

SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

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



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

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THINK ON THESE THINGS

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CAN WE ATTAIN UNITY?

All religious bodies, preachers and teachers claim to be advocates of unity among the believers in God. Many plans and movements have been initiated to achieve unity among these religious groups. Some of their efforts have spawned even more discord and party spirit than the unity they seek. The religious world is dreadfully divided over many issues. Even with the Lord's church there are parties who banish all efforts toward the unity of God's people taught in the New Testament.

"With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:2,3).

The term "denomination" indicates division. It means to name, the act of naming, a designating by name. It means a part of the whole, separated and named to distinguish it from the other parts. A quarter is a denomination of a dollar, so are dimes, nickels and a penny. Denominations refer to different religious bodies, claiming to be different parts of the church Jesus Christ built, all called by different names to distinguish them from one another. As long as these denominations hold their differing doctrines and their names to separate one from the other, Bible unity is impossible.

Some brethren are worried about the world classifying them as a denomination. It is probably because of what they teach and practice. When one holds out the hand of fellowship to some denominational group,

in or out of the church, he is showing some endorsement of denominationalism. The question is: How far is he going, and why does he stop where he does? Some brethren endorse, coddle and protect false teachers and false brethren, and then wonder why unity is not attained. Some will say, "I do not want to drive him further from the church and the Lord." He is already away, and he will never be restored except by the truth, the gospel of Christ (John 8: 32; Rom. 1: 16).

Division is condemned by the Holy Spirit. "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Rom. 16: 17). "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1: 10). By the questions: "Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Cor. 1: 13), the apostle shows the absurdity of division growing out of the doctrine of Christ.

Unity is a part of the doctrine of Christ. He prayed that those who believe on him should be one in the same sense that Christ and the Father are one (John 17: 20, 21). We are to endeavor (struggle, strive) to **KEEP THE UNITY** of the Spirit. To **keep** the unity signifies that we have it in the word of God. We must **try** (test) the spirits to know whether they are of God or man. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4: 1).

In spite of these statements by the Holy Spirit and the efforts of godly men and women, there are some hindrances that stand in the way of true unity. I shall mention only two.

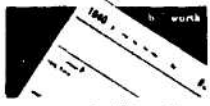
1. Lack of knowledge. Some people will accept unity as a principle endorsed in words of scripture, but because they do not know what the New Testament teaches on the subject, they are involved in division while claiming to accomplish unity among disciples. Ignorance of what unity means leads some to draw conclusions from partial evidence and prejudice, and then demand that all others accept their

conclusions. The idea that there are saved in all churches is not reached by studying the word of God. Ignorance of the nature and mission of the church of our Lord has caused much division, and it is the very foundation upon which denominations are built today.

2. Loyalty to men. Paul warned of false teachers within the church who would lead others away from the truth. "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20: 29, 30). Jesus gave a like warning: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matt. 7: 15).

Loyalty is first based upon human wisdom and importance. Just because a certain man has a degree from some college of reputation, or because he is well known throughout the nation, it does not follow that he is right in his preaching. Human wisdom tends to elevate the man and decrease the importance of God's word. Loyalty to men causes many to accept just about any doctrine they preach, whether it is taught in the New Testament or not. This hinders true unity.

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Editorial

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THE OPEN SEWER

What would you do if you had an open sewer flowing into your house? It is bad enough to have an overflowing septic tank in the back yard with the terrible odor it produces. Such emergencies prompt us to take swift remedial action. After all, the quality of our lives is at stake. The health hazard to our families must not be tolerated.

But wait a minute! Do you have a television set in your house? Perhaps two or three? Have you paid much attention to what seeps into your house through that influential box? Oh, I know there are some things which are informative and entertaining in a harmless way. But even a recent TV GUIDE carried a lead article raising the question about the outbreak of dirty language, "HAS TV GONE TOO FAR?" Consider the following which this open sewer is dumping into your home:

(1) **Profanity.** This started several years ago with a four letter word now and then. At the time it was shocking to hear those words blaring right out in the dens and livingrooms of our houses, words we would not permit our children to use, nor any of our guests. Little is ever said to honor or glorify God, but plenty is said in taking his name in vain. There are parents who are Christians, including some preachers, who see nothing wrong with renting movies to watch on VCR which are liberally sprinkled with profanity and these are sometimes shown to the whole family as good entertainment for a family night at home with a "good" movie. "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt..." (Col. 4:6).

(2) **Coarse speech.** The recent article in TV Guide spelled out many of the words and phrases being commonly used on prime time shows this year. One six-year-old girl uses a word or phrase which is clearly vulgar in origin and has little girls and boys all over the country repeating this phrase. I have heard it from the children and grandchildren of Christians. I could not print in this paper some of the terms being used over and over in sitcoms on prime time TV. The writers and producers are bolder this year than ever before. Would you allow a friend, fellow-worker, neighbor, or even relative to come into your home and talk that way before your wife and children? "keep thy heart with all diligence" (Prov. 4: 23).

(3) **Gore.** Do you realize how many buckets of blood your children will see shed on TV before they ever leave the nest? Under the guise of "realism" murder and torture scenes are getting gorier and gorier. (If no such word exists, I hereby invent it). Rape, strangling, smothering,

assaulting with blunt objects, mutilations, stabblings and shootings are common fare. Paul said to think on things that are "lovely" (Phil. 4: 8).

(4) **Hedonism.** The gratification of natural desires without any moral "hangups" seeps into our homes day and night. Disrobing, breathless love scenes, adultery in abundance, fornication, homosexuality and incest are frequently brought into our homes through the magic of television. The story line on many shows raises confusion as to right and wrong. Often, what the Bible would clearly condemn, is presented in such a light that good is called evil and evil is called good.

(5) **Humanism.** What values are portrayed are often presented from a humanistic base. What man wants, likes or what appears to serve his own interest has become the standard for behavior. Anyone who insists on adherence to a divine law is presented as a hypocrite or an incompetent. Family roles, as presented in the word of God, are portrayed with role reversals. The Cosby Show is one of the greatest offenders in this regard. It is funny, cleverly done, but the message is loud and clear. "It is not in man that walks to direct his steps" (Jer. 10: 23).

Parents would do well to watch Sesame Street and the cartoons their children are watching. Recently, while a granddaughter was here visiting, we were appalled at the humanistic preaching being done to children in some of the cartoons. Liberal doses of evolution are assaulting their minds almost daily. Biblical family values are consistently being undermined in our own homes, and then we wonder what is happening to the family. That box in the corner might be a part of what is happening to it! Whatever happened to the shows where a family consisted of a husband and wife (not married before) with their own offspring. Now we have single-parent sitcoms galore complete with ex-husbands and ex-wives, his children, her children and their children. Children in a stable family who watch such drivel are likely to get the idea that they are out of touch with life, or that such aberrations in family life ought to be expected. Divorce with all its evil by-products comes to be viewed as the norm, not the exception.

What Can You Do About It?

(1) **Be very selective.** Think ahead about what you will watch. If you are surprised and it heads downhill, cut it off. Do not be a jellyfish in exercising control over it with your family.

(2) **Find useful alternatives.** Teach your children the joy of reading good books. Rediscover it yourself. Play games together. Encourage children to use their imagination in play.

(3) **If you are offended by a program, note the sponsors and write to them.** They are sensitive to consumer good-will. A recent boycott of Burger King for sponsoring programs with an anti-religious bias and those that were excessively violent, brought a promise from that company to cease sponsoring such shows. TV will be out of business without sponsors and sponsors do not want public ill-will. Write the network which carries the sewage. Write the local affiliate.

(4) **Revive family hospitality.** Invite that new couple which just started worshipping where you do.

Pop some popcorn. Make some fudge. Settle down and read a chapter in the Bible and have prayer together. Learn the act of entertaining yourselves.

Folks, we have to do something to stop that open sewer from overflowing in our living rooms. Otherwise, we will become so immune to it that we won't even smell the stink!

DIVINE COMMUNIQUES

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GOD CONDEMNS SIN IN THE FLESH

Divine Message: For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. (Rom. 8: 3-4)

We all accept the affirmation that God condemned sin in the flesh. His condemnation is stated in His law and is clear and objective. I am not certain, however, that we all understand the **ORIGIN** of God's expectation and its real source. "The righteous requirement of the law" did not originate with the law itself... it originated in the character of God. It would certainly be enough for God to say it. God's saying it in His law makes anything righteous. But morality is not first and foremost a **matter of law. It is a matter of character...** the character of God in whose image we are made. It is therefore a righteous requirement of God that our character made in His image be based upon his standard of morality.

Furthermore, Paul set forth the **SOURCE** of one's own personal attitude toward morality. It is determined by that upon which one sets his mind. "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit" (Rom. 8: 5). What one wishes to do, he will do. What he sets his mind to do, he will accomplish. "I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, **so that you do not do the things that you wish** (Gal. 5: 16-17).

In his book, **In the Presence of Mine Enemies**, Howard Rutledge, a U. S. Air Force pilot who was shot down over North Viet Nam during the early stages of the war, tells of his thoughts during several miserable years, hundreds of arduous days, and a seeming eternity

of hours when life seemed so intolerable in the hands of the Viet Cong. He said, "During those longer periods of enforced reflection it became so much easier to separate the important from the trivial, the worthwhile from the waste. For example, in the past, I usually worked or played hard on Sundays and had no time for church. For years Phyllis had encouraged me to join the family at church. She never nagged or scolded—she just kept hoping. But I was too busy, too preoccupied, to spend one or two short hours a week thinking about the really important things. Now the sights and sounds and smells of death were all around me. My hunger for spiritual food soon outdid my hunger for a steak. Now I wanted to know about that part of me that will never die. Now I wanted to talk about God and Christ and the church. But in Heartbreak (the name POWs gave their prison camp) solitary confinement, there was no preacher, no Sunday-school teacher, no Bible, no hymn book, no community of believers to guide and sustain me. **I had completely neglected the spiritual dimension of my life. It took prison to show me how empty life is without God**" (quoted by Gordon MacDonald, **Ordering Your Private World**, p. 115).

Next, Paul informs us that there are deadly serious **CONSEQUENCES** of following the flesh. He says, "For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh **cannot** please God. (Rom. 8: 6-8). "

The world says that our fears of sin and evil are childish, like the child who fears the alligator under the bed who will not hang his arm off the bed because the alligator might bite it off. The child's fears are obviously unfounded. Larry Crabb in his best seller, **Inside Out**, (page 30) responds to the world's claim by saying, "But there really is something wrong in our world. Reality is not what we want it to be. We sense that something is badly twisted in our world because it is." We are not dealing with an imaginary alligator. We are dealing with the reality of prostitution, aids, homosexuality, pornography, murder, theft, embezzlement, lying, cheating, fornication, etc. We had best do all we can to protect ourselves and our families. We had best prepare ourselves and our families to fight real enemies.

Paul said that "the works of the flesh are evident..., and those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5: 19-21). We can only deal with those realities by changing (with God's help) our character. And we do that by recognizing and favoring the reality of spiritual life. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. (Gal. 5: 22-26).

My friends, I am afraid we preachers are not warning people of sin as we should. "Just As I AM," does not mean we can REMAIN "Just As I Have Been. "

Finally the apostle informs us of the wonderful BLESSINGS which result from following the Spirit. "But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness" (Rom. 8: 9-10).

God provides life, real life, to those who follow Him. We must notice, however, that this is not just a matter of DOING good. All of these passages suggest that we must BECOME good... that is, we must become spiritual. I want to improve, not just in what I do, but in what I AM as a person. I know many persons who do wonderful deeds of kindness and illustrate patterns of behavior I would do well to emulate. But the list of persons is much shorter whose character qualities evidence a truly giving, compassionate, noble spirit. I RESPECT those who do good. I truly ADMIRE those who are good throughout.

Do you see what I mean? Let me illustrate. I want to give my wife everything I can that is good for her and I want to treat her with great kindness and respect. But I know that a lot of guys could give her more and probably treat her better from physical points of view. I want her to know that I want to give her something more. I want her to feel that I am giving her all the deep resources of my being, my loving, my caring, my sharing ... everything within me. She is not going to get that from any other man. So, Sweetie, just don't look! God wants that from each of us and it is that, ultimately, that he rewards with such wonderful blessings.

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THE LOVE OF GOD — ROMANS 8 - NO. (2)

THE HOLY SPIRIT — OUR GUIDE — VS. 5-14

"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not in the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if you live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

In these verses we see the love of God manifested toward us through the Holy Spirit who is our spiritual guide. God, in His infinite knowledge, knew how desperately man needs a guide from earth to heaven, and in His infinite love has provided such for both saint and sinner. We have already learned from the first four verses of this chapter that the **freedom** enjoyed by those "in Christ" depends upon their walking "not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." In verses five through fourteen, Paul shows what it is to "walk after the flesh" and to "walk after the Spirit."

Wisdom demands that, first of all, we give some thought to our need for such a guide. **Subjectivism** seems to be the rule of the day. The prefix "sub" in "subjectivism" (as elsewhere) involves the idea of that which is "within" or "under," e. g., a submarine — that which is "within" or "under" water. Hence, by **subjectivism**, I mean the disposition to be guided by that from "within." All men need to realize that, of themselves, they do not know the way to heaven — it simply is not in man: "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not man that walketh to direct

his steps" (Jer. 10: 23). All men need to realize that they need guidance that is from without, over, above, and superior to anything they possess. Therefore, his guide must be objective — not subjective. That guidance comes to us from the Holy Spirit through the word He has "revealed to the holy apostles and prophets" (Eph. 3: 5). In our text Paul urges us to follow this guide.

Led By The Spirit

Paul makes it plain that those who "walk after the flesh... mind the things of the flesh," and those who "walk after the Spirit..." mind "the things of the Spirit" (vs. 4, 5). When children mind their parents, they obey their parents. When one minds the things of the Spirit, he does what the Spirit says. To act otherwise is to walk after the flesh — it is "to be carnally minded" (v. 6). Man's spirit is governed by one of two forces — the flesh or the Spirit. To which he yields accounts for his actions. Such tells the story of whether he is carnally minded or spiritually minded. The former involves yielding to the desires, appetites, and impulses of the flesh—all the propensities thereof. The latter involves listening to the Holy Spirit as He speaks through His inspired word and being led thereby (Eph. 3: 5; 6: 17; Heb. 4: 12; Rev. 2: 7, 11, 17, 29; 3: 6, 13, 22). Walking after the Spirit is pleasing unto God, but walking after the flesh—being carnally minded—is enmity against God. The two are incompatible—wholly irreconcilable! This is what Paul meant when he said "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (v. 7). In other words, man cannot be carnally minded and spiritually minded at the same time. He must choose between the two. Jesus put it this way: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt. 6: 24).

Power of Choice

Unfortunately, some have understood verse seven to teach a cardinal tenet of Calvinism, namely, Hereditary Total Depravity. This doctrine affirms that man is born into this world having inherited Adam's sin so that he is wholly incapacitated to do any thing good until and unless he is operated on directly and mysteriously from on high. Such operation is usually attributed to the Holy Spirit and is often called an "experience of grace." According to this theory, prior to this operation man has no power of choice — no freedom of will.

From a historical point of view, this doctrine had its origin in the latter part of the fourth and the forepart of the fifth centuries with Augustine, a prominent theologian being the prime promoter. It is interesting to observe that among the "church fathers," who wrote before 325 A. D., that unanimity prevailed on this matter of man's free will. While an exception now and then might be found in the field of religion, the "church fathers" referred to them as heretics.

Opposing Augustine's view was one named Pelagius of Britain who was a strong believer in man's free will. His concept is succinctly expressed by himself in the following words: "If a man should, he can." However, his influence was over shadowed by the more prominent theologian, Augustine. As a consequence

much of the religious world became saturated with his concept which was later popularized even more as a cardinal tenet of Calvinism. This doctrine not only robs man of his power of choice, but also takes from him his **accountability** — all of which contravenes the following very plain passage of Scripture: "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). It should also be noticed that throughout the whole context of verse seven of our text that it is clearly implied that man is responsible for whether he follows after the flesh or after the Spirit. In the final analysis, it is up to him—not God. Paul is our example: "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).

In the last verses of our text, Paul talks about our being in the Spirit, God dwelling in us, and our having the Spirit of Christ—all of which is tantamount to our being led by the Holy Spirit. He then brings our text to a close by giving us **assurance** that "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (v. 14).

Let us thank God for His great love in providing us with this spiritual guide which man so desperately needs in his journey from time to eternity.

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CONDITIONS OF HONORABLE MARRIAGE

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As seen earlier in this study, marriage is precious in the sight of the Lord and must be held in honor among all. Marriage per se—that is, whatever men want to call marriage—is not here endorsed by God in Heb. 13: 4. The apostle did not write an unqualified statement, designed to cover every relationship that people want to institute. The hortatory statement encourages honorable conduct on the part of all who contemplate and enter marriage; it implies conditions upon which marriage can be had in honor.

Permanence

The very best preparation that can be made by people eligible before God to marry is to determine to stay married. God's will is that people marry for life. God hates putting away (Mai. 2: 16). He further decrees that no one separate (sunder) what God has joined together. (Matt. 19: 6). In that God joins people in marriage, it must follow that only He can set the conditions upon which he joins and severs them. Laws of civil government have no effect on joining and severing by the Lord. This is not encouragement to any to disregard civil law conforming to God's will, but to remember the superiority of divine law. Only God's law says what people's actions should be when civil law fails to reflect God's will.

Keeping the covenant in marrying another is a matter of simple honor—honoring one's word pledged to another. Before marrying and after marrying, it would behoove all married people to remember the seriousness of marriage and of keeping one's word. The principle of honesty, even to the hurt of oneself, must be appreciated (Psm. 15: 4).

Eligibility

The teaching of the New Testament shows that not all are eligible before God to marry (Matt. 5: 32; 19: 9; Rom. 7: 1-4). In the view of civil governments, any divorced person (with divorce decree) may marry again; but God, who instituted and controls marriage according to His will, does not so view the matter. His Word authorizes only three classes of people to marry: (1) people never married (Gen. 2: 22-25), (2) people whose spouses have died (Rom. 7: 2-3), and (3) those who have had fornication committed against them (Matt. 19: 9). These alone have God's authorization to marry: apart from divine authority to such effect, no one would either have right to marry or know of such right. Eligibility is never determined on the basis of civil law, for civil law does not reflect the divine will. Civil law is an expedient useful to people in the forming and terminating of marriages, but

its use does not necessarily force God to recognize all actions recognized by governments of men.

Submission

Even marriages begun with God's approval by people eligible before Him and determined to remain married to each other sometimes end because one or both parties fail to maintain the spirit of submission to the other. Paul's teaching respecting wives and husbands is included in a section dealing with submission (Eph. 5: 21-33). Paul developed and applied the attitude of submission to the behavior of the wife, who should love, respect, and submit to her husband, and to the husband, who ought to love, cherish, and nourish his wife as Christ did the church. In both instances, there is submission to the other manifested in the actions enjoined. Even the husband must submit to his wife in his deferring to her needs, requests, and wishes, and he will do if he loves her according to the love of Christ for the church.

It is tragic to have people prepare to marry, begin their marriages according to God's will, and even continue them for a time in an honorable state, and then later suffer a dishonorable end through divorce. Divorce always says that someone sinned; sometimes it says that both parties sinned. The only honorable end to a marriage is death. In summary, all marriages fail because of selfish people. Selfish people are unwilling to make sacrifices necessary for marriages to survive. Are you willing to sacrifice for your partner? Have you contributed to the unnecessary end of your marriage? Are you trying to maintain your marriage in an honorable state? Hebrews 13: 4 exhorts you to do so.

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and preach the gospel
to every creature"
(Mark 16:15)**

WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

Send all questions to:

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GOING ON TO PERFECTION

QUESTION: What does the statement in Heb. 6: 1, "leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection," mean? Also, comment on "not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, etc. in vv. 1-2.

ANSWER: "Leaving" means to "forsake, to put away, let alone, disregard, put off." It indicates total detachment. The phrase about the "first principles of the doctrine of Christ" does not mean the principles of the gospel of Christ, such as the resurrection of Jesus, faith, repentance and baptism as taught in the gospel. We are not to abandon or detach ourselves from them.

The "principles of the doctrine of Christ" are the teachings about Christ in the Old Testament, namely, the shadows, types, symbols and prophecies. They must leave the pictures of Christ and go on to Christ Himself in order to be perfect. They must abandon Judaism and proceed to perfection in the gospel.

The recipients of the Hebrew letter needed to be taught again "The first principles of the oracles of God" (Heb. 5: 12). They needed someone to show them again the pictures of the Old Testament of its ordinances, ceremonies, and sacrifices. Babies need pictures in order to comprehend. They also must learn the alpha-bet. These types and figures (pictures and alphabet) foreshadowed Christ, but they could not recognize Him unless they understood the word-pictures. Hence, they must have someone to teach them again the "first principles," that is, the meaning of the Old Testament figures and symbols. The book of Hebrews endeavors to lead them on to perfection.

Next the writer presents six foundational elements not to be laid again — repentance from dead works, faith toward God, etc. It is my persuasion that these are fundamentals of Judaism rather than Christianity. Some of them are relevant to Christianity, but none are exclusively Christian.

Repentance from dead works. In addition to this passage, "dead works" are mentioned in Heb. 9: 14. These were the sins that remained on the conscience after the Levitical ceremonies were unable to cleanse through animal blood (Heb. 10: 2). They are "dead works" because they belong to the realm of spiritual death as the result of sin. Those under the Old Covenant needed to repent of these sins.

Faith toward God. The Jews believed in God (Jn. 14: 1). But they also needed to believe in Christ (Jn. 14: 1) in order to become Christians. Faith toward our **Lord** was preached by Paul to Jews and Gentiles (Acts 20: 21). "Faith toward God" was characteristic of the old Mosaic system, and, hence, a foundational element of Judaism.

Doctrine of baptisms. These "baptisms" are Jewish washings or cleansing rites. Hebrews 9: 10 has "washings" rather than "baptisms," but both are from the same Greek word—*baptismos*. According to Trench, this word means, "ceremonial washing or lustration... while by *baptisma* we understand baptism in our Christian sense of the word."

Laying on of hands. Fundamental to the Jewish religion was the imposition of hands, repeatedly prescribed in the Levitical ritual. Priests (Lev. 4: 4), elders (v. 15), rulers (v. 24) and every common person (Lev. 1: 4; 3: 2, 8, 13; 4: 29, 33) were to lay hands on their sacrifices.

The laying on of hands was important in the consecration of priests (Exod. 29: 10, 15, 19; Lev. 8: 14, 18, 22, 27, 28). This practice, being a part of the Old Covenant, was annulled at the cross and was not to be laid again, but rather forsaken.

Resurrection of the dead. This fact is taught in the Old Testament (Job 19: 25-27; Dan. 12: 2; Psa. 17: 15). It was commonly believed by all Jews (Acts 24: 14-15; 26: 6-8), except the Sadducees (Acts 23: 6-8). Jesus enlarged upon this doctrine and brought life and immortality to light (2 Tim. 1: 10).

Eternal judgment. The final judgment was known back in the Old Testament era (Jude 14-15; Mai. 3: 16; Dan. 12: 1-2). Adam Clarke commented, "The doctrines also of the *resurrection of the dead* and of *eternal judgment* were both Jewish, but were only partially revealed and then referred to the gospel."

When the author of Hebrews says we are to "leave" or "abandon" these things, it is not the understanding of them that is to be disregarded, but rather an attachment to the Mosaic economy as an ongoing religion.

Many hold the view that "the principles of the doctrine of Christ" in Heb. 6: 1-2 are the basics of the gospel and that the six elements enumerated are New Testament fundamentals rather than Mosaic. They could be right, but it seems to me the context, as well as some of the six elements, favor the preceding position that is espoused.

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"PLAY IT SAFE"

Job was blameless, upright, fearing God, and turning away from evil. God classed him with Noah and Daniel as models of righteousness (Eze. 14: 14). James calls attention to his exemplary patience (Jas. 5: 11). Surely there is much we can learn from this great patriarch. Focus with me on one principle by which he lived.

Job had seven sons. "And his sons used to go and hold a feast in the house of each one on his day, and they would send and invite their three sisters to eat with them. And it came about, when the days of feasting had completed their cycle, that Job would send and consecrate them, rising up early in the morning and offering burnt offerings according to the number of them all; for Job said, 'Perhaps my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.' Thus Job did continually" (Job 1: 4, 5).

The regularity of these feasts is uncertain. Some think "on his day" implies that the sons took turns every day hosting these feasts, thus making this a weekly cycle. Since "his day" in chapter three refers to Job's birthday, others think these were birthday celebrations. Be that as it may, when the feasting was over, Job, in keeping with the priestly function of a father under the patriarchal era, offered burnt offerings on behalf of his sons. He did not know that they had done wrong, but sacrificed "just in case." And here is our principle: Job played it safe where God is concerned.

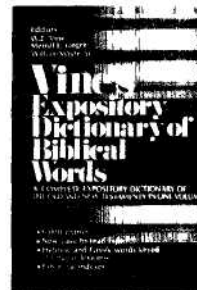
Displeasing God is too great a matter to take chances with. The stakes are eternal. God has plainly revealed what he expects of us. Yet in our applications of His will to our lives, we sometimes prefer going out on a limb to playing it safe.

Some want to do things that do not have God's expressed approval. They reason, "God did not say not to." No, but He did not say to, either, which means you are risking His displeasure by going ahead. The very purpose of revelation is so that we can know the mind of God instead of acting by supposition (1 Cor. 2: 9-13). That revelation warns us against going beyond what is written (1 Cor. 4: 6). Still, many are willing to take chances with God's word. Some insist on substituting for what God has specified. Others categorize their pet projects as good works, with which they cannot imagine God will be displeased. I fear that some brethren are basing their views on divorce and remarriage on speculative inferences instead of plain statements of Scripture. Job teaches us better. His example says play it safe where God is concerned.

Playing it safe prohibits us from seeing how close to sin we can get without crossing over. All of us must draw the line between right and wrong. God sometimes tells us exactly where to mark it. On other matters He gives us principles which we must apply. In such cases it is a good idea to draw your line with a margin for safety. That means we will reject, not accept, marginal language, clothing whose modesty is doubtful, and questionable forms of recreation. If in doubt, don't do it. Play it safe. Instead of seeing how close to sin you can get, "abhor what is evil; cling to what is good" (Rom. 12: 9b).

Now reverse that application. Christians who are always concerned about minimum requirements — "How many services must I attend?" "How much do I have to give?" — have surely not yet discovered the joy of serving the Lord. Nor have they learned Job's principle of playing it safe. Only the most ardent risk-taker would want to stand in judgment having aimed no higher than the least he could get by with.

No one needs to learn Job's principle of playing it safe any more than the individual who is putting off obeying the gospel. Perhaps you, like Felix, are looking for that "convenient season." Friend, it will not come. There is no easy time to repent. Meanwhile, you are taking a great chance in assuming you will have future opportunities. Life is "a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away" (Jas. 4: 14). You do not know the time of the Lord's coming. Besides, there is the danger that as you grow older the hardness which prevents you from obeying now will stiffen, causing you to lose all interest (Ecc. 12: 1). Now is the day of salvation.



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SMOKING

Is there anything wrong with smoking? While most would agree that it is a bad thing, can we really say it is a sin? It is not uncommon to see women, as well as men, smoking. In fact, there are a number of men and women who claim to be Christians who smoke.

In the last few years, the American people have developed a greater health consciousness. Consequently, many have quit smoking. Restrictions have been established for smoking in public.

Our real concern in this article is to see that smoking is a sin.

It is Harmful to the Body

1. Smoking harms the body. Quotes could be compounded that establish that smoking harms the body. However, just a few will suffice here.

The British Royal College Of Physicians stated, "cigarette smoking is now as important a cause of death as the great past epidemics of typhoid, cholera and tuberculosis."

The Harvard Medical School Health Letter (Vol. III, No. 6, April 1978) speaking of lung cancer said, "The good news is that we know the cause of at least 80% of the cases of this leading cancer killer — cigarettes."

The American Lung Association said, "Cigarette smoking is a major cause of emphysema, chronic bronchitis, lung cancer, heart disease... Just one cigarette speeds up your heart beat, increases your blood pressure, upsets the flow of blood and air in your lungs, causes a drop in the skin temperature of your fingers and toes.

2. It is a sin to deliberately harm the body. Smoking is wrong for the same reason "doing" drugs is wrong — it damages the body.

While in a context of speaking of the sin of fornication, Paul addressed the problem of the abuse of the body and whether it is our body to do with what we want anyway. "What? know ye know that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body and your spirit, which are God's (1 Cor. 6: 19-20).

It is Addictive and Enslaves The User

1. Smoking is addictive. The smokers themselves supply the evidence of this point. When a smoker says, "I've tried, but I can't quit." he is admitting that he is addicted. Sometimes one does not realize how addicted he is until he quits. When one can't go thirty minutes

without a cigarette, he no doubt is hooked on smoking.

2. Addiction is a sin. Smoking is not wrong because it is habit. There are many habits that we have developed that are not sin. Even bad habits are not necessarily sin. Smoking is wrong because it is addicting.

Paul wrote, "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any" (1 Cor. 6: 12). Weymouth's translation says, "... to nothing will I become enslaved."

Addiction violates the principle of **temperance** (self-control). It is a command of God to develop temperance and continue to grow in it (2 Pet. 1: 5-10). When a man (or woman) can't sever himself from his cigarette, he does not have the self-control God requires.

It Affects Other People

Smoking not only affects the one who is smoking, but it is also irritating and harmful to those who are around. Reports now suggest that the smoke coming off the burning end of the cigarette is just as harmful (if not more so) than the smoke inhaled by the smoker.

The family of the person who smokes has to constantly breathe his smoke. Little children raised in this cloud of smoke have to inhale poisoned air.

There are others affected as well. The smell of cigarette smoke gets into the clothes, hair, car and house of those with whom we come in contact.

I can testify of the aggravation caused by those who smoke. A few years ago I was having some voice problems. So, I thought it would be helpful to attend a seminar on voice care at one of the universities in Louisville. During a break, I stepped out into a small foyer (that was filled with the smoke from one smoker sitting in the corner) to call my wife. I was only in the foyer for two minutes or less. However, before I could get out the smoke had caused me to **lose my voice**. It was ironic that that was the very thing I was trying to learn how to prevent.

Jesus taught us to care more for others than that. He said, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matt. 7-12). Paul said, "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Phil. 2: 4).

If you don't care about your own body, please take others into consideration.

You Can Quit

We have established that smoking is a sin. Since that is true, then we conclude that quitting is not impossible. You can do it. You must first admit that it is wrong. Then, you must determine to quit.

(This author has a tract entitled "Smoking" published by Faith and Facts Press. It is available through Religious Supply Center.)

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THE FIRST AND GREAT COMMANDMENT
"Jesus said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." (Matt. 22: 37-40).

The priority that Jesus gives the first commandment indicates that the mission of Christ and His cause is a spiritual one (Matt. 1: 21; 20: 28; Luke 19: 10). Jesus did not come to start a denomination or a revolution; He did not leave heaven to promote the social status of men. He did not directly intrude into the problems of poverty, government, international affairs, economic questions, or secular education. It is a fact that requires little argumentation that His ministry was primarily concerned with people's spiritual welfare and eternal salvation.

When one fellow called on the Lord to settle a dispute over an inheritance, Jesus said, "Man, who made Me a judge or an arbitrator over you?" He then proceeded to warn against covetousness (Luke 12: 13-15).

The social gospel is based upon a reversal of the two great laws that Jesus referred to in the above text. Men have inverted the order. They have made the body more important than the soul. Having done this, they have exchanged the gospel of Christ for a gospel that has as its goal social improvement rather than salvation. They have promoted a gospel that treats the symptoms of the disease rather than the disease itself. As news analysis, Paul Harvey, has commented, "Jesus never seemed to be concerned about getting people out of the slums. But He walked the squalid streets day by day trying to get the slums out of the people." The fact is, if we can get the slums out of the people, they'll clean up their slums.

The source of the social gospel is that men no longer believe in the authority of the Bible, or in God, or in the soul. They believe that the greatest good they can accomplish is to provide people with a better life now.

Perhaps we need to emphasize that man's first duty is to God, and his second duty is to man. Here are some applications of the principle that I invite the readers to consider.

Some of God's requirements are strictly religious in nature. They pertain solely to the God - man relationship. Such is true of the first four of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20). The commands to have no other gods; to make no graven image; to not take the

name of God in vain; and to keep the Sabbath holy were religious laws. Many other laws in the Old Testament so far as the sacrifices, festivals, foods, and other matters were religious requirements. When the Jew under the law of Moses transgressed such laws, he sinned directly against God. Except for the religious influence he may have had on his family or neighbors, his sin was not against man. He could have been a good person socially; a good parent, neighbor, husband, employer; and broken all those laws.

This principle is true today. There are many requirements in the New Testament which are strictly religious. To believe in God and Christ, to repent, be baptized; to sing praises, take the Lord's supper, contribute to the church's work, assemble; all of these pertain to our vertical relationship with God. Many violate all such laws and are considered good men in the social and moral sense. They may be accommodating neighbors, loving parents, and productive citizens. They are just not interested in religion, or maybe they just have their own ideas about religion.

Other requirements are social or moral in nature. Many of God's commands and doctrines pertain to the horizontal man to man relationship. These, of course, also involve our relationship with God since this is part of His divine will. The last six of the Ten Commandments fall into this category: to honor parents; refrain from murder; adultery; theft; perjury and covetousness; all of these are in the realm of our relationship with our fellowmen.

Such remains true under the new covenant, for these and other moral requirements are legislated therein. When one breaks these laws, he sins not only against God, but against his neighbor. Governments have civil laws that concern these kinds of matters. If one is a transgressor of the social—moral laws, he is not usually considered a good man in the community.

Put the emphasis where the Lord put it. Both of these classes of laws are essential, but let's not lose sight of where Jesus placed the emphasis. He said the first and great commandment is to love God. Men tend to give priority to those laws that are social in nature. If one does not kill, steal, and carouse with other men's wives, he's a fine fellow. But in reality, if he has not submitted to the Lord and the gospel, he has not obeyed the first and great commandment.

It may be that the command to love God is called the first and great commandment because it really includes the second: to love neighbor as self. 1 John 5: 3 teaches us that the love of God is to keep His commandments. This would include both categories of His commandments. We are advised in 1 John 4: 20, 21 that it is not possible to love God if we do not love our brother.

When one is guilty of not helping a brother in need; or of backbiting and whispering about a brother; or of being jealous, envious, or bitter; the real problem is this: Such a one does not love God!

Some applications: We must conclude that one cannot obey the religious requirements, but ignore the moral-social requirements, and be acceptable to God. Jesus described those who were very scrupulous over religious laws, but tried to circumvent their social obli-

gations to their parents, as hypocrites (Mark 7: 6-13).


But, by the same token, if one keeps the moral laws, but ignores the religious responsibilities, he is not right either. The same God that gave the one gave the other. Both are essential. Just being a good moral person is not sufficient to save a person.

A recognition of the order of priorities in our text would solve many problems relative to institutionalism and the work of the church. On the one hand, the church, as well as the individual Christian, has certain benevolent responsibilities. These would fall into the social or moral classification. On the other hand, God has revealed a divine pattern regarding the organization and work of the church. Such is religious in nature. Some have voiced the opinion that we need to get the benevolent work done and not worry about the N. T. pattern. It appears that the emphasis is being misplaced.

Of course the basic error here is the assumption that we must ignore one thing or the other. Some of us wonder why we cannot do God's work in God's way!

Many further applications could be drawn. But the central lesson in all this is that we need to be concerned about keeping all the laws of God, both the religious and the moral.

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DOCTRINAL WEATHER PATTERNS

Those whose lives are affected by the weather have learned to recognize the weather patterns in their particular geographic area. And, while the Bible is not a textbook on meteorology, there are some references to weather patterns within its pages. Jesus recognized such patterns with respect to the sky (Mt. 16: 1, 2), and Solomon wrote about patterns for the wind (Eccl. 1: 6).

The apostle Paul says that the organizational structure/mission of the church is designed to protect us against "every wind of doctrine" (Eph. 4: 11-14), and this would certainly include that "wind of doctrine" which tells us there is no church, no organization, no work, and no mission.

But patterns have a way of establishing themselves for good or for bad, in spite of those who claim there are no patterns. Even those who scoff at the idea of Bible patterns find themselves following a pattern in their efforts to minimize the truth and maximize their false winds of doctrine. And, while the Bible gives abundant warnings and descriptions pertaining to those who ini-

tiate or fan the winds of false doctrine, we can also turn to history and our own experiences to verify such patterns.

In the early 1950's, two preachers in the Ohio Valley entered the first stages of this doctrinal weather pattern with regards to the terms "church" and "kingdom." While some Baptists and Jehovah's Witnesses had made such a distinction earlier, and at least one other preacher had held a similar position, the winds of this particular theory had not caused much of a rustle in the church.

Of course, there had been a distinction made between the church and the kingdom by various proponents of the pre-millennial theory, but this new wind was blowing a different tune.

This new twist to the church/kingdom distinction advocacy that the church was established during the personal ministry of Christ, the kingdom came on the Day of Pentecost, and that Jesus returned the second time in A. D. 70 at the destruction of Jerusalem.

The first step in the pattern was to teach this new doctrine privately, because one of the champions of this theory admitted that brethren were not yet well educated enough to be taught publicly. But, when some of us began to warn of this new "wind of doctrine," we were accused of misrepresenting those who were men of considerable influence and reputation among the brethren.

Gradually, as the brethren became more "educated" by private tutoring, the winds became stronger and more public, until the champions of this doctrine caused open schism in the body of Christ, established and nurtured their own congregations, held at least one public debate, and published a book detailing their dangerous and "damnable heresies" (cf. 2 Pet. 2: 1-3).

These doctrinal weather patterns became even more evident in the Ed Fudge/Carl Ketcherside connection of the 1970's, mainly because the scope and influence of the controversy and its participants were greater. Besides the main characters on the stage at this time, there were several younger preachers in the wings, in the front row, or as one portrayed himself, on a journey toward Jesus.

The same doctrinal weather patterns began to emerge. First, there was the private indoctrination, little trial balloons sent up in sermons or articles, or cunningly devised questions which accomplished the same purpose as a statement, yet could not be used as evidence that somebody was teaching something.

Then, as concerned brethren began to raise storm warnings, there were the usual claims and charges of misunderstanding, poorly-worded positions, character assassination, and even crucifixion. One defender of those in or loitering around the Ketcherside camp even admitted that one of the central figures in the controversy was "nebulous" in describing his position, but still accused others of either misunderstanding or misrepresenting his position.

"Herein is a marvelous thing"—some of these brethren had college degrees, and some had done graduate work, but were supposedly incapable of stating their position clearly enough to avoid being misunderstood. Any of us may make an off-hand statement or reference in passing that could stand some further clarification or

editing, but when an otherwise capable writer or speaker addresses a particular subject of his own choosing, and still can't express himself clearly enough to be understood, there is something wrong, and the fault doesn't lie with the hearer or the reader. That person either doesn't want to be understood clearly, or else needs to go back and take a basic course in plain English.

Another "wind of doctrine" is blowing over the brotherhood and it surely sounds like somebody is questioning the deity/divinity of Christ while he was upon earth. Again, there are the plain statements that no one could misunderstand, nebulous statements that could mean anything (or nothing), and inferences and questions that are left for the reader to answer or decide. Then come the denials or claims of misunderstanding and misrepresentation and other pieces of the doctrinal weather pattern.

The philosophy of those who want to advocate some new thing or resurrect some old denominational doctrine seems to be: throw your hat in the door, sample the waters of brotherhood reaction, send up a trial balloon, then advance or retreat depending on the nature of the opposition.

I have purposely omitted names with regard to the church/kingdom controversy of the 1950's, because that particular incident was more localized, and has about run its course as far as influence is concerned (I hope). There was no question about what Carl Ketcherside advocated in the 1970's, though his earlier positions were couched in the same ambiguity as other winds of false doctrine. Some of his converts were not as forthright as their teacher, and still aren't.

But these more recent winds blowing strange things about divorce/remarriage and the deity of Christ have not yet reached their full gale force, and some brethren had better take a second look at where they are in this doctrinal weather pattern before they make shipwreck concerning the faith.

We would not leave the impression that everyone who becomes entangled in such patterns fits the "sleight of men and cunning craftiness" label of Ephesians 4: 14. Sometimes a position forces us to follow a particular pattern which we would not intentionally embrace under more rational circumstances.

And, it is possible to be caught up in an "I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas" situation (1 Cor. 1: 12), "be puffed up for one against another" (1 Cor. 4: 6), or be led away by the dissimulation of those who do fall into such errors (Gal. 2: 13).

At any rate, we need to examine ourselves (2 Cor. 13: 5), and make certain that we are following a pattern that originates from spiritual Mt. Sinai (cf. Heb. 8: 5), and not a pattern which finds its origins in "every wind of doctrine."

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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WHERE JOHN LENNON MISSED IT

On October 9, Yoko Ono spoke before the United Nations and a recording of John Lennon's IMAGINE was broadcast to 130 countries over 1000 radio stations to over 1 billion people. The Armed Forces network beamed it to 80 more countries. While one may admire Lennon's ability, right-thinking people must disdain his atheistic communism. Tom Brokaw (of NBC) told us that Lennon began his rebellion against authority when he was 10 years old. The peace he longed for will never come through the philosophy he advocated.

"IMAGINE There's No Heaven, It's easy if you try." Lennon wanted us to believe Jesus was lying by promising us heaven. This would mean Jesus was not the son of God. Jesus taught us to live morally and righteously that we might spend eternity in the place he has gone to prepare and where he now reigns (Jn. 14: 1-3).

"No Hell Below Us, Above us only sky." As an act of friendship, Jesus warned us against hell. "And I say unto you my **friends**,... fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Lk. 12: 4, 5; Mt. 10: 28). Not many believe in hell because it hampers their lifestyle. Lennon taught and practiced self-indulgence. Jesus taught self-denial and called us to a higher and nobler life of faith in Jehovah God who holds the future. If Jesus was right about hell then Lennon was no friend to man.

"IMAGINE All The People, Living for today." Charles Smith, former president of the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism (4A Society) said, "happiness here and now should be the motive of our conduct." Neither Smith nor Lennon believed in a hereafter — no heaven or hell. Just do what will make you happy **NOW**. For over two decades a large segment of society has been doing that. And when we look at the AIDS plague, other epidemics of VD, the abortions, unwanted and unloved children, drug addicts, suicides, etc., we are caused to ask, "Are we having fun yet?"

"IMAGINE... No religion too." Eliminating Jesus and his teaching about heaven and hell does not eliminate religion. It exchanges one religion for another. From a religion of self-denial to a religion of self-indulgence. Lennon's religion of self-indulgence makes self into a god. The worship of self is the most corrupt religion a man can have.

"IMAGINE All The People, Living life in peace." If you can imagine this from a life of self-indulgence you have

too big an imagination. Lennon admitted advocating drug use (self-indulgence) in some of his songs. The drug culture has brought us anything but peace. We have seen its blight on America's most precious natural resource — her youth. It has ruined the health of many. It has caused many to turn to a life of crime, prostitution, etc. It has caused some to turn away from life to suicide. Lennon suffered the consequences of his own philosophy. One of his fans, who was a drug user, shot and killed the rock star. And if there is no God, who can say he did wrong?

Christians deplore both the crime and the philosophy that led to it (no God, self-indulgence).

IMAGINE No Possessions... People sharing all the world." Christians of the first century shared their possessions with their brethren by choice, out of love, as Jesus taught (Acts 2: 44, 45; 4: 32; Jn. 13: 34, 35). But Communism tried to force people to work according to their ability and receive according to their needs (no choice, without love). The work ethic was destroyed and many now live in poverty.

It would help if the multi-millionaires like Lennon and many other advocates of this philosophy would lead the way instead of pointing the way. Lennon, Jane Fonda, etc. retained their millions while making a token contribution now and then. Communist leaders lived lives of luxury while the people starved. They want everyone else to give up their possessions but they haven't shown us how it's done.

"You May Say I'm A Dreamer..." Yes, because what Lennon dreamed (communism) became a nightmare that didn't work. Atheistic communism is not the answer to man's plight. The reason we could never have the peace of which Lennon (Lenin?) dreamed is because he

eliminated the Prince of Peace who gave us the highest moral principles ever known to man. It is not because Christianity was tried and found difficult, but because it was found difficult and not tried. The fact that the cooperation of the U. N., all the radio and TV stations and 210 countries could be brought together should tell us that there are many who are still dreaming of communism.

Almost everyone can identify with John Lennon's longing to "live to peace" when "the world will be as one." Can we not see where Lennon and others have gone wrong? It isn't hard to Imagine.

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THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

Send all News Items to: Connie W. Adams, P. O. Box 69, Brooks, KY 40109

GEORGIA DEAN COPE

GEORGIA DEAN COPE, beloved wife of James R. Cope, completed her earthly journey on December 3. Funeral services were conducted on December 6 at Hutchinson Auditorium on the campus of Florida College with Bob Owen, Colly Caldwell and Earl Kimbrough conducting services. She was a gracious lady who loved the Lord, her husband and children and the people of God. She was a personal blessing to the life of this editor. The Copes have unselfishly given of themselves all their lives to help other people. Young people they influenced for good are now scattered over the globe. Our hearts go out to brother Cope in his loss, and yet we rejoice for her that she is at rest from the illness she suffered. You may reach James R. Cope at 301 Greencastle, Temple Terrace, FL 33617.

WILLIAM C. SEXTON, 4400 N. W. Gleason, Kansas City, MO 64151—October 14, 1990 was an historic day for the Roan Ridge

congregation in Kansas City. Three men (Ray Harris, Bill Sexton and Kenneth Young) were appointed to serve as elders of the congregation. April 16 was a critical day in my life. I had open heart surgery, had 4 by-passes and spent 21 days in the hospital. I am now doing fine. Thanks for all the prayers, cards, letters and phone calls brethren. In a few weeks I was back in the pulpit and able to resume my usual work. The bill exceeded \$70, 000. In the last three years my insurance company has paid out about \$170, 000 on hospital and doctor bills. I would suggest to any preacher who is tempted to get along without hospitalization that you think again.

I'm in my 6th year with Roan Ridge. Bill Crews was here in a good meeting in June. When in Kansas City, worship with us.

EDGAR J. DYE, 800 Green Oak Lane, Pine Bluff, AR 71602—Contrary to persistent public rumor I have NOT retired, am NOT retired and DO NOT—repeat, DO NOT—plan to retire. I have changed my primary place of labor, **but have NOT** retired. After a

total of 18 years labor with the brethren in Pine Bluff, 4 years with the 6th Ave. church and 14 years with the W. 28th Ave. church, I am now laboring with the church at Grady, Arkansas about 20 miles southeast of Pine Bluff on Highway 65 South. I will continue to live in Pine Bluff at the above address while working full time with the brethren in Grady.

JACK GILLILAND, San Bernardino, CA—We moved from Taft, Texas to begin work December 1 with the Mt. View church in San Bernardino, CA.

NORMAN E. Webb, 3402 Reign St., Melbourne, FL 32934—The Eau Gallie congregation in Melbourne has recently completed a new auditorium that will seat about 225. This has been planned several years and we are thankful to see it realized. I have been working with the church here for 2 years. We have been blessed with 20 baptisms and several have placed membership with us. Attendance is about 100. The Melbourne/Palm Bay area is growing rapidly. We invite anyone visiting this area to meet with us.

WILLIAM O'NEAL, Route 7, Box 26, Russell Springs, KY 42642—Dorval McClister will begin work with the church at Jamestown, Kentucky on January 1, 1991. He has been with the Burbank, Illinois congregation for the past 21 years. Since he was born and reared in Adair County, KY, it is like coming home to him and his wife, Jean. Everyone in the Jamestown congregation is so happy about his accepting work here.

BOB L. ROSS (Baptist), P. O. Box 66, Pasadena, TX 77501— I note the passing of A. C. GRIDER in the October issue (page 232). I first met Bro. Grider in Annandale, Virginia in 1973 where I was in a debate with Floyd Chappelle. As I had no one to serve as a moderator, I proposed that Bro. Grider, who was to serve for Floyd, was also acceptable to me and could serve as the mutual moderator, which he did. I called only one point of order during the debate, regarding a chart which was "new material" in a last speech of the evening, and Bro. Grider upheld my point, even though we were divided over the issues in debate. I developed an immediate fondness for him, and it seemed to me that he took a liking to me. Since our first meeting, we have had a few letters between us, and I have always enjoyed his correspondence. He once invited me to come and debate with him for a month! Despite our differences, I could not help but like him, and I am sure he will be missed by all who knew him.

JIM DEASON, Rt. 1, Box 153, Culleoka, TN 38451—In October I was in a meeting at Carriage Dr. in Beckley, WV where Weldon Warnock is doing a fine work. One was baptized. Then, I went to Pound, VA for my sixth meeting there where Leonard Salyers has done such good work for some 13 years. One was baptized here. Health problems have slowed him down some the last two years, but the fruit of his labor can be seen everywhere.

ROBERT BOLTON, 504 Goodwin Dr., Richardson, TX 75081—After working with the College Park church for almost 17 years, by mutual agreement with the elders, I am restructuring my work as a gospel preacher. As many of you know, for several years I have been attempting to persuade the brethren to get another preacher. As a result, it has been decided to engage some mature man to take up the work of a local preacher here. I will continue to be fully supported and financially underwritten by College Park, but will be relieved of the burdens of local work. Thus, I will be free to increase my schedule of gospel meetings, especially with smaller churches that might be financially restricted. Also, I will be available for Sunday appointment preaching in the immediate area of North Central Texas. Brethren, I do not desire to retire, but simply to rearrange my work in the kingdom of God. My hope is that I will be able to conduct ten to twelve meetings a year as well as do a good deal of appointment preaching where needed. Should any congregation, anywhere, desire my service in such an endeavor, I would be most delighted to hear from them as soon as possible, that I might complete my schedule for the next three years. I may be contacted at the above address or phone (214) 234-0296.

W. BRADENTON CHURCH RE-LOCATES

The church which has met at West Bradenton, Florida since 1911, has sold the property at 161910th Ave. W. On September 2, 1990 we began meeting in a meeting room at DAYS INN MOTEL, 15061st St. W. (Hwy. 41) in Bradenton. Services are at 9 and 10 A. M. and 5 P. M. on Sundays and 7: 30 on Wednesdays. All correspondence should be addressed to: Bradenton Church of Christ, P. O. Box 10932, Bradenton, FL 34282. Phone (813) 746-0305. We plan to re-locate at another site as soon as possible.

A. A. GRANKE, JR., 1 Cherokee St., Sumter, SC 29150—As soon as support can be arranged, my wife, Cindy, and I plan to move to Millsboro, Delaware where I will do the work of an evangelist. Millsboro is situated near the center of Delmarva peninsula, between the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean. To our knowledge the saints there comprise the only faithful church on the entire 190-mile long peninsula. The nearest sound churches are more than 100 miles away in Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington, D. C. areas. The church began in 1987 with the family of Tim and Connie Fannin. Four adults they have taught have recently obeyed the gospel and they are studying with others. I am 46 years old and have been preaching since 1970. Personal evangelism is the kind of work to which I am best suited. I was born and reared in Delaware and I know the people of that area. I will be glad to put churches which are interested in helping support me in contact with congregations which have supported my work in South Carolina and with other references. My phone number is (803) 773-0828.

FRED A. SHEWMAKER, 1101 S. W. Dorchester St., Fort St. Lucie, FL 34983—Since our last report on the work in Fort Pierce, Florida, there have been several significant developments. We have converted a garage into three nice class rooms. We remodeled the assembly area, installed a baptistery, tore out the restrooms and built new, larger ones. In January the church assumed support which two other churches had supplied for the preacher, and plan in Jan, 1991 to assume that supplied by two other congregations and a part of that supplied by the remaining supporting church. We have had 11 baptisms, one restored and 10 have been identified with us. We now publish a bulletin, "The Fortifier." Grover Stevens and Eugene Ford were here in meeting in 1990. Hoyt H. Houchen will be here Feb. 10-15, 1991 for a gospel meeting. If you are thinking of moving to Florida, or visiting this state, we invite you to consider the Treasure Coast and the Fort Pierce Church.

GLENDON MCCLURE, P. O. Box 1413, Antioch, CA 94509—Bobby Witherington, now of Panama City, Florida was recently with us in a gospel meeting. We continue to struggle because our number is small, but we press on. We wish to issue a plea to "come over to" Antioch, CA and help us. We would like to interest Christians to come here who love, live and teach the truth; those who oppose worldly living and false doctrine, including false teaching on divorce and remarriage. We need people who are grounded and settled, who will not forsake the assembling and who can be depended on. We need people who love the lost. If you are that kind of Christian, then "COME OVER AND HELP US."

PREACHER NEEDED

CAMERON, OHIO—The church here is seeking a full time preacher. Cameron is located about 15 miles from New Martinsville, West Virginia and about the same distance from Woodsfield, Ohio. The average attendance is about 40 people. Outside support will be required. We can offer \$600 per month support. Contact: Bill Gorrell, P. O. Box 67, Woodsfield, OH 43793 or call (614) 472-5141.

ROCK SPRINGS, WYOMING—The church which meets at 90 Second St., Rock Springs, WY 82901, is in need of a fulltime preacher of the gospel. There are about 50 in attendance on Sunday mornings. The editor of STS preached there recently and was impressed with the potential for good. Rock Springs is a town of about 12, 000 located on

I-80 in the southern part of Wyoming. Some outside support would be needed. Those interested may contact Al Hasley, 525 Wilkes Dr., Green River, WY 82935. Phone (307) 875-6669.

FROM AROUND THE WORLD

NORWAY—The church in Bergen has bought a building in which to meet. They will have the first floor of a building at Steinkjellergate 9. This is located one block from the famous "Bryggen" (harbor front). It is near several of the large hotels. Though the structure is 150 years old, it has recently undergone complete renovation. They could use some help from individuals in the purchasing of some equipment (tables, lighting, chairs for assembly area and classrooms, table for the Lord's Supper). They will be able to meet the payments from their own contributions. Write to: Terrell Bunting, Bronndalen 89, 5071 Loddefjord, Norway.

AROUND EUROPE—**STEVE WALLACE** of Ramstein, Germany reports on recent trips to various places to preach and encourage the brethren. He has made two trips to Budapest, one alone and one with Denny Diehl of Elgin, IL. Two were baptized and many Bibles and pieces of literature were handed out. Lynn Trapp from Crane, Texas spent about 3 weeks in Budapest in July. During that time he baptized 15 people. Derek Chambers and Harry Rice plan to go there in October. Denny Diehl and Steve Wallace also stopped in Prague, Czechoslovakia to gather information for brethren planning to move there. They handed out literature. The Czechs swarmed around the table until every piece of literature was gone. John Iguma, one of the original converts in Budapest, has now moved to Vienna, Austria and has already baptized 3 there. Derek and Harry also plan to visit there. Tom Earp, Jeff Young and Bill Bynum are now in Prague. As soon as they can find housing, their families will join them.

INDIA REPORT

JOHN HUMPHRIES, 8705 Wooded Glen Road, Louisville, KY 40220—Jerry Parks and I completed safely around trip to India for the purpose of preaching and teaching the gospel of Christ. We were gone about six weeks in September and October. We had Bible classes for preachers and any others who wanted to attend at several locations in various districts in the state of Andhra Pradesh, South India. We presented various lessons on authority, the church and its work, apostasy and history of the church, the plan of salvation, etc. We had prepared workbooks that we handed out to the brethren who attended the classes. We also did a lot of preaching in many villages meeting with many of the churches to encourage the members.

As you may remember, this past summer Andhra Pradesh had a severe storm that destroyed many villages and killed several thousand people. It was what we would call a hurricane with 150 mile per hour winds. This storm hit the Krishna Delta where many of our brethren live. They were devastated. Homes were blown away. Crops and animals were destroyed. Many of them lost everything. A number of them were killed. After the storm, because of the water problems and dead animals, various diseases spread. Malaria, cholera, typhoid and other medical problems caused heavy loss of life.

The response of brethren here was heart-warming. Several thousand dollars in help to the needy saints was sent and also carried by us to the suffering brethren in India. Money was given for food, clothing, shelter and medicine. We have pictures of many of the places and brethren who were helped. We were able to purchase Bibles for many who lost theirs.

We also had 8 tracts, written by several of us who go to India, printed in the Telegu language. We printed 10,000 copies of each tract. The Taylorsville Road church (Louisville, KY) made most of that possible. Also, some song books in Telegu were printed. Pekin and Silver St. in New Albany (Indiana) had sent money to pay for tracts and song books.

Jerry and I watered where Indian preachers had planted. We baptized 54. These has been taught by Indian brethren and were ready to respond to the gospel.

India is in great difficulty right now as a nation. There is religious conflict over a "sacred" temple site presently occupied by a Moslem Mosque. The Hindus want the property back in order to build a temple there and the Moslems are threatening "Holy war" if the Hindus try

to build there. It has resulted in much bloodshed over the past year and a half and no end is in sight. Conflict over jobs based on quotas instead of merit has led to riots and bloodshed. Hyderabad (where we were) was shut down for days at a time. Buses did not run, stores did not open, and schools closed down because of the violence.

I will not go into other problems, but just wanted all to realize that we were not making a pleasure trip. I had a close call one night when preaching in a suburb of Secunderabad. Some Hindus were objecting to the Christians meeting there and came with knives and clubs to stop the meeting. Several brethren were beaten and the brethren rushed me away from the place (Acts 17: 13, 14).

Though Jerry and I split up to cover more places, we still were not able to visit all the brethren. I have been going to India for the past 14 years and see many new churches as a result of the gospel work. I am planning to return to India next fall.

ITALY—Francesco Fosci of Latina reports three baptisms there in October. He also has started a new radio program on Sunday mornings.

Sandro Corazza of Rome is losing a sizable amount of support which places him and the work at Via Sannio in a precarious situation. Several years ago this brother gave up a good job, took his retirement funds and purchased a small print shop to use in preparing and printing material in Italian to help further the work. He is now 66 years old and past the time when he could find other employment. His wife has had serious physical problems.

Also, Stefano Corazza, who works with Roberto Tondelli in establishing a new work in another section of Rome, has lost a large amount of support. All of the men there face difficulties because of the fluctuations in the value of the dollar in the foreign exchange.

SPAIN—Efrain Perez has just started the second year of a preacher training program at the Badalona congregation (Barcelona). Attendance recently has averaged 42 with a high of 55 in services. Two more have been baptized and one restored.

VENEZUELA AND COLUMBIA, SOUTH AMERICA—Carlos Capelli of Buenos Aires, Argentina reports on a preaching trip to Venezuela and Columbia during which four were baptized and one restored. He says the brethren in Venezuela need Bible literature in Spanish. Ruben C. Amador of Houston, Texas was with the churches at Jose C. Paz and Boulogne in Argentina for gospel meetings in October. Much good was done.

Ruben C. Amador makes this comment about false reports on the work in Venezuela. "Since beginning our work in Venezuela through the invitation of the sound church in Barinas, distorted reports have come from the liberal camp. A much circulated paper, THE LATIN AMERICAN CRIER, published monthly by the Western Christian Foundation, Inc. in Wichita Falls, Texas, contains a monthly report written by Bob Brown, missionary in Venezuela. Every other report contains false information about the sound work of good faithful brethren. These reports demonstrate a lack of love for truth and fairness. Contrary to these reports, the work in Barinas continues and is by far the strongest church in all Venezuela."

SOUTH AFRICA—Paul Williams' last two reports mention nine baptisms, four confessions of wrong and two withdrawals. Paul is losing \$550 a month support.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: It is sad to learn that several good men in foreign fields are losing significant amounts of support at a time when so much good is being done and so many doors are being opened. There are often good reasons why some congregations have to reduce their help at certain times but we pray that others will see the need and take up the slack. The fields are white unto harvest. CWA)

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	S21
RESTORATIONS	114

(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)

SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

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



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

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THINK ON THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 1631
Lutz, FL 33549



THEY KNEW NOT WHY THEY CAME TOGETHER

By the authority of Jesus Christ saints all over the world come together upon the first day of the week to break bread, and to engage in other expressions of their praise and adoration unto God in spirit and truth (Acts 2: 42; 20: 7; 1 Cor. 11: 17-34). In various localities churches assemble for worship and edification each Lord's day, and at other appointed times between Lord's days. In many cases some of those people who come together do not have any real understanding why they have assembled. Some assemble to fulfill a duty to the church; some to criticize and find fault; some to sleep; and some come to play; some come because they like the preacher. The reasons for the assembly of the saints are clearly taught in the word of God.

An assembly of citizens in Ephesus resulted from a complaint by Demetrius, a silversmith who made silver shrines for Diana, the goddess of the Ephesians. He called together the workmen of the same occupation as that of himself and proposed a solution. "For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen, whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands: so that not only this

our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth" (Acts 19: 24-27).

The whole city of Ephesus was said to have been filled with confusion. "Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused: and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together" (Acts 19: 32). Most of those in the assembly did not know why they were there.

This reference to an assembly did not refer to the church meeting, but was a mob created by Demetrius who was concerned about losing his trade. The circumstances of this assembly may be much like that of the church in many places today. In almost any assembly of any size there are those who "knew not wherefore they were come together."

Some people use the assembly of the saints as a place to make friends and acquaintances for business purposes and to plan socials for the coming week. This hour of public assembly for worship and edification is sometimes used to promote picnics, parties, showers, etc. One would think the singing and praying are secondary matters.

Some think they come to the assembly to accommodate the preacher and elders. It is as if they viewed themselves as clients, doing a great favor to the preacher by coming. If the preacher speaks too plainly of their sins, they threaten to quit coming to the assembly, and sometimes they do. They are doing him a service by coming, they think.

Some come to the assembly to be seen: to show off their new clothes. These use the assembly as a time and place to impress others with appearance, and vie for popularity with the group. They do not know the real reason for the assembly.

Some make their plans to rest and even get a nap for the afternoon activities when they come to the assembly of the church. No higher purpose for the assembly occurs to them.

Why do we meet together on the first day of the week? It certainly is not for the above reasons. We are authorized to assemble to "break bread" (Acts 20: 7).

We must not forsake the assembling of ourselves together to exhort and provoke one another unto good works (Heb. 10: 25). We will say that the church assembles on the first day of the week to worship the Lord and to teach and exhort one another—to edify the body in love.

Worship consists of singing; teaching and admonishing one another; praying: the church prayed together in an assembly for Peter (Acts 12: 5, 12); preaching: Paul preached to the disciples assembled on the first day of the week (Acts 20: 7); breaking of bread: eating the Lord's supper in memory of his death (Acts 20: 7; 1 Cor. 11: 20-34); and giving of our prosperity to the work of the Lord (1 Cor. 16: 1, 2; 9: 14; 2 Cor. 11: 8). The combination of all these expressions of worship include nothing more than worship to God and edifying the church. Other matters should be left out of the assembly on the first day of the week. We hear far too much about profit and pleasure and far too little about the word of the Lord.

Prepare your hearts and lives to meet with the saints of like mind on the first day of the week to get the most from the worship to God at that time. If you come with the right heart and for the right purpose, you will be blessed beyond your expectation.

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Editorial

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OUR GLORY AND JOY

Why do faithful men preach the gospel? Is it an ego trip in which men delight in the large audiences they have addressed, the well-known churches they have served, the honors heaped upon them, and whether or not their names are "household words" in a large brotherhood? Is it to glory in the vanquished foes in and out of the church when issues, serious and otherwise, create tensions?

Paul said "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel" (1 Cor. 9: 16). Of his own countrymen he said "My hearts desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved" (Rom. 10: 1-2). To the Romans he said "As much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also" (Rom. 1: 14-15).

But no passage better expresses the motivation of the faithful preacher of the gospel than his statement to the new converts at Thessalonica. "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? **For ye are our glory and joy**" (1 Thes. 2: 19-20). Earlier in that chapter he wrote of his work among them marked by courage, fidelity to the Lord and his word, unselfishness, gentleness as a nurse with her children and understanding as a father with his own, and all to the end that "ye would walk worthy of God." His overriding ambition was to present them blameless before the Lord at his coming.

Such men do their work because they love the souls of all people. They are willing to "spend and be spent," to go to the ends of the earth, if possible, for them, to snatch some out of the fire. They are willing to work whether supported by the church, or by the labors of their own hands so they can continue the work of telling the old, old story of Jesus and his love. They delight in teaching those, who like the Thessalonians of old, receive it "not as the word of man, but as it is in truth, the word of God" (1 Thes. 2: 13). To teach these receptive souls, see them baptized into Christ, and then to see their joy and eagerness to learn and grow—that is their glory and joy. Then to watch as they mature into strong Christians, able to digest the meat of the word, and see them take places of responsibility and leadership among the saints of God—that is their glory and joy. To see them handle adversity with faith and courage—that is their glory and joy. That glory and joy cannot be put into a check

from the treasurer. It does not come from brotherhood adulation or tributes of praise from the famous. It is the sustenance of devoted servants of God the world around, whether breaking fresh ground in eastern Europe, amid the poverty of India or the Philippines, in China where every Bible study session poses the threat of arrest, imprisonment, or possible execution, or in the heartland of the USA where general apathy toward spiritual interests makes the hungering soul the more unique.

If it is the "glory and joy" of the faithful to see earnest souls preparing well for the presence of the Lord, it is also the greatest sorrow to see the work destroyed. Paul wrote of this when he said "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" (1 Cor. 3: 11-15).

While there is no joy to compare with seeing honest people obey the truth and then grow in grace and knowledge, neither is there any sorrow to compare with seeing once eager young Christians growing weak or falling away altogether. Thank God the teacher will not lose his reward because the student turns out to be "wood, hay or stubble." One of the greatest joys of my life was to baptize a young man in Norway in February, 1958, the first fruits of the gospel in that land. It was a glory and joy to see him lead in public prayer for the first time, then later hear his first attempts to preach the gospel. *Ah* our ship left port that night in September, 1959 headed to New York, this young man stood on the dock with a small band of disciples and I commented to my wife that this young man would "stand until the judgment." But I was wrong. What had been a glory and joy turned to bitter tears and disappointment for the Harrises who remained along with the Pierces, and for me, when this young man left the truth and disturbed the faith of others. That ache continues to the present hour. What preacher of the gospel, having labored for only a few years, cannot identify with this case and multiply accounts from his own work?

It would help all preachers of the word to reassess their motives for preaching against the background of these statements from Paul which we have noticed. It would equally help Christians in their relationship with those men who preach among them to realize that true servants of the Lord are doing this for YOU. YOU are truly their glory and joy. Whether or not they ever become famous, ever write a book, ever have a public debate, ever speak on a lectureship to a large audience, or ever preach outside their own county, does not really matter to them as long as YOU are growing in your service to God so that you may be presented to Christ at his coming. That is what makes such men endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ.

Think about it brethren. When you are tempted to

quit, or you think you are not being fairly treated, or that you are not appreciated, or that you could make a lot more money in business, or... well, whatever, please ask yourself, What is my glory and joy? Am I doing this so that others might "walk worthy of God"?

GEORGIA DEANE COPE
Funeral Address by Colly Caldwell

There is a wonderful phrase in the apostle Peter's instructions to married Christians which speaks of their "*being heirs together of the grace of life*" (1 Pet. 3: 7). If she lets her beauty center in the gentle and quiet spirit, the hidden person of the heart which trusts in God, as she maintains moral purity and follows the leadership of her husband in the home; and if *he* gives honor to her, understanding her needs; *their* prayers will not be hindered and they will be "*heirs together of the grace of life.*"

The ultimate "*grace of life*" inherited by the children of God is, of course, that undeserved eternal blessing of the life beyond. There is, in addition, for those who love and pray and share and care as Jim and Georgia Deane Cope have these past forty-six years a certain shared "*grace of life*" upon this earth. God caused Solomon to write: "He who finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor from the Lord" (Prov. 18: 22).

We share sadness today, but through our tears we smile and feel a profound sense of joy that she was part of our lives. We also cannot help but be happy as we look by faith at the wonderful experiences she has now entered. And we feel an excited sense of encouragement in the memory of all the wonderful experiences she brought into our lives by the grace of the good Providence of God. In all of those ways, she would not like for this to be an unseemly or unhappy time for us.

All of us will always remember Georgia Deane as among the most graceful and beautiful women we ever knew. The bright colors in her clothing, the radiant glow in her eyes, the captivating smile that brightened her entire face, and the charm of her expressions (both facial and verbal) were inescapable... they drew us to her like the brilliant light of the sun or the fragrant aroma of a rose in full bloom.

But like the woman described by Peter, her real beauty to us was not the outward appearance. She possessed all that and more; and as she added years, she added grace and charm. Age seemed only to enhance her beauty and the calm and quiet spirit which accepted change with dignity and poise only added to our pictures of her beauty and made her appearance even more pleasant to all of us. Where her beauty was really found, however, and it was always so, was in her character... the kind of character that God has blessed with the "*grace of life.*"

To me, and I think to most of you, the beauty in Georgia Deane's life centers in two great qualities. First, her understanding of who she is. Sister Cope committed

her life to Christ and first and foremost she wanted to be a Christian. She saw herself simply as that... no more, no less, and in that fact she seemed always to be herself. She was equally at home with those of us who have little as with those who walk with kings... and she wanted us to be so... to be ourselves before God and men. She entertained very important people with grace and charm, but she loved to be with those important people with whom she could share a taco and talk about family and church. I never knew her to seek any kind of recognition for herself. She simply served others—ALL others often at great cost to her own personal needs, when it was easy and when it was not.

And that brings us to say that her beauty is also found in our knowledge that the guiding principle applying all the beliefs and values in this woman was one articulated by her Lord when he said the "*greatest among you shall be your servant.*" *Truly* she was as giving a person as I have ever known. Even in dying she put others before herself. Perhaps especially in dying, she showed her love in how much she cared that her loved ones were all okay. I wish all of you could know as we know that to end the suffering of these last days was her wish for Jim and Connie and Sissy much more than for herself.

And she was thankful: a gratitude that was articulated almost unbelievably to me when she said that God was blessing her by her illness in letting her experience the love her family and friends showered upon her in visits and cards and beautiful flowers and words. That was an experience she saw as a great gift given by the Lord.

