe of Judah. After the death of Mahlon and another son, Naomi decided to go back to her own country. Ruth vowed "Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge." So, Naomi and Ruth go to Judah, to be with near kinsmen. Ultimately, a kinsman of her deceased husband, took her as his wife, according to Jewish law. She became the mother of Obed, the father of Jesse, and the grandfather of David. Thus, Ruth the Moabitess was an ancestor of David.

The 51st Psalm was written by David, expressing his repentance, and his regret; and seeking forgiveness for his own sins. But in the course of the Psalm, he makes references to this sin in his ancestry: "Behold I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me" (Psa. 51: 5).

Bishop's Bible (1568) gives this passage: "Beholde, I was ingendred in iniquitie: and in sinne my mother conceived me." Literally, in verse 5, David is writing about his ancestry and his conception; he is not dealing with his birth. And the sin concerning which he writes in verse 5, is that of his family lineage, which contained Moabite blood.

Conclusion

Many modern denominations and their writers or commentators explain the 51st Psalm, verse 5, as David's "original sin," stemming from Adam and Eve's transgression. However, such an explanation flatly contradicts other plain Scripture passages. Catholicism, the church of England, (Episcopalianism). Methodism, Presbyterianism, and others... all teach the doctrine called "original sin." This false teaching, then requires the "baptism of infants" in order to maintain any semblance of logic. In other words, one false doctrine begets yet another.

The truth is, God's creation was all, "very good," until such time as man determined to chart his own course.

"O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps" (Jer. 10: 23).

"We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5: 29).

A SWEET SMELL

Oliver Watts
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Craig, Colorado 81626

We thank the good Lord that He created us with a sense of smell. Lacking it would not be good as is implied in 1 Cor. 12: 17. Many pleasant experiences are ours in nicely scented situations. We have had much enjoyment in fragrant woods and during old times at home (bread baking, laundry in the sun, and on and on). So keen on lovely smells are some people that the memories of a long lifetime become mainly a series of those of varied and happy fine aromas. So, it is no surprise that our wise and kind God uses odors figuratively in His Book to teach us interesting and valuable lessons.

Old Testament The first of these is the way He tells us that He was pleased with Noah's burnt-offerings after the flood. Genesis 8: 21 begins, "And Jehovah smelled the sweet savor." Savor is not used much now. It means odor.

The translations others gave us of this are interesting. Young called it, "the sweet fragrance." In the RSV we read, "the pleasing odor." Both the NASB and the NKJV have, "soothing aroma."

James Strong makes an interesting comment about the Hebrew adjective here ("sweet"). He says that properly it means, "restful, i. e., pleasant," and that abstractly it indicates, "delight: — sweet (odor)."

J. H. Thayer mentions that Jehovah compared His own reactions to those of a man. He writes of, "the ancient anthropopathic notion that God smells and is pleased with the odor of sacrifices." Thayer states that the New Testament verses we discuss below have "a

metaphor borrowed from sacrifices." The sweet odor of the Jewish offerings was mentioned often. Moses wrote the word combination forty times.

New Testament Some guests, old friends, now from a distant state, told us that their schooled young preacher taught them "new wonderful truth" about the sacrifice of Christ. It was claimed that Leviticus shows that, unlike other offerings, sin-offerings were never pleasing to Jehovah. (Later we noticed Lev. 4: 31.) Rather, he taught, sin being such an abomination, sin-offerings, too, were repulsive to God. Since Jesus was a sin-offering (Hebrews 7: 27 and 10: 12), it was said that for a time the Father despised the Son on the cross

Jesus Only one verse was needed to fix that. Ephesians 5: 2 states that Christ "gave himself up for us, an offering **and** a sacrifice to God for an odor of a sweet smell." So, God was well-pleased with that sin-offering, too. **Every lamb of** all the millions sacrificed by the Jews over hundreds of years was a type of the great sacrifice to come. Each pre-pictured the Lamb of God.

The **word odor** (Greek: OSME) a **neutral** one, the "sweet smell" (one word in Greek — EUODIA) always a nice one, and the word for "sense of smell" (OSPHRASIS), all were derived from a base word, OZO, which meant "to give out an odor." Thayer writes, "either good or bad," Strong says, "to **scent** (usually all ill odor): — stink." This basic word was used by Greek-speaking scholars in translating Exodus 8: 14. It appears in the New Testament only at John 11: 39.

Church Offerings Paul wrote the Philippians (4: 18) that the money they had contributed and sent to him had been received. He called it, "the things that came from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God." He also reminds us in Hebrews 13: 16 that when we thus do good and communicate, "with such sacrifices God is well pleased." They are the EUODIA ("good-scentedness") the "sweet smell" to our Father.

Sprenging Fragrance To the Corinthian Christians (2 Cor. 2: 14-15) Paul wrote that God "makes manifest through us the odor (OSME) of his knowledge in very place. For we are a sweet smell (EUODIA) of Christ unto God, in them who are being saved and in them who are perishing." Here we use the NIV so we can quote words matching those in a song. It reads that God "through us spreads everywhere the **fragrance of the knowledge of**" Christ. Ira Guidrey's song, "Jesus Rose of Sharon," has, "— bloom within my heart. Beauty of Thy truth and holiness impart, That where'er I go my life may shed abroad **Fragrance of the knowledge of** the love of God."

Verse 16 returns us briefly to the unpleasant. To the ones who are perishing the gospel message is the "odor of death." On TV news after an earthquake we see rescue workers hunting for and removing bodies. They wear odor-hiding masks over their mouths and noses. The announcer says, "Everywhere is the smell of death." Since the neutral word (OSME) was written here, the NIV is perhaps too strong in rendering it as "the stench of death."

The inspired writer goes ahead to say that Christians

to those who are being saved are the (OSME) odor (NIV, fragrance) of life.

This is written in springtime. The mountains now are alive with the aromas of life. Just so, by gospel preaching and Christ-like living the lovely fragrance of heaven is spread by the sweet breezes of God into the hearts of people in this world.

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A CHANGE IN THE OFFICE OF STS

Jane Ashbrook has worked in the office for sometime now. Her competence and efficiency have been a great help to us. Upon the death of her father, A. C. Grider, Jane will now be taking care of her mother, sister Hallie Grider, and will therefore not be able to continue her work with us. We thank her for work well done. Karen Arbuckle is now working with us. Bobby and Jane are helping her with the many things which must be learned. Karen is a member of the Manslick Road church in Louisville and her husband is one of the deacons.

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*

CHRISTIAN CHURCH PREACHER AND WIFE CONVERTED

John and Betty Yost of Hodgenville, Kentucky were recently baptized at Manslick Road in Louisville. He has been preaching for over 20 years, most of that time among conservative Christian Churches. He worked for awhile among some of the institutional brethren but decided there was very little difference in their practices and what he saw among the Christian Churches. They have continued to study and reached the conclusion that they were a part of a denomination and involved in many unscriptural practices. On September 23, after having the congregation sing some songs without the instrument and preaching a sermon on Bible authority with appropriate applications, he read the following statement which had been submitted to the elders of the Union Christian Church, Hodgenville, Kentucky:

"Gentlemen:

I have no alternative but to resign my position as preacher of this congregation.

The reason for my resignation is stated as follows:

1. The Christian Church is a denomination.
2. Unscriptural leadership — Head elder and elders and deacons rule equally in church government.
3. Unscriptural worship — musical instrument and entertain-ment.
4. Support human institutions out of the church treasury.
5. The Christian Church brotherhood has women preachers, elders and deaconesses.
6. Opposition to the preaching of truth.
7. The Christian Church does not exercise church discipline - against unfaithfulness, and of course it could not without taking disciplinary action against itself!
8. Etc.

Betty and I have recently obeyed the gospel of Christ. Therefore, we cannot fellowship the institutional Church of Christ, Christian Church, Baptist Church, or any other denomination in any religious

matter. Paul in quoting Isaiah 52: 11 said: Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean (forbidden) thing; and I will receive you' (2 Cor. 6: 17).

You that have studied your Bible know that I have not failed to preach unto you the whole counsel of God. Therefore, you have **heard** the whole truth, and the Lord God is my witness, "your blood is now upon your own heads; I am clean, from henceforth I will go unto another people willing to follow God's instructions."

I love all of you, and I pray you will sever your relationship with error, and that you will obey God!

(Signed) John Yost'

On Tuesday night, September 25, John and Betty met with about 35 people in the home of one of the members of the Union Christian Church. David Price, preacher of the church of Christ in Hodgenville, David Key, an elder at Manslick Road in Louisville and the editor were invited to attend this meeting. It lasted nearly three hours. About half the people sat on the floor (vinyl) during that entire time and listened attentively as John Yost spoke for about an hour then fielded questions. Some questions were addressed to us. After the meeting broke up there were many smaller discussions with various ones for some-time. It is evident that John and Betty Yost have the love and respect of those who were there. Many of them are searching for truth. On Wednesday night, September 26, he attended services in Hodgenville where David Price preaches and one other went with him.

This decision on his part was made at great personal sacrifice. They live in the residence owned by the Union Christian Church and must soon vacate it within a week (this is written on September 27). He has lost financial support. He is 57 years of age, is a well educated man and knowledgeable in the scriptures. He and his wife are pleasant but dedicated people who would be a blessing to any congregation desiring to walk in the old paths. The editor would be glad to put anyone in touch with him who is interested in encouraging him or could use his services. He is temporarily preaching at Caneyville, Kentucky.

RELOCATION IN BAKERSFIELD, CALIFORNIA

ALLAN MARTIN, HC-1, Box 801, Keene, CA 93531 — In answer to fervent prayer and diligent labor, the brethren that have been meet-ing at 2727 Alta Vista Dr. in Bakersfield are now meeting in our own building located at: 2500 Fairview Road, Bakersfield, CA 93304. Phone: (805) 398-3020. We meet on Sundays at 9: 45, 10: 35 a. m. and 6 p. m. and on Wednesday's for Bible study at 7: 30 p. m. We began meeting together 15 years ago with Bill Robinson, Jr. preaching for us. He was followed by Brent Phillips. Most recently, Doug Clevenger worked with us until moving to Brawley, CA. We are presently without a full-time preacher. Anyone coming here would have to raise some outside support. Call me at (805) 822-1353; or Richard Thomas at (805) 589-3157; or Richard Williams at (805) 664-0760.

ROBERT H. BUNTING, 3034 Coleman Road, Memphis, TN 38128 —Faithful brethren are meeting in Cleveland, Tennessee. The work seems to be off to a good start with about 30 in attendance at all services. Anyone moving to that area would do well to meet with these saints. They meet at 2892 Waterlevel Highway (beside Calfee's Produce on Highway 64. For information call: (615) 479-8892.

DON MARTIN, 1995 South Holly St., Denver, Colorado 80222 — a new work began in Greeley, Colorado on June 1, 1990, with five members. It will be known as the Westside church of Christ. They are meeting in the Westview Shopping Center, 2422 West 10th (Highway 34). We, the elders of the Holly Street church in Denver, have been concerned about the sparcity of faithful churches in the state of Colorado. We, therefore, decided to take in most of our outside support (other states) and concentrate on Colorado. We researched the state and found Greeley to have potential. It is a city of about 70,000 with an established university. It is located about 70 miles northeast of Denver off I-25 (Highway 87) and about 70 miles southeast of Chey-enne, Wyoming. Though situated near Rocky Mountain National Park (60 miles west) it has a sound economic base. We secured Leonard Wright to preach the gospel in Greeley. If you know of individuals whom the brethren in Greeley could contact or if you need additional information, please call Leonard Wright (303) 339-3221, or Al Mitchell (303) 482-5257.

DON KING, 423 Donelson Pike, Nashville, TN 37214 — After seven years with the Lake Wire church in Lakeland, Florida, my family has relocated back in Nashville, Tennessee. I am now working with the Perry Heights, church since September 1, 1990. It is great to be back "home" in Middle Tennessee. The Lake Wire congregation is presently looking for someone to work with them. They have full support for a preacher. There are four elders and Sunday morning attendance runs about 75. If interested, contact Phil Wharton (one of the elders) at (813) 858-7929 (home) or (813) 859-2339 (work).

BOYCE F. BARGER, Hwy 5 and Salem Rd. Church of Christ, Benton, Arkansas 72015 (P. O. Box 1677)—The church which meets at the above address in Benton, AR would like to contact some individual who would like to buy our building note at a reasonable interest rate. Our note is currently carried by a local savings and loan with a yearly balloon note and an escalating interest rate tied to prevailing rates. This is strictly a business proposition and we cer-tainly expect a private lender to profit. If you are interested, please call Dickie Hooten at (501) 847-4571 after 3 p. m.

RICHARD BOONE, Rt. 1, Box 794, Hayden, AL 35079—I am trying to complete my set of Pulpit Commentaries on the Old Testament. I have the Eerdmans edition. After checking with several book stores, this edition is no longer in print. However, I only need Volumes 1, 2 and 9. If anyone has these for sale, write me at the above address. Please state the condition of the books and your selling price.

MY FRIEND AND BELOVED BROTHER — A. C. GRIDER

When I heard A. C. Grider in a meeting in the Birmingham area on June 11, little did I realize he would be buried on September 18 beneath the Kentucky Bluegrass to await the resurrection of the righteous.

In the passing of Adolphus Cornelius Grider a family has lost a wonderful husband, father and grandfather and a brotherhood has lost an able preacher of the gospel and capable defender of the truth.

When brother Grider stood before any audience to proclaim the

gospel there was always (1) an honesty of purpose, (2) a sincerity about his voice, (3) a conviction of his heart, (4) a simplicity about his style and (5) an urgency about his plea that resulted in many obeying the gospel, leaving denominational error or in turning from institutional-ism within the church.

He met in debate some of the leading denominational preachers of his day and converted many people. He met some of the leading debaters among the liberal brethren, resulting in many leaving the errors of institutionalism. In debate, he knew what the issue was, he knew the truth, he knew why he believed what he did and because he would not give in to error he effectively presented the truth in such a way that all could understand.

Some incorrectly perceived him as being too hard in debate. Yet, he was responsible for more people leaving error than all of his critics put together. I was never ashamed of either him or his manner. If we had more Griders, we would not have the false teaching going unchecked in many places today in the church.

I am glad by God's grace I was able to know this servant of Christ and that his life touched mine. I am the better because of our friendship for over a quarter of a century.

—Thomas G. O'Neal

FROM AROUND THE WORLD

PAUL WILLIAMS reports seven baptized recently in South Africa even amid the civil unrest which still besets that nation.

WILBERT G. ENOSTACION of San Fernando, La Union, Philip-pines hopes to join Jeff Kingry in Hong Kong for some short-term work among the Filipinos. Jeff reports a Filipino population of over 50,000 in Hong Kong. Wilbert speaks seven different languages and should be a great help. He is valuable to the Philippine work, but can contribute much to the effort in Hong Kong as well.

ISIDRO V. MANIBOG reports 9 baptized in Cotabato, Philippines.

PREACHERS NEEDED

LAKELAND, FLORIDA — The Lake Wire church of Christ is looking for a full-time preacher. This church is self-supporting. If interested please contact: S. O. Ward (813) 686-3700, Lee W. Boswell (813) 686-1601, Ellis Dawson (813) 682-5427 or Phil Wharton (813) 858-7929.

HOPKINSVILLE, KENTUCKY — The Skyline Drive church in Hopkinsville is seeking the services of a gospel preacher "full time. ' The church, though small, has great potential in a city of near 30,000 and has made significant improvement in the last two years with James Gabbard commuting to preach from his home in Round Hill, KY. There are several dedicated families who will work with you. Outside support will be needed. Those interested should contact John Crawford, 310 Jessie St., Hopkinsville, KY 42240, phone (502) 866-1278.

LAKE JACKSON, TEXAS — The Southern Oaks church is seeking a preacher who is mature and sound in the faith. There are 3 elders, 8 deacons and we have about 100 at all services. We are located on the Texas Gold Coast about 50 miles south of Houston by freeway. We have grown about 30% in the last 18 months and the area is expected to double in population over the next 10 years. Please contact South-ern Oaks Church of Christ, P. O. Box 698, Lake Jackson, TX 77566. Call Calvin Reed (409) 297-6229, Maurice Powell (409) 297-9697, or Dennis Fink (409) 299-1418.

PREACHER AVAILABLE

BRUCE A. EDWARDS, 204 Mt. Vernon Dr., Fairview Heights, Illinois 62208 — I am looking for a full-time work. I have been preaching nine years. I am a black male, 33 years old, married with two children. Those interested may call me at (618) 632-5307.

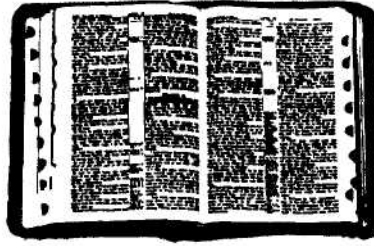
IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	228
RESTORATIONS	89

(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)

SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

"Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me"—John 5:39.



"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so"—Acts 17:11.

"DEVOTED TO THE SEARCH FOR DIVINE TRUTH"

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THINK ON THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 1631
Lutz, FL 33549



WHEN THOU ART CONVERTED

Jesus once said to Peter, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22: 31, 32).

The primary meaning of conversion is simply "to turn, to turn about." In the scriptures it implies a turning from and a turning to; a spiritual and moral change from the world unto God. In Acts 3: 19 Peter preached, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out..." Genuine repentance must be based upon faith in Christ, and faith comes from hearing the word of God (Rom. 10: 17). In Acts 2: 38 Peter told believers to, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..." In Acts 3: 19 he told those who heard him to "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out..." To "repent and be baptized for the remission of sins" and to "Repent and turn that your sins may be blotted out" mean the same thing.

Paul made his defense before king Agrippa and related how Jesus appeared unto him as he entered Damascus on a mission of persecuting the saints. He said when the light from heaven shown around him, he fell to the earth and heard a voice saying in the Hebrew tongue: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest" (Acts 26: 14, 15). Then Paul

tells WHY the Lord appeared unto him. It was not to save him from his sins; he was sent into Damascus where Ananias told him to "arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22: 16).

Jesus told Paul why he had appeared unto him" "But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for 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 which are sanctified by faith that is in me" (Acts 26: 16-18).

Jesus appeared to Paul to call him to be an apostle and to commission him for the work he was to do for the Lord. Paul said he was not disobedient to that vision. He was "called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ ... " (1 Cor. 1: 1). "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God" (Rom. 1: 1).