One time a man asked Jesus, "*Who is my neighbor?*" I cannot imagine Georgia Deane asking that question. First of all, she considered everyone who contacted her to be important to her and a part of her life. She sewed up the students' ripped clothes, she made little meringue "Connie Kisses" by the thousands, she fed and cared for the brethren... because others were important. But beyond that, I think Georgia Deane would never have made that statement because she thought more in terms of "family" than "neighbors." The church is her family. The people, all the people, here at the College are her family. Her friends are "family" to her.

Of course, she has her own immediate family which she literally served until the moment she left us and who in many ways she will continue to serve through all she has already done. She came out of a wonderful Tennessee family of Christians. Her grandfather McFarland was an elder in the Donalson church near Nashville and her grandmother was a fine Christian named Georgia Ellen. Her mother was named Naomi after that wonderful mother in the Bible and her father, Charles Combs, was a dear man who walked along the streets of Temple Terrace greeting us in his own way. Georgia Deane and Sissy gave themselves to their father's care as long as he was with us. Her sister, Sissy, who is here today was almost her twin... a year and day separated their birth-days, but there was not a year and a day separating their love and devotion to one another as the dearest and closest of sisters.

Isn't God's Providence wonderful. Let me tell you a

story. When Georgia Deane's parents married, they went to Texas on their honeymoon and never returned to Tennessee. Brother Combs worked in Galveston for the old Wells Fargo company until 1941 when his job moved the family to Dallas. It was there in the summer of 1944 that Jim Cope came to the Preston Road church for a meeting. On the opening day, he met the young woman who would be his bride for life. He had preached for four years on a regular basis at Donalson where her grandfather McFarland now in his nineties had served as an elder, but he had never seen Georgia Deane, except perhaps in a family picture or two, until now. During the next two weeks she heard him preach every evening, spent almost every moment during the daytime hours in his presence (at his insistence we might add) and before he returned to Tennessee she had promised to become his wife.

Can anyone doubt her loyalty and dedication to Jim? "The heart of her husband safely trusts in her."

She has been in his love and she bore his children. She has been his friend and confidant and she never violated his trust or broke his confidence. She has been his helper, intellectually and emotionally and he has always been proud to have her at his side. They read the Bible together, they prayed together, we know they have shared and we trust they will share the "grace of life" together.

She has been his homemaker in the truest and fullest sense of all that that means. She has cared for so many in their home. She has literally fed thousands. She did it for Jim and she gave all that from her love... and it was not easy to do. A private, quiet life would have fit her personal desires much more.

Jim could well have written the words of that beautiful song we often hear on the radio: **"It must have been cold there in my shadow; you always walked a step behind; I was the one with all the glory; while you were the one with all the strength; I never once heard you complain."** And had he written these words, he would have gone on to say, **"It might have appeared to go unnoticed, but I've got it all here in my heart; Did you ever know that you're my hero, and everything I'd like to be? I can fly higher than an eagle, cause you are the wind beneath my wings."**

And her children, they call her blessed. She gave so much to them without regard for herself... beginning in the labor which brought them forth. When Jim had to be gone to find help for this school or to preach the gospel of Christ, she took the support of his work and the family as her mission in life, and she cared for Connie and Cathy and "Butch" and nurtured them and loved them and their mates, Mike and John and Jenny, unselfishly. Her touch was gentle and comforting. Her voice was pleasing. Her nature was sympathetic. She was fulfilled as a wife and mother. She loved her grandchildren and her new great-granddaughter. She certainly wanted to share the "grace of life" with them.

I do not believe that love ceases when one moves to be with the Lord. Jesus spoke of the concern of one who had passed into the spirit realm for his five brothers on

earth. Be that as it may, I know our love for Georgia Deane did not suddenly stop when she went away. She will always be there in Jim's heart, and in the hearts of her family, in mine and Lynda's, and in all of yours. And she would want us to love one another as well so we can share the "grace of life" with her.

I want to close with some verses from God's word. The Bible passages I find myself wanting to read today are not the passages that speak of death and mourning. I think Georgia Deane might like for us we read one like this: *"Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud but associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do right in the eyes of everyone"* (Rom. 12: 10-17).

As we pray for God to comfort Jim and this wonderful family, let's pray also for God to bless Georgia Deane's extended family, all of us, with the same spirit she had so that we might practice the words we have read in our lives as she did so that we all may share the "grace of life" together with Georgia Deane.

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THE WORLD IS IN TROUBLE!
DON'T FORGET TO PRAY!

THE TRAGEDY OF DIVORCE

T. Doy Moyer
1422 Clover Hill Drive
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"For the God of Israel says that He hates divorce" (Malachi 2: 16).

One of the greatest tragedies to face this country today is the breakdown of the family unit. With nearly 50 percent of all marriages ending in divorce, the first step to solving the problem is to recognize that there is a problem. Furthermore, members of the Lord's church must not bury their heads in the sand and ignore the same problem within the church. Many Christians are learning more from the world than they are from God and consequently are ending their marriages also.

Everyone needs to take a serious look at what is happening. I fear that these matters are being taken too lightly. We have a tendency to think, "it can't happen to me." We have probably all thought that about a family that now have divorced. We then sit back and wonder with complete amazement, "How? Why?" Actually we know how and why; I just don't understand how or why Christians let such things happen. It is a real problem that needs to be addressed and seriously thought about, because with the breakdown of the family comes even a more serious problem: the rejection of God and His will.

Divorce is a tragedy for several reasons. Consider a couple.

1. It shows a disregard for God and His word. Anytime a divorce takes place, there is sin involved by someone. And how often do we see those who get divorced completely fall away afterwards? People are entering marriage these days with the concept that they can get a divorce if things just don't work out. Marriage is held in contempt by those who advocate "trying each other out" by living together first. People are entering first marriages with pre-nuptial agreements, just in case they might need a divorce (this is not to suggest that *all* such agreements are wrong; just the ones that do it with a view toward divorce). Others substitute the vows "until death do us part" with "until the love between us dies." Such attitudes are geared for divorce in the first place. We should not be surprised they are so common.

Yet, the tragedy so close to home is that Christians also show disregard for their vows to each other. Members of Christ's body, including elders, deacons, and preachers are leaving their families and rejecting the will of Almighty God. Instead of letting our lights shine and holding fast the word of life (Phil. 2: 15-16), we are giving non-Christians opportunities to blaspheme Christ. It ought not to be so! "Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge" (Heb. 13: 4) How many souls

will be lost to the cause of infidelity or the abandonment of responsibility?

2. Divorce has a deep effect on many people. It embraces a large circle of people. The divorcing couple cannot rightly say that they are the only ones involved. There are the friends, the church, the family, and most tragically, the children. Sometimes families that seemed to be pillars get divorced and the effects on the church are astounding. Churches can be torn apart, the very heart of their activity and encouragement ripped out when a family whose example is so strong breaks up. Some lose their faith, and others might think, "if they can't do it, how can I?" It can become a serious stumbling block to many.

But perhaps the most affected and least thought of in these situations are the children. Divorce is something that will have a dramatic impact on the rest of their lives. It's not like a beat up toy that they can toss away and forget about. While still at home they will be juggled between parents, trying to learn how to deal with instability both physically and emotionally. They will be torn in their feelings, desperately wanting to have their parents together, yet thinking that they must make a choice between them (even though such may not be necessary, the feeling is still there).

Once gone from home, the child still feels the pressure that comes from a torn family. They may have a family of their own now and it becomes difficult to "share" their own children with the parents that they feel had let them down. It is said that "time heals all wounds," but this is a wound that will forever change their outlook on life. It could very well be the thing that drives them from God. Though this does not justify their actions, it reminds us that "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... woe to that man by whom the offense comes!" (Matt. 18: 6-7). How tragic when it is the parents who become such a factor in driving their children away from the Lord! Parents, do not underestimate your influence on your children!

With all of my heart I wish I knew how to properly impress upon Christians how important marriage is and how terrible divorce is. Brethren, "Marriage, Divorce, and remarriage" is more than an academic issue. It is a stunning reality that is sweeping this country and ruining more people than we can imagine. Some will know what I'm talking about. Others might think I'm an alarmist. But if that's what it takes to wake us up, let me sound the alarm loud and clear! Souls are going to be lost over it. And believe me, it *can* happen to you, whether you want to believe that or not. "Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10: 12). Your realization of this will help prevent it happening to you.

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SIMPLICITY IN CHRIST

P. J. Casebolt

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"FIRE IN THE HOLE!"

Originally, "Fire in the hole!" was the warning cry which accompanied the use of dynamite or nitro in mining and petroleum operations. Gradually, it has become a generic warning for any impending danger.

The thought of fire conjures up the worst possible scenario in a building, on board a ship or plane, or just about anywhere else. Even the use of explosives or a backfire for the purpose of quenching or controlling an existing fire is a delicate procedure fraught with risk and danger.

And when it comes to preachers, the cry of "Fire in the hole!" would tempt some of us to enter a burning building to rescue our sermon outlines. This story is about a preacher who lost not only his sermon outlines, but most of his other possessions in a destroying fire. But before we hear about him, how would you other preachers and brethren (especially brethren), react in the face of such a real or threatening loss?

Like most young preachers, I had to wrestle with the real or perceived value of sermon outlines in my earlier preaching days. In my first meeting, I thought I had enough outlines for a two-week meeting, but found out the last day that my last outline was merely a summary of things I had already preached. A record snowstorm closed the meeting, and I doubt that the Lord sent that storm just for my benefit, but I sure did appreciate it. And I don't even like snow.

Older preachers advised me to get some sermon outline books, and loaned or gave me some of their own. I even went to the Gospel Advocate store in Nashville and bought a joke book, "Snappy Stories That Preachers Tell," thinking it would give me some needed or expected (in the eyes of the brethren), illustrations to spice up my sermon outlines. What a waste of time.

At one point in my preaching days, I accepted the responsibility of speaking on a daily radio program, only had two "radio sermons," and had already used one of them on the same station before I took on that monumental task. I bought and read a book of 50 radio sermons delivered by a famous preacher, and couldn't use a single one of them. What another waste of time.

When preachers would get together, especially younger preachers, the first question somebody asked was, "Have you found any new sermon outlines lately?" Some even engaged in a chain letter-type practice in order to get some new outlines. I broke that chain real quick.

While readily admitting that I have received help from other sources as to sermon content and outlines, I can truthfully say that most of my sermons have resulted from long hours of study and meditation spent in the greatest sermon outline book of the ages—the Bible. And the longer I preach, the more time I spend arranging my sermon subjects and outlines in quotation marks which enclose some Bible statement or principle. I may depart from that format on rare occasions to deal with some contemporary problem by design or by request, but I still try not to let the tail wag the dog.

I personally believe that every preacher should have some plan, some outline in mind, whether written or unwritten, when he stands before an audience of judgment-bound souls. They have prepared to hear him, and the least he can do is make some preparation on his own part.

And even in any emergency, the Bible is full of the best sermon outlines we can find. Stephen gives us one on the seed of Abraham (Acts 7), and Paul used a similar one at Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13). If a preacher can't preach the outline on "The Mystery of Godliness" (1 Tim. 3: 16), he couldn't preach one from *Pulpit Helps* either.

One older preacher said that we should use our sermon outlines once, then throw them in the trash can, thereby disciplining ourselves to study the next time we address the same subject. This may be an extreme formula, but it makes a point.

Some of our best outlines, like the Gettysburg Address, have been written on the backs of old envelopes, grocery bags, dinner napkins, sales slips, or any remnant of papyrus which we could bum from our wife's purse. And some church bulletins which rely on the "Selected"/"Anonymous" format could be more useful if they would provide a blank space for store lists or sermon outlines.

Written and preserved outlines can provide a valuable source for future use in classes, publication, and even for posterity. I have sermon outlines which I haven't used for years, and probably never will use again. But I don't aim to throw them in the trash can or set fire to them. But neither will I allow them to lull me into a metal state of lethargy and slothfulness, nor deceive me into thinking that they would bring a premium bid at an auction.

Ordinarily, I would not mention the name of the preacher who lost most of his possessions and sermon outlines in a fire, but in this case I make an exception, not just to verify my story, but because I want him to know that we appreciate his years of service in the Lord's vineyard.

Larry Hayes is not well known, as preachers go. But besides preaching in meetings and other labors in this area, he worked with one congregation for 17 years. And I can assure you that the loss of sermon outlines in a fire has not affected the quality of Larry's preaching.

Some folks resort to arson in order to collect insurance or to punish some enemy, or maybe just to get rid of some old structure that has served its purpose and become an eyesore in the community. So I am not advocating that either preachers or the brethren (espe-

daily the brethren), set fire to the preacher's outlines in order to infuse some new life into the pulpit.

But "Fire in the hole!" wouldn't necessarily herald the end of the world even if we did lose a few sermon outlines, and may even be a blessing in disguise if we could salvage the preacher.

**WRITTEN FOR
OUR INSTRUCTION**

Frank Himmel

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Palmetto, Florida 33561



"NONE RETURN AGAIN"

During a recent family reading of Proverbs 2 we paused to consider verse 19. Wisdom says in reference to an adulteress, "None who go to her return again, nor do they reach the paths of life." What does it mean, none return again?

Most expositors take it as stating a general rule. "It is very rare that any who are caught in this snare of the devil recover themselves, so much is the heart hardened, and the mind blinded, by the deceitfulness of this sin. Having once lost their hold of the paths of life, they know not how to take hold of them again, but are perfectly besotted and bewitched with those base lusts" (Matthew Henry).

Sadly this observation is true. The unbridled lust which leads one to adultery will likely lead him there again and again. One so naive as to fall for the adulteress' flattering words (e. g., she "understands him" as his wife does not) is apt to repeat his folly. Witness the number of people who are in their third or fourth marriages, or those who have quit bothering with marriage and just cohabit with one "lover" after another. I confess that I do not understand why anyone, even those who disregard God's law, would seek a marriage partner among adulterers. They have proved unfaithful to their vows once. Is there reason to think they will not do so again?

I do not mean to rule out forgiveness, by God or man. "No one gets so far into sin that God will not receive him back if he makes the proper amends. But the danger and rule is that a patron of the kind of life described above will continue therein to the end of life" (E. M. Zerr).

Now consider another sense in which the statement, "None who go to her return again," is true. And in this sense it is not a general rule, but an absolute certainty.

No man who becomes involved in adultery will ever be the same again. He cannot return to where he was. He can be forgiven by God. He can be forgiven by his mate. He can even be forgiven by the spouse of his partner in adultery. But things can never be quite the way they were.

The implicit trust his mate placed in him has been broken. The special intimate relationship between husband and wife has been violated. The painful memory of the act remains in the consciences of all involved, try as they may to remove it. The feelings of guilt are still there. To the extent the sin is known to others the reputation is damaged. If those involved are Christians the Lord's holy name is reproached. If they have children who know of the affair the confidence of those little ones is shaken. Time will aid in healing these wounds, but it cannot completely erase them.

Some mates elect to put the adulterer away. If they so choose, he/she loses the privilege of a God-approved marriage (Mt. 5: 31, 31; 19: 9), despite what men may say about the matter. His only options are to remain single or be reconciled to his mate (1 Cor. 7: 11).

Before you become involved in this or any sin, take time to sit down and count the cost. Do not be dazzled by the enticing array in which Satan clothes sin. Look at what is inside. Look at the price you must pay. Look at where you will be after the momentary pleasure is past. Are you entering a place from which there is no return?

"The one who commits adultery with a woman is lacking sense; he who would destroy himself does it. Wounds and disgrace he will find, and his reproach will not be blotted out" (Pro. 6: 32, 33).

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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

P.O. Box 83
Tuckerman, Arkansas 72473

CHRIST, MAN, AND SIN

Following are some questions that have troubled brethren in recent times over the nature of Christ, man, and sin. While admitting that this is an oversimplification of a complex subject we have attempted to answer each question from the Scriptures. We hope this will be helpful to the Bible student who doesn't have the time or resources for an in-depth study.

1. HAVE ALL MEN SINNED? Answer: Yes (Rom. 6: 23; 1 Kgs. 8: 46).

2. DOES MAN HAVE TO SIN? Answer: No (1 Cor. 10: 13).

3. WILL MAN SIN? Answer: Yes (1 Jn. 1: 8, 10).

4. HOW DOES MAN SIN? Answer: By transgressing God's law (1 Jn. 3: 4). He may sin by omission (leaving undone what God said to do, Mt. 25: 41-46) or by commission (doing something God said not to do, Rom. 13: 8, 9).

5. WHY WILL MAN SIN? Answer: Because of the weakness of the flesh (Mt. 26: 41; Rom. 8: 1-4; 6: 19; Heb. 5: 2).

6. DOESN'T THIS MEAN MAN HAS TO SIN? Answer: No, not in the sense of being forced or compelled to sin. It means he sins because he is not as strong against temptation as he ought to be. It doesn't absolve him of responsibility (Js. 1: 14, 15).

7. DOES THE FACT THAT THE BIBLE TEACHES MAN WILL SIN, MAKE GOD RESPONSIBLE FOR IT? Answer: No, no more than the fact Jesus knew Judas would sin meant he caused it (Mt. 26: 20-24). It just means he knew it ahead of time. Man still has a choice.

8. WAS ANYONE WHO SINNED GIVEN TIME TO REPENT? Answer: Yes (Rev. 2: 21).

9. WHEN I REPENT TOWARD GOD MUST I SPECIFICALLY NAME EACH SIN FOR WHICH I AM REPENTING? Answer: No scripture says so. Jesus did not teach it in the model prayer (Mt. 6: 9f) nor was anyone condemned for not doing so. To prevent misunderstandings (thus causing confusion) there will be times when we will need to do so before men since they cannot read our hearts.

10. DO THE SCRIPTURES TEACH THAT THE BLOOD OF CHRIST CONTINUES TO CLEANSE ME EVEN AS I SIN AND BEFORE I REPENT AND CONFESS? Answer: No, we are forgiven *if* we confess (1 Jn. 1: 7-9). Simon was not forgiven even as he sinned before he repented and confessed, though he had entered a blood relationship with Christ when he was baptized (Acts 8: 13f).

11. WILL GOD EXTEND MERCY TO ANY WHO ARE GUILTY OF SIN WHEN THEY DIE (SUCH AS CURSING AND THEN GETTING KILLED IMMEDIATELY IN A CAR WRECK)? Answer: The Scriptures imply mercy at the judgment (Js. 2: 13; Mt. 25: 31-46; and possibly Mt. 5: 7). One should not take comfort in sin from this. On what basis or criterion God will extend mercy, only He knows. In our finite minds we may not understand how He can have perfect justice and yet extend mercy. We should have enough faith in Him to believe that He is a just God and He will do right. "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counselor?" (Rom. 11: 33, 34).

12. WAS JESUS SUBJECT TO THE SAME TEMPTATIONS THAT WE ARE? Answer: Yes (Heb. 4: 15).

13. WAS JESUS JUST AN ORDINARY MAN WHILE ON THE EARTH? Answer: No. The word just means "only." Jesus had two natures. He possessed humanity and deity (Phil. 2: 5-8; Heb. 1: 6-8; Mk. 2: 5-7; Col. 2: 9).

14. CAN A MAN SO LIVE (SINLESSLY PERFECT) AS NOT TO NEED THE BLOOD OF CHRIST? Answer: Suppose one were to arise among us today and confess that *I have lived to the full potential of my ability and taken advantage of every opportunity to do good. I have not left undone anything God commanded me to do. Nor have I violated any of the prohibitions He has made. I have lived without sinning.* What would Jesus say to him? You are a liar and self-deceived! You have made me out to be a liar and my word is not in you." Jesus has said it won't happen (1 Jn. 1: 8, 10; 1 Kgs. 8: 46) because of the "weakness of the flesh" (Mt. 26: 41; Rom. 6: 19; 8: 3; Heb. 5: 2). To say man can so live as not to need the blood of Christ is to say he can earn his salvation on meritorious works and place God in debt to him. It is to say that Christ died in vain for that person.

15. SINCE ALL HAVE SINNED AND WILL SIN DUE TO THE WEAKNESS OF THE FLESH, SHOULD WE LOWER THE STANDARD FROM TRYING TO ALWAYS DO THE RIGHT THING? Answer: No. Scripture tells us that all sin (Ec. 7: 20; 1 Kgs. 8: 46; 1 Jn. 1: 8-10; Rom. 3: 23) but it never hints that the standard should be lowered. It should ever remain our goal, even if we stumble.

16. IS IT PROFITABLE FOR US TO STUDY SUCH A SUBJECT AS THIS? Answer: If a subject is dealt with in Scripture, then it is profitable (2 Tim. 3: 16, 17). What may be unprofitable is the amount of time and space we give to a matter. Am I treating this as a weightier matter than God would want me to? Does it merit volumes and reams? Why should we become obsessed in theorizing over something Inspiration says won't happen (that one of us might live sinlessly perfect)? It is not merely "remote" or "unlikely" to happen. The Bible teaches *it won't*. EVERY man will need the blood of Christ. To uphold a theory we may feel forced to take an indefensible position, such as: (1) that we are forgiven by the blood of Christ even as we sin; (2) that Jesus was divested of his divinity and godhood and was just an

ordinary man; or (3) that we can be saved on the basis of merit and not need the blood of Christ.

To uphold cherished views of cherished men we are often tempted to brand each other with prejudicial names, hold allegiance to a man more highly than we ought regardless of the absurd things he might say, become unethical in our journalism, and divide. Is that profitable?

WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

Send all questions to:

Weldon E. Warnock

100 Carriage Drive
Beckley, West Virginia 25801



BROKEN BODY OF CHRIST

QUESTION: *Would you comment on 1 Cor. 11: 24, specifically the word "broken." Is it proper to speak of the broken body of Christ? Many versions omit this word.*

ANSWER: Quoting from vv. 23-24, Paul wrote concerning Jesus' institution of the Lord's Supper, "That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me."

"Broken" appears in the King James Version which is based on the *Textus Receptus*, meaning the received text of the 16th century. But its genuineness is widely disputed. It is absent in the best manuscripts and omitted in the most modern translations of the Bible.

However, inserting "broken" into the text does no injustice to the passage if we understand it to mean *given* or *sacrificed* in death. This is precisely what Luke's record states. Jesus said, "This is my body which is given for you" (Lk. 22: 19). In Paul's account, Jesus said, "this is my body, which is (broken) for you." The word "broken" may logically be supplied or inserted by the context, preferably italicized or in parenthesis. The body of Jesus was for us as a sacrifice. Hence, it was broken.

"Given" is from the Greek word *didomenon*, nom. sing. neut. part. pres. pass. of *didomi*, which means in Lk. 22: 19, "give up, sacrifice" (Arndt-Gingrich, p. 192). The word "broken" is from the Greek word *klomenon*, nom. sing. neut. part. pres. pass. of *klao*. Moulton says of *klaso*, "with figurative reference to the violent death of Christ, 1 Cor. 11: 24" (p. 232). Thayer states, "shattered, as it were, by a violent death, 1 Cor. 11: 24" (p. 348).

True, Jesus' body was pierced (Jn. 19: 34), but his body was not broken, that is, in the sense we use the word in our vernacular. The Bible plainly states, "A bone of him shall not be broken" (Psa. 34: 20; Jn. 19: 36). The word "broken" in Jn. 19: 36 is from *suntribo* (shattered,

crushed), a different word than the one in 1 Cor. 11: 24. Therefore, when we break or separate into parts the bread of the Lord's Table and say, "This (the broken bread) represents the broken body of our Lord," we fail to understand the broken body of Jesus Christ. Indeed, the bread represents the body of Christ that was given or sacrificed for us, but breaking the bread into parts is not a symbolic picture of Jesus' body being fractured. As already pointed out, Jesus' body was not broken. Breaking or separating the bread has no symbolic significance. Breaking the bread was (is) for distribution or to eat the bread (cf. Acts 2: 42; 20: 7; 1 Cor. 10: 16).

Things Most Certainly Believed

Julian R. Snell

128 Quail Drive
Lawrenceburg, Tennessee 38464



THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOB

Our title presumes upon the understanding that Job was not a man living in the gospel age, he was an Old Testament patriarch who lived hundreds of years before Christ. However, since the Bible is the unfolding of God's eternal purpose, human redemption, we must recognize that every book of that sacred volume is in complement to this purpose. Within the Old Testament there are types and shadows which look to the New Testament for the anti-type and substance. Sometimes these references are glaring, sometimes they are subtle, but in either case there is the ultimate pointing to Jesus Christ, the savior of the world. Within the Book of Job we are treated, for the most part, to the subtle inquisitiveness, pleading and longing, the questioning that finds answer only in Christ. While we are attentive to Job's questions we are more intent on the answers from Jesus.

Generally speaking the book of Job addresses the problem of human suffering, ever present and a fact to be recognized and dealt with. "And in my dream I stood with an angel on one of the balconies of heaven. And the angel allowed me to lean over and listen. But I could not bear to hear. Sounds of pain came up to me: the cries of widows, children in agony, strong men wounded and mutilated, the burden of the bereaved, the lonely, the bewildered, the frightened. Men crushed women beneath their feet, and starved little children, and hunted their brothers into poverty and unemployment and disease. Even women hurt one another with cruel deeds and malicious words. There were pains of body and mind and soul which no one on earth could understand and no one could cure. The world seemed full of sorrow and pain, and the sound of it all came up to heaven until my soul was sick." (Leslie D. Weatherford, *Why Do Men Suffer?* page 11).

Admittedly, the above quote comes across bleak and pessimistic, yet expressing truths not to be denied. The sources of human suffering are varied. There is nature, the elements, disease, pestilence and the like. From man himself suffering is traceable to greed, lust, wars, cruelty, as we meditate upon the attitudes toward others generally prevalent. Then we must not ignore self in respect to the violation of law, moral and spiritual. The problem of suffering? How can God, all wise, absolutely good, tolerate such as the heritage of all men, good and bad? To answer, "such is God's will" while expressive of truth generally, does not either adequately or specifically explain.

Suffering in the case of Job recognizes Satan as its source and origin. In Job the struggle of piety, faith and resignation to God's hand with despair, adversity and gloom are presented with the overriding conclusion, suffering may be unexplainable. Thus one must bow and say, "I do not understand yet I believe and trust in my God." While suffering is the abiding thrust of the book no real solution is herein afforded to the problem. It is certainly impossible to crystallize into a brief statement the book of Job. Nevertheless it is of inestimable value and in the introduction to this series we approach it simply as the Book of Job, the story of a man whose name is Job.

Within this central fact, Job the man, we become aware that he is related to both God and Satan, suggesting initially that both God and Satan had an interest in him. He is related to other human beings, his wife, family and a group of friends along with numerous acquaintances referred to, but who quickly pass across the stage of his life. Most importantly we see Job within the consciousness of his own personality. All things retire from him until he is alone. Here we concentrate our study, Job within his own personality, Job as a person.

Although we hear the voices of the philosophers, we pay little attention. Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar and finally Elihu offer words which must pale before more profound matters. Job answers his critics, even refutes their philosophy in personal application. We do not consider this nearly so important as the cries and inquiries from within the man as he seeks for and asks for some answers. The book of Job is an unanswered agony. There are no answers till we find them in Jesus, here we have answer to the agonizing cries of Job.

First, see the man Job as he is revealed in verse 1. Two words describe him, two phrases tell the secret of his being, what he was. He was "perfect and upright," complete and straight, if you will. Could any higher compliment be paid? This however does not touch on relationship to God. It has to do with human relationships. The secret of his completeness is in the fact he was one "that feared God," he was religious. He "eschewed evil," he turned down evil, this is his moral quality. Here is a man with an upward outlook from which he has learned to deal with the things by which he is surrounded. We suggest in this connection that morality is ever rooted in religion, there can be no true morality without religion. God ratifies that estimate of Job and

amplifies, "there is none like him in all the earth" (v. 8). Here we have a man of integrity, uprightness, having relationship with God, and turning away from evil. What a beautiful character, how easily we are attracted to him.

We are able to watch this man in the realm of the physical, mental and spiritual. He is seen visited by Satan, this resulting in overwhelming calamities. The reason for which is not found in the man himself. This was the mistake of the three friends and it is sometimes our own as we search for the why. Job is stripped of everything which man naturally depends upon, wealth, children, health and even loses the partnership and support of his wife. The process runs on, his friends forsake him, even though they spend seven days in silence with him and offer three cycles of speeches by way of explanation of his predicament, they finally turn from Job.

Now consider his mentality, his personal consciousness. Rooted within was a conviction of integrity, this was assailed and misunderstood by his friends. Presently he lost the sense of greatness of his own personality and is heard to say "naked came I out of my mother's womb and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (1: 21). This seems to reflect the idea, I am still here, no matter what. However, he lost this and cursed the day he was born. And not only so, he lost his sense of God as just. Our man, physically stripped, mentally misunderstood, therefore spiritually groping after a solution as to why God was thus dealing with him. Thus, Job faces the perplexing question of suffering which is not the result of the sin of the sufferer.

Job presents a man in the majestic loneliness of his own being. It is in this that we must be impressed with the reality that man in the final analysis is in a one on one relationship with God. But hear the mental cries of our man. Rising from the center of his personality, stripped and lonely, he cries out of need, inquiry and even challenge. Cries to which the book gives no answer. Then we turn to the New Testament and see Jesus, who began earthly life without wealth, went through life devoid of things others depend on and before we are through with him we find he has answered every question Job has asked, supplied every need that Job revealed. And so it is with every man.

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EXHORTING PEOPLE TO OBEY

Over the last few years I have observed a trend that has become troubling to me. It seems that in many sermons that I hear there is very little emphasis placed upon exhorting people to obey the gospel and extending the invitation for them to obey immediately. In one lesson I heard an excellent exposition of an Old Testament passage that was designed to stir our hearts (and it stirred mine) but the teacher closed his otherwise splendid lesson suddenly by saying only, "If we can help you in any way just come to the front while we stand and sing." No mention was made of the plan of salvation, no exhortation was given for those in the audience needing to obey to do so, no pleading with the hearts of lost people that were there and needing to respond.

When Paul taught the unbelieving Philippian Jailor he exhorted him to "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household" (Acts 16: 31). Paul taught him the urgency of the Lord's plan and he obeyed "that very hour of the night" (Acts 16: 33). On Pentecost Peter preached a soul stirring message and to those believing Jews he commanded, "Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins..." (Acts 2: 38). "and with many other words he solemnly testified and exhorted them..." (Acts 2: 40). The success of this kind of preaching is evident.

It appears to me that preaching a good lesson and then virtually extending no invitation is like a hunter taking aim on his target only to find out when he pulled the trigger that he had loaded his gun with blanks. Really, it's not even taking good aim.

Have we lost our faith in the power of the gospel? Do we no longer believe that it can touch the hearts of lost men and women, boys and girls? Do we feel that the story of Jesus has lost its appeal? Do we feel that we have repeated the invitation so much that senses have become dull? Could it be that we have offered so many invitations to which no one has responded that now we have come to expect no one to respond? Is this why we have come to spend less time and emphasis on exhorting people to obey the gospel? Is this why the song leader sometimes only leads the first and last verses of an invitation hymn? Is this why so few do obey the gospel? I hope these questions challenge your thinking and tug at your heart.

The gospel has not lost its power! When sown in good and honest hearts it will bear fruit. God has promised

that it would and so it will. But let those of us who preach and teach fulfill our responsibility. Let us not only tell the story and teach the commands, let us exhort those we love to obey.

E. A. "DIKE" DICUS
March 14, 1913 - November 3, 1990

On November 3, 1990, Emrold Aaron Dicus, affectionately known as "Dike," finished his journey in time. His funeral service was conducted on November 7, 1990 at the building of the Lorain Avenue church in Cleveland, Ohio. The building was filled with his family, brethren, business associates and friends. Interment was at Sunset Memorial Park. Ed Holcomb and I spoke at his funeral.

' Dike was the oldest son of the last A. W. Dicus. His father was widely known as a preacher, educator and songwriter. Much of A. W.'s preaching was done in his home state of Indiana. He was an administrator with Florida College in its early days, and he was the inventor of the automobile turn signal indicator. But, A. W. was probably best known as a songwriter. He wrote several songs but the best-known are probably OUR GOD. HE IS ALIVE and LORD, I BELIEVE. Several of his songs were sung at Dike's funeral.

Dike was baptized by the well-known Indiana preacher, J. C. Roady, at the age of 12. He was baptized at the Lincoln Street church in Bloomington, Indiana. He was a Christian for 65 years.

Dike had two younger brothers, David of Chattanooga, TN., and James of Agoura, CA. When A. W. died, Dike more or less picked up the mantle of leadership and exerted strong direction for the family. His father had stressed education to his sons, and they listened.

Dike graduated from Purdue University in 1936 with a degree in Mechanical Engineering. He was something of a "throw back" to an earlier time. He was a full-time Gospel preacher who supported himself. Most of the preachers of the generation before him were farmers who preached. (It is probably more accurate to say that their families were farmers and they were preachers.) Dike was an engineer who preached.

He had many titles at Anvil Industries in Cleveland. He was Engineer, Chief Engineer, Vice President in charge of Engineering, President, Corporate Vice President and a Director of Anvil Industries. He retired in 1980, though he continued as a consultant to the Corporation until his death. I said in his eulogy, "I suspect he did more preaching than any other Mechanical Engineer in history! Or, did he do more Mechanical Engineering than any other preacher in history?"

When he and Martha moved to Cleveland, they attended the West Side church. During that time, he did a lot of "fill-in" preaching. When the church meeting at Warren Road and Detroit Avenue was established, he

began "full-time" work as their preacher. That congregation is now known as the Lorain Avenue church and Dike was the only preacher they have ever had. His work with Lorain Avenue covered a span of approximately 43 years. He **never** received full support for his preaching work with the church. Only in the last few years did he accept **any** support, and that was only after the church insisted that he do so.

Not only did he preach for the congregation, but for the last several years of his life he served as an Elder of the church. He is held in highest regard by brethren throughout this region for his service to God and His people. Only a man of such strength could have successfully carried the burdens of husband and father, a secular job, preaching and serving as an elder at the same time. He was a truly unique individual. In his "spare time" he pursued his hobbies of raising flowers and cabinet making. With his "much patience" he almost hand-made two Grandfather clocks, several tables, a cradle for his grandchildren and many toys.

He and Martha (Hewett) were married in her parents' home in Marion, Indiana on June 11, 1939. They celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary with a host of their family and friends on June 11, 1989. For over 51 years they exemplified what God intended marriage to be. The "home" was one of his favorite subjects. His mission was to keep the home intact, sacred and full of love. Building on that foundation, he knew the church would maintain its purity and harmony. Some of his greatest preaching was on the Home.

Dike and Martha had two children, John and Debbie (Mrs. Ervin Jones), both of whom live with their families in Cleveland and attend the Lorain Avenue church. John is now one of her Elders. They were proud of their children and grandchildren, Christopher, Lisa, Sarah and Rachel.

His concern for the cause in Northeast Ohio was genuine. He had spent his life promoting Christ and His church. He constantly urged preachers to "stick with the basics" and "fight digression." He knew how and when to be firm. He was esteemed very highly in love for his work's sake (1 Thess. 5: 13).

At his funeral I said, "When I pillowed my head last Saturday evening after learning of Dike's death, it occurred to me that our world is a lonelier, sadder, poorer place now that he is gone. It is now time for those of his generation who have served God so faithfully, to go home. A. C. Grider is gone! Harry Pickup, Sr. is gone! And, E. A. Dicus is gone! May God help us."

If you would like to communicate with Martha and the children, you can contact them at: 4641 West 210th Street, Fairview Park, Ohio 44126 - (216) 331-6362. We express our deepest sympathy to this good family.

—Lewis Willis

**PATIENCE—
EASIER
SAID THAN DONE**

Norman E. Sewell

824 S. Pine St.
Harrison, AR 72601



I'm sure we're all familiar with the old saying that something is "easier said than it is done." No doubt this saying is true, for it is much easier to talk about something and to recognize that the thing ought to be done, than it is to actually get busy and do it. It is much easier to see our own faults than it is to correct those faults, yet this is exactly what God requires of us. Its much easier to say "well, that's just the way I am," thinking that this excuses us, than to accept responsibility for my faults and correct them.

I understand what God says about being longsuffering, or patient as we use the word today. I know for example that God is the ultimate example of such longsuffering just as He is of love. Peter wrote: "*The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*" (2 Peter 3: 9). Peter was writing about the return of the Lord, and that His failure to return up to that time did not mean that He would not come, only that God was longsuffering with us. Well, He has been longsuffering with us for just less than 2000 years now, and He continues to be patient desiring our salvation. I know also that He expects me to be patient with others, just as He is patient with me (1 Thess. 5: 14). But, to tell you the truth, this is so much easier said than it is done.

I take no pride in the fact that I am not very patient. In fact, when it is pointed out that I need to be more patient I become annoyed, not because it isn't true, but because I already know the truth of the accusation. The only alternatives I can see are either to just give up trying to do better and go on in my impatient ways, or to continue making a diligent effort to do better next time than I did today. And, because I want more than anything in this world to go to heaven when that great day comes, I will continue trying to do better.

Being longsuffering or patient may not be a natural human reaction, but it is something that can be learned and adopted. In Colossians 3 Paul wrote about the need for those Christians to put away from their lives the old sins they had lived in and put on a new character. In verse 12 he wrote: "*Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering.*" There's that word again. Patience is something I can develop if I want to and am willing to work at it. In Galatians 5, when Paul contrasted the works of the flesh with the fruit of the Spirit he wrote:

READ YOUR BIBLE TODAY

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Gal. 5: 22-23). The fruit of the Spirit is that which is produced in the life of a person who allows himself to be led by the Spirit of God through the revealed word. If I am not developing "longsuffering," then it must be that to some degree, and for some reason, I am not spending enough time studying the word of God, and making proper application of it on my own life. Further, when Paul wrote to the Corinthians about the nature of love he wrote: *"Charity suffereth long, and is kind"* (1 Cor. 13: 4). If I am not patient with others, does this mean that I don't have as much love for others (neighbors, enemies, etc.) as I should?

Brethren, these are not fun things to think about. Most of the time we really don't want to see all our faults, and especially we don't want to have someone point out all these faults to us. But they are serious enough that we had better start opening our eyes and trying to put on the "new man" or character that God wants us to have. Maybe this seems like such a small thing compared to murder or fornication or some other highly visible sin, but the truth is that unless we open our eyes and our hearts to see the way we really are we will not grow and mature as He desires. And we may soon start excusing these other things too.

Here are some suggestions that may help us to change the things that are lacking in our lives. First we need to really SEE ourselves as God sees us; all our sins and all our shortcomings. I think sometimes that we Christians actually feel somewhat superior to others when in reality we are as much sinners as anybody else, but now we have been forgiven through the blood of the Lamb. This doesn't make us any better, only very blessed. Then comes the next step: correcting the thing that is wrong. I believe praying about the problem is

very helpful; recognizing that I need God's help to be more open to my sins and my shortcomings; praying that I may have the right spirit to make whatever changes are necessary. And, when I have sinned, confessing my sin, repenting of it and praying that God will forgive me, and He will. And third there is the determination to fight against my weaknesses or shortcoming so that I may be more the man (or woman) that God wants me to be. Sometimes you just have to eat a little "humble pie" and admit that you need to be more patient, or that you need greater self-control, or that you need more compassion for the lost, or that you need more commitment in your life to live for the one who died for you. As I suggested in the beginning, this is much "easier said than done," but IT MUST BE DONE! When you start counting the cost of following Jesus remember to count it both ways; the cost to you in this life if you do follow Him in everything, and the cost to you in eternity if you don't. And while it may be "easier said than done," IT CAN BE DONE.

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DUDLEY ROSS SPEARS, 1609 Parkside Dr., Bowling Green, KY 42101—(Editor's note: In the December issue of STS I had a short piece entitled "Extreme Positions" in which I took exception to the last paragraph of an article brother Spears had sent. It was my view that the statement dealt with left the writer open to the charge of a consequence which I believed to be faulty and which I did not believe brother Spears would accept. We are glad to print the following from him).

Thanks for the offer, I think I will take you up. I hope to add nothing to any issue that drives people farther apart. I read my article again — and again. Your statement says, "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." There is nothing at all about His temptation in the article. I didn't even use the word tempt, tempted, or temptation.

How could someone press what I said to a conclusion that only the outward man sins, that the inward man is untouched? The question of Jesus' temptation, whether He could or could not have sinned, is an entirely different issue than His nature as God and man. There may be a relation but they are different aspects of His nature. I was dealing with his being — not his conduct or ability.

I think that someone has to press very hard to come to the conclusion, from what I wrote, that only the outer man sins and the inner man remains secure and cannot sin. I certainly do not believe this Calvinistic concept of the nature of man.

RALPH SMART, P. O. Box 56, Milbridge, Maine 04658—We are beginning a new work in Calais, Maine, a city of some 5,000. A couple of Christians have moved there. They have been driving 1 1/2 hours one way to Milbridge. Bruce Hudson, of Bangor, and I, will try to help this new work. We will conduct services in Riverview, New Brunswick (Canada) in the mornings and in Calais later in the day.

TONY MAUCK, 1040 Meadowland, Beaumont, TX 77706—The Pinecrest church in Beaumont, TX has moved to its new facility on Dowlen Road in Beaumont which will more adequately serve our needs in the future. The Dowlen Road church has Joe Sheffield, Jason Riley and Max Dawson as evangelists, and 16 faithful men serve as deacons. Our membership of 250 is excited about our new work. Our new mailing address and phone number is as follows: 3060 Dowlen Road, Beaumont, TX 77706. Phone (409) 1996.

KEVIN SULC, 2314 E. Hundred Rd., Chester, VA 23821—An opportunity has opened to begin a sound work in Anderson, Indiana, a city of 60, 000, located an hour northeast of Indianapolis, just off I-69. Anderson is the largest populated area in Indiana with no faithful congregation. We will be working with Alan Jones and family in this effort. Alan is already involved in evangelistic work at the Indiana Reformatory in Pendleton which is south of Anderson. A few months ago, he moved to Anderson to be nearer his work. Not only has this increased his effectiveness in the work at the prison, it has created the opportunity for the work in Anderson itself. I will assist in the work at the prison and also plan to attempt some evangelism at Anderson University. We would like to also reach out to other towns/cities in Madison County (pop. 160, 000). Most of the faithful Christians in the county are members of the church at Alexandria. We also have some contacts with some caught up in institutionalism. I stand in need of some support for this effort. I will gladly supply references of individuals and churches who know me. I will need monthly support plus moving expenses. If you cannot help, you could assist me by letting others who might be able to help, know of this need. Please call me for more information about this. (804) 452-0458.

(Editor's note: I have known Kevin Sulc all his life. His father served as an elder of the Rivermont, VA church for several years, along with my own father. Kevin has had several years experience in preaching the gospel, most recently at Rivermont, VA, his home congregation, where he had done very good work.)

BILLY ASHWORTH, Rt. 3, Box 215, Columbia, TN 38401—As of December 31, 1990, I terminated my work with the Hillview church in Nashville, TN, ending a total of nine and a half years that Lois and I have spent with this good church. During those years we learned to love and appreciate the brethren there. We were wonderfully treated by them. Such fellowship with faithful saints of God make preaching the gospel much easier, more enjoyable and satisfying.

We look forward to placing membership and working with the Collegeview church in Columbia where Jim Deason is doing an excellent work. We hope to be involved in their teaching program. The church is young but growing in numbers and enthusiasm. Plans call for an expansion of the building to accommodate the growth. I will also continue preaching the gospel over Radio WAKM, Franklin, TN, the same station over which I began preaching in March, 1955. The church at Hillview have paid for this program each Sunday morning from 7: 05-7: 30, at 950-AM. I will continue preaching in gospel meet-ings, as well as by appointment. I am not "quitting preaching" as long as the Lord spares my life. If I may be of help to anyone in this way, you may write me at the above address, or call (615) 388-8355.

JOHN AND ANNA COPELAND, 580 Maddox Lane, Powell, WY 82435—We regret that we are no longer holding services in Powell, WY. We have tried to get the work started here but have been unable to succeed. We met strong opposition from the liberal church. We thank the brethren who stopped and worshipped with us when traveling. It meant so very much to us and encouraged us to remain faithful to the Lord. We are trying to sell our property and move south to be nearer our daughter who is ill and needs our help.

MARSHALL MILBURN SEWELL

Marshall Milburn Sewell, who served 35 years as an elder of the St. James, Missouri church, passed away on September 4, 1990 at the age of 73. He obeyed the gospel while a teenager and became a member of the Oak Grove church which still meets for worship. On May 31, 1938 he was married to Martha Elizabeth Spurgeon. Two children were born to this union: Norman Eugene Sewell, gospel preacher of Harrison, AR and Sharon Ann Sewell of the home in Rolla. Funeral services were conducted on September 7 from the Atkisson-Swinford Funeral Chapel in Rolla by Larry Morris and Luther W. Martin. Burial was in Oak Grove Cemetery. —Submitted by Luther W. Martin

OLEN HOLDERBY, 4265 Lakeshore Bid #18, Lakeport, CA 95453 (707) 263-3682—All readers please take note of our new address. After living and laboring in Fresno, CA for 13 years, we have moved to work with the small group of brethren meeting in Lakeport, CA. Most of my support comes from outside in this effort. In addition of the local work, the last year found us in gospel meetings in Oroville, CA. St. Louis, MO, Tahlequah, OK, Long Island, NY and Lincoln, NE. In October Connie W. Adams was in Lakeport in a good meeting. We

have high hopes for this area and solicit your prayers to that end.

LESLIE DIESTELKAMP, 1730 W. Galena Blvd., #102W, Aurora, IL 60506—I began to know brother Joy Notarte in my work with his father in 1974 and 1976-77. Since then I have had numerous reports from American brethren, all of whom recommend him highly. His father was one of the greatest preachers in that country—the Philippines—and his three sons have carried on the great work since their father's death. Joy deserves some help, for economic conditions there are very difficult and the people with whom he works in various places are very, very poor. I wish I could help Joy myself but cannot now, but I do commend him to whomever might be able to help in the good work he does. Write to me for his address and information about him.

NEY RIEBER, 613 Zion Church Road, Sanford, NC 27330—The prison work continues to be profitable. Since my last report there have been three more baptized at Polk Youth Center. The chaplain continues to be an obstruction, but the inmates I come into contact with recognize his tactics and this creates a sympathetic disposition towards me which he does not realize.

PREACHERS NEEDED

BAYSIDE, NEW YORK — The Bayside church, which is located in the north-eastern part of Queensborough of New York City, is seeking a full-time preacher. The membership is nine with a few visitors on Sunday mornings. Outside support will be needed, although we will be able to supply some. Please contact Albert Dickson, 65-12 Utopia Pkwy, Fresh Meadows, NY 11365; phone (718) 445-2773 for more information.

EL TORO, CALIFORNIA—The church here is looking for a full time preacher. The congregation has approximately 35 members and an average attendance on Sunday morning of 45-55. We can provide full support. Please contact: Saddleback Valley Church of Christ, 22600-B Lambert St. Suite 810, El Toro, CA 92630; or phone Andy Anderson (714) 380-1206 or Walt Halagarda (714) 768-8518.

PETER MCPHERSON, Bancroft, Ontario, Canada — We moved back to Bancroft about four years ago to labor where we had earlier spent seven years of work, baptizing nearly 100 people during that time. Many of these were elderly at the time they obeyed the gospel and many have gone to their reward. We presently have about 40 in attendance counting children and some visitors. Two were baptized in October. A new family of Christians is moving here in February. Since I did not have adequate support when we returned here, I worked in real estate and did quite well until the market went dead. The church here is able to supply \$150 a week and I have \$150 a month from elsewhere. I would like to devote full time to this work and could use some help to that end. I am known to Norman Midgette, Mike Willis, J. T. Smith, Brian Sullivan, Sewell Hall and a host of other preaching brethren.

FROM AROUND THE WORLD

ITALY—Francesco Fosci reports from Latina that on Nov. 16 another man was baptized after studying for four months... Stefano Corazza reports that they lost the location they had rented in trying to launch the new work in Rome, but have now found a better one. The dollar is now being exchanged at the rate it was 10 years ago while the cost of living is rising. For instance, meat costs \$8 to \$12 a pound, turkey \$5 a lb., chicken \$3. 65 a lb., milk is \$5. 50 a gallon, fresh fish \$12. 50 a lb., gasoline is \$5. 60 per gallon. While Stefano has replaced some of the support he has lost, he is still far short of what is needed.

SOUTH AFRICA—From Pinetown Doug and Sheila Bauer report their plans to visit among individuals and churches in the USA with whom they have been in contact for a number of years. They are financing their own trip and would like to meet with any who are interested in the work they are doing. They are leaving South Africa on January 31 and can be contacted c/o O. Fred Liggin Jr., 934 Robinson Ave., Barberton, Ohio 44203.

ECUADOR, SOUTH AMERICA—Ruben C. Amador of Houston, Texas reports on his visit to Ecuador and Brazil. Three were baptized in Ambato, Ecuador. Attendance there runs 50-60. There are also area churches in San Andres, Rio Verde and Ambatillo. He then reports the

following: "There is a power struggle among the liberal preachers in Ecuador. I was given a copy of a bulletin circulating along the Ecuatorian Christians. Enrique Romero, the preacher for the Guayaquil church in Quito, names himself as the 'director' of nearly all of the churches in Ecuador. He claims that Louis McBride, a 'missionary' with whom he is having the power struggle, is the 'direction' of just two churches in Ecuador. "Romero claims to receive support from a church in Niceville, Florida for his personal use and "for the work in many congregations." This Romero also claims to control one congregation which is sound in the faith.



MONEY WITHOUT WORKING

We have seen a number of unabashed scams over the years but recently came across one which surely takes the prize. An outfit in Brooklyn, NY has sent out a brochure advertising a kit to help you make money without working. It boasts "This new multilevel money making idea will make miracles happen. We have combined two fast moving principles for making big money without working too hard for it... This program was created for the millions of people who want to stop working, and start having some fun in their lives." They are selling vitamins and they assure us that by starting off with \$2 sent to this company in Brooklyn we can end up with \$93, 312 a month. Of course, a kit with 25 newsletters which you must send out will cost you \$20 (Not to mention postage) and you can get additional kits at increased prices, of course. All of which reminds me of what Paul said "If a man will not work, neither should he eat."

NO LAW

Ray Downen of Joplin, Missouri, a member of the Christian Church, publishes a newsletter called VIEWPOINT. He delivers himself recently on the question of authority for musical instruments in worship and decries those who "make laws where God made none." Hear him: "God gave no law of authority, no law of silence, and no law against the use of instrumental music in His praise. Men have no right, in His name, to make laws they think God should have made!" Well now, since Paul said "Where there is no law, there is no transgression" we can expect this gentleman to place his approval on infant baptism, animal sacrifice, prayers to Mary and a host of other things on which the word of God is silent. The Hebrew writer argued that Christ could not be a priest on earth since he was of the tribe of Judah "of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood" (Heb. 7: 14). Silence was prohibitive there, was it not?

A MERRY HEART — GOOD MEDICINE

Tom Icard, my late brother-in-law was a man with a tremendous sense of humor. His merry heart was good medicine to all who knew him. His wife, my sister Glenda Icard, has written a summary of their life together for the family to keep and I asked her if I could lift an item or two once in awhile for this column. She readily agreed. When Tom and Glenda first married, they rented an apartment in a large house in Hillsboro, Ohio, then owned by Lloyd Barker who lived in the other part of the house. Glenda wrote "One day he (Tom) locked Lloyd in the attic with the statement that he could come out when he agreed to lower the rent. Then Tom ran downstairs to see if Gwen wanted anything out of Lloyd before letting him out. About that time Lloyd appeared at the kitchen door. Tom told everyone that Lloyd was so tight he would jump off the roof before agreeing to lower the rent." Well, sorry about that Lloyd, but that was too good to keep.

FLIES AND BALD SPOTS

"Early in his work at Tomlinson Run (PA), one Sunday Tom (whose hair was thinning and who had a little bald spot on top of his head) was being pestered by a fly. When the fly finally landed on his bald spot. Tom stopped and said 'I don't mind his landing. It's just when he skids that it bothers me.' The audience broke into laughter and Tom proceeded with his sermon.

CHURCH OF CHRIST HOSPITALS

For many years now, our institutional brethren have operated church-supported hospitals in other countries. Why they have not made a push for them in this country is a mystery to me, unless they are afraid that their folks will not stand still for it yet. Every year, I receive a brochure advertising a "Medical Evangelism Seminar." One was conducted in Dallas, Texas January 4 and 5, 1991. This one was hosted by African Christian Hospitals Foundation. The schedule lists a section from 1: 30-3: 00 P. M. dubbed "Reports on Medical Works of Churches of Christ" and (counting the 4: 45-5: 30 session) there are eight different hospitals or clinics mentioned. There is the Chimala Mission Hospital in East Africa; Clinica Christiana in Guatemala; Nigerian Christian Hospital; Ghana Mission Clinic; Predisan, Honduras; one in Mexico; a medical clinic in Tegucigalpa, Honduras; and a report on the Haiti Medical Evangelism Campaigns. These activities are not reported as the works of individuals but as "Medical Works of Churches of Christ." Hospitals are good places for the sick to go and Christians have as much right to operate them (or work in them) as anyone else, but it is not the mission of the church of the Lord to organize, operate or fund them. To argue for them as a means of evangelism is to land smack in the middle of the social gospel which argues that we must minister to the "whole man."

SAID WHAT NOW?

In the October-December, 1990 IN WORD AND DOCTRINE, Curtis A. Cates reports on four speeches delivered at Missouri Street in West Memphis, Arkansas April 20-21, 1990 by Rubel Shelly. Shelly used to be fairly conservative but has ended up out in left field. He is one of those who has been holding hands with the Christian Church folks more recently. Cates reports that he ridiculed "the old paths mentality." He belittled our imitating the pattern for the church of the first century. Said he "I reject pattern theology." He further said to imitate the church of the first century is an "eccentricity, a foolish thing to do." He also ridiculed the sermons great men have preached for years on "Marks of the True Church." He also said "The church is not the kingdom of God." "The kingdom did not come on Pentecost, whereas the church did." Once men hunger for fellowship with the forces of error, and once they lose their faith in the old Jerusalem gospel there is no telling what they will think up to say next.

EDITOR'S MEETING SCHEDULE—1991

- March— Dowlen Rd., Beaumont, Texas (3-8)
Danville, Kentucky (17-22)
Caneyville, Kentucky (24-29) April—
- E. Central, Tulsa, Oklahoma (7-12)
Holly St., Denver, Colorado (21-26)
- May— Harrodsburg, Kentucky (5-10)
Jordan, Ontario (19-26)
- June— Jonesboro, Tennessee (3-9)
Huntington Beach, California (23-28)
- July— Yakima, Washington (7-12)
Sunnyside, WA (14-19)
Lawrenceburg, Kentucky (28-Aug. 2)
- August— Sycamore, Gravel Switch, KY (5-11)
- Sept. — Taylorsville Rd., Louisville, KY (8-13)
Beatrice, Nebraska (23-29)
- Oct. — Campbellsville, KY (7-13)
Plainfield, Indiana (20-25)
- Nov. — Spencer, Indiana (4-10)
Mesa, Arizona (17-22)

It is likely that two or three more meetings may be added to this list though details are too indefinite now to include them here. We would be glad to greet any of our readers who might be in any of these areas.

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	232
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(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)	

SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

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



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

"Devoted to the Search for Divine Truth"

VOLUME XXXIII

MARCH, 1991

NUMBER 3

THINK ON THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

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Lutz, FL 33549



SINS OF THE TONGUE

Man's heart is the spring from which all language flows (Matt. 12: 34, 35). We should be careful to be swift to hear and slow to speak (Jas. 1: 19); we should speak to edify (Eph. 4: 29).

What The Scriptures Say About Speech

"O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matt. 12: 34-37).

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" (James 1: 19).

"Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man" (Col. 4: 6).

"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers" (Eph. 4: 29).

We need a clear definition of the Bible terms used to describe some of the sins of the tongue. The definitions of these words are taken primarily from W. E. Vine's Expository Dictionary Of New Testament Words, and Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary.

1. **BACKBITING**—W. E. Vine says the word is formed from **kata**, "against," and **laleo**, "to speak." It is used in Rom. 1: 30: "Backbiters;" in 1 Pet. 2: 1: "Evil speaking," and "backbiting" in 2 Cor. 12: 20. The word means, "to censure, slander, reproach, or speak evil of the absent." (Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary) The result of backbiting will devour and destroy both the backbiter and those against whom he speaks (Gal. 5: 15). The man who is not a backbiter is identified as in the tabernacle of the Lord and dwelling in His holy hill (Psa. 15: 3). Among those whom God has given up because of their evil is the backbiter (Rom. 1: 28-32). Backbiting is slander, evil speaking of others in their absence, and he does so openly; he is usually a liar.

2. **GOSSIP**—"One who runs about tattling and telling news; one who talks too much about the affairs of others.

Gossip is related to: 1. **Idle talk**—Tattlers: the noun does not appear anywhere in the New Testament, but the verb is in 3 John 10. "Prating"—To utter nonsense; idle accusations; empty charges. "Gossip" would well translate the word. It is associated with a busybody and being idle. "And withal they learn to 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. **Tattling**—"Wherefore, if I come, I remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church" (3 John 10). It signifies to talk non-sense, to babble; the adjective **phluaros**, babbling, garrulous; to raise false accusations.

3. **SLANDER**—"A false tale or report maliciously uttered, and tending to injure the reputation of another: "... and a whisperer separateth chief friends" (Prov. 16: 28); in 1 Tim. 3: 11, the wives of elders and deacons in particular must not be slanderers, but sober and faithful in all things.

Slander is related to: 1. **False accusers**—"Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good" (2 Tim. 3: 3). 2. **Whisperers**—(Pro. 16: 28; Rom. 1: 29).

Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers" (Rom. 1: 29). Speaking evil reports into one's ear; secret slander. To insinuate, hint evil reports of others, while trying to avoid personal responsibility. He is a very dangerous person.

4. **LIARS**—(Lying - deceit), Rom. 1: 29; Eph. 4: 25; Rev. 21: 8. Pseudes—"false, a falsehood." Used of false witnesses, Acts 6: 13; false apostles, Rev. 2: 2; adjective for many words; calculated to deceive; it is elsewhere rendered "lie," John 8: 44; Rom. 1: 25; 2 Thess. 2: 11; 1 John 2: 21, 27; to deceive, not telling the truth as it is. To deliberately tell or insinuate anything but truth; an effort to mislead.

Lying comes from the devil (John 8: 44; Acts 5: 3, 4). God hates liars (Prov. 6: 17); Rom. 16: 17). All liars will receive eternal damnation (Rev. 21: 8, 27; 22: 15).

5. **SWELLINGS**—"Phusiosis, denotes a puffing up, swelling with pride..., 2 Cor. 12: 20, "swellings." "For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults" (2 Cor. 12: 20). "Huperonkos, an adjective denoting of excessive weight or size, is used metaphorically in the sense of immoderate, especially of arrogant speech, in the neuter plural, virtually as a noun, 2 Pet. 2: 18; Jude 16, 'of great swelling words, "' doubtless with reference to Gnostic phraseology. It means arrogant boasters in Rom. 1: 30. It is empty claims; pride in speech.

6. **STRIFES**—Several related words will be considered under this term because they belong under the definition by Greek Lexicons and English Dictionaries. Some are found in 2 Cor. 12: 20: "For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults."

W. E. Vine says: "Eris: strife, contention, is the expression of enmity, Rom. 1: 29." Debates: used in a good sense (Acts 17: 17; Gal. 2: 5; Jude 3; Heb. 12: 4): to struggle against, reason with opposition. It is used in a bad sense: contention, wrangling, quarreling (1 Cor. 1: 11, 12; 3: 3; 2 Cor. 12: 20; 1 Tim. 6: 5). It is strife, party spirit (Gal. 5: 20; Jas. 3: 16). Other words that have similar meaning are: faction, contention, dispute, fightings, strife of words (1 Tim. 6: 4).

7. **MALIGNITY**—Vine says of this word: "lit., bad manner or character,... hence, an evil disposition that tends to put the worst construction on everything, malice, malevolence, craftiness, occurs in Rom. 1: 29, as the accompaniment of dolos, guile." The word signifies depravity of heart; the act of applying words or actions of others in the worst possible sense. The idea is to hurt, injure and destroy others.

8. **FALSE ACCUSERS**—To falsely accuse one of evil, a form of slander. "Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good" (2 Tim. 3: 3).

9. **TALEBEARING** (Prov. 11: 13; 26: 20-22). A walk-

(Continued on page 4)

Searching The Scriptures

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Editorial

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VICTORY THROUGH CHRIST

"But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15: 57).

I like to win. Defeat is agonizing. All that talk about good sportsmanship is nice, but I'd still rather win! I don't want my team to just barely win, either. I want them to win overwhelmingly. In time of war, the prospect of victory inspires the battle weary soldier and the sacrificing citizen at home. The price is high. But the prospect of victory is sweet.

Our text speaks of victory of far greater importance than the mundane affairs just mentioned. This victory is over the grave and is achieved in the resurrection. And it is the thought of that victory which enables us to be "steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (v. 58).

The means by which victory is accomplished is "through our Lord Jesus Christ." We cannot do it on our own. This was the confidence which inspired Paul and he expressed it often. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom. 8: 31, 37). "Now to him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" (Eph. 3: 20). "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4: 13). But, over what shall we have victory? Victory Over Sin

"All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3: 23). But that is not the end of the story. We can have victory over the guilt of sin. Our age has psycho-analyzed sin out of existence. Why, we are not guilty, of all things, we are just disadvantaged! It's the fault of our parents, or the environment, or else we will blame it on the government. Victory over sin begins with a recognition that we have sinned and that we are guilty before God. We will not be free from the guilt of sin by divesting ourselves of our "religious hang-ups" or abandoning our principles, but by respecting the law of God and amending our ways accordingly.

The law of Moses with its sacrifices could not take away sin (Heb. 10: 4). We have been redeemed through the precious blood of Christ (1 Pet. 1: 18-20). That was the price paid to free us from sin. We realize the benefits of his shed blood in obedience to the gospel. "Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteous-ness" (Rom. 6: 17-18).

Victory Over Life's Trials

Through our Lord, we shall have victory over sorrow. Job was right when he said "Man that is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble" (Job 14: 1). Paul wrote of our God "Who comforteth us in all our tribulation" (2 Cor. 1: 4) and in the next verse spoke of "our consolation" which abounds by Christ. Sorrow bows us down, but it is a great teacher enabling us to rise up with even greater strength to serve the Lord victoriously.

We shall have victory **over difficulties**. Life is full of hills to climb, some appearing to be steeper than we can manage. Paul learned from his thorn in the flesh that when he was weak, then was he strong. Man's extremity is God's opportunity. The Psalmist said "And call upon me in the day of trouble: and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me" (Psa. 50: 15). Our strength is small but our God has unlimited power coupled with unending love and we can win.

We shall have victory **over fear**. There are fears on every hand. Will some dreaded disease overtake me? Will I be the victim of crime? Will the banks all fail? Will I lose my job? Will I lose my children to the Devil? What about the earthquake? What about the war? When will it be over? We have to be careful about fears. They become evidences of little faith in God. Paul said "comfort the fainthearted" (1 Thes. 5: 14). John warned that the "fearful" will be lost (Rev. 21: 8). So, it is imperative that we gain the victory over fear. It helps to remember several basic things. God is on his throne. The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous and his ears are open to their prayers (1 Pet. 3: 12). The kingdoms of earth pass away, one by one, but the kingdom of heaven remains (Heb. 12: 28; Dan. 2: 44). Even if we should lose our lives to disease, crime, war, there is an eternal reward for the faithful. It does not all end at the cemetery. We are saved by hope (Rom. 8: 24). "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will **fear no evil**: for thou art with me" (Psa. 23: 4).

We shall have victory **over the world**. "And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 Jno. 5: 4). Jesus said "Be of good cheer: I have overcome the world" (Jno. 16: 33). How did he do it? He grappled with the powers of evil and won by relying upon the word of God. "It is written" he told Satan. There is our help. "Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psa. 119: 11). We can win this battle but not by neglecting Bible study in our private lives and not by neglecting opportunities to study and learn when Christians assemble. The more we saturate our minds with the word of God, the less appealing will be the offerings of this world.

We shall have victory **over death**. That is where we started. Through the ages men have asked Job's question: "If a man die, shall he live again?" (Job. 14: 14). Our victory will be realized in the resurrection of the dead. Oh, I know that some sneer at such a thought. If a plastic surgeon can remake a face disfigured in an accident, cannot the One who made the surgeon and gave him life and breath, reshape broken and decayed bodies into a heavenly form? The body may be burned or torn beyond

recognition, or disappear into the depths of the sea, or be blown into countless fragments: but please know this: The Almighty who made them in the first place, is able to gather them from the ends of the earth, and reform them into immortal and incorruptible beauty beyond comparison. So then, the casket at the cemetery is not the sign of defeat; it is merely the threshold of victory. "Death is swallowed up in victory." All of that leads to Paul's challenge in 1 Cor. 15: 58" Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. "

"Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place" (2 Cor. 2: 14). Indeed, we are going to win!

(Continued from page 2)

ing busybody; trader in scandal. One who tells all secrets of evil and seldom reports good. "From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling" (1 Tim. 1: 6). "Neither filthiness, nor foolish talk-ing, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks" (Eph. 5: 4). "It denotes more than mere idle talk" (W. E. Vine). "For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision" (Titus 1: 10).

10. CORRUPT COMMUNICATIONS—It means shameful, disgraceful speaking; it is used in Eph. 5: 4, of obscenity, all that is contrary to purity. "Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks" (Eph. 5: 4). "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers" (Eph. 4: 29). This signifies profanity and vulgarity; a conveyer of the basest garbage and filth of the mind. "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth" (Col. 3: 8).

11. BLASPHEMY—As an adjective, "blasphemous, abusive, speaking evil... "railing," As a verb, "blasphemeo, to blaspheme, rail at or revile, is used (a) in a general way, of any contumelious speech, reviling, calumniating, railing at etc., as of those who railed at Christ, e. g., Matt 27: 39... (b) of those who speak contemptuously of God or of sacred things, e. g., Matt. 9: 3..." (W. E. Vine). "Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord" (2 Pet. 2: 11). "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, un-holy" (2Tim. 3: 2). The noun form: The word 'blasphemy' is practically confined to speech defamatory of the Divine Majesty." (W. E. Vine).

To understand the meaning of these words is to realize the horrible consequences of their use by Christians under any circumstances. Not only will the soul of the one using these words be in danger of eternal damnation, but the souls of many will be doomed to eternal punishment because of their use. Any use of any speech as characterized above is sin against Almighty God. All such speech comes from the heart and indicates its condition. Think on these things.

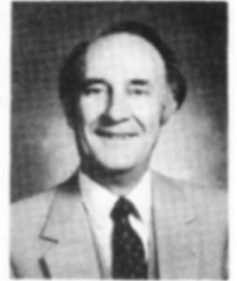
WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

Send all questions to:

Weldon E. Warnock

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BODILY EXERCISE

QUESTION: *What does Paul mean by the statement, "For bodily exercise profiteth little" (1 Tim. 4: 8)?*

ANSWER: Quoting the whole verse, Paul says, "For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." The consensus of many is that "bodily exercise" is physical training, such as gymnastics, and that it has little significance in contrast to godliness. Although I am in the minority, it seems to me that Paul is speaking of the *regulating* of bodily appetites and desires rather than gymnastics.

W. E. Vine said "the immediate reference is probably not to mere physical training for games but to discipline of the body such as that which the Apostle refers in 1 Cor. 9: 27, though there may be an allusion to the practices of asceticism" (Vol. 2, p. 60). Paul wrote in 1 Cor. 9: 27, "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." Hence, controlling the body in 1 Cor. 9: 27 is the same as "bodily exercise" in 1 Tim. 4: 8.

R. C. H. Lenski wrote, "Keeping the body with all its bodily desires well trained in the godly life is worth something, we must even say that it is a part of true godliness. Yet it is not the whole thing nor even the main feature; it is only 'little' when it is compared with all that real godliness comprises. "

Only a part of godliness lies in the body, while the foundation of godliness lies in the spirit and its spiritual virtues. This is why "bodily exercise profiteth little." It just encompasses a part of our Christian life while godliness embraces the whole, even all things.

The New American Standard version renders 1 Tim. 4: 8: "for bodily discipline is only of little profit." The Revised Standard Version has, "for while bodily training is some value, godliness is of value in every way. "The Greek word translated "exercise" is *gymnasia* which Thayer says, "a. prop, *the exercise of the body in the palaestra*, b. any *exercise whatever*" (p. 122). The "any exercise whatever" could well be the *discipline* (NAS) or *training* (RSV) of the bodily appetites in harmony with divine regulations.

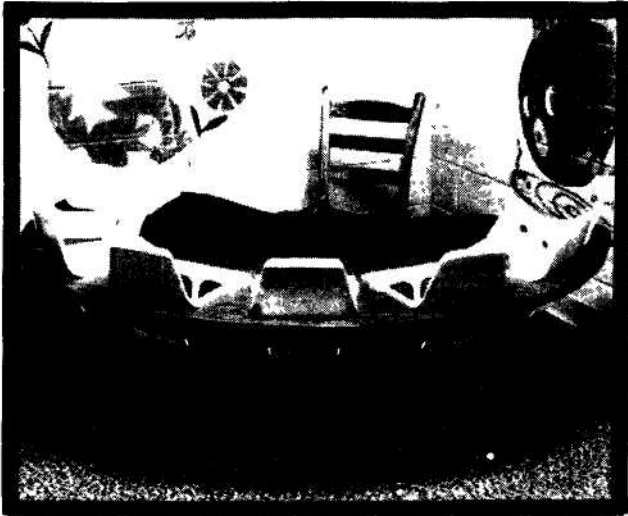
Some contend that "bodily exercise" in 1 Tim. 4: 8 is the ascetic practices in v. 3 of the context. But "forbidding to marry" and "commanding to abstain from meats"

are doctrines of devils (v. 2). Paul certainly would not have said that these diabolical doctrines are of some value.

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DEALING WITH SIN

For the last year or two we have been considering a number of sins such as stealing, gambling, social drinking, immodesty, dancing, smoking and misuses of the tongue. With this article we will conclude our study of worldliness by taking a look at the question of how we are to deal with sin. What can be done about these sins in our own lives and the lives of others?