Paul's mission, as was the mission of the other apostles, was to turn people from sin unto Jesus Christ. "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 which are sanctified by faith that is in me" (Acts 26: 17, 18). "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Col. 1: 13). That is a change from darkness to light; it is a turning: conversion. The gospel is the power to affect this change.

Every person must be converted before he can enter the kingdom of heaven. Jesus said to his disciples: "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). This involved a change from arrogance and haughtiness to humility, such as a little child.

Some things are essential before one actually turns to the Lord. Jesus made this clear in Matthew 13: 14, 15: "And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." They must **see** with their eyes, **hear** with their ears, **understand** with their heart, and be **CONVERTED**, and I should **heal** them. The turning is from and with the heart.

Conversion is described in the figure of a birth. Jesus said to Nicodemus: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God... Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3: 3, 5). Jesus said one must be born again to enter the kingdom, but he also said one must be converted to enter the kingdom (Matt. 18: 3). Acts 2: 38 and 3: 19 show baptism to be the point of turning to the Lord. Being born again of water and of the Spirit (John 3: 5); being saved by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit (Titus 3: 5); and being cleansed with the washing of water by the word (Eph. 5: 26), all refer to the same thing: baptism of a penitent believer. That is in harmony with the commission of Christ to the apostles in Mark 16: 15, 16: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

Paul shows the state of the Gentiles before their conversion in Ephesians 2: 11, 12 and then describes their state after conversion in 2: 19-22. In their process of turning to the Lord, they were reconciled unto God in one body by the cross. As one turns to the Lord, he is reconciled unto God by the cross.

This conversion begins with the word of reconciliation. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul" (Psa. 19: 7). "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls" (James 1: 21). "... yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel" (1 Cor. 4: 15).

The turning or conversion is by the word of God. The heart, life and relationship are turned from Satan unto God by the gospel. The heart is turned by understanding and belief, the life is turned by repentance, and the relationship is turned by obedience in baptism.

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Editorial

Connie W. Adams

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EDITORIAL STEW

It is time for the annual assortment of short and unrelated tidbits which we call "Editorial Stew." As I write this, the signs of fall in Kentucky are in evidence. Nights are cooler and leaves are changing colors on the trees. This is a favorite time of year for me. Nature adorns itself in splendor. There is a crispness in the air. The work of a year is winding down. The realities of winter are tempered by thoughts of a warm fire in the fire place. It is a good time to review the work of the last few months and to dream and plan for the time ahead.

Return to Fulltime Meeting Work

In 1990, I cut my meeting schedule in half in order to work for a year with the Manslick Road church in Louisville, Kentucky. Since December, 1985, we have worshipped here, taught classes during the winter months and the church has made it possible for me to devote myself to meetings the rest of the time. Contrary to the opinion of some, the income from full-time meeting work is not nearly adequate to provide a living. Because of that, some have attempted to crowd in more meeting work than is possible while maintaining good health and meeting family and other obligations.

Phillip and Lori Mullins, of Riverdale, Maryland will come to work with us in December, or early January. They have done good work where they have been and come to us highly recommended by those who know them. I will teach four classes during December, January and February: Amos, the Shepherd Prophet; Scriptural Elders and Deacons; Bible Geography and History; and Daniel, Prophet in Captivity. The first of March, 1991, we plan to get back into a full schedule of gospel meetings. We will announce the places and dates in a later issue for benefit of readers in those areas. The past year has been an enjoyable one for us from the standpoint of the work itself. We have seen some growth as some have been saved and others strengthened. Peace has prevailed.

Extreme Positions

Is man so constructed that he "has to sin"? Is his nature such that he cannot help it? No, God made man with the power to choose right from wrong. Historically, all men have chosen to sin at one time or another when confronted by temptation. But each time, there was the element of choice. Jesus Christ came to the world and lived in the flesh. But while here he resisted temptation. "He was tempted in all points... yet without sin" (Heb.

4: 15). But while discussing the humanity of Jesus, let us not deny (or even leave the impression that we deny) his Godhood while here in the world. And why is it necessary to argue that Jesus is still a man in heaven?

In the September issue of STS we carried an article on the deity of Christ. For the most part, it was a good article. But the conclusion was drawn in the last paragraph that when Jesus was tempted, only the outer man was involved while the inner man remained untouched. When pressed far enough this culminates in the false position of "eternal security" which argues that it is the outer man that sins while the inner man is secure and cannot sin.

We ought to be able to preach on the deity of Christ without anyone getting the impression we deny his humanity. On the other hand, we should be able to preach on his humanity without making rash statements which sound for all the world like a denial of his Godhood.

Hunger and Disease Among Brethren

The Philippines has suffered much over the years. Geographically it is situated so as to receive the brunt of numerous typhoons which roar across the Pacific. It has volcanoes and is subject to earthquakes and tidal waves. Oddly, while one end of the country often is flooded, the other end suffers drought and pestilence. The people have long been afflicted by unstable government. The economy is a shambles. There is a ravenous inflation. In times of calamity, cold-hearted lenders charge exorbitant rates of interest. Correspondence over the last year with men known personally who have faithfully served the Lord for years, mentions with increasing frequency and urgency malnutrition and disease among brethren who cannot supply the basic needs of daily existence. It is easy for brethren here to say "We cannot relieve all their problems." That is true. But when I hear from a brother whom I know personally and have worked beside him in the gospel and he (without asking for anything), speaks of weakness and sickness among family members and among the families of other brethren, who could be easily treated with simple medications which they cannot afford, it is hard to know that and rest peacefully. When some of them cannot feed their children, it is hard for me to enjoy my dinner. I know there are some appeals which are fraudulent. Care must be exercised in all cases. But there are real needs, like the one described in Acts 11 when disciples determined to send relief, and such as that mentioned in Romans 15 and 2 Cor. 8 and 9 when relief was sent to the poor saints in Jerusalem. I do not believe we should measure the rest of the world by the standards which we have here in this country. Neither should we shut our eyes and stop our ears to the needs of the destitute.

One Nation Under God

The Sycamore Church of Christ of Cookeville, Tennessee is trying to raise \$17 million to mail a brochure to 100 million homes in America, the largest mailing in the history of the postal service. This is to be preceded by an ad in READERS DIGEST about the forthcoming mailing. A recent mailing from that congregation gives

the text of the brochure. It will be in comic book style under the format of news commentators before the cameras and microphones of a newsroom. Others will comment on the presentation itself (which is personally distasteful to me, if not insulting to the intelligence) but my main concern is with the unscriptural sponsoring church approach. Here is a church which is putting \$200,000 into the project and raising \$16, 800,000 from other churches and individuals. The sponsoring church is just as unscriptural now as it ever was. Peter told the elders to "tend the flock of God which is **among you**, taking the oversight **thereof...**"... (1 Pet. 5: 1-3. Elders can oversee the flock "among" them, including whatever collective activities pertain to that flock. Elders of a local church have no obligation or scriptural authority to plan a brotherhood work. Recommendations from well-known preachers do not change the fact that this whole project proceeds without one iota of scriptural author-ity. Each local church and each Christian is under orders from the Lord to sound out the message of the gospel as we have opportunity and resources. The Sycamore plan is of the same whatness as the Herald of Truth and other such sponsoring church efforts. There is neither general nor specific Bible authority for such an activity. It is without Biblical command, example or inference.

Religious Supply Center

We continue to enjoy a most pleasant relationship with Religious Supply Center of Louisville, Kentucky. While there is no official connection between the paper and the book store (they simply purchase ad space from us), our working relation ship has been most pleasant for the past 17 years. We are glad to tell folks about them and to recommend their services. Well-located for walk-in business for people in the Louisville area and for travelers through the city. (Preston Highway is parallel to I-65 and one block east, and two blocks north of I-264, known also as Watterson Expressway). This is a major book and church supply business. It is operated as a tax-paying business. David Key is the amiable manager. Your business will be handled by friendly and competent people. Phyllis Key, Wimpy Threlkel, Cindy Bryant, Michael Key and Wendy O'Banion are ready to help you. In case you have been under the impression that there is just nothing available for class materials, you might want to check with them. You just might be surprised how much good material is ready for use in all kinds of class situations. We are grateful for their continued business with the paper and we are glad to recommend their services to you.

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The greatest need of this, or any other subscription paper, is SUBSCRIBERS! Where would we be without them? There are many choices available at the present hour. It would be costly, for some, to take all the papers available. However, there are some who subscribe to a wide assortment of magazines, plus taking a daily newspaper. I have seen many of them in the homes of some who have told me, with a straight face, that they just can't afford to spend \$11 a year for a paper such as

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THE LOVE OF GOD — ROMANS 8 - NO. I

This is the first in a series of seven articles on the eighth chapter of Romans. In the last verses of the chapter Paul reaches the climax of the theme that runs throughout the whole chapter, which theme is: "the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (v. 39). These climactic verses serve well as a text for the whole series: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8: 35-39).

This is one of the deepest, richest, and most profound chapters of the New Testament. Admittedly, it has in it some difficult verses. However, when carefully studied, especially in the light of the overall theme of the chapter, much of the difficulty is resolved, and the chapter becomes one of the most precious, comforting, thrilling, and satisfying chapters of the Bible.

While the subject "The Love Of God" is very broad, these articles confine our study to "The Love Of God" as set forth in this particular chapter.