The answer is not as hard as some might think. In fact, the Bible answer is rather simple.

Recognize The Difference In Law And Opinion

If the opposition to the practice of social drinking, smoking, dancing, mixed swimming, gambling and lying is just a matter of opinion, then these are not sin. Remember, that sin is a violation of the **law** (1 John 3: 4). If **law** is not transgressed, there is no sin (Rom. 4: 15).

The subjects that we have studied for the past several months are violations of the law of **God**. Passages have been given in each article that demonstrate that each practice is contrary to the word of God.

The way to deal with these matters is not to dismiss them by saying "that's just his opinion," Rather, it is a matter of law which means that we are talking about **sin**. The first step in dealing with sin is to recognize that it is sin.

Recognize The Consequences Of Sin

Sin has consequences that are serious. Even a brief look at these fruits will make us want to deal with sin properly.

1. **Spiritual Death.** Sin separates man from his God (Isa. 59: 1-2). This separation is referred to as death. The apostle Paul wrote, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned" (Rom. 5: 12). James wrote about the same principle, saying, "... sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (Jas. 1: 15).

2. **Hell.** The separation from God now is not the only consequence. Those who persist and die in that condition will be eternally severed from God in the fires of hell (Matt. 25: 46; Rev. 14: 10-11).

Again, Paul instructed the Romans saying, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6: 23). Notice the contrast between the "eternal life" on the one hand and the "death" on the other. This death must refer to (or at least include) the eternal separation from God. The book of Revelation refers to being cast into the fires of hell as the "second death" (Rev. 20: 14-15).

Don't:

1. **Ignore it.** Ignoring sin does not cause it to go away. It still remains (John 19: 41). The Hebrew writer urges us to obey "today" because as time marches on the chances are greater that we will become hardened in sin (Heb. 3: 7, 13). Thus, to ignore sin would only harden our hearts in it.

2. **Hide it.** Those who endeavor to hide their sin from others and put on an appearance of being righteous are called "hypocrites" in the Bible (Matt. 15: 8-9; Matt. 23). Hiding the dirt under the rug doesn't remove the dirt; it only keeps a few from knowing where it is. Hypocrisy doesn't remove the sin and certainly doesn't conceal it from God.

3. **Deny it.** Isaiah dealt with people who called "evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; and put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter" (Isa. 5: 20). They, like many today, had things all backwards. Some will deny that the practices we have been studying are sin. Others will admit that they are sin, but will deny that they are guilty when in fact they are guilty.

Why can we not ignore, hide or deny our sin? Because the day is coming when "we all must 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).

The Child of God Who Sins Must:

1. **Repent.** When Simon sinned, Peter told him to "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness..." (Acts 8: 22). Repentance is a change of mind (Matt. 21: 28-29) that is prompted by godly sorrow (2 Cor. 7: 10) and results in a change or reformation of life (Rom. 6).

It is easy to see from the nature of repentance that one who repents of sin **ceases to practice the sin.** Repentance involves turning from the evil (cf. Matt. 12: 41 and Jonah 3: 10).

If the sin does not cease, there has been no repentance (2 Cor. 12: 20-21; Rev. 9: 20-21). The Christian does not continue to practice sin in his life (1 John 3: 6, 9).

2. **Confess his sin.** He must confess his sin before God in order to obtain the cleansing by the blood of Christ. John said, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1: 9).

Should sin be confessed before brethren? We must either (1) confess **all** of our sins before the brethren, (2) confess **none** of our sins before the brethren or (3) confess some of our sins before the brethren and some merely before God. In light of Jas. 5: 16 the last of these must be the correct answer. The text says that there is a time to confess our sins one before another which would rule out the idea that we confess none of our sins before brethren. Obviously, the first possibility would not be true, for that would mean that we confess every private thought that is wrong.

Which sins need to be acknowledged before brethren can be determined by how public the sin is. Public sin, where many in and out of the church are aware of it, must be confessed. What other conclusion can be drawn?

3. **Pray for forgiveness.** Simon was also told to "... pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee" (Acts 8: 22).

Conclusion

Two principles need to be remembered about the sins we have been studying.

1. Sin cannot be tolerated. Preachers, elders and all of God's people must take their stand against sin.

2. Sin in our life must cease in order to please God and go to heaven.

EMOTIONAL AND CHARACTER EFFECTS ON CHILDREN OF DIVORCE

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Divorce is a tragedy for all who are involved. Many times an "innocent" spouse is left for no apparent reason and then has a lifetime of consequences to deal with. Friends and family are stunned and the divorcee has to live with the "stigma" that will follow him or her from then on. But perhaps the worst effects will be felt by the children of the divorced couple. Many times the children are thought little of while the divorce is in process, except for being tossed around and fought over by the selfish couple. The parents are concerned with who will keep the child, but really that is not in the forefront of the child's mind. The child wants the parents back together! Yet because of what has happened, consequences will follow the child that go far beyond the problem of who keeps him.

I speak in general terms, realizing that not every divorce will follow the same pattern, nor will every child react the same way. Some behave boldly as if they are able to accept the situation. Others are quite obviously devastated. But the hurt is there. There are many effects that will be felt by the children, even long after the actual divorce. Consider two:

1. **Emotional.** Divorce is a traumatic experience. While many children try to hide the hurt, they are quickly decaying inside. The self-image that the child has will almost certainly go from bad to worse. He might view the adult world as horrible, while his own world is not much better. He feels worthless and alone. Loneliness is almost inevitable. He is not an adult yet and does not have the adult mental capacity to deal with problems. He seems to be on an emotional roller-coaster that starts down and never goes back up. Horrible thoughts go through the mind. There is the self-pity, the deep depression, and perhaps the thoughts of suicide. Many children have taken that route. Many try to escape the reality by turning to drugs—any way to get away from it. Usually, the child thinks the divorce is his own fault. Maybe if he weren't there, the parents never would have had trouble. Eventually, bitterness and perhaps hatred sets in. Untold damage is done emotionally to the child. He will

carry emotional scars that never quit hurting. Years passing may help some, but the emotional effects will always be felt. I just wish for people to know the potential for emotional disaster in a child when the parents divorce. If you know of a child going through this kind of stress (age can range from a tot to late teenage years), seek to help him or her. Be aware that the damage may be so great that he or she needs professional help. Just look at the number of kids that are committing suicide and are hooked on drugs. Not all of this is from divorce, but you can almost be sure that children who have these problems come from a troubled family situation.

2. **Character.** Jesus taught that thoughts from the heart determine action (Matt. 15: 18-20). Consequently, one who has nourished his mind with depression and bitterness will manifest that by his action. A child's personality is developed over the years that he spends with (or without) his parents. This is why parents are to bring up their children in the training and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6: 4). They are to help the children develop the character to serve God the rest of their lives. Now you can imagine what kind of effects that divorce will have on the character of the child. Chances are that the child will become introverted (keep to himself, afraid of any social atmosphere), or very extroverted (going out of his way to get attention). Both of these extremes are dangerous traits for anyone to develop. If a person becomes introverted, it will be difficult for him to make friends. If he chooses to be a Christian, he will shy away from taking stands for truth against a majority. It will be a battle that lasts a lifetime. On the other hand, if the person is extroverted, he will turn people off by his overbearing personality. It might reach the point where he is not taken seriously. Both extremes are undesirable. Of course, these traits are developed by those who have not been put through a divorce, but I believe the potential for them to develop are greatly increased by divorce. A child wants and needs attention. He wants to know that he is needed and loved. He does not feel this when his parents are divorcing. Thus, he will do what he can to gain the attention he feels he has lost.

When a baby is born, he is in the hands of those who will help mold him for life. Parents cannot take lightly this responsibility of raising and training their children. If you are among those who think divorce is an alternative when you are not getting along with your spouse then 1) don't get married and 2) if you are married, don't have children. If you do have children, then I pray that you realize how important of a job you have. Remember, example says much more than words. And if you show your child that marriage is not important or worth working hard for, then you have greatly failed him.

THE WORLD IS IN TROUBLE!
DON'T FORGET TO PRAY!

Using the SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

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HAVE YOU NOT READ THIS SCRIPTURE?

Jesus repeatedly and continually directed people to the Scriptures. There was never a question with Him as to the authoritative nature of the word of God. He raised questions like, "What is written in the law? How readest thou?"; or, "Have you never read in the law?". He made statements like, "It is written..."; and, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures...". His constant plea was that folks read, search, examine, and believe the Scriptures.

In Mark 12: 1-10, we have the parable of the wicked vinedressers. This story is something of an allegory that parallels the history of the nation of Israel. As the Lord reached His conclusion, He asked, "Have you not read this Scripture: The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?"

The ASV is more emphatic: "Have ye not read even this Scripture?"

Jesus seemed to be perplexed and appalled at the ignorance of God's word that He confronted. If He walked the earth today, I'm sure He would still be asking: "What is written...? Have you not read even this Scripture?"

I. The Place and Purpose of Baptism. Some teach that baptism is completely non-essential. Others, that it is important, but not necessary for salvation. Our concern is: What does the word of truth say?

Sometimes we tend to deluge people with Scripture when we discuss such matters. Perhaps we would do better if we focused on one statement and asked, "Have you not read even this Scripture?" Let's take Mark 16: 16. If one will not accept this plain statement, it's doubtful that he would accept a half-dozen others that might be cited.

Jesus said that "He who believes and is baptized shall be saved." Two prerequisites are here given for salvation. The statement is grammatically parallel to: "He who enrolls and is taught shall be educated;" or "He who fights and is whipped shall be humiliated"; or "He who marries and is bossed shall be henpecked." Obviously in these examples, both conditions are necessary for the conclusion to be valid. One who enrolls in school is not educated unless he is also taught. But many quibble that the Lord does not say in the second part of the verse, "He who believes not and is not baptized shall be condemned." He only said, "He who believes not shall be condemned." Therefore, we are told, baptism is not necessary to salvation.

The Lord, however, was not speaking of salvation in the second clause. If one desires to know what is needful for salvation, this is revealed in the first clause. Jesus said what He meant and meant what He said. Had He made both unbelief and neglect of baptism conditions of condemnation, then one would not be condemned if he performed either of them. What would happen then to one who had been baptized and did not believe? He couldn't be saved and he couldn't be damned!

As I heard one preacher say, "You could be baptized till the bullfrogs call you brother, it would accomplish nothing if you don't believe!" Have you not read even this Scripture?

II. **Jesus Christ—always the same.** Those who believe in modern-day miracles often quote Heb. 13: 8. "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever." Their implication is that if Jesus performed miracles on the earth in the past, He must necessarily be doing the same today. Their assumption is that the verse demands that He has not changed in any fashion.

It might do well to inquire, "Have you not read even this Scripture?": Phil. 2: 5-7. He was in the form of God, but was made in the likeness of man. Obviously then, He did make a change. Heb. 13: 8 does not necessarily imply that Jesus has never changed in any sense. **But** He has not changed in His divine character. Heb. 1: 10-12 affirms the same truth. "**Have you not read even this Scripture?**"

III. **The Perfect Revelation.** Many today speak of "lost books of the Bible," Others promote and defend "latter day revelations." According to these, the word of God has not been perfectly revealed and preserved for all generations.

We wonder if some "have not read even this Scripture": Matt. 24: 35. The Lord here promised that "heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

IV. **Fun and Frolic at Church Expense.** When I was a boy and my parents obeyed the gospel I do not remember any controversy over the mission of the church. In the 40's and early 50's, brethren were pretty much in agreement that fun and frolic were not the work of the church. The denominations were denounced for their perverted view and unauthorized activities.

For several years now many churches of Christ have been employed in the entertainment and recreation business. **We wonder if some "have not read even this Scripture":** Romans 14: 17. The apostle informs us that "... the kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

V. **Premillennial Theories.** The radio preachers continually speak of "the last days, the rapture, the coming kingdom, the Jews being gathered to Jerusalem, and the thousand year reign of Christ on earth.

I have often asked the question, "**Have you not read even this Scripture?**" 2 Peter 3: 8-13: According to this passage, the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night. When this day comes, it will not be

followed by a seven year tribulation, or a millennial reign, but of the passing away of this world by fire. **VI. Apostasy Impossible?** Can a saved person lose his salvation? Many say "No!" Evidence to the contrary is found on practically every page of our New Testaments. But let us ask, "**Have you not read even this Scripture?**": 2 Thess. 2: 1.


According to this passage, "that day" (the return of Jesus) will not come except there come a falling away first. If Christians cannot fall away—this leaves one in the unenviable position of denying that the Lord will ever return.

We would be wise to follow our Lord's example and asking, "**Have you not read even this Scripture?**"

**CONTRASTING VIEWS
ON PARENTAL
RESPONSIBILITY**

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Being good parents has never been the easiest task, and that responsibility is made even more difficult by the attitudes prevalent in an unbelieving world. Our sin-saturated society has exerted a powerfully detrimental influence on family relationships as a whole. The "nuclear family" is under heavy assault from certain very vocal feminist and humanistic organizations. The increase in "single parent households" and the spiraling number of "latchkey kids" portend an even greater disintegration of many families. Our hearts should go out to those Christians who are striving to bring their children up in the fear of God. The attitudes of the world toward parenting **are** completely at odds with God's revealed truth. The aim of this article is to point out these conflicts and to encourage Christians to recognize those differences and to rely on God's instructions.

"Children are a heritage from the Lord" (Psa. 127: 3). When He has blessed a husband and wife with children, this "heritage" should be approached with the attitude of Manoah, Samson's father. When told that they were to have a child, Manoah's request of God was, "Teach us **what we** shall do for the child who will be born" (Judges 13: 8 NKJV). All parents need heaven's help in meeting their responsibilities. This is a matter of primary importance if parents are to bring their children up in the right way.

Attitudes to Avoid

The world would **shift responsibility for child-rearing to someone other** than the parents — babysitters, the schools, government agencies, neighbors, television, or others. Why? The causes are numerous. First, being parents is both physically and emotionally demanding, even exhausting at times. Some just do not

want to be taxed that much. Too, it interferes with so many outside activities. Some are galled at being deprived of their pleasures. It may be, in some cases, that the parents want so many things that both have to work even to "make ends meet." Children have to be turned over to others.

Christians, however, know that God has required them, especially fathers, to bring their children up in the training and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6: 4 NKJV). No one else can do for the children what dedicated, God-fearing parents are told to do.

The world's attitude is to **provide little or no supervision, to allow unrestricted freedom** of action, and to **reject the idea of corrective discipline** (corporal punishment). The potential disaster of this attitude is seen in the wise man's words: "A child left to himself brings shame to his mother" (Prov. 19: 15). The Scriptures tell us that Eli's sons "Made themselves vile, and he did not restrain them" (1 Sam. 3: 13). The sad results can be seen by reading the whole story in that context. The Bible still says, "He who spares his rod hates his son; but he who loves him disciplines him promptly" (Prov. 13: 24). Read similar words in Proverbs 22: 15; 23: 13; and Hebrews 12: 7-11.

The world's attitude seems to be that **loving children** means giving them whatever they **want** every toy in the store, all the latest designer fashions, a car at sixteen, plenty of spending money, no curfew rules, etc. And this is called "love"? One of the great Satanic deceptions is that the more things one has, the happier he will be. Our Lord would remind such people, "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12: 15). Love cannot be bought; children cannot be bribed by this sort of pretense. Our children need **genuine** love. They need some of our time; they need companionship, affection and nurturing. Such gifts to our children are not tied to money and things, but to hearts. Some youngsters will grow up not knowing how to love a marriage partner, their children or anyone else, simply because they never witnessed it in their parents. The relationship their parents had with them did not cause them to feel loved, nor did they learn the feeling of security that such love brings.

The world's attitude is that **religious, spiritual instruction is not important**. The kids can make their own decisions when they are old enough to do so," they foolishly say. The very thing that will instill a sense of true values, God's word, they slight. The emphasis in many homes today is on material things — sports, recreation, physical fitness, education, making money, and pointing children toward training themselves for the most lucrative professions.

The most basic possession anyone can have is "unfeigned faith" such as Timothy had (2 Tim. 1: 5). Parents should desire this for their children above all else. That kind of faith comes from being trained in the sacred writings. Paul wrote to Timothy, "From childhood you have known the holy scriptures..." (2 Tim. 3: 15). Do you wonder why Timothy had this deep, genuine faith? Paul stated that such faith "dwelt first in your grandmother

Lois and your mother Eunice" (2 Tim. 1: 5). What better can parents do today than to imitate this grandmother and mother? It is good to be concerned about the schoolwork of children. It is even more important, however, to be sure they are being taught what will lead them to salvation. When children grow to maturity with no interest in God's word, attending worship and living righteously, it just may be because the word of God did not mean much to their parents, was never read and discussed in those formative years. Parents, work on your own "unfeigned faith," and make every effort to create it in the hearts of your offspring.

The attitude of worldly parents is to have **no care about the influence their own lifestyle is having on their impressionable children**. Many youngsters simply duplicate what they have seen in their parents. When the home is characterized by drinking, drugs, profanity, marital infidelity, unscriptural divorce and remarriage, those practices may very well show up also in the children. When Jesus speaks of the power of influence in His reference to the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matt. 5: 14-16), surely parents need to learn that lesson. Training children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord involves setting good examples as well as giving verbal instruction. The home is the chief arena where spirituality and morality are viewed by our children. Be sure they **see** the right things as well as **hear** them.

It is easy to be swayed by the world's standards, but parents who love the Lord and want what is best for their children will resist the temptation to surrender their God-given responsibilities. Helping your precious children reach heaven will have been worth every inconvenience and sacrifice. May God bless those loving, caring, concerned fathers and mothers whose hearts are set on their task. Such parents are not perfect, and are sometimes frightened by their fearful responsibility, but they are striving earnestly to do their best. May they live to see the day when those children will "rise up and call her (them-BK) blessed" (Prov. 31: 28).

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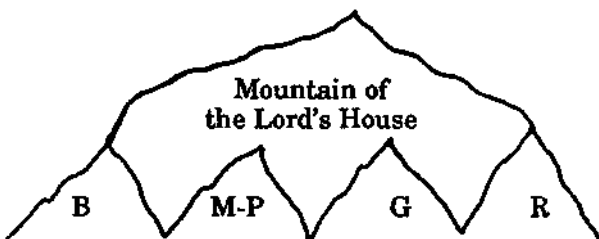
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WHAT HAPPENED IN ACTS 2?

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Most members of the church easily recognize the first chapter of Acts as a bridge between the gospels and Acts of Apostles; the real story of this book beginning in chapter two. While the second chapter of Acts is a familiar one to most, it would seem that a very few know what really happened in that chapter. In teaching classes in various places, I have often ask, "What really happened in Acts 2?" Several replies which have been received are: Establishment of the church, The Apostles being baptized with the Holy Spirit, Salvation being offered for the first time in the name of Christ, and preaching of the first gospel sermon in effect. Surely all these things, and more, did occur; but, does that really answer our question?

Acts 2 can easily be seen as a fulfillment of prophecy, but what prophecy? Yes, Peter did say that Joel 2: 28-32 was being fulfilled. Is that all? Let us now read Isa. 2: 2-3, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Let us illustrate what Isaiah said by placing four mountains before us and another mountain on top—the Lord's house was to be established in the top of the mountains.



The reader is now asked to stop and read Dan. 2: 31-35, and notice the mountain that was to fill the whole earth. Daniel offers an explanation and identifies four kingdoms: Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek, and Roman. From this we can identify our four mountains (B, M-P, G, R). The word "kingdom" basically means "sovereignty, royal power, dominion, or rule." It would be of some assistance to remember this, first of all, when the word "kingdom" is mentioned. So, Isaiah 2 was referring to the simple fact that the rule of the Lord was to be set up—over all! We could simply write the word "rule" over each of these kingdoms, and see the position that the rule of the Lord was to have; it was to be over all. That is, it would demand a higher allegiance than all earthly

powers (Ac. 5: 29). This "rule" was not to just control the actions of men, but, "The kingdom of God is within you," (Lk. 17: 21)—a rule from within the hearts of men. Acts 2 identifies the beginning of the reign of Jesus Christ, as the "King of kings" and "Lord of lords." This was the beginning of a system that was to bridge the gulf between man and God (Jno. 14: 6). Here, in Acts 2, Peter speaks of Christ being, "By the right hand of God exalted" as both Lord and Christ (Ac. 2: 33). But, let us be sure that we grasp this.

We wish to get a view of three pictures at this point. The reader should consider these verses carefully. In Ac. 1: 9-11, we have an account of the Ascension of Christ, His leaving the earth to return to heaven—from whence He came. His entrance into heaven is prophetically set forth in Psa. 24: 7-10. Now, let us get the third picture, that of the crown being placed upon His head, "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed," (Dan. 7: 13-14). We may recall that the angel Gabriel said to Mary In Lk. 1: 33, "And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." No wonder, then, that Peter said in Ac. 2; 36, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ." The thousands listening to Apostolic preaching on the Day of Pentecost had a decision to make; "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey," (Rom. 6: 16). Three thousand got the point; and they yielded in obedience to King Jesus. What had Isaiah said? "He shall teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Dear reader, do you see that what really happened in Acts 2 was that the **RULE OF THE LORD WAS SET UP**; and that all the other things were merely fruits or results of this one great fact? Without the **RULE OF THE LORD** there would have been no church, no coming of the Holy Spirit, no preaching of the gospel, and no salvation. The Lord, of course, does that ruling today through His word (Lk. 10: 16; Psa. 119: 89; Heb. 1: 1-2).

Now, let us go back to Acts 2 and get the whole picture. Just maybe those three thousand saw something which we have missed. We must remember how the Jews had treated Jesus, all the efforts to ensnare Him, the premature efforts to destroy Him, and finally their crucifixion of Him. Truly it could be said, "He came unto his own, but his own received him not," (Jno. 1: 11). These Jews are now face to face with a fact which they never expected. The very one whom they had crucified now had all authority, He was King at God's right hand, and to Him they were going to have to give an account! No wonder they cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Ac. 2: 37). They were murderers, destined to hell, and their only way of escape was to turn to this One now reigning, the one whom they had crucified. They got

their answer in verse 38; and, in verse 41 three thousand of them complied. What were they doing? They were submitting to the rule of King Jesus; they were recognizing Him as Lord and King in their lives. Certainly these became the "church;" but "church" refers to people, and not something into which people may get! In spite of their past, they were now an acceptable part of His church; and they would continue to be such as long as they lived in submission to the King.

Apostacy And Restoration

Many have the wrong idea about these two words; they simply miss the point—almost completely! Apostacy does not destroy the rule of the Lord, even though men may rebel against this rule. Nothing has happened to that rule, it is still there and people can still submit to it, and thus become an acceptable part (be added) to His church. Watch the expression, "Stick with the church!" No! no! no! Stick with the Lord, with the truth. If you will do this, you will be an acceptable **part** of His church. When you fall away (apostacy), it is not, "from the church;" but, it is **FROM THE LORD, FROM THE TRUTH, FROM HIS RULE!** And that is what you must return to. It is not, "return to the church;" but, it is a return to, or being restored to the **RULE** of heaven, the **LORD'S RULE**. This is true whether we are talking about apostacy of an individual or a church Collectively). Sometimes people will say, "O, I never left the Lord, just the church." When one quits doing what the Lord said do with reference to the church, **THAT ONE HAS LEFT THE RULE OF THE LORD**—let us not try to play games with the Lord.

The Invitation

When we invite people to become members of the church, what are we doing? We are inviting them to submit to the rule of heaven, to come in obedience to King Jesus, to submit to His authority. If one leaves, he has left the Lord and needs to return to Him. Ignore the gospel and you will not be an acceptable part of His church. We have no more of an alternative today than did they on Pentecost. If men would really recognize the position of Jesus as it began in Acts 2, I am convinced that the scene of that occasion would be more often repeated. And our allegiance would be recognized for what it should be—total and complete submission to the King of heaven—the Lord Jesus Christ. He awaits your submission!

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THE LOVE OF GOD—ROMANS 8—NO. 3 THE HOLY SPIRIT AND ASSURANCE—VS. 15, 16

"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

Our last article in this series closed on the note of assurance (v. 14). In the foregoing verses we find that theme extended, amplified, and strengthened.

Unfortunately there are many in the religious world today who suffer untold misery because they are in doubt about their salvation. They are sincere and want to go to heaven, but for some reason that on which they rely for assurance is not real—it is not certain—it does not satisfy.

I cannot document the reference just now, but some time ago I read from a book which discussed briefly this problem from the viewpoint of the denominational world. Instructions were given to preachers on how to comfort their members who came to them suffering doubt about their salvation. The instructions went something like this: "Tell them not to worry; that this feeling comes to everybody; that it will go away soon; just pray to God, then forget about it." After preaching along this line at one place, a sister in Christ told me after services that before she learned the truth, she had an experience just like that after thinking she had been converted at the "mourners bench;" that I had accurately described what her preacher said as he tried to comfort her.

The strange thing to me about all of this is, these are the preachers and people who rely on what they say is supernatural evidence of pardon. They sometimes pat themselves on their left bosom saying, "I know that I am saved because of what I feel right here." Yet, here is evidence that such is not reliable—it does not last—it does not satisfy!

The New Testament Writers

The writers of the New Testament spake, wrote, and lived "in full assurance of faith" and exhorted us to do the same (Heb. 10: 22). At no time do we find them expressing a single instance of doubt. Note the following: "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor. 5: 1). Paul says "we know." Again, "we are always confident" (v. 6),

and again in verse eight: "we are confident, I say..." Hear Paul in another place: "... for I know who I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Tim. 1: 12). John, the beloved, said, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3: 2).

God does not want us to go through life with a feeling of uncertainty and suffering the misery of doubt. He has provided us with assurance. Our text tells how we may have such—even that which characterized the New Testament writers.

The Blessedness of Our Assurance

Verse fifteen emphasizes the blessedness of our assurance. The contrast is between the spirit of a slave in bondage to a cruel tyrant and an adopted child crying unto a tender, compassionate father. The expression "Abba, Father" might appear redundant at first glance since the word "Abba" means "father." However, when the word is understood in the light of its Aramaic meaning we see why it was not translated, and all appearance of redundancy vanishes. Authorities point out the "Abba" in the Aramaic always denotes filial affection and parental tenderness. What a beautiful relationship! Some authorities say the word "Abba" came to be used as a personal name for such a father. Our English word "father" of itself only denotes progenitorship. The context must determine the kind of father. Understanding this difference adds deeper and richer meaning to our Lord's prayer in Gethsemane: "... Abba, Father,... take way this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt" (Mk. 14: 36; Cf. Gal. 4: 6).

Even the word "adoption," when understood in the light of Roman law and as understood by the recipients of this letter, adds to the blessedness of our assurance. According to Roman law an adopted child had to be treated, in all respects, including the matter of inheritance, as a natural child. No favoritism could be shown—ever. Imagine what this meant to Gentile Christians. What a lesson to be learned by Jewish Christians!

Evidence of Pardon

Verse sixteen identifies the basis of our assurance. It involves the testimony of two witnesses, namely, the Holy Spirit and our spirit: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

Let us look first at the Holy Spirit and His testimony. How does He bear witness? The answer is simple: **Through His word!** This ought not to appear strange, because we find a precedent in the Old Testament: "Yet many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by thy spirit in thy prophets: yet would they not give ear: therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the people of the lands" (Neh. 9: 30). When one hears the words of a man guided by the Holy Spirit, he is hearing the words of the Holy Spirit. This word is that revealed unto the "holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit" (Eph. 3: 5), and which is the gospel (1 Pet. 1: 25)—God's power unto salvation (Rom. 1: 16). Paul called this

word "the sword of the Spirit" (Eph. 6: 17). This sword is so powerful that nothing—absolutely nothing can perform a more thorough operation on the heart of men: "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4: 12). It is interesting to observe in further confirmation of how the Holy Spirit bears His testimony that the inspired apostle John closed every one of his letters to the seven churches of Asia saying, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (Rev. 2 and 3).

This testimony of the Holy Spirit, however, of itself does not suffice for proof of our salvation. Our spirit must testify, or bear witness **WITH** the Holy Spirit. Notice, our text does not say "the Holy Spirit bears witness **TO** our spirit that we are the children of God." Rather, it says, "The Spirit itself beareth witness **WITH** our spirit, that we are the children of God." True, the Holy Spirit bears witness **TO** our spirit, as we have shown, but we have no proof of our salvation until we have believed and obeyed what the Spirit says. Then, our spirit can bear witness **WITH** the Holy Spirit—the two harmonize **WITH** each other. For example: The Holy Spirit says to the alien "believe" (Acts 16:31), "repent" (Acts 17: 30), "confess" (Rom. 10: 9), and "be baptized for the remission of sins" (Acts 2: 38). My spirit says that I have "believed," "repented," "confessed," and been "baptized for the remission of sins." Thus, the testimony of the Holy Spirit and my spirit harmonize. The Holy Spirit bears witness **WITH** my spirit that I am a child of God! Here is assurance—evidence of pardon—as strong and as sure as the word of God. If one doubts after understanding this, he needs another lesson on a different subject, namely, **Faith In God.**

This same assurance has been provided for the child of God. Day by day he walks "in full assurance of faith" as he conforms his life to the revelation of the Spirit. This does not mean that perfection is demanded of him. While some commands directed to the Christian are **absolute**, most of those involving his faithfulness to the Lord are **relative**. Limited space precludes a careful study of this point of distinction just here. However, suffice it to say that absolute commands are those in which one does not grow or become proficient with the passing of time and practice. He either obeys it or he does not, and that is it. Relative commands are those in which we do grow and become more proficient with time and practice. In the latter we are judged on the basis of our time, opportunity, and ability (Matt. 25: 14-30; 2 Pet. 1: 5-8). Of course, if he sins, God has provided for forgiveness through genuine repentance, confession, and prayer (1 John 2: 1; Acts 8: 22; 1 John 1: 9). This puts salvation within reach of every man and enables him to have assurance all along the way from earth to heaven.

Let us continue to be thankful for the love of God which has provided us with blessed assurance so that we can say with Peter, "Whom having not seen, ye (we) love; in whom, though now ye (we) see him not, yet believing, ye (we) rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Pet 1: 8).

Things Most Certainly Believed

Julian R. Snell

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THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOB THE CRY FOR A DAYSMAN

Our title continues to presume upon the understanding that Job was not a man living in the gospel age, he was an Old Testament patriarch who lived hundreds of years before Christ. However, since the Bible is the unfolding of God's eternal purpose in human redemption, we must recognize that every book of that sacred volume is in complement to this purpose. Within the Old Testament there are types and shadows which look to the New Testament for the anti-type and the substance. Sometimes these reference are glaring, sometimes they are subtle, but in either case there is the ultimate pointing to Jesus Christ, the savior of the world. Within the book of Job we are treated, for the most part, to the subtle inquisitiveness, pleading and longing, the questioning that finds answer only in Christ. While we are attentive to Job's questions we are more intent on the answers from Jesus.

We have been initially impressed with the man, Job, and his character, perfect and upright, one that feared God and eschewed evil. Interesting is the eloquent address of the philosophers, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, as is the impassioned responses. Couched in the fact that in Job we see a man stripped to the nakedness of his own individuality, we listen to his friends and hear his replies from the depth of his nature. The first of these is "There is no daysman" (Job 9: 33). This statement occurs in the first series of controversies as Job replies to Bildad. Bildad has argued that God is just (8: 3). Job answers by agreeing, I know it is so (9: 2). He then raises a question "How should a man be just with God?" This is a legal question, somewhat argumentative. In meaning it seems to say, "How can man argue his case before God, so as to justify himself?"

The friends of Job have sought to establish Job's suffering as punitive, on account of sin. Based on this, Job cries for a daysman since he could not argue his case before God in such a way as to disprove their position. Seeing that impossibility, his cry comes from the depth of his being. Our line of study is to consider this cry and show the final answer as revealed in Christ. We are made aware in the progression of the book that Job's cry for a "daysman" is born of double consciousness. An awareness of the greatness and majesty of God and of his own comparative littleness. Here is the cry of a man who knew God and his

matchless power and might (cf. 9: 5-10), but in the recognition of his own smallness felt he could not reach God. His cry, in effect, is, "Oh, if I only could. In his need for God, Job also realized his need for a "daysman," an umpire, arbiter, a go-between, one that could lay hands on both parties. Indeed, here is expressed an abiding need with all men.

Man's nature demands God for full realization of self. Life in its fullest sense requires conscious dealing with God. While it is true, God deals with every man, "For in him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17: 28), the mere contact with God is not enough. Life is complete only when dealing with God is direct and conscious, when God touches on the very purpose of life, to not only give the breath of life but to dominate and control every breath. Herein we glorify the Father and in this is given true purpose for life.

Search as we might there is no answer to the cry for a daysman to be found within the book of Job. We must turn to the New Testament for the answer. "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (1 Tim. 2: 5-6). There is indeed a daysman, a mediator. The two words have essentially the same meaning. There is one of authority who can lay hand on both God and man. An authority based upon the reality of his humanity plus the fact of his deity. "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2: 6-7). A mediator "who gave himself a ransom," did something making way of approach to God possible.

What separates between man and God? Isaiah says, "iniquities" or "sin" (Isa. 59: 1-2). Here is man's failure to reach God. Sinless man needs no mediator, will not cry out for a daysman. Ideal man walked and talked with God in the Edenic relationship, but, sin severed that relationship. The fact of sin separates every responsible being from God as it dims the true sense of God and the sense of man's spiritual nature. A sense which can never be accentuated through human mentality alone. Zophar argues that man cannot know these things because they are beyond his finding out (Job 11: 7-8). Indeed, "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10: 23).

Thankfully, the possibility of fellowship with God severed by sin, can be restored. We have a mediator, ransom has been paid. When sinful man yields to the Christ, through the full and complete obedience of faith, sin's barrier is removed. It is by Him we have access to eternal hope. "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5: 2).

And so it is that Job's questioning cry for a "daysman" carries across the ages to Jesus Christ for answer. A cry born out of a sense of lack of contact with God and ultimately identifying with the breach caused by sin. It is thus that the recognition of that hopeless state is produced. God spans the breach, separation does not have to exist, we have our "daysman," our mediator, our access to the grace and mercy of God. For all men contact with God is possible, forgiveness is real, fellowship with the Father is a continuing thing for all who will accept it. "But if we

walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 Jn. 1: 7).

**SIMPLICITY
IN
CHRIST**

P. J. Casebolt

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PARADOXICAL THERAPY—A BELLYFUL

Recently (Nov. 22, 1987), an interesting and informative article appeared in **Parade Magazine** concerning the subject of "paradoxical therapy."

The principle behind this method of therapy is described as "inverse logic" and "fighting fire with fire." But, we are cautioned "that it is not suitable in every case." The technique works best "if all other efforts to solve a problem have failed."

In layman's language, paradoxical therapy often works when people get a bellyful of the problem.

To me, one of the most interesting statements in the article was that "Paradoxical therapy was first suggested more than half a century ago..." With maybe a slight variation, I think this principle of treating or even curing problems has been around longer than "half a century."

The law of gravity was around a long time before men like Newton and Galileo "discovered" some things about it (Job. 26: 7). The earth was round before the expeditions of Columbus and Magellan proved that fact to the world (Isa. 40: 22).

And, God was using the principle of paradoxical therapy thousands of years before modern-day psychiatrists "discovered" it. Thousands of people were treated and "cured" of their problem simply by giving them a bellyful of that which ailed them.

When Israel said, "Give us flesh, that we may eat," God said that they would have it "until it come out at your nostrils, and it be loathsome unto you" (Num. 11: 13-20). By our standard of measurement, the "flesh" Israel wanted piled up about three feet deep for a day's journey in all directions (v. 31).

When God's people took the liberty which belonged to others and kept it for themselves, God gave them more "liberty" than they wanted—"to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine" (Jer. 34: 17).

Because Israel insisted on serving strange gods in the land which God had given them, God "allowed" them to serve strange gods in a strange land, in captivity to those heathen nations whose gods Israel wanted to serve (Jer. 5: 19).

God told his people, "In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not. But ye said, No; for we will flee upon horses; therefore shall ye flee..." (Isa. 30: 15-17). The people ran until they were tired of running.

Because Israel feared the sword, and would not trust in God to protect them, God brought the very sword which they feared upon them (Jer. 42: 14, 22; Ezek. 11: 8).

Because mount Seir had "shed the blood of the children of Israel," God said, "blood shall pursue thee" (Ezek. 35: 5, 6). The same "therapy" was administered to the enemies of God's people in a vision which John saw on Patmos (Rev. 16: 6).

As the author of the **Parade** article indicates, this method of treatment may not be suitable in every case, but it works best when drastic measures need to be taken, and all else has failed.

Some of God's people today seem to be going through a stage of this thing called paradoxical therapy. They helped to instigate the flood of institutionalism, sponsoring churches, recreation and entertainment and other brands of the social gospel. Now, at least a few of them seem to be getting a bellyful of their "quail."

But, there are some people who do not need therapy. They just "fear God and keep his commandments," and generally go about the day to day business of being normal, spiritually healthy people of God.

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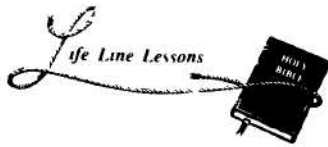
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ROBERT H. FARISH AT REST

Robert H. Farish died at about 7: 30 PM Wednesday, December 12, 1990. He was lucid and independent until the end: he and Mother drove to Scott and White Hospital in Temple, singing along with one of R. J.'s quartet tapes, and he walked into the emergency room at about 5: 30 PM Wednesday. He had an aneurysm of the aorta, which gave way and defied repair, and he died in surgery.

Funeral services were conducted at the Leon Valley church building in Temple on Saturday morning. Tim Coffey and Elmer Moore preached. Jimmy Roberts led congregational singing. Prayers were led by Robert Welch, Tom Roberts and Jim Ward.

Dad was 78 years old. He and Mother were married 55 years and had four sons, five grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren. He preached the gospel 60 years, doing local work in Mississippi, Indiana, Alabama, Texas, Georgia, Kentucky and California. He held gospel meetings in probably half of these United States, and wrote articles and tracts which have received wide distribution. He did his last "fulltime" work in Refugio, Texas and had been living in Belton nearly two years. —Patrick Farish

(Editor's note: We have lost another great soldier of Christ. This writer personally profited much from the writings of brother Farish, especially in the 1950's and 60's. Sometimes it seems that we are losing more preachers than we are gaining. It is especially difficult to bid farewell to those who fought for truth in crucial times and whose courage and faithfulness emboldened many to stand and be counted. We shall miss him. Our sighing for Heaven grows heavier day by day. CWA)

DENVER NIEMEIER, 10356 N. State Rd. 267, Brownsburg, IN 46112—On Feb. 13, I left the Traders Point church in Indianapolis, Indiana after an association of almost 23 years. Five years were spent as the preacher and since Feb. 18, 1971 as an elder. There are four good, capable men remaining to serve as elders. The work is strong, sound and my leaving is peaceable.

February 17, I began working with the church in Jamestown, IN, located 20 miles west of Indianapolis just off I-74. This is my second time to preach here, having worked here from 1961 through 1966. I

look forward to being in the harness again. I will be able to conduct four meetings each year and have two openings for this year. The church at Jamestown will continue enabling me to hold meetings where churches are unable to support their own meetings. **HAL SNYDER**, P. O. Drawer I, Newport, NC 28570—We are now publishing THE VISITING PREACHER which is designed to acquaint readers with the New Testament church and the faith and practice of Christians. This bimonthly bulletin is sent FREE to any and all who may benefit from it.

DEBATE

THOMAS N. THRASHER, P. O. Box 1941, Decatur, AL 35602—A public debate on "congregational benevolence" is scheduled for June 3-4, 6-7, 1991 (7 PM each night). Sessions on Monday and Tuesday nights will be held in the building of the church of Christ on Sparkman Drive in Huntsville, AL. The proposition will be: "The Bible teaches that a church of the Lord's people may make a contribution from its treasury to a home for orphans." Roger Jackson affirms and Thomas N. Thrasher denies.

On Thursday and Friday nights the discussion will be conducted in the building of the Union church of Christ near Somerville, AL. The proposition will be: The Bible teaches that, in benevolence, a church of the Lord's people is restricted to the relief of needy saints only." Thomas N. Thrasher affirms and Roger Jackson denies.

For additional information contact me at the above address or call (205) 353-3085.

CHUCK SCOTT, 2637 Walnut Bottom Rd., Carlisle, PA 17013 — Rejoice with us in the recent baptism of two more here at Walnut Bottom. Over the past year 6 were baptized and 3 restored. Lloyd Barker will be here for a meeting in March.

TOMMY L. MCCLURE, Route 2, Box 179, Marvell, AR 72366—After forty-three years of local work, Janette and I now live in the country near Marvel, AR, about 90 miles down the Mississippi River from Memphis, TN and about 30 miles west of Helena, AR. I plan to hold meetings, preach on week-end appointments, lead singing for meet-

ings where there is no adequate song leader, and do much long-awaited writing. I am interested in hearing from congregations within reasonable driving distance for week-end appointments, places wherever located for meetings or song leading. No congregation has to have a huge bank account for me to be of service—expenses, or a little over, if affordable, will be fine. Contact me at the above address or call (501) 829-3759.

WAYNE S. WALKER, 310 Hayes St., Dayton, OH 45410—The Haynes St. church has four gospel meetings planned for 1991: March 17-22 with Grover Stevens of Lubbock, TX; June 17-21 with Dan Clarkson of Brookville, OH speaking to teenagers and adults in vacation Bible study on "living For Jesus"; Sept. 22-27 with Wayne Chappell of New Castle, IN; and Dec. 6-8 with Gary Eubanks of Acworth, GA dealing with the false doctrine of Charles Holt and the Examiner. Our building is fairly close to both I-75 and U. S. Hwy. 35 not far from downtown Dayton.

FROM AFAR

BARCELONA, SPAIN—EFRAIN PEREZ reports that the work at Badalona congregation goes well. He has had a helper recently in Gregory Roark who arrived there to study and who hopes to be able to work later in Spain as a teacher. He attended a Spanish speaking congregation in New York City. Two more were baptized in December. Average attendance for the month was 48. Efrain also made a trip to the Canary Islands to follow up on some contacts there for teaching the gospel.

SOUTH AFRICA—Paul Williams reports from Eshowe that three more have been baptized there. One of these was from a correspondence course and one was an ancestor worshipper. The Eshowe church has started supporting a native man to preach. He is David Ngonyama. The church has few wage-earners but they are giving well.

PREACHERS NEEDED

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE—The Hillview congregation is looking for a part-time or full-time preacher who is mature and sound in the faith. This congregation is self-supporting. If interested, contact Clyde Dean (615) 356-2482, Jimmy Jordan (615) 646-5564 or Donnie Brown (615) 952-2701; or write to: Hillview Church of Christ, 7471 Charlotte Pike, Nashville, TN 37209.

PASCAGOULA, MISSISSIPPI—The Chico Road church is seeking a full-time preacher. We are a small congregation which has lost several members over the last few years and that has weakened our ability to support, therefore outside support will be needed. If interested, please contact: Clyde Johnson (601) 769-9640, Dr. Leo Hastings (601) 872-3473, or Charles Hagan, Sr., 1217 22nd St., Pascagoula, MS 39581, (601) 762-9557.

TORONTO, OHIO—Small congregation in southeast Ohio near Pittsburg is looking for a full-time preacher to work with them. Salary plus house and utilities furnished. Some outside support may be needed. Those interested should contact Larry Sapp (614) 537-9351, or write to the Dennis Way Church of Christ, Toronto, Ohio 43964.

GREEN BAY, WISCONSIN—The Hillcrest congregation meeting at 1621 Hillcrest Dr., Green Bay, WI 54313, needs a preacher to work with us beginning about May. Average attendance is about 30 and we can provide partial support. The city of Green Bay has a couple of colleges, a prison and a metropolitan population of over 100, 000. Those interested should contact Wilmer Kersten (715) 758-8615, or Nolan Glover (414) 497-0769, or write the above address.

EDITORIAL LEFT-OVERS

THIS MUST BE SOMETHING ELSE

I don't usually get too excited about the book reviews in some of the periodicals. They do serve a needed place and, of course, the reviewer appraises books as he sees them. In the January, 1991 issue of GOSPEL HERALD, published in Beamsville, Ontario, Canada, Keith Thompson reviews a book entitled A JEWISH SAVIOR THROUGH GENTILE EYES, Studies in the Gospel of Luke by Rubel Shelly. You may recall that in a recent "Left-Overs" column we quoted from speeches Rubel Shelly made in West Memphis, AR in which he belittled "pattern theology" and attempting to make the church of the

present like the church of the first century. Thompson's review has this closing paragraph about Shelly's book:

"Shelly writes in a very engaging style. He uses illustrations from such diverse sources as a Soviet poet, Olympic games and Charlie Brown! He quotes Psychology Today and the Guinness Book of World Records. He cites authors like Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Francis Schaeffer, A. W. Tozer, Leon Morris and C. S. Lewis. An excellent source book for personal reading or class use. Also it would make an ideal gift for someone who needs to know what the gospel is all about."

Shelly has become a liberal's liberal. He is under heavy attack from some of his former colleagues in this country. If such material fills the minds of Canadian brethren (and remember, it is recommended for "class use") then this will contribute to a further weakening of conviction among them.

WAR IN THE GULF AND GOSPEL WORK

Just as doors of opportunity were opening in many places, especially in eastern Europe, the war in the Persian Gulf has shifted our attention to the hostilities there. The travel plans of many may be altered. Americans living and working in the Middle East as well as other places will have to take extra precautions because of the threat of terrorists. Christians everywhere are praying that this conflict will soon be over. It would be added tragedy should congregations, now supporting faithful men to preach around the world, lessen their interest or withhold their support. War points up the universal need for the gospel to be preached and to change the thinking and behavior of those who yield to it.

ARMAGEDDON—ARMAGEDDON

The presses are rolling and publishing books to convince the world that the events in the Middle East are the fulfillment of Bible prophesy. "Specialists" on prophesy have had to back down time and again on their predictions. But they don't quit. Now the script is being rewritten to work Saddam Hussein into the picture. The comment of Adam Clarke on Revelation 16: 16 is interesting. He says "But what is the battle of Armageddon? How ridiculous have been the conjectures of men relative to this point! Within the last twenty years (Clarke wrote this over 150 years ago—CWA) this battle has been fought at various places, according to our purlblind seers and self-inspired prophets! At one time it was Auaterlitz, at another Moscow, at another Leipsic, and now Waterloo! and thus they have gone on, and will go on, confounding and being confounded."

The world has been told with absolute certainty that Kaiser Wilhelm was the "Anti-Christ." Then it was Adolf Hitler, then Mussolini, and even Henry Kissinger. The speculators have tried to turn the European Common Market nations into the ten horns of Daniel's prophesy. Every crisis in the Middle East has become the excuse for re-figuring the prophets and the signs of Matthew 24. Consider the following:

"Not in the lifetime of most men has there been so much grave and deep apprehension; never has the future seemed so incalculable as at the present time. The domestic economic situation is in chaos. Our dollar is weak throughout the world. Prices are so high as to be utterly impossible. The political cauldron seethes and bubbles with uncertainty. Russia hangs, as usual, like a cloud, dark and silent, upon the horizon. It is a solemn moment. Of our troubles, no man can see the end."

Now, if you think this came from a recent newspaper editorial, think again. It came from Harper's Weekly, October, 1857! (quoted from The Kingdom of God and the Planet Earth by Jim McGuigan). All of which reminds us that God is still the governor among the nations and still rules in the affairs of men.

One more observation. When this conflict with Iraq is over, I hope our leaders will have the good sense not to try to continually police that region of the world. Arabs and Jews have been in conflict since the days of Isaac and Jacob.

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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ON COURTESY AND CANDOR

I know that "balance" is one of the most important things in life. But the suspicion has sneaked up on me that sometimes folks who plead for balance are just too lazy to figure out which side they are on. I am suspicious of the fellow who never hears any two people disagreeing but what he offers this sage opinion: "I think **both** of you are right. What we need is a balance between what each of you is saying." This fellow, and those like him, apparently operate with a split-the-difference philosophy of judging ideas: the truth is always the "Golden Mean" between whatever alternatives have been presented. But **is** that always the way to get at the truth?

For example, I have in mind to say some things about "courtesy" and "candor" in discussing religious differences. I might merely repeat the axiom that we need both courtesy and candor, that "speaking the truth in love" (Eph. 4: 15) is what is right. But I am not going to do that. At least, not just that. Rather, I want to say that the balance between courtesy and candor tends to be, upset (at least in our society) **more** by "excesses" of courtesy than those of candor. The reason why that is so has something to do with human nature, I think.

Courtesy. The desire to please and not to offend comes as standard equipment on most human beings. The need to be liked and accepted is basic enough that we naturally shrink from being discourteous. There are exceptions, of course. Some individuals seem to find that belligerence and rudeness comes very natu-

rally to them; but they are conspicuous exactly because they are exceptional. The majority of us are eager to please, and the pressure that puts on us to be tactful and mannerly is basically good.

There is not a thing in the world wrong with being gracious. It is instructive and refreshing to read about the Lord that "all bore witness to him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth" (Lk. 4: 22). And Paul wrote, "Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one" (Col. 4: 6). Not a few of us could do with some lessons on **how** to be gracious even when that is what we are **trying** to be. While the impulse to say things in the right way may be instinctive, the "know how" may elude us if we do not work at acquiring it.

When we have the opportunity to discuss differences of understanding, whether with a non-Christian neighbor or a fellow-member of the Lord's body, we need to be conscious of how important it is to speak in a way that respects the dignity of the other person as a human being. And if we are honestly wanting to persuade him to our viewpoint, we need to use every skill we have ever learned in "seasoning" our speech to make it as palatable as possible. But, to repeat, most of us have a natural inclination to do that, even if we do not always execute the inclination very skillfully. For every time when we fail our religious neighbor in the matter of courtesy, there are many more times when we fail him in another way.

Candor. As a teacher, I must confess that I never cease to be astonished at how frequently people do not "get the point" of what is being taught. No doubt a part of the problem is that we sometimes assume more background understanding than our interlocutor actually has. We get to the end of a discussion and find that our main point has not really registered because the other person did not know something initially that we assumed he did know.

Very often, though — and I am more convinced of this the more I deal with other people — our basic affirmations do not get across simply because we are not being as direct as we **think** we **are**. If our subjective feelings are the "instrument" by which we get a "reading" on how frank we are being, we often get a false

reading because our feelings incline so much in the direction of not giving offense. As a general rule, if we intend other people to understand exactly what we are saying about the truths of the gospel we need to be **more candid**, rather than more courteous. It is not that courtesy does not matter. It is that courtesy will tend to take care of itself, while candor will not.

I do not find a person in the NT who strikes me as having any more direct a personality than Paul. Yet we find him being concerned that even he might pull back so much in deference to courtesy that the gospel would not be communicated clearly: "And (pray) for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel ... that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak" (Eph. 6: 19, 20).

Unless I have grossly misread my own experience, the great need of our day is for clarity in conversation about Jesus Christ. In an environment where discussion of substantive religious differences is socially stigmatized, the pull of courtesy away from candor is strong indeed. We may not always get the balance exactly right, but most of us would get it more nearly right if we said what we mean more candidly. To be sure, what some people call candor is nothing but malicious bullying — but who can deny that what we sometimes call courtesy is nothing but cowardice and compromise? When souls are at stake, failures of candor are eternally more costly than failures of courtesy, simply because the gospel must be **understood** to be obeyed. A man may **not** obey the truth if he does not like it; but he **cannot** obey it if he does not understand it!

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Editorial

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REPENTANCE AND GOD'S MARRIAGE LAW

It is argued by some that if people in unscriptural marriages must sever that relationship upon obeying the gospel, that penance is being exacted rather than repentance. Brother Homer Hailey holds this view and has stated it clearly. I believe he is wrong about this.

The Catholic doctrine of penance imposes some penalty which must be carried out in expiation for sin and that is tied together with the doctrine of absolution granted by a priest who is thought to fulfill the extended role of an apostle in forgiving sin. The intricacies of this doctrine are not taught in the Bible and the attempts to defend it rest upon a misuse of the scripture.

But the Bible does teach repentance. The word METANOEO, translated repent, literally means to perceive afterwards, implying change. It denotes a change of mind which results in amendment of character and conduct. John preached "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance" (Mt. 3: 8). On Pentecost those who had been guilty of the blood of the son of God were told to "repent and be baptized" "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2: 38). Scriptural baptism was contingent upon genuine repentance. They could not undo what had been done, but they could resolve in their change of heart, not to be guilty of such a thing again. On Solomon's porch Peter told his audience to "repent and be converted that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3: 19). Notice that the blotting out of sin was conditioned upon repentance. On Mars Hill, Paul made it clear that repentance is a universal mandate of God who "commands all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17: 30). Peter said God would have "all men to come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3: 9).

The doctrine that an alien sinner is not subject to the law of Christ and that therefore in baptism all previous marriages are forgiven so that the one baptized may now remain with his present marriage partner, regardless of the cause of all previous divorces, is fatally flawed in that it nullifies repentance. In fact, if the doctrine is true, then the previous marriage state was not sinful anyhow, for sin is not imputed where there is no law. If no law, then there is no transgression (Rom. 4: 15).

It is contended further that there is no such thing as "living in adultery." But Paul wrote the Colossians and listed "fornication" along with other sins and then said "in the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them" (Col. 3: 5-7). In that same context he listed "inor-

dinate affection" or unlawful lusts, a reference to homosexuality. Some had "lived" in that sin. In Col. 2: 11-12 Paul showed that these sins of the flesh had been removed by the "circumcision of Christ" when they were buried with him in baptism. Question: Was it required that these change their practice? Or did their baptism purify the state in which they lived so that they could continue in it? What did repentance demand?

This doctrine raises all sorts of questions. If the alien is not amenable to the law of Christ, then should he be a polygamist, upon what ground could it be argued that he must give up all his wives, but one, upon obedience to the gospel? Polygamy was tolerated under the law of Moses and under the "moral law" under which it is argued that alien sinners still operate until they obey the gospel. If a man can keep wife number three when his first two marriages ended in divorce without the cause of fornication, then why could not a polygamist keep three wives upon obeying the gospel? Where would repentance be in all of this? Would it be penance for the polygamist to give up these extra wives? Or would repentance demand it? I believe this is a fair question.

The gospel invitation is offered to every kind of sinner. Jesus came to "seek and save that which is lost" (Lk. 19: 10). They that are sick need the Great Physician. Such passages as Col. 3: 5-7 and 1 Cor. 6: 9-11 treat a wide range of sinful conduct on the part of those described before they became Christians. The blood of Christ was able to cleanse every sin. It still is. But, baptism does not sanctify any sinful action or relationship. Murder is still murder whether before or after baptism. Drunkenness is sinful, before or after baptism. Homosexuality is sinful before or after baptism. Polygamy is wrong before or after baptism. Violation of God's law on divorce and remarriage is wrong before and after baptism. **Baptism does not wash away wives!**

Baptism is for those who have truly repented of their sins. What good does it do to baptize a man who is a thief who has no intention of giving up thievery as a way of life? What good would it do to baptize a murderer who is totally impenitent? What good would it do to baptize a polygamist who has three wives and fully intends to keep them all? What good will it do to baptize a woman who has her third husband when the first two were not put away for adultery when she fully intends to remain in that condition? There may be times when we do not know all the circumstances in the lives of those who present themselves for baptism. All we can do is be sure they know what God requires of a sinner for the remission of sins. I once refused to baptize a man who came forward during a gospel meeting in Richmond, Virginia and told me he wanted to be baptized. Why? Because he was clearly intoxicated. We talked with him after the services and offered to be of whatever help we could, but when he sobered up we saw no more of him.

Brethren, we have placed great stress on scriptural baptism and for that none of us should apologize. But there is a great need to stress Bible repentance. This is a prerequisite to Bible baptism. Without it, baptism is invalid. I freely admit that we have to accept the word of those who say they understand what the will of the Lord

is and that they are acting accordingly. But we have too many who are counted among the saints who have never made any change in life. Some have been converted to baptism but not to the Lord. True conversion involves a change of heart which is manifested in a changed life.

When James D. Bales wrote his book, NOT UNDER BONDAGE, I wrote him that one of the errors of his position was that it denied repentance its fruit. That is the same error our brother Hailey has made and that is made by those who stand with him in arguing that the alien sinner is not subject to the law of Christ and that God's marriage law only applies to those who enter the kingdom. No earthly priest can forgive sin, as is taught in Catholicism in relation to the notion of penance. But there is a high priest in Heaven who does forgive sin and when he forgives, he treats the forgiven sinner as if he had not sinned. But never forget that he forgives the genuinely penitent who have resolved to stop doing whatever is offensive to God. "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid!" (Note: This article was prepared for a special issue of GUARDIAN OF TRUTH dealing with the position of brother Homer Hailey as set forth in his recently published book, THE DIVORCED AND REMARRIED WHO WOULD COME TO GOD. The publication of this book ought to settle the dust as to whether or not these views are just privately held and only occasionally discussed in response to questions. Actions by brother Hailey in 1989 in which he did openly preach and teach on this subject brought on public response from several, including this writer. Regrettably, some influential brethren, who say they are opposed to brother Hailey's views, clouded the issue by focusing attention on the man and away from the issue by charging that this well-loved brother had been "attacked" and by sidetracking the matter into a discussion of the question of fellowship and its limits. To this day NOBODY has written in an unkind manner about brother Hailey personally. The same cannot be said with reference to those of us who have written against this doctrine. Motives have been impugned all over the place. We have been charged with "unheroic attacks" and accused of "slobbering" on brother Hailey in personal expressions of affection for a brother who is much loved and appreciated for many good reasons. All such expressions were simply genuine efforts to indicate that opposition to his doctrine was not a personal attack on the man. I am personally outraged by these unbrotherly remarks and call upon those who have made them to offer apologies. Such would not only be the right thing to do, they would also help to put this question in proper focus on the doctrine and not on men.

I suggest to our readers that you obtain a copy of the special issue of GUARDIAN OF TRUTH dealing with this subject and keep it for your own study. — Editor).

**"Go into all the world
and preach the gospel
to every creature"
(Mark 16:15)**

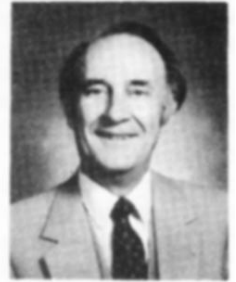
WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

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ARMAGEDDON MANIA

QUESTION: *The Persian Gulf War has set off a barrage of speculations from denominational preachers that this conflict is the forerunner of Armageddon. Would you comment on their suppositions?*

ANSWER: Truly, the modern soothsayers and spiritual gurus have cranked up their doomsday machine in high gear since the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq. To listen to these crafty diviners you would think that Armageddon is on every page of the New Testament. But not so! It is found one time in Rev. 16: 16, a book that is apocalyptic, figurative and symbolic in nature. The battle, therefore, is not physical, but spiritual. It is a conflict between righteousness and wickedness.

No battle is fought in Rev. 16: 12-16, but rather the forces are *gathered together* for the battle. The war is fought in Rev. 19: 11-21 where Jesus comes from heaven on a white horse, followed by his heavenly army who are also riding white horses. Jesus smites the nations with a sword coming from his mouth. I can't imagine Jesus riding a literal horse, having a literal sword in his mouth, when he returns from heaven. Common sense tells us this is figurative language.

The word "Armageddon" is an allusion to the Old Testament hill of Megiddo which overlooked the Plain of Jezreel. Many battles were fought there. Deborah and Barak defeated the kings of Canaan (Jud. 5: 19), king Saul was defeated by the Philistines (1 Sam. 31), Jehu slew Ahaziah (2 Kings 9: 27), and Josiah perished at the hands of Pharaoh Necho (2 Kings 23: 29-30). The valley of Jezreel is triangular in shape, measuring about 20 miles by 15 miles by 15 miles (*Discovering the World of the Bible*, LaMar C. Berrett). To gather the armies of the world into this small area to fight World War III is absurd.

Ray Summers (Baptist) correctly stated, Thus Megiddo fitly symbolized the worldwide distress of righteousness and evil engaged in deadly combat... If one expects this to be a literal battle (Armageddon, wew), he must expect the army to be headed by a committee of three frogs. Both figures are symbolical; neither is literal" (*Worthy is the Lamb*, p. 189). The frogs are mentioned in the context of Rev. 16: 16.

Adam Clarke (Methodist) wrote, "But what is the *battle of Armageddon*? How ridiculous have been the conjectures of men relative to this point! Within the last twenty years (before 1826, wew) this battle has been fought at various places, according to our purblind seers

and self-inspired prophets! At one time it was *Austerlitz*, at another *Moscow*, at another *Leipsic*, and now *Waterloo!* And thus they have gone on, and will go on, confounding and being confounded" (*Clarke's Commentary*, Vol. 6, p. 1035).

In his book, *Armageddon Now*, Dwight Wilson (Assemblies of God preacher and professor, and a pre-millennialist) wrote, "The current crisis was always identified as a sign of the end, whether it was the Russo-Japanese War, the First World War, the Second World War... The revival of the Roman Empire has been identified variously... Speculation on the Antichrist has included Napoleon, Mussolini, Hitler, and Henry Kissinger... Such loose literalism when considered as a whole is no more precise than the figurative interpretation of which these literalists are so critical" (p. 216).

Today it is war with Iraq, or subsequent events following the war, that will release Armageddon upon us. These wizards have learned nothing from the total failures of their predecessors. Neither has the general public! Many seem to be just as gullible and as easily duped by these false prophets as were those who have gone before them. For example, the sale of Hal Lindsey's book, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, has increased by 83% since the Persian Gulf Crisis (*U. S. News & World Report*, Nov. 1990).

Jehovah characterized our times when he said through Jeremiah, "The prophets prophesy falsely... And my people love to have it so" (5: 31). "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied" (23: 21).

Moses said when a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord and the thing follow not, he spoke it presumptuously and thou shalt not be afraid of him (Deut. 18: 22).

This premillennial view of Armageddon is totally false. It has not the slightest biblical support. Rather it is grounded upon a novel and relatively recent scheme of theological presuppositions. It must be rejected!

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WHO IS THE LORD THAT I SHOULD OBEY HIS VOICE?

The subject of this study is Pharaoh's question to Moses when he came with God's order to "let my people go" (Ex. 5: 1-2).

The who or what of a person or thing, from the standpoint of power, importance, authority, or position, determine another's action, reaction, or response. This is true in every relationship of life. Children's response to the requests, orders, or commands of parents is more ready and sure, than to those of strangers. The same principle holds true with students and teachers, citizens and law officials, workers and management.

The question of Pharaoh in our text is understandable and logical. He knew nothing of Israel's God. Why should he alter his course or change his actions on orders from someone he didn't know? In order for Pharaoh to obey the voice of the Lord, he would need evidence that would convince him that God is: that he had power over him; power to make or destroy, even over the idolatrous and imagined gods of Egypt. What followed in his dealings with Moses and Aaron was designed to answer the question he had raised.

The Evidence

Evidently, even the Children of Israel needed their faith reaffirmed in Jehovah for God told Moses that what he was about to do to Pharaoh in effecting their deliverance would enable them "to know that I am the Lord your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians." (Ex. 6: 1-8). These same things would cause the "Egyptians to know that I am the Lord, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them" (Ex. 7: 5).

In addition to the evidence of God's supremacy in turning Moses' rod into a serpent, that devoured the rod-serpents of the magician's enchantments, there followed the plagues of Ex. 7-10.

The plagues were turning water to blood, land and houses overrun with frogs, lice on man and beast (which the Magicians could not imitate, causing them to say "this is the finger of God" (Ex. 8: 18-19), swarms of flies, a grievous murrain among cattle, horses, camels, sheep, etc., boils upon man and beast, hail throughout Egypt, except Goshen, locusts, darkness "that could be felt," and last, death of the firstborn. Thus, Pharaoh learned the answer to his questions. He learned who the Lord was and why he should obey His voice.

The Question in Later Generations

Because of man's tendency to forget God, there have been in every age, including ours, those who raise the question, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice?" What evidence is now available that should answer the question for us? I believe we have just as strong and convincing evidence today (an enlightened and knowledgeable age) as was given to Pharaoh and the Egyptians.

Look, for example, at the universe, coupled with modern scientific findings and knowledge. It has ever been true that the heavens "declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork" (Ps. 19: 1). Today's technological findings confirm the existence and power of God more clearly than ever before. The earth and firmament is characterized by design, and design demands a designer. When we look at a computer, sky-scraper, book, automobile, space ship or station, our question is never does it have a designer, but "Who"? The claim that all design in the universe is by accident or some cosmic explosion is neither logical nor scientific. The "who" of the universe is plainly stated in Ex. 20: 11; Jno. 1-3; Ps. 33: 6; Gen. 1-2.

Think now about the Bible. Here is a book (combination of books) written by 40 writers, over a period of some 1500 years, containing doctrine, history, prophecy, morals, and with one general theme (The redemption of fallen man), yet completely harmonious; without one erroneous statement, contradiction or unfulfilled prophecy. No other book, or set of books, ever written can even come close to these features. In spite of the efforts of men to undermine and destroy, it still stands in all its glory. All archaeological and geological findings of later years have only confirmed its accuracy and inspiration. The Bible is a miracle as great as anything done in Egypt in the days of Pharaoh.

Look also at man: his reproductive system, the functioning of the brain, his heart/lung circulatory system, and many other features. To think he came through an evolutionary process from lower life form is neither scientific nor reasonable. Evidence that man came from a creator is such that cannot be denied.

Truly, the universe, man himself, the Bible, and Jesus Christ (proven by unmistakable evidence to be "son of man" and "son of God") are miracles as great as, or greater, than anything done in Egypt. They are sufficient, when properly understood, to convince any reasonable person of the reality of God, and this faith settles the matter of why we should hear and obey Him.

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THE IRONIES OF LIFE

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In Ecclesiastes we learn much about life from the wise man, Solomon. While it was all right to pursue every proper goal, he came to realize that earthly things aside from God and service to Him were without lasting meaning. It was good even to enjoy the fruits of one's labor but that alone did not completely satisfy. This book is a strong argument for the dual nature of man, that is, body and spirit. Both of these demand attention. Neither may be ignored. To do so is to create a void or vacuum in one's life and development.

One can see humor, if he will, in the irony of life. When we were young, my wife and I used to wish we had money enough when on a trip with the kids to stop overnight at a motel and even to stop to eat at a hot dog stand. Usually we had a sack of "knick-knacks" to chew on as we would drive "straight through." But we did not have the money so we could not stop.

Things changed, the children went to college, married and left home. Now funds were available for a few "extras" but you know what? Though the money was now available, now we were **on a diet** that left much to be desired. A self-respecting hog would not eat some of the "things" we have eaten since the discovery of "cholesterol." So we still had to pass up what we could then afford because of a weight problem.

Now we could stop overnight at the motels but by the time we unloaded, ate a bite at the nearby "salad bar," called someone in the family to let them know our whereabouts in case of an emergency, prepared for bed, all the sleep was gone out of our eyes. Then we slept fitfully, dreading to reload the car and afraid we might oversleep.

We longed for a nice car and the opportunity to take a few trips to see the beauties of this wonderful country in which we live. Cataracts developed making our driving limited and with Wilma doing most of it.

Now we had a variety of good clothes but the weight problem kept us fluctuating so that the clothes were either too tight or too loose.

Often we just broke down and laughed and laughed at

the irony of it all. Why not? Solomon said "a merry heart doeth good like a medicine" and he also said "there is a time to laugh" as well as "a time to cry."

But, like Solomon, we reached one and the same conclusion. "Fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (**Ecclesiastes 12: 13**).

Brethren, let us seek the things which are eternal! This is what really matters.

CHILDREN OF DIVORCE AND HOW RELATIONSHIPS ARE AFFECTED

T. Doy Moyer
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Louisville, Kentucky 40216

We have considered how traumatic it can be emotionally for a child whose parents have divorced. There will be deep emotional scars that will go with that person the rest of his or her life. Many will try to hide it, but it will still be there. Let us consider here another aspect of that child's life that will almost certainly be affected: Relationships

Children learn about relationships with others from their parents. They learn about how to treat friends and neighbors, how to deal with brethren in Christ, and how to handle the marriage relationship. If the parents do not hold their marriage together, then the child will doubt his own ability to hold together relationships. The first relationship to decline will probably be with his own parents. Children are to "honor your father and mother" (Eph. 6: 2), but this will be extremely difficult for them to do after a divorce. A child feels let down, and might feel that the parents have lost their right to tell him what to do. He may feel that the parents are living a double standard and wishes to be no part of it. It may turn him against the church because he sees what he perceives to be hypocrisy in his own parents. Thus, the child loses respect for parental authority and flies in the face of all they have tried to instill in him. And when a child loses respect for parental authority, he soon loses respect for **all** authority, including God's! What a frightful outcome!

Since the child has lost confidence in holding together relationships, he will probably feel very apprehensive about getting married himself. When he does marry, evidence shows that he will be more likely to divorce than those who come from stable families. The American Family Association reported in their journal in May 1988, "The children of divorced parents are much more likely to end their own marriages through divorce than are the children of intact families. In a study recently conducted at the University of Texas at Austin, researchers examined the data from 11 national surveys and found that divorce rates among children of divorce ran well above the divorce rates for children who lived with both parents... In trying to explain this phenomenon, the UTA team rejects the hypothesis that mar-

riages of children of divorce are neither better nor worse than other marriages but that the children of divorce are simply more willing to divorce if problems develop. Rather their analysis suggests that "the marriages of the children of divorce are, on the average, unusually likely to become unsatisfactory and not just unusually likely to end in divorce." The researchers incline toward a lower commitment-to-marriage' of the data. Doctors Glenn and Krammer stretch out this explanation in their conclusion: The children of divorce tend to be hesitant and cautious about marriage during adolescence often saying that they will not marry. However, they are just as likely to marry at an earlier age on the average. Thus, they seem to be strongly impelled toward marriage while at the same time often feeling highly apprehensive about it. It seems likely, therefore, that when they marry they often hedge their bets against failure by withholding full commitment to the marriage."