-This love manifests itself, not only in what God the Father has done for us, but also in what He has done for us through God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Hence, all three persons in the Godhead are involved in a manifestation of this love — so much so that the title of the whole study might well be "The Love Of Deity, " meaning, of course, all three persons in the Godhead. Lesson number one involves:

Christ and Freedom — Vs. 1-4

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, con-demned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit"

Freedom

In these verses Paul focuses our attention upon the blessing of freedom which God in His love has provided for us through His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. The word "freedom" is one of the most thrilling words in the English language. It identifies something that all men desire and in defense of which multiplied thousands have died. Spiritual freedom is the greatest of all freedoms, because it involves the eternal destiny of the soul. The value of this freedom becomes more obvious when it is contrasted with the bondage from which one is delivered in possessing this freedom. In fact, the measure of one's appreciation of this freedom will be in proportion to his understanding of the severity of the bondage from which he is delivered.

This contrast is emphasized by three significant expressions in verse one, namely, "now" - "no condemnation" and "in Christ. " Furthermore, this contrast is introduced by the word "therefore" which shows that it is based upon the last verses of the preceding chapter (Rom. 7: 14-25). The word "now" contrasts the present with the past. The expression "no condemnation" identifies the freedom of the present which stands in contrast to the **bondage** of the past. The expression "in Christ" identifies that relationship in which freedom is found in contrast to that relationship of bondage which is **outside of** or **without** Christ.

Bondage

Romans 7: 14-24 paints a picture of a state of bondage that is, indeed, appalling. Unfortunately, not all men who are in this bondage realize it, much less its severity. The Jew needed to transfer his hope of heaven from being a literal descendent of Abraham (Jno. 8: 33) to being in Christ, and, thus, being an heir according to "the promise" (Gal. 3: 8, 29; Gen. 12: 3). What was true of the Jew is true of every man who is trying and hoping to go to heaven on some basis other than being in Christ— All such efforts are futile! This Paul seeks to establish in these verses.

I realize that some hold the view that Paul here is describing his own personal experience as a Christian in his efforts to live righteously. However, a more careful contextual study shows this view to be in error.

It must be admitted, however, that there is a conflict within the Christian as he strives to live righteously. Paul refers to this when he says: "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5: 17). Again, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1 Cor. 9: 27). However, in these verses the possibility of victory is clearly in view. In fact, the Christian is urged to attain it. The man in Christ who strives for righteousness, meeting the conditions of the Spirit, is counted righteous by our heavenly Father. This is the meaning of Paul's statement: "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8: 4).

On the other hand the individual of Rom. 7: 14-24 is hopeless. In spite of all his efforts he fails. He is in

bondage to sin — he is **bought** and **owned** by sin (v. 14). He is held **captive** by the "law of sin which is in his members" (v. 23). In no way can this be descriptive of the man in Christ. This man is in need of a deliverer. Of himself and on his own he can only cry: "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me... ? The Christian has a deliverer: "I thank God through Jesus Christ" (v. 25). Again, "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).

Paul's use of the personal pronoun "I" and the present tense in Rom. 7: 14-24 must, therefore, be understood from the viewpoint of his transporting himself from the present (the time of this writing) to his past state under the law of Moses in which he vividly describes the vain struggle of himself (and all men apart from Christ — no matter what law they are under) trying to attain unto righteousness. Notice, the same change in tense occurs in relation to "the law" as well as the "I" under consideration in the context (vs. 7-24). This certainly comports with Paul's objective, namely, to show the insufficiency of the law in **contrast** to the sufficiency of the gospel — "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" — by which men are made free (Rom. 8: 2).

Most commentators agree that the early Greek fathers so viewed these verses. Even Augustine so contended until his encounter with Pelagius. Subsequently, however, most commentators accepted Augustine's modified view, especially Calvinists, namely, that Paul is here describing his present struggle as a Christian. Obviously, Paul's picture of the struggle of the inward man to attain unto righteousness does not comport with Calvinian theology, especially the tenet of Hereditary Total Depravity. Calvinism affirms that the unregenerate is wholly incapacitated to even think anything good much less say or do any good. Consistent with their doctrine. Calvinists have no alternative but to apply these verses to the regenerate.

Suffice it to say that the contrast between Romans 7: 14-24 and 8: 1-4 is too sharp, too severe, too extreme, and too incompatible to be anything except a contrast between a state of bondage and a state of freedom—the state of the unregenerate and the state of the regenerate.

How Men are Made Free

In verses two through four Paul answers the question of how men are made free. **It is by law!** "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (v. 2). Here the legal aspect of the gospel is brought clearly into view (Cf. Rom. 3: 27; Gal. 6: 2; Jas. 1: 25). In these verses the gospel is called "the law of the Spirit of life, " "the law of faith, " "the law of Christ, " and "the law of liberty. " There is a legal aspect to the gospel of our Lord that must be recognized, honored, and obeyed in order for the soul to be saved!

Paul even tells us by which law we are made free. Three laws are identified: 1) "The law of the Spirit of life, " 2) "The law of sin and death, " and 3) what Paul calls "the law, " which, according to Paul's use of this expression throughout the Roman letter, refers to the law

of Moses (Cf. 7: 4-7).

While some think the latter two refer to the same law, namely, the law of Moses, a more careful notice of what is said of each shows this view to be in error. True, the law of Moses is elsewhere referred to as "the ministration of death" and "the letter" that "killeth" (2 Cor. 3: 6, 7), and, therefore, from that point of view might be called "the law of sin and death, " but not so in this context. One law made him free. One had him bound. The other could not make him free. Thus, there are three laws under consideration.

"The law of sin and death" is the "law of sin" which Paul says was "in his members" and which was "warring against the law of his mind, " all of which accounted for his failure or spiritual death (Rom. 7: 23, 24). This is the governing force, power, or law in one's members that accounts for man's failure to attain unto righteousness **without Christ**. It is the carnal, fleshly man that wars against the inward man and brings him into condemnation.

The law of Moses could not make man free and stands in contrast to "the law of the Spirit of life" which did make him free. The difference between the two as pointed out by Paul in the context is in the blood atonement provided by each. The only atonement provided under the law of Moses, of itself, was the blood of animals which had to be offered every year. Paul makes this plain in the Hebrew letter and at the same time emphasizes the reason for the remission of sins attained thereby being only temporary:

"For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? Because that the worshippers once purged should have no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins" (Heb. 10: 1-4).

In contrast to this, look at the atonement under the new covenant:

"For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself (Heb. 9: 24-26). This is the contrast made by Paul in our text when he says, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8: 3). It should be remembered, however, that the atonement of Christ, which was in addition to the law, of itself, reached backward as well as forward in its efficacious power (Heb. 9: 15). Thus, all remission under the law was made contingent upon the great sacrifice yet to be.

"The law of the Spirit of life" which made Paul free (v. 2) is indeed the gospel of Christ. It is the law that liberates (Jas. 1: 25) and this law of liberty is the word

(Jas. 1: 22-25) and this word is the gospel (1 Pet. 1: 25). No wonder Paul said the gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1: 16).

Our only hope **is in Christ** where the atoning blood of the Lamb enables us to be counted righteous. Hence, There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. " No wonder Paul said "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5: 8). Behold what love! Blessed freedom — in Christ!

**DOES NO ANSWER
MEAN "NO"?**

Norman E. Sewell

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Harrison, AR 72601



As some of you perhaps already know, I recently moved from Springfield, MO to Harrison, AR. This was my first move in about 15 years, and a move after such a long time is rather traumatic. But we have survived the packing and the moving and getting settled in a new community, and we are now working with a fine congregation of people who seem to want to serve the Lord and work in the kingdom.

One thing about this move however was very disappointing to me and I'm sure to many before me. This is my first time to have to seek outside support, and for several months before this move I wrote letters to congregations asking to be considered in their plans for supporting preachers outside the local congregation. Having been on the receiving end of such letters for many years I did not want to write a form letter and mail it all over the country, but instead chose several congregations where I am known personally, either by the congregation as a whole or at least by one individual, usually the preacher. But even this system did not seem to accomplish my purpose. The most disappointing part of this was NOT having congregations say "NO" because I know how difficult it is to raise support these days. Most congregations are already fully committed to the work of preaching the gospel, and it just isn't possible for them to take on more outside support. The most disappointing thing was and continues to be receiving NO ANSWER at all. And brethren, this really troubles me. Perhaps I wrongly judged that BRETHREN would at least answer a letter (not a form letter) written and addressed directly to them, even if it was necessary to say NO.

Yes, it is difficult to have to write letters telling a brother that you cannot help with his support. Some congregations had prepared a form letter ahead of time, and simply sent that letter indicating that they were

already fully committed and could not help more. To me, this form letter was much preferable to receiving no answer at all. Or perhaps part of the problem is that elders or the men at a business meeting discuss requests for support, and agree among themselves that they cannot help anyone else right now, but fail to designate someone to inform the person requesting the support. Even a phone call would be appreciated so that we might be able to plan our support.

A second disappointment was the length of time it takes for brethren to respond. It took sometimes 3 or 4 months to get any kind of reply about the availability or lack of availability of support. When you are trying to plan how you are going to pay the bills, how much money it will take to live and where that money will come from, it is very difficult to have to put off such decisions for 3 or 4 months or longer while waiting for someone to say YES or NO. Someone may be saying that I need to learn to be more patient, and no doubt this is true. I'm certainly not claiming to be anybody special, nor are my opinions any more important than yours. But knowing the distress that these things have caused me and others I know of, I thought perhaps they needed to be discussed.

I believe there is a lack of common courtesy in the world today, of people saying please and thank you, etc. The one place you would think people would try to be the best they can be is within the body of Christ. Yes, I know, my naivete is showing. But if we who are Christians are not trying to be the kind of people God expects us to be, how can we expect others to be that way?

Brethren, it has not been my intention to point a finger at anybody, nor to set myself up as a judge. I hope only to get all of us thinking that perhaps there is a better and more considerate way to handle these things than we have practiced in the past. To those brethren who did respond to my requests for support, even to say NO, or not right now, I say, "thank you for considering me and for answering my letter. May the Lord bless you as you work for Him. " And my prayer would be that every congregation would strive with all of its might to have "fellowship in the gospel" with as many men needing that help as possible; and that God would be merciful to our many failures along the way.

The Search for the Ancient Order

By Earl Irvin West

This four volume work on the search for the landmarks of primitive Christianity covers the Restoration Movement from 1849-1950. Volume I traces the history from the early beginnings through the movements of Stone, Campbell, the early pioneer preachers, Lard, McGarvey and others. Volume II, carries on from the Civil War to "Horizons of Destiny." Volume III takes us to the end of World War I. Volume IV takes us to 1950.

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MARRIAGE IS HONORABLE

**Bobby L. Graham
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The exhortation of Hebrews 13: 4 needs serious study in our day of diverse thinking and divergent practices concerning marriage. Instead of seeking explanation that will satisfy us, we must willingly hear the voice of God on these matters. "Let marriage be had in honor among all, and the bed be undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge."

This verse is better translated as an exhortation, as in the American Standard Version, than as a declaration in the King James Version. It is found in a series of hortatory statements, urging all to hold marriage precious and dear (meaning of *timios*) and to maintain the physical relationship in marriage in an undefiled condition. It is only when we thus honor marriage that we make our own marriages honorable, in keeping with divine appointment.

The exhortation necessarily implies the honor that God has attached to marriage in His appointment. There must be understandable reasons for its preciousness and honor. What are they?

God's Creation

Marriage is honorable (precious, dear) because God is its source. It could not be otherwise and still reflect God's righteous character. As part of divine moral law, God's marriage law merely reflects the divine character like all other moral law.

That marriage is part of that law is readily seen in its moral purpose. Marriage is the very context in which the begetting, bearing, and training of children was planned by God (Gen. 1: 28). Marriage further serves to prevent fornication (1 Cor. 7: 1-3). In that its purpose is to prevent immorality, marriage must conform to divine moral law.

All moral law is applicable universally. That God holds all amenable to His moral law is seen in the prophets' condemnation of the same practices of immorality among the nations as among Israel. Romans 1 decries covenant-breaking among the Gentiles — a practice applicable to marriage. The Corinthians were guilty of various forms of immorality before being washed, sanctified, and justified in their conversion to Christ (1 Cor. 6). Their guilt presupposes their accountability to divine moral law. God held them amendable before they were Christians.

Because the righteous character of Deity is the basis of all moral law (1 Pet. 1: 16), God would need to change His character when dealing with unbelievers, if He held them accountable to a different moral law. Is God

of diverse characters? Does He change from one character to another in His dealings with saints and sinners? One does not learn such a conclusion from the Bible.


A consideration of the character of God, divine moral law, and marriage as appointed by God helps us to understand that marriage is a divine creation.

Divine Sanctity

Marriage is also honorable because it has been sanctified by God (Heb. 13: 4). It has a unique status, so that the same physical relationship condemned as fornication or adultery outside marriage is counted honorable and undefiled by God within that relationship. To transfer the benefit of that sexual relation outside marriage is to commit either fornication or adultery. Fornication refers to illicit sexual activity in general, including premarital, extramarital/adultery, incestuous, homosexual, or prostitudinal relationship. Adultery is illicit sexual relationships involving a married person or two married people. God will judge (condemn) those thus guilty.

Modern times and changing morals do not alter sin. What some have dubbed the "new morality" is no more than the old immorality. It has always been wrong and will ever be sinful because it violates God's unchanging moral law, rooted in His unchanging character. Not even the amelioration of the once — dreaded consequences of fornication/adultery changes its status with God. The ultimate dreaded consequences of such conduct is not venereal disease, unwanted pregnancy, social banishment, a guilty conscience, or even AIDS; it is God's eternal banishment to the lake burning with fire and brimstone (Rev. 21: 8).

The next study in this two-part series will examine how people can make their marriages honorable before God and men.



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ANTECEDENTS

Antecedents and their pronouns are something like types and anti-types in the Bible — there must be certain points of agreement between the two principals in each category.

Moses was a type of Christ (Dt. 18: 15; Acts 3: 22). The tabernacle was a type of the church (Heb. 8: 1, 2).

Whether we like it or not, those of us who live in English-speaking countries need to rely heavily upon the rules of English grammar. Generally, we let the translators worry about such things, but we have ways of checking on the Hebrew and Greek, as well as the English language. But in everyday conversation/writing, we may need to depend more on ourselves than on some translator.

A pronoun is used to take the place of a noun, so that we do not have to keep using the noun in a repetitious fashion. But, the pronoun must agree with its antecedent in gender (male/female), person (1st/2nd/3rd), number (singular/plural), and sometimes case (nominative/possessive/objective). The case is determined by how the pronoun and its antecedent are used in particular groups of words (Plain English Handbook-Walsh).

There's another rule concerning pronouns and their antecedents that I would emphasize, especially for Bible students — the one I call common sense. Often, the reference in a context is so clear that we would need some "help" to misunderstand what the antecedent of a particular pronoun is.

For instance, I have heard brethren argue about the antecedent of the pronoun "whom" in Heb. 5: 11, when Paul said, "Of whom we have many things to say..." Paul had been comparing the priesthoods of Melchisedec and Christ, and almost any Bible student knows that there are not "many things" that can be said about Melchisedec. In contrast, there are many things which Christ did and said which are not even recorded (Jno. 20: 30, 31; 21: 35).

In the narrative of Philip and the eunuch, the statement is made, "... and he baptized him" (Acts 8: 38). I knew of a sectarian preacher who used this passage to claim that we couldn't tell if Philip baptized the eunuch, or if the eunuch baptized Philip. This is where the "common sense" rule of pronouns and their antecedents comes into play. Converts had already been baptized under the influence of Philip's preaching at Samaria (Acts 8: 12, 13), and it was the eunuch who needed and

requested baptism, not Philip (Acts 8: 36).

The same rule can be applied to those who received a baptism of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2: 1-4). The baptism of the Spirit had already been promised to the apostles (Jno. 14: 26; 16: 13; Mk. 16: 17-20). They (the apostles—see the antecedent?), were even told, "... tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Lk. 24: 49). Later, the Hebrew writer confirms the truths set forth in the foregoing passages (Heb. 2: 3, 4).

But, while brethren in general don't have too much trouble with Melchisedec, the eunuch, or the apostles, they seem to have an inordinate amount of difficulty with other passages of scripture. A refresher course in pronouns and their antecedents as used in English grammar would clear up this confusion, without even having to appeal to the Greek language.

One preacher, who even did some teaching in one of the colleges operated by brethren, claimed that the breaking of bread and eating referred to in Acts 20: 11 was justification for a "fellowship hall," built and operated by and for the church.

When we notice the context of Acts 20: 7-12, it is plain that the disciples "came together to break bread," and that the pronoun "them" in v. 7 refers to its antecedent "disciples." The rules of grammar are not violated.

But in vv. 7-12, there are 13 things which Paul did, as demonstrated by the noun (Paul), with its several antecedents. Paul preached (two references), was ready to depart, continued, went down, fell, embraced, said, came up, broke bread, ate, talked, and departed. Anyone who claims that it was the church which was doing all these things would not only flunk an English test relating to pronouns and their antecedents, but would also flunk a class in the proper use of Bible contexts if I were the teacher.

Incidentally, when the preacher was challenged on his "authority" for his "fellowship hall" (A respectable term for a gymnasium or a romper room), he then switched tracks and claimed that if an individual (Paul) could do it, the church could do it. It is ironical, and sometimes pitiful, to see brethren using two entirely different sets of rules when dealing with issues among themselves, and when dealing with those in the denominational world.

Much has been written, said, and even debated, as to who the recipients of the Jerusalem contribution were — saints or non-saints (2 Cor. 9: 13). Some brethren have violated almost every law of Bible context application as well as the rules of English grammar.

Seven times, Paul told the brethren that the collection was being taken up for "the poor saints at Jerusalem" (Rom. 15: 2 Cor. 8-9; 1 Cor. 16: 1, 2). This practice would be in complete harmony with other examples of benevolence as previously seen in the early church (Acts 2, 4, 6, 11).

Not only would these facts show that the "all men" of 2 Cor. 9: 13 were of "the same class or order," but even the pronouns "they," "them" and "their" in vv. 13, 14 refer to those saints who are on praying terms with God. Further, any position which would brand Paul as a deceiver

who collected money under false pretenses (saying the money would be used for saints and then giving it to non-saints), is a position which any self-respecting Bible student ought to distance himself from immediately.

Then, there is the abuse of pronouns and their antecedents in the practice where the pronouns are used without antecedents.