So we can see that what the child learns about marriage from his divorced parents is something he will likely take into his own. He has learned that marriage is not as important as God says it is. And he has learned that divorce is indeed an "out" when things just don't go the way he wants it. He will withhold full commitment to that marriage and be more likely to end the marriage when problems come. Parents, have you thought seriously about this?

Relationships with friends and others will suffer also. The child might feel that he cannot trust anyone since the ones he was closest to have let him down, and will therefore withdraw into a shell of isolation and loneliness. This leads to a minimum of friends and, as already seen, sharp skepticism about marriage. This is tragic itself, but the most important relationship that will suffer is the one that the child has or will have with God.

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BLIPS, BLUNDERS, AND BYGONES

A lot of our differences are just little blips on the big screen of life, and like the old song said, we should "let bygones be bygones forever."

But when blips turn into blunders and adversely affect the lives of people, those blunders need to be accompanied by repentance and "fruits meet for repentance" (Mt. 3: 8).

Hezekiah was willing to let bygones be bygones, and invited Israel to attend the passover feast at Jerusalem, along with Judah. But Israel had blundered, and all the compromise or concessions that Hezekiah might make would not change that fact. Hezekiah admonished Israel for their trespasses, urged them not to be like their stiff-necked fathers, and to get themselves on back to Jerusalem where they belonged (2 Chron. 30: 6-9).

The apostle Paul was not one to harbor a grudge, and when the participants in a controversy were ready to be reconciled, he was willing to let bygones be bygones (2 Cor. 2: 10). Yet, on another occasion, when the Roman magistrates made a blunder with respect to their civil law, Paul held their feet to the fire until they resolved the matter (Acts 16: 35-40).

In the controversy over missionary societies and mechanical instruments of music, churches were divided, brethren were alienated, and the cause of Christ suffered untold harm. Most of those involved in that controversy have gone on to their reward, and a lot of blunders were never rectified.

Beginning about the Mid-1950's, churches were once again divided, brethren were alienated, and the cause of Christ was once again crippled with permanent scars. This time, the division was over human arrangements in evangelism, organization, edification, and the mission of the church. And many of the participants in this battle are still among the living.

Some of us were lied on, accused of dividing churches, of not believing in helping poor orphans/preaching the gospel/cooperation, and maligned as "do-nothing Antis." Good, sound congregations and preachers were blackballed, backbitten, and subjected to quarantine.

In recent years and months, some of those brethren who were directly and indirectly responsible for such blunders have evidently had a twinge of conscience, and have indicated that they would like to let bygones be bygones, and allow peace and unity to prevail once

again. Possibly such things as runaway liberalism, the Crossroads movement, and a nearing judgment have helped to account for some of this change in attitude. The "let 'er rip" attitude toward the body of Christ so prevalent 30 years ago has been replaced in some hearts by at least a tentative "let us rise up and build."

And, as far as I am concerned, I'm willing to let bygones be bygones. Long ago, I prayed for the Lord to forgive those preachers, brethren, and congregations who knifed me in the back, helped spread false accusations, and canceled meetings on me. I decided that I was no better than other messengers of God who had been mistreated, and could not allow malice, hatred, and a desire for revenge to prevent me from getting on with the business of preaching the gospel.

When you remind brethren that they were the ones who divided the body of Christ and went off after their Samaritan idols, and that they need to repent of their sins and come all the way back to Jerusalem, their ardor for peace and unity cools off considerably, much like the rich young ruler (Mk. 10: 17-22). These may sound eager at the prospects of eternal life (v. 17), but they simply aren't willing to pay the price.

It is a wonderful thought when two people, two congregations, or two nations are willing to let bygones be bygones and dwell together in unity (Ps. 133: 1). But the only way we can atone for a blunder is through repentance, prayer, and a genuine effort toward restitution and reconciliation (Ezek. 33: 15; 1 Jno. 1: 9).

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SINCERE WORDS

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Dick Blackford

P.O. Box 83
Tuckerman, Arkansas 72473



FROM THE PREACHER'S NOTEBOOK

Many preachers keep a notebook of random thoughts on a variety of subjects that they intend to use in a sermon or an article sometime. Many of those tidbits never see the light of day. Others write articles like this one and present those unrelated reflections. Here are a few from this preacher's notes.

Prayer

Do you really realize the benefits of prayer? When you pray to God you never get a busy signal. He never puts you on "hold." "You are never interrupted by "call waiting." You can talk as long as you want. And the call is toll free. What a bargain! What an advantage! What an incentive! Don't break the habit of praying (1 Thes. 5: 17).

Long-Winded Song Leaders

With this clock-watching generation we are living in, preachers become more sensitive to complaints that they are preaching too long. I regret that some are afraid they may hear too much gospel. Be that as it may, sometimes preachers get blamed unjustly. We now have songbooks that have several songs that stretch out over two pages and some songs have 5 or 6 verses. Some leaders feel they need to lead all of the verses all of the time. Many would object if a preacher felt he had to read all of the verses if he quoted from a particular chapter. Since I like to sing, I have no problem with singing all the verses. But since I also preach I feel the need to point out that preachers are not always the reason why the service lasted longer than you wanted it to.

Inherited Guilt—Racial Guilt?

Should we be held accountable for the sins of our ancestors? Some think so and have tried to make me feel guilty. The Bible teaches otherwise—"the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father" (Ezek. 18: 20). Thank God, I am not guilty of what my ancestors did to the Indians five generations ago in killing many innocent people or running them off of the land. (I don't know if any of my relatives were involved, but that is beside the point I am making). Nor is any Indian living today responsible for what his ancestors did in scalping many innocent men, women, and children, or burning their homes. Neither should I feel guilty for the sinful way many Negroes were treated by white men who captured them, mistreated them, or made them slaves. Nor should any black person today feel guilty over the way cannibals treated many white missionaries who went to the native lands of their ancestors. We should all deplore

man's inhumanity to man. Let us equally deplore the attempt to blame generations that had nothing to do with things that occurred long before they were born. The judgment will not be based on collective guilt. If so, nobody has a chance. We will be judged on a personal basis for what we have done (2 Cor. 5: 10). No Christian should have a part in radical and lawless groups such as the KKK, Black Panthers, etc.

Sermon Requests

While lighting up a cigarette, a lady asked me to preach a sermon about these wild Jehus who speed and drive recklessly up and down the highway. Another person who has a weakness for backbiting asked me to preach on smoking.

I have worked with congregations that had a question box in the foyer. One night per month I would endeavor to answer questions that were submitted. At one place I soon learned that the box was being abused by those who were not asking for information so they could be edified. They were using me to "get at" somebody else in the audience. They lacked the nerve to do it themselves. Brethren, these things ought not so to be. It is refreshing when someone requests a topic because they need it — which doesn't happen too often.

The Rewards For Debating

Those who have participated in public debate seem to be unanimous in saying that the work is never harder and the pay is never poorer. And in some cases there is little appreciation. It is true that there aren't many rewards for defending the faith in this life. Those who are set for the defense of the faith in debate can't be doing it for financial reasons, in most cases. We should be "set for the defence of the gospel" that we might be partakers of His grace (Phil. 1: 16, 7).

Write Letters

One source of reaching the public with Bible truth on moral and religious issues of our day is by writing letters to the editors of our local newspapers. I am convinced this has not been utilized enough by Christians today.

The letter may be trimmed by the editor for brevity but the main body is usually kept in tact. We should take advantage of every opportunity to teach. A lot of fuzzy thinking in religion and morals appears in our newspapers that need answering. Christians should be ready to answer (1 Pet. 3: 15). One advantage to "letters to the editor" is that it is a free forum. If you are not good at writing letters don't be ashamed to ask for help from a fellow Christian who may be a better grammarian and speller. Try to cut out excess verbiage and speak directly to the point.

I also urge more writing to the syndicated advice columnists, such as Abby and Ann Landers. Though the chance is slim that such a letter will be printed, if enough Christians write, some of them will get through and be printed. Millions will have the opportunity to hear some truth.

One word of admonition. Do not write in such a manner as to be unbecoming to the gospel (Phil. 1: 27). Try to shed more light than heat.

CONCLUSION: I hope some of these remarks will be worthy of your consideration and helpful to you.

CHRISTIANITY IS PRACTICAL

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Faithful Christians do well to occasionally have their grand estate in Christ reaffirmed. Not only does it strengthen one's own faith, it better prepares him to show the alien his condition out of Christ and compare it with what he could enjoy in Christ.

One of the difficulties with which we have to contend today, it appears to me, is showing folk that the "here-after," not just the "here and now," is worthy of one's attention. Particularly do young people have trouble becoming really concerned with eternal matters in a society where the getting of "things" consumes the greater part of man's attention and energy, physically and mentally. Christianity often seems to be translated by them as applicable only to something which seems to them to be far removed and with which they are not presently concerned. But that it is applicable to the "here and now" we shall see.

Christianity is practical. But to properly appreciate the proposition, let's look at the terms. By Christianity, this article means the religion of Christ, true religion as revealed in the New Testament — not some watered-down version of it as seen in denominationalism and among many who claim to be "of Christ." We shall be using "Christianity" and "godliness" as interchangeable. By practical, we mean that it is useful, workable, capable to being turned into use or account as opposed to that which is only theoretical or speculative. The religion of Christ is a taught religion—"teach... baptize ... teach them" (Matt. 28: 19-20); "the thing that thou hast heard... commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others" (2 Tim. 2: 2; "they shall be all taught of God" (John 6: 45) — but it is a system of teaching that is practical or useful because it meets definite needs.

1 Timothy 4: 6-11

Please read this passage carefully. Space will not permit a lengthy exegesis, but note that Paul advises Timothy to "refuse profane and old wives' fables." This is in contrast to his being "nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine" which will enable him to "exercise himself unto godliness." "Bodily exercise is profitable for a little; but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is (the here and now), and of that which is to come (the hereafter)." The "all things" in which godliness is said to profit is to be understood as meaning **the life that now is and that to come.**

Christianity Is Practical Because It Meets the Needs of This Life

"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4: 19). "For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and

glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly" (Psa. 84: 11). The needs of man are many, and they are as varied as they are many; but all man's needs — whatever is really necessary will be supplied. There is not a worthwhile interest of man that godliness will not promote.

Godliness will promote the health of the body. Abstinence from evil which harms is expected (1 Thes. 5: 22). Moderation and temperance in all things is advised (Phil. 4: 5; 1 Cor. 9: 25), and physical exercise is profitable (1 Tim. 4: 8).

Godliness is favorable to a clearness and vigor of the intellect as it sets before one the relative value of objects. The value of the soul is set over against the value of the world (Mat. 16: 26). The use of the mind is encouraged in study and investigation (2 Tim. 2: 15; cf. Prov. 1-6).

Godliness offers a recipe for happiness. For those who "would love life and see good days," it is not a "do your own thing" philosophy of humanism. It rather involves compassion, loving as brethren, tenderheartedness, humble-mindedness, a returning of blessing for evil and reviling, a controlled speech, doing of good, and seeking peace while trusting in God's approbation (see 1 Pet. 3: 8-12).

Christianity promotes a peace of conscience by leading to a faithful performance of one's duties in all relationships of life (cf. Acts 24: 16; 1 John 3: 18-21). There is instruction for the husband-wife relation (Eph. 5: 22-33; Col. 3: 18-19; 1 Pet. 3: 1-7; 1 Cor. 7: 1-5). The parent-child relationship is dealt with (Eph. 6: 1-4; Col. 3: 20-21). Under the figure of the servant and master, the employer and employee may learn how to treat each other (Col. 3: 22-4: 1; Eph. 6: 5-9; 1 Pet. 2: 18; Tit. 2: 9-10). The citizen learns of his relationship to his government and how to fulfill his duty to it (Rom. 13: 1-7; 1 Pet. 2: 13-17; 1 Tim. 2: 1-2). Nor is one left uninformed as to how to live before and treat his fellowman generally (1 Pet. 2: 11-12; Mat. 7: 12). The relationship of the creature of the Creator is one of obedience and worship (Eccl. 12: 13-14; John 4: 23-24).

Godliness will produce a good name (Prov. 22: 1), because it leads to honesty, industry, and sobriety as a course of life, or "lifestyle" to use the current "buzz word."

There are the promises of physical needs being met (Mat. 6: 33; Phil. 4: 19; Psa. 37: 25).

And, finally, in meeting the needs of the life that now is, godliness offers comfort in trial (Deut. 33: 27; Psa. 46: 1), calmness in death (Psa. 23: 4) and immortal peace beyond the grave (Rev. 14: 13).

Christianity is Practical Because It Provides for the Life to Come

Infidelity makes no promise of future happiness. Madelain Murray O'Hare and her ilk live only for the "here and now." A life of sin and lust promises nothing but remorse at death and in death. And though many things (beauty, wealth, fame, power) hold flattering hopes of happiness here, they offer nothing of eternal bliss. Nothing but godliness can so promise. A life without aim is like a ship without a rudder, but godliness offers aim and direction in life (Col. 3: 1-2), and its

promise of eternal life (1 John 2: 25) is a stabilizing force (Heb. 6: 13-20). The hope we have in Christ is not in this life only (1 Cor. 15: 19). We hope for something far better (2 Cor. 4: 16-18).

Truly, Christianity is the only really sensible way for one to live. It enriches this life and promises bliss in that to come. Yet with all its promises, many defer it to the last period of life or reject it altogether. And some who once accepted it return to the weak and beggarly elements. How tragic! How sad!

A Faithful Saying

Paul's estimate of the promise in 1 Timothy 4: 8 is found in verses nine and ten. It may be depended upon as true and it is worthy of being embraced. And that which godliness affords is worth one's labor and even the suffering of reproach. These things command and teach."

**Things Most
Certainly
Believed**

Julian R. Snell

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Lawrenceburg, Tennessee 38464



THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOB JOB QUESTIONS LIFE

For the benefit of those who are reading this series for the first time we remind that our title presumes upon the understanding that Job was not a man living in the gospel age. He was an Old Testament patriarch who lived hundreds of years before Christ. However, since the Bible is the unfolding of God's eternal purpose, human redemption, we must recognize that every book of that sacred volume is in complement to this purpose. Within the Old Testament there are types and shadows which look to the New Testament for the anti-type and substance. At times these references are glaring, at other times they are subtle, but in either case there is the ultimate pointing to Jesus Christ. We are examining some of these questions and statements from Job to point to the answers found only in Christ.

"If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come" (Job. 14: 14). These words are in the first of the three cycles of speeches. Here is but part of Job's rather lengthy answer to Zophar found in chapters 12, 13, and 14. The friend, Zophar, has harshly reaffirmed the view of the others, namely, suffering is because of sin. In fact Job has been told he is not getting what he deserved, "Know therefore that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth" (11: 6).

Job injects a bit of satire as he responds to this. "No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you" (12: 2). Then he declares his determination to appeal to God. His friends are dismissed and in the course of that appeal the challenging question of Job is raised.

Job seems to imply, if I could be sure bearing of all my trials would be some easier. "All the days of my warfare, would I wait, till my change come" (14: 14b). Evidently Job did not expect an affirmative answer to his question, for as it is raised out of a dark and bleak outlook, he only momentarily expresses a note of hope before lapsing back into gloom.

"If a man die, shall he live again?" is only a question, but what a question. The ages leading up to Christ do not give a definite answer. Clear insight evades even the most inquiring minds, revelation does not uncover until, from Bethany Jesus is heard: "I am the resurrection and the life: He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (John 11: 25). Job's consciousness of life was by the large based on experience. "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not" (14: 1-2). For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease" (v. 7). Does this not seem to argue, in my experience there is more hope for trees than man. They are cut down but sprout again, appear dead but water brings to life. But, what with man, "man dieth and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost and where is he?" (cf. v. 10).

Are men generally given to thus think of life? Job is baring his soul, truly expressing how he felt. Admittedly, he is viewing solely from the physical, yet, he seems to recognize he is more than the dust. Bound to this limited perception, there seems to be the nagging need to cleave to something more. Does giving up the spirit mean man is nothing more than dust, or, does the spirit continue to live? This represents a perennial cry, largely raised and answered without proper consideration of spiritual facts.

The real meaning of Job's question must be understood. His question is not, "will the dead come back to life?", rather, "does one physically dead, still live?" If the flower is cut off, is man still alive? The real issue which was so perplexing to Job is the continuity of life. Is life more than the present? Can it be that death is indeed but a change? Our character seems to say, I could bear anything if I thought I would still live. With this sigh he passes back into gloom, however, this challenging question rings forth from pensive men of every forthcoming age. Without the gospel man's view of death would continue to be a dark one and we along with Job would yet be wondering "is this all?"

Is there an answer to the question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" Not in the book of Job. God in dealing with Job offers no explanation of pain. He did not answer any question asked. However, He did make his glory pass in review before Job and this quieted the inquiries of our man, no more questions. Our search of the Old Testament does not offer definite and final proof of immortality. Glimpses, suggestions, yes, but nothing definitive. The answer to Job's question came finally in Jesus, and is to be found in the gospel. "But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim. 1: 10). "Brought to light" rather than created, by the gospel,

brought into clear visibility.

Job said, "If a man die shall he live?" Jesus answered, yes, "he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live" (Jn. 11: 25). Here is a clear affirmation of the continuity of life rather than resurrection. For whom? "He that believeth in me" Jesus says. Those who have fellowship with God never die, life continues even though the body returns to the dust of the earth. Indeed, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 Jn. 1: 7).

Hopefully, Job causes us to realize that there is more to life than three score and ten. The real meaning lies beyond this and when understood it puts a different complexion on our being as we realize our "now" is leading to "then." Life's ultimate meaning lies beyond death of the body. Jesus says, "if a man dies he lives" but only if "he believes on me." Even though the newspaper may announce the death of the saint, and indeed it someday will, don't you believe it. That individual is more alive than ever before. What comfort is this fact.

LESSONS FROM CORNELIUS

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Before reading this article, the reader is advised to first read Acts 10: 1-11: 18. This lesson, basically, has to do with attitudes, yours and mine. The "beatitudes" of Matt. 5: 3-12 are expressive of attitudes, for the most part. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2: 5); this is a familiar verse, and directs as to our attitude.

Many sermons have been preached about Cornelius; and, no doubt, most of them were needed. However, it seems to me that his attitude is often overlooked. I am aware that the record says that he was a devout man, one that feared God, gave much alms to the people, and prayed always. But, is there more that tells us about his attitude? Let us see!

The Three Miracles

There were three miracles involved in this story, and every one of them deals directly with attitudes, the changing of the attitudes of those involved. The first miracle was to change the attitude of Cornelius (10: 3-6; 11: 13-14). He had to realize that he was in a lost condition, in spite of his many commendable characteristics. It is obvious that this miracle accomplished its purpose.

The second miracle involved the attitude of Peter; his attitude toward the Gentiles had to be changed (10: 9-20; 11: 5-10). Peter now realizes that salvation through the gospel is to be extended to the Gentile world. Reread Peter's explanation to his fellow Jewish disciples at Jerusalem, in Acts 11: 4-17; and notice how he had God in the picture every step of the way. Not only does Peter's changed attitude come through, but the attitude

of his fellows recognizes that, "God also to the Gentiles (has) granted repentance unto life."

The third miracle changes the attitude of those going with Peter (10: 23; 11: 12-13); and Peter is seen using these six brethren to verify what he is saying.

Having noticed these things, we are now ready to get our "lessons from Cornelius; and, these consist in appreciating his attitudes toward—

The Preacher

"And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshiped him," (Ac. 10: 25). He obviously goes too far, and is rebuked by Peter; however, his attitude toward Peter was right. To see this clearly we, perhaps, need to understand something else—Peter's function: He was a witness of the Lord (Ac. 1: 8). He was a message bearer; and, that message was the gospel (Mk. 16: 15; Ac. 10: 36ff). Cornelius needed this message (Ac. 11: 14). Indeed, "—How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, —," (Rom. 10: 15). The apostles were "sent ones," and Peter was such a man. Cornelius, then, was trying to show respect for the Lord's messenger. Remembering the Old Testament story of Saul's pursuit of David furnishes us a good example. Saul caught up with David in the cave, and David was invited to dispose of his enemy. His reply was, "I will not raise my hand against the Lord's anointed." Cornelius was trying to show the same respect for Peter. The importance of Peter was not to be found in his person, but in the message he brought. And, so it is today with gospel preachers.

The Word

Cornelius' attitude toward the Word can be seen in Ac. 10: 33; among other things he says, "Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God." His needed spiritual food was vested in this man. God's Word is truth (Jno. 17: 17); this truth could free him of his sins (Jno. 8: 32); and, Peter had this truth which he needed. A few years earlier three thousand "gladly" received the Word preached by Peter (Ac. 2: 41); now, Cornelius has the same attitude, "speak, Lord, and I will listen." Think of the masses today, whose attitude is, "tell us what we wish to hear." Contrast that with Cornelius' attitude of, "tell me what I need to hear." What a difference it would make if the audience possessed the attitude of Cornelius, and all preachers were governed by 2 Tim. 4: 1-2! In Tit. 2: 14 we are told that Christ died for us that He might purify unto Himself a "peculiar people zealous of good works." Their peculiarity was not to be found in a name, but in that they were "zealous of good works." This was Cornelius' attitude, even before he becomes a Christian.

His Relatives And Friends

Cornelius' attitude toward his relatives and friends would put most to shame today. To see this, we read Ac. 10: 24, "and the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and called together his kinsmen and near friends." Their spiritual welfare was his concern, and he did something about it. I can almost see the urgency with this man as he requested, invited, urged, or begged them to be there. He knew that he needed to be saved, and so did his kinsmen and friends. There is a preacher coming, one who will tell all of them

words of salvation; they just must not miss it. The anxiety is obvious, they would be watching down the road for signs of Peter's coming. They did not wish to see how he was attired, his looks, or his mannerisms; Cornelius had gotten them there for the message.

Is our sense of urgency gone? Do we really realize who is in sin? (Rom. 3: 23). Do we really believe that those in sin are lost? What are we doing about it? It is little more than nonsense to talk about faith, until we have shown that we really believe these facts. Cornelius did!

Himself

We have already noticed Cornelius' attitude toward himself changing—to realize his lost condition. With him this was fact; but, not a fact to be ignored. Finally, of course, he and his obeyed to the saving of their souls (Ac. 10: 47-48).

Application

Can we moderns learn lessons from this story? Let us express this mathematically: Right attitude toward the preacher + right attitude toward the Word + Right attitude toward relatives and friends + Right attitude toward self = Success. Think of what this would mean to every evangelistic effort: Personal evangelism, gospel meetings, etc. Develop the right attitudes and successes we shall have.

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GENERIC BRAND RELIGION?

Norman E. Sewell

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One of the things which came out of the decade of the 80's was GENERICS. Perhaps they were around even before that but at least they became prominent during that decade. There was a time when you expected a BRAND NAME item to be better than an "off-brand," but with the advent of generics this changed. Part of the reason was the price. Medicines especially began to be so expensive when purchased by their brand-name, so smaller companies began to compete by producing the same medicine under a generic name and at a much lower cost. We have come to expect that, generally speaking, these generic drugs or foods will be just as good as their name-brand counterparts, but at a lesser cost. Have we also come to expect that EVERYTHING can now be found in a generic version and be just as acceptable and good as the name brand?

In the realm of generics, especially in medicine, before you can buy the generic brand your doctor must specify in his prescription that the generic is suitable for your problem. Only then can the pharmacist substitute some generic product for the original brand name. In some cases there is no generic available which will do what the brand name drug will do. This is the case in religion. In Matthew 7 Jesus said: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (v. 13-14). Jesus clearly said that all roads do not lead to heaven or life, only one does. We must be careful to show our friends and neighbors this, so they may understand that getting to heaven requires more than just doing something that seems religious. The Pharisees were religious, among the most strict of their day, but Jesus said of them, "Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying. This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15: 7-9). Then in the following verses when the disciples came to Jesus and said that the Pharisees were offended Jesus said, "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up. Let them alone; they be blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (v. 13-14). That which is not of God will not last, even though it may seem to be successful here on the earth.

There is no doubt that Jesus is the only Savior; even most of our religious friends believe this. Jesus said of Himself, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14: 6). Peter told the Jews concerning Jesus: "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: 12). So, if we are to be saved, if any are to be saved, it will be through Jesus. Many religious people today clearly accept this as truth. There is no generic savior available; no substitute will do.

For years we have struggled with the problem of showing the world that the church which belongs to Jesus is not just a better church or denomination than others we find in abundance today, but that it is the real thing, the original, the one and only purchased with the blood of Jesus. The general attitude among many religious people has been that one church is as good as another, thus that the generic variety is just as good as the real thing. If there is no generic savior, then why should we believe that just any "generic" church will do, since the Bible shows clearly that Jesus promised to build, and did in fact build, His own church.

One passage seems to illustrate this very well. In Acts chapter 2, after Peter had preached to the Jews and some 3000 had believed and been baptized we find that the next verses describe their conduct over the next days and weeks. The last verse of the chapter says, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (v. 47). As men and women were continuing that process which had begun on Pentecost of hearing and believing the word, repenting of their sins and being baptized for the remission of those sins, they were being saved. And when they were thus saved it was Jesus who added them to the church. He did not just add them to the church of their choice, but to His own church which He had built,

and purchased with His own blood. If indeed that is the church the saved were added to by Jesus then, why would any of us want to be added to some generic version today when the real thing, the original is still available. Men and women can indeed today be added to Christ's church without any substitute of generic nature.

Yes, the original almost always costs more than the generic, but then some things are worth more than others. Why do we sometimes buy a BRAND NAME appliance or piece of furniture even though it costs more than some others? This is frequently because we know that we will get better quality, and something that will last longer than the off-brands. The faith of Jesus Christ, and the church which belongs to Him, will cost more than substitutes. Really believing in Jesus and following Him will always cost more than just paying Him lip-service. The cost of truly following Jesus is one life time, yours and mine. Many are not willing to pay this price, but would rather have something that makes them feel good now; something that caters to their whims. The sad thing is that there are many who are willing to pay the price, a life-time of service, but have agreed to pay this price for something less than the real thing, and the reward that comes from following Jesus. He is the "author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5: 9). Whatever it costs to go to heaven will not be too much, for we can never earn that heavenly home. It will always be by the grace of God that we are saved at all, certainly not by any works of our own righteousness. But the reward, the inheritance given to us is "incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Pet. 1: 4). Perhaps as we come to see it better we can help our neighbors to see and truly understand that in religious matters the real thing is always better than the generic.

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

JOHN GAMBINO, 7111 Sunlit Trail, San Antonio, TX 78244—I am trying to reach any Christians who might know of fellow-Christians in Vietnam. My wife and I took in three Vietnamese boys in 1984. They are sons of a man who served as an interpreter for my advisory team. I have good studies with the two oldest. One of them wants to go with me to Vietnam in December. Many doors of opportunity are opening all over the world and I would like to see what opportunities there might be in Vietnam. If any reader knows of any Christians there, please contact me soon. My phone number is (512) 666-4242.

LECTURES IN OKLAHOMA CITY

Broadview Heights church, N. W. 38th & St. Clair, Oklahoma City, OK 73157 (P. O. Box 12654)—The church here will have a lectureship July 21-26, 1991 on HEBREWS—THE WORD OF EXHORTATION. Speakers will be Steve Wolfgang, A. W. Go ft" and Jim Ward. Congregational singing will be led by Dane Shepard. Services will be at 9: 30 and 10: 30 each morning. At 7 P. M. each day the speakers will make

up a panel to answer written questions, followed by 30 minutes of congregational singing and then the closing speech at 8: 30 P. M. For information about video tapes, audio tapes or housing accommodations please write to us at the P. O. Box given above.

WALLACE H. LITTLE, 520 Mary Esther Cutoff, Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32548—Due to present and anticipated growth in the work here, the Northside elders asked me to postpone my Philippines preaching trip until the spring of 1992. I am now returning all funds sent to me for this, and asking brethren who helped this time, or were considering it, to put my trip expenses into your 1992 budget.

JERRY BROCK, 707 Parker Dr., Clinton, MS 39856—I began work with the church at Brandon, MS in October, 1987. At that time we had 14 members and the church was able to supply \$200 a month of my support. We now have 35 members and the church now provides \$1, 000 a month of my support. We have lost 8 members to job transfers

in the last three years. I lost \$200 a month outside support in January and will lose \$500 more the last of March due to two congregations having to make some cutbacks. Any who might be interested in helping please contact me at the above address or phone me at (601) 924-4851. Those who wish to consult references may contact Walton Weaver, Leslie Sloan or Lee Roy Clark (Thorn, MS) or the church at Brandon. We meet at 109 Trickam Bridge Road, two blocks off Hwy. 80 just east of the heart of Brandon.

WORKERS FOR SPECIAL EFFORT IN EAU CLAIRE, WS
DAVID DIESTELKAMP, 1609 Drury Ave., Eau Claire, Wisconsin 54703—The church in Eau Claire is planning a door-to-door effort July 29-August 9. Because the church is quite small here and the need is great we are hoping others in and outside of this area will come and help.

Eau Claire is the largest metropolitan area in northwestern Wisconsin with a population of 60,000 and with 150,000 who use city services. This is the only conservative work for 60 to 100 miles in every direction. This is a young congregation with an average of 20. July 29-Aug. 3, we will be door knocking. Aug. 4-9 we will continue that work but will also have a gospel meeting in the evening. Paul Earnhart will be preaching in the meeting and hopes to bring several members from Douglas Hills in Louisville to help. We will do our best to provide housing and some meals for those who come, but our ability is limited. In addition to four homes of members, a lodge to house 20-30 people has been reserved for Aug. 4-9. There are also camping areas and many hotels and motels in the area. Please contact us for more information if you think you might be able to help. Phone (715) 839-7800.

A. A. GRANKE, JR., 1 Cherokee St., Sumter, SC 29150—1990 was a fruitful year at Woodland. Our radio program received a favorable hearing in the community. I have not been able to arrange support to go to Millsboro, Delaware though I have been in touch with many congregations. So, I will have to abandon these plans for now. We will continue to work here in Sumter at Woodland. Since December, I have received wages of only \$900 per month. We have exhausted our savings, have borrowed money to make ends meet. Secular job prospects are not good since 3 major industries here have closed in the last year, and Shaw AFB, the area's principal employer, is largely deployed in the Middle East. Our situation is becoming desperate. Please contact me if you can help, whether on a monthly basis, only once, or even a small amount, any help will be gratefully received. I will gladly supply references of sound brethren and churches who know me well. Phone (803) 773-0828.

(Editor's note: I am one brother who knows the Grankes well. What a shame he could not get the help to go to Delaware. Question: Who else do you know who is willing to go there and work in the gospel? Are YOU ready? Why should faithful, experienced men be reduced to poverty to keep on preaching? Is it because this brother has spent so many years in South Carolina and is not widely known? Can't somebody do something?)

FROM AROUND THE WORLD

PHILIPPINES—Julie D. A. Notarte reports from Digos, Davao del Sur (Mindanao) that six have been baptized since December, 1990 at Dunganpikong. After 5 weeks of intensive study a denominational preacher was baptized. He also included pictures of 3 who were recently baptized on Samal Island on Jan. 27, 1991.

Alberto D. Vivero reports from Baybay, Leyte that in spite of damage from a strong typhoon last November 12-13, the work goes forward. On December 9 he baptized 5, including a former Missionary Baptist preacher and wife (they studied for two and a half months before obeying the gospel).

SOUTH AFRICA—Paul Williams reports from Eshowe that one was baptized. Also, two young South African preachers conducted a three day meeting at Melmoth in which three young men were baptized. On the last day of a tent meeting in which David Ngonyama did the preaching, the tent was badly damaged by wind. It is old and they are trying to decide whether it is worth repairing or if they should try to buy a new one.

CALGARY, ALBERTA, CANADA—Wayne Bailey writes "We have been without a preacher for two and a half years and are carrying on

as best we can with a small nucleus of men taking turns preaching and teaching classes. The article by Greg Litmer in the Nov., 1990 STS really hit home to me. The situation and problems he mentioned fit us to a tee.

The city of Calgary has a population of about 700,000. There are two large instrumental churches of Christ, one large institutional church and a small sound Spanish work meeting in a home, and of course, we are here. The work here began in 1968 when Dave Bradford moved here and began a new work. We purchased our own building in 1971 and moved to our present location in 1984. The other men who have worked here in preaching have been Marvin Nerland, Eldon Givens, Mike Rosser, David Spiece and Mike Hosey. In 1988 we lost about half the members to the institutional church as a direct result of some of the very problems discussed by brother Litmer in his good article. We now have a membership of 31 with attendance 35-40. We have baptized seven in the last two years, four of which are still with us. The other three have moved out of town. We offer a free Bible correspondence course and with a telemarketing machine we are calling all residents of the city.

Our building is paid for. We could provide \$1000 per month support. Additional support would be needed. The potential here is great. Naturally we are looking for an evangelistically minded self-starter who is willing to work with others. Men who have held meetings here and know of our situation are: Ed Brand, Dave Bradford, Dennis Scroggins, Bob LaCoste, Joe Corley, Joe Price, Jim McDonald and Cherrill Schmid. Who can come and help us gather the harvest?"

GERMANY—Steve Wallace reports from Ramstein that since last report four have been restored and one baptized (though he did not stick). Two members were transferred back to the USA and between now and January, 1992 they are to lose 26 people (members and families) who are being transferred out. Harry Rice was there in a meeting in October.

AROUND EUROPE—(Excerpts from report of Steve Wallaces—Tom Earp, Bill Bynum, Jeff Young and their wives and children are now in Prague, CSR. We took in Czech Bibles and lessons in Czech and distributed them on Wencesla's Square. "Those fellows have more Bible studies going than they know what to do with."

Harry Rice went to Budapest, Hungary, with Derek Chambers and taught the brethren there and distributed Bibles and correspondence courses.

Steve Wolfgang was in Vienna, Austria for much of November. David Owen and Roland Lewis were in Budapest for a couple weeks in November working with young Christians. Steve Wolfgang was able to find some Bible lessons in some of the East European languages which have already proved useful.

Steve Wallace is trying to raise enough help to make a trip each month to help the brethren in Vienna and Budapest. He, Bill Bynum and Tom Earp plan a trip to the Ukraine in March to hand out Bibles and literature. Wallace says "Men are planning to move to Eastern Europe. They will need support." The denominations and liberal brethren are putting lots of money into evangelizing Eastern Europe. Once tares are sown, the work will be much harder. Is it true that error can go around the world while the truth is putting its boots on? Surely not! Brethren, let's not have to be **talked into it**, let's be eagerly watching for the opportunities. Some things can't wait!

ITALY—STEFANO CORAZZA reports the first baptism in the new work in Rome, a young man of 23 with whom Stefano and Roberto Tondelli had been studying for a year. Also, two have recently obeyed the gospel from their work at Pomezia, one 65 and the other 30. Classes continue with all of these to ground them in the truth.

RODOLFO BERDINI reports on a recent series of four sermons presented by Stefano Corazza at Aprilia to help instruct the young Christians on the institutional division. Berdini said "I wanted to schedule this series of studies particularly for the young Christians who did not pass directly the sad experience of division. I think they must know the doctrinal reasons that forced us to fight the liberal thought toward Bible authority and which brought so many churches in Italy (and in the world) to reach slowly the dark bottom of compromise and unscriptural practices."

ARRIGO CORAZZA writes from Alessandria, Italy the following: "Pray for us, because we are alone and we need to be encouraged (he is many miles from any other workers in Italy, CWA). It's getting very difficult to get or replace support from U. S. churches. My father (Sandro of Via Sannio in Rome) lost several hundred dollars a month of his support and I am going to lose \$900 starting April 1, 1991. I don't really know what to do. Asking support I am sure gets tiresome to the churches, but it will be many years before we can be self-sufficient in Alessandria."

PREACHERS NEEDED

TAYLOR, TEXAS—Taylor is 35 miles north of Austin, in a rural farm community of 13, 000. The Parker Blvd. church has 25 members with many small children. We need a fulltime preacher who can raise much of his support. We can supply some. We own our building. Those interested please contact Dean Glover (512) 255-3529 or Darrell Glover (512) 856-2625.

PINE APPLE, ALABAMA — The Awin church needs a gospel preacher. We can provide \$400-\$500 per week support and a house. We are located 20 miles East of Greenville on Hwy. 10. Those interested should contact Gilbert Pugh (205) 746-2800, or Jessie Godwin (205) 746-2143.

ORANGE PARK, FLORIDA — The church here needs a full time evangelist who is sound and willing to do personal work. Partial support necessary. For more information call (904) 264-9412 or (904) 272-6888.

CLEVELAND, MISSISSIPPI — We will be needing a preacher as of June 1st. We are a small congregation of 35-40 located between Memphis, TN and Jackson, MS. Cleveland is the home of Delta State University, a community of about 20, 000 when the University is in session. There is much work needed here. The next sound church is in Grenada, 55 miles to the east. We have some members driving as far as 37 miles (one way) to meet with us. We can provide partial support. For more information please call Connley Keenum at (601) 334-6055.

PRINCETON, WEST VIRGINIA — The church here is looking for a fulltime gospel preacher. The church is small but owns its building. They can supply partial support and have contacts to help with some outside support. Princeton is located in the southern part of West Virginia, a beautiful and relatively inexpensive place to live. If interested, contact the church by writing to 1013 Old Athens Rd., Princeton, WV 24740 or calling Leonard Mattock (304) 425-4627.

AVAILABLE FOR APPOINTMENTS

LONNIE MEREDITH, 7906 Briarcliff Rd., Louisville, KY 40219 — I am available for appointments to preach when needed. I would prefer a one week's notice. For recommendations contact the elders of the Expressway church in Louisville.

RALPH C. SMART AT REST

Ralph C. Smart, veteran preacher of the state of Maine, died unexpectedly on February 21 in Bangor, Maine. Funeral services were conducted in Bangor on Feb. 25. For many years he has devoted himself to the work in Maine while doing what he could to assist the work in New England and in the eastern provinces of Canada. For the last several years he has lived at Milbridge, Maine and worked with the church there and made regular appointments to visit and strengthen small groups of Christians throughout that area, along with Bruce Hudson who preaches in Bangor. Our sympathy to his wife, Roberta, and to all the brethren in Maine who will greatly miss the faithful services of this good man. We have asked Bruce Hudson to provide us a more complete report and tribute to brother Smart.



OPEN FORUM WITH PREMILLENNIALISTS

There was an open forum involving nine hours of study with five of the premillennial brethren at New Albany, Indiana on February 15-

16. This came about through the efforts of Guy Roberson who preaches for the Silver Street church and Nick Marsh who preaches at the Cherry Street church, both in New Albany. In addition to Nick Marsh, Paul Kitzmiller, Vernon Lawyer, Earl C. Mullins, Jr. and George Marsh, comprised a panel which presented and defended the premillennial view. Guy Roberson, Paul Earnhart, Gene Frost, John Humphries and Connie W. Adams made up the opposing panel. Each man made a 30 minute speech, had a brief rejoinder to the opposing speech and then the panels fielded written questions from the audience. While the issues were vigorously discussed and points were pressed, a good spirit prevailed.

The premillennial division came about 60-66 years ago and was largely centered in the greater Louisville area where R. H. Boll lived then. It is still the strength of that movement. Within 40 miles of Louisville, there are 26 premillennial churches of Christ. Very little contact has existed over the years since the division. The last major contact with them was in the early 1950's at the Welch-Schreiner debate.

The present-day premillennial brethren here have largely moved away from the older views advocated by Boll toward the popular dispensationalists views of conservative denominationalism, perhaps best represented by the Dallas Theological Seminary, and by such writers as Hal Lindsey and John Walvoord. All of these men would not accept that characterization. In fact, the editor of WORD AND WORK told me during the discussion that he did not agree with the panelists on the time line chart presenting the agenda which they believe will occur before, during and after the millennium. He said he was a "post-tribulationist." Others of that persuasion who attended made it clear to some of us that they were not in total agreement with all that was said. The differences between these brethren and the rest of us in this area are deep and wide. They include the general overview of scripture and the scheme of redemption, the nature and fulfillment of prophesy, the nature and present existence of the kingdom and the events related to the second coming of Christ and last things.

The premillennial panelists believe that the temple is to be rebuilt in the millennium, the Levitical priesthood will once again function, animal sacrifices will be offered, the Sabbath will be bound and even the covenant of circumcision will be re-instated. In his speech on consequences of the premillennial view, Guy Roberson powerfully pointed out that such a view not only carnalizes the kingdom but is a reversion to the type and shadow and an abandonment of the reality which we now have in Christ.

Video tapes (priced at \$18 per set - 6 tapes) may be ordered from Rick Hubart, 5127 W. 32nd St., Indianapolis, IN 46244. Phone (317) 328-1776. Audio tapes (priced at \$30 per set - 3 tapes) may be ordered from Donald Stump, 266 Cherry St., New Albany, IN 47150. Phone (812) 945-7029.

LOCKED UP

When my late brother-in-law, Tom Icard preached at Virginia Beach, Virginia he supplemented his income by driving a van for Mental Health. One day he had to stop for gas and had to go into the second precinct and call the computer first. A police woman let him in. Tom made his call and then started out only to find the door was locked and no one was in sight. He looked around and noticed two empty holding cells. He was locked in jail! He spotted a phone, but could only remember the 911 number, but realized no one would pay any attention to a man calling and complaining that he was locked up in jail! Finally he spotted a policeman and motioned to him. The man opened the door and with a puzzled look asked "Who are you?" Tom said, "Well, before I tell you, is the food any good in here?" When he got back to the van he found a very worried group of mental health patients who wanted to know "Where have you been?" Tom said "You'd never believe it." At the end of his service for Mental Health, patients presented him with a plaque inscribed TO: TOM ICARD FOR EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE, GIVEN WITH LOVE. (From an unpublished manuscript by Glenda Icard)

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	486
RESTORATIONS	106

(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)

SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

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



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

"Devoted to the Search for Divine Truth"

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THINK ON THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 1631
Lutz, FL 33549



WHEN WAS THE KINGDOM ESTABLISHED?

The denominational world constantly emphasizes the "millennium" or thousand years reign of Christ upon his throne upon earth. As long as I can remember they have been prophesying this event with every world incident between nations. In this is somehow "fulfilled" the prophecy which forecasts the coming "great tribulation" and the coming of Christ for his "one thousand years" reign upon earth. They do not all agree about the order of these events, and not necessarily what each event means.

The word of God is the only competent authority to determine the accuracy of prophecy and fulfillment. We shall appeal to this inspired historical data relating to this broad subject.

To understand when the kingdom was established, if it has been established, we must go to the prophets and learn from them where and when it was to come. If the predictions of the prophets have not yet been fulfilled, the kingdom is still future. But if the New Testament shows the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Old Testament men who were moved by the Holy Spirit as they spoke, the kingdom is now present, and we do not look for anything regarding the kingdom yet to come.

Prophecies Of The Kingdom

When was the kingdom of prophecy established, if it has been established upon earth? Some have claimed that it began in the days of Abraham when God made His promises to him. This is obviously not

true because the prophecy concerning the kingdom had not been made and Christ had not received a kingdom.

Many strongly contend that the kingdom was established during the days that John the Baptist was upon earth. Jesus made the statement that none was greater than John the Baptist, but he that is least in the kingdom is greater than he (Matt. 11: 11). This is to say that John was not in the kingdom. He lived and died before the kingdom was established.

Besides this, John the Baptist preached, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3: 1, 2). After John was put in prison, he was never released (Matt. 14: 3-12). Jesus came preaching, "the kingdom of God is at hand..." (Mark 1: 14, 15). The kingdom had not come when John was beheaded. John was dead before the kingdom was established.

The kingdom could not begin before the death, resurrection and Ascension of Jesus Christ.

The promise was made of a Messiah who would save the people. "But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4: 4, 5). Jesus came at the right time for a definite purpose. The blood of the lamb of God had to be shed in order to make both Jew and Gentile one in Christ (Eph. 2: 13-16). By his blood Christ reconciled all unto God in ONE body "by the cross." The one body is the church (Eph. 1: 22, 23; Col. 1: 18, 24). Our redemption, the forgiveness of sins, is through his blood (Eph. 1: 7). The church is purchased with his blood (Acts 20: 28). The church could not have been established before Christ gave his blood on the cross.

The kingdom could not have been established before Christ ascended to the Father to receive the kingdom of prophecy. He could not ascend until he was raised from the dead. He gave his life in fulfillment of the eternal purpose of God, and he must be raised from the dead before he could ascend to the Father and receive the power he now has.

Christ told the twelve just before he ascended into heaven that they should tarry in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high (Luke 24: 49;

Acts 1: 8, 9). After he said this he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. Daniel saw night visions in which "one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Dan. 7: 13, 14).

The kingdom or church could not be established until the power came. Jesus said unto the people and his disciples, that there were some of them standing there, "which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power" (Mark 9: 1). If we can know exactly when the power came, we know exactly when the kingdom came. Just before his Ascension, Jesus told his apostles to "tarry ye in the city of Jerusa-lem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24: 49).

Luke was the inspired writer of both Luke and Acts. He addressed both to "most excellent Theophilus" (Luke 1: 3; Acts 1: 1). Acts begins where Luke leaves off. "The former treatise" most surely refers to the gospel of Luke (Acts 1: 1). Christ commands the eleven not to depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father (Acts 1: 4). Verse 6 gives the account of the eleven asking Jesus if he was now ready to "restore again the kingdom to Israel." He replied, in effect, that it was not any of their business what the Father put in His own power. Then he said, "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 Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1: 8).

We have the right PLACE and the right TIME: Jerusalem and Pentecost. That is where the power came and when the power came, that is where and when the kingdom of Christ began upon earth according to prophecy and fulfillment. That is the time when and place where the church had its beginning. Acts 2 is the account of that power beginning its work and in the last verse we read, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2: 47). All of these passages give evidence that the kingdom of heaven began on Pentecost following the Ascension of Christ to the right hand of the Father. That means that Christ is now on his throne and his kingdom now exists.

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Foy E. Wallace Jr.

Publications

The Instrumental Music Question

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Editorial

Connie W. Adams

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A BLOSSOMING COURTSHIP

For several years now there have been "unity forums" in which men from the conservative Christian Churches and some from the institutional Churches of Christ have met, at first to discuss differences and more recently to ignore them and engage in a blossoming courtship. The most recent one was labeled "Restoration Forum VIII" and was conducted at the facilities of the Garnett Church of Christ in Tulsa, Oklahoma on November 7-9, 1990. The Winter, 1991 edition of ONE BODY, published by Don DeWalt carries a summary of what took place and speaks in glowing terms of the growing cordiality and cooperation between the two groups.

William Pile wrote his summary under the heading "They Had a War and Nobody Came." If he correctly assessed the affair, there was no war to it. The following excerpts are reported in Pile's article.

Bill Humble (a capella), speaking on "Who Are These People" said "at times we have been so committed to Biblical authority that we have become dogmatic and legalistic. We've sometimes been such defenders of the letter of the law that it has overshadowed the cross. Today we have a better balance."

Dennis Randall (a capella) said "Most issues dividing us are peripheral. While we debate them, the world is going to hell... I Believe both groups are right **and** wrong."

Boyce Mouton moderated reports of cooperative efforts between instrumental and non-instrumental groups in "worship, sports activities, campus ministries, breakfasts, prayer meetings, camps, Bible translation, welfare, etc."

Rubel Shelly (a capella) said "Our triparted hermeneutic (command, example, necessary inference) is not inductively Biblical." He also said "Our 'everybody can understand the Bible alike' sermons were a bit arrogant." Pile commented, "Perhaps his most startling statement was this: 'I reject the religious patternism with which I grew up.' "Well, that is startling, not only to me, but to a man of the Christian Church reviewing it. On the music question Shelly said "Against this background, I can recommend a capella music. Linguistically and historically I think we have a case for a capella music. Do I have a biblical case for it? No."

Pile summarized the change in these forums. He wrote "The Forums have moved from exercises in academics, logic, and polemics, to exercises in love, grace, and relationship. We spent far more time as brethren

than competitors... Argumentation lost to amiability. Being right gave way to being real. It was as if everyone now sees unity (the issue for which we assembled these eight times) as no longer the real issue, but a byproduct of our fulfilling the Great Commission. Obviously, everyone felt quite relieved."

Well, **relief** is not the emotion this editor feels. I am **sad** to see how little conviction some of those who have participated in these gatherings have. No wonder the instrumental participants are ecstatic. They have had to give up nothing. They have their instruments **and** concessions from men who formerly opposed them with vigor, concessions to the end that those who opposed the instrument were just too legalistic in the first place, that had it not been for poor hermeneutics such a blunder would not have been made, and besides all that, the opposers had simply fallen for outdated "pattern theology."

We would like to serve notice on those in the Christian Churches that there are still a number of us who believe we can make a biblical case for singing in public worship and who are prepared to show that playing is without divine authority, hence iniquitous. Further we yet believe that those who practice "iniquity" (lawlessness) will be lost (Mt. 7: 21-23). We love these who are caught up in sin. That never has been an issue. But we hate the sin and stand ready to contend for the faith and to oppose any departure from the New Testament pattern. As it was with Moses when he was about to make the tabernacle, even so must we "make all things according to the pattern" (Heb. 8: 5). To "go onward" and "abide not in the doctrine" is to forfeit the approval of both God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Jno. 9-11).

These false worshippers and their sweethearts have made another "date" to sweet-talk each other. This one will be Forum IX set for November 6-8, 1991 in Portland, Oregon. Don't be surprised if we hear wedding bells before this courtship is over. The whole thing is being treated as just a lover's quarrel. The hugging and kissing to make up is well advanced.

Meanwhile, ask for the old paths and "walk therein."

CHANGES AT FLORIDA COLLEGE

BOB F. OWEN resigned as President of Florida College a few months ago and MELVIN D. CURRY also resigned as head of the Bible department. COLLY CALDWELL has been named the new President of the college. Ferrell Jenkins has been appointed head of the Bible department and Buddy Payne will serve as vice-president and acting dean. The many who have been served by the college over the years owe a debt of gratitude to Bob F. Owen for his many years of faithful service to the school and its patrons. His wife, Janelle, has stood faithfully by his side in all these years. Many young people, now scattered around the globe, have benefited immeasurably from the work of this devoted couple. Melvin Curry has brought scholarship and devotion to truth to his work. His character and competence have blessed the students who passed under his influence over the years. Both Bob Owen and Melvin Curry will continue in different roles for the college. Bob will work in fund raising activities and Melvin will continue

to teach.

Colly Caldwell is ideally suited to the work of president of the school. He is prepared for it educationally, from the standpoint of administrative experience, and is well known and appreciated by brethren over the country for his able work in preaching the gospel. His convictions are sound and his life is beyond reproach. He, too, is blessed with a devoted wife, Linda, who stands beside him with grace and dignity. I believe the school will do well under his leadership and commend it to parents who want to send their children to college in a wholesome environment.

Ferrell Jenkins has long been known for his scholarly work. He is an able preacher and teacher and the author of several books. His convictions are strong and we can only expect good from his efforts. His wife, Elizabeth, has taught in the business department for many years. We wish all of these men and their families well in their new assignments.

Our readers have benefited much from the excellent articles written by Colly Caldwell. We hope he will still be able to find the time to submit additional material for your study.

DONNIE V. RADAR AND THE NEXT THREE MONTHS

We have asked Donnie V. Rader to edit the paper for the months of June, July and August as he did so capably last year. He has consented to do so. I know of no brother in whom I have greater confidence than Donnie. His love for the truth is evident, his work is careful, his spirit is fair to all concerned, and his expertise in layout is a great asset. The July issue will be another "special" to be entitled "Whatever Happened To Common Decency?" It will be a great help for trying problems of our time. It will be the kind of material which ought to be in the hands of Christians everywhere. Look elsewhere in this issue for an advertisement giving subjects and writers along with prices.

Our schedule of work is full to overflowing all the time and this kindness on his part will give us a little slack to attend to our meeting work with a little less pressure. We look forward to the three issues to be edited by brother Rader and thank him in advance for his faithful help.

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SATAN'S KINGDOM

QUESTION: *Our Lord Jesus said, "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand" (Matt. 12: 25). How is the kingdom of Satan divided against itself and when shall it be brought to desolation?*

ANSWER: Jesus was responding to the sinister thoughts of the Pharisees who had said (not in presence of Jesus), "This fellow doth not cast out devils (demons), but by Beelzabub the prince of the devils" (v. 24). To show the absurdity of such reasoning Jesus states an universal experience that a kingdom, city or house (family) divided against itself cannot stand. This being fully realized and unquestioned by all men, Jesus logically concludes, "And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand" (v. 26).

The import of v. 26 is not that Satan *could* not cast out his own evil spirits, but rather he *would* not. The passage does not suggest that Satan is divided against himself, as indicated by the querist, but it implies the opposite — that he is working in unison to accomplish his ends.

If Jesus were casting out devils by the power of the Devil, then there would be division in the kingdom of darkness and Satan would be bringing about his own demise. Desolation would be the result. This is when, hypothetically, it would be laid waste. Parenthetically, Jesus' argument constitutes an incidental but strong argument against sectarianism (cf. 1 Cor. 1: 13).

MOUNT ZION

QUESTION: *Does Zion in Isa. 2: 3 refer to heaven or earthly Jerusalem?*

ANSWER: Zion in Isa. 2: 3 refers neither to heaven nor earthly Jerusalem, but rather it denotes the kingdom or church which is the spiritual Zion of the messianic age. The prophet said, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established..." (v. 2). Mountain in this verse signifies government (cf. Jer. 51: 25) and house is the church (1 Tim. 3: 15). In this context Isaiah stated, "for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (v. 3). This Zion is the city of truth (Zech. 8: 3).

The *Zion* of Isa. 2: 3 is the *Mount Zion* of Heb. 12: 22-23 wherein the author writes, "But ye are come unto Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem... To the general assembly and church of the

firstborn..." The Hebrew Christians had already come to Zion by virtue of their citizenship in the kingdom of heaven. "For our citizenship is in heaven" (Phil. 3: 20, NAS).

Homer Hailey commented, "The word *Zion* came to be used in prophecy to refer to the spiritual Zion to come, that is, the dwelling place of God among His redeemed people where they find security and peace... Zion, as the mountain of God's house and people, was the place from which the law would go forth and from which the people would be ruled by His word" (*Isaiah*, p. 47).

George Robinson, commenting on Micah 4: 1-5, a parallel passage to Isa. 2: 2-4, said that it is "a picture of Zion, destined, he sees, to become the spiritual metropolis of the whole world (cf. Isa. 2: 2-4)." C. F. Keil wrote, "Zion is the source of the law and word of the Lord, from which the nations draw instruction how to walk in the ways of God, to make it their own, take it to their homes, and walk according to it" (*Minor Prophets*, Vol. 1, p. 457).

It was upon Mt. Zion where Jehovah would set Jesus as king (Psa. 2: 6), resigning over the inhabitants of spiritual Zion from which his law had proceeded (Micah 4: 7). A sure foundation would be laid in Zion (Isa. 28: 16), the sons of strangers would build the walls and the gates shall be open continually (Isa. 60: 10-14). This is the city to which all nations will flow in order to be taught the way of the Lord and to walk in his paths.

In several places *Zion* is used in a literal sense. Originally, it was the old Jebusite stronghold which was captured by David (2 Sam. 5: 6-7), making it his capital. Later, it came to stand for the enlarged city of Jerusalem, including Mt. Moriah, the site of the temple. However, in Isa. 2: 3, as well as several other passages, Zion has a spiritual connotation as already noted.

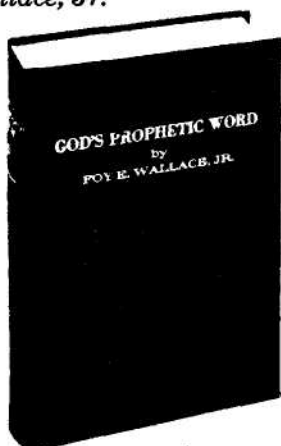
Though we have come to Mount Zion and the heavenly Jerusalem in one sense, in another sense, it is still sought after as Heb. 13: 14 suggests. "For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come." Abraham looked for this eternal city whose builder and maker is God (Heb. 11: 10).

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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GIVING THE LORD OUR LEFTOVER TIME

When it comes to money and material things, most of us understand the Lord's work can require sacrifice. If a thing urgently needs doing and we lack the surplus cash to make it possible, many good brethren will dig down deeper and do without things for themselves in order to get the Lord's work done, perhaps selling off possessions to raise the necessary funds, as the early disciples did (Ac. 2: 45; 4: 34-37). When the collection plate is passed, we know the Lord deserves more than a simple look in our wallets to see if there is anything we can "do without." Parents and preachers have taught us to adjust our living standard to the needs of the Lord's work, rather than vice versa. We don't always do as we should, obviously. But most of us know what the word **sacrifice** should mean, and we feel guilty when we ignore our conscience concerning financial sacrifice.

Our Most Precious Possession. But there is something else that must often be sacrificed in doing the Lord's work — **time** — and I suspect that our frequent unwillingness to make **this** sacrifice may be a worse problem, if only because we are not as honest about how sinful it is. Money is valuable, of course, and we would like to have as much as possible. But time is in some ways an even **more** precious commodity to us. Philanthropic organizations, all say that the typical American would much rather write a check to support a worthy cause (and be "done with it") than donate even a little **time**. In the Lord's body, for every one person who has a problem about giving his money, there are at least three or four of us who have a problem about giving the thing we are most covetous and selfish about: our time.

Who can deny that we hang on to our time and activities with a tighter stinginess that we do our money and possessions? It has gotten to the point where, if the Lord's work conflicts with any of our precious activities (or even sometimes with **rest from** our precious activities), we will hardly even consider giving up the activity as a **sacrifice**. It would be simply out of the question. The thing is "ours" and we are not going to part with it willingly. Our rule of thumb seems to be that if anything has to "give," it should be the services and work of the congregation. Scheduling conflicts are virtually always resolved at the expense of the Lord. We may still now and then sacrifice the **having** of certain things for the Lord — but very few of us will let the Lord stand in the way of **doing** something we want to **do**. One would

think that spiritual matters are the only "optional" things we are involved in.

A Critical Problem. It is a plain fact that we do with our calendars and datebooks precisely what we have always said was sinful to do with our checkbooks: give the Lord nothing but what is "left over." Like the Jews of old who brought the "lame and sick" (Mai. 1: 8, 13) for their animal offerings (their "spare" livestock), we insult the Lord by giving Him our "spare" time. If the Lord needs an hour or two, that is fine— unless we have **anything** else we could possibly be doing. It begins to look as if the Lord gets our time only when there is **absolutely zero else going on.**

Am I exaggerating? Ask your elders. Ask them how hard it is anymore to do even a little thing like setting the times for services of the church. Ask them if they have been able to please the folks who think an "expedient" time is one that involves the least possible interference of church services with anything else. Ask them how often they hear complaints about services running overtime. Ask them about the unrelenting pressure they are under to cut gospel meetings shorter and shorter and shorter. Ask them about the nearly impossible demand to find dates for gospel meetings when nothing else is going on that would "conflict." Ask them how often they hear about the importance of getting children to bed early on school nights — often from parents who will take their children completely **out** of school for other "important" activities.

Ask your elders how many who are asked to take care of some job or responsibility in the congregation seem to be mainly concerned about how little time they can spend doing it. Honestly, ask your elders if they do not get the distinct impression that many members of the body nowadays are not motivated by these overriding concerns: How can we constantly whittle away at the Lord's work and keep it from intruding on our schedules? How can we keep it from conflicting with anything else we want to do? Above all, how can we keep the church "convenient?"

The truth is, the real work of the Lord in all ages has tended to encroach on busy schedules, just as it has tended to eat away at large bank accounts. Those who consider time and money as resources to be spent on self have never been more than a hindrance to heaven's cause. But we live in a busy age when time seems especially short — the variety of things to be involved in is mind-boggling. If we do not get a fresh grip on the concept of true **sacrifice** in the matter of our time, we are going to lose our souls and, with them, everything that ever mattered. Jesus said, "Whoever desires to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake will find it" (Mt. 16: 25). Can there be any doubt that, by withholding our "schedules" from the Lord, we are refusing to give up our lives for Him, one day at a time? He **never** let Himself get involved in anything that was so important that He could not lay it aside at any moment to serve our needs. If, in return, we give Him only the leftovers of **our** time, is hell not too good for us? Think about it the next time the Lord needs you for anything... and you "can't make it. "

MUSINGS

J. Wiley Adams

103 Ridgeland Drive
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THE THIEF OF TIME

It has been properly said that "procrastination is the thief of time." Procrastination simply means the practice of postponing or putting off until tomorrow, or at least until later on, that which should be done today or now. In the movie "**Gone With The Wind**" you will remember that Scarlett O'Hara practiced that philosophy. Do you recall how, when she was faced with a decision, she always would say, "Well, I won't think about that now. I'll think about it tomorrow. "

There are some things, of course, that may be postponed and indeed should be because there is no urgency required or the thing under consideration may be of no particular consequence anyway.

People are prone to put off a lot of things. Some put off going to the doctor or dentist. Some put off paying their honest debts. Others put off doing good deeds. One could go on and on with such a list.

The most serious postponements, however, have to do with spiritual matters. Some so-called Christians postpone or set aside their duties and responsibilities to God and man. They plan to visit the sick tomorrow. They will encourage those who are weak in the faith later. Some will seek to recover the backsliders when they get around to it. Wives and husbands neglect each other but they are going to do better—tomorrow. Parents are going to have a closer family life — eventually. Children away from home plan to call or write their aged parents — when they have caught up on a few things. Many of these elderly people watch for the mail each day in hopes that there will be some mail from the children. Often they are disappointed and have to come back into the house with a handful of bills and advertisements. But no word from the kids. They will write someday.

Some people have heard the gospel of Christ time and again. They believe it, they say. They are going to obey it, like Felix, at a more convenient season. One wonders how many tombstones could accurately bear the epitaph: "**I plan to obey the gospel — later on. "**

My friend, spiritual matters are not trivia. We must not take them lightly. Many need to make a decision now about their souls. Paul said, "... behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation..." (2 Cor. 16: 2). How true this is. Many would agree that this is so but not be moved to action. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1: 16). Jesus is the author of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him. (Heb. 5:9).

Please do not trifle with your soul's destiny. To do so is to face an eternity of remorse and regrets. Act on your faith, repent of your sins, confess Christ, be baptized into Christ, be faithful unto death. Heaven will be yours. This you will never regret. Use the time you have **now** to do the will of God.

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**CHILDREN OF DIVORCE AND
SPIRITUAL LIFE**

**T. Doy Moyer
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A child who goes through the trauma of divorce is going to be affected in many ways. The child will likely have trouble with building and maintaining strong relationships. Furthermore, evidence shows that the tendency of this child to divorce his own spouse is greater than those whose families stayed intact. A child is hurt deeply by a divorce, and often ends up losing respect for his own parents. When a child loses respect for parental authority, he soon loses respect for all authority, including God's. The most serious problem that can stem from a divorce has to do with one's relationship to God.

Odds are not very good that a child of divorced Christians will be a faithful child of God himself. The bitter child might even blame God for the divorce and show a manifest bitterness toward the church. As Job's wife wanted Job to "curse God and die" for the suffering he had to endure (Job 2: 9), so the temptation is there for a child to feel the same. He may feel that he has been mistreated by the church, and that if "this is what Christianity is all about, then I don't want any part of it." This is one reason why it is so important for members of the church to pay special attention to children going through a divorce. Ignoring them will be the worst thing you can do to them.

"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10: 17). A child raised in a Christian home is taught the principles from God's word on how to live. Parents are to nurture their children, teaching them God's word in order to instill that faith within them (Eph. 6: 4). However, if the child is hearing one thing from the parents, yet seeing another, he will learn to distrust not only what the parents say, but also what the Bible says. Faith will be replaced by doubt, and the child might despise the things he has been taught. It is not surprising then that such a child may not amount to much as a Christian. Probably most of the rebellion we see in today's youth comes from children who have unstable family situations. We must realize that there is a direct correlation. These rebellious children are seeking for help and acceptance. They don't know what it means to feel safe, secure, and loved. Many reject God because they have never been shown what being a true Christian is all about. If his parents are divorcing when they have been telling him to obey God, he may feel as though the Bible contains principles that really don't work in life. Thus, he will not have faith.

Commitment is everything in our service to God (Lk. 9: 23). From whom do we learn about commitment?

Children need to learn it from their parents, as they strive to follow Christ. Yet, what does divorce say to a child about commitment? Remember, that child may not understand why his parents are splitting up. It makes no sense to him. Instead of learning the devotion and commitment that he needs to have in order to "bear up" under the hard times, he learns to "quit" when the going gets tough. After all, this is what his parents have taught him by example.

People are constantly struggling with their faith. Even when Jesus was in the flesh, his own disciples struggled with it (e. g. Jn. 20-25-29). There were occasions when Jesus told them that they had "little faith" (Mt. 6: 30). Many will have a hard enough time struggling with faith. It's hard enough being young and growing up. It is much worse for a child who also has to live with divorce. Furthermore, how often does it happen that both parties in a divorce remain faithful to God? Anytime a divorce takes place, there is sin involved somewhere by one (or often both) of the people. Divorce has never worked wonders for a person's faith. Imagine how much it can hurt that impressionable child who has been putting all of his trust in the two people who have more to do with his shaping than anyone! If he sees his own parents showing lack of faith in God and His word, what do we expect to see from him? His relationship with God will indeed be affected.

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THE LOVE OF GOD—ROMANS 8—(NO. 4)

The Father's Sympathy — Suffering and Hope — Vs. 17-25

"And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us, for the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." This text gives us assurance of our loving Father's sympathy in the midst of the trials we are called upon to endure in this life. He not only sympathizes, but has provided that which sustains us until the final redemption of our bodies from all the evils of this present world.

Suffering With Him

Based upon the fact that we are children of God (v. 16), the first verse of our text affirms that we are "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." The apostle then introduces the theme of human suffering and shows that our ultimate glorification with Christ is conditioned upon our suffering with Him. Indeed, it is true: "The Way Of The Cross Leads Home." While there is suffering that is common to life in this world, that referred to here is "with him." This is suffering experienced by virtue of our relation to Him and because of our stand for and defense of the truth. Paul in another place put it this way: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3: 12). Jesus also, without equivocation, said, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because I have chosen you out of

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the world, therefore the world hateth you" (John 15: 18, 19)

Salutary Effect

The apostle goes on the show (v. 18) that no matter how great the suffering here, it does not begin to compare with the magnitude of the glory that shall be ours "in the sweet by and by." In fact, Paul teaches that such afflictions even have a salutary effect upon our lives: "For our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4: 17). Whether our afflictions are common to life in this world or because of our suffering "with him" they are "light" and "but for a moment" compared to the "weight of glory" that is "eternal" received at last by the faithful. Besides that, they are working for us. This is what James had in mind when he said, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this that the trying of your faith worketh patience" (Jas. 1: 2, 3). Afflictions beget within us a deeper sense of our need for and dependence upon God. They drive us to the word of God, to prayer, and build into our character virtues necessary for entrance into heaven. Peter also speaks of their salutary effect: "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1: 6, 7).

"The Whole Creation Groaneth"

In verses nineteen through twenty three the theme of human suffering is amplified. Admittedly, these are difficult verses. Even after years of diligent study, I set forth my convictions with measured caution.

The brief over-all view is simply this: It is the lot of all mankind, as long as he tabernacles in the flesh, to experience suffering — intense groaning. However, those in Christ have something to sustain them and to look forward to that the man of the world does not have, namely, hope — hope of immortal glory! This involves laying aside this mortal tabernacle and being "clothed upon with our house which is from heaven" (2 Cor. 5: 2) — a house in which we can no longer know the emotions of sorrow, pain, suffering, or any of the bodily imperfections of this life.

Every "new creature... in Christ" (2 Cor. 5: 17) longs for this transition (v. 19) — a transition in which shall be clearly manifested a sharp **contrast** between those of the "new creation" (2 Cor. 5: 17 — marginal reading — ASV) and those who are not (v. 19). This manifestation shall then be not by way of simple declaration only, but by way of ACTUALITY! All mankind shall see and know it.

Difficult Words

Perhaps the greatest difficulty in understanding these verses grows out of determining the meaning of the words "creature" (KJV), "creation" (ASV), and "whole creation."

Since Paul says that the "creature" (KJV) or "creation" (ASV) "shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of

God" (v. 21), these words necessarily refer exclusively to the children of God. The expressions "corruption" and "glorious liberty" draw a contrast between present suffering in a mortal body with future glory in an immortal body. Who or what else has been promised such liberation? This is corroborated by the fact that the word "creature" in Rom. 8: 19, 20, 21 and in 2 Cor. 5: 17 is translated from the same Greek word. The latter reads: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." Again, we find the verb form of the word "creature" in Eph. 2: 15: "For to make ("create"—ASV) in himself of twain one new man, so making peace." Thus, a Christian is a "creature" of God—a "new creation... in Christ." The church of God's "creation" of both Jew and Gentile.

Verse twenty two shows that not only **God's creation in Christ**, but also the "whole creation" (the whole human race) suffers in the here and now. These two groups are contrasted in the next verse by the use of the words "they" and "ourselves."

I see no reason to include in the expression "the whole creation" the animal and vegetable kingdom — the lower order of creation — with a view to such, along with the earth itself, being renovated so as to be an eternal abode for the righteous, as per materialists, including some premillennialists. Such would demand making figurative language of our text arbitrarily. Such action is wholly without justification.

The First Fruits of the Spirit

The "first fruits of the Spirit" enjoyed by "ourselves" (God's creation in Christ) is the same thing Paul referred to as the "earnest of the Spirit" by which we are sealed (2 Cor. 1: 22; Eph. 1: 13, 14). The word "earnest" is used here in the same sense as "earnest money" or a down payment on a piece of real estate. Such is a guarantee that the balance on the property will be paid in due time. Such is a seal or guarantee of the genuineness of the transaction.

Since we who are in Christ have already received multiple promises made by the Holy Spirit, namely, "all spiritual blessing... in Christ" (Eph. 1: 3), such serves as a guarantee that future promises will be fulfilled in due time. What better assurance does the Christian have of that grace to be received at the revelation of Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 1: 13) than that grace that has come unto us (1 Pet. 1: 10)? Not one promise of the Holy Spirit made for the gospel dispensation has failed — "all are come to pass"! Such is a down payment on those of future glory — "the first fruits of the Spirit."