I suppose there are instances where an antecedent would be understood, but when Paul condemned the church at Corinth for division, he revealed his source — "them which are of the house of Chloe" (1 Cor. 1: 11).

But brethren will use the terms "they" and "some" like TV preachers use the phrase "Praise the Lord." According to some reports, "they" are saying that the preacher spends too much time on worldliness, or digression, or divorce and remarriage. Or "some" think the preacher preaches too long or that "some" think it is time for the preacher to move. Or "they" are saying this and "some" are saying that.

When brethren use a pronoun without an antecedent, it generally means that the "they" or the "some" end up being the ones telling the story — or their wives, husbands, or children. If I'm going to listen to such rumors, gossip, or even a statement founded in fact, I want an antecedent to go with the pronoun.

It may even be possible that the requests preachers claim to get for some of their sermons or articles come from this same ambiguous source. The "they" or the "some" may be their own wives, or someone they have prompted to ask the question or make the request.

Brethren, I don't mean to leave the impression that one has to have a college degree in English before he can understand the Bible. Those who translated the Bible had enough degrees for all of us. On the contrary, some 5th Grade students may know as much about pronouns and their antecedents as do some college graduates.

But if we are going to understand the Bible, we are going to have to do it in the language we speak and understand.

SMOKING AND THE GOLDEN RULE

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A recent article in the **Lexington Herald-Leader** (September 6, 1990) reported the following findings on the effect of cigarette smoking on non-smoking members of families:

"Non-smokers who grew up with smoking parents face double the usual risk of lung cancer, according to a new study that provides new evidence of the dangers of secondhand smoke. The report estimates that 17 percent of all lung cancer in the United States among people who never smoked cigarettes results from their exposure to smokers during childhood and adolescence."

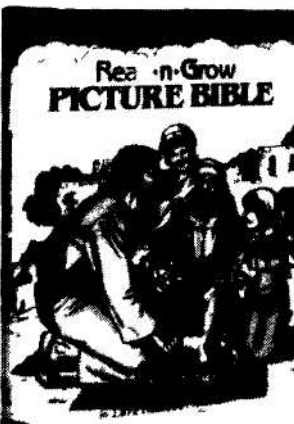
In another **Herald-Leader** story (October 4, 1990), the Surgeon General, Antonia Novello, stated that smoking by pregnant women causes 4,000 babies to be born dead each year.

Smoking is never mentioned directly in the Scriptures, but there are some principles mentioned in the Bible which have a direct bearing on whether Christians should smoke. One of these has to do with the effect of smoking on the smoker — smoking tobacco is addictive. Becoming addicted to such a health-threatening drug like nicotine violates a principle Paul gave in 1 Corinthians 6: 12: "All things are lawful for me, but **I will not be mastered by anything.**"

But, a second reason smoking is not appropriate for Christians is because of the effect it has on others, which was the concern of the Herald articles I quoted. Personal experience has suspected and scientific examination has confirmed that if you smoke you not only threaten your own health because of your addiction, but also the health of those around you who do not smoke. Having grown up in a household where two family members were heavy smokers, I can personally verify the ill effects of "secondhand" smoke.

Clearly, Christians who smoke must honestly think about the effect their addiction has on those around them. "Therefore, however you want people to treat you, so treat them, for this is the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 7: 12). According to Christ, the entirety of Old Testament ethics rested on the basic principle of treating others like you would want them to treat you. If you smoke, I do not ask you to quit just because of what it is doing to you, but because of what it is doing to those around you.

When I was in the ninth grade I contracted pneumonia and was confined to bed for a week. Two very dear family members came to see me. As I lay in bed, struggling to breathe, one of them leaned over to talk to me, still puffing on his cigarette! You can imagine the effect of that smoke on someone laboring to breathe because of



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pneumonia. He did not desire to intentionally harm me, but because his habit had become so important to him he did not even think about putting his cigarette out, even though the smoke nearly choked me.

Cigarette smokers, like all addicts, tend to forget about the consequences of their habit on others. I challenge all Christians who smoke to consider their habit in the light of the golden rule. "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others" (Philippians 2: 3-4).

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



GROWING OLD GRACEFULLY

"MAINTAINING A YOUTHFUL ATTITUDE"

The theme we are studying in this series of studies involves each one of us sooner or later, unless we die young. Many of us are already involved.

The girl on the Oil of Olay TV advertisement says "Grow old gracefully? I am fighting it every step of the way." She means instead of resigning to the inevitable, she is going to do what is available, and can be done, to look and act as though still young. Certainly such an attitude will contribute to entering old age with vim, vigor, and cheerfulness.

Some look upon old age as "Second Childhood." This figure suggests a time when one lacks judgment, often acts foolishly, and needs the direction and oversight of others. This is not what is meant by "A Youthful Attitude" in my lesson. This kind of thing may come to exist because of disease, deterioration, or other hazards, but with many it may be prevented by keeping the mind and body alert and active. Growing old gracefully does, indeed, involve some fighting, persistence, and action all along the way.

When I had my heart surgery (8 yrs ago), before, I resisted surgery, asking my doctor if I could not be treated with medicine without surgery. He replied, "Yes, if you are ready to retire to a rocking chair, amble about the place, watch TV, go out to church maybe twice a week and act as an invalid, we can go that route for as long as you last. But if you want to do all the things you have been doing, for a long time yet, you had better have the surgery. Of course, that's what I wanted. Thank the Lord I am still doing all those things I formerly did, without limitation.

Attitude Has Everything To Do With Growing Old Gracefully

Maintaining a youthful attitude is a determination to keep doing the things you have always done without yielding to the excuse "I can't for I'm too old."

Art Linkletter came to Huntsville recently, promoting projects of a senior citizen organization, and a book he had written, entitled "Old Age Is Not For Sissies." Thinking it might help me with this speech, I went down to an autographing session and bought the book and got it autographed. He assured me it would help. He does say some good and profitable things, but the book is directed more to physical and secular needs than to spiritually minded people of God.

Speaking of "attitudes" and keeping them youthful, he told of his long-standing friendship with the late popular Newscaster and writer, Lowell Thomas. Thomas was married to the same lady for more than 60 years. When she died, after a few years, he married again—in his eighties. Following the wedding, they set off on an around-the-world honeymoon. When they were in Hong Kong, Art wired him this telegram, "I have great faith in your strength and vitality, but a honeymoon like this could be fatal." Thomas wired back, "If she's got to go, she's got to go!" He was maintaining a youthful attitude.

Art said in his book, "Age-any age-is defined by an individual attitude." He quotes Betty White as saying of old age, "It's one of those invisible barriers that other people see you go through, but you never go through it. If you are a vital person inside your head, that same person is still going on." I believe this is true. A dull, slothful young person will probably enter old age much earlier than one who remains interested, alert, informed, and active.

Remaining interested and active as we grow older is a difficult thing. Charles Swindoll, in his book, "Growing Strong In The Seasons Of Life" says there is much stress put on motivation to start and ways to spark initiative, setting goals, establishing priorities, and developing a game plan, which is good and important, but let's look at the other end... sticking with something until it's done—hanging tough when the excitement and fun fades into discipline and guts—Being just as determined eight minutes into the fourth quarter as at kickoff—Not losing heart even though the way is difficult... even painful."

Those of us who are children of God know it is easier to get others interested in the gospel than it is to get them to sustain that interest. Many have and do submit to the gospel message, but the apostasy rate is dreadful. Responding to the gospel is popular, but not the patient acquisition of virtue and holiness, or a life of toil, among difficulties, in the Lord's Vineyard. Far too many develop the "I'm getting tired—This is difficult, I think Til just quit" mentality. Dieting is a discipline, so we stay fat. Finishing school is a hassle, so I'll quit. Writing a book is demanding, so we stop short. Working through conflicts in a marriage is a tiring struggle, so we divorce. Going to church, engaging in good works, studying the Bible, and sacrificing for the Lord is taxing and burdensome, so we give it up. This mentality really contributes

to "getting old."

Maintaining a youthful attitude is desiring and doing the things that are right and good that we have been doing, without murmuring or relenting, even when the aging and deteriorating earthly tabernacle is groaning.

Righteousness And Faith Contribute To Growing Old Gracefully

Two things are affirmed in this statement. (1) Righteousness and faith contribute to growing old, period. (2) Righteousness and faith contributes to growing old gracefully.

Longevity of Life

Faith is the foundation for righteousness. Without it there is no motive for acting in any way other than what is dictated by the appetites and desires of the flesh. Thus acting results in both physical and spiritual death.

The law (Ex. 20: 12) said "Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." Paul referred to this commandment in his letter to the Ephesians, saying "Honor thy father and mother; which is the first com-mandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on **the earth:** (Eph. 6: 2-3).

The promise connected to honoring father and mother was, to Israel, prosperity and long life in their God-given land, but in Eph. 6: 2-3 it is extended to all of Spiritual Israel—the church, in whatever land.

This promise does not mean that no righteous one will ever die young, for many have, and do. Honoring father and mother assumes that they are God-fearing parents who will teach their children to honor God and respect authority wherever it exists, whose children will, therefore, grow up into honorable, dutiful individuals. They are not likely to bring their life to an untimely end by strife and crimes; by intemperance or idleness, and by many other ungodly actions that weaken and destroy physically.

Besides these actions that naturally tend to shorten or lengthen our days, there is the special providence of God which is active in the lives of those who "love God and are called according to His purpose."

Too, there are the prayers of saints that ascend to God, through Christ, that often affect longevity of life. When Peter's life was threatened, prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him, and his life was spared.

If you are interested in living long enough to be considered OLD, you ought to be interested in God and His will.

Growing Old Gracefully

The aim, goal, rewards of godliness and righteousness are just as attractive and motivating in old age as ever. Dedication, joy, peace and hope do not deteriorate along with the physical man. The aged Christian feels as Paul said in 2 Corinthians 4: 16, "though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." Bible study, praying, gathering with the saints—going to church, singing the sweet songs of Israel, doing good to others, and many other such things are just as meaningful and impelling to the aged as when they were

young in years, and in the faith. So, they keep doing in old age just as they did when young. Their attitude toward such things is a youthful one. "I'm tired of such activities—too old to go to church, visit the sick, or be active in things religious" never enters their mind.

Recently we buried a beloved sister in Huntsville who was in her eighties. She had a sick and feeble body. Getting around was difficult for her, but this did not damper her desire to gather with the saints and worship on the Lord's day. On one occasion when she was hospitalized and I visited her, she said "Oh how I wish I could have been at church Sunday. I hate so bad to miss." As she spoke, tears rolled down her cheeks. She was in the service, with great difficulty, the Sunday of the week she died.

In the Jordan Park church in Huntsville, we have a couple—both 85 and more, who for a number of years have been a great inspiration to all. Both have been in the hospital lately, her with a broken leg and he for vascular surgery on his legs, but even though it is difficult and painful, he drives their car and with the aid of a walker, or wheel chair, both make it to services, even visit the sick—because they want to. Their attitude toward such is youthful. Their mind says yes, while their bodies say don't.


Many others like this, in many places, could be cited. I am thankful to God for every one of those who have and are giving us an example of maintaining a youthful attitude in growing old gracefully.

—Condensed sermon, preached at Downtown church of Christ, Lawrenceburg, TN.

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DON'T WAIT FOR RETIREMENT

David A Padfield
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Thousands of promises are made every day. At every wedding, couples vow to remain "faithful till in death we part." The divorce statistics prove many of these vows are not honored. Promises made by politicians in an election year are usually taken with a grain of salt.

Preachers hear many promises too. When you invite people to services many non-Christians will promise to attend, but very few ever show up. Christians are also guilty of taking their promises lightly. Some promise to give better "when a few bills get paid." Others promise to study harder "when things slow down at work." Others promise to start teaching Bible classes "when they retire."

It has been my observation that those who give liberally when the bills are paid are the same ones who gave "while in deep poverty" (2 Corinthians 8: 2). Those who devote many hours to diligent study when out of work are usually the same ones who study hard while working overtime at the factory. Those who teach in their "golden years" are usually the same ones who taught in their youth.

There is a crying need for qualified men to serve as elders, deacons and preachers in the Lord's church. I realize new congregations might not have men ready to serve as elders and deacons. As we study the book of Acts, we find it was several years before congregations ordained elders. But, there are large congregations today which have existed for forty or fifty years, still waiting to find "qualified" men to serve as elders.

What is the problem? I believe part of it is that we wait too long before urging men to prepare for the eldership. Paul gave a rather lengthy list of qualifications for elders and deacons in 1 Timothy 3: 1-13 and Titus 1: 5-9. Before a man was to fill either office, he was to "first be proved" (1 Timothy 3: 10). This simply meant he was to show his ability to serve before being "set apart" for this demanding work.

If a man is not capable of teaching before he is an elder, I doubt that he ever will be. A man who throws temper tantrums before he is ordained will not magically manifest self control afterwards. Those who "convict the gainsayer" (Titus 1: 9) in their youth will be able to "hold fast the faithful word" as elders.

Those who desire to be of service to Christ when they retire must remember their creator in the days of their youth (Ecclesiastes 12: 1) After the kids leave home it's too late to decide to raise "faithful children" (Titus 1: 6). After years of socializing with the ungodly, it would be hard to become "a lover of what is good, sober-minded,

just, holy" (Titus 1: 8).

I have often heard Christians lamenting the fact that we have very few young men like Timothy today. I would suggest this is because we have very few parents and grandparents like Eunice and Lois (2 Timothy 1: 5).

Let us strive to teach our children the importance of preparing for the service of God.

I

AN EVIL (JEALOUS) EYE

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Craig, Colorado 81626

In His parable about vineyard laborers Jesus said that the landowner asked a complaining worker (Matt. 20: 15), "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? or is thine eye evil because I am good?" **Jealous In The Fourfold Gospel**, J. W. McGarvey comments, "The evil eye is a synonym for jealousy. It originated with the malicious leer with which jealousy regards its object."

King Saul An example of how some thus eyed others is in 1 Sam. 18: 7-9, "And the women sang one to another as they played, and said,

Saul hath slain his thousands.

And David his ten thousands.

"And Saul was very wroth, and this saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands: and what can he have more but the kingdom? And Saul eyed David from that day and forward." **Eyed** From what Saul did later we can fairly well tell what "eyed" meant. In his **Exhaustive Concordance**, Dr. James Strong defines the Hebrew verb used here, "to eye." He writes that it meant, "to **watch** (with jealousy)." **In List of Sins** At Mark 7: 21-23) Jesus showed that "an evil eye" meant a wicked one rather than one diseased (as our expression, "Bad eye"). We quote, changing one word since two different Greek words are translated "evil" here: "For from within, out of the heart of man bad (W) thoughts proceed." He names twelve kinds of those. Among them is, "an evil eye." Then he states, "—all those evil (same word) things proceed from within and defile the man."

Wicked About this, in his **Commentary on Mark**, Burton Coffman says, "'an evil eye —' Sanner described this as envy, or a jealous grudge, the attitude that looks upon the good fortunes of others with envious hatred and which would cast an evil spell upon them if it had the power." If this seems somewhat extreme, we can see that here again Jesus tells us about the wicked (jealous) eye. **Old Testament** In former dispensations there were

other cases of wicked jealousy. Stephen recalled one, Acts 7: 9, "and the patriarchs, moved with jealousy against Joseph, sold him into Egypt. " **Jealousy Against the Poor** Did you ever know of anyone begrudging good coming to the unfortunate? I could cite you a few. Deut. 15: 9 warned, "Beware that thine eye be (not) evil against thy poor brother. " The Lord pointed out that by their doing positive good and conquering the negative attitude, "Jehovah thy God will bless thee in all thy work, and in all that thou putteth thy hand unto. "

Trusting the Jealous Proverbs 23: 6 warns, "Eat not the bread of him that hath an evil eye. " It goes ahead to show that both the free food and the "sweet words" will prove to be very sickening.

New Testament Religious leaders, who loved the praise of many, became "green-eyed" at the success others had in drawing crowds. Those who first arrested the apostles (Acts 5: 17) "were filled with jealousy. " Years later at Antioch, "— when the Jews saw the multitudes they were filled with jealousy and contradicted — (Acts 13: 45). "

Exhortations We briefly summarize, and urge careful study of, teachings on our subject. In the sharp reprimands which begin James 4 we read, "Ye kill and covet and can not obtain. " The margin states that the Greek words mean, "Ye kill and are jealous. " **Romans 13: 13** This urges, "Let us walk — not in strife and jealousy. "

1 Cor. 3: 3 The Christians there were told, "Ye are yet carnal —" because, "— there is among you jealousy and strife. "

James 3: 14 The would-be wise man is warned, "But if ye have bitter jealousy and faction in your heart glory not and lie not against the truth. "

2 Cor. 12: 20 Paul feared that when he got to Corinth, among other very undesirable things, he might find "jealousy. "

Gal 5: 19-21 "Jealousies" are included in the statement that, "They who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. " **1 Cor. 13: 4 (NASB)** "Love — is not jealous. "

We know that parents do not resent the good success of their boy or girl, even when they might that of others'. Love is the antidote, the killer of the poison. It works. If we come to love our neighbor enough we are not going to be jealous of him. This will correct that "evil eye. "

DEBATES CLARIFY ISSUES

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Debates do good in many ways. Christ and his disciples used debating as a method of teaching. They exalt truth, expose error, and stop the mouths of false teachers. Debates may be formal or informal, oral or written, conducted with or without propositions, and private or public. Debating like all other methods of teaching can be abused, but the method itself is proper. Error thrives on confusion, ambiguity, misrepresentation, misunderstanding, and deceit. **Debates clarify the differences between truth and error.** This helps honest hearts who are seeking for truth to find it.

Jesus used debating to expose the traditional doctrines of certain Jewish leaders as unfounded in Scripture. In Luke 13: 10-17 Jesus taught "in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. " He confirmed the truth of his teaching by healing a woman of curvature of the spine. The ruler of the synagogue stood with his advisers and attempted to frame Jesus as a false teacher. With a show of indignation and anger, the ruler accused Jesus of breaking the prohibition against labor on the Sabbath (Ex. 20: 9). By misrepresenting the Law and misrepresenting what Jesus did, he misrepresented the issue and confused the people.

Many of the Jewish teachers added their own doctrines, traditions, and commandments to the Law of God. The Law did not forbid teaching the truth or helping someone in need on the Sabbath. If this difference could be made clear, people could understand the truth. People then could have a greater respect for God's Word and learn not to put their confidence in human traditions and false teachers.