Hope

The infinite love and sympathy of our heavenly Father is clearly seen in the grace he gives to sustain us through every trial in the here and now (2 Cor. 12: 9) and the **hope** set before us "which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast" (Heb. 6: 19). This is an anchor that every soul on earth needs. We all have problems to solve, difficulties to face, and burdens to bear that would crush us to earth in despair, but for the fact we have hope. Even hope in this life is wonderful. We endure today because we hope for a brighter tomorrow. However, by comparison hope in this life only leaves man a miserable being (1 Cor. 15: 19) Here the

Christian has something of inestimable value that the man of the world does not have. He can lift his eyes and by faith look over the Jordan of death and face the world to come with joy, courage, hope, and faith.

Because of this hope we can "hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering" (Heb. 10: 23). We can stand steadfastly, endure patiently, and fight on courageously. We can resist temptation, deny ourselves, bear our burdens, nurse our sick, bury our dead, and gather up the shattered pieces of a broken life and build again — ever pressing on "toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3: 14). No wonder Paul said, "We are saved by hope" (v. 24).

Using the

SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

Ken Green

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Huntsville, Alabama 35805



A TRIP TO HONG KONG, INDIA, AND ENGLAND

On Jan. 8, Darrel Haub, Gerry Sandusky, and I left the U. S. with plans to preach for a month in India with stops in Hong Kong and the United Kingdom. We spent about a week in Hong Kong. The Jordan Park church in Huntsville has had fellowship with Jeff Kingry for several years, both in Vermont and China. It was profitable to visit the Kingrys and the Robert Smalls and to be involved in some small way in the work there. Those who receive reports from these brethren are aware that the most encouraging progress in Hong Kong has been among the Filipinos. Jeff, Robert, and the Dale Smelsers (who were in Shenyang at the time of our visit) have been making periodic trips into the People's Republic of China. Reports of the work there seldom fail to bring tears to the eyes and joy to the heart.

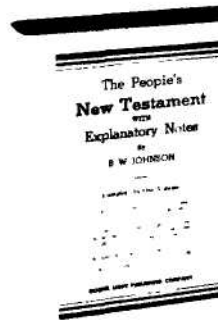
We arrived in Hyderabad, India Jan. 16. Ed Brand joined us a few days later. Our plans for evangelism and teaching the brethren were largely aborted because of the unrest occasioned by the Gulf war. The agitation between the Moslems and Hindus which John Humphries recently reported was unabated at this time. But the war in Iraq which began shortly after our arrival made the situation even more explosive. There was also an acute fuel shortage that made traveling impossible had it been advisable. The American embassy advised us to leave if possible. The same counsel was given by several others who believed that our presence at that time was dangerous for us and for those associated with us.

We were able to conduct several classes and services around Hyderabad. Also several thousand dollars of needed relief was given to suffering brethren.

With some difficulty we left India Jan. 26 for London. Ed and Darrel returned to the states a few days later. Gerry and I opted to stay in England until Feb. 21, working primarily with Derek Daniell in Tunbridge Wells. Several classes were taught there and in Canterbury and London. Much literature, ads, and correspondence courses were distributed house to house and in the open mall area. Some good contacts were made. One lady in Canterbury was baptized who was responsible for some other contacts there.

Derek and Margaret Daniell are native Britons. They and their large family are deeply spiritual, committed, untiring workers in the kingdom. Derek drives forty miles to Canterbury twice a week to teach a class there and to bring people to worship in Tunbridge Wells. He drives to Kentish Town in London, another forty or so miles, on Wed. nights to teach a Bible class there. Gas is about \$3. 20 an American gallon. Everything seems to be about twice as high in and about London as it is in Huntsville, AL. This good man has lost a great deal of his support. He is having to wash windows to supplement his income as he gives as much time as possible to the work of the kingdom. I never heard a word of complaint from him so I want to complain on his behalf. If you would like to correspond with Derek Daniell, his address is: 34, North Farm Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN2 3XD. U. K His telephone: 0892 23864.

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"He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it; and whoso breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him. Whoso removeth stones shall be hurt therewith; and he that cleaveth wood shall be endangered thereby" (Eccl. 10: 8, 9).

"He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears" (Prov. 26: 17).

Those two passages should account for our subject title, and I don't think we had to stretch either the context or our mental faculties to find congruity and conformity between the two.

Solomon did not say that we should never dig a hole, clean out a briar patch, move rocks, or chop wood. He simply tells us to be prepared for the fringe benefits of such endeavors. A certain amount of risk is necessary, and the same writer says that we can spend too much time observing the clouds and the wind (Eccl. 11: 4). But the fellow who purposely takes a dog by the ears has no excuse whatever.

Anyone who has not been warped across the shin bone or alongside the head by a ricocheting stick of wood has not explored all the possibilities of instant and abiding pain. He who has never held a snapping dog by the ears knows not the meaning of dilemma.

There are many deadly snakes in the world, and many more that can scare you half to death. In our country, the rattlesnake is probably the most prolific and notorious, which some folks are said to be as mean as.

The person who would unnecessarily subject himself to the aforesaid dangers is devoid of good common sense. And yet, most of us have done it a few times, and some have done it several times. Some keep right on doing it.

I speak of giving heed and attention, either by initiation or by bidding God speed, to "foolish and unlearned questions" and such like (2 Tim. 2: 23).

I've done my share of grubbing sprouts, cutting wood, and killing copperheads. I am no stranger to, yet not a connoisseur of, that commodity called controversy. And, though not alone, I've probably engaged in more than my share of controversy, partly because some others avoided their fair share of the burden in that department.

But, though Florida is said to be populated with innumerable rattlesnakes, I have not encountered any live ones to date. I have seen a couple of dead ones, and

pictures of others, and I'm sure there are thousands more out there in the boonies, swamps, and palmetto thickets.

But I attribute my scarcity of association with this reptile to the fact that I just haven't gone out of my way to hunt them. On the contrary, I have done a pretty good job of avoiding the known habitats of rattlesnakes.

Years ago, a young preacher complained to me that brethren had taken him to task for preaching that a candidate for baptism need not understand that baptism was necessary to the remission of sins. He had cleaved the wood and broke the hedge, and he didn't get any sympathy from me for the consequences which he suffered.

Some preachers will take a dog by the ears in the pulpit, in a Bible class, or in some publication, just for the sake of being different, or trying to appear scholarly or profound. Some may have a pet position and want to test the reaction of brethren by throwing their hat in the door before entering the room. Then they will cry discrimination, persecution, harassment, or even crucifixion. Some may just break the hedge in ignorance, with no desire or intent to aggravate a serpent or take a dog by the ears.

All the same, the dog or the snake may not know, or care about the motive.

Don't misunderstand me. There may be scriptural topics which have been ignored or swept under the rug for too long. Consequently, someone has to follow the example of Samuel and hue the Agagite doctrine or practice in pieces (1 Sam. 15: 33). Or, there may be "no small dissension and disputation" over something we didn't introduce in the first place (Acts 15: 1, 2).

But whether your effort is justified or is simply an exercise in meddling with strife better left alone, be ready to dodge the flying chips, rattlesnakes, and snapping dogs inherent in such activity.

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THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOB "My Witness and My Redeemer"

By way of introduction we are reminded again that Job was an Old Testament patriarch living hundreds of years before Christ. Even so within the Old Testament there are types and shadows which look to the New Testament for the anti-type and substance. These references within the framework of God's eternal purpose to redeem lost man are a pointing to the Christ and the revelation of the plan of redemption. At times these references are glaring, at other times they are subtle, but in either case the ultimate aim is Christ. This series is the examining of some of the questions of Job, some of his statements, which point to answers found in Christ and the gospel.

"And now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high" (Job 16: 19). These words occur in the 2nd cycle of the three cycle controversy between Job and his three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar. The first cycle has attempted to account for suffering on the basis of personal sin. The friends have argued Job's predicament is the result of personal sin. Job has protested. Eliphaz's second address is essentially the same. He sums up, only the wicked suffer. Indeed it is true that the wicked suffer, however, it is false to conclude **only** the wicked suffer. Job reaffirms his innocence and reproves his friends like this, "I have heard many such things: miserable comforters are ye all. Shall vain words have an end? or what emboldeneth thee that thou answerest?" (Job 16: 1-3). In other words, are you to continue in your vain repetition?

With the continuing affirmation of innocence in face of his friends' accusation Job's statement is "Not for any injustice in mine hands: also my prayer is pure" (16: 17), we are challenged by the statement "my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high" (v. 19). Our man amid misunderstanding, in face of bewilderment and perplexity in this manifest a consciousness of one who knew the truth about him, one who was able to attest truth. As he ponders his troubles there is the acknowledgement of his personal sense of inability to plead his case with God. He is beset by longing, his eyes pour out tears, his heart pleads his case, yet God does not hear as when a man pleads with his neighbor (cf. 16: 20-21).

Let us not be too hasty in our indictment of Job. Stand in his shoes and understand his predicament. Amidst turmoil, filled with anguish, listening to good men talking of his experiences, yet ignorant of facts,

even so indicting Job of sin. Is it any wonder that he should feel alone and forgotten. Of course subsequent events and fuller understanding on Job's part proved him wrong in a number of instances, but not concerning his "witness." It seems as we reflect upon Job's opinion he has concluded God is not acting in his behalf. Sometimes even we lose sight of the fact that God is always on the field, governing activity. To us, in our weakness and anxiety, as with Job, it is as though God is doing nothing. This is Job's experience at the moment.

In the midst of this Job makes two affirmations. One, "my witness is in heaven." "Witness" or "watcher" conveys the idea of one who sees and knows. His friends had failed him because they did not know all, they simply **thought** they did. Theirs was an attempt to account for Job's experience by a partial and incomplete philosophy. Job declared there is one in heaven watching, understanding and knowing all. Second, "And He that voucheth for me is on high" or "my record is on high" (KJ). There is one able to vouch, bear witness to truth in Job's behalf. This reflects a consciousness of the ultimate tribunal in heaven. But he seems to immediately recoil from this affirmation as he again speaks of sorrow and anguish and bemoans the fact he cannot reach this watcher and voucher this "witness and recorder." In him we are reminded that the knowledge and perception of the best of friends is incomplete when compared with heaven. With Job there seems to be the growing conviction that his only hope of justice is with heaven.

Having been prompted toward deeper considerations by these things of Job, what is the abiding truth concerning our "witness and redeemer?" Christ alone satisfies this need, for He had entered into "heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb. 9: 24). This passage declares there is one who stands in the presence of God, knowing perfectly and acting in our behalf, one who stands before God, vindicating the sinner. All that Job felt the need for spiritualizes in Jesus Christ. He has entered into heaven itself, is our Witness, our Recorder, our Mediator. By the atonement process he has made grace available, thus we may stand before God forgiven and approved. Judgment of friends, self approval will not suffice to this, it is God and he alone that must approve.

In that continuing second cycle of speeches, from the answer of Job to Bildad, there is another challenging statement, "I know that my redeemer liveth" (Job 19: 25). Bildad has argued that suffering is found only in the dwelling of the wicked. The implication being, Job is wicked. Job acknowledges his afflictions are from God and says his friends have no right to add to them, all the while denying their charge. In the midst of this gloom our cry breaks forth and in the very next sentence Job obviously sinks back into his gloom. He has previously declared my "witness is in heaven," here he goes further by adding his witness is his redeemer. It is impossible to read this statement without a consciousness of Christ. Try to grasp Job's understanding. Ours is an insight through incarnation. But what of Job? He seems to have momentarily caught the music of eternal things, "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin

worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me" (Job 19: 25-27). However, the light fades immediately as he is heard to say "my reins are consumed within me" (i. e. "source of life"). What did this mean to Job?

"My redeemer" is an expression which must look to the Son of God for full interpretation. "Redeemer" is the Hebrew word "Goel" meaning next of kin, another, to defend my cause, avenge wrongs and so acquit of wrongs. Much like the relation of Boaz to Ruth. Note Job does not just say his redeemer existed, but, even though I die, he lives. He declares that in death he yet had a kinsman, one through whom he would be acquitted, and vindicated. He declares a consciousness not simply of the fact of a redeemer but a conviction that he would see him. Job is testifying to an awareness of continuity of life beyond death. For a fleeting moment our man has the widest outlook as he seems to grasp the truth concerning himself and God. We have heard him ask, "If a man die, shall he live again" (Job 14: 14)? Now, he rises to affirm the answer. Not only live but see God and my living redeemer. Are these things true? They certainly are as every true believer holds tenaciously to the words, "He ever liveth to make intercession for us" (Heb. 7: 25). Jesus Christ is our witness and our redeemer. God be praised.

IT COULD HAVE BEEN ME!

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Of all the experience of this life, death is perhaps the most difficult. Until this past year I had lived without death touching very close in my immediate family. Losing an aunt or an uncle is just not the same as losing someone you have been really close to for many years, whether physical family or spiritual. But within the past year or so all of that has drastically changed.

How often have we read David's statement in the 39th Psalm which says, "**Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am**" (v. 4)? But do we often stop to recognize just how frail we are? Just a few months ago I lost my father whom I thought would surely live many more years. Nothing could have prepared me for the shock of it, but somehow we do get past death and go on to remember with love those who have gone on ahead of us. Recently I participated in the funeral service for an uncle that I had actually

grown up with. We had been more like brothers than uncle and nephew. Yet suddenly he was dead and he was younger than I was. I did in fact think, "It could have been me." As I was preparing for his funeral I was thinking of what seemed like the untimely nature of his death and I remembered something David had said to Jonathan as he was hiding from King Saul. David said, "**As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death**" (1 Samuel 20: 3).

I guess we have all had our "close calls"; those near accidents which could have been so deadly. Sometimes these too help us to think just how frail human life is, and that at times there really is "but a step" between us and death. And now comes the conflict in the middle east, with hundreds of thousands of American men and women sent to defend the cause of freedom. And all of us either are related to, or know personally some of these men and women. Some of them are our brothers and sisters in Christ. Its easy for us to see and to think that there may be for them "but a step" between them and death. We rejoice to see this war coming to a close with as few casualties as there are. But the point is still the same; we are frail with only a few years to live here on earth, and there is but a step between us and death. Though Moses spoke long ago of "**threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years**" (Psa. 90: 10), yet many never reach even that age.

As we ponder these frailties that we all come to see as we grow older, we also come to understand better Solomon's statement in Ecclesiastes chapter 7. Solomon wrote: "**It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting**" (v. 2). It seems to contradict human nature to say that, yet this is what Solomon said. His reason for saying this is also given: "**for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart.**" This is the end of all men, to die. The Hebrew writer said, "**And it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment**" (Hebrews 9: 27). Since it is to be my end as well, it is important then that I recognize this frailty in myself and prepare for it. This is much more than just picking out a burial plot, or deciding about and paying in advance for your funeral. These things CAN BE DONE by someone else after you're gone. But what they cannot do for you, or for me, is to prepare for the judgment for us. This isn't news; we all have known it for a long time. Have you laid it to your heart that there is but a step between you and death, or that "it could have been YOU?" If we will indeed take it to heart when we go to the house of mourning, perhaps we will prepare for that time when it WILL BE us.

Seeing our friends and family precede us in death is not easy for we suffer the pain and disappointment of knowing that we will see them no more in this world. But what a joy it is, even in the midst of sorrow, to know that the one who has gone on was a Christian, and, as far as any of us can know, faithful to Jesus our Saviour. What a joy it is to be able to say, "I'll see you over there," fully believing that all of the faithful will "**meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord**" (1 Thess. 4: 17).

At the same time how sad it is to see Christians (so-called) who hardly even know what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. We can only hope that these who take

such a casual attitude toward living as Christians and serving God day by day will indeed have time yet to think, "it could have been me," and to prepare for eternity.

THE NEW NAME! WHY?

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Acts 11: 19-30 is the lengthy text for this article; but I wish to call attention to that part of verse 26 that says, "And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." This verse has been used by some as a fulfillment of Isa. 62: 2—the new name by which God's people would be called. Others have contended that the name "Christian" was not the new name, but was given in derision, there in Antioch. It is not the design of this effort to even try to settle that argument; rather, to ask and discuss the question—Why were they called Christians? If they were called Christians" by God, why? If they were called "Christians" in derision, why? There must have been some reason(s) as to why this name would be used in reference to the disciples. I believe that the answer to this question is to be found noticing the characteristics of these disciples. What kind of people were they? Let us see!

THEY WERE A TAUGHT PEOPLE. Verse 26, says that "much people" were taught. Jesus had said, "And they shall all be taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me," (Jno. 6: 45). The "Great Commission" cannot be overlooked here (Matt. 28: 18-20). People were to be taught, baptized, and taught further. Indeed, "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" (Rom. 10: 14). The opponents of Peter and John were grieved because "they taught the people" (Ac. 4: 2); and the Colossians were to be rooted and built up in Him, "as ye have been taught" (Col. 2: 7). To the Ephesian elders Paul said, I "have taught you publicly, and from house to house." Being TAUGHT is a fundamental requirement of one who would be a follower of the Lord. Do you think these people would have been called "Christians" had they not been taught?

THEY WERE AN OBEDIENT PEOPLE. Verse 21 relates this by saying, "A great number believed and turned unto the Lord." God's people today simply cannot be as Israel of old, "All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people" (Rom. 1: 21). These disciples at Antioch were, "Doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (Jam. 1: 22). Perhaps we see here what Isa. 65: 1 prophesied, "I am sought of them that asked not for me' I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name." Do you think these disciples would have been called "Christians" had they not been obedient?

THEY WERE A PEOPLE WITH PURPOSE. That purpose is clearly stated in verse 23, to "cleave unto the Lord." The word "cleave," in the original, meant, "to join fast together, to glue, to cement." In our text it carries the thought of "to abide with." So, these people "cemented" themselves to the Lord. They did not try to see how close to sin they could get, but, how close to the Lord they could get. They truly practiced the teaching of Jas. 4: 7-8, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts ye double-minded." Do you think these folks would have been called "Christians" had they been without this purpose?

THEY WERE AN ASSEMBLING PEOPLE. Verse 26 shows them gathering in a teaching assembly. Early Christians assembled regularly (Act. 20: 7), and steadfastly (Ac. 2: 42). The thought of Heb. 10: 25 was precious to these disciples. Can you imagine any of these people willingly being absent from any of their services? I cannot! It would seem that their thirst for Truth was never satisfied (Matt. 5: 6). We have every reason to see them as being glad when someone suggested an assembly (Psa. 122: 1). Do you think they would have been called "Christians" without that interest in assembling?

THEY WERE A CHANGED PEOPLE. Verse 21 shows that change being wrought. This change, no doubt, was obvious to all. If they were called "Christians" in derision, it would serve to compliment them; for, their change was so obvious that even their enemies thought they should be called after the One whom they followed. They were now new creatures (2 Cor. 5: 17), and they would act like it. Their hearts had changed; they now believed in the things of God. Their lives had changed; they had turned to the Lord. I suggest that this is a case of genuine repentance (Ac. 17: 30). Could anyone possibly suggest that they would have been called "Christians" without this change?

THEY WERE AN IDENTIFIED PEOPLE. They were "called Christians" (v26). Whether by derision or by God, it set them apart from the world; and, this was ordained of God (Rom. 12: 2). You may be in the world; but, if you wish to be identified as one of God's own, you must keep the world out of you (1 Jno. 2: 15; 1 Pet. 4: 4, 16; Jas. 4: 4). Would they have been called "Christians" had they not been thus identified?

THEY WERE A BENEVOLENT PEOPLE. We see this in verses 29-30. The only force applied in this matter was the force of their convictions; being Christians compelled them to be charitable. They "determined" and "also they did it." They knew that talk was cheap, and that only actions counted. We see in them "A peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Tit. 2: 14); we see in them a people who were taking advantage of every opportunity which they had to do good (Gal. 6: 10). The principle taught in the parable of the good Samaritan was not wasted on these disciples. Without this benevolence, do you think that they would have been called "Christians?"

THEY WERE A LORD-CENTERED PEOPLE. The Lord Jesus was preached (v20), a great number believed

on the Lord and turned to the Lord (v21), they would cleave to the Lord (v23), and many were added to the Lord (v24). They had "clothed yourselves with Christ" (Gal. 3: 27-NAS). They simply would not think of trampling under foot the Son of God; they were clothed in Him. They knew that they were not their own, but that they had been bought with a price; and, that they were to glorify God in their bodies (1 Cor. 6: 19-20). How do you see these people in regards to Matt. 6: 33, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God?" Were they respecting this principle, or something different? We ask, once again, do you think that these disciples would have been called "Christians" had they not been Lord-centered?

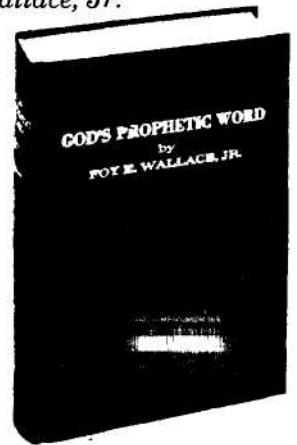
Does the above give you any idea as to why these people were called Christians? Would not the same be essential for us today? If not, why not? There is an eternal principle of God that we need to vividly remember—There is no respect of persons with God (Ac. 10: 34-35; Rom. 2: 11). Ac. 8: 22 tells us what Simon was told to do; but, it was recorded so that each of us might know what to do when we sin-repent and seek God's forgiveness. And, dear reader, it is a sin to ignore the characteristics which God expects us to develop.

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OLIVER WATTS, Box 895, Craig, CO 81626 — Kenneth and Madge Underwood drove 1300 hundred miles from their home in Owensboro, Kentucky to attend the funeral of Vera Hockett Watts in Craig, Colorado on March 15. Those three, with Vera's husband, Oliver, and with the Bill Fiske family and others, worked together in the 1940's to plant the gospel in that Colorado Town.

WALLACE H. LITTLE, 520 Mary Esther Cutoff, Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32548 — The Northside church had Don Patton of Dallas, Texas here in March for a series on Evolution and the Bible, strengthening our faith. We had many visitors, some from 60 miles away as well as visitors from the community, some attending more than once and some every evening. Several studies have resulted from this with more anticipated. Most of our local visitors had responded to our advertising. Brother Patton's subject had wide appeal.

TOM WHEELER, 2407 Stewart St., Johnson City, TN 37601—After two years with the Brookmead church in Johnson City, TN, we are moving April 1 to work with the River Bend church near Florence, AL. The River Bend church is working and growing. Mildred and I look forward to our work with them.

LECTURES IN KANSAS CITY

The Vivion Road church meetings at 2026 N. E. Vivion Rd., Kansas City, MO 64118, announces a lecture series for June 24-27, 1991. Speakers will be: Leslie Diestelkamp (Evangelism); Bob Owen (Biblical Interpretation/Biblical Authority); Larry Houchen (Edification/Benevolence). For information concerning video tapes, audio tapes and accommodations for out-of-town visitors, write to the church at P. O. Box 28478, Kansas City, MO 64118. Phone (816) 452-3684.

MIKE HUGHES, P. O. Box 2481, Corinth, MS 38834 — After three years with the Central church near Corinth, we will be moving June 11 to work with the church in Piano, IL. While in Corinth six were baptized into Christ. Our new address will be: 418 Lee St., Piano, IL 60545. Phone (708) 552-8735.

CEDAR RAPIDS/WATERLOO, IOWA AREA — We are trying to establish a sound congregation in the Cedar Rapids/Waterloo, Iowa area. We have five Christians with their families presently worshipping. If you live in the area, we would welcome you to meet with us. If you know of someone in our area, we would appreciate the chance to contact them. Any help or support in this effort would be appreci-

ated. We presently meet in our homes. If you wish to contact us, please call Larry Brown (319) 396-1703 or George Mantica (319) 234-1988. If anyone would be willing to go and work with these brethren, please contact: Jack Gay, Tampa, FL (813) 985-1612.

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. The Aliens and another family which drives from Emo, about 50 miles away, meet in the lodge every Lord's Day for worship. Nestor Falls is in a remote area of central Canada, with very few permanent residents, mostly native Indians. For their own spiritual edification, and in an effort to reach other Christians who may live within driving distance, and also to generate some interest in Bible study with residents of the area, the Aliens have set aside two weeks in August for that purpose. During the weeks of August 11-17 and 18-24, they are reserving their cabins for Christians, their families and friends. I will present a special series the first week and Ray Ferris will teach a series the second week. The mornings will be spent in Bible study at the lodge. The afternoons are free to work to invite others to study and to enjoy the handiwork of God walking in the woods or fishing in a glacier lake, while at the same time helping a small group of Christians in a remote area of central Canada. If you are interested, why not give the Aliens a call. You may write them at Allen's Crow Lake Lodge, Box 250, Nestor Falls, Ontario, Canada POX 1K0. Phone 1-807-484-2628.

RONNY MILLINER, P. O. Box 960, Colonial Heights, VA 23834 — Recently we witnessed a couple return to the Lord. Then we rejoiced at the conversion of a Catholic family with whom we had been studying. Then tears of joy were shed as a sister who had left the Lord and returned to the Baptist Church, was restored. We now have twenty members. We have outgrown our present meeting place and are currently searching for larger quarters in which to meet. I hate to mention the fact that I have lost \$1050 a month over the past few months which I desperately need to replace. An individual is temporarily helping with \$350 a month but I need to relieve him of this burden as soon as possible. For a list of references or further information, please contact me at the above address or call (804) 526-6434.

ROBERT W. TRASK, SR., P. O. Box 1505, Chiefland, FL 32626 — I have been preaching for about 12 years. During that time I have provided most of my support through my secular business. After much prayerful consideration, I am closing my business in order to devote full time to preaching duties and will begin this about July 1, 1991. The church at Manatee Springs is slowly growing, continues to be at peace, and is in complete agreement with my decision. If you can help with my support, either on a one-time or continuing basis, I would be grateful. A list of references will be supplied upon request. This is a big change for me and my family, so please keep us in your prayers.

FROM AROUND THE WORLD

PHILIPPINES — Felipe Catolos reports the beginning of a new congregation at Caggay, Tuguegarao, Cagayan which meets in his home every Sunday and Wednesday. Six were added last month.

SPAIN — Efrain Perez writes that two more have been baptized and two restored at Badalona (Barcelona area). Recently two of the local brethren preached and did well. Average attendance now is 48. In January a trip to the Canary Islands resulted in eleven baptisms and the establishment of a new congregation which met first on January 20, 1991 with 16 present.

ECUADOR, SOUTH AMERICA — Ruben C. Amador of Houston, Texas reports one baptized at Judiway in Houston and tells of a trip to Ecuador. Since his trip last November, seven were baptized there. The country is going through rough and dangerous times and his most recent trip had to be cut short.

PHILIPPINES — Through the teaching of Bert Enostacion and Cris Sarceda, on November 29, 1990, Celestino E. Bautista, Jr. renounced his association with the institutional brethren. Since that time he has been working with Roger Salviejo in personal work and public preaching. Ten have been baptized from their labors. Twenty others have turned away from liberalism. He, along with others, reports a continu-

ing unstable situation both politically and economically.

Reynaldo E. Corsino writes of a good meeting in Feb., 1991 in Centro, Lasam, Cagayan. Speakers included Andrew Gawe and Rody Gumpad. Eight were baptized.

Domie A. Jacob of Sagat, Cordon, Isabela wrote and included pictures of a number of baptisms. On Dec. 9, five were baptized and four families restored at Diffun, Quirino. Then on Dec. 28, four more were baptized at the same place. At Der-an a gospel meeting was held with Eusebio Balliao and Fernando Balbin as main speakers and eight were baptized. On January 13 four more were baptized at the same place. A lectureship is planned for April 24-26 at Urdaneta, Pangasinan with several speakers, including Carl McMurray from USA.

MEXICO — Enrique Cisneros of Naco, Arizona reports a meeting in March, 1991 in Naco, Sonora, Mexico in which two were baptized into Christ.

SOUTH AFRICA — While Paul Williams and wife were away from Eshowe visiting in Johannesburg, local brethren did the preaching and teaching and baptized two. The brethren have decided to purchase a new tent since the old one was badly damaged by wind. We understand also that Gene and Betty Tope have decided to return to South Africa for a few more years of work. They have already spent 20 years in that field and have been in this country for the past few years preaching in Virginia and Florida. We published a book, TRAILBLAZERS FOR CHRIST written by the Topes about their first 20 years of work in South Africa. It is a thrilling little book which sells for \$2.95 (plus postage).

Sakkie Pretorius also writes from Nelspruit in South Africa where they are meeting in his home while trying to locate a suitable place to rent. These appear to be scarce and expensive. They are often crowded for space. Two were baptized in December. One of those baptized was a young man who is a fourth generation of families which have served the Lord faithfully and taught their children/grandchildren the truth. He wrote "We can only thank God for those men who came here 40 years ago to plant such healthy seeds to produce a crop of Christians four generations deep."

The Vesta via church in Birmingham has supported him since 1983 but must attend now to pressing expansion needs in the local work. They have asked Sakkie to replace the \$2,000 a month support they were supplying and that will not be easy. Brethren, these good men must be allowed to continue their gospel work. Who can help?

ARGENTINA — Carlos Capelli reports two baptisms at the Jose C. Paz church in Buenos Aires. The woman baptized and her brother travel 60 km for worship each Sunday. They have started a new radio program on Saturday AM 7:30 to 8 on a powerful FM station (98.9).

CHINA—The most recent report from Jeff Kingry, Robert Small and Dale Smelser who are working out of Hong Kong, is nothing short of thrilling. Their most recent trip to Shenyang in Manchuria resulted in seven more obeying the gospel. Each new convert (as well as older ones) is at great risk from the repressive government. In Hong Kong, four more Filipinos have been baptized. The work of Bert Enostacion from the Philippines has been outstanding. He was only able to remain for one month. The brethren have been encouraged by the presence of Dan and Jeanie Clendenning, Christians who are business people and who have been a great blessing in several nations where their work has taken them. April 1, Dale and Marlene Smelser left to begin their work in Prague from which point they hope to follow up some leads for teaching in the Soviet Union. If you do not receive the Kingry China Report, you might want to request it from: Ken Guthery, 7402 N. 56 St. #895, Tampa, FL 33617. I think it stirs me as much as anything I have read in recent times.

EDITORIAL LEFT-OVERS

CAMP WAMAVA IS A "MISSION EFFORT"

The March 15, 1991 issue of STAND, bulletin of the church in Annandale, Virginia, contains an article entitled "The Camp WAMAVA Missionary Society" written by Floyd Chappellear from which the following information is gathered. The church there received a letter from the camp including these excerpts:

"Camp WAMAVA needs your help! Now, more than ever before, this mission effort (emphasis, fdc) is depending on the financial

support of ALL of the local congregations. "

"First every member of the board of directors believes camp WAMAVA to be an important missionary effort of the churches of Christ. "

"Brothers and sisters, camp WAMAVA belongs to the churches of Christ in the Washington area... The camp's continued existence depends on the consistent support of the area churches. "

"Please make Camp WAMAVA a part of your missions budget beginning with 1991. "

The church is the "pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3: 15) but it is not the pillar or support of youth camps functioning as missionary societies. The only unit through which "church" work may be done is the local church. It operates under elders, served by deacons, not under a board of directors. Christians have a right to run a camp for young people, but they have no right to claim it as a work of local churches nor to solicit churches for support.

CHANGING TIMES

A recent article in the Louisville Courier-Journal reported on a recommendation from a Presbyterian task force that gays be ordained and that the Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.) ease restrictions on sex outside marriage." The report said "What matters ethically is not the sameness (or the difference) of the gender of persons in relation, but rather the quality of their relationship." Noting that the majority of Presbyterians would not accept this yet, the task force said they had to speak out for "sexual justice. "

I suggest that you read Lev. 18: 22; Lev. 20: 13; Rom. 1: 26-27 and 1 Cor. 6: 9-10. Homosexuality is not a matter of personal liberty, it is a matter of SIN.

CANADIAN REACTION TO ITEM

In our March, 1991 EDITORIAL LEFT-OVERS column I wrote about Keith Thompson's review of a book by Rubel Shelly in which the reviewer recommended Shelly's book for both private and class study,

and then commented that this would contribute to "a further weakening of conviction among them." Brian V. Sullivan of Wellandport, Ontario and John F. Maddocks, Jr. of Jordan, Ontario wrote and said my item might be "a little misleading." They said "Faithful brethren do not take their cue from the Gospel Herald, or from Keith Thompson's book reviews. "

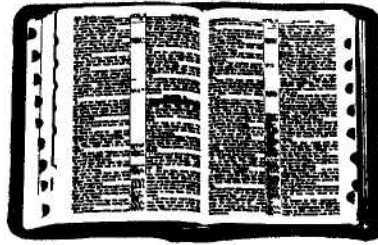
Indeed, there are a number of brethren throughout Canada who are not in agreement with the doctrinal positions of those who publish the Gospel Herald. The management and staff of that journal are generally associated with the institutionalism which has come among brethren both in the USA and in Canada over the past 40 years. When I wrote the item in question, it never occurred to me that anyone would associate brethren who are not a part of this institutional movement with those who are. Brethren Sullivan and Maddocks stated "there are faithful brethren still standing firm and upholding the truth of Christ in this land." We thank God for that, commend these worthy brethren and others like them and pray for success in their work for the Lord. I look forward to a gospel meeting May 19-26 with the good congregation at Jordan, Ontario. This will make 26 times over the last 30 years that I have preached the gospel in meetings in Ontario. There are good and deserving brethren there (and all across Canada) who could use financial help in their work. While all of us are excited about the opening opportunities in eastern Europe, Asia and other fields, there is much to be done in the great nation across our northern border, a nation which exceeds in land size the USA. Faithful men there have been spread too thin and over the years many of them have worked with inadequate income.

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	218
RESTORATIONS	83
(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)	

SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

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



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

"DEVOTED TO THE SEARCH FOR DIVINE TRUTH"

VOLUME XXXII

JUNE, 1991

NUMBER 6

THINK ON
THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 1631
Lutz, FL 33549



THE KINGDOM AND THE CHURCH

Those in the kingdom are the same individuals who are in the church. The authority of Christ is complete (Matt. 28: 18). He is the head overall things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all (Eph. 1: 22, 23). Moses said Christ would be a prophet—a law giver—like he was, and all who did not hear him would be destroyed from among the people (Acts 3: 22, 23). All the prophets from Samuel and those who spoke afterward foretold of this (vs. 24).

When God called Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees, he promised that all nations would be blessed in him; and promised him a land for his seed (Gen. 12: 3, 7; 13: 15; 22: 18). "And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child" (Acts 7: 5). His faith in God that He would do what He had promised caused Abraham to act as if he had children (cf. Rom. 4: 16-22).

The promise made to Abraham was reiterated to Isaac, the promised son of Abraham and Sarah (Gen. 26: 4). Again, it was repeated to Jacob, the chosen son of Isaac (Gen. 28: 3, 4; 13, 14). The same promise was made to Judah by Jacob (Gen. 49: 8-12; Heb. 7: 14). Furthermore, the promised seed was made to the house of David, the tribe of Judah, the son of Jacob,

Isaac and Abraham. Matthew tells us that there were fourteen generations from Abraham to David (Matt. 1: 17), and this is the line of the promised seed.

The Holy Spirit by prophecy and fulfillment tells us who the promised seed is in whom all nations of the earth would be blessed. Nathan the prophet told David, "... And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever" (2 Sam. 7: 12, 13). This statement contains the dual picture of God's people in the "promised seed" to Abraham through David, as the church and the kingdom. He would "build an house for my name." The church is called the house of God (1 Tim 3: 15). He would establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. He would be seated on the throne to reign until the last enemy was destroyed (1 Cor. 15: 24-26). This refers to the same people and the fulfillment is at the same time and the same place.

Jesus Christ is that PROMISED SEED of prophecy to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah and to the house of David. The New Testament tells us so (Rom. 1: 3; Gal. 4: 16). The fact that he was the son of David was not disputed while Christ lived. (Matt. 22: 41-46).

Keep in mind that we are talking about a promise made to Abraham, and repeated to Isaac, Jacob, and to Judah and the house of David, that the promised seed in this line would bless all nations of the earth, and this seed would sit upon the throne of his father David and rule in his kingdom forever. This one seed is Christ (Gal. 4: 16). God has but one nation of people, and they are in this seed who is Christ. "If ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3: 29). There is no way one can get two institutions out of this promise and its fulfillment; one as a kingdom and the other as the church. The kingdom and church refer to this one body of people in Christ who are referred to as "Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

The Called Out Kings And Priests of God

Christ died to redeem us from all iniquity and to purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good

works (Titus 2: 14). This "peculiar" people are all those who are purified unto him as his own possession. They are his people—all of his people. They are a "chosen generation"—an elect race. They are built up a spiritual house on the elect foundation: Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 2: 4-9). They are called a "royal priesthood." Christ is High Priest and every saint a priest, composing a royal or kingly priesthood. They are called a "holy nation," who were not a people, but now are the people of God (1 Pet. 2: 9).

The new song of praise to the Lamb which is recorded in Revelation 5: 9, 10, have these words: "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." God's people are described as both a "called out" people and "kings and priests" who shall reign on earth. We have the description of both the church and kingdom.

The royal priesthood would be meaningless without the High Priest. Christ became our high priest to offer his own blood for our sins (Heb. 8: 4). He is a priest after the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 6: 20; 7: 17; 3: 1). Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of the most high God at the same time (Heb. 7). He had none who preceded him and none who would follow him in his priesthood. Christ was a priest after this order. He was of the tribe of Judah, of which tribe Moses said nothing concerning priesthood (Heb. 7: 15). His priesthood will be for ever after the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 7: 17). We have such an high priest now in the heavens, and he is Jesus Christ (Heb. 4: 14).

Christ became high priest after he ascended into heaven, because he could not be a priest on earth (Heb. 8: 4). But when he ascended into heaven to the right hand of God, he received dominion, and glory, and a kingdom (Psalm 110: 1-4; Dan. 7: 13, 14). When Christ sat down on the right hand of God and began to rule as king, and he would be a priest on his throne as he reigned. "Even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both" (Zech. 6: 13).

Searching The Scriptures

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Irven Lee (1914-1991)

Irven Lee, a well known and greatly loved servant of the Lord, passed away on May 4, 1991 at the age of 76. Funeral services were conducted by Wayne Moore and Bob Waldron (brother Lee's sons-in-law) on May 6 at the Limestone Chapel in Athens, AL.

We express our sympathy to sister Lee and his two daughters, Judy Moore and Sandra Waldron.

Bob Waldron will have more to say about brother Lee in a future issue of STS.

Those wishing to express sympathy to sister Lee may write to her at 405 Cruther Circle, Athens, AL 35611.

" QUOTE
"He who praises
everybody
praises nobody."
—Samual Johnson
UNQUOTE "

Editorial

Donnie V. Rader

P.O. Box 9
Lexington, Alabama 35648



MEMBERSHIP IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

When one obeys the gospel, the Lord adds him to the church (Acts 2: 47). He is a member of the church in the universal sense. However, that within itself does not necessarily identify one with a local church. What does the Bible say about membership in the local church? What does it mean to be a member? Does the fact that one attends mean that he is a member? What about those whose names are in the directory, but seldom darken the door? Should they be considered as members?

Let's see what the Bible says in answer to these questions and try to clarify some misconceptions about local church membership.

Local Church Membership Is Necessary

1. *Without members there would be no local church.* Local churches consist of members. The saints at Philippi were the church (Phil. 1: 1). The Christians at Corinth were the church at Corinth (1 Cor. 1: 2). The same was true at Antioch (Acts 13: 1). Thus, local church membership is essential to a local church. To argue that local church membership is not essential is to do away with the local church.

2. *Without local church membership elders cannot have the oversight that the Bible describes.* Elders are to shepherd the flock of God which is among them (1 Pet. 5: 1-2). Elders have rule and authority among those in the local church (Acts 20: 28; Heb. 13: 17). Without local church membership, elders would not have this oversight. The sphere of their authority obviously is not just to Christians living in a general area. If so, could elders in areas like Athens, AL, Louisville, KY or Tampa, FL (where there are a number of churches) have authority and oversight over any and all the Christians living in their area? Of course not. In light of 1 Pet. 5: 1-2, elders only have the oversight of those who are members of the local church where they are members. Thus, to argue that local church membership is non-essential is to eliminate the authority and oversight of the elders.

3. *Without local church membership disciplinary action cannot be carried out.* The church at Corinth was instructed to "put away from yourselves that wicked person" (1 Cor. 5: 13). This, obviously, is not barring him from attendance, for one could be disciplined and still attend the worship services. This "putting away" refers to (or at least includes) removing him as a member of the

local church.

The church at Thessalonica was told to "withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly..." (2 Thess. 3: 6). This cannot be done without local church membership. How can we put away "from among us" a wicked brother who is not a member?

We must be careful not to draw the wrong conclusion. This does not mean that there is never a time when he/she may not be identified with a local church for a short period. For example, one may move into an area where there are a number of churches and spend four to six weeks visiting around until they decide where they want to be members. However, if I conclude from this that I don't ever have to be a member of a local church, then I can also conclude that no one else does either. Thus, away with the local church, its elders and discipline.

Identifying Or "Placing Membership"

Though the phrase "placing membership" is not found in the text, the concept of identifying with a local congregation is justified by the text. There are examples of Christians seeking to identify with local congregations where they went.

1. *Paul sought to join himself to the disciples at Jerusalem (Acts 9: 26-28).* At first, they were afraid and would not receive him for they did not believe he was a disciple. Yet, after Barnabas declared that he was a child of God and had boldly preach the gospel, they received him.

2. *Paul and Barnabas were identified with the church at Antioch (Acts 13: 1).* Luke tells us that they assembled with the church there for a whole year (Acts 11: 25-26). But, they were more than mere visitors in the assembly, for the same writer says that Barnabas and Saul were among those teachers "in the church" at Antioch (Acts 13: 1). Thus, they must have identified with the local church.

3. *Apollos sought to be received by the brethren in Achaia (Acts 18: 27).* When Apollos left Ephesus, the brethren there thought it necessary to write and encourage the brethren in Achaia to receive him. The same verse indicates that the brethren at Corinth did receive him. Again, we have a Christian being identified with a local church.

Accepting And Rejecting Members A local church has a right to *accept* or *reject* people as members of that church. Obviously, this is not some type of arbitrary decision as Diotrephes tried (3 Jno.).

1 Cor. 5: 1-13 instructs the church at Corinth to reject the fornicator who was in their midst. They were to do this because he was guilty of *wickedness* that would corrupt the church (vs. 6, 13).

2 Thess. 3: 6-14 directs the church at Thessalonica to reject any who walked "disorderly." That included the lazy man and the busybody.

From these passages we conclude that any rejection is based on whether that person lives according to the word or walks disorderly.

Churches have a *right* and *duty* to know who they are accepting. The church at Jerusalem would not accept Paul until they knew more about him (Acts 9: 26-28). The Ephesians saw a need to encourage the brethren in

Achaia to receive Apollos (Acts 18: 27). That tells me that the church at Corinth would not have received him until they knew who he was and the things for which he stood. Brethren are wise to ask a few questions of those who come desiring to place membership.

It is just as bad to accept anyone without question as it is to fail to discipline those who should be rejected.

What Does It Mean To Be A Member?

1. *It is not an honorary club.* There is nothing to be gained by having our names on the church roll or in a directory in and of itself. Each member is a functioning unit (1 Cor. 12).

2. *It means work, duty and responsibility.* It's some- what like being a member of the armed forces. We have witnessed in recent months that it involves more than a rank and paycheck. It means work when the call is given.

Being a member means that I have a responsibility to *attend* the assemblies of the church where I am a member (Heb. 10: 25). It means *contributing* into the local treasury (1 Cor. 16: 1-2), *teaching* as one's ability allows (Acts 13: 1; Heb. 5: 12), *restoring* the erring (Gal. 6: 1), *working together harmoniously* (Rom. 14: 19), *supporting disciplinary action* (1 Cor. 5) and *worshipping together* (Acts 20: 7; 1 Cor. 11).

So, when you announce that you want to be a member of a certain congregation, you are saying that you want to be active and be a part of the work. You are willing to participate and involve yourself in the work that the church is doing.

I am amused at people who want to be considered as members and have their names in the directory, yet, they are not willing to attend all of the services, not to mention the other work.

Misconceptions About Being A Member In A Local Church

1. *"Being a member of a local church of Christ puts me with those who are going to heaven."* The idea is that we will be judged as a congregation. Since this church is going to heaven, then I am too, because I am a member. This ignores the fact that we will be judged individually (Rom. 14: 12).

2. *"I'm still a member where my letter" is. I've been worshipping here for five years, but I'm still a member where we used to live since I never 'moved my letter'."* This doesn't fit the examples in the New Testament. In Paul's journeys, he identified with churches where he traveled.

The Bible doesn't talk about one being a member where he doesn't attend, contribute and work.

3. *"There is no need to be members of this congregation. We just want to attend."* The fact that Paul identified with the church at Jerusalem (Acts 9: 26) indicates a need. The fact that we are to submit to elders (Heb. 13: 17) also suggest the need to be members. Any passage that speaks of the local church and its work speaks of the need to be a member.

4. *"Anyone who is considered a member is approved of God and the brethren."* This is not necessarily so. Members may behave in unbecoming and ungodly ways that other brethren may never see. Just because a person is a member where I am doesn't mean that I

approve of all they do. They may be guilty of things that I never know. Furthermore, there may be suspicion of wrongdoing. But, without evidence, action cannot be taken.

On the other hand, when the sin is obvious and the evidence is not lacking, action is demanded by the authority of Christ (1 Cor. 5).

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MUSINGS

J. Wiley Adams

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Warner Robins, Georgia 31093



WELL, I THOUGHT I KNEW!

A friend of mine was telling about an old gentleman who asked him if he knew where the non-white races of people came from. The friend said he knew, to which the old fellow replied, "No you don't neither." My friend, somewhat at a loss as to what to say but wishing to be courteous, said, "Well, I'm sorry, sir. **There for a minute I thought I knew.** By the way, sir, just where did they come from?" This question was just what he was waiting for and he said with great finality, "outer space."

Well, through the years there are many things which I thought I knew — until lately. For instance, I thought I knew the difference between "faith" and "the faith" but now I am told they are the same thing. **But, I thought I knew there for a minute.**

I thought I knew that Romans 14 was a discourse about how to treat a weak brother with respect to matters of indifference but now I am told that in reality this is a kind of "umbrella" under which to pile all the things we disagree on so we can continue in fellowship. By George, I was wrong again. **But there for a minute I thought I had it.**

All my life I thought there were three dispensations of Bible history. But, oops, I missed it again. Really you see there is the moral law, the Mosaic law and the law of Christ. A fellow has to really be careful with his Bible or he will miss it for sure.

It used to be that the Seventh Day Adventists talked about the ceremonial and the moral law of God. Whatever happened to the law of the patriarchs with its altars and sacrifices? What is "moral" about that? But I guess I just missed it all the way around. **But for a while there I thought I understood it!**

I always thought that a testament and a covenant were the same and in contrasting them referred to them as the old and the new. **But there you go. I am wrong again.**

I have always believed that I could take my Bible, read it, understand it, go by its teachings, die, and go on to Heaven. But, now I am beginning to realize what a dummy I really am. You see, we used to chide various religious groups for having creeds, manuals, prayer books, and catechisms to supplement the Bible. Now I find that some brethren seem to be saying you have to have the "historic" approach in order to come to a full knowledge of the Truth. Others are seeming to say we must have certain word study books or we cannot determine the difference in the law of Moses and law in

general. **Foiled again!**

Well, I am wondering just what is the matter with me by this time. I guess it is probably this King James Version I use and from which I memorized all my Scriptures from an early age. I have never taught nor do I believe it is the only good version of the Bible. I do believe it is a good version. Some have facetiously implied that some seem to believe that the apostle Paul carried the KJV with him on his journeys all the time. I could just as well say and with as much logic that they seem to be saying that he carried around the American Standard Version. I have been wrong so many times, I guess I could be wrong again. I cannot help but take note of the obvious fact that the more new versions we get the more uncertain many brethren are as to what they believe. Some versions, instead of helping the case, only add to existing problems. Kind of like Lard's Commentary on Romans. The book of Romans is much easier to understand.

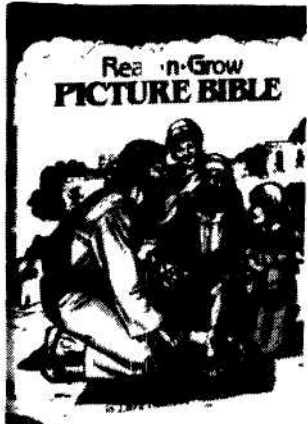
But I tell you what. So far, I have never heard anyone say you cannot use the KJV to learn what to do to be saved, live a godly life, and go to Heaven finally.

But just in case I am wrong about that also, I really need to check with the CSH (Christian San Hedrin) to see if these things are so. If you do not think we have one among us you have not been very alert lately. Arrogant academics are not a substitute for Divine Truth. Nor do I believe that I must run to the "Priest" to discover what I must believe.

All of these things considered it is enough to make one wonder if a plain Jane such as myself has sense enough to go Heaven. I still may have one of two alternatives left, however. (1) I might make it in through the fool hole, or, (2) just be honest and sincere, as some are implying.

We need to break up this spiritual log-jam we seem to be in, brethren. The Truth is understandable. It is not as hard as some are making it. Let us not be as the philosophers on Mars Hill and become intrigued with some "new thing" as it seems some are prone to do. If it is new it is not true.

"Wherefore, be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5: 17).



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MUSINGS

J. Wiley Adams

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VACATION OR VACILLATION?

Only about ten other listings separate these two words in my dictionary. Some brethren need to take a closer look at their practice, and decide what they are doing.

When we take a vacation, we are free from a duty or service. When we vacillate, we waver or fluctuate. I'm convinced that when some take a vacation from secular employment, they attempt to free themselves from their commitments to the Lord and his body, the church. Thus, they waver (vacillate), in their relationship to Christ.

Most who read this column see the difference between individual and collective duties; between the secular and the religious. There are those among us who do not make this distinction, just as there are those who scoff at the idea of any collective or public work and worship in the church. I doubt if I can help those in these latter categories.

In the past, we have stressed the need for assembling with the church, pointing out the advantages of assembling and the disadvantages of failing to do so. We have fortified our position with such passages as Mt. 18: 20 and Heb. 10: 25.

Along this same line, we concede that if a person consents to a thing being right, and then violates that conviction, that he sins (Eccl. 5: 4, 5; Acts 5: 4; Rom. 14: 14-23; 1 Jno. 3: 20).

This being true, how can brethren be faithful to their convictions (and urge them upon others), for 50 weeks out of the year, and then vacillate while on vacation the other two weeks of the year? They plan a vacation from secular pursuits, with no thoughts or plans to discharge their acknowledged responsibilities to the Lord and his body, the church.

It is ironic, and almost humorous, to hear brethren condemn others when the one condemning "doest the same things" (Rom. 2: 1; 14: 22). It is all right to forsake the Lord when on vacation, but not at any other time. Some think their vacillation is justified while on a tour, but not while hunting, fishing, or camping. Others seem to think a thing is wrong in the continental United States, but not in a foreign country or in island possessions. Some preachers will engage in this double standard themselves, then return home and condemn their

brethren in the local congregation for not being faithful to the assemblies of the church.

Heb. 10: 25 means what it says except when on the vacation of **your** choice.

Then, there are others who attempt to resolve this dilemma by temporarily taking the worship of the church with them, or part of it. (Make sure you "get" the Lord's supper even if you miss everything else.) No wonder some brethren say, "Now we come to the most important part of the worship," when they "wait on the table. "

Again, the inconsistency of some is evident. It is proper to take the Lord's supper with you on a tour, but not while hunting or fishing. Or, it is permissible while camping, but not while golfing or just staying home with the TV and the Sunday paper.

Brethren, we need to (1) get our practice in harmony with the scriptures and (2), get consistent in what we teach. We establish the local congregation as the only expression of organization which God has given the church on earth, then proceed to circumvent the very thing which we teach.

Yes, times of assembly, providing for our own, sickness, natural disasters, and such things become a matter of judgment and priority in all of our lives and activities. But, if we can decide such matters for 48 or 50 weeks out of the year, why not the rest of the time? Or, when we retire from secular employment, are we accountable to the Lord at all?

Vacation or vacillation, which is it? Or, is it both?

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A GREASED POLE

Ever tried to climb a greased pole? Even if you haven't, you know that it's almost impossible, even for an excellent climber in tip-top shape. For the rest of us it's just downright impossible.

Well some have put salvation at the top of a greased pole and are constantly exhorting folks to climb right up and enjoy the benefits.

This extreme has probably been occupied as a reaction to the idea of escalator salvation. Once one steps onto the escalator, no effort is necessary whatever. One might expedite matters by taking a few steps, but one does not need to do so to reach the destination. Such is the view of those who hold to the doctrine of unconditional security. The doctrine is certainly contrary to many simple and clear passages in God's word. Heb. 4: 11 exhorts us to "be diligent to enter that rest." Rev. 2: 10 demands that we "be faithful unto death." Escalator religion is contrary to sound doctrine.

Equally erroneous, however, is the concept of conditional insecurity. Perhaps such a doctrine has not been actively taught. But it has been accepted by way of default. I would think that the great assurance that is constantly given the faithful, striving, child of God should be administered in equal doses, at least, in our teaching as the warnings against falling or drifting away from so great a salvation.

Even before the plan of salvation was consummated at the cross, the people of God expressed great assurance: "The fear of man brings a snare, But whoever trusts in the Lord shall be safe" (Prov. 29: 25); "The Lord shall preserve you from all evil; He shall preserve your soul. The Lord shall preserve your going out and your coming in from this time forth, and even forever" (Ps. 121: 7, 8); "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever" (Ps. 23: 6).

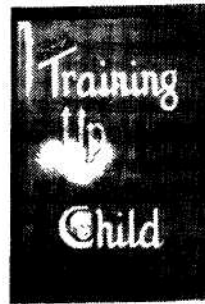
Do we who are privileged to live under a better covenant, established upon better promises, possess less confidence than the people of a darker age? May it never be!

Paul lived in the security of God's love. Because life to him was Christ, he could declare confidently that to die was gain and to depart was to be with the Lord (Phil. 1: 21-23; 2 Cor. 5: 6-8). He could say this in spite of the fact that he had not reached perfection in this life (Phil. 3: 12-16).

He exulted in the knowledge that a crown of life awaited him and all who love His appearing (2 Tim. 4: 8). Jude commends us all to the God who is able to keep us from falling (verse 24). Peter declares that "if" (that's conditional, folks), "you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1: 10, 11).

Let us examine ourselves. Are we preaching a greased pole salvation? Are we guilty of binding "heavy burdens, hard to bear" when we ourselves will not move them with one of (our) fingers" (Mt. 29: 3)? Let us balance warning with consolation that the committed and submissive Christian might be motivated to sing with rejoicing and praise: "Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine. Oh what a foretaste of glory divine. Heir of salvation, purchase of God; Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood."

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THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOB "WHERE IS GOD?"

In the interest of continuity we remind that Job was an Old Testament patriarch living hundreds of years before Christ. Even so, within the Old Testament there are types and shadows which look to the New Testament for the anti-type and substance. These references within the framework of God's eternal purpose to redeem lost man are a pointing to the Christ and the revelation of the plan of human redemption. At times these references are glaring, at other times they are subtle, but in either case the ultimate aim is Christ. We are examining some of Job's statements, his questions, which clearly point to Christ and the gospel.

"O that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat" (Job 23: 3)! This is a part of Job's response to the third and final cycle of explanations offered by Job's friends, the last speech of Eliphaz. Eliphaz steadfastly maintains suffering results from sin describing in no uncertain terms his perception of Job's sin as great wickedness and infinite iniquities (22: 5). While he attributes this to Job, no evidence is offered. Thus leading to the conclusion his indictment is speculative and false. He ends his speech with "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee" (22: 21).

In reply, Job ignores the charges and replies to the advice give by his friends. In effect he asks "How?" "Oh that I knew where I might find him!" This is the language of a man with conviction about God. Of one convinced if he could find him he would give heed to him. Our man flounders in his search declaring he has looked forward and backward, to the left and to the right, and yet does not perceive Him. Obviously his directional view fails of the upward dimension, Job has not looked up. Even if he had there is every indication that he would have still said he could not reach him.

There is an abiding frustration among men that seek God on earth level. Their search, like Job, may be the result of pressure and tribulation. It may be the search of intellect for the riddle of the universe. Within these, God is not necessarily denied, there may even be an acceptance of his being, but he cannot be found. Why? Men do not make contact with God by earth-bound actions. Some honestly tell us they find God in

nature, that they have no need of worship activities. This is not true. Indeed, God is evidenced in nature, all creation glorifies the creator. But, God is not found in nature so as to satisfy a nagging necessity without our being.

"O that I knew where I might find Him!" reveals the need of special revelation to satisfy man's inner longing. Zophar has previously said "Canst thou by searching find out God?" (cf. 11: 7). Now Eliphaz, "Acquaint thyself with God" and Job ratifies the difficulty expressed by Zophar. Where is the answer for Job? More importantly, where is the answer for you and me?

The intervening centuries have run their course, the climax of revelation in the New Testament brings us to a scene in Jerusalem where in an upper room with his disciples, Jesus is heard to respond to Philip. "Lord, shew us the Father and it sufficeth us" (Jn. 14: 8). Is this not essentially what Job said? The reply, "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (v. 9). In this response Jesus asks Philip, by implication, to look back over the period with Him, remember all the things seen and heard, the miracles, the examples of compassion, grace and mercy. Thus, Philip had seen the Lord, proof of every claim is in evidence. Jesus had spoke from the Father, he had worked the works of the Father, this was conclusive proof.

Based on this Jesus makes an appeal to Philip and the rest of the disciples, an appeal to you and me. He says, "believe me" because of myself, who I am. Not only this, "believe me for the very works' sake." Indeed, an abiding challenge. The New Testament Gospels present the person of our Lord. We may find him in Bethesda's porches among the derelicts (Jn. 5) or, in the midst of the rulers with a sinful woman before a watching crowd (Jn. 8). Wherever, there is a projecting line into infinitude and upon following it up we are seeing God. When we with fear and trembling see Jesus, eyes as flaming fire indicting the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, or, wet with tears at the graveside of Lazarus, or, viewing the doomed city of Jerusalem, we are seeing God. "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" (Jn. 1: 14).

Thus, the cry of all humanity if there is the slightest perception of God and relation to him is reflected in Job's "O that I knew where I might find Him!" in Philip's, "Shew us the Father and it sufficeth us." The answer is full and final, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Furthermore, "All things are delivered unto me of my Father" and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither, knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him" (Mt. 11: 27).

Revelation did come to Job subsequently, but only partially, never fully. To Philip revelation came in its fullness in and by the person of the Lord. And not only so, but to you and me, fully and completely in Jesus Christ, His person and works are revealed in the Gospel. God be thanked. Every sincere seeker can indeed find.

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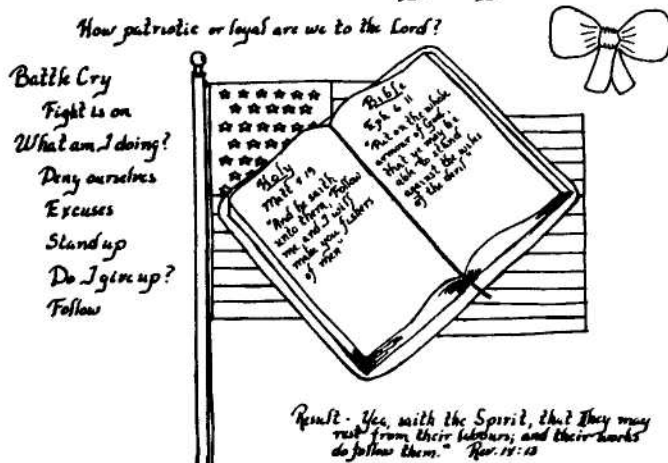
PATRIOTISM — LOYALTY

Robert L. Rice

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Moundsville, West Virginia 26041

Patriotism - Loyalty

How patriotic or loyal are we to the Lord?



In the past months we have witnessed a nation of people pull together. Why is that? I realize I'm too young to remember the Korean War and World War II, but I have heard much about the things that went on. I grew up during the Viet Nam War and there was one thing I noticed that was missing during the Viet Nam War that the Korean War, World War II and the Persian Gulf War had. That one thing was Patriotism or Loyalty.

Definition

Webster defines patriotism as: "love and loyal or zealous support of one's own country, especially in all matters involving other countries-nationalism." Loyalty is: "quality, state, or instance of being loyal, faithfulness or faithful adherence to a person, government, cause, duty." Keep these definitions in mind as you read the article.

The war we have so closely followed in the days past brought about the feelings and the actions of patriotism. Men and women were willing to go to war to stop a mad man from destroying other people. People back home who couldn't go felt the need to do something to support those in Saudi Arabia. Each day we heard of support groups, rallies, and prayer vigils forming everywhere. People everywhere began to fly the American flag, tie the yellow ribbon on many different objects or wear something with red, white and blue on it. This helped to make people feel that they were a part of the war. There was a cause to fight for and leaders to follow and support.

When you begin to make an analogy of the war of Saudi Arabia and the spiritual warfare in which a Christian should be engaged, a question comes to mind.

How patriotic or loyal are we to the Lord and his battle?

Are we following our leader like we should? When one loses faith in his leader he will be defeated in battle. We saw that happen on many occasions during the war. The enemy was surrendering because they no longer trusted their leader.

As in any war, you will also have casualties. As we see the spiritual battle rage on around us we see the same conditions existing among the soldiers of the cross. Their faith in Christ is weak and they give in to Satan and his temptations and go back into the world (2 Pet. 2: 20-22). Or, on the other hand they have been tried and wounded but become stronger and want to fight the battle even more. What type of soldier are you? **Call of the Lord**

From the beginning of time God has called on men to follow him and do his will. In the days of Noah, God called on him to make an ark of gopher wood (Gen. 6: 13-14). Noah did all that God commanded (v. 22). It was said of Noah, that he "walked with God" (Gen. 6: 9).

In Genesis chapter 12 we read of Abram being called of God to go unto a land that he would be shown. Abram didn't hesitate, He departed as the Lord commanded (v. 4). Abraham was known as the Friend of God (James 2: 23). Why? He followed God and was loyal to him.

Our Lord and Saviour has called men to follow him. Jesus went to Galilee and there found Peter, Andrew, James and John and said to them "Come and follow me, and I will make you fishers of men (Matt. 4: 19-21). Are you following Jesus? Are you a Christian? If not, you need to realize that no one can go to heaven unless they do the will of the Father (Matt. 7: 21-25). If you are a Christian you need to realize the battle cry has been sounded and we need to be fighting the spiritual battle for the Lord. We cannot sit back and let some one else fight our battles for us.

Battle Cry

As the song states "Sound the battle cry, see the foe is nigh, raise the standard high for the Lord, Gird your armor on stand firm everyone, rest your cause upon his Holy Word." Satan is fighting against the cause of Christ. However, we know the cause of Christ will prevail when the soldiers of the cross put on the whole armor of God and fight against the wiles of the devil (Eph. 6: 10-13).

The soldiers of Desert Shield were brave volunteers who arose to the occasion when the war began. That is the cry for the soldiers of Christ, to arise. We need brave volunteers.

What Am I Doing

As the war broke out, we saw many people flocking to the recruiting centers. They wanted to go to battle to help their country, to stand beside their friends and help them. They were willing to sacrifice to go over and help.

Deny Ourselves

Jesus asked us to deny ourselves (Mark 8: 34; Matt. 16: 24-27). Too many do not want to deny themselves the pleasures of this world for the cause of Christ. When things we want to do come before service to the Lord that is not denying ourselves. Yet, when the day of judgment comes we are going to want the Lord to give us a home in heaven with him. Jesus said in John 8: 31, "If you

continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." How do we except to be considered a disciple when we won't follow him? Do we say we will follow but make all kinds of excuses for not doing it right now (Luke 9: 59-61; 14: 18-20)?

Stand up for Jesus

Do I stand up for Jesus? Peter said he would lay down his life for him (John 13: 36-38). However when the time came to stand up for Jesus he denied him. Do I, when under fire give up? Do I change my colors (allegiance) so that no one will recognize I am a soldier of the Lord? Consider what happened when the soldiers of Saddam changed colors, the army was defeated. When the soldier of Christ changes loyalty and won't stand with the Lord, the church begins to crumble.

Follow

How does a soldier accomplish what he sets out to do? He follows orders. Paul told the young man Timothy, "But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and have professed a good profession before many witnesses (1 Tim. 6: 11-12). Let us follow Christ (1 Pet. 2: 21). Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."

Am I listening to Christ? Am I keeping his commandments (John 14: 15; Mark 10: 21)?

Result

The war ended quickly. The soldiers listened, obeyed and conquered.

Our life will end quickly. We need to be ready when the time comes for us to step out of this life. We need to be fighting the battle. When we fight the battle as we should we will have a home in heaven (2 Tim. 4: 6-8; 1 Cor. 15: 58).

If you are not a soldier of Christ we plead with you to become one. If you are a soldier that has quit fighting, we plead with you to begin again and show your loyalty to the Lord.

LESSONS TO LEARN FROM DIVORCE

T. Doy Moyer

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Louisville, Kentucky 40216

Some of the characteristics of love are that it "believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" (1 Cor. 13: 7). There are truly some situations that make it difficult to look for the good, especially in crises. It was difficult for Job to see the good in what he was going through. Yet, after it was all over, he was a better man for it. Similarly, it is hard to see how any good can come from a divorce. While these are all lessons that can be learned otherwise, there are some things we can learn from a divorce. It has been rightly suggested that we need to learn from the mistakes of others. Life is just too short to make them all yourself. While we look at some important lessons for the marriage relationship, we'll also consider some ways in which a child who has gone through a divorce can help himself deal with it.

1. We must learn to forgive. Marriage is a lasting relationship only if forgiveness is practiced. Married couples especially need to be kind and tenderhearted toward one another, forgiving each other as God has forgiven us (Eph. 4: 32). No matter how badly we may feel we have been sinned against, we must make every effort we can to forgive and put it behind. If this cannot be done, the marriage is doomed for failure.

2. We must be committed. Upon entering a marriage, the couple needs to have the attitude that no matter what problem may arise, they will deal with it. Divorce is simply not an option. Let God's word determine the correct course of action. One of the most important things that parents can do for their children is to simply love each other (Eph. 5: 25; Titus 2: 4). Be committed to the marriage, and resolve that no matter what happens, you will work it out.

3. Communicate with each other often. Marriages crumble because of a lack of communication. Don't be afraid to talk and tell your spouse the things that trouble you. Don't hold things in for a long time, only to one day explode and make matters worse than they should have been.

4. Understand the importance of treating your spouse as you would have him/her treat you (Matt. 7: 12). Be kind, courteous, and faithful. Anticipate the needs of the other and be sensitive to their feelings. When discussing problems, be kind and gentle. Don't be selfish and rude, pushing to get your own way no matter what the other thinks. A marriage that is not built upon this principle will fail because of selfishness.

5. Realize how much your children are affected by your actions. You are an example, and your children will imitate you. Your actions have the greatest impact on

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their lives. Never underestimate the value of your example to your children.

6. Realize that no one is immune to the evils of divorce (cf. 1 Cor. 10: 12). Don't think, "It can't happen to me." This may cause one to have a lazy approach to their marriage. Never stop working hard at the marriage. While we can certainly have confidence and trust in our marriage, we must avoid an arrogant and lazy attitude. Continue to "court" your spouse and you will have a greater relationship.

7. Learn the proper attitude toward divorce. The Lord says He hates it (Mai. 2: 16). Do you? Are you teaching your children to hate it? Learn the truth about God's law for the marriage relationship and maintain a deep conviction about it. Understand the permanent nature of marriage. Realize the terrible consequences for tampering with God's law (Matt. 19: 1-12). Understand that one who divorces a spouse and remarries for any reason other than fornication is guilty of adultery. If more were convicted of this, perhaps less would consider ending their marriages and would work harder at it. Then, teach your children the truth about marriage, divorce, and remarriage. We act upon what we believe; and if what we believe about it is loose and lenient, then don't be surprised to see people acting accordingly. It is too serious to play around with.

To children who have to deal with a divorce, you must also learn to forgive. Your parents are not perfect. They have sinned just as all have (Rom. 3: 23). This doesn't excuse their actions, but your realization of this will help you. You must learn to deal with the facts of the situation. Living in a fantasy world will only hurt you more. It will take some emotional struggle, and it will take some courage to overcome the difficulties; but it can be done. Furthermore, don't let the actions of others determine your relationship with God. Though everyone else fails you, God won't. Learn to hope, trust, and pray. Look to Jesus for the answer to your suffering. Understand also your need to communicate. Talk to your parents and reassure your love for them. Talk to others who will help you. You won't help anyone by digging a hole and burying yourself. You can help yourself through your difficulties, but it will take a desire and courage that you may not even realize you have. Dig deep and let the tragedy become a character building experience.

All of us need to learn to help those who are going through a divorce. Whether it be the couple or the children, we can help them deal with it. The bottom line is that we are trying to save souls. Don't ignore them or act as though they are "unclean." Try to work with them in order to "save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins" (Jas. 5: 20). May all of us learn the importance of marriage and be committed to our own. Eternal life hangs in the balance. Never lose sight of that.

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There are many sections of the scriptures that are especially inspiring for us to read. Some of the most beautiful are found in the Psalms. One particular chapter which encourages me when I'm down is the 11th chapter of Hebrews. As this writer describes these great men and women of faith I am both made to feel very small (because of the littleness of my faith), and at the same time shown what faith is really all about. I am always amazed, though I have read the accounts so many times, of the faith of Noah and of Abraham. Why can't my faith be more like theirs? It becomes clear that my faith still needs to be made stronger, and I believe Hebrews chapter 11 helps me in that.

First notice that in verse 6 the writer said: *"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."* The kind of faith that pleases God is not one that merely accepts the idea that there is a God of some kind, somewhere. Not only must we believe IN God, but we must BELIEVE GOD! Now look with me at some of the examples used to show us this kind of faith.