What did Jesus do? He did **not** walk away mumbling, "Debates do no good. You believe it your way and I will believe it my way. " He did **not** refuse the challenge with the excuse, "Debates make people angry. See how the ruler is already angry. I refuse to debate because someone will be upset. " Jesus did **not** ignore the opportunity to teach by saying, "If we debate this matter, afterward I will still believe what I believe now and the ruler will still believe what he believes. " The ruler needed to hear the truth whether he would believe it or not, and other people could be helped by hearing the debate whether the ruler was reached or not.

Jesus made the issue crystal clear. He reminded the ruler and his advisers that they watered their oxen on the Sabbath. In this way, the oxen were helped and blessed but were not plowed in the fields as would be done if they were taken out to labor. Just as they loosed

the oxen for watering **without labor**, Jesus loosed the woman from the bond of disease **without engaging in some business enterprise or occupational labor**. The enemies of Jesus saw the point and so did the people in the audience, but they reacted differently. "And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him" (Lk. 13: 17). The people were released from their bondage to human traditions and false teachers because Jesus was willing to debate.

Debates do good by clarifying issues, upholding truth, and defeating error. That is why false teachers avoid debate as much as possible. Advocates of legalized drugs (marijuana, cocaine, etc.), legalized abortion (murdering unborn babies), and legalized gambling like to talk about supposed "economic advantages" to the community or giving people a wider "choice." They do not want to debate the deeper issues involved such as the destruction of moral principles, families, and even life (Rom. 13: 9-10).

Denominational preachers claim that water baptism

is excluded from salvation by grace through faith, but they run like scared rabbits from open discussions where they would face Mark 16: 16, Acts 2: 38, and 1 Peter 3: 21. Pentecostal preachers claim that the miracles of the Bible days can be done now — some even pretend they are willing to debate the issue — but they will not engage in a public examination of their claims lest they be put to shame like the religious leaders in Luke 13. Some weak-kneed preachers among churches of Christ promote a social gospel of church suppers, "fellowship halls," and gyms, but refuse to debate such practices. Other brethren teach that alien sinners are not subject to God's marriage law or that a fornicator divorced for his sin can remarry, but beg to be excused from public investigation of their theories.

Debates should not be rushed into lightly, prepared for carelessly, or conducted rashly. When debates are arranged and conducted properly, they clarify issues to the embarrassment of false teachers and the salvation of honest souls.

THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

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Leslie Diestelkamp

Overcoming Obstacles
Jady Copeland

In the World but Not of the World
Doug Barlar

Thursday
Unacclaimed Heroes of the Faith
Dee Bowman

SHANE SCOTT, 111 McGinnis Lane, Mt. Sterling, KY 40353—The work here at Oak Hill is going well. I have been here 16 months now, and have never been around people easier to work with than the brethren here. For a "rookie" preacher, it means a lot to have such supportive brethren. Attendance hovers around 45 on Sunday mornings. Bill Hall held our spring meeting and preached some of the finest messages from Scripture I have ever heard. Paul Smithson, a young preacher and personal friend, was with us in October for a meeting. If you are in this part of the Bluegrass, come see us. The Oak Hill church assembles five miles north of downtown Mt. Sterling at 4860 Hinkston Pike. Our phone number is (606) 498-6490.

Mrs. H. E. (POLLY) PHILLIPS had back surgery a few weeks ago and has been in a great deal of pain. She has not been able to get out much and gets around the house a little with a walker. It would be difficult to estimate how much she has contributed to the cause of Christ. She and brother Phillips have been like parents or grandparents to a host of young people over the years who are now scattered over the earth. A card or note from you would mean much to her. Write her at: P. O. Box 1631, Lutz, FL 33549.

FROM AROUND THE WORLD

FERNANDO VENEGAS, Casilla #122 C. C., 5500 Mendoza, Argentina, South America—A young man was recently baptized here who had been in religious error most of his life. We first contacted him through our radio program and Bible correspondence course. Finally, he decided to study with us in a personal manner. We have visitors constantly in our services. As this is written (September 30) I am on my way to La Serena, Chile for a gospel meeting. I have lost \$100 of my support.

TERRELL BUNTING of Bergen, Norway has been hospitalized in recent weeks and very ill. He is presently being treated with blood thinners to prepare for surgery which he must have. In the midst of that problem, Mrs. Tom (Shirley) Bunting's father of north Florida passed away. Don Bunting of Stavanger, Norway, came with his mother but left one of his sons in the hospital with pneumonia. He is better now. Tom Bunting's 82 year-old mother is staying with them in Bergen for a year. Pray for the family and for their work. Write to Terrell Bunting at Bronndalen 89, Loddefjord 5070, Norway.

RUBEN C. AMADOR, Bos 924456, Houston, TX 77292—In September I was in a gospel meeting in Chihuahua City, Chihuahua, MEXICO (some four hours by bus from El Paso, Texas). The local preacher is Guillermo Larrea and he is doing an excellent work. The church had just moved into a new auditorium and much preparation had been made. Attendance was in the 50's and 60's with over a dozen visitors about every night. Two were baptized. Heavy rains did much damage to the city the week after the meeting but I do not know, at present, of any brethren who suffered loss.

PATRICK N. OKAUGBO, No. 3 Umeze Road, Amachalla Village, Awka, NIGERIA — I am pleased to inform you that there were two souls baptized into Christ last June and August. Remember us in your prayers. I have just received the June issue of SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES and am highly impressed by the excellent and educational articles contained in it.

DOMIE A. JACOB, Sagat, Cordon, Isabel a 3312, Philippines — In June, 3 were baptized and will worship at Der-an. One was baptized and will worship at Cordon. In July, 3 were baptized at Der-an. On July 15, 6 were baptized. In August, 6 more were baptized. Pray for us and the work here.

CARLOS A. DOMINGO, JR., Seaside church of Christ, Santiago Sur, Caba, La Union 2502, Philippines — Last August we had 8 baptisms. Our evangelism program is reaching far and near and making many contacts. We are sad to note that the brethren with me suffered great losses from the killer earthquake in July which severely battered our place. Among brethren, three houses were leveled to the ground and a dozen more are slanting. Our house was damaged with the foundation weakened and unsafe. We stayed 46 days at the evacuation center. We are presently at the heart of the town renting. Brother, we are having a difficult time.

JULIE D. A. NOTARTE, 4243 Roxas Ext., 8002 Digos, Davao del Sur, Philippines — On Sept. 2, with the cooperation of Tawan Lacay and Rosendo Lamodin, two were baptized at San Isidro, Magsaysay. On Sept. 7, 4 were baptized at Igpit, Digos. On Sept. 9, on Samal Island, 2 were baptized. Diseases like severe cough and other health problems are rampant because of the poor living conditions. We are very poor and always lack food. Poverty is our greatest physical problem. You are always in our prayers. Please pray for us also.

PREACHER NEEDED

MIDDLEBURY, VERMONT — Because of some pressing financial needs, Keith E. Clayton is having to take some time out from his full-time work. He is still preaching on Sunday mornings, but is pained to see daily evangelism suffering. They have asked brother Clayton to help them find a man who can come and work full-time. The church is small and can supply only \$200 a month, plus health insurance. The rest will have to be raised elsewhere. Any who might be interested in working with the Addison County church should call Jay H. Vrooman (802) 453-3941; or Keith E. Clayton (802) 388-2420.

EDITORIAL LEFT-OVERS CHURCH ADS

Many of our readers tell us that the church ads in this paper are very helpful to them when they travel. We have often used them to locate a place to worship when away from home. Churches near universities or colleges, military installations, major tourist attractions or in areas of the country where congregations are few and far between, might well consider placing such an ad. The cost is \$80 a year.

ADS PROMPTED MORE STUDY

A few years ago we had a most interesting letter from a preacher in Nigeria who had been associated with the institutional brethren. He said one of the American "missionaries" had told him that the "anti" people only had less than a dozen churches in the U. S. A. One of the brethren there gave him a copy of SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES. He said he read it and counted over 150 ads from churches. He said "I knew then he had lied to me, and if he would lie about that, perhaps I ought to re-study some of what else I had been taught."

THE DEVIL'S GRAPE JUICE

A few years back, when the battle was so fierce in the Philippines between institutional and non-institutional brethren in Mindanao, Philippines, one of the brethren wrote an interesting letter. He said on a certain Sunday in June in his town, the more liberal brethren discovered they had no grape juice and sent across town to borrow some from the "anti" brethren. The brother summarized it this way: "Liberals say conservatives are 'of the Devil', but they want to borrow our grape juice. Therefore, liberals will drink the grape juice of the Devil."

ON READING A SERMON

It is reported that a certain preacher went to "try out" as the saying goes. After his sermon not one person said anything about his sermon. When all had left, he asked the brother who was cleaning up the building "What was wrong with my sermon?" "Well, he said, "there were three things wrong with it. First, I never did like to hear a man read a sermon. Second, you ain't a very good reader. And third, it wasn't fit to read." Enough said.

MAD PRAYERS

In a terrible dispute over who was entitled to the church property, the two sides ended up at the courthouse before a judge. One man was questioned as to why he refused to bow his head and participate in the closing prayer at the end of a turbulent business meeting. He said "Your honor, everybody there was mad. That prayer did not get any higher than the ceiling. If the Lord was in that meeting, he left when we got started!" It is pretty hard to pray when you are angry.

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