"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith" (Heb. 11: 7). God warned Noah of some things that he had "not seen as yet." What is that Noah had not seen? We can't know for sure, but it appears possible that Noah had never seen rain. In Genesis chapter 2 we find in verse 5, *"for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground. But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground"* (v. 5-6). We do know of course that God soon put man in the garden, and could have caused it to rain before the days of Noah, but there is no record of it. And certainly he had never seen a flood like that which was about to come. But Noah not only believed in God, he BELIEVED GOD. He believed in something he had never seen because God said it; and he acted upon his faith by doing just what God wanted. Genesis chapter 6 tells us, *"Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he"* (v. 22). Noah believed God and acted upon that faith. Do I have this kind of faith?

Then comes the story of Abraham. Perhaps because I have sons of my own I can identify even more with the story of Abraham. First we learn: *"By faith Abraham,*

when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11: 8-10). Abraham was at this time a married man, and God called him to leave his family, take his wife, and follow where He would lead. Even though Abraham didn't know where he was going he followed. He believed IN God, but he also BELIEVED GOD. He even lived in the promised land with his descendants without receiving the land as his own as God had promised him. But this was not the last test of Abraham's faith. Later in the same 11th chapter of Hebrews we read: "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received his promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure" (v. 17-19).

After first following God to the promised land Abraham waited something like 25 years for part of the promise to be fulfilled in Isaac. Most of us would have given up after about the first 6 months. Then, when the child was still young God commanded Abraham to take

him to Mt. Moriah and offer him as a burnt offering (see Genesis chapter 22). How could God ask this of him? How could he possibly offer up the very son through whom the rest of the land and people promise was to be fulfilled? But Abraham BELIEVED GOD. He not only believed that he must now offer up Isaac in order to please God, but he still believed the earlier promise, "that in Isaac shall thy seed be called." His faith in God was such that he figured that if God had to raise Isaac from the dead in order to keep His promise He would do just that. There is no disputing the fact that Abraham BELIEVED GOD with such a faith that he acted even when what God asked for seemed contrary to logic. How can I be said to BELIEVE GOD if I don't obey in the same way the things God requires of me today?

So many today claim that they believe, and yet when their claim comes face to face with some demand of God that they don't understand or perhaps like, it quickly becomes clear that while they may believe IN God, they don't BELIEVE GOD. When they read Jesus' statement in **Mark 16** saying, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (v. 16) it quickly becomes clear that while they believe IN Jesus, they don't really BELIEVE JESUS; they don't believe what He said. Somehow we need to clearly, yet in love, point out this distinction to those we deal with, for without this kind of faith no one can be pleasing to God!

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IS BEING ANTI BECOMING A GOOD THING?

Dudley R. Spears

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Students Against Drunk Driving (S. A. D. D.) and Mothers Against Drunk Driving (M. A. D. D.) join several other "anti" groups in what has become quite respect-able. The number of anti- "this or that" organizations grows almost daily. Maybe being "anti" something is finally recognized as a good thing after all these years. But it has not always been so. Time was when all that was required to brand someone as wrong, was just to say, "Oh, he (or she) is an anti. "

S. A. D. D. expresses their anti-sentiment to the practice of teens who drive on the public streets and highways while drinking alcohol. The same is true with M. A. D. D., except they are against allowing all drivers who drink alcoholic beverages to drive. These are very respectable anti-organizations and deserve the praise of all right thinking and acting citizens.

Again, it has not always been so. Time was when people were not so precise in the use of the term "anti." Time was when anyone who spoke out against local churches financially subsidizing the operation of a human institution set up to take care of homeless children was called "anti-orphan" (with the obvious intent at

a sick pun). Time was when one who spoke out against the amalgamation of local churches into a super church called a "sponsoring church" was considered "anti-preaching-the-gospel" or "anti-cooperation."

Things do change! Or, is it really true, that "what goes around, comes around?" With the "new hermeneutic" and the revival of so-called "unity meetings" (similar to the old "Murch-Witty Meetings") those who have bandied the term "anti" the most are now being labeled as the "antis." The more "conservative" among those who toss out the terms "anti-orphan" and "anti-cooperation" epithets, are opposed to these "unity" efforts. And because they oppose them, they are looked at as "the antis." They have also come out in strength against the "new hermeneutic." They are called "antis" for their efforts.

It should be a little bit gratifying, but it isn't. Why is it that opposition to a human institution, set up to care for homeless children, financed by local church treasuries, is "anti-orphan" and opposition to this "new hermeneutic" is not anti-hermeneutic? Or why is it that opposition to the sponsoring church type cooperation is anti-cooperation, and opposition to the false standards of these so-called "unity meetings" is not anti-unity?

To all brethren everywhere who find themselves forced to press their opposition against that which they sincerely believe is error, God bless you. To those who still feel that being "anti" is something bad, God help you. There never was (or is) a time that anyone in his or her right mind opposed orphans. Opposition was registered against the unscriptural organization set up to do the work—not the orphan children. There never was a time (or is) when anyone in his or her right mind opposed cooperation of local churches of Christ. Opposition was registered against the unscriptural method of centralization — not cooperation based on sound biblical principles. And the same is true with hermeneutics and unity.

The tactic of branding a sincere opposition to erroneous practices and teachings with an unqualified "anti" is a remnant of an ignorant past. From this day on, with being "anti" becoming more respectable, there may be hope for a stronger church, a church united both in opposition to all that is unquestionably right.

Now, to know for absolute certainty that being "anti" is a pretty good thing, consider the Almighty's expression, "I am against..." You will find it at least five times in Jeremiah, a few more than that in Ezekiel. Each time God told people why he was against them; He specified what was wrong with them. That is what all who would be anti-that-which-is-wrong ought to do. It puts you in real good company. Here are some of the passages where you may learn what God is "anti" toward.

Jeremiah 21: 13; 3: 30; 23: 31; 23: 32; 50: 31; 51: 25; Ezekiel 5: 8; 13: 20; 21: 3; 26: 3; 28: 22; 29: 3; 29: 10; 30: 22; 34: 10; 35: 3; 38: 3; 39: 1.

Take some time to look these up and see just how respectable being "anti" really is.

TWENTIETH CENTURY PERSECUTION

David V. Hurst

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Conifer, Colorado 80433

There are records in my files concerning Christians who were recently sued or abused simply for practicing what was right. Even now, jobs are in jeopardy and managerial benevolence is taken away in efforts to pressure people to do that which is ungodly. There are brethren who have quit their jobs because they could not handle the constant criticism given them because they tried to live as Christians among the ungodly. This writer knows of cases wherein even school children were given more homework simply because they did not participate in school activities they considered wrong. There is ever increasing pressure from society to give women equal roles of authority in all churches. It is important to note that these are not trials or problems created because of ones own sin, but because of the sin that others have in their life. As Christians, we are seeing more and more of this kind of persecution taking place. Many congregations are purchasing "law-suit insurances." The humanistic influence of a hedonistic society is slowly turning society from our favor. We are facing very real possibilities that our faith will be tested in ways we have not had to think of before.

Whether these are warnings of even greater hardships to come or not, how should we as Christians deal with the persecution? Suppose the courts of the land do rule that we must have women preachers or elders? Suppose they prohibit the physical spanking of a child? How should we act if promises of agonizing consequences are given should laws be violated?

"Yet if (any man suffer) as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. (1 Pet. 4: 16, KJV). We have countless examples of those who have lived before us and what God expected of them. Noteworthy, are those in the Old Testament, recorded in Hebrews 11 who suffered greatly, due to their faith. Some of these sufferings were "(cruel) mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, they were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and (in) mountains, and (in) dens and caves of the earth (KJV—vv. 36-38)."

We often have it so "easy," we lose a sight of the very real hardships that can come to us because we strive to do what is right. Perhaps we need to be reminded that we "are" to suffer for righteousness sake (Mt. 5: 10-12). Paul informed us that it was not just to be expected (2 Tim. 3: 11, 12) but that it "would" happen. We will not be exempt (1 Pet. 4: 12).

Before we begin to fear and quiver into a jellied heap, let

us note what "blessings" these trials can be to the Christian. Persecutions show our word of mouth and our example in life are identical. On Sunday mornings, we profess what we are or want to be but "trials" give us the reality that we are indeed what we claim. We then "know" we are precious to God, not just hay or stubble to be destroyed. Trials teach us that our strength is in God (1 Cor. 3: 13; 2 Cor. 12: 10). They bring us to a patience (steadfastness) that will keep us strong (Rev. 5: 3; Jas. 1: 3). They are the means whereby we glorify our Father (1 Pet. 1: 7).

Indeed, the trials of our faith are more precious than gold (1 Pet. 1: 7). The tears of hardship that come from trials can be changed to tears of joy if we use them to bring us closer to our God! Dear Christian, we know Satan will not give us up easily, but let us endure trials faithfully no matter what may come with the recognition that victory is truly ours (Rev. 5: 3-5).

CARNAL TACTICS IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Bobby L. Graham

1820 Epworth Drive
Huntsville, Alabama 35811

It is undeniably clear that Jesus lifted the kingdom of God above the plane of conduct normally seen in the kingdoms of earth when He declared, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight so I would not be delivered to the Jews; but now my kingdom is not from here" (Jn. 18: 36.) While many have not adhered to these words in their efforts on behalf of the kingdom, it is unmistakable that heaven's king did not intend for his rule, or the realm of that rule, to be established, expanded, or defended by those weapons or tactics usually employed on behalf of worldly kingdoms. Political power, conspiracy, gossip, fanning up support among members, whispering campaigns, giving a cold shoulder to people, and other forms of dishonorable behavior must take their place with the carnal sword, because one has as much place in the spiritual kingdom as the other. When these tactics take the place of serious Bible study, prayer, and earnest efforts to prevent and solve problems, problems grow worse and last longer. In such confrontations there is no doubt that Satan wins the victory. It is no marvel that the apostle warned not to give the Devil a place (Eph. 4: 27).

My brethren, it is not right for those claiming to be Christians to treat others in any way they would not also treat Christ. When God's people resort to such carnality, either in their efforts to proclaim Christ and defend the truth or in attempts to handle local-church problems, they open the door to Satan and surrender the battle for truth. Whatever the consequences and whichever side seems to prevail when the dust has cleared, "Christians"

have become the puppets and pawns of Satan, and he has had to do little besides sit on the sideline and have a big time.

Of what do I speak? What are some of these carnal tactics too often employed?

Unfair Treatment of Brethren

Some have been too quick on the trigger, in that they fire at others before they even understand what others mean. They do not know the others to be enemies or friends, but they fire away as if they were dealing with enemies. It is unwise to attack one without knowing beyond doubt that he definitely teaches something. It is unfortunately true that some write in fuzzy phrases, leaving themselves open to criticism. (They really should not write until they can do better, leaving nothing unclear or ambiguous.) When one does write in such fashion, the local "scout" sights him and cries out "Enemy!" Would it not be wise to inquire about his meaning and then attack the error, not the writer, if inquiry shows it necessary to do so?

Others have followed the course of inequity in accusing some of doing what they themselves have been doing. Regardless of one's view on a matter, he should not be attacked for responding to a request to set forth his view, when the attackers have been doing as much themselves. The rule that is golden has much value in dealings with brethren (Matt. 7: 12). Let us never descend to the low level of the spiritual cannibal in devouring each other (Gal. 5: 14, 15). We must learn to deal with the teaching, but no dishonorable treatment of the teacher is permitted!

Establishing Rank in the Church

Brethren rightly protest the distinctions erected between "clergy" and "laity" in human religious systems, but they often commit the same error by developing an elitist view of elders in the local church. Such a view sees elders as inherently blessed with wisdom beyond others so they need no input from the rest of the church. They seem to say, "We're in control, and you need to stay in your place." These elders see no need to keep members informed about the gospel work being supported, financial matters, or major decisions affecting the church. It is beyond them to request prayers, comments, or suggestions from others. While some may not use these very words, they clearly think them because they never solicit or accept such input.

Closely akin to such elitist elders, because it is practiced by them, is the lording it over God's heritage. What else would it take for elders to act as lords, in defiance of the Lord and in opposition to His order in 1 Peter 5: 3, than to display such secretive modes of operating, to refuse to share information with the congregation, and to refuse to listen to others. Elders must remember the charge allotted to them is God's heritage, for them to lead and oversee as God's stewards (caretakers) (Tit. 1: 7). They must lead and shepherd God's people as a sacred trust as God wants them led, not as their own selfish desires would dictate. Paul said elders must not be self-willed men.

How can men such as these inspire confidence in the ones they seek to lead? How can they lead people having no confidence in them as leaders? Because open commu-

nication is needed to have followers, then elders need to sit down with members of the congregation so both sides can benefit from the two-way communication. When the members don't know what the elders are thinking or planning and when elders lack the confidence of the people, there is no more leading than there is following: NONE! Men that should be warning, teaching, exhorting, and setting an example for God's people, in such circumstances as these, are actually lame-duck leaders.

Political Machinations

Satan never has more cause for delight than when he enlists purported disciples of Christ for the work of building political machines in local churches, with them feeding on the desire for power and the grab for power made by those claiming to be of Christ. This kind of power does not exist in the spiritual kingdom (Matt. 20: 20-28). More times than saints would like to think, efforts to line up a base of political power among members have been exerted by having groups to meet and discuss objectives they want to achieve, by use of petitions to exert negative pressure against someone, by refusal to love actively (even to speak to) those against whom the intrigue is being promoted, by gossip campaigns, by a misuse of withdrawal and by other arrogant displays of carnality. How can such people love their brethren? They do not, and they lie if they claim to. Paul's rebuke of similarly motivated saints in Corinth should be headed (1 Cor. 3: 1-4).

Worldly Standards for Spiritual Efforts

In the work of the local church, a spiritual work not susceptible to the same measurements of success or failure applied to material endeavors, it is a major mistake to use the models and images created by the world. Only those provided by the Lord, the church's head, will prove effective.

Trying to fit a preacher into the mold of a church manager or administrator is a colossal mistake. Many brethren think of him as the one around whom all congregational efforts/projects must be centered (ignorant that elders are such leaders). Others think of him as an office-boy with office hours, regardless of the need for him to be elsewhere doing more important things. Some view him as the church's official representative, insisting that he should wear a certain "uniform," make all announcements, and be spokesman for the church. Would somebody kindly favor me with the passage teaching any of these ideas.

While disavowing the term "clergyman," some insist that a preacher must remain aloof from the common people when possible, not dirtying his hands (literally and figuratively) with the more mundane matters of life. They absolutely cringe at the sight of his doing physical labor around the church building, at his house, or at the houses of others. In all of these areas, there have been plenty of preachers who have enjoyed such special treatment and have acted so as to further these notions in people's minds.

The creation of an elite group of "big preachers" in the minds of some is another use of worldly standards inappropriate in the church. These are smoothly praised and flatteringly treated by those who would not cross the road to hear and encourage "smaller" men, as these

twisted thinkers view them. James 2: 1-13 teaches a needed lesson on impartiality that many of us have not fathomed.

The lures used to attract people to hear the gospel and the devices for measuring the gospel's success also betray much carnal thinking. An impressive building, recreational programs for various ages, the improper citing of attendance and contribution figures, flattering titles for preachers, emphasis on community leaders in a local church, and other such tactics have been employed for good purpose, but without God's favor.

God's people have the only power needed to convert the lost in the gospel divinely given for that purpose (Rom. 1: 16; Jn. 6: 44-45). Nothing else is needed! Nothing else can accomplish God's objective! We must leave all else alone.

Jesus made it clear that in the spiritual kingdom there would be no ranking of citizens, no lording over others, and no tactics relying on arrogant power. Humble service is the only path to divine approval and exaltation, and that can be best observed in the lowly life of the Nazarene, who came "not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20: 20-28).

Nothing in this article should be construed to teach the no-rule theory of elders or any related idea. Nor should it be concluded that all (even most) elders are of the kind herein discussed. There are also "big preachers" who do not know they are big, but they are big in both life and teaching, just as there are "little preachers" whom God and brethren count big. This writer has been privileged to work under some godly elders, and he is now privileged to serve with some of that kind. He is not "soured" on elders, but there are regrettable instances of the kind discussed here. Truth must be taught on these matters as on all others.

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THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

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J. DAVID POWLAS, 3430 Kay Street, D-3, Columbia, SC 29210— The Lower Richland congregation meets at 3000 Trotter Road. Although we have a Hopkins, SC mailing address, our building is located on the southeast side of Columbia, less than five miles from Gate 5 (Semmes Rd.) of Port Jackson Army base and within ten miles of the McEntire Air National Guard base. Columbia is the state capital and is the home of the University of South Carolina. Please write or call me at (803) 772-4371 to let me know about any saints serving in the military or attending college here. Also, please keep me in mind for future gospel meetings. I am available to preach in two or three meetings this year.

NEW WORK

A new congregation was established in Marietta, OH on January 6, 1991 with 13 present. They have 10 members with attendance in the 20's. The church is meeting at 324 4th St. in the conference room of the Ohio Gas Co.

The times of their services on Sunday are 9: 45, 10: 30 and 6: 00. They meet on Wednesday evening at 7: 30.

If you are traveling in the area or know of someone living in the area who may be interested, contact these brethren by writing to: 4th St. Church of Christ, P. O. Box 44, Marietta, OH 45750 or call Sheldon Blair (373-0367) or Joe Schofield (373-0064).

DEBATES

ON CONGREGATIONAL BENEVOLENCE—JULY 8, 9, 11, 12, 1991. Jesse G. Jenkins and Steve Gibson will discuss the following propositions. "The Scriptures teach that a church, from its treasury, may provide benevolent aid to a sinner or one who is safe." Gibson will affirm; Jenkins will deny.

"The Scriptures teach that a local church's benevolent work is limited to relieving only saints who are unavoidably destitute." Jenkins will affirm; Gibson will deny.

On July 8 and 9 the debate will be at the building of the Highway 95 church of Christ in Taylor, TX (across from Wal-Mart). On July 11 and 12 it will be in the building of the Twin City church of Christ, 810 Southwest Parkway, College Station, TX. Taylor is thirty miles northeast of Austin on 79. College Station is about eight miles east of Taylor, and about half way between Waco and Houston on Highway 6. The discussion begins at 7: 00 each evening.

For further information, call Jesse Jenkins (409) 268-3069 or Steve Gibson (512) 352-6444.

ON THE GENERAL CHURCH QUESTION—AUGUST 5, 6, 8, 9 1991. Kevin Campbell will debate Cecil Patterson (Missionary Baptist) in Gulfport, MS. The proposition for the four nights will be: "The church of which I am a member is scriptural in origin, name and doctrine." Campbell will affirm the proposition the first two nights and Patterson will affirm it the last two. The debate will begin at 7: 00 each evening. The place has not been decided. For more information contact Kevin Campbell at 106 Beverly Dr., Gulfport, MS 39503 or (601) 831-4357 or 832-5529.

OBITUARIES

ETHEL RANDOLPH—This is to inform your readers of the passing of sister Ethel Randolph, widow of Wright Randolph and sister of Roy Cogdill. She is survived by one sister, Ida Terrell, who attends the congregation here at S. W. 84th Street in Oklahoma City.

Ethel spent the last year of her life in a nursing home here in the Oklahoma City area. In death, even as in life, Ethel maintained her interest in the Lord's church and her faith in God. Ethel was buried in her childhood home of Hobart, OK on March 26, 1991. — Submitted by Phil T. Arnold, 3228 S. W. 96th St. OKC, OK 73159.

LURIED LOBB (1928-1991)— On the afternoon of January 7, 1991, Luried Lobb, a faithful Christian and member of the Lord's church at Campbellsville, KY, passed away.

Brother Lobb was only 62 years old. He retired last April and was busy enjoying life. He worked improving his home, but more importantly, he was in the greatest work of all—teaching the gospel. He and his devoted wife, Lois, were looking forward to her retirement in a few years, when they could spend more good time together.

Luried was born and raised near Greensburg. When he was a teenager, he and his father obeyed the gospel and led the rest of the family to Christ. He married Lois Parson in February 1950. He led her to the truth and they both became active members at a church near Greensburg. In 1953 they moved to Campbellsville and helped establish a sound church there. Luried gave of his boundless energy to the work and through the years was a stabilizing influence for good.

He was not widely known as a located preacher (which he was not), but he did preach and teach the word to all who would listen. He influenced more than many "located preachers" have. Much of his work was effected through private Bible study in homes of people throughout the area.

Luried loved his family dearly and was loved by them. The Lord blessed Luried and Lois with two children: Wanda and Wendell. He is survived by all these and four grandchildren. All of his family who are old enough have obeyed the gospel — a testimony to his influence for good.

Luried's funeral was conducted at Campbellsville on January 10 by Scott Vifquain, Dorris V. Rader and Billy Ashworth. His earthly remains lie buried in sight of the church building where he attended. The church has lost a faithful, zealous worker. His family has lost a dear loved one. My wife and I have lost one of our dearest brothers in Christ.

We extend our sincere sympathy to and fervent prayers for Lois and all who mourn Luried's death. We do not sorrow as those who have no hope (1 Thess. 4: 13). — Submitted by Billy Ashworth, Rt. 3, Box 215, Columbia, TN 38401.

FROM AROUND THE WORLD

PHILIPPINES — Dominador J. Neniell reports that six were baptized and were added to the Magpet church in February.

Emeterio A. Piciwien reports that Luis Cabrera, a Pentecostal preacher for 26 years, was baptized on February 20, 1991. On

February 26, 1991 there was a one day meeting at Lasam Cagayan in which eight were baptized. On February 28th at Cawayan Isabela there were two baptized. Five were baptized on March 28th at Baculod Iguig, Cagayan.

Wilbert Garingo Enostacion — P. O. Box 09, San Fernando 2500, La Union, Philippines — I was invited by the church in China, particularly the Hong Kong church, to work with them for a limited period. While I was there, I was able to baptize two people. Jeff Kingry baptized one and Bob Small baptized four. In mainland China seven were immersed by Jeff and Dale Smelser.

The Hong Kong church had its beginning in 1988. Jeffrey and Anna Kingry went to China to teach English at some Chinese Universities and used that medium to reach Chinese people by the gospel. On their "survey" of the land, they went to Hong Kong and found the people were more receptive, especially those Filipinos in that land working as DH (domestic helpers,). As reported by the Philippine embassy in Hong Kong, there are more than fifty-thousand Filipinos there.

While in Hong Kong, Jeff and Dale worked as a team while Bob Small and I worked as a team. Our team focused on some Asians. Our contacts were with the Filipinos and the Chinese.

In March 1991, Dale and Marlene Smelser left China for Prague, Czechoslovakia to join their sons, Tim and Scott. The work in China will be put into the hands of Jeff and Bob. Both men are good gospel preachers. However, both have expressed the need of a Filipino family to work with them among the fifty-thousand Filipinos there.

As soon as support can be arranged, my wife, Maria Nenita, and I plan to move to Hong Kong where I will do the work of an evangelist. Our stay will be limited to five or six years because by 1997 the Chinese communist government will take it over. Therefore, it is a MUST for workers of God today to work DOUBLE TIME in that short period.

If enough support can be raised, we plan to move before the end of 1991. Please help the cause of Christ in China. My family and I have decided to take the risk and would endure great sacrifices. If any are interested in extending the right hand of fellowship with us, please contact these brethren who know my life and work: Jeffrey Kingry — Hong Kong (852) 898-7706 or FAX (852) 898-7815; Robert Small — Hong Kong (852) 889-3815; Earl Robertson — 514 South Green St., Glasgow, KY 42141; Connie W. Adams — P. O. Box 69, Brooks, KY 40109 — (502) 957-2257; Cecil Willis — (409) 642-1456; Weldon E. Warnock — Beckley, WV — 252-8163; John A. Humphries — Louisville, KY (502) 499-9942; Walter D. Bunnell — P. O. Box 657, Eldorado, AR — 826-5209.

WEST AFRICA — I. O. Aku, P. O. Box 12587, Umungasi Aba, Imo State sent pictures of 13 baptisms. Among them was a deacon in the Qua Iboe church and a pastor of an Orthodox church.

PREACHERS NEEDED

YAKIMA, WASHINGTON — The church in Yakima is looking for a mature, sound man. Support is available. The church has about 75 in attendance. Yakima is a city of 50, 000 with a Junior college. Contact: Morris May (509) 248-8190.

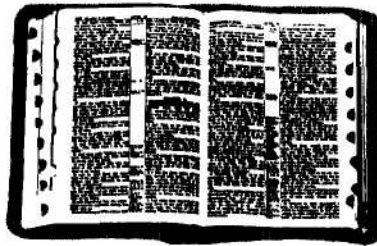
STARKE, FLORIDA—The Southside church of Christ is looking for a preacher. Contact: Frank Crews (904) 468-2225.

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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 XXXII

JULY, 1991

NUMBER 7

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO COMMON DECENCY?

Drugs
Drunkenness
Nudity
Foul Language
Rape
Cursing
Premarital Sex

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Homosexuality
Violence
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Abortion
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SPECIAL ISSUE

Living In Perilous Times

Even a casual look around in our society will cause one to wonder, "Whatever happened to common decency?" What has happened to our sense of shame? Yet, we are not the only generation to ask these kind of questions. Even Christ and his apostles lived in perilous times and made it clear that we all will live in a continual age of conflict between good and evil.

No passage better describes the indecency of the world, the cause and the answer to the problem than 2 Timothy 3. In the first verse Paul said, "But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come."

The word translated "*perilous*" is only used twice in the New Testament. It is translated "fierce" in Matt. 8: 28. The ASV translates it "grievous" in our text. It describes a pathetic period of evil — difficult or troublesome times for the people of God.

In this chapter will we see the characteristics of the perilous times, how they are promoted, how Paul conducted himself in the midst of trying times and the answer to the problem.

I. Characteristics Of The Perilous Times (vs. 2-5)

A. *Emphasis on self* (v. 2). When men are "lovers of themselves" they are not really concerned with others or even God. Their only interest is in what they want and what makes them happy. Humanism tells us that's the way it ought to be. Man should be his own God. This characteristic is the basis and foundation for the rest of the traits in the context.

B. *Greedy* (v. 2). Being a "lover of money" (NJKV) or "covetous" (KJV) is a sign of one's selfishness. This is one reason we have the filth and obscenity on the movie and television screens. The bottom line is what kind of movie or show makes the most money.

The one who loves money is swallowed by materialism. Money and material things become the priority in life.



Editorial

Donnie V. Rader

Searching The Scriptures

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C. *Arrogant* (vs 2, 4). There are three terms used in this context to describe their arrogance. The "boasters" are those who make more of themselves than they really are. The "proud" looks down his nose at others. The "haughty" is one who is inflated with pride. He is a know-it-all.

D. *Disrespectful* (vs 2, 3). There are six references to the irreverence of those who make the times perilous. (1) Some will be "blasphemers" (v. 2). They speak evil of others, insult and criticize. (2) Many young people will be "disobedient to parents" (v. 2). When children develop the practice of showing little or no respect to their parents by talking back or flatly disobeying them, we are

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in troublesome times. (3) Others will be "unthankful" (v. 2) or ingrates. They show no appreciation for the things that others do for them. (4) Some will be "slanderers" (v. 3) who falsely accuse others to the ruin of their reputation. (5) Many will be "despisers of good" (v. 3). They have no respect for that which is good or those that stand for it. One reason that the filth and indecency is tolerated by so many people is that they have little or no appreciation for moral and Biblical principals or those who advocate them. (6) Many are "unloving" (v. 3) or "without natural affection" (KJV). This natural love is the kind of love that a parent has for a child or a child for the parent. J. W. Shepherd suggests in his commentary that this is common to every class of brutes. When we reach the point that we have no natural love or feeling then abortion, euthanasia, physical, emotional and sexual abuse follows. This is the very reason that many parents are put into nursing homes to be forgotten by their children.

E. *Unrestrained* (vs. 2, 3, 4). (1) Some live "without self-control" (v. 3). They allow their drives and passions to run wild and unbridled. (2) "Brutal" (v. 3) also describes an unrestrained life. The brutal are untamed and "fierce" (KJV). (3) The "unholy" (v. 2) engage in all forms of sin. They do not try to maintain a sense of purity. (4) The "headstrong" (v. 4) acts without wisdom or thought. He proceeds carelessly into whatever activity he wants.

F. *Can't be trusted* (vs. 3, 4). (1) Some are "unforgiving" (v. 3) or "irreconcilable" (NKJV footnote). You cannot get along with this person. He will not honestly resolve any differences. The KJV uses the term "truce-breakers" which gives the idea of one whose word means nothing. (2) "Traitors" (v. 4) are those who turn their backs on others.

G. *Thrill seekers* (v. 4). There will be those who are "lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God". They will seek things that a sensual. All they care about is the enjoyment, the thrill and the fun. No regard is given to God and his word. That's why people drink, smoke pot, shoot drugs into their bloodstream, go to X-rated movies, listen to filthy music and engage in all forms of sexual perversions.

H. *Have an outward form of godliness* (v. 5). Even though many will care nothing about God and even looking like they care about spiritual things, there will be some who will pretend to be godly despite their indecency. The Bible calls these people hypocrites.

Paul plainly tells us how we ought to deal with the people who live by the principles listed above. "And from such people turn away" (v. 5)! We cannot afford to participate in sin with them. Our only choice is to rebuke them and turn from them (1 Cor. 15: 33; 2 Cor. 6: 14-17; Eph. 5: 11).

We sometimes think that our society is worse than any society before us. However, a little reflection upon the Bible will tell us otherwise. Do you remember that God had to destroy the whole world (saving only eight people) because of sin (Gen. 6)? Do you remember that God destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah because they were given to sexual perversion (Gen. 19)? Do you remember that in the days of the Judges "everyone

did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21: 25)? Do you recall the disgusting description that Paul gave of the Gentile world when men were having sex with men and women with women (Rom. 1)? Do you remember how wicked the Corinthians were before they obeyed the gospel (1 Cor. 6: 9-11)?

Paul Harvey once said, "In times like these, it helps to recall that there have always been times like these" (Los Angeles Times Syndicate).

II. How Evil Men Advance And Promote These Times (vs. 6-9)

A. They work privately (v. 6). They "creep into" houses slowly and silently. More will be accomplished by working privately, undercover and planting the seeds slowly than using other methods. Subtle efforts are very successful.

B. They prey on the unlearned and immature (v. 6). They lead away the "gullible"—those who are easily impressed. The humanist well recognize this strategy for they start in early grades in school.

C. They prey on those interested in the novel (v. 7). They are always learning, yet never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. They want something new (Acts 17: 21).

III. Paul's Conduct In the Midst Of Ungodliness (vs. 10-13)

Paul draws a contrast in the life he described in vs. 2-5 and his own. He tells Timothy that his example should be followed. He speaks of his manner of life, faith, patience and endurance of persecutions. If Paul could live godly in the midst of perilous times, then so could Timothy and you and me. The indecency around us is no excuse for our own indecency.

IV. Continue In The Truth (vs. 14-17)

A. Paul tells Timothy to *remain* in the truth that he had been taught from a child (vs. 14-15). No matter what the rest of the world is doing, that doesn't change our standard.

B. The reason that the times are perilous is that men have *resisted the truth* (v. 8).

C. Therefore, the *answer* and *remedy* is to turn men back to the truth. That is the point of vs. 16-17 in the context. Paul is not just telling us that the word of God is inspired. His point is that the inspired word is designed to *reprove* and *rebuke* and turn perilous men into godly men. The answer to every one of the problems dealt with in this special is to turn back to the Bible.

Today

Today we are surrounded by the same kind of indecency that Paul and Timothy were more than 1900 years ago. We wonder how much worse the movie and television industry can become. Today's music leaves little to the imagination. The sexual pervers are coming out of

(Continued on page 7)

Humanism — The Heart Of The Problem

Conduct develops from concept. "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he" (Proverbs 23:7). The best of men live according to what they think. The basest of men live as they think. No man lives without a standard which determines his life-style. Morality or rightness is determined by one's set of mind.

To control a nation it is unnecessary to capture the entire citizenry. It is only necessary to conquer the government. So, to control one's conduct it is only necessary to capture one's mind.

No man lives precisely as his mind tells him — neither the noble or the ignoble man. Temporarily one's thinking may be affected by any number of things: a situation, associates or the general attitude of a culture. Finally, each man is brought back to law by what he thinks; or else he changes his thinking.

One's state of mind is the result of learning. In reference to moral education there are only two choices: God or man. "But my people harken not to my voice: and Israel would none of me. So I let them go after the stubbornness of their heart, that they might walk in their own counsels" (Ps. 81:11, 12). The theist, the Christian, believes that he is made in God's image and accepts the conclusion that all moral conduct springs from that fact. His circumstances of living is measured by that truth.

On the other side is Humanism. The Humanist does not believe that he is his own creator but he does believe that he controls his destiny and determines his own life-style.

These two views are irreconcilable, as much as flesh and spirit, light and darkness, God and idols (Gal. 5:16ff). Each necessarily produces opposite conclusions

and styles of living. What one believes, therefore, is the "heart of the problem". The argument between the Christian and the Humanist over what is obscene, filthy, perverted, decent, coarse and abusive can never be resolved until the mind of one is converted.

The point which this special edition makes is that many Christians are beginning to live like Humanists while trying to think like Christians — a hopeless impossibility. Many are unaware of this contradiction. This article takes the position the the **cause** for this change of living is that some Christians are beginning to **think** like Humanists.

From one point of view separation from the world is an "either is or isn't" thing. It is not a matter of degrees. It is a matter of thinking; and then acting as one thinks. The worldly state of mind produces the most horrible fruit.

Description

Humanism is neither hard to define nor difficult to understand. Its creed is clearly stated. Humanists describe their faith as, "a philosophical, religious and moral point of view..." (Humanist Manifesto, I and II, page 3). They are evangelistic in their endeavor: "to establish such a religion is a major necessity to the present", (ibid, p. 8).

Decrees

The following are some of its basic decrees. About God: "We find insufficient evidence for belief in the existence of a super-natural; it is either meaningless or irrelevant to the question... We begin with humans not God, nature not deity" (ibid, p. 16). About ethics: "moral values derive their source from human experience. Ethics is autonomous and situational, needing no theological or ideological sanction" (p. 17).

Humanism has undergone many recurring resurrections. Its progression is delineated in Rom. 1.18-31. It began in refusing to honor God, who had "manifested" Himself unto man, and the contemporary evil ingratitude. From these roots came darkened perception and ineptness to reason. Foolishly God was dethroned and absurdly man was enthroned. Having substituted the creature for the Creator, Truth as exchanged for Lie. This resulted in the perverted becoming the normal, the abhorrent becoming acceptable, coarseness become cultural and the abusive being excused.

The Humanist views himself as his own saviour. He establishes Truth-reality, judges his own conduct, and offers his own "plan of salvation". "Man is at last becoming aware that he alone is responsible for the realization of the world of his dreams, that he has within himself the power for its achievement. He must set intelligence and will to the task" (ibid p. 10).

A Word Of Caution

The measure of morality is the holiness of God (I Peter 1:15). In teaching holiness it is a serious mistake to substitute the relative holiness of the Christian for the



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absolute and unchanging holiness of God. The measure or standard of holy living is not the practice of Christians; it is the character of God. This mistake is an easy one to make.

Obscenity, indecency, coarseness and abusiveness are determined by the righteousness of God; not by laws, customs and practices of brethren. For example, modest apparel is measured by "godliness" (I Tim. 2: 9, 10) rather than the accepted appearance of Christians. Coarse language is not judged by the accepted speech of saints. To hold up as an ensign the life-style of Christians of any age is to raise a fallible standard which is doomed to defeat and will fail in its purpose. Let us preach the Truth; not our view of it. Let us declare the holiness of God and not the life-style of believers.

Deployment

Slowly and steadily Humanism has exercised its influence upon mankind. It is a virulent and slow evil. Like cancer, often it has done its deadly work before it is detected. Humanistic morality in its earliest stages often appears harmless.

To accomplish its ends Humanism has employed three modern conditioners: entertainment, education and environment. No Christian is beyond the influence of these three conditioners. A "conditioner" is an influence which causes something to become manageable toward a certain end. Hair conditioner manages one's hair so that the comb can do its work. Body conditioning influences muscles to become adept in running, hitting the ball and scoring points.

Entertainment conditions the part of the mind which is easier to influence: the desires. Modern science fiction movies, such as "E. T." and "Close Encounters of the Third Kind", subtly and surely make plausible the theory of Evolution. Television has gone a long way in making Biblical morality appear ridiculous. The rightness of marriage before living together is portrayed as absurd. The life-style of many Christians has been compromised by this powerful conditioner.

To make changes in our living, most of us need some "reason" to justify the change. Humanistic education has conditioned Christians intellectually to move their moral guide lines. It is one thing to adjust the application of a principle; it is another thing to change the principle. As people well aware of the great benefits of education many brethren have become susceptible to Humanistic education without knowing it. Humanism is not amoral; it is a morality which frees man from Biblical morality and permits him, in a given situation, to determine his own principles. "Let this sink into your ears." "... much of our moral freedom is good: it is pleasant to be relieved of theological terrors, to enjoy without qualm the pleasures that harm neither others nor ourselves, and to feel the tang of the open air upon our liberated flesh" (**Lessons from History**, Will Durant, p. 42).

Many Christians ignore the fact that most of America's education is either thorough going Humanism or, at least, the majority of modern teachers have been fundamentally influenced by it. Humanism presents a reason for doing as one pleases. The Bible presents a

reason for doing what pleases God.

Environment conditions the will of a person. Environment is the total circumstances of one's societal living. Each of us is highly susceptible to the influence of the group. "Everyone does it" has long been an excuse for changing moral action. The will to resist peer pressure requires more than human strength.

Defeat

Resisting humanism is not impossible, though it is difficult. The "inner man" must be empowered by God (Eph. 3: 16). While the Christian cannot isolate himself from the world he can insulate himself from its pervasiveness. He looks to God for wisdom. He neither rationalizes his conduct nor allows the situation to decide what is right. Victory over the world comes by faith (I John 5: 4) and faith comes by hearing the word truly.

Therefore, study the Bible; especially books such as Proverbs which again and again declare that the fundamental factor in wisdom is the "fear of Jehovah". The first commandment for the wise and good man is to do what is right. "Right" is merely the other side of the coin of Truth. "Hear (wisdom)...; and the opening of my lips shall be right things" (Prov. 8: 6).

Discipline is essential to defeating Humanism. Discipline is training. It is deliberately doing the right thing when options are faced. It can be developed by the strengthening of one's will-power.

Heed the warning of God; observe the lives of those who did not. To go against "wisdom" is not only ill-advised, it is disastrous. "But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death" (Prov. 8: 36).

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Obscene Movies And TV Programs

Few things frighten me any more than the passing comments I hear brothers and sisters in the Lord make about movies and TV programs they have permitted themselves to see. Just when I believe there may be a deepening spirituality among the Lord's people in our day, someone, who is thought to be a part of the real strength of his or her congregation tells me what they rented at the video store last weekend or what they watched on TV last night — and I find it difficult to be optimistic at all about where we are headed as a people. When it comes to telltale signs of spiritual shakiness, there are none more disturbing than the problem we have with obscene movies and TV programs.

How Bad Is It?

It is an obvious fact that pop entertainment has gone from bad to worse in the matter of obscenity (as well as violence and secular philosophy, which are, of course, no less a problem). In regular broadcast television, not to mention cable TV or the movies, the language has grown increasingly profane and vulgar, producers are daily pushing the limits on nudity and sexual content, homosexuality has come out of the closet and onto the tube, and the "moral" values that are promoted are farther and farther away from anything the serious Christian can identify with. What is being pumped into our living rooms has changed for the worse so noticeably that even one secular writer previewed the current TV season with an article entitled, "The Family Hour Fades to Black."

But the worsening of movie and TV content itself is not the whole problem. The **acceptance** of this fare by supposedly strong, faithful Christians is what is truly alarming. We may have an admirable devotion to the Lord in many things, but when it comes to entertainment we are bowing before the altar of television; we **are**

going to the theater to see virtually any movie we believe we will enjoy; we are letting our kids watch nearly anything they want at the movies or on TV (including MTV); we are paying to get the cable movie channels, which rarely carry anything the Christian can afford to be interested in; and we are renting movies at the video store that not too many years ago would have been classified pornographic. Basically, we have sold our souls for a mess of footage, and it is impossible to contemplate what has happened without being concerned about the future.

The Worrisome Aspect Of The Problem

Obviously, none of us can say we have been entirely consistent in our entertainment, least of all this writer. To my discredit, I have been places and seen things no Christian ought to. But the thing about the present situation that seems different to me is that I am encountering **mature** saints who not only watch obscene movies and TV programs, but **defend** their practice as perfectly **acceptable** conduct for the Christian! It is one thing to give in to temptation and, when confronted, offer excuses about not being as strong as one should be. But if, as is apparent, we have come around to the view that those who question our viewing habits are the ones with the problem, then we have entered a new and worrisome phase in the battle against obscenity.

Increasingly these days I am hearing responses like the following whenever I express amazement at a movie or TV program a fellow Christian says he has seen:

"Well, it didn't have **much** profanity in it. I hear it so much at work, it doesn't bother me. I just tune it out."

"If it bothers or offends you, then it's not a movie you should see — but it didn't bother me."

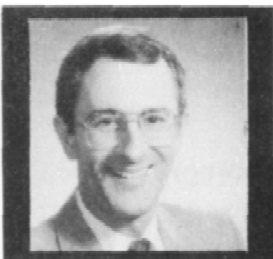
"If you can't handle it, you shouldn't see it — but I've been out in the real world enough, I can handle it."

"If it embarrasses you, you shouldn't see it — but I'm mature enough that things like that don't embarrass me."

"We rented it and watched it at home. There's nothing really wrong when it's just us."

Surely we cannot fail to notice the common thread that runs through these remarks; that obscenity is acceptable entertainment for us if we personally have been so "desensitized" that obscenity no longer bothers, offends, or embarrasses us. That we think that way is cause enough for concern. But that we are **pleased** with ourselves for thinking that way is truly frightening. If we have, in fact, lost our sensitivity to obscenity and are patting ourselves on the back because of it, we are not far from qualifying for Paul's description of those "whose glory is in their shame" (Phil 3: 19).

But on the other hand, whether one is bothered or embarrassed has very little to do with the question of whether one should or should not indulge in certain entertainment. It is safe to say the Lord, if He were on



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earth today, would be strong enough to "handle" far more than any of us — but you would not catch Him entertaining Himself with the stuff we watch. What it comes down to is that we have turned decency upside down when we start defining how spiritually mature and strong we are in terms of how little embarrassment we feel in the presence of obscenity.

Whether we realize it or not, we have adopted the basic posture of the Gnostic libertines of the first century. These were brethren who believed themselves to be a select group of Christians who had achieved such a high plane of strength and enlightenment that they could indulge in immorality and not be hurt spiritually. They liked to think the amount of fleshly indulgence they could "handle" was a sign of their advanced knowledge and sophistication. But John, as well as other inspired writers, called this enticing doctrine what it always is: a lie. He wrote, "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth" (1 Jn. 1: 6).

The NT Admonition To Purity

Need it be pointed out that the Scriptures call us to inner sanctity? Have we forgotten that the Lord said, "Blessed are the **pure** in heart, for they shall see God" (Mt. 5: 8)? Have we forgotten that Paul wrote, "Finally, brethren, whatever things are **true**, whatever things are **noble**, whatever things are **just**, whatever things are **pure**, whatever things are of **good report**, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy — meditate on these things" (Phil. 4: 8)? Whatever any of us individually may or may not be "bothered" by, the passage is still there waiting to be dealt with which says that there are some things not "fitting" for the Christian to dally with, among them "uncleanness" and "filthiness" (Eph. 5: 3, 4). Those around us, whose souls we hope to reach with the gospel, deserve to see in us a better example. We owe it to them, as well as to the Lord and ourselves, to **demonstrate** that the way of purity is the better path of those we could travel.

A WORTHY WOMEN

By Darlene Craig

This is a well-written book with a chapter on each verse of Proverbs 31:10-31. The author is the wife of a faithful gospel preacher, a mother, homemaker, and grandmother. Her writing style is fresh and her research is extensive. Her applications are alive to the needs of godly women today. This 220 page paperback book is attractively bound, the layout is neat and the printing is excellent.

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(From Page 3)

the closet. Some of the attire and language used today cannot be described. Children are being physically and sexually abused and even killed (abortion) by their parents.

Rogland R. Hegstad wrote, "It has become fashionable to be 'broadminded,' a category into which more and more segments of society are striving to fit. Broad-mindedness is the keynote of our generation.

"Hollywood broad-mindedly hustles the philandering husband and the faithless wife on to the wide screen for the applause of the broad-minded masses. The chiseling cheat has his applauders, the price-fixing executive his apologists. Minds have been stretched so broad that in many cases little of moral substance seems to be left between the ears" (*Reader's Digest*, May 1991).

Must We Tolerate Indecency As "Freedom"?

"No, the real issue is decency — what all civilized societies demand. The real threat is not what might happen to the 'artistic rights' of a few lightweights, but what is happening to a society out of touch with its own standards and values. We are being desensitized to almost every form of degenerate behavior. We are being beguiled, in the name of 'freedom,' into accepting the degeneracy as 'the price we have to pay.'

"Pardon me, but no, it isn't. Giving in to the lowest common denominator is not what freedom is all about. Freedom is not just about doing and saying whatever one pleases, but also about responsibilities for the common welfare. It is about exercising our right not to put up with the depravities that weigh us down. Indeed, there is no freedom at all when there is no respect for human dignity" (John Underwood, "How Nasty Do We Wanna Be?", *Reader's Digest*, May 1991). I can only add an "amen".

Overview

This special examines the problem of indecency in our society. This article looks at the problem from a textual analysis of living in perilous times. *Harry Pickup, Jr.* demonstrates how that humanism is at the heart of the problem. *Gary Henry* deals with the obscenity found on the television and movie screens. *Frank Himmel* deals with some of the filthy lyrics that come from those in the music industry. *Colly Caldwell* deals with gross sexual perversion from the textual point of view. *Ed Bragwell* shows how the immodesty of the day violates plain Bible principles. *Hiram Hutto* deals with Biblical instructions about profanity as well as addressing the question of why people use coarse language. *Leon Mauldin* looks at the deplorable problem of child abuse. He deals with the text as well as up-to-date statistics.

We hope you find this special helpful in your own life and will purchase extra copies to pass on to others.

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Filthy Music

Have you ever wondered why God made music a part of our worship? Prayer is the expression of our heart's desire to God, including praise, thanksgiving, and requests for aid. The Lord's Supper keeps Jesus' death ever before us. Studying God's will is essential to knowing how to please Him. But why singing?

Singing is a natural expression of happiness, a fitting way to express our joy and our adoration for the Lord. Yet perhaps something else is involved. Music has a unique ability to touch our emotions, thereby enhancing the expression of our thoughts. What Christian has never felt goose bumps while energetically singing a great hymn such as *Our God, He is Alive*? Music is also a powerful ally in helping our retention. Little children who struggle to memorize the books of the Bible or the apostles can do it with ease when these lists are put to music. These special qualities of music give it great potential for good in serving God. Unfortunately, that same potential can be used to propagate evil when music is used to express ungodly ideas.

The music industry knows this. The late Jimi Hendrix said in an interview with *Life* in October, 1969, "... Music is a spiritual thing of its own.... I can explain anything better by music. You hypnotize people to where they go right back to their original state which is pure positive — like in childhood when you got natural highs. And when you get people at that weakest point, you can preach into the subconscious what we want to say."

The year my grandmother was born, the hit songs were *She'll Be Comin' Round the Mountain* and *My Wild Irish Rose*. In contrast, *Rolling Stone* listed as the number one song at the beginning of this year, *I'll Be Your Baby Tonight*. Clearly the message is changing, and not for the better.

The Extremes

Heavy metal music is saturated with **Satanism**. It preaches against Christ while encouraging Satanic worship and the occult. Go to your local music store and take a look at the boxes the CD's and cassettes come in. They are covered with Satanic pictures and symbols. The names of the groups themselves are revealing: The Almighty, Black Sabbath, Faith No More, Judas Priest, Metal Church, Nazareth, and Testament to

name a few. Now flip the box over and read the names of the songs. They include *Bring Your Daughter to the Slaughter*, *Dead Babies*, *Devil's Child*, *Flesh and Blood Sacrifice*, *Hell Ain't a Bad Place to Be*, *Living in Sin*, *Sin After Sin*, *Social Disease*, and *Suicide Solution*. These songs advocate everything from perverted sex (including necrophylia in *Cold Ethyl*) to human sacrifice to pyromania to suicide. The only rule seems to be to have no rules. The most appropriate title I found was a Black Sabbath song, *We Sold Our Soul for Rock 'n Roll*.

Gross sexual perversion is not uncommon in rock music. One of the top music videos of 1985 was *Hot for Teacher* by Van Halen. It depicted middle school age boys fantasizing about their teacher stripping to a bikini and dancing around on top of the desks. Several performers, such as Prince and Madonna, build their entire act around sex, exposing themselves as much as they can get away with. Prince's songs include *Do It All Night*, *Let's Pretend We're Married*, and *Darling Nikki*, which is about a girl standing in a hotel lobby engaging in self-gratification while looking at a magazine. Madonna's *Like a Virgin* has been well-publicized. One of her latest videos, *Justify My Love*, was even too raunchy for MTV to broadcast!

Profanity and vulgarity are also on the increase, especially with the emergence of rap music. 2 Live Crew's *Nasty As They Wanna Be* has brought on the ire of many communities. Unfortunately that wrath was insufficient to produce a conviction on obscenity charges last year. Despite the fact that the song contains graphic references to body parts and continual expletives (one term occurs over two hundred times!), Luther Campbell's attorney convinced a jury that this piece has artistic value. He said the problem is that some white folks just do not understand the culture!

The Norm

You will not hear most of the songs I have mentioned thus far on your local radio station. Even broadcasters realize that such lyrics are on the fringe and have limited appeal. (On the other hand, a few stations specialize in heavy metal music.) However, I am not sure that some of what is played on top forty stations is much improvement. The lyrics tend to be less graphic, but sin is still glamorized and advocated. And perhaps therein lies a greater danger. The more subtle the appeal of sin, the more easily it finds its way into our hearts. As we listen to these songs over and over we may become enamored with their catchy tunes and punch lines while ignoring the evil they promote. Remember, music makes the words stick. We are probably absorbing more than we realize.

Of course, not all top forty music is so subtle. For example, one of Heart's recent hits was *All I Wanna Do Is Make Love to You*. It is about a woman driving along in a rainstorm. She sees a man standing by the road and offers him a ride. Without even asking his name, she heads straight for a motel where they commit fornication



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(obviously that is not what they call it). In the chorus she cries out, "All I wanna do is make love to you, say you will, you want me too." Parents, is that the sentiment you want circulating in the head of your son or daughter when they are out with other young people? Later the song refers to seeds and trees. If we do not want the tree of immorality, we had better do something about the seed we are planting in our minds.

Sex is indisputably the common thread in rock music. But let no one think that rock has a monopoly on filthy music. Country music is right along beside it. Its two favorite themes seem to be honky tonkin' and adultery. Here is a list of titles I found on country albums: *Heaven Is Just a Sin Away*; *I Got a Right to Be Wrong*; *If Loving You is Wrong I Don't Want to Be Right*; *It Don't Feel like Sinner to Me*; *It's All Wrong, But It's All Right*; *Lay My Body Down*; *The Power of Positive Drinkin'*; *Whiskey Bent and Hell Bound*; *Your Cheaten' Heart*. Now folks, is there any difference between a country boy crooning about tears in his beer and a rocker screaming about escaping through drugs?

Not even classical music is blameless. More than a few operas are stories of lust and murder. Of course, most of us have no idea what in the world those folks are singing anyway!

The Solution

What can be done about filthy music? Some have advocated a rating system similar to what is used in the film industry. Albums with sexually explicit language or profanity or those that advocated violence would be identified with warning labels. That is not a bad idea. However, if the music industry does not do a better job rating its product than the film industry does, "safe" albums will not necessarily be safe at all. Even conservative worldly standards are far behind God's standard.

Shall we burn all of our records, tapes, and CD's? No, though that might be appropriate in a few cases, like the Ephesians' occult books (Acts 19:19). But not all rock or country music is bad. I am not crusading against any particular type of music. I am simply pointing out the ungodly influences that exist so that we may counter them.

The simple solution is that we need to learn to be selective about what we listen to. Just as we must be selective about what we watch on television (sometimes the best choice is channel off), and what movies we go see or rent to bring home, and what books we read, likewise we must be selective about the songs we listen to. When filthy music comes on, change the station or turn it off. Do not just sit there and listen thinking you will be unaffected. You are paying greater attention than you realize.

One more thing: we need to be as selective about the particular station we are listening to as we are about the music. Disc jockeys are getting increasingly bold. Profanity and bathroom humor are commonplace on some stations, especially during prime listening hours. It seems as though there is nothing that some of them will not talk about or joke about.

Parents, pay attention to what your children are listening to. Young people, do not dismiss this article as

the ravings of some old fogey preacher. It does make a difference what you fill your mind with. "Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life" (Pro. 4:23). "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things" (Ph. 4:8).

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Gross Sexual Perversions

"And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own habitation, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day; as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries" (NKJV, Jude 6-8).

Honorable Sexual Fulfillment

The wonderful God of heaven designed human beings with emotions and desires which complement all the noble purposes of life. Conjugal bonding to another who provides companionship and help through life is honorable. Bringing children into the world is honorable. Giving and receiving sexual fulfillment and happiness is honorable. These activities are only honorable, however, when accomplished within a relationship designed and ordained by God to protect both their honor and the honor of the persons involved. "**Marriage** is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled" (Heb. 13: 4). When Paul responded to the questions of the Corinthians, he said, "because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another..." (1 Cor. 7: 2-5). Complete sexual sharing between married partners is a part of God's great plan for our happiness and fulfillment.

Sexual Perversions

Isn't it sad, therefore, that so many in our society **are** not only winking at aberrant, deviate sexual practices but are also openly promoting them. Fornication, adultery and wife-swapping (both through remarriage and outside of marriage), homosexuality, lesbianism, rape and violent sexual abuse of women and children (both in

and out of the home), and sexual harassment (in schools, the workplace, and other social contexts) seem to top the list of sexual perversions we hear about most today. These abuses are fed by pornography (on film and on paper), entertainment houses (single bars, theaters, discotheques which exploit unclothed women under the guise of dancing, etc.), and a media which constantly bombards our society with pictures glorifying unclothed men and women engaged in activities and relationships which are immodest and immoral.

All such are properly identified as sin. They are sinful because they constitute rebellion against God's laws and because they violate God's plan for the fulfillment of sexual desires in honorable marriage. It is no wonder that these people are unfulfilled and unhappy sexually. The people most fulfilled are those who are committed to honor and to their mate's fulfillment. Those who are happiest are those who dedicate themselves to making their mates happy.

Jude's Identification Of Sexual Perversion

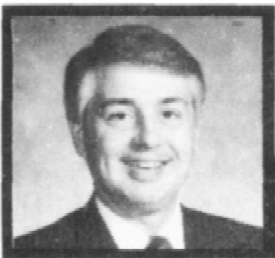
Jude dealt with ungodly men who, among other things, turned "the grace of our God into licentiousness" (vs. 4). One way in which they evidenced their basic unbelief was in their attitudes toward sexual immorality. Sexual perversion is not new. As it increases in a given society, however, that people becomes increasingly in danger of annihilation at the hand of God. Jude used two expressions to identify the sexual perversion of the people of Sodom, Gomorrah and surrounding cities (vs. 7).

The first is the term **porneia**. This word is translated "fornication" (KJV) or "sexual immorality" (NKJV). It is a general term which encompasses "every kind of unlawful sexual intercourse" (Arndt & Gingrich). Unchastity in sexual conduct in or out of marriage is identified as **porneia**. In this passage, **porneia** refers to the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah. **Porneia** is perversion of God's plan.

The other expression is translated "gone (or "going," **KJV**) after strange flesh." The men of Sodom called to Lot and asked, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may know them carnally" (Gen. 19: 5). Their **porneia** took the form of homosexuality. The consequences to them was destruction. They are set forth with "the angels who did not keep their proper domain" as examples of those who suffer "the vengeance of eternal fire."

Jude's Characterization Of Perverts

Having identified the perversion, Jude proceeds to characterize the perverts. He cuts to the heart of human sexual crimes against God by specifying four integral problems with their mentality.



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First, they are called "dreamers" ("filthy dreamers," KJV). People involved in sexual perversion of any of the types identified in this article are dreaming. Their supposed pleasure is not real. Fornicators "dream" of excitement which is temporary at best. They fanaticize momentary ecstasy which cannot bring lasting honorable satisfaction and fulfillment because it is based on selfish, physical enjoyment rather than joy in sharing true love with one's wife. Both the involvement and the outcomes are imagined.

Second, they "defile the flesh." Paul said to the Corinthians that "the body is not for sexual immorality" and that "he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body" (1 Cor. 6: 13, 18). To the Romans he said "God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves" (Rom. 1: 24). He continued the same theme when he said to the Thessalonians that they "should abstain from sexual immorality that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor" (1 Thes. 4: 3, 4).

Remember, sexual perversions are not honorable. Marriage is honorable. That, of course, reminds us that when one marries, he/she becomes "one flesh" with the mate. When one "defiles the flesh," "sins against his own body," and "dishonors his body," he does that against his wife because she is now one flesh with him. It is from that consideration that we must recognize adultery as well as homosexuality as a "gross sexual perversion!"

Third, Jude says that the perverted mentality "rejects authority." The mind which says, "I will do what I wish to my own pleasure," is rebellious. The individual who goes to bed with another than his/her mate rebels against the law of God. The person who seeks sexual pleasure with one of the same sex totally disregards both the law and the righteousness which stands behind the law (Rom. 8: 3, 4). Jude goes on to say, "But these speak evil of whatever they do not know; and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves. Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah" (Jude 10-11). Go back and study the implications and applications of these two verses to the sexual perversions we are considering.

And fourth, Jude says that they "speak evil of dignitaries." The word "dignitaries" is literally "glories" or "glorious ones." These call what is evil "good" and call what is good "evil." They ridicule those who serve the Lord and make fun of the lives of the faithful. They sometimes blaspheme spiritual beings even slurring the name of God Himself. Such is the nature of those who have degraded themselves to such depths of immorality.

Wicked men are compared by Jude to "spots in your love feasts" (hidden reefs), "clouds without water," "trees without fruit," "raging waves foaming to their own shame," and "wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever" (Jude 12-13). There is no substance to them. The Lord will come "with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their

ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him" (Jude 15). Our instruction is to "keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 21) and "others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh" (Jude 23). Let us preach against the sins of the flesh! Let us call upon men to repent. And let us remember that when we sing, "Just As I Am," we do not mean that we may REMAIN "Just As We Have Been. "

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On August 8, 9 Travis Quertermous of Morley, Missouri will affirm. Dan Richardson of Vanduser, Missouri will deny.

On August 12, 13 Marion W. Ferrell of Charleston, Missouri will affirm. Dick Blackford of Tuckerman, Arkansas will deny.

There will be a question and answer period.

Indecent Dress

Since the fall of man in the garden, men and women have needed to be adequately and decently clothed. When Adam and Eve sinned they became conscious of their nakedness and were ashamed — a consciousness and sense of shame needed in a world invaded by sin. They tried to cloth themselves with aprons of fig leaves, but God clothed them more adequately and decently (Gen. 2: 25-3: 31). It is interesting that the sacred text does not say that the aprons clothed them, but rather the coats or tunics that God made for them.

I heard a brother say that if he could find some of the fruit that Adam and Eve ate, he would pass it out to the sisters by the bushel — so that they would open their eyes and know that they were naked (Gen. 3: 7). I might add to that many are still sewing together less than fig leaves and calling themselves clothed.

Adornment: Inside And Out

Misinterpretations of Peter's teaching about outward adorning (1 Peter 3: 1-4), have led to several extremes. Some conclude that all outward adorning such as wearing gold, braiding the hair, and the like is forbidden. It should be obvious that this is not what Peter meant, or else one could wear **no clothes** because another example given of outward adorning is that of "putting on of apparel." While some versions other than the King James and American Standard say **fine** apparel, **fine** is obviously an interpolation supplied by the translators and is so indicated by italics in the New King James.

This is one of those "not... but..." passages where the "not" portion of the passage may indeed be important, but is not nearly as important as the "but" portion. (John 6: 27 is another example of such a passage). Having correctly understood that the inward adorning is **far more important** than any outward adorning, one must not conclude that outward adorning is of **no** importance. Whoever said that "clothes do not make the man" may have been right, but it is also true that clothes may be a reflection of the man (or woman). The way that we dress sends certain signals about ourselves. This is why godly women should dress as **women professing godliness** (1 Tim. 2: 10). They want to signal their true character before all.

One's dress may reflect one's socio-economic standing (Jas. 2: 1-4). Since, among saints, no partiality should be shown based on this factor, we should not

show favoritism toward one whose clothing may reflect either prosperity or poverty. However, the fact still remains that the way one dresses does say something about the person.

One's dress may reflect one's attitude toward an occasion. Joseph was about to appear before the Pharaoh, so he "he shaved, changed his clothing, and came to Pharaoh" (Gen. 41: 14). Queen Esther wanted an audience with the king, so she "put on her royal apparel" (Esther 5: 1). A wedding guest was expelled from a king's wedding feast for his son for not wearing the wedding garment (which, I am told, was customarily supplied by the host) (Matt. 22: 11, 12). All of this points to the fact that special occasions call for special attention being paid to one's dress. How one dresses for the occasion reflects his attitude toward the occasion.

When we assemble around the Lord's table to commemorate the great sacrifice of our Savior and to otherwise worship Him, is this not a very special occasion? Is it a casual event? Yet, I sometimes see brethren who have good clothes, fitting for other special occasions, and who are careful to arrange their appearance for those occasions, attend the worship services looking like they had just come from or were heading to a hog-killing. Casual occasions may call for casual and unkept appearance, but publicly worshipping the Lord is no such occasion.

Dress And Character

One's dress may reflect one's personal character traits. For example, if one, with the means to do otherwise, habitually appears in public with unkept clothing, hair and general appearance; it is a pretty good indication of laziness and carelessness on his part.

Likewise, one may indicate either godliness or ungodliness by the way one dresses. Solomon speaks of seeing a young man devoid of understanding meeting a woman with the **attire of a harlot** (Prov. 7: 6-9). Judah mistook Tamar for a harlot because of her outward appearance (Gen. 38: 14, 15). This did not justify Judah's action, but it does show that one's outward appearance can send out ungodly signals. How often have I heard it said of some sisters that they dress "like street walkers" and find it hard to disagree. A person who professes godliness should dress as a person professing godliness (1 Tim. 2: 10). If Christians are not the wrong kind of people and do not want to be identified as such, then they should not signal by the way that they dress that they are.

The way Christians dress should indicate a sense of modesty, propriety and moderation because these traits should be a part of their very character. Three significant Greek words, referring to a Christian's character, are used relative to a Christian woman's apparel in 1 Tim. 2: 9: **kosmios**, **aidos**, and **sophrosune**. The way one dresses is indicative of whether the person possesses these characteristics or not. **Kosmios** ("modest") means "orderly, well-arranged, decent, modest... of good behavior (1 Tim. 3: 2 KJV)" (Vine). **Aidos** ("propriety" - NKJ,



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"shamefacedness" - KJV, "shamefastness" - ASV, "decency" - NIV is "that modesty which is 'fast' rooted in the character" (Vine). **Sophrosune** ("moderation" - NKJ, "sobriety" - KJV, ASV) is a "habitual inner self-government, with its constant rein on the passion and desires..." (Vine).

Those professing godliness are to be governed by chastity or purity (Greek **hagnos** - Phil 4: 8; 1 Tim. 5: 22; Titus 2: 5; James 3: 17; 1 Pet 3: 2; 1 John 3: 3), rather than sensuality. They seek to conceal rather than shamefully (or shamelessly) revealing their nakedness (cf. Ex. 28: 42; Rev. 3: 18; 16: 15). They should refrain from sexually provocative clothing or gestures (cf. Prov. 7: 10, 11, 21-23). By doing this they can keep themselves pure and avoid being a stumbling block to others (cf. Matt. 5: 28; 18: 6-9).

What We Are Seeing

More and more Christians are dressing in a sexually provocative manner. In fact, Christians who have been taught that sexually provocative clothing is wrong and still want to wear such clothing to be "in style" are about the only ones who try to deny that such is provocative. Most people in the world freely admit that this is why they find such apparel appealing. Sex appeal is the name of the game with many of the fashion designers of this world.

Many wear clothing in public that barely stops short of complete nudity. The shame of their nakedness is revealed either by clothing that is too brief or too tight. I sometimes see sisters out in their yards, out shopping, around recreational areas, at beaches and pools or at sporting events (both fans and participants) that expose at least as much flesh as they would in their underwear. I also see brothers at the same places in very short shorts without a shirt. If all of this is decent or modest apparel — pray tell what could be immodest or indecent and still be called apparel. Remember there is such a thing as "modest apparel", necessarily implying the reality of "immodest apparel."

Others wear clothing, even to church services, that may not be as brief but is about as revealing. Skirts and dresses that are so short that make it impossible for one to stand or sit in a decent manner and revealing as much or more flesh than the shorts mentioned above. Dresses, skirts, pants, and tops that are near skin tight that reveal the very form of private parts are all too frequently worn. Dresses and skirts, though they may be nearly to the ankles, are sometimes slit so as to reveal the entire leg with every step. Dresses very low cut at the top are not uncommon. A person who defends the design of such clothing as decent and non-sensual is either woefully naive or shamefully dishonest.

Brothers and sisters, we need to be careful about how we dress; but, more importantly, we need to constantly examine our hearts so as to develop and protect that basic sense of decency and shamefastness that should characterize Christians — then dress accordingly.

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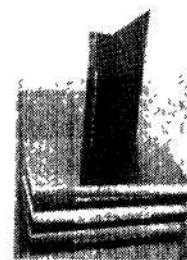
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Abusing Children

There are no doubt many factors involved in child abuse (abortion, physical abuse, sexual abuse), but one of the greatest determinants is what Paul calls being "without natural affection" (Romans 1: 31). Our widespread problem of child abuse, and the heartless, unfeeling lack of natural affection that accompanies it was a plight of major proportions in New Testament times:

"*Storge* was the special Greek word for family love. It was quite true that this was an age in which family love was dying. Never was the life of the child so precarious as at this time. Children were considered a misfortune. When a child was born, the child was taken and laid at the father's feet. If the father lifted up the child that meant that he acknowledged it. If he turned away and left it the child was literally thrown out. There was never a night when there were not thirty or forty abandoned children left in the Roman forum. Every night in life children were literally thrown away" (Barclay, *The Letter to the Romans*, p. 32). [Seneca wrote]... children who are born weakly and deformed we drown" (Ibid, pp. 32-33).

Some want to leave the impression that the issue of abortion is so complicated that no one could possibly say what is right or wrong; that each person will have to decide for himself. The truth is that it is not such a complicated issue. It is quite simple to determine from the word of God what is right or wrong. We just have complicated ideas which create confusion about a fundamental moral issue. People get themselves into complicated situations; the way of the transgressor is hard (Prov. 13: 15). But truth is attainable "if any man willeth to do His will" (John 7: 17).

Abortion is shedding innocent blood. God hates those who do so (Prov. 6: 17). Abortion violates the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill." Murderers will have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death" (Rev. 21: 8).

There can be no doubt that God recognizes the unborn as a living child. When Elizabeth was pregnant, the unborn "babe" leaped in her womb at the salutation of Mary (Luke 1: 41). The same word (*brephos*) is used to denote the newborn child (Luke 2: 12, 16) as well as the older child (Luke 18: 15). Consider also Psalm 139: 13: "For Thou didst form my inward parts; Thou didst weave me in my mother's womb" (NASB).

Abortion Statistics

How extensive is the problem of abortion? Perhaps you have seen the statistics that show that since 1775, 1, 186, 654 American soldiers have been killed in wars, but from 1973-1989, over 25, 000, 000 abortions have occurred in the United States. The proportion and magnitude of the problem is seen in that "nationally, one third of all pregnancies are terminated by abortion" (NFD Journal, Apr. 84).

When can a baby be aborted? Maura K. Quinlan, chief staff counsel for Americans United for Life was quoted in the July 1987 issue of *Focus on the Family* as saying, "While most Americans know that abortion is legal on demand in the first three months of pregnancy, very few realize that it is also legal—for almost any reason—until birth." It is estimated that between eight and ten percent of abortions take place during the second and third trimester.

Child Sexual Abuse

It is difficult to obtain precise, reliable statistics on sexual abuse of children, because of "significant under-reporting" of cases. But the best and most recent information available indicates that in 1989, of the 2. 4 million reports of child abuse and neglect recorded nationally by child welfare agencies, that 16%, or 384, 000 were reports of sexual abuse. The total reports indicated a 10% increase from 1988 to 1989 (The National Resource Center on Child Sexual Abuse).

Other statistics state that the "largest retrospective study of adult populations estimated that approximately 27% of women and 16% of men had experienced some form of childhood sexual mistreatment/abuse" (ibid.).

These statistics are similar to those reported by Andre Bustanoby in his booklet, *When You've Been Abused*: "... one in four girls will be a victim of sexual abuse by the time she is eighteen" (p. 13).

Further, a very high percentage of perpetrators are known by child victims. "Fewer than 20% of children are abused by strangers" (NRC). Mrs. Marilyn Atler, Miss America of 1957, spoke to a prevention and treatment group (May 8, 1991), telling "how she'd been sexually abused by her father between the ages of five and eighteen, but buried it in her mind." She had been silent about the abuse for thirty years.

This silence is a common peculiarity to incest and other sexual abuse. "The silence can have a deadly effect. Though anxiety may be masked for years, the secret is a psychological time-bomb (emphasis mine, L. M.). Guilt, confusion, depression and passivity can suddenly explode into self-destructive behavior, even suicide" (Bustanoby, p. 54).

Physical Abuse Fatalities

Do you remember the Baby Doe case that attracted



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national attention in April 1982? A baby boy was born with Down's Syndrome, and an esophageal fistula that prevents food from passing to the stomach. Acting on the advice of their obstetrician, the parents refused corrective surgery, and denied their baby intravenous nourishment and water. Several families offered to adopt him, but they were refused. He cried from hunger the first four days. Then he was too weak to cry any longer. He died six days after his birth. Sadly, this was not a notable exception.

In Michigan, sixty-two children were abused to death between January 1, 1984, and December 31, 1988. Tragically, nearly one-third of these lived in families that had previously been reported to the Child Protective Services (*The Detroit News and Free Press*, Aug. 18, 1990).

Abandonment

Increasingly we hear of cases of child abandonment. In Texas, Mike Cocannon, a 35 year-old lawyer went into a store for only thirty minutes; when he returned to his car he discovered that someone had left a nine pound baby boy, wrapped in a piece of cloth, in his front seat.

A Child Protective Services supervisor was quoted as saying, "I had a case where the mother met some guys at a fast-food place. She asked them to watch her one-year old baby while she went off to buy diapers. It was the last they saw of her."

In Alabama, in the three months between December, 1989, and February, 1990 four newborn babies were abandoned. A Jefferson County social worker was quoted as saying, "We get millions of calls about abandoned babies. Everybody wants to adopt them" (*Birmingham Post Herald*, Feb. 18, 1990).

Infant Drug Addiction

February's *Reader's Digest* contained an article entitled "Kids Who Can't Say No." It told how expectant mothers who smoke "crack" (crystallized cocaine) force the drug, with all of its effects, upon their developing infants. Also, the amniotic fluid is contaminated by crack byproducts. The article referred to resulting birth defects, such as Ronald, whose head was twenty percent smaller than normal, and Tony (two pounds at birth), who was born with an incurable liver disease, and consequently died at three months. Babies whose mothers smoked crack are more likely to be born prematurely.

The Problem And The Divine Solution

Our adversary the devil perseveres in his work of destroying souls (1 Pet. 5: 8). He is never idle. "Band-aids" are not sufficient to quench the fiery darts of the evil one. What is needed is the whole armor of God (Eph. 6: 10-18). Surface cures, such as "sex education" courses, do not address the real problem. Abortion, and physical and sexual abuse grows out of a heart of rebellion and disobedience to the will of God.

When there is a lack of faith in God and His word, bedlam and chaos ensue in ones value system. This is seen in the current "animal rights" movement. For

example, a newspaper cartoon, which was not intended to be funny, but make you think, depicted two women carrying signs. One sign read, "No Furs". The other sign contained the words, "Stop Abortion". The animal rights activist, with the "No Furs" sign, said to the "pro-life" woman, "I don't understand why you're so upset. It's not like they're killing minks or anything..."

1 Thess. 4: 3 reads, "For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality." It is the one who disregards or even shows contempt for such warnings that is faced with the question of what to do now that an unwanted conception has taken place, or has to deal with the problems of incest. The solution is to listen to and obey God's Word (Gal. 5: 19; Heb. 13: 4). God's answer to the problem of child abuse is that the older women teach the younger women to love their children (Titus 2: 3-5). The only solution is more teaching and living of the principles of God's Word. Only this will "turn the hearts of the fathers to the children" (Lk. 1: 68).

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Coarse Language

"A rap group is declared obscene. Comics get condemned by pressure groups. Serious movies garner X ratings. A Cardinal of the church blames a rock singer for teen suicides. In a four-letter world, what's a citizen to do? See it in perspective, and take it in stride. *Another view*: Entertainers should censor themselves before the state does it for them." With these words in its May 7, 1990 issue, *TIME* magazine previews its feature article on "Dirty Words, America's Foul-Mouthed Culture." When a subject has become so prominent as to be put on the cover of *TIME* it is certain that the subject must be of no small dimension. And while most of the article dealt with the entertainment world and its "foul-mouth," we can rest assured that coarse language is not limited to that area. It is in the work place, in newspapers, the songs, the literature, television, movies, news programs, on radio and television, sports programs, and what is saddest of all, on the tongues of some who are supposed to be Christians. Some expressions have become so prevalent as to seem as normal as breathing.

The Bible's Teaching

While the foregoing is true, it is certainly not because the Bible is unclear in its teaching on this subject. Consider these passages:

Exodus 20:7. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain."

Leviticus 19:12. "Ye shall not... profane the name of thy God."

Leviticus 19:14. "Thou shalt not curse the deaf."

Psalms 10:7. "His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and oppression; under his tongue is mischief and iniquity."

Psalms 62:4. "... they bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly."

Psalms 109:17. "Yea, he loved cursing, and it came to him; and he delighted not in blessing, and it was far from him."

Ephesians 4:29. "Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for edifying as the need may be, that it may give grace to them that hear."

Ephesians 5:3-4. "... all uncleanness ..., let it not even be named among you, as becometh saints; nor filthiness, nor foolish talking, or jesting, which are not befitting."

James 3:9-10. Concerning the tongue, "Therewith bless we the Lord and Father; and therewith curse we men, who are made after the likeness of God: out of the same mouth cometh forth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be."

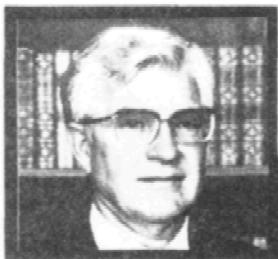
Various Forms Of Coarse Language

1. *Profanity*. In this, that which is sacred and worthy of reverence is treated with contempt or without any sense of respect. Here perfectly good words, in their proper context, are used in an irreverent and degrading manner. For example, in Mark 16:16 Jesus said, "He that believeth not shall be *damned*." Everyone knows what the word *damned* means in this passage, but that certainly is not the way it is profanely used. And when the Bible says, "the wicked shall be turned into *hell*" (Psalms 19:17) we understand the meaning of this word, but profanity uses it for almost every conceivable idea.

And what shall we say about the name "God"? Of all words, surely this one deserves the greatest reverence. Concerning it Jesus said, "Hallowed be thy name" (Matt. 6:9). When Paul said "*My God* shall supply every need of yours" it was used as a sacred term. But have you noticed the extent to which this expression is on nearly every person's tongue? You can hardly see the news on television or hear someone interviewed but what it is used several times. Such *expletives* ought to be *deleted*.

However, this "hard" cursing is not all there is. Many use profanity but in a "softer" and, to them, a less offensive way. These are called euphemisms. Such words as *gosh*, *golly*, *gee*, *gee-whiz*, *darn* are defined as being mild oaths and are simply softened ways of using profanity. Look them up in a dictionary. When the Bible says, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain", the word "vain" simply means "for nothing", and that is precisely what such euphemisms do. Perhaps some will say, "I didn't know that that is what these words mean." Neither does a child know what some bad words he hears at school mean. But, should he be allowed to continue to use them? Of course not, nor should we.

2. *Coarse Language*. It is a sad commentary on the morals of our society that it is willing to take people who tell obscene jokes and use gutter language and put them on a pedestal, consider them to be heroes and pay them millions of dollars per year. What is even sadder is that some members of the church know more about these than they do about outstanding characters in the Bible. It just might be they have spent more time with the former than they have with the latter. The words are such that they could not appear in these pages and ought not to be willingly or voluntarily allowed in the ears of Christians. I thought one time that I would set aside an hour and count the immoralities that were glorified in



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country music, but I just didn't have the stomach for it. Why any Christians should allow such to be drummed into their ears for hours on end is beyond me.

Again, the Bible is quite clear on this. When it condemns "foolish talking or jesting" it is dealing with the very thing that is described as coarse language. While many may think the talk shows, etc. are funny, the Bible says "Fools make a mock of sin" (Prov. 14: 9).

Why?

Several years ago I read an article concerning the research done by some psychologists as to why people use such language. It was their conclusion that "cussing" or "cussers" come in two categories: 1. *Social swearing*, which is the effort to be friendly or one of the gang, and 2. *Annoyance swearing*, stemming from obvious reasons. Since then, I have read of some other reasons (?). 3. *Weakness of intellect*. There are approximately 400, 000 words in the English language. When a person is so limited in his vocabulary that he cannot find decent words from such a vast number to express him-self he certainly betrays a poverty of intellect. 4. *It adds spice to language*. Where did the idea originate that language needs to be spicy? It does need to be with "grace" (Col. 4: 6). But I do not read that it needs to be

with spice.

No doubt there are other excuses for profanity and obscenity but Jesus give the *real* reason when He said, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. The good man out of his good treasure bringeth forth good things: and the evil man out of his evil treasure bringeth forth evil things" (Matt. 12: 34-35). People use bad language because they have evil hearts.

We need to be characterized by the sentiment of David in Psalms 39: 1, "I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue." Let us remember, "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matt. 12: 36-37). We certainly do not want our speech to be such that it will cause us to be like the rich man who lifted up his eyes in torment and cried for Lazarus to "dip the tip of his finger in water, and *cool my tongue*; for I am in anguish in this flame" (Luke 16: 24).

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	324
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(Taken from bulletins and papers
received by the editor)

SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

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



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

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THINK ON
THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 1631
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THE PROBLEM WITH A LITTLE LEAVEN

For some time a large body of religious teachers and leaders have been busy trying to find a basis for "unity" in what they call "diversity" of opinions on Bible teaching. Many of them are interested only in opening their arms to embrace all who "believe that Jesus is Lord and Christ." The doctrine of doing something to be saved, or obeying the law of Christ, is obnoxious to them. They want to be "Free" from all law in Christ. But that is not possible if one wants to be saved. All who will go to heaven must obey God (Matt. 7: 21, 22). All who "obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" will be "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (2 Thess. 1: 8, 9). That "law of Christ" is the gospel which began in Jerusalem when the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles and began to guide them into all truth (Gal. 8: 2; John 16: 13; Acts 1: 1, 2, 8; 2: 4; 31-33).

Who will go to hell? Who will be lost in eternity? The answer clearly is: All who live and die in sin. Sin and iniquity separate men from God (Isaiah 59: 1, 2). "Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come... I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8: 21, 24). All those who disobey and reject the will of God are sinners

Sin is defined as the "transgression of the law" (1 John 3: 4). Where no law is, there is no transgression (Rom. 4: 15). If we are not under law, of any kind, we are not sinners, because the apostle Paul said where there is no law, there is no sin. That is what the word of God says. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3: 23). Both Jew and Gentile, all men, are guilty of disobeying the law of the Lord, and are therefore sinners. Unless these sinners hear and obey the gospel, which is the power of God to save, they will be lost.

I am sick of hearing brethren whine because one speaks forthrightly against error from the pulpit, in the classroom, in religious journals and publications and in private studies from house to house. Over the years I have had my part of canceled meetings, canceled subscriptions to Searching The Scriptures, when I edited the paper; and verbal assaults by phone, letter and in person. My offense was to speak out about error someone was teaching.

The critics always, charge that one who opposes error is attacking the person who is teaching the error rather than the error. Who was guilty when Christ opposed error in the strongest terms? Any one who has read the 23rd chapter of Matthew cannot deny that Christ used plain and forceful speech in denouncing the scribes and Pharisees for their sins against God and the people. They taught and practiced things contrary to the word of God (Matt. 15: 7-9). Jesus called them hypocrites, and said they would compass land and sea to make one proselyte, and when he is made, they make him twofold more the child of hell than they were (Matt 23: 15).

Stephen, one of the seven chosen in Jerusalem to attend to the needs of the Grecian widows, was opposed by some of the most prominent religious leaders of his day. The plain truth he preached to them, recorded in Acts 7, caused his death by this mob of religious fanatics. Even in the face of death, Stephen said to them, 'Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just

One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it" (Acts 7: 51-53).

Some say, it was different then because Stephen was inspired and knew the hearts of these people. Stephen was inspired to speak the truth, not to judge their hearts. He knew their false teaching and opposition to the doctrine of Christ which began on the Pentecost following the resurrection of Christ. He knew also that the truth of this doctrine would make men free (John 8: 32). If error was not opposed without compromise, the doctrine of Christ would not convict these people of their sins that they might be saved. Stephen loved the truth and the souls of the lost. For that reason he denounced error that truth may prevail.

Would some of these complaining brethren condemn courageous preachers of the gospel today for doing exactly what Christ and Stephen did in opposing error? We could cite verses that tell of Peter, James, John, Paul and the other apostles doing the same thing. The reason: that is what the gospel requires of all who preach the gospel of Christ. Do we not teach that disciples of Christ should do as he did? Paul said, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11: 1). "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample" (Phil. 3: 17). That has been preached from the beginning.

If faithful brethren love the truth enough to oppose error any where and at all times, regardless of who teaches it, why should they not be regarded as faithful to the Lord, just as Stephen and Paul are?

The truth of the matter is that one cannot preach Christ and his word without condemning error. Just remember that "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." Let error and evil remain with those of truth and good, and before long the power of truth and good is destroyed by the error and evil. "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12: 21).

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—Connie W. Adams, Editor

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" QUOTE

"Truth is tough. It will not break, like a bubble, at a touch. Nay, you may kick it about all day, and it will be round and full at evening."

—Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr.

UNQUOTE "

Editorial

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"EVIL COMMUNICATIONS CORRUPT GOOD MANNERS"

This frequently quoted phrase is found in 1 Cor. 15: 33. Many who are reading this have this text memorized. Let's see its context, its meaning and how it applies to us.

The NKJV says, "Evil company corrupts good habits." The ASV states, "Evil companionships corrupt good morals."

This text is generally used in a discussion of choosing our friends. We rightfully warn that running with the wrong crowd can easily destroy one's morality. Our text is cited as proof of our warning. However, there is another circumstance that we need to see in the context of the 1 Cor. 15.

The Context

Chapter fifteen deals with the resurrection from the dead. There were some (probably Greeks) at Corinth who denied that there would be a resurrection in the end of time. They denied a *general* resurrection. Yet, they believed in the *resurrection of Christ*. Thus, Paul argues from the resurrection of Christ to the general resurrection in the end of time.

The first section of the chapter presents The Resurrection Of Christ - An Established Fact (vs. 1-11). The gospel that was preached, believed and by which the Corinthians were saved centered around the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (vs. 1-4). There were witnesses of the resurrection (vs. 5-11).

The second section argues that **All Men Shall Be Raised** (vs. 12-34). Paul speaks of our hopeless condition if there is no resurrection from the dead (vs. 12-19). If there is no resurrection, then Christ has not been raised. Thus, our faith is vain, we are still in sin and the dead have perished. We are to be pitied more than any person because of the empty hope we have of being raised.

Yet, the resurrection of Christ provides hope for us (vs. 20-28). The resurrection of Christ tells us it is possible to be raised again.

Then Paul raises this question: If there is no resurrection, then why do you do what you do (vs. 29-34)? Why are you baptized in view of death? Why do you stand in jeopardy every hour? And, why do you fight and resist evil (vs. 31-34)?

The third section of the chapter deals with The

Nature of The Resurrection (vs. 35-63). We plant a physical (corruptible) body, and a spiritual (incorruptible) body will be raised (vs. 35-44). In the resurrection we will bear the image of the heavenly Adam (vs. 45-49). Since flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, our bodies must be changed (vs. 50-53).

The fourth section pictures the **Victory Over Death Through Christ (vs. 54-57)**.

The Last division of the chapter tells us that **We Must Live In View Of The Resurrection (v. 58)**.

It is obvious that the context is dealing with the denial of the general resurrection. Thus, a statement about "evil company" would refer to those who taught that there is no resurrection.

While it is true that choosing the wrong friends can lead us astray, the verse is in the context of false teachers corrupting morals with the error they teach.

The Text

In the previous verse Paul had shown the consequences to the doctrine. He said, "If the dead do not rise, 'Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die'" (v. 32). The doctrine being taught to the Corinthians would lead to all forms of sensuality and immorality. That's why he said "Evil company corrupts good habits" (v. 33).

Let's see what some of the commentators have said about our text. "So Paul insists that the Corinthians must not associate with those who say that there is no resurrection. To associate with such is inevitably to risk an infection which can pollute life" (William Barclay, *The Letters To The Corinthians*, p. 174).

"Paul's use of it here was to warn the Corinthians against any toleration of the evil teachers who were denying the resurrection; for the toleration of them was certain to have corrupted some of the church. The truth spoken is timeless and applicable to all who ever lived in any generation" (Burton Coffman, *Commentary on 1 Corinthians*, p. 260).

"Paul warns the Corinthians against associating with evil men. He seems to have in mind those who were denying the resurrection. He has just shown how their doctrine would logically result in the abandonment of morality in favor of sensuality. Some believe that we may associate closely with the wicked or tolerate the false teacher in the church without being affected by them, but Paul says one who so believes is deceived" (Darrell Conley, *1 Corinthians* (Living Way Adult Series), p. 107).

This verse can only mean one thing in this context. Paul is telling the Corinthians to cease associating with those among them who denied the resurrection of the dead. The influence of such men might not be evident at first, but it would, nonetheless, lead to a destroyed morality. At first, the false doctrine would appear to be an innocent theory about the dead; soon those who accepted it would reason, "Why deny myself of this fleshly pleasure since there is no resurrection anyway?" This truth is just as applicable today as ever before. Association with those who deny some of God's revelation, still corrupts good morality" (Mike Willis, *A Commentary On Paul's First Epistle To The Corinthians*, pp. 567-568).

Many scholars and commentators connect our text with the writings of Menander, a heathen poet (3rd century B. C.). Some think it has been passed on as a proverb. It is possible that Menander was only citing a proverb as he wrote. However, Paul uses it here by inspiration to warn the Corinthians.

The Application

Yes, this verse can be properly applied to friendships and associations with the wrong crowd. The verse is a general statement from which Paul makes specific application. We need to echo this proverb to our young people time and again.

Our text also applies to our association with those who teach a doctrine that will corrupt our morals. Today there are a number of doctrines that will do that, but one that is certain to do so is the false teaching on divorce and remarriage. There are brethren today who wonder what harm there is in someone teaching that the alien is not amenable, that the guilty party can remarry or that those who have committed adultery need not separate when they are baptized. The same question could have been raised about those who deny the resurrection.

The danger was that if those who listened believed the doctrine of no resurrection and lived consistent with it, it would lead to immorality (1 Cor. 15: 32). When people believe what is being taught by some today on divorce and remarriage and live consistent with what is taught, they are guilty of adultery (Matt. 19: 9).

Was Paul not informed as to how to handle these teachers who denied the resurrection? Maybe someone should have pointed out that the issue of the resurrection was not all that clear. There were some side issues that had to be discussed like the nature of the body that is raised. Therefore, there would be no need to draw any lines of fellowship. Why would this not work on the issue of the resurrection since we are told that it works on divorce and remarriage?

Maybe Paul did not know that the Corinthians could just tell these teachers that they disagreed with their position and thus they would not be having fellowship on that point. Why would that not work since that is being argued on the question of divorce and remarriage?


It would seem that someone could have told Paul that the question of the resurrection was just an individual matter and does not affect the collectivity.

I suspect that a better conclusion is that Paul knew exactly how the teachers of an erroneous position should be handled.

The lesson that I learn from our text is the danger of corrupting morals by false teaching. The teaching that the alien is not amenable to the law of Christ on marriage leads to adultery. The teaching that the guilty party can remarry leads to adultery. The teaching that the couple who have divorced and remarried (contrary to Matt. 19: 9) do not have to separate leads to adultery. Thus, our morals are corrupted by those who so teach. Who can deny it?

Commending you to

THE WORD OF HIS GRACE



Marshall E. Patton

1024 Coronado Dr., S. E.
Huntsville, Alabama 35802

**THE LOVE OF GOD—
ROMANS 8—NO. 5
THE HOLY SPIRIT — "HELPETH
OUR INFIRMITIES"—VS. 26, 27**

"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. "

In our former lesson (vs. 17-25), **hope** is set before us as a sustaining power and motivating force throughout all human suffering. In this lesson our text adds further comfort and encouragement to those who are children of God who might grow weary under the burdens we are called upon to bear.

Controversial

Many know already that these verses are highly controversial. Fortunately, however, not all erroneous views are fatal. Brother J. W. McGarvey, one of our highly esteemed pioneer preachers, pointed this out clearly in his sermon on "Believing A Lie." He made use of the young prophet of Judah (1 Kings 13) showing that while he believed a lie that was fatal, there were other lies he might have believed that would not have resulted in a fatality: "If, for example, the old prophet had said, an angel sent me to tell you to get from under this tree and run for your life, and not stop until you get home, the young man would have been scared, and would have run himself out of breath; but the lion would not have killed him. In like manner, I can imagine a man believing some lies in religion, which, though they may injure him some, and I suppose there are very few that would not, might yet fall short of proving fatal to him... If the belief of a lie, then, leads a man to commit sin, it will prove fatal unless that sin shall be forgiven. It was thus with the young prophet. The lie which he believed led him to disobey God" (**Sermons**, By J. W. McGarvey, p. 334). I judge that nearly all, if not all, of the differences among brethren over our text would not lead one into a practice that would involve a transgression of God's will. Hence, tolerance is to be exercised. Alexander Campbell said of the position he affirmed on the very verses of our text: "But I make no bond of union, no terms of commun-

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ion, no condition of fellowship in the adoption or rejection of it. I have no such intolerant spirit. I offer it as a favor to those who look for instruction" (**Millennial Harbinger**, Vol. I, p. 115). However, let me say with a great deal of emphasis that such an attitude toward such verses is no reason to cast aside further diligent study of the issues involved. Honest, diligent study of any revelation of God to man is not only a divine obligation but also very beneficial and rewarding.

Three Prominent Views

There are three prominent views some times expressed by brethren on our text: 1) Some say that the "Spirit" that "helpeth our infirmities" is our own spirit, and that the "groanings which cannot be uttered" are likewise those of the human spirit; that the Holy Spirit is not involved in the verses at all. 2) Others say that the "Spirit" that "helpeth our infirmities" is the Holy Spirit, and that the groanings "which cannot be uttered" are those of the human spirit which groanings are presented by the Holy Spirit to the Father thereby making intercession for us. 3) Still others say that the "Spirit" that "helpeth our infirmities" is the Holy Spirit, and that the "groanings which cannot be uttered" are likewise those of the Holy Spirit. In other words, it is the Holy Spirit throughout that **helps** us, that makes the **groanings**, and that **intercedes** for us. This latter position is the one I hold to be true.

Views Examined

View Number One: The contextual study of these verses demands that the Holy Spirit be recognized as the **helper** in this instance. Remember, the theme of the whole chapter is "The Love Of God" (God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit), which love is manifested toward us in the redemption of our souls. Why should Paul turn aside from this theme to inject a **helper** from another source?

Besides this, the one who needs help in this instance is the one who **knows not** "what we should pray for as we ought." **Knowing** is not an attribute of the outward man. This eliminates the body and leaves only the inward man in need of help. The body apart from the spirit is dead (Jas. 2: 26). If it is the spirit of man that needs help and it is the spirit of man that supplies that help, then wherein is the need for help in the first place? Such need would not be for help from **without** as the text implies by the words "our," "us," "we," and "saints" which stand in contrast to the helper. The help would be self contained.

Furthermore, it would be impossible for the spirit of the Christian to plead in behalf of self and at the same time function as an **intercessor**. One who makes **intercession** occupies an in-between position—representing one to another.

Sometimes the view of the Holy Spirit making intercession is opposed on the ground of there being only "one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2: 5). This objection, however, confuses the role of an intercessor and a mediator. The former represents one to another and the latter represents both to each other. Even we are commanded to make "intercession for all men" (1 Tim. 2: 1).

View Number Two: In consideration of this view, I

think it best to notice first that there are two needs for help. One is clearly stated and the other is clearly implied. The first need is for **knowledge** to know "what we should pray for as we ought. Our spirit is of no **help** here. We frequently think that what we need is that which God knows we don't need. Paul thought he needed his "thorn in the flesh" removed and so prayed three times. God's answer was "My grace is sufficient for thee." Paul acquiesced and learned a great lesson. Listen to him: "... Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong" (1 Cor. 12: 7-10). No doubt, the Holy Spirit made intercession for Paul, as He does for us, "according to the will of God." It would be of no help to us, if the Holy Spirit made intercession according to our will. Thus, we should be very thankful for the kind of intercession the Holy Spirit makes for us.

The second need for help is a means of communicating our deepest emotions both of sorrow and of joy to the Father that is over, above, and beyond what words can do. This need exist not because of illiteracy on our part, but rather because there are no words in any vocabulary adequate to express such. They simply do not exist—such emotions are **unutterable**. Peter speaks of the joy of the Christian being "unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Pet. 1: 8). There are times when the emotions of sorrow and joy run too deep for expression in words. Such can be expressed only by unutterable groanings.

Concerning view Number Two, I agree that the Holy Spirit is the one who "helpeth our infirmities." However, I have difficulty believing that the Holy Spirit intercedes by presenting our groanings to the Father in words that man cannot utter. This reads too much into the text. It does not say that the Spirit maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered by man. It simply says these groanings cannot be uttered—period. How can the Holy Spirit present our groanings unto the Father in words which do not exist in the first place? Hence, I opt for the third view.

Concerning view Number Three, I am persuaded that while the spirit of the Christian can only give expression to such deep emotions with groans that cannot be uttered, God the Father who "searcheth the hearts" comprehends. Elsewhere we learn that Jesus our advocate and sympathizing high priest is touched by the feelings of our infirmities and also intercedes in our behalf (1 John 2: 1; Heb. 2: 17, 18; 4: 14-16). Now, in our text, we are assured also of the help of the Holy Spirit, especially in the matter of expressing the deepest emotions of the soul. He makes intercession for us with His own groanings which cannot be uttered. No words are needed. God fully comprehends the mind of the Holy Spirit.

It certainly is reassuring to the Christian to know that all three persons in the Godhead are acting in our behalf in all such instances. How wonderfully God has provided for our every need in working out His great scheme of redemption. How thrilling to behold such manifestations of the **love of God!**

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**THE SEARCH FOR
TRUTH**

"What have I always told you? Everything must be taken into account. If the fact will not fit the theory — let the theory go."

These are the words of Hercule Poirot, the Belgian detective created by Agatha Christie. The quote is taken from her book, **The Mysterious Affair at Styles**. It represents simply and succinctly the inductive method of investigation which is indispensable in arriving at truth.

Inductive reasoning has many applications. Poirot was speaking, of course, of the solving of a crime, a murder. To reach the truth every fact must be considered. If a fact contradicts a theory, then some other theory, or at least a revised theory must be sought.

It is regrettable that in our judicial system, facts are often concealed because of some breach of formality or even ethics in acquiring the evidence. If a rule has been broken in obtaining evidence, those responsible should be reprimanded or punished; but if truth is the objective, the evidence should be presented. There is no hope of justice if facts are buried.

This principle is also basic to the scientific method: "Everything must be taken into account. If the fact will not fit the theory — let the theory go." Unfortunately it is often the facts that suffer while the theory is maintained at all costs. This is especially the case when it comes to the general theory of evolution; the concept that all living things have developed from non-living chemicals through simple life forms to the complex organisms that now exist.

The facts do not fit the theory. The basic biological law of biogenesis: that life comes only from previous life, does not fit. The fundamental law of physics, that matter is constantly losing energy; is changing from the more complex to the less complex; in short that entropy is occurring in the known universe; that things are running down; does not fit the theory.

The simple fact that there is no concrete evidence of any kind of living thing evolving into another kind of living thing; this does not fit the theory. Yet the facts are ignored and the theory is accepted as fact.

Poirot's simple formula is of essence if truth in the matter for biblical interpretation be ascertained. As good detectives we should take everything into account. If some fact will not fit the theory — let the theory go.

Our aim should always be to reach conclusions based upon all the evidence at our disposal. Our conclusions must harmonize with all the facts of revealed truth and be contradicted by none of them.

If we have reached a doctrinal position and a passage comes to our attention that has not previously been taken into account, honesty demands a re-evaluation. Perhaps we have shut the door and locked it on that subject. But we should never throw away the key. "If the fact will not fit the theory, let the theory go."

The Psalmist seems to express the principle in his declaration: "The entirety of Your word is truth..." (119: 160). The devil quoted Scriptures: "For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge concerning you'" (Matt. 4: 6). But the Lord observed that there was more which needed to be taken into account: "It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God'" (4: 7).

Here is the key element to arriving at truth, whatever the nature of the search; "Everything must be taken into account. If the fact will not fit the theory—let the theory go."

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"TRAIN UP A CHILD"

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

Much has been said and written about this proverb of Solomon. Some say that "it means just what it says," and that if a child does not continue in the training which it has received, it has not been properly trained. Others say this is only a general rule, and that there are exceptions to the rule. Some tie this verse into the qualifications of an elder, and suggest that a man may do his best, and still not have the ability to rule either his house or the church of God.

One man (who was an elder with unfaithful children), told me that the passage in Proverbs meant that the children may leave their childhood training when they are young, but return to it when they grow older.

But in all that has been said and written, there is one point which we are failing to emphasize, and that is the very definition of the term **training**. Webster says that training includes bending, pruning, drilling. Strong says that to train means to initiate or to discipline.

The same principle is embodied in Paul's statement to the Ephesians, "... bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6: 4). "Bring them up" means to nurture, cherish, train. The whole idea of training is to be persistent and consistent.

We seem to have no problems understanding or applying the definition of our term when it comes to things other than children. If we want to train a dog, a horse, a bird, or an athlete, we are diligent and persistent in drilling, bending, and coaching the object of our efforts.

Some parents, both in the world and in the church, are failing miserably when it comes to training their children. We deplore the practice of abortion in order to escape the responsibility of parenthood, but some parents will not accept the responsibility to train their children even after they are born. They leave that chore up to grandparents, the store clerk, the school teachers, the police, or whoever happens to be around when the child needs training.

There are 33, 000 people injured every year by shop-ping carts, and 58% of those injuries are to children under four years of age, most being ignored or unattended by their parents. It is common to see children in malls and supermarkets unattended by parents, or even lost. Security personnel or store clerks have to watch out

for someone's child.

Children run loose around church buildings before, during, and after worship. I have been in homes where parents paid no more attention to their children than if they weren't there. And you can make the antecedent of "they" either parents or children — the children may as well not be there as far as parents are concerned, and the parents may as well not be there as far as the children are concerned. Parents don't even take time to train their children how to use the bathroom. The child wears one of those padded, disposable diapers, and manufacturers just keep adding more padding so parents don't have to change them as often.

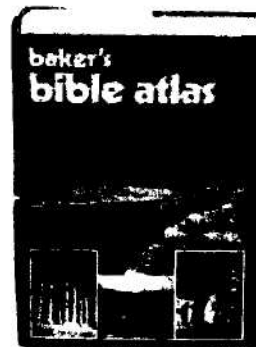
The sad thing is that the parents are too busy watching TV, shopping, visiting, or just day-dreaming while their children are both literally and figuratively crying out to be trained. And with all of our modern conveniences and appliances, some of us don't spend as much time training two children as our grandparents did training five times that many.

Contributing to this slothful attitude in training children are the child psychology "experts" who advocate allowing the children to have their own way and to "express" themselves, while the parents ignore any form of discipline whatever. We may not be able to shape the children of the world, but it is high time that parents read the rest of the book of Proverbs as it pertains to discipline and training (and discipline is training), and accept the God-given responsibility of training and bringing up our children while there is yet time. And it does take time.

I've seen so many examples of parents who just don't take time to train their children that it wouldn't surprise me if I get fifty letters from parents wanting to know if I had them in mind when I wrote this article.

If I can arise that many parents, I have only one thing left to say.

Thank God!



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"THEN WE'LL HAVE GOOD ROADS"

Like Paul in Galatians 1: 6, I marvel at some of my brethren sometimes. You can teach, preach, and instruct on various Bible subjects until you are blue in the face, only to have some who seemed to be listening intently to what you are saying, go right out and do the very opposite of what you were teaching from the word of God. I have seen some who snoozed all during the sermon go out the door and tell me how much they enjoyed the lesson. Others stay awake, take notes and look you right in the eye but they misunderstand or deliberately disregard the teaching.

It reminds me of a true story related to me by my mother. She has a unique way of telling things that helps one to remember. She recalls back when folks used to sit up with the dead. Neighbors would come in and sit up, visit, talk, eat, or doze. There was a sweet old lady who was called by everyone "old aunt Jane." She smiled a lot and could always be depended on to come and sit up when there was a death in the community. **But she was very hard of hearing.** She, however had this habit of twiddling her thumbs, smiling, and shaking her head affirmatively when someone was talking to her. You would think she understood every word.

On one particular occasion there was a man who was in the well drilling business who also came to sit up all night. As always, "old aunt Jane" was there with several others. This man was quite a talker so he began to explain in great detail to "old aunt Jane" how to drill a well of water. She sat in her customary manner in a chair smiling sweetly as she twiddled her thumbs first in one direction and then in the other. To all outward appearances one would have thought she understood every word that was being said as she nodded her head as if she comprehended.

Finally, the man finished his not very interesting story on well-drilling. "Old aunt Jane" could tell he had stopped talking so she very politely responded with the most amazing statement you ever heard. She smiled sweetly and said with all sincerity, **"Then we'll have good roads, won't we?"**

This is about like some of my brethren when you warn them about various sins such as fornication, drunkenness, divorces for any cause and such like. They seem to be listening, they seem to understand but

they sometimes go right out and do the very things you warned them about. Well, at least "old aunt Jane" had an excuse. **She was deaf.**

However, the Bible warns us of this very thing in Matt. 13: 13. Here Jesus spoke to the people in parables "because they seeing see not: and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand." In Revelation chapters two and three the instructions to each of the seven churches of Asia concluded with "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches..." God wants us not only **to hear** but also **to heed** what He has said. That means to put into practice in our lives daily the precepts of the Lord.

Brethren, let us pay more attention to what the Lord has said!

Things Most Certainly Believed

Julian R. Snell

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Lawrenceburg, Tennessee 38464



THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOB "JOB MAKES TWO DISCOVERIES"

In this, the final of six articles dealing with the gospel according to Job, we turn our attention to the overall impact of the man's experience. We are now moved beyond the controversy between the man and his friends. Their voices are silent. The last speaker, Elihu, the more profound of the group, is also silenced. Actually, his speech is cut short by the voice of God from out of a whirlwind, "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me" (Job 38: 2-3). The silencing of Elihu produces an immediate address of Job.

Verse 3 addresses Job as an intelligent human being, a personality capable of grasp and understanding. In this, circumstances are ignored, Job in his relation to the Lord is the overriding picture. We are unable to erase the picture of Job sitting in sorrow. He is stripped of everything upon which men depend. His wealth gone and partnership of his wife in faith is also gone. Acquaintances are noticeably absent. Friends have misunderstood him to become in his eyes, "miserable comforters". So far as circumstances are concerned, Job is derelict. The Lord's first words remind him he is still a man and had his own personality. He was what he had always been, but, hopefully more perceptive and a bit wiser. He was a man.

"Gird up now thy loins like a man." With this reminder,

the Lord continues with no reference to his sufferings; no explanation is offered for anything. What He did was bring Job face to face with the universe in which he lived and asked could he govern it. Job is brought to consider life, movements of seasons, wind, snow and storm and is asked if he was equal to creation of what he saw or even to government of it. The point of the inquiry was to cause Job, upon seeing he could not, to realize he was not equal to understanding of God and his purposes, nor was he in position to argue with Him. The consideration appeals for a striking of balance, a weighing of the relationship between man and his God, realizing God's greatness and man's littleness.

In the light of this, Job discovers himself. "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth" (40: 3). Compared to almighty God, ruler of the universe, creator of all, Job says, I am nothing. Thus, a true vision emerges. Enhancement of our understanding is tied to the word "vile" (KJV). The word did not mean as now, the Hebrew word has no suggestion of moral failure. Literally, of no weight. Job acknowledged his comparative insignificance. God had called upon Job to "gird up his loins as a man." He did so and rose to a level of greatness not previously achieved. He was able to grasp in thought the greatness of God and make comparison with self.

What does Jesus say to that consciousness in man? Never did he argue that Job declared the final truth about man. Consider two statements complimentary to this. "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? (Matt. 16: 26)? This, among other things, emphasizes the value of man's soul. In God's sight it is worth the blood of His own Son, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3: 16). "What shall it profit" is the language of the market place, suggesting that we strike a balance or weigh the two. Job says, "behold I am of small account," Jesus says, it is worth more than all the world. "What shall a man give" presumes man has sold himself, what will he give to regain? No answer. Jesus brings man face to face with the value of his own personality, his soul.

The second discovery of Job we are able to establish in this study is his discovery of God. "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: and now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (42: 5-6). After coming to a consciousness of himself by comparison with creation, the God of the universe, Job concludes he is of small account. The Lord continues in what has been referred to as the second movement of this scene (40: 7). The reminder once more, Job you are a man, act like a man. With this approach the Lord pays compliment to the dignity of humanity. It is as though He reminds him of the creation statement, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Gen. 1: 27). In Job, by God's estimate, is one greater than all creation.

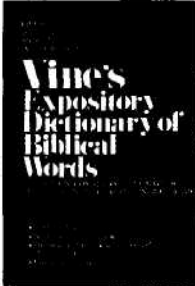
In this address of God we are able to identify the one thing in which Job was foolish. It emerges in, "Wilt thou

also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous" (40: 8)? Job had not charged God foolishly. He had, however, questioned the justice, government and wisdom of God. Now he is asked, can you disannul my judgment? Do you intend to condemn God in order to justify self? As he calls upon Job to assume government of the universe, we are treated to satire as gentle as a mother's kiss as she laughs at her child. God does not attempt to explain his methods only to establish confidence in them, despite the mystery to human minds.

Job is challenged with the question of his ability to rule in the moral realm. His own incapability toward solution implies God's way must be allowed its course and that even here solution will be forthcoming. It will work according to His purposes. Job is compelled to face his incompetence in God's realm.

Now he is heard to say, "I have heard thee" and "mine eye seeth thee," indicative of a new consciousness of God. This brought two conclusions on the part of Job. "Thou canst do all things" and "No purpose of Thine can be restrained" causing Job to understand that no purpose of God can be frustrated. With this new consciousness he gives expression to complete submission in "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (42: 6).

Only as we are brought to the reality of Job's discoveries will we fully appreciate and apply the gospel of Christ to make the blessings of the kingdom ours. Entrance into this relationship with the Lord includes all Job said, the relegating of self to impotence respecting spiritual need and the elevating of the Lord in his eternal purpose. "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2: 20). Men brought face to face with God and the guilt of sin, like Job have to say, I disappear and am filled with sorrow, I repent in dust and ashes. Such, God lifts up by grace through submission to his will. The sense of peace and longing, so illusive to human spirits, now fills the soul as result. The wonder of all wonders, thank God.



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Most of us remember being told when we were Children, "act your age." This rebuke usually meant that we were acting like children much younger than we really were. Now, as we are growing older it isn't a bit unusual to hear someone say, "Well, you don't weigh too much for someone YOUR AGE"; or "a little gray in the hair doesn't hurt anything AT YOUR AGE." All in all it seems to me that these things suggest that at whatever age we may be in life certain things are expected, either in behavior and character, or in physical development or decay. But the same thought is often used in the scriptures in the spiritual sense. There is a very real need to ACT YOUR AGE in spiritual things, or to understand how you should have progressed and developed spiritually AT YOUR AGE.

The Hebrew writer put it this way: "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For everyone that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Hebrew 5: 12-14). These Hebrew Christians had been Christians long enough now that they should ACT THEIR AGE; they should by now have grown and developed and be able to teach others.


One of the saddest things about preaching the gospel is to see people who long ago obeyed the gospel, at least in a sense, but who have apparently never really been serious about being a Christian. Its almost as though being a Christian was somehow similar to membership in a club, but one without any activities for its members to participate in. Most of us who are parents are very thankful to God to have had healthy children who grew up normally in the physical sense. If they had not made proper growth at the right times we would have anxiously taken them to the doctor to see what was wrong. I'm sure our father in heaven already knows what's wrong when some of His children fail to grow up; fail to develop the way they should.

What is the reason that some fail to grow? I can only give my opinion about this, but I believe that many who fail to grow do so because they just aren't interested all that much in spiritual things. They knew they ought to be baptized, and no one but God knows their hearts, so

we can't judge what they did or why they did it. But for some reason, right now, their interest in spiritual things, in being with the brethren, in being at a Bible study and perhaps picking up some new thought from God's word that will help them live better, in offering thanksgiving and praise to the father, is very low. I often wish I could say just the right thing to stir up these people, or perhaps grab them and shake them really good. But I know that I can't. I remember an older gospel preacher who used to say that some people need to have their "WANT TO'S" fixed.

Paul told the Corinthians. "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves" (2 Cor. 13: 5). And he wrote to the Roman brethren to say, "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" (Rom. 13: 11). If I do wake out of my sleep and realize that eternity is much nearer, what do I do? In the following verses Paul told them to put off the works of darkness, to put on the armor of light, and to walk honestly as in the day. Then in verse 14 he wrote: "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof." How many of us are Christians, but have not really put on Christ in our lives? How many of us are Christians, at least in name, but we regularly put ourselves in a place where it would be easy to give in and sin?

Dear brother and sister in Christ: If you find yourself not too much interested in spiritual things, please consider how near indeed eternity may be, and start getting serious about being a Christian and going to heaven. It is indeed time to ACT YOUR AGE. It is indeed time to develop and grow to be what God would have you to be AT YOUR AGE.



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SATANISM

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Satan worship is alive and well, a very sad statement, but nevertheless true. People across America recently were shocked by the realization of an active satanic cult across the southern border in Matamoros, Mexico. It is sickening to hear of the horrific rituals that take place, the recovery of mutilated bodies and buckets of human brains and entrails. With total disbelief we hear of the devotee claims that the slow torture and blood-letting of human sacrifice strengthens the soul of the cult member and secures protection from his enemies, such as the police (Dave Miller, *The Matamoros Monstrosity*, "Gospel Advocate, July 1989, p. 60).

Few things seem to surprise us anymore and yet we think we have heard it all when something even more sickening hits the news media. It is no different today than it was back in the days of Noah, "when 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). No matter how bizarre, immoral, sick, decadent or evil, someone somewhere will do it. The moral framework depicted in the Bible, when embraced by the majority of the people of any given society, enables that society to achieve a measure of stability (Psa. 33: 12; Isa. 60: 12). Once that society begins to abandon it's heavenward gaze and overturn it's moral foundation, it is just a matter of time before that society comes apart at the seams and destroys itself by it's "detestable practices" (Ezek. 9: 11). Every nation throughout history has followed this inevitable course.

There has been a widespread movement throughout the world to battle for the minds of men. A deluge of doctrines have been introduced in an all-out effort to eradicate the God of heaven from society's consciousness. In it's place, a conception of reality has been promoted that allows for the sanctioning of virtually any and every belief and practice, no matter how deviant from previous moral norms.

Of course Satan worship is more common than we would like to admit. Maybe we should have anticipated that this force of evil would emerge into what it is today, when the 1960's re-introduced us to astrology and witch-craft. The film "The Exorcist" simply was the first in a flood of decadent movies that enhance society's toleration of and desensitized our opposition to the occult and satanic worship ritual. Checking one's horoscope has become a commonplace practice in our society. The Satanists simply were taking astrology and belief in demons to their logical conclusion.

Methods of Promoting Satan Worship

One of the most subtle tools for promoting Satan worship is rock-n-roll music. The rhythmic beat is used to stimulate group excitement and emotional release (William Sargant, *Battle For The Mind*, p. 114). The lyrics are designed to indoctrinate the hearers into the practice that the particular band performing, wishes to promote. For example the song "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" by the Beatles stands for the drug LSD. In the song "Bridge over Troubled Waters" by Simon and Garfunkel, (the song goes "like a bridge over troubled water, I will ease your mind, ") is the promotion of drugs by falsely declaring it to be the worlds answer to all of it's problems, hence the appeal to ease the mind. So skilled have these performers become that they have developed a technique known as "back masking." Back masking is wording a lyric such, that when it is played backwards, it has a very audible message. This technique is subliminal and is unvoluntarily passed through all the compartments of the brain until it reaches the compartment that stores information and lies there dormant until some activity calls it to memory. The band "Queen" are the fore-runners in this technique, and they promote drug taking, homosexuality and Satan worship in their back masking messages. One of their songs when played backwards, very audibly says "Satan is worthy to be worshipped." Drugs such as LSD are promoted because they are mind altering, and to this day these drugs are still referred to as "tools for transformation" (M. Basileu Schlink, *New Age from a Biblical Viewpoint*, p. 16). It's no wonder that our society is becoming so decadent with drugs, homosexuality and Satan worship on the increase.

Ingredients For Satanic Worship

In 1978 Charles Walker who was investigating various mysterious happenings in Clapham Wood, in England, received a telephone call, inviting him to the woods that night. When he arrived at the meeting place, the callers voice rang from behind him "don't attempt to look for me! For your safety and mine it is imperative you do not see who I am." The man claimed to be an initiate of a secret group formed in Sussex. "The nearest I can describe our activities to you is that we are followers of Satanism. At every meeting we hold we sacrifice some animal or other, usually a dog or other domestic or farm animal depending on what is available at the time." He ended, warning: "We will stop at nothing to ensure the safety of our cult" (Toyne Newton, *The Demonic Connection*, p. 11, 12, 28).

Church leaders in the area were forced to take strong action because the magical practices and pagan rituals exerted a strong power over the people. Among the things rigidly banned were:

1. Idolatry and worship of demons.
2. Cult of the dead.
3. Worship of nature such as trees, wells, stones, fire, etc.
4. Pagan calendar customs and festivals.
5. Witchcraft and sorcery.
6. Augury (to predict) and divination.
7. Astrology (Toyne Newton, *Ibid*, p. 66).

These activities were obviously practiced by the Satanists. Other activities that Satanists perform are spiritualism, voodoo and black magic (Dave Miller, Op. Cit.).

God told the Jews as they were about to enter into the land of Canaan "There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For whoever (all inclusive) does these things is detestable to the Lord; and because of these detestable things the Lord your God will drive them out before you" (Deut. 18: 10-22). Those who do practice these things will not only be excluded from the kingdom of God, (Gal. 5: 19-21) but will be cast into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone (Rev. 21: 8).

Each year many young people in Britain go to London in search of success. Some realize their potential in fulfillment of their dreams and aspirations while the others slip into the background. In time these young people just literally disappear. Over 600 annually in London alone are never heard of again. What happens to them? Are they merely victims of their own naivety of the lure of the big city, or are there more sinister reasons for their disappearance? How many of them fall into the hands of the Satanic cults?

In this respect, Paul Sturgess, General Secretary of the Christian Exorcism Study Group, says that some Satanic groups will sacrifice a human being if they possibly can; often these victims are unwanted babies or tramps taken from the streets at night. He also describes a typical initiation ceremony at which the initiate would firstly be drugged, either by injection or orally, and a doctor or nurse would take a blood sample from them. This sample is mixed with the blood of a sacrificed animal and drained into a chalice containing urine provided by the male priests of the Satanic "temple" and the whole concoction drunk by the initiate as well as by the other members. The initiate is then made to undergo a bizarre stamina test to see how well he or she submits to the will of the group leader, and finally sexual intercourse takes place on a black altar. The initiate is totally unaware that the whole event is being secretly videoed, and it is this video tape which becomes the Satanic group's protection, the threat of its being shown to the initiate's family or employers ensuring his or her continued loyalty to the group (Toyne Newton, Op. Cit. p. 153).

Christians have a message that Satanists do not have, and that is one of hope, for without Christ there is no hope. "Christ in you the hope of glory" (Col. 1: 27) The preaching of the cross has never been more needed than it is right now. Sataism offers no hope, to the contrary it offers doom, despair and damnation. There is nothing to compare with "standing in the way, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and you shall find rest for your souls (Jer. 6: 16) The old paths? Yes, God is eternal but Sataism had a beginning and it will end. (Matt. 15: 13).

THE SCRIPTURES AND THEIR AUTHORITY

Richard Boone

Route 1, Box 794
Hayden, Alabama 35079

From time to time, the plea "Give us something relevant and practical" arises and is brought to the attention of preachers for consideration in their selection of preaching material. When that plea is made, it is often from an individual (or individuals) who are not content with plain and simple book, chapter, and verse preaching. When such a plea is made, any brother who preaches has to honestly consider this question: "What is the most practical and relevant topic that I could preach on?" Frankly, I know of no topic more relevant and practical than a study of the Scriptures and their authority. That is so because the Scriptures are for our day to day living, and are relevant to situations that Christians must deal with. Therefore, it is my prayer that you will study the material contained herein and may it be to God's glory.

The Authority Of The Scriptures Established

In order for the authority of the Scriptures to be properly established, we need to determine the source of the Scriptures. Are the Scriptures the product of man or a product of the mind of God? If they are the product of man's wisdom, then we need not be really concerned with what they say, for on that basis, one man's opinions are just as good as another's. But, if they are the product of God (and I affirm here that they are), then we must follow what they teach! That the Scriptures are the product of God's wisdom (and not man's) can be seen from the following passages.

From beginning to end, the Bible teaches that God has indeed spoken to man throughout the ages. Not only did He Himself speak, but He also spoke through the prophets in past ages, and in these "last days" (Christian dispensation), He speaks through His Son who has "all authority" (Heb. 1: 1-2; Matt. 28: 18-20).

Of the Son, God said, "... hear Him" (Matt. 17: 5), therefore we must heed what the Son says. But, let us realize that Jesus also gave His apostles authority.

Just before His departure from the apostles to return to Heaven, Jesus promised the Holy Spirit as a guide for them (John 14: 25-26; 16: 12-13). It would do one well to note the context of these verses. After spending some three years with His chosen ones, Jesus was now going to leave them. He would no longer be there to lead and guide them. Therefore, He promised the Holy Spirit as a Comforter to them after His departure. The Holy Spirit came just as Jesus promised (Luke 24: 49; Acts 1: 5-8), on Pentecost (Acts 2: 1-4). With the promise of the Holy Spirit being fulfilled, what we must now recognize is that the apostles wrote by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and

not just merely their own ideas about various matters (cf. 1 Cor. 2: 12-13; Eph. 3: 3-5). Summarized, all of this shows that God spoke through His Son, Jesus Christ, who in turn promised the Holy Spirit to His chosen apostles. Upon reception of the Holy Spirit, the apostles taught and wrote what was delivered to them of the Holy Spirit which was sent by the Father (John 14: 26). Yes, the Scriptures are from God!

Now that we have established that the Scriptures are from God and not man, we must consider two further points which will help us to recognize the authority of the Scriptures. First of all, the Scriptures are **complete**, that is they furnish us with everything we need pertaining to our relationship to God, brethren, and the world. We do not need to look to other sources for revelation as to how to live, and neither should we doubt if we have all of God's revelation on a matter. There are passages which show that the Holy Spirit would reveal "all truth," that He would reveal all we need to be "complete," that He would give us "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (see John 14: 26; 16: 13; 2 Tim. 3: 16-17; 2 Pet. 1: 3). There-fore, we do not have to wonder, as some do, whether or not we have enough given in the Scriptures to under-stand God's will on any given subject. We do—the Scriptures are complete! Furthermore, not only are the Scriptures complete, they are **final**. They were "once for all delivered" according to Jude 3. That simply means that there will be no further revelation from God other than that which we have in the Bible! When the New Testament was revealed, that would be all that God would give us pertaining to revelation of His will. New Testament dictionaries and lexicons will concur in what has been said here. Also, when one considers the fact that the Scriptures are complete (a point previously discussed), there is no need for fur-ther revelation.

What Is My Attitude Toward The Scriptures?

Now that we have established that the Scriptures are from God, that they are complete, and they are final, we need to concern ourselves with the question, "What is my attitude toward the authority of the Scriptures?" In asking this question, under consideration is the question of whether or not we should follow the Scriptures strictly. Which should it be—am I to deal loosely with the Scriptures or am I to follow them closely? In light of several passages, I have no other choice but to follow them closely! Take the time to carefully read passages like 1 Cor. 4: 6, Gal. 1: 6-9, 2 Thes. 2: 15, 2 Tim. 1: 13, Jas. 1: 25, 1 Pet. 4: 11, 2 John 9, Jude 3, and Rev. 22: 17-18. I realize that this list is rather lengthy to be included in an article, but upon honest and careful consideration of such passages, we can come to no other conclusion but that we cannot depart from the teaching of Scripture and still be pleasing to God! These passages require us to go back to the Scriptures, which is where we need to be to begin with.

The Authority Of The Scriptures Applied

Brethren, we have now come to the point where we are to take the Scriptures and apply them to everyday

life. It does not matter what we are talking about nor the problems we are facing, we still have to stick to the Scriptures. I want to consider various areas of application because recognition of the authority of the Scriptures without application of them does us no good.

We must apply what the Scriptures teach about the **plan of salvation**. For an alien sinner to become a child of God, he must hear the gospel, believe it, repent of his sins, confess his faith in Christ as God's Son, and be baptized for the remission of sins (Rom. 10: 17; Heb. 11: 6; Acts 17: 30; Rom. 10: 9-10; Acts 2: 37; etc.). If you leave any one of those out, one is not a child of God. Why? Because that is what the Scriptures teach! The erring Christian must repent of his sins, confess those sins to God (and to brethren's if needs be) (Acts 8: 22-24; Jas. 5: 19-20; 1 John 1: 9). To do anything less results in unforgiven sins!

We must apply what the Scriptures teach about **the church**. The local church does have organization (see Phil. 1: 1), no matter what Charles Holt and his colleagues of Truth and Freedom Ministry would have us to believe. Passages such as 1 Tim. 3: 1 show that the elders under consideration are more than just older men (or women). Note that those men must meet certain qualifications to be appointed. 1 Tim. 3: 2 and Titus 1: 7 both say, "a bishop **must be...**" which shows that there is more than just age under consideration. The work of the church is three-fold according to Eph. 4: 12—edification, benevolence, and evangelism. To include the church in politics, business, entertainment, social events, etc. perverts the work of the church. One who wishes to involve the church in such things either does not understand the authority of the Scriptures or is not concerned with the authority of the Scriptures.

We must apply what the Scriptures teach when it comes to **daily Christian living**. While the Christian has to be in the world, he is not to be "of the world" (John 17: 14-16). That means that the Christian's life will be one of transformation rather than conformation (Rom. 12: 1-2). Therefore, the Christian is not to engage the sins and allurements of this world (Col. 3: 5-11). Rather than being entangled in the affairs of this life (2 Tim. 2: 4), he sets his mind on heavenly things and strives to please the Father in heaven (Col. 3: 1-2).

This is just a brief list of the various ways that the Scriptures are relevant to how we should live while here on Earth, but I believe these will suffice to show that we can and are to follow the Scriptures. Whether we will or not depends on how strongly we desire to please God.

Conclusion

Let us all realize that there is nothing more practical and relevant for us than an understanding of the authority of the Scriptures. May we always remember that the Scriptures are from the mind and infinite wisdom of God, and as such, they are complete and final. Furthermore, may we be impressed with the responsibility that is ours to follow them closely. It takes courage to apply what the Scriptures teach without fear or favor. Let us all pray for that kind of courage (cf. Heb. 4: 16).

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THE GREEK PREPOSITION "EIS" (UNTO, INTO, IN) — ACTS 2:38

Luther W. Martin

707 Salem Avenue
 Rolla, MO 65401

Why bother to study an obscure (?) Greek preposition? Because it has been a battleground between gospel preachers and Baptist preachers! Because Baptist preachers usually teach that one is "saved" prior to baptism! And, because the Scriptures teach that one receives remission of past sins followed faith, repentance, confession of Christ, and baptism!

**American Baptist Pub. Society
 Commentary on Acts
 (Horatio B. Hackett, Newton
 Theological Institution)**

*"And Peter said unto them, "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ **unto** the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."* (Acts 2: 38 Emphasis mine — LWM). The Baptist author then comments:

"In order to the forgiveness of sins (Matt. 26: 28; Luke 3: 3) we connect naturally with both the preceding verbs. This clause states the motive or object which should induce them to repent and be baptized. It enforces the entire exhortation, not one part to the exclusion of the other." (Page 53). Note that in the text of Acts 2: 38, the word "unto" is translated from "eis" and that in the comments, the Baptist author stipulates that **both** repentance **and** baptism serve as an inducement toward the object: *i. e.*, the forgiveness of sins.

**American Baptist Pub. Society
 Commentary on Acts
 (Alvah Hovey, Editor of Revised Edition)**

Another Baptist Editor then writes:

"... (2) That repentance and the prescribed expression of it by baptism are closely united. Peter did not feel it necessary to provide for exceptional cases in this address to the people. He saw that the inward change and the ritual confession of it were so knit together by nature that it was enough for him to state them in their proper order and sequence. Repentance and the first fruits of repentance were generally inseparable. The former could not be genuine without manifesting itself in the latter. And in the circumstances of that day a willingness to be baptized was no slight evidence of a new heart." (Page. 53).

**Northern Baptist Theological Seminary
 (J. R. MANTEY — Dept. of New Testament)**

In a personal letter to me, dated December 10, 1942, Dr. Mantey wrote:

"Acts 2: 38 reads as follows in the Greek: 'And Peter (said) to them, Repent and be baptized (=be immersed) each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. "

Dr. Mantey's letter then continued: "The remission of sins is conditioned by one's repentance, turning from sin, and by one's identifying himself completely with Christ, as baptism implied. Thus the believer turns from sin to Christ and all that Christ wants him to be and do. "When one does this sincerely and genuinely, he is promised the presence of God's Spirit in his life, to aid him in every way that he needs help. "

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

"And Peter said to them, 'Repent, and be immersed each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto remission of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'" (Underscoring mine — LWM).

Harvard University Divinity School (Professor Henry J. Cadbury)

In a personal note, Dr. Cadbury penned the following: "But Peter [said] to them: 'Repent, and let each one of you be baptized at* the name of Jesus Christ to [the] forgiving of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. '" *Important early MSS read here in. **University of Chicago Divinity School (Baptist)**

(Allen Wikgren, of the Divinity School)

In a personal note, Allen Wikgren stated: "A literal translation (of Acts 2: 38) would be as follows:

"And Peter [said] to them, 'Repent [plural] and let each one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for [literally "to"] the forgiveness [or "remission"] of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. '" (Westcott and Hort text).

Bangor Theological Seminary (Alfred Morris Perry — Dept. of the New Testament)

Professor Perry sent me a letter on Jan. 11, 1943:

I should render Acts 2: 38 as follows: — "But Peter [said] unto them, 'Repent [change your minds], and let each of you be baptized [caused to be dipped?] in [by] the name of Jesus Christ unto [for the purpose or result of] forgiveness [sending away] of your sins, and you will receive the present of the Holy Spirit. "

Presbyterian Theological Seminary (Paul E. Davies, Ph. D., Professor of N. T. Greek and Exegesis)

On December 5, 1942, Dr. Davies wrote to me as follows: "

"Peter then [said] to them, 'Repent and get baptized each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the free gift of the Holy Spirit. "

Dr. Davies then continued:

"The verb *baptistheto* translated 'get baptized' or "be baptized" is in the passive voice. There are a number of places in the New Testament where this verb is in the Greek Middle Voice (reflexive) and could be translated "baptize yourself," but here it is clearly in the Passive Voice, "Be immersed." I find it most interesting that here we have a "Ph. D." in a Presbyterian Seminary, rendering *bapistheto* as "Be immersed." To me this indicates that he is more of a Greek scholar than he is a Presbyterian!

Conclusion

In researching the use of "*eis*" in Koine Greek it is used only in the Accusative Case. This deals with **motion toward a place**; and it also denotes purpose and sometimes result. The actual meaning of "*eis*" is: **unto, into, in, and inwards**. *Eis* always looks "forward" never "backward. "

Therefore, faith, repentance and immersion is "in order to," or "unto," or "for the purpose of remitting sins." These acts are looking forward to the goal of forgiveness. In the gospel age, sins are subsequently remitted, **after** these acts of faith have been met.

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

PLEASE CONDENSE THE NEWS

When sending an item for this news column, it will be helpful if you will make it as brief as possible. Since many of the items are too long to print, it is necessary to condense them. Thanks for your help.

ALAN YEATER, 290 Warfield Blvd., Clarksville, TN 37043 — After approximately five encouraging years of growth in the Lord's kingdom here, we have said yes to a request to "come over... and help us." The Lord's church is alive and well here in Clarksville. The congregation

is blessed with two fine elders and many diligent servants. The attendance has gone from the 30's to the 80's and the contribution has nearly tripled in the last five years. The Lord has provided the increase. Mark Mayberry has agreed to come and serve as an evangelist beginning in August.

Please send any helpful information regarding military personnel (Ft. Campbell — 101st ABN), and college students (Austin Peay State University).

My family and I plan to move to Hartselle, AL the first of August, if the Lord wills. The Westview congregation in Hartselle has asked us to come and work with them. Jeff Archer, who has worked with them for the last five years is moving to Budapest, Hungary. When traveling through north Alabama stop and visit with us. We are right off I-65. The address is: Westview Church of Christ, Vaughn Bridge Rd., P. O. Box 551, Hartselle, AL 35640. We can be reached by calling (205) 773-9358.

JOHN W. PITMAN, P. O. Box 9, Louisa, KY 41230 — The church in Louisa now has 10 members since two were baptized just after a meeting with Jimmy Mickells in April. They came out of the United Baptist Church. We are in the Big Sandy River Valley. The area is growing. I need support since \$450 has been lost since Dec. 1990. I already had a low income. The only income now is \$673 Social Security check and \$150 from Franklin Rd. in Nashville. It is not possible to meet monthly expenses (\$348 house payment, \$200 car payment, insurance, etc.) with this amount. Please consider this urgent appeal. References will be given. My phone number is (606) 673-4421.

TROY ADAMS, P. O. Box 506, Ellsworth, ME 04605 — I have been in Ellsworth since starting the work here in September 1978. The work has been very slow and often discouraging. Our number has reached as high as 34 for a while, then dropped down to only my family of seven and two ladies. However, the congregation presently numbers 26. Since the last week of February 1991 we have had three baptisms. Five of our families (13 people) are military people and therefore temporary.

As most other preachers in isolated areas, securing support is always a problem. At the present time I am \$150 short of what I need monthly, and I will also be losing another \$500 per month at the end of 1991. Any help will be appreciated.

GARY OGDEN, 2604 Robin Drive, Plant City, FL 33656 — The Lord willing, 111 be leaving June 10th to accompany Buddy Payne and other brethren on an evangelistic trip to Eastern Europe. We solicit your prayers. The Plant City church is solidly behind me. We collected \$6,000 last Sunday to defray expenses and purchase Bibles.

BOBBY HOLMES, 219 Timothy Trail, Duncanville, TX 75137 & **RON HALBROOK**, 654 Gray Street, West Columbia, TX 77486 — The Sturgis Church of Christ began in 1974 and is located near State Hwy. 12 between Sturgis and Starkville, Mississippi. A liberal church in Starkville took the oversight of the Sturgis church in 1984 when they put up a small meetinghouse. Starkville controlled Sturgis' treasury and the deed to Sturgis' property was put in the name of Starkville. When Sturgis learned the truth on local church autonomy in late 1987, they asked for their treasury and their property. Starkville returned their treasury *but not the property*.

After first offering to sell Sturgis their property for \$35,000. Starkville transferred the deed to a third church in Starkville on Hwy 82. This church now wants to sell it. In seeking counsel for the Sturgis brethren, we contacted Thomas Keenum, Sr., an elder and practicing attorney in Booneville, MS. Rather than go to court or lose the property, brother Keenum has negotiated with the Hwy 82 church and gotten the price down to \$17,000. The brethren at Sturgis are rich spiritually, but poor financially. Will you please help? Our real hope is the average person will give from \$5 to \$100. This is an individual effort. No church funds will be accepted. Please send whatever you can to the Sturgis Church of Christ Building Fund, P. O. Box 418, Booneville, MS 38829 (tax deductible).

A WORD OF CLARIFICATION

STEVE PATTON, 2325 Old Columbian Road, P. O. Box 20117, Birmingham, AL 35216 — In a recent conversation with Donnie Rader, we discussed the news report in *Searching The Scriptures* (May 1991) regarding Sakkie Pretorius in South Africa. As the preacher for the Vestavia church mentioned in the news item, I wanted to clear up a misunderstanding regarding our intentions in supporting Sakkie.

It is true that we are planning a long overdue renovation and will also expand our church building and parking lot. We wrote about this to the eight men we presently support in other places. We told them that if they had opportunity to replace the support we were providing to please take advantage of such an offer as that would help us. Some of the men misunderstood our letter and assumed we were planning to drop them at the end of 1991. That is what prompted Sakkie's letter to STS. Such is not our intention. If we can possibly complete our expansion without dropping these men, we will do so. That is our stated goal. Sakkie would be one of the last we would cut because we realize how hard it is to raise support while living abroad. The Vestavia church has consistently put 80% or better of its annual budget into evangelism.

I hope this clears up any misunderstanding concerning Vestavia's intentions. We do not put physical facilities above evangelism.

TOPES TO RETURN TO AFRICA

GENE TOPE, 1700 Prairie Lake Blvd. Ocoee, FL 34761—Betty and I have decided to return to South Africa this October to continue our work there. Workers tell us we are needed as much, or more, than ever before. We need your help once again. We are asking individuals and congregations to have fellowship with us in both one-time contributions and also monthly support. The amount need not be large. Several have already indicated they will help us.

FRANK INGRAM PASSES

On April 23, 1991 Frank Ingram succumbed to the illness that he had battled for years. He preached the gospel for forty-three years. Funeral services were conducted on April 25 at the Garden Sanctuary in Seminole, FL by Charles Murray and Ronald Drumn. You may reach his wife Elaine at 9960 37th St. Pinellas Park, FL 34666.

FROM AROUND THE WORLD

PHILIPPINES — Joy Remuner A. Notarte reports that two were baptized on March 10 in Maymana, Marilog District. Four were baptized on March 20. In Tambobon two were baptized on March 24.

Rody Gumpad reports that two were baptized in April. The number there continues to grow. Rody also reports a lack of funds due to the necessity of buying canned milk for their baby and other expenses.

Bert G. Enostacion writes about a brother in need in the church at San Fernando, La Union. His name is Ireneo Crisostomo. He is sick and cannot buy the needed medicine. If you can help, send checks via registered mail to: Ireneo Crisostomo, C/O Church of Christ, P. O. Box 09, San Fernando 2500, La Union Philippines.

Julie DA. Notarte reports that two were baptized on March 3, eleven on March 10, four on March 20 and three on March 31.

Zozimo Ely states that a new church building has been built in Tinulang, Bayabas, Toril, Davao City.

MEXICO — Ruben C. Amador (Houston, TX) reports that two were baptized and one made confession in April in Tampico, Tamps., Mexico. The church in Tampico is one of the strongest churches in Mexico.

SOUTH AMERICA— Carlos A. Capelli writes that the Jose C. Paz church in Argentina is doing well. The brethren there could use Bibles and song books in Spanish.

SOUTH AFRICA — Paul Williams reports that six were baptized in Zululand (three in Eshowe, one near Mapumulo and two in Nkandla).

Ray and Thena Votaw's oldest daughter, Celeste, died suddenly on March 26 of Leukemia.

George Harris reports of some correspondence he had with Samuel M. Hayioye, an evangelist in Nigeria over the question of institutionalism. He accepted the truth and has identified with a faithful group. He is now appealing for financial help.

SPAIN — Efrain F. Perez reports at least three baptisms recently in Spain.

ITALY — Francesco Fosci (Aprilia) writes that the Latina Church is doing fine and growing in knowledge and faith. Francesco was challenged by a private radio station to meet a Catholic priest in a debate on the Passover. However, the priest was forbidden by the bishop to debate.

Stefano Corazza (Rome) reports that he presently has two ongoing Bible classes with some who are in denominational churches. David Thomley and Kelly Cook plan to return to Italy to work in gospel.

Rodolfo Berdini says that the work at Aprilia is continuing fine.

Alessandro Corazza (Rome) reports two baptisms in Rome.

PREACHERS NEEDED

FONTANA, CALIFORNIA — The church in Fontana will be needing a preacher by July 1, 1991. We can offer \$500 a week. If the attendance is increased, the amount could be increased. Those interested call Fred R. Woelpern (714) 822-7894, John McCance

(714) 822-2822 or Glen A. Rice, Jr. (714) 823-6339.

MADERA, CALIFORNIA — The Parksdale Church is in need of a preacher. They also have a small preacher's home. Attendance runs in the 40's and 50's. The area is growing. There is the prospect of a new state university near by. They are unable to provide full support. Those interested can contact Burt Bridges (209) 674-9553 or Robert Holcomb (209) 674-7814.

SALEM, OHIO — The Salem, Ohio church is looking for a full-time, experienced gospel preacher. For information call (216) 223-2055 or (216) 584-2696.

CAMERON, OHIO — The church here is seeking a full-time preacher. Cameron is located about 15 miles from New Martinsville, WV and about the same distance from Woodsfield, OH. The average attendance is about 40. Outside support will be required. We can offer \$600 per month. Contact Bill Gorrell, P. O. Box 67, Woodsfield, OH 43793 or call (614) 472-5141.

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ROCKWOOD, TENNESSEE — The church in Rockwood, TN is in need of a full-time preacher. There is good potential for growth. We cannot provide full support. Contact Tom Lequire (615) 364-3266 or Jim Woodall (616) 354-3624.

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

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THINK ON THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 1631
Lutz, FL 33549



WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH A LITTLE LEAVEN?

"Ye did run well, who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (Gal 5: 7-9)

There are several statements in this epistle to the Galatians that indicate a departure from the gospel that was preached by the apostle Paul "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel.." (Gal. 1: 6) "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?" (Gal 3: 1) "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain" (Gal. 4: 9-11) "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" (Gal. 4: 16) "Ye did run well, who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?" (Gal 5: 7)

Those in Galatia had been removed to another gospel, they were not obeying the truth, they were turning to the "beggarly elements" of the former bondage from which they were delivered, and were not running well. What caused this problem? Why did they turn from the way of truth? Throughout this epistle is the evidence that "false" brethren had in-

fectured them with the old Jewish Traditions that had carried them back to the bondage from which they had been delivered by the gospel.

The apostle said, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (Gal. 5: 9). This is a warning to all that a little false teaching will eventually affect the whole body. All too often brethren console themselves with the statement that "we do not have many who hold to false teaching in this church." But these brethren make little effort to teach them the truth or deal with them scripturally. It takes only a little leaven to affect the whole body.

The Holy Spirit used the word "leaven" because it has a certain quality about it that parallels the working of real leaven in dough. It is used metaphorically of the false doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matt 16: 12), and of the hypocrisy of the Pharisees (Luke 12: 1). A false teacher injects his teaching a little at a time. In time a little yeast will penetrate an entire mass of dough. Because of that quality of leaven the apostle employed that figure here. Just leave a little false doctrine alone in a congregation of people, and soon the whole body is led away from the truth.

To express the serious danger of tolerating fornication among disciples of the Lord, Paul said, "Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" (1 Cor. 5: 6). The leaven of malice and wickedness is to be put away and the un-leaven bread of sincerity and truth put in its place. False teaching and evil practice is described by the "leaven" of the Pharisees and Sadducees and their hypocrisy.

It is well known that one rotten apple will infect a barrel full if left together. In that same sense a little false teaching will destroy the whole body where it is tolerated. The only way to save the barrel of good apples is to get rid of the bad apple. The whole barrel of good apples will never make one bad apple good. Neither will a whole body of believers made one false teacher sound and good by holding him in their fellowship. Many brethren believe a little false teaching will do the church no harm.

The fellowship of a local church is not really disturbed by confronting one who is teaching something

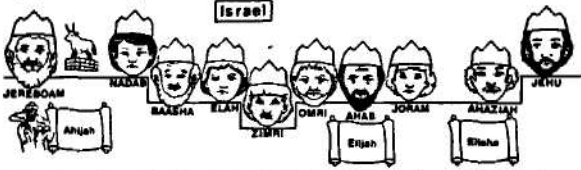
without divine authority. But some will say, "we do not want to divide the church over such a little thing." Brother, let it go and in time the whole church will be polluted by that "little harmless thing."

A respected brother begins to pervert passages from God's word to support a false view of some Bible subject. Far too many brethren will insist that this good brother's view will not do any harm. Leave him alone, some will say, and there will be no problem. In fact, many will take issue with the one who does challenge the error with this brother. He becomes the "trouble maker" who does not manifest "the spirit of Christ." He is treated as the enemy of the church. That is the sense of Paul's question: "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" (Gal. 4: 16).

The Judaizers were affecting the churches of Galatia with their efforts to go back to their traditions of the law of Moses, which could not provide salvation through Christ. Paul said, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (Gal. 5: 9). In 3: 1: "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?" To permit a little leaven is to be bewitched not to obey the truth. And by his question in 4: 16, Paul affirms that he is not their enemy when he tells them the truth. We cannot betray the truth of the gospel by tolerating even "a little leaven" to remain with those trying to do the will of God.


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" QUOTE

"He who lives in a glass house should never invite over he who is without sin."

UNQUOTE "

Editorial

Donnie V. Rader

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Lexington, Alabama 35648



LIVING PEACEABLY WITH ALL MEN

Rom. 12: 18 is a short verse that says a lot about human relationships. It reads, "If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men." This passage sits in a context that deals with relationships.

Human relationships are basic and the basis of everything in life. How we relate to people affects our homes, jobs, the church, friendships and neighborhoods. Paul Parker said, "The act of dealing with people is the foremost secret of successful men. A man's success in handling people is the very yardstick by which the outcome of his whole life's work is measured."

This text divides itself into four sections from which we learn four lessons.

"If it is possible... "

1. From this phrase I learn that *there are times and circumstances when peace is not possible*. There are some people with whom it is impossible to get along. There are times when strife creates a rift and someone will ask, "What else can I do to solve the problem?" Part of the time the answer is that there is nothing you can do.

Somewhere a few have developed the idea that if you are a good and kind individual that you can be at peace with anyone. That is just not so. Even Christ, who was called the "prince of peace" (Isa. 9: 6), wasn't able to have peace with all (John 1: 11-12; 5: 19-ff). Dennis Wholey said, "Expecting the world to treat you fairly because you are a good person is a little like expecting a bull not to attack you because you're a vegetarian."

2. I also learn that *if peace is not possible, it must not be our fault*. Pursue peace to see if it is possible. If others will allow it, have peace with them. However, make sure, if you can't get along with someone, it is their fault and not yours.

3. Those with whom it is impossible to get along: (a) One who cares little about what the Bible says. When this is the case, we have no standard to which to appeal to settle any dispute or as a guide for conduct, (b) One who is domineering and overbearing like Diotrophes (3 John). This kind of person "interacts with their environment like a tornado in a trailer park" (*Quote Magazine*). (c) The person who is strong and self-willed, (d) Those who have no feelings for others (Matt. 7: 12; Phil. 2: 4). (e) The proud and arrogant one who looks down his nose at others. We will give evidence of this list later from the context.

"... as much as depends on you... "

1. We must *do all we can* to have peace with others. We have no control over others to make them do their part. But, we can do our part. Notice that the text tells us to make *every effort*. It says, "... as much as depends on you..." (Emphasis mine DVR).

We are to be peacemakers for they are called the sons of God (Matt. 5: 9). Paul instructed the Romans to "... pursue the things which make for peace..." (Rom. 14: 19).

2. How do we try to get along with others: The answer is found in the context of Romans 12. (a) *Be dedicated to the Lord* (vs. 1, 2, 11). One who is not diligently serving the Lord will not care anything about the Lord's instructions about how to get along with people, (b) *Be humble* (vs. 3, 16). (c) *Have sincere love for others* (vs. 9, 10). (d) *Care about other people* (vs. 13, 15). Be kind and considerate. Mark Twain said, "Kindness is the language which the deaf man can hear and the blind man can read." Dale Carnegie said that you can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years in trying to get other people to become interested in you. (e) *Be honest and fair to all* (v. 17). (f) *Be good to your enemies* (vs. 20-21). (g) *Be honorable citizens* (Rom. 13).

3. The efforts we make must not violate our responsibility to God or our conscience (Rom. 14: 23). Thus, our text is not talking about peace at any price, but peace that can be attained following God's law.

"... live peaceably... "

1. Living peaceably with others is not merely a suggestion that makes life more enjoyable, but we are commanded to do our part in getting along with others (Mark 9: 20; 2 Cor. 13: 11; 1 Thess. 5: 13; 1 Pet. 3: 11).

2. What does it mean to live peaceably? W. E. Vine suggests that it involves harmonious relationships, friendliness, rest, contentment and being void of bitterness, strife, friction and enmity.

3. To live in peace with others is both *good* and *pleasant* (Psa. 133: 1). It is *good* in that it is right and good for us to live in peace. But, it is also *pleasant*. To help you get the picture of how pleasant it is, think for a moment about a close friend or family member. Think of how pleasant the relationship is. Think of the fun times and the great memories. Now imagine for a moment that something suddenly changed and now you just don't get along. Can you envision the pain, the hurt, the agony and frustration? If so, we can understand, at least in part, how pleasant a harmonious relationship is.

On the other hand, think for a moment about a person with whom you cannot get along. Think about how unpleasant, tense, nerve-racking and how it hurts. What if something could be done to resolve that? Can you imagine how good and pleasant that would be? If so, we can see the nature and the blessing of living peaceably with others.

"... with all men. "

There are times that we apply these principles of trying to get along to some, but not in our relationship with others. We can be so cordial to strangers or friends

and yet be so rude, cutting and unkind for our own family members.

Whoever said "Sticks and stones may break our bones, but words will never hurt me" was wrong. Robert Fulgham said it correctly, "Sticks and stones may break our bones, but words will break our hearts."

Sometimes we work hard at making and maintaining our friendships and yet make no effort to get along with our enemies.

The text says, "all men". That includes friends, fellow-workers, neighbors, fellow-Christians, family members (parents, children, in-laws, brothers and sisters) and even our enemies.

I find myself thinking about this verse quite often because I see so many situations where it is applicable.

**A PERSONAL NOTE
FROM
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THANKS FOR YOUR RESPONSE

The reader's response to our mail-out about our computer problems has been great. Many have written kind and encouraging notes. A number of people have responded by paying for subscriptions for others. We thank you for your help.

—Connie W. Adams

I am very grateful to Donnie V. Rader for editing the paper during the summer months of June, July and August and for continuing in this work until the first of the year. First of all, his writing and layout work has been excellent. The July special, "Whatever Happened To Common Decency?" was well done and well received. We had to reorder to meet extra demand.

It has been an eventful summer. We were struck twice by lightening within one month. Our loss of computer billing data has been largely recovered by now, thanks to a mountain of effort by Karen Arbuckle, my wife, Bobby, and the cooperation of so many of you who responded quickly and compassionately to our appeal for information. I have been surprised to find out how many computer "experts" there are out there among the brethren. Yes, we know you have to "back up" your work daily. We have always done this. But "back up" can get fouled up too, and that is what happened to us. We have now installed a better system and added hard copy backup in case of future problems. We are thankful to those of you who took this occasion to write words of appreciation and encouragement about the paper and to those also who sent in new subscriptions. They could not have come at a better time.

I had to have additional back surgery on August 6. If all goes as planned, I should be back into my meeting work in September, though I will have to live with some restrictions for a few months. I cannot sit very long without exercising and that poses some problems about working very long at a desk. Once again, my good friend and brother, Donnie V. Rader, has agreed to help. I have asked him to work as guest editor until January 1st and hope to be able to be back at my post by that time. He is a busy man and extra effort is required to maintain his own work and take care of this task as well. I have utmost confidence in his knowledge, ability and character. He is true to the book in his preaching, writing and life. Please give him your support and encouragement. We continually owe a debt of gratitude to those men who consistently provide excellent material for the paper, just because they want to do it. God bless all of you. Pray for us.

SIMPLICITY IN CHRIST

P. J. Casebolt

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"NOT DONE IN A CORNER"

Concerning the fulfillment of those things "which the prophets and Moses did say should come," including the revelation of Christ and his will, Paul said, "this thing was not done in a corner" (Acts 26: 22-26).

Even in the presence of hostile witnesses, Jesus said, "I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing" (Jno. 18: 20).

Even the Old Covenant, given at Mt. Sinai, was given openly so that "all the people" were witnesses to that revelation (Ex. 20: 18). And when that covenant was abrogated, it was done so "openly" (Col. 2: 14-17).

The New Will and Testament of Christ was revealed openly by the Spirit, working through apostles and prophets (Eph. 3: 5). The resurrection of Christ was confirmed "by many infallible proofs" (Acts 1: 3), and by witnesses whose testimony is unimpeachable to this day (1 Cor. 15: 5-8). And the word preached was confirmed, not by alleged "proofs" emanating from some dark corner, but by "signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost..." (Heb. 2: 3, 4).

Now, let us compare all these things "not done in a corner" with the confusing and contradictory claims of so-called "latter day revelations." And not only do these "foolish prophets" (Ezek. 13: 3), contradict each other, they even contradict themselves.

Around the year 610 (A. D.), a man by the name of Mohammed claimed that the archangel Gabriel appeared to him in a corner of the world somewhere around Mecca, Arabia. Out of this corner came a new "revelation" known as the Koran, and the subsequent religion of Islam.

And Muslims base their faith and their eternal destiny on something done in a corner.

Around 1830, in a corner of upstate New York, Joe Smith made the claim that he had found and translated some golden plates, and with the abracadabra of another religious magician, the Book of Mormon was born.

And, peculiar to these corner revelations and religions, Joe Smith conjured up not only his golden plates, but peep stones of quartz through which he allegedly translated the plates. And not only was all this done "in a corner," it was done behind a bed sheet in secret, and the translation passed through to scribes on the other side.

Joe Smith and the Mormons claimed witnesses to these clandestine operations, but three of his original "witnesses" (Cowdery, Whitmer, and Harris), were discredited and "cut off" by Smith himself in less than ten years.

Not only did Mormonism begin "in a corner," its leaders and authorities have continually attempted to suppress certain writings and evidence which is detrimental to the claims of Mormonism. Even to this very day, Mormons are urged to avoid any kind of confrontation where their claims and the Book of Mormon can be subjected to the light of God's word, the Bible.

And if you doubt that, just try to arrange an open, fair, public examination of the Bible vs. the book of Mormon.

Not to be out-cornered, William Miller and Ellen G. White came on the scene about 1844-45 with their version of "vanity and lying divination" (Ezek. 13: 6, 7), claiming like the false prophets of old that the Lord had sent them. Mrs. White even claimed that she was "caught up to the third heaven" to receive her revelation, which surely should give it more credence than what Joe Smith claimed to have gotten through peep stones behind a bed sheet.

In the latter part of the 19th century, Charles Russell came up with prophecies from the southwest corner of Pennsylvania, predicting the return of Christ in 1874. When Christ did not show up, Russell claimed that the Lord and his apostles did come, but that they were invisible. Or, to use Paul's phrase, they were hiding "in a corner" somewhere.

Not sufficiently embarrassed by previous failures, Russell's followers predicted that Christ would return and set up his kingdom in 1914, and that "millions (then) living would never die." Again, they claimed the event happened, but only a few could see it. "In a corner" again.

Dear readers, we are not trying to make fun of you, or your religious beliefs. Many sincere people have followed, and continue to follow, these false prophets who got their "visions" in the darkened corners of human revelation. Their claims are so shallow, inconsistent, contradictory, and even ridiculous that it is a marvel that intelligent people could be deceived by them.

Jesus came the first time and set up his kingdom in keeping with Old Testament prophecies (Lk. 24: 44; Heb. 12: 28). When he returns the second time, it will be to deliver up that kingdom to God (1 Cor. 15: 24). And you need to get into that kingdom (Jno. 3: 5), stay in it (Rev. 14: 13), and stay out of every religious system that "shall be rooted up" (Mt. 15: 13).

The once-revealed scriptures are a complete and sufficient revelation to guide us until the Lord returns (2 Tim. 3: 16, 17; Jude 3).

And we can "say unto you by the word of the Lord" that the second coming of Christ will not be "done in a corner" either.

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IN MEMORY OF
IRVEN LEE

Bob Waldron

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1914



1991

On May 4, 1991, at ten minutes till two in the afternoon, I watched as my father-in-law exhaled his last breath. Suddenly, the body that had been alive lay still and quiet. Though it has been over two months since that day (this article is being written in mid-July), vividly, the moment of death can be called to memory's eye and relived.

At the funeral, Donnie Rader asked if I would write a memorial for brother Lee. The text of the funeral sermon has already appeared in the *Guardian of Truth*. I did not wish to repeat the thoughts of that sermon; therefore, it has taken a little time for me to comply with brother Rader's request. The time has been good because it has already begun to give perspective to the past. As I tried to do in the funeral sermon, I want to honor brother Lee's memory while not violating what his wishes would be. My article will therefore attempt to say what I know he would want me to say.

Brother Lee came to be widely known and very influential, but his power and influence accumulated slowly through a life of diligent toil and service in the quietness of the Lord's fields and vineyards where he worked.

Those who know trees realize that generally the faster the tree grows, the softer and weaker is the wood. Those men who devote their lives to the service of God, and work quietly, studying and preaching, those men who remember the importance of godliness, grow into the solid oaks and cherries from which beautiful furniture is made. On the other hand, often, influence and prominence are handed to a young preacher in a gift-wrapped package, and he is ruined by it. He remains a quick growth tree that is really good for nothing: it burns too readily even to use for firewood.

There have always been those preachers who, from youth, have been in the limelight. There was less of this in brother Lee's day, and in preceding generations, because preaching was anything but a lucrative field. Often there was no "full-time" support available. Men like brother Lee preached because they had to; it was in their bones. "If I say, 'I will not make mention of him nor speak any more in his name,' then there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with forbearing, and I cannot contain" (Jer. 20: 9).

Brother Lee always found it impossible to understand how a young man could say, "I wish somebody would help me get a church," or, "I wish I had a place to preach." He felt we have God's permission and help to preach. What else does anyone need?

I have delighted in hearing and reading of his first meeting held in 1931. There was an abandoned schoolhouse, and this painfully shy boy of almost seventeen went and got permission to conduct a meeting in the little building. He went up and down the country roads and lanes inviting people to come. He then preached to those who accepted his invitation. Brother Lee commented on this in *Preaching in a Changing World*: "Do you see how I got started preaching? It was simple, was it not? I preached and preached before any established church thought of asking me to work with it. I grew up into the work. There is no better way to begin."

Though circumstances have changed greatly, the principle is still good — let a man work to serve God in God's own ways. Let no man seek preaching as a means to gaining fame and prominence, or merely to have a job. Opportunities to preach still abound to the one who is willing to serve in any capacity God desires.

Often today young men enter a preacher-training program at a church with equipment galore, with enormous resources, and many such will then preach no way but first class. Many will get the idea that they have a right to expect first class accommodations always. Such men will be limited in the work they can do for the Lord. I am afraid that many preachers today have very distorted ideas about preaching. In brother Lee's life, I saw what preaching really is.

Preaching Is A Close Relationship With God
First, preaching is a very close relationship with God. When I was a teenager first thinking of preaching, and in the early years of my preaching, Elijah was one of my favorite characters because of the relationship he had with God. Actually, this kind of relationship with God characterized all the great characters in the Bible: Abraham, Moses, Samuel, David, Elijah, Jesus, Paul, and others. I saw this relationship with God in brother Lee's life as well. The cultivating of such a relationship should be the first order of business with any would-be preacher of the gospel.

Preaching Is Commitment

A man such as I have described is going to preach whether "supported" or not. Once he puts his hand to the plow, there will be no turning back. To him, preaching will never be a way of paying for his degree. Whether making tents or receiving wages from the churches, he preaches the gospel. These words are not meant to cast aspersions upon any man who, because of health, is

prevented from preaching. I do think that, often a man may preach until he comes to an opportunity for more lucrative work. In other words, the man who, because of health or financial catastrophe, has to abandon the primary goal of preaching, has nought but my understanding, and he can still serve the Lord effectively. But that man who turns his back on preaching the gospel to seek wealth and an easier life raises questions about how deep-seated his love for God and for the gospel was. Sometimes men will preach until they discover just how able they really are; then they decide their talents are being squandered just preaching, so they go into some other field of endeavor. Perhaps that man should realize that God has nurtured him during the developing of his abilities expecting that when they are mature, he will devote his full powers and energy to the proclamation of the gospel.

Preaching Is Unfeigned Faith

In brother Lee I saw unfeigned faith, a faith solid and pure all the way to the bottom. There was love for God also. Once I asked him what had helped him to maintain such a good life. What had enabled him to resist temptations? Among other things, he said, "I realized what Christ did for me, and I felt that I should do all that was in my power to show Him how I appreciated it."

Maybe I could sum up the point I am trying to make like this: Perhaps we need to revive the expression, "man of God." These words were found often in the Old Testament. They suggested a man wholly given to God's service, no matter what he might do for his living. We need preachers who are first of all men of God. "He was a man of God" is the finest thing that could be said of any man.

Preaching Involves A Lot Of Studying And Thinking

Brother Lee did a lot of sermon preparation as he drove. In the earlier years, Sandra, his younger daughter, remembers that on Sunday afternoons, or on any afternoon when there was a service that night, brother Lee would go for a walk, and she was perfectly welcome to go along, but she knew that she was supposed to remain quiet because her daddy was thinking about his sermon.

This thinking I am talking about was called meditation in olden time. Let me tell you what meditation does for a sermon. Has your wife ever put into a pot chunks of meat, with potatoes, carrots, onion, and other vegetables, to make a stew? When she gets all the ingredients together in the pot, the meal is not yet ready to serve, is it? The stew must be cooked and simmered until the ingredients have grown tender, until their individual flavors have blended into one delicious taste. Meditation is the cooking of verses and thoughts and ideas of persuasion into a sermon powerful to move, to convince, and to convict. We need more simmering in our sermons.

Preach With A Purpose

Preaching should be aimed, it should meet a need. Often brother Lee was called into a situation where there was trouble and strife. He would preach to the need. It never occurred to him to evade the issue. He believed in applying the gospel alcohol to the skin. It

would burn when it touched where it was needed.

Let Us Run Our Race

Brother Lee has run his race; he has fought his fight. The course each one runs is different. There are many fields to be worked, many different challenges to be faced. Let us be determined that whether our challenge is faith in the face of trial, or steadfastness against the howling winds of false doctrine, or resisting the temptations of the flesh, or joyfully dealing with the hum-drum affairs of the ordinary, that we will be resolved to complete our race and receive our prize. I would like to think that brother Lee has become a part of that great cloud of witnesses who cheer us on by their example.

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ARE WE HAVING "GOSPEL MEETINGS"?

Barney Keith

541 Midfield Street
Birmingham, Alabama 35228



The practice of conducting gospel meetings is widespread. While that expression is not found in the Scriptures, most would concede that the concept is Biblical. Just as one may use such terminology as "the New Testament church," "scriptural authority" and "Bible classes," so one may talk about a "gospel meeting." Most would have no problem with the language itself. The problem comes when words are applied to something they do not describe. Obviously it would be a misnomer to call something a "Bible class" if the Bible is not being studied. Likewise one should not call something a "gospel meeting" if the gospel is not the focus of the meeting.

The word "gospel" appears several times in the New Testament with phrases that modify, or qualify, its meaning. These phrases can help in determining whether a real gospel meeting takes place. The purpose of this study is to examine some of them, for surely the presence of these elements will be visible when the gospel is preached.

Terms Modifying The Gospel

It is "the **gospel of Christ**" (Rom. 1: 16; 15: 19; Ph. 1: 27). It is "of Christ" because it is **His**; it came from **Him**; it concerns **Him** — His Deity, authority and saving power. When the meeting focuses attention on the Son of God, as in the first century, it is truly a gospel meeting. Gospel meetings should deal with the **doc-trine of Christ** rather than the philosophies of men. Souls are in jeopardy when His teaching is perverted, both of the preacher and of those taught (Gal. 1: 6-9; 1 Tim. 6: 3-5). First century preachers preached **Christ** (Acts 8: 4, 12, 35).

It is "the **gospel of your salvation**" (Eph. 1: 13). What theme could be more vital in a gospel meeting? Implicit in the expression "gospel of salvation" is a truth that is explicitly declared in other passages; namely, that man without the gospel is without hope, he is lost, he needs deliverance from the guilt of sin. Paul, in Antioch of Pisidia, preached "the word of this salvation" (Acts 13: 26). In Philippi Paul and Silas were found "showing the way of salvation" to the people (Acts 16: 17).

An essential fact to remember, too, is that the gospel is called "the **gospel of the grace of God**" (Acts 20: 24). What a great opportunity the gospel meeting affords to teach the "true grace of God" (1 Pet. 5: 16) in contrast with the religious world's false notions on salvation by grace.

A study of the book of **Acts**, looking at the sermons of the early preachers, will help us to appreciate **what can** properly be incorporated into proclaiming the **gospel** of our salvation. Question: Is a gospel meeting **truly that** when sinners are not even told what to do to **be saved**?

It is "the **gospel of the kingdom**" (Matt. 9: 35; 4: 23). There surely is a place somewhere in the **preaching of the gospel** for preaching about the kingdom Jesus **came to set up** (Matt. 16: 18, 19). Informed Christians **know that the "kingdom"** generally refers to the **church**. Those in the church at Colosse were said to be in "the kingdom of **God's dear Son**" (Col. 1: 13). The fact that both words are **used in** Matthew 16: 18, 19 to refer to what Jesus had **come to build** further demonstrates this. Let us **preach** "the **gospel of the kingdom**." Paul did (Acts 19: 8; 20: 25; 28: 23, 31). People still need to understand the unique nature of **the Lord's church**. One has cause to wonder just **how many of** our younger generation in the church think **that "our denomination"** is just one among the many. **Do they** understand Bible teaching about the Lord's organization and work of the local church so that they will not **become** associated with liberal, institutional churches when **they** move from place to place? Would not a gospel meeting **be** a proper time to speak a few words about that body of which Christ is the Savior (Eph. 5: 23)?

It is the **gospel of peace**" (Rom. 10: 15; Eph. 6: 15). Many people are in a frenzied search for personal peace and inner contentment in this age of turmoil and uncertainty, not knowing that the "Peace that passeth understanding" is found in the gospel of the Prince of peace. It is tragic that so many turn to the gurus of pagan religious philosophy, to the "New Age" voices of people like Shirley MacLaine. The voices of the "channelers" and "mediums" do not speak "the gospel of peace." A gospel meeting provides an opportunity to point desperate, groping souls to the source of genuine peace, a peace that is the possession of all who are in the "one body" of the reconciled ones (Eph. 2: 16).

It is a gospel that demands a **lifestyle that is "worthy of the gospel of Christ"** (Ph. 1: 27). There must be preaching that clearly shows that a verbal commitment to Christ is no substitute for **practicing** holy living that will "adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things" (Titus 2: 10). The carnally-minded brother or sister must understand that thinking, talking and acting like the lascivious age in which we live are unacceptable to God (see Titus 2: 11, 12). The gospel of Jesus Christ deals with the daily conduct of the child of God, and that should be preached. **The Sufficiency of the Gospel**

The material found in the gospel revelation is sufficient for the right kind of gospel meeting anywhere at **any** time. The many truths exalting **Christ** as Lord, **the** extensive teaching about the Lord's **church** in its various facets, the abundance of instruction concerning the **plan of salvation** for lost men, the emphatic declarations about where **true peace** is found, the breadth of teaching on **how Christians are to live** — surely these gospel elements are enough.

A gospel meeting does not need the hype of sectarian charlatans. Congregations can have gospel meetings without resorting to the titillation of a pleasure-seeking

audience. Efforts to be sensational may serve the purposes of denominational revivalists, but a gospel meeting is no place for such. Attempts to project a Thespian stage presence with dramatic flair seems out of order when the aim is to have a gospel meeting. Gospel preachers need not be actors, comedians, magicians or entertainers. The precious truth of the gospel needs to be handled aright (2 Tim. 2: 15). That truth can be preached in plain and simple language that the common man can understand. It will accomplish what Christ intended. It is enough.

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OLD DISEASED WILLOWS AND CHURCHES

Norman E. Fultz

13018 Oakland Avenue
Kansas City, Missouri 64166

They weren't really of much value... rotten in the heart, badly leaning, punctuated by many dead limbs which littered the ground after the slightest wind storm. But I hated to lose them.

They were pretty in a strange sort of way even if they were only willows, just plain old willows, not the weeping kind. Like other old gnarled and twisted trees that have withstood the storm and then basked in the sun while they had stubbornly stood for many years, they might have become the subject of poem or have been framed in the camera lens of some creative photographer. I'll have to admit I've had dreams of finding some old twisted tree and of being able to catch the light just right as I clicked the shutter. I have the same dream about the crusty, wrinkled face of an old man or an old woman when each deep furrow under a crown of gray — maybe even disheveled—hair tells a story of endurance through many a storm of life and many a hardship suffered.

And they — my old willow trees — were a sort of landmark, too. Standing in my yard or on the back deck of the house, it was easy to explain to any querist my property line. "Under the arched limb of the second willow, barely to the left of the third and onto the fence," I could say. And he'd know. Never had anybody failed to understand it? We all need that kind of landmark from time to time, something highly visible, dependable, immovable, that can help us keep our directions in life on the right track.

Though diseased and always dropping their dead limbs, I'd pruned them a bit, thinking they might survive a few more years. Oh, I'd thought about just cutting them down, especially when I'd be picking up the debris they shed. Then I'd stand back and look at them. Sentimentality would win out.

But in a couple of recent spring storms, two of them came crashing down. And no marvel, for other, far stronger things that didn't catch nearly the wind as does a tree succumbed to the force. In the storm's path only a mile or two before it reached these aged towers of former strength, several power poles had yielded. The trunk of one of the trees broke some four feet up and the limbs fell in opposite directions forming a 180 degree semicircle like someone dropping a handful of pick-up sticks. The other holding its own in the first storm, finally yielded in the second a few days later. Its old, diseased, hollow trunk finally broke. But only after engaging in a tug of war with its roots. Alas, they were overcome, and there they lay crying out to be cut up,

piled into a heap, eventually to yield to the flame of the torch and melt into a pile of dusty, powdery ashes.

No longer a landmark. No longer an adornment where the land ceases its slope and flattens out. No longer a place of rest for the birds, weary from flight, who stop for a brief rest, or perhaps just to perch and sing their full-throated song to a companion nearby. No longer a shade in a parched pasture to which cattle had in years past sought refuge from the hot summer sun. Their usefulness and service to man and others of God's creatures were now a thing of the past. When they've dried out sufficiently, the flame will eradicate even the memory of them except for perhaps a few folk to whom they have had some real significance. Like me, or the farmer who formerly owned the land and saw his cattle lie under them contentedly chewing the cud in the heat of the day or perhaps a horse having turned his back side to the tree for refuge from a blowing rain or winter wind.

As I tackled the task of clean up, the chain saw, with its voracious appetite, chewed its way through trunk and branch, mixing the sawdust with the smoke of its two-cycle engine, and my thoughts turned to Christians and churches. I could even think of specific ones to whom application of my analogies seemed appropriate.

Christians, genuine Christians, are things (I hate to call them "things") of beauty. And they too are much like a landmark. The Psalmist spoke of "the beauty of holiness" as the character of the worship desired by the Lord (Psa. 29: 2; 96: 9). And it is precisely that quality of life that is to characterize the Christian (Heb. 3: 1; 12: 14; 1 Pet. 1: 14-15). They are light and salt in a world of darkness and perversity (Mat. 5: 13-14; Eph. 5: 8; Phil. 2: 15-16). They are instruments of service and praise to God (Rom. 6: 1-19; Heb. 13: 15; Rev. 5: 8). And they stand like bright beacons to those lost in sin, for they hold forth the word of life (Phil. 2: 16) which points men to heavenly realms (Col. 3: 1-4).

But what if one's faith becomes hollow, and the heart is gone from his devotion; and he has become but an empty shell, his spirit diseased with the cares of this world and of this life (Mk. 4: 19; Lk. 21: 34)? Faith which can overcome the world (1 Jn. 5: 4) with all its torrents and fiery darts of the devil (Eph. 6: 16) no longer sustains in the evil day. Patient continuance in well-doing (Rom. 2: 7) is but a memory of the past; and the beauty of life fostered by holiness of heart becomes scarred as the light that had shone in darkness becomes dimmed or smothered. One whose life had been "an example of the believers" (1 Tim. 4: 12) and thus like a landmark for others groping their way through the fog and indecisive-ness of life, himself succumbs to the storms. Fruit-bearing gives way to rotteness. The shadow of faith under which others sought comfort in difficult times no longer beckons a weary pilgrim. Is it his end now to be burned, since the things that accompany salvation no longer keep company with him? (Heb. 6: 8-9).

And there are churches that have stood as landmarks and from whom has been sounded forth the word of the Lord (1 Thes. 1: 8). Lost souls have been drawn to hear and learn the truth by the lives of godly members like a magnet emitting its powerful force. As storms of immor-

ality set off a flood in society, these churches counter with the sword unsheathed and drawn to do battle. And saints are encouraged to "put on the whole armor of God and stand against the wiles of the devil" (Eph. 6: 10-18). Incursions of error that threaten doctrinal soundness are met with unflinching loyalty to the Captain of salvation.

But what if a church grows indifferent and is victimized by apathy (Rev. 3: 15-17), or what if it leaves its first love (Rev. 2: 4), or what if it begins to rest on its laurels (Rev. 3: 1), or what if worldliness creeps in and goes unchallenged (Rev. 2: 20), or what if false doctrine makes an inroad (Rev. 2: 15)? Unless these maladies are corrected, when storms eventually sweep across the spiritual terrain, such churches will be unable to withstand. Like the old, diseased willows, they will fall, their beauty gone, their usefulness a thing of the past.

Surely the Lord hates to lose any of His churches. But when disease and decay set in with a persistence like that of leavening which will not be satisfied until it has permeated the whole lump, and His chastening fails to "yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness" (Heb. 12: 6-11), will they not cease as landmarks or lighthouses? And will He not remove their candlestick?

Christians, keep a tight grip on your faith and help the churches of which you are members not become like old diseased willows which cannot withstand the storm and whose usefulness is lost.

"YOU JUST CONDEMNED MY GRANDMOTHER!"

Wallace H. Little

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Ft. Walton Beach, Florida 32548-5212

I could hear myself saying the same thing to the one teaching me the gospel more than 36 years ago. I loved my grandmother deeply. She was as near perfection as anyone I had known. After a long bout with cancer, she had passed away when I was 15. I understood that if the Bible was correct, she died out of the Lord. My heart rebelled. I was hung up on baptism.

My teacher's answer might help others. "You say your grandmother loved God, but never heard of baptism for remission of sins. As one who loved God so much, what would she do if she were here now, listening? What would she advise you to do, with your increased knowledge?"

That was enough. I obeyed God (Mk. 16: 16; Acts 2: 38; Acts 22: 16; Rom. 6: 3-5; 1 Pet. 3: 21). Will this move you to love Christ also (John 14: 15)?

Or, do you still think I'm condemning your grandmother?

**MARRIED FOR
LIFE, WITH ONE
EXCEPTION**

Ron Halbrook

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W. Columbia, Texas 77486



The Scriptures teach that two people joined by God in marriage are bound for life, the only exception being that an innocent partner may put away a mate guilty of fornication and remarry.

It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:

But I say unto you. That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery (Matt. 5: 31-32). Jesus referred here to the Old Testament law of Deuteronomy 24: 1-4 which allowed a man to put away his wife for indecent conduct short of adultery, but Jesus said such a practice will no longer be tolerated. **IF A MAN PUTS AWAY HIS WIFE FOR ANY REASON OTHER THAN FORNICATION, HE CAUSES HER TO COMMIT ADULTERY WHEN SHE MARRIES ANOTHER.** The difference between the Law of Moses and the Law of Christ can be summarized as follows:

- | Moses | Christ |
|--|---|
| 1. Fornicator put away by <i>death</i> penalty — not marry another. | 1. Fornicator put away by <i>divorce</i> — not marry another. |
| 2. Man permitted to put away wife for conduct short of fornication. | 2. Man <i>not</i> permitted to put away wife for conduct short of fornication. |
| 3. Woman put away for cause other than fornication <i>not</i> said to be in adultery if marries another. | 3. Women put away for cause other than fornication said to be in adultery if marries another. |
| 4. Man she marries <i>not</i> said to be in adultery. | 4. Man she marries said to be in adultery. |
| 5. First husband barred ever getting her back if she remarries. | 5. First husband <i>not</i> from barred from ever getting her back if she remarries. |

Notice both the rule and the exception included in the law. The rule says that anyone who puts away his wife is guilty of causing her to commit adultery when she enters an unscriptural marriage. The exception says that if a man puts away his mate because she engaged in sex with someone else, he is not responsible for her subsequent adultery when she marries another man unscripturally. This shows that an innocent partner may put away a mate guilty of fornication and remarry.

The Pharisees asked Jesus, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" His answer emphasized the principle taught by God from the beginning:

For this cause shall man leave father and mother, and

shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh.

Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

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: 3-9).

Notice again the rule and the exception. The rule says that when anyone divorces his wife and marries another, he commits adultery. God rejects this second marriage as immoral. The exception says that if a man puts away his wife because she engaged in sex with someone else, he does not commit adultery when he marries again.

The word "EXCEPT" conveys the idea "IF AND ONLY IF." "Except ye be converted" means "if and only if you are converted" and become as little children, you can enter God's kingdom (Matt. 18: 3). No man could do the miracles Jesus did "except God be with him" — "if and only if God be with him" (Jn. 3: 2). "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" — "if and only if a man is baptized in water and does so because he truly accepts the gospel revealed by the Spirit, he can enter God's kingdom" (Jn. 3: 5). "EXCEPT IT BE FOR FORNICATION" means "IF AND ONLY IF a man puts away his mate for fornication, he can marry again without committing adultery." The Scriptures do not teach that a person who is divorced by his mate for committing fornication is free to marry another. Compare these statements of Jesus: 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). Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it shall marry another, committeth adultery **AND WHOSO MARRIETH HER WHICH IS PUT AWAY DOTHTH COMMIT ADULTERY** (Matt. 19: 9).

Jesus emphasized that the divorced person is not to marry another.

Two cases of divorce are contemplated in the above passages. 1. A man divorces his wife wrongfully and unscripturally when she has committed no fornication. She should keep the door open for reconciliation rather than marry another man. God gives her no right to seek another spouse. If she does marry someone else, the new marriage will be nothing but adultery in God's sight. The man who causes such a case of adultery by wrongfully divorcing his wife has no right to form a second marriage. 2. A man might divorce his wife because she engaged in sex with someone else. After she has brought her marriage to wreck and ruin by immoral conduct, God does not release her to form a new marriage. If she marries another man, it will be adultery in God's sight. "Jesus here limits the right of divorce to cases of unchastity... the innocent party to such a divorce can

many again. Of course the guilty party could not, for no one is allowed by law to reap the benefits of his own wrong" (J. W. McGarvey, **Fourfold Gospel**, p. 242). All cases of divorce and remarriage result in adultery, with one exception. 1. Whoever divorces his mate and marries another commits adultery. 2. Anyone who marries a person who is unscripturally divorced becomes guilty of the sin of adultery. 3. The divorced fornicator who remarries enters into an adulterous relationship with the new mate. All cases of divorce and remarriage result in adultery, with one and only one exception. Whosoever divorces a mate for fornication and marries another does not commit adultery.

God rules over all cases of marriage. Romans 7: 2-3 plainly says that if a woman's husband dies, she can be scripturally "married to another man." Matthew 19: 9 just as plainly teaches that a man who puts away his wife for fornication can "marry another" without committing adultery. Where does the Bible plainly say that an unscripturally divorced person may marry someone else? There is no such passage! Where does the Bible teach that the divorced fornicator can marry another? No such teaching can be found in God's Word!

What should a person do whose marriage is unscriptural and adulterous? John came as the forerunner of Christ, preaching a baptism in water which required true repentance and which brought the remission of sins. "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance," he insisted (Matt. 3: 1-8; Mk. 1: 4). When John preached to Herod, who was living in an adulterous marriage, he declared, "It is not lawful for thee to have her" (Matt. 14: 4; Mk. 6: 17-18). True repentance required Herod to get out of an unscriptural marriage.

True repentance today requires the same thing. Those who obey the gospel of Christ can no longer live in such sins as fornication and adultery (Col. 3: 5-7; 1 Cor. 6: 9-11). If a Christian persists in such sin, the church must withdraw fellowship from them (1 Cor. 5). An unscripturally divorced Christian, like a divorced fornicator, is limited to these options: "let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband" (1 Cor. 7: 11).

(For further study: The weeks of 15 Jan. and 26 Feb. 1990 Ron Halbrook affirmed and Jack Freeman of N. Las Vegas, NV denied "that two people joined by God in marriage are bound for life, the only exception being that an innocent partner may put away a mate guilty of fornication and remarry." Freeman affirmed and Halbrook denied "that a person who is divorced by his mate for committing fornication is free to marry another." Video tapes of the Jan. debate are \$22. 00 from Truth on Tape, 19409-26th Ave. NW, Stanwood, WA 98292; Feb. debate, \$20. 00 from Chuck Ainsworth, Rt. 5, Box 712, Lindale, TX 75771.)

**Do you read your
Bible
every day?
(Acts 17:11)**

THE VIRGIN BIRTH

J. Edward Nowlin

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Perry, Florida 32347

"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign: Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." (Isa. 7: 14). This scripture is quoted in Mt. 1: 23 (KJV).

In 1952 the Revised Standard Version of the Bible made its appearance and set forth this passage with "**a young woman**" instead of "a virgin." Obviously, there is a difference between these renderings of Isaiah's prophecy. A young woman may or may not be a virgin, and that translation was evidently intended to give aid and comfort to the Modernists who deny that Jesus was born of a virgin. However, if we look back a bit we shall find out that the Modernists of the present day did not think up this little morsel of blasphemy. They are "Johnnies come lately."

Irenaeus, a Christian who lived 120-202 A. D. took on some people in his day who first came up with this doctrine. Among them were an Ephesian named Theodotion and a citizen of Pontus named Aquila, who were Jewish proselytes to the Christian religion. Note here that it didn't take long for Paul's prophecy to the Ephesian elders at Miletus (Acts 20: 30) to come to pass. Theodotion was teaching a "perverse thing" on this matter. The Ebionites also taught this error, claiming that Jesus was begotten by Joseph, "thus destroying, as far as in them lies such a marvelous dispensation of God, and setting aside the testimony of the prophets which proceeded from God. For truly this prediction was uttered before the removal of the people to Babylon; that is, anterior to the supremacy acquired by the Medes and Persians. But it was interpreted into Greek by the Jews themselves, much before the period of our Lord's advent, that there might remain no suspicion that perchance the Jews, complying with our humour, did put this interpretation upon these words.... For before the Romans possessed their kingdom, while as yet the Macedonians held Asia, Ptolemy the son of Lagus, being anxious to adorn the library which he had founded in Alexandria, with a collection of the writings of all men, which were [works] of merit, made request to the people of Jerusalem, that they should have their Scriptures translated into the Greek language." (Irenaeus Against Heresies, ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, p. 451).

Here Irenaeus refers to the Septuagint Version of the Old Testament which was a translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into the Greek language about 250 B. C. The Ptolemy referred to was Ptolemy Philadelphus (286-247 B. C.), the son of the Ptolemy Lagus, a General in

Alexander's army who took over Egypt after the death of Alexander the Great in 331 B. C. This translation is available today and Isa. 7: 14 in it says "a **virgin**," not "a young woman."

Irenaeus continues, "Since, therefore, the Scriptures have been interpreted with such fidelity, and by the grace of God, and since from these God has prepared and has preserved to us the unadulterated Scriptures in Egypt, where the house of Jacob flourished, fleeing from the famine in Canaan; where also our Lord was preserved when he fled from the persecution set on foot by Herod; and [since] this interpretation of these Scriptures was made prior to our Lord's descent [to earth], and came into being before the Christians appeared—for our Lord was born about the forty-first year of the reign of Augustus; but Ptolemy was much earlier, under whom the Scriptures were interpreted; — [since these things are so, I say,] truly these men are proved to be impudent and presumptuous, who would now show a desire to make different translations, when we refute them out of these Scriptures, and shut them up to a belief in the advent of the Son of God." (Ibid, p. 452)

We agree that any who deny that Jesus was born of a virgin are "**impudent and presumptuous.**" This includes those who make modern translations of the Scriptures, so-called, which do not faithfully translate the original language into our tongue. The King James Version is not a perfect translation, since it translates the Greek word for passover "Easter" in Acts 12, but it and the American Standard Revised Version were translated by one hundred and forty-eight of the best scholars who ever lived. Those of us who cannot read the Hebrew and Greek texts can depend upon their work as being as near perfect as men can produce. It was our old Bible teacher in college, H. Leo Boles, who said that anything which cannot be proven by the King James and Revised Versions of the English Bible cannot be proven any way!

We have here given only a small part of the arguments of Irenaeus on the subject of the Virgin Birth of Jesus. He wrote several pages on the subject of the Virgin Birth of Jesus. He wrote several pages on the subject and ably defended the truth. It is refreshing and faith-building to be able to read the words of a man who was taught by Polycarp, a disciple of the Apostle John. Isaiah wrote about 700 years before the Christ was born. Thus, in spanning 2700 years of time and finding the same truth taught, we, with Irenaeus call it "**a marvelous dispensation of God**" that Jesus was born of a virgin. **This was the natural way for Divinity to become humanity because this is the way it has always happened!**

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WONDERFULLY MADE

George Hutto

Rt. 1 Box 384
Killen, Alabama 35645

For You have formed my inward parts;
You have covered me in my mother's womb.
I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
Marvelous are your works,
And that my soul knows very well.
(Psa. 139: 13-14)

The inspired psalmist most likely did not have a degree in biology or human anatomy. But he did understand some of the marvels of the human body. Also, he recognized that it must have been created. Therefore, he gave the glory of that wonderful creation to the proper One — to the God who created it.

The circulatory system is a wonder all its own. As the scripture says, the life is in the blood (Gen. 9: 4). Each human body is plumbed with hundreds of miles of living pipes which transport blood to and from each cell of the body. Pressure is maintained by the pump, the volume of blood, and the constricting of the pipes (controlled by the nervous system).

If something goes wrong, all the vessels in the extremities constrict, providing circulation for the vital organs. If a limb is accidentally amputated, the vessels constrict in that limb, slowing the blood loss and allowing for clotting.

The heart is the pump, a muscle which works from shortly after conception until death. It rests in between beats. Actually, it is two pumps with four chambers, check valves, and its own nervous stimulation systems; more than one, in case the primary system fails.

A person's well-being is so closely attuned to the circulatory system that when a heart attack or shock is experienced, the person is overwhelmed with a sense of impending doom.

The respiratory system is likewise incredible. The lungs allow blood to exchange carbon monoxide and oxygen with the atmosphere as we breathe. This is accomplished in tiny air sacks called alveoli. The average person's alveoli surface area is equal to approximately one fourth a basketball court. Here blood and the atmosphere come together for their exchange activities.

The lungs are such specialized organs that no substitute for their work has been developed. If a person's lungs are damaged by disease or injury, he cannot live.

The stimulus to breathe is the level of carbon monoxide in the blood. This level is constantly monitored. If too much carbon monoxide is in the blood, a message to breathe harder is sent. If not enough is found, a message

to breathe more slowly is sent.

But people with chronic obstructive lung disease lose this stimulus. There is a backup system. They are stimulated to breathe harder or easier by the level of oxygen in their blood.

Have you ever considered how you would survive without bones? Bones provide protection, a frame, and the ability to move. Our frames are alive, too. There are 206 living bones in the adult.

They make up joints just like the ones man used in his designs. There are hinged joints that turn only on one place, such as finer joints. And there are ball joints which turn in any direction, such as the shoulder joint.

But bones do other things as well. Inside bones is marrow which produces blood cells. Bones are strongly attached to muscles for great strength in movement. Blood vessels and nerves are plumbed into bones for protection and to provide bones with blood and feeling.

But then there are several vital organs and glands which control life. Without a properly controlled pancreas, for instance, life will cease.

Without the skin, life will cease. As a matter of fact, with only a small portion of skin seriously damaged body fluids will leave the body, heat will leave the body, and infection will invade the body.

How does all this marvelous design get started from just two little cells at conception? Each cell of the body contains the blue print in the DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) molecules for another whole body just like the one you have. These molecules are so complex that it would take many, many pages of text just to tell their chemical contents. Birth defects are often caused by small errors in these complex molecules in the chromosomes in reproductive cells.

Simple things like eye brows and eye lashes should cue us as to the wonder of how the body is designed. Windshield wipers on an automobile are one thing. But automatic dust catchers which grow on their own, require no maintenance, and automatically sense, close and flip are indeed a wonder.

A hundred years ago, when the evolutionists were having their hay-day, they claimed that the human body had over a hundred vestigial organs (organs that through evolution serve no useful purpose). But today useful purposes for all but a few (3 or 4) have been found. They are not useless tissue left over from when we were something else, but they serve vital functions. (A man can live without his right arm, but he will function much better with it.) Today authorities are not eager to cast them off as vestigial organs (although the vestigial argument is still made by some).

The knowledge acquired by modern technology and science is not contrary to the teaching of scripture. Truthfully, the knowledge that we now enjoy in the secular world was brought about by people who followed the instruction of the wise man (Prov. 23: 23). Nothing has been learned which would embarrass or violate the Bible believer. But the things learned have served only to confirm the things said by God's word. For You have formed my inward parts; You have covered me in my mother's womb.

I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
Marvelous are your works,
And that my soul knows very well.
(Psm. 139: 13-14)

COMETS, THE ORIGIN OF LIFE AND THE REAL LEAP OF FAITH

Tony Mauck

1040 Meadowland
Beaumont, Texas 77706

Will those who take the real "leap of faith" please stand up? For years now, believers in the creation model presented in the book of Genesis have been classified as illogical persons who are taking a "leap of faith." This so-called "leap" expresses what the more scholarly(?) would consider to be the lack of evidence to support our faith. Creation has been dismissed from the curriculum of public schools, and evolution has taken its place. In our nation, evolution is becoming the most commonly believed position on the origin of life on planet Earth. Scientists and educators far and wide affirm their belief in evolution. Thankfully, there are some exceptions.

But which does the evidence favor—creation or evolution? Which is the more logical of the two? And there are only two alternatives to the origin of life. I know of no other that is espoused. All explanations of life's beginnings are variations of these two main philosophies. In elementary, junior high and high schools, young people are being taught extensively to accept evolution as fact. In college, students who believe in creation are ridiculed as being blind, uninformed and treated as if they are in fantasy land, wearing "rose-colored glasses. "

But consider this recent article in the **Houston Chronicle**. The headline grabbed my attention, "Comets may have brought life." The article began, "Are we the sons and daughters of comets? Scientists have long speculated the ingredients for life arrived on Earth aboard comets or asteroids that pelted the planet some 4 billion years ago." From that point, the short article relayed the "new calculations" of Christopher Chyba of Cornell University and his colleagues. In short, they concluded, "... at least 2 million pounds of organic material could have reached the Earth each year during the period of heavy extraterrestrial bombardment 4 billion years ago." A stunning statement wrapped up the article, "That just might have been enough to get life rolling. "

Don't let the big words and big numbers of scientists and educators throw you. Look at what is really being said by those who so confidently affirm their belief in evolution. Notice these words which appeared in the

brief article, "Are we... ?; speculated; appears to have been; if; could have; just might have been enough." THIS IS THE LANGUAGE OF EVERY EVOLUTIONIST IF HE OR SHE IS HONEST!

The FACTS about evolution are as follows: 1) The theory is replete with "what if's," "might have been's" and "I'm not sure's"—question marks and speculation! 2) Evolution provides no concrete answers for life's origin. 3) Even if evolutionists can somehow assemble on earth the materials necessary to generate life, they still cannot explain with any certainty where those materials came from originally nor how life got started. 4) No "proof of evolution from one species to another is offered. If all living things came from one source, why are there no transitional forms? Why do changes only occur within a certain species and not form one species to another? 5) No "proof" exists that our planet is 4 to 5 billion years old. All the evidence, if rationally weighed, suggests a relatively young earth in comparison. 6) Even if the evolution model somehow provides an answer to the beginnings of life (and it can't), it still cannot adequately explain man's mind—his conscience, his personality and his ability to reason. The Bible provides the answer. "Let us make man in our image" (Genesis 1: 26).

Why then do scholarly men and women believe evolution and teach it with such conviction and confidence? Some are influenced and deceived by others. Some just simply will not allow themselves to consider creation as a viable alternative. Generally, we don't believe anything in life which carries so much speculation as evolution does. We demand facts, reliable evidence for our beliefs. The Bible explains why foolish, fanciful theories like evolution are accepted by certain people. Psalm 10: 4 says, "The wicked, in the haughtiness of his countenance, does not seek Him. All his thoughts are, There is no God. "

I have solid facts behind my faith. It is the evolutionist who takes the "leap of faith," not me. I see the design

of the universe and know that it demands a designer. Common sense tells me "time and chance" is not the answer. Factually, I know the laws of science conflict with the idea that matter existed eternally. So where did it come from? Creation is the ONLY logical explanation! Two passages of Scripture are sufficient for me to declare my faith, rationally and logically, in the God of heaven: Psalm 19: 1, "The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands." Genesis 1: 1, "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. "

If someone questions my belief in the Bible, I offer proof. I challenge anyone to refute the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. It could not be done in the first century nor can it be done today. As further proof, I offer the historical trustworthiness of the documents which comprise the Bible. The testimony of the Bible is credible. Archaeology only supports the Bible record. In addition, I appeal to fulfilled prophecy as an evidence of the Bible's inspiration, being the revealed will of the living God.

Which will you believe? Did comets crashing to the earth precipitate life on this planet or is the Bible's explanation of the origin of life more plausible? Will you believe. "That just MIGHT have been enough to get life rolling" or will your response be, "By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of the things which are visible" (Hebrews 11: 3)?

**"Go into all the world
and preach the gospel
to every creature"
(Mark 16:15)**

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

WAYNE S. WALKER, 310 Haynes St., Dayton, Oh 45410—Pour have been baptized so far this year, with three placing membership at Haynes St. In Dayton. We had a spring meeting with Grover Stevens and a Summer Bible study with Dan Clarkson of Brookville, Oh. Our fall meeting will be Sept. 22-27 with Wayne Chappel of New Castle, IN. We will have a weekend meeting Dec. 6-8 with Gary Eubanks discussing the errors of Charles Holt and *The Examiner*.

My own meetings have taken me to N. Ft. Myers, Fl with Jimmy Tuten, Brookville, OH with Dan Clarkson, Bowling Green, KY with Maurice Jackson, Bound Lake Beach, IL with Dave Pratte and Etowah, GA with Gary Eubanks. I will be at Loveland, OH Sept. 29-Oct. 4 and Richmond, IN Nov. 3-8.

JEFF ASHER, 5416 Dumas Drive, Amarillo, TX 79108—July 1, 1991 marks the beginning of our fourth year with the good church which meets on Dumas Drive. Our work has been very pleasant and profitable, and I expect it to be even better in the future.

In the three years we have been laboring in Amarillo we have seen twenty-seven additions to the church; seven restored from liberalism, one from one cup/no-class, ten baptisms and nine identifications. Sadly, we have had nearly as many loses: nineteen have been transferred out and four returned to the world. At present, counting everyone, our number stands at 98.

In this time we have been blessed in having fellowship with Hayes Reneau in Cash, TX, Tim Coffey at Belton, TX, Elmer Moore in Livingston, TX and Keith Sharp while at East Bradenton, FL. The church is active in local evangelism having three gospel meetings a year, a weekly hour-long call-in radio program, and a monthly 4 page 8 1/2 by 11 first principle paper which we send to 1, 000 residences around our meeting house.

Our radio program is making more and more opportunities for study. As a result of our broadcast, I have debated on the air Robert Williams, a homosexual priest, Glen Stocker, a hyper-dispensationalist, and J. David Davis, a Baptist preacher turned B'nai No'ach. Many

of those who came out of liberalism came as a result of the radio program.

If you have friends or family in Amarillo send us their name and address and we will add them to our mailing list and visit them.

B. G. Echols, 7 Ridgewood Ave., Glen Ridge, NJ 07028—Eight were baptized during the first six months of the year in East Orange, NJ. I recently completed my 19th year here.

NEW WORK

A new congregation is meeting in the Jamestown, Russell Springs, KY area. Services are at 9: 30 AM and 6: 00 PM on the Lord's day and at 7: 30 PM on Wednesday evening. Pat Scherba is the evangelist. For directions to the building call (502) 343-2206 or write the Lakeway Church of Christ, P. O. Box 1461, Russell Springs, KY 42642.

FROM AROUND THE WORLD

PHILIPPINES—CARL MCMURRAY, 1175 Hornaday Rd., Brownsburg, IN 46112—I was one of five American brethren who arrived there over a period of about nine to ten weeks. I will only mention the areas I visited, but for more information you might contact Keith Burnett, John Humphries, Jerry Parks and Norman Fultz. In the areas I visited I witnessed 46 baptisms, while over the 9-10 week period the total went over 200 in addition to the information of one or two new congregations.

Keith Burnett and I spent two weeks in the northern provinces of Ilocos Norte and Ilocos Sur. We spent each day traveling, preaching, visiting with brethren and staying in their homes. The work going on in those areas is tremendous. It began with the efforts of Materno Sibayan, Sr., 19 years ago in Laoag City. Since that time, in just two provinces, there have been about 40 preachers converted, trained and set to work among 70 established congregations. Literally thousands have been baptized into Christ over that time period. What has happened in your area over the past 19 years? I might add that Materno is a ex-Pentecostal preacher and has helped lead a multitude of his Pentecostal brethren to the Lord. Many of those taught by him have done likewise.

We spent some time traveling into areas that the U. S. Embassy had declared off-limits because of the threat from NPA (Communist) rebels.

After two weeks in these provinces, Keith went to Palawan while I traveled through and spoke in churches in the provinces of La Union and Pagsanin, concluding with a three day lectureship in Urduyeta, where brother Eusebio Balliao labors.

While there we had an uncomfortable situation with a native preacher (U. S. supported) to arise. His living, due to alcohol, was not up to his profession. The information discovered was passed along to those in fellowship who, being worthy of commendation, did not view this as a blot on the name of faithful preachers, but instead shifted their assistance to worthy workers.

I left for the southernmost island of Mindanao. Jerry Parks and I stayed with Joy and Amy Notarte and traveled out into the rural areas meeting with various congregations. While we met several young, diligent preachers doing a good job in this area, a special word might be inserted here about the work of Joy Notarte and his brother Jul. Together, they are active in teaching and training preachers in about 20 congregations. They had already baptized about 70 souls themselves in the first four months of 1991, including an entire congregation of Baptist (20 people). They took down the sign on the building, turned it over, painted "church of Christ" on it and just hung it back up. Joy also funds a radio program from his personal support to reach into outlying areas.

Though there are some unworthy Filipino preachers (just like U. S. preachers), I met and spent time with a great number of dedicated faithful brethren who are earnestly serving the Lord amidst great hardship. Many have never received any financial support. Great sacrifices are being made to preach the gospel on *that* side of the Pacific. I commend those who are in fellowship with that work. Please do not grow weary in well doing.

If any individual or congregation would be interested in the work there, I would be glad to share any information I have gathered, in slides or by letter. If there are any young Christians who would like to correspond with a pen-pal, I would be glad to pass that information along also.

ITALY—GIANNI BERDINI, Puglie di Domio 250, 34010 S. Antonio in Bosco (TS) Italy—Things are going very well with us. I just baptized a young couple (Francesco and Fabrizia) who live near Ascoli, a town located in the middle part of Italy. Last Sunday a man named Sergio obeyed the gospel in Trieste after two years of studying with him. I am also studying with a couple in Trieste who seem very near to obeying the gospel. This gives us a lot of courage and strength to go on notwithstanding the problems we always have to face. We are now looking forward to having Stefano with us to hold a meeting (June 15) on Catholicism.

ROBERTO TONDELLI, V. Q. Roscioni, 69, 00128 Rome, Italy—Socially speaking, Italy is having increasingly hard social problems. Hundreds of people have been killed in recent months by the Mafia, not only in the South, but practically on the whole national territory.

Religiously speaking, the Catholic church is gaining more and more political—economical power. The Vatican hierarchy presents itself as the only safe religious-political power (in Italy and the world). Last year they received 800 billion Liras from our government as income from a portion of a tax which Italians pay to their government. Their propaganda says they are helping the poor with that money. Actually, among other things, they have recently purchased several important local TV broadcasting stations and are covering practically the whole country with their (mis-) information on *every* aspect of life over here. They are now attacking every non-Catholic church, labeling them as "sects."

You can easily imagine how all that reflects very negatively on our preaching work here, making it even harder than usual. I'm simply mentioning these things that you may be informed of our working situation here and that you might also be encouraged by our fighting.

GERMANY—STEVE WALLACE, P. O. Box 7257, APO NY 09012—First to the work in Ramstein. We have had one baptized. Three have been transferred back to the U. S. We will lose six more in the next three months. We have had one man transferred in and some visitors. Sewell Hall held us a good meeting (April 26-28). It was good to be with him again and Martin Broadwell who was traveling with him.

I have been teaching a teacher/preacher training class on Tues. nights at the building. The results have been real encouraging.

There is a sound church in Bitburg, Germany. Five brethren left the liberal brethren. They call themselves the "Eifel church of Christ." Their address is Gary Sowell, P. O. Box 3025, APO NY 09132.

A trip to the USSR: I was contacted about a sister in Tennessee who wanted to spend \$1000 on Bibles for the USSR. After talking it over with the brethren in Prague, it was decided that Jeff Young, Bill Bynum and I would go to the east Ukrainian city of Lvov the third weekend in March. We spent two afternoons on the square there in Lvov taking addresses from people who wanted Bibles. We were enthroned continually for hours. We ended up getting more names than we had Bibles.

Arrigo Corazza is doing a good work in a section of Europe where there is no other sound church for 150 miles. He has lost \$900 support as of April 1. He and his wife have already dipped into savings to make up the difference. He has been preaching for almost 15 years in a country where Gospel preachers are scarce. He is a worthy man. If you know of a church willing to help him, his address is Arrigo Corazza, Via Magellano 32, 15100 Alessandria, Phone: 0131-226649.

NEW LOCATION

The church that has been meeting on Chestia pike in Erwin, TN will begin meeting at a new location September 22, 1991. The new building is located on Tennessee Hwy. 107. From the Unicoi exit (23), off the four-lane, it is approx. 1. 8 miles south. From the Erwin exit (19) it is approx. 2. 5 miles north. If you know of anyone in our area please contact Leroy V. St. Cyr, 108 Horton Ridge Road, Erwin, TN 37650. Phone: (615) 743-8251

LECTURESHIP

The Mound and Starr church in Nacogdoches, TX is planning a weekend lectureship on the institutional and cooperative issues Sept. 6-8 with James W. Adams. We will be happy to provide lodging in the homes of our members for anyone desiring to come for the weekend. Call us at (409) 564-7286 — Mark White.

DEBATES

SHARP—DEAVER DEBATE—Keith Sharp will meet Mac Deaver in debate Sept. 23-26 in Camden, AR. Proposition #1: "The Scriptures teach that a local church may grant benevolent aid to alien sinners." Deaver affirms. Sharp denies.

Proposition #2: "The exclusive New Testament pattern for the benevolent work of the local church from its treasury is the relief of needy saints." Sharp affirms, Deaver denies.

For more information contact Washington St. Church of Christ, 1107 Washington St., Camden, AR 71701 (501) 836-5369 or Keith Camp, 749 Sharp, Camden, AR 71701 (501) 836-0266.

SMITH—HICKS DEBATE—J. T. Smith will meet Olan Hicks in debate November 11, 12, 14, 15 in Tucson, Arizona. Proposition #1: "The Scriptures teach that only those persons who have divorced their mates for fornication (and those whose mates have died) may, with God's approval, enter and maintain a marriage with another person." Smith affirms. Hicks denies.

Proposition #2: "The Scriptures teach that all divorced people (including those whose mates are still living) may, with God's approval, enter and maintain a marriage with another person." Hicks affirms, Smith denies.

PEWS FOR SALE

Twelve pews, bond oak with seat padding, has book racks and card holders for sale. They are 16 feet in length in good to very good condition. Contact: Sam Carter (317) 892-3021 or John Crouch (901) 642-8236.

DO YOU KNOW OF ANY STUDENTS AT BOWLING GREEN, OH?

If you know of any students attending Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green, OH, please contact the church of Christ

in Bradner, OH. Call or write to George W. Lambroff, 629 Ordway Ave., Bowling Green, OH 43402, (419) 352-8842.

PREACHERS NEEDED

MCMENNVILLE, TENNESSEE—The West End Ave. church needs a gospel preacher. We can provide \$250 per week in support. We are located about 60 miles southeast of Nashville. Those interested should call Don Henry (615) 473-3425.

CLEARWATER, FLORIDA — The Northeast church meeting at 2040 N. McMullen-Booth Road is currently seeking a preacher to work full-time. If you are interested please contact Ed McKinney by writing to the above address or call (813) 799-0007.

MERRITT ISLAND, FLORIDA — The Merritt Island church is a small church with great potential looking for a full-time preacher. We can provide a nice house (3 bedroom, 2 bath) and some salary. If interested contact Jim Winton (407) 452-4762 or Cloyce D. Walden (407) 636-8255 or (407) 636-4361. Our Mailing address is: Merritt Island Church of Christ, P. O. Box 540591, Merritt, Island, FL 32954-0591.

NEWPORT, NORTH CAROLINA — The church in Newport is looking for a full-time evangelist to start working with them the first part of 1992. We can provide partial support. Those interested should contact us at P. O. Box I, Newport, NC 28570-0994.

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

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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 XXXII

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THINK ON THESE THINGS

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PURGE OUT THE OLD LEAVEN

There is a definite quality about leaven that caused the Holy Spirit to use it in connection with the invasion of false teaching into the body of Divine Truth. Literally leaven is sour dough in a high state of fermentation mixed with new dough to prepare for baking. It was forbidden in the house of the Jews during the seven days of Passover, as a reminder of the haste with which they left Egypt (Deut. 16: 3), Ho offering by fire was to be made unto the Lord with leaven (Lev. 2: 11).

In the New Testament the idea of leaven was used to illustrate the effect of teaching, especially false doctrine. Since its fermenting quality indicated the effect upon new dough, the corrupting quality of error upon truth is the comparison. It also indicated corrupt practices as in the case of the fornicator in 1 Corinthians 5: 6, 7.

In Matthew 16: 6-12 Jesus warned the disciples to "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees." Although the doctrines of these two religions differed widely, the same admonition was given regarding both. It makes no difference what the nature of the false doctrine is, we must beware of all of them. The disciples thought Jesus was talking about the fact that they had brought no bread, but he explained: "Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. "

There are some outstanding comparisons between the working of error and the working of leaven in bread. These are the points indicated in the state-ments just read from the word of God: 1) Leaven works silently and secretly. 2) It spreads by contact. 3) It affects the whole lump. 4) It changes every particle with which it comes in contact into its own kind. 5) It can only be destroyed by purging it out of the lump; no part of it can be permitted to remain or it will begin its work over again. 6) It takes only a "little" to do the job. The Lord gave a perfect illustration of the working of false teachers in the body of his disciples.

Paul told the Corinthians what to do about the leaven working among them: "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 5: 7). He warns: "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (Gal. 5: 9). We must oppose sin in any form and to every degree in the church or suffer the whole body to be affected and destroyed by error. We had better learn this lesson well if we want to remain the peculiar people of God.

Since Jesus used the term "leaven" to describe the false and hypocritical teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees, it is important to learn what this meant to the people to whom he spoke. These religious leaders came from the descendants of the twelve sons of Jacob who were delivered from Egyptian bondage and led by Moses to the mount where *the* law was given to Moses for the people. The law prescribed in detail the worship, priesthood, personal behavior and duties to God and their fellowman. The use of unleaven bread and the rejection of all leaven during the week of Passover was well known by every descendant of those to whom the law was delivered.

The Passover was instituted in Egypt before the children of Israel were delivered from bondage. The blood of the slain lamb without blemish was to be put on the side posts of the door and the upper door post. The first born of all in Egypt would die that night where the blood was not on the door posts. This feast of Passover was to be observed every year to the end of the Jewish dispensation. "And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to

the Lord throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever" (Exodus 12: 14).

One important thing about this feast that was to be observed with strictest care was that no "leavened" bread was to be used during the seven days of the Passover. The law said all leaven was to be put out of the house for the seven days. No one was to eat any leaven. Any one who did eat leavened bread was cut off from Israel (Exodus 12: 15). Even strangers were cut off if they ate any leaven (Exodus 12: 19).

For seven days they were to eat unleavened bread. "Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days; and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters" (Exodus 13: 7).

The apostle Paul described the church at Corinth as being unleavened, and therefore, they should put away the leaven of immorality: the man among them who was guilty of adultery. This is what the Holy Spirit said: "Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor. 5: 6-8).

Jesus used the word "leaven" to refer to the "doctrine" of the Pharisees and Sadducees, and the hypocrisy of the Pharisees (Matt. 16: 6-12). The doctrine of the Pharisees produced vain worship because it was a doctrine based upon the "commandments of men." The doctrines of men are all doctrines that are not of God. The doctrine of God—the Father, Son and Holy Spirit—is one; the doctrines of men are all that men have developed throughout the ages. They are all alike in that they reject and pervert the doctrine of God.

Paul said no other gospel was to be received because there was no other from Christ. "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. 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" (Gal. 1: 8, 9).

The apostle John said: "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (2 John 10, 11). Anyone who gives sanction or encouragement to those who teach any false doctrine, are as guilty as the false teacher. John said so!

The application of the instruction of Jesus regarding the leaven of false doctrines of men must be made today as it was in the time Jesus made the statements. All leaven must be put away, out of the house. No one can partake of that leaven under any circumstances.

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

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" QUOTE

**"Be careful of your thoughts;
they may become words
at any moment."**

—Iora Gassen

UNQUOTE "

Editorial

Donnie V. Rader

P.O. Box 9
Lexington, Alabama 35648



"ONE NATION UNDER GOD"

This year over 2,000 churches of Christ (some reports have suggested 3,000) worked together in a national campaign called "One Nation Under God". The elders of the Sycamore church in Cookeville, TN have "accepted oversight" of this project (Update brochure). The whole plan is the brainchild of Horace Burks a business man and deacon at Sycamore. He now serves as national chairman of the campaign.

Here is how this project works. Over 2,000 churches of Christ (and a few denominational churches) have sent money to the Sycamore church. I say they **have** sent it — actually, some churches have pledged large sums of money over a period of years. The Sycamore church and its elders have overseen the mailing of 102 million brochures into every home in the nation. This claims to be the largest mailing in U. S. history.

This mailing was preceded by a full page ad in the July 91 issue of *Reader's Digest*. The brochures were to be received between the first of July and the end of August. Many of these churches planned gospel meetings to be going on about the same time in July. The update literature sent out by Sycamore stated that responses that came in to the campaign headquarters would be sent to the "mission churches."

What started out as a 17 million dollar project was reduced to 10 million. I wondered if they just couldn't raise the other 7 million or if they almost wasted 7 million dollars. Supposedly, a million is coming out of two counties in north Alabama.

The plea for support says, "Perhaps for the first and only time in our lifetime, will our entire nation have an opportunity to receive the Gospel."

Future Plans

"One Nation Under God" did not end with the national mailing in July of this year. That was phase one. Phase two is scheduled to start in 1992. It will involve mailing brochures to homes in Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean and Eastern Europe. There are other stages that continue on until the turn of the century (Central and South America in 1995, Europe in 1997, Africa in 1999). The final phase should begin about 2001 and cover Asia.

A Violation Of Local Church Autonomy

In the New Testament each local congregation was independent and autonomous. Elders were ordained in every church (Acts 14: 23). Their rule and oversight was limited to the local church where they were appointed elders. Peter instructed the elders to "Shepherd the

flock of God which is *among you*, serving as overseers..." (1 Pet. 5: 2, emphasis mine DVR). There is no authority for the elders of one church to oversee the work of any other church.

The "One Nation Under God" project violates local church autonomy. The Sycamore church is overseeing the work of over 2,000 churches. The *Christian Chronicle* (Feb. 91) stated that Bill Johnson, coordinator for the campaign, said that those who have become involved have done so because they see One Nation Under God as "an opportunity to evangelize their community, and in actuality, the entire nation, without having to devise a plan for doing so themselves."

If 2,000 or more churches can turn part of their work of evangelism over to Sycamore, then why can't they turn all of their work of evangelism over to them. Then, why not all of their other work? Where does it all stop? If Sycamore can oversee some of the money of these churches, why not all of the money?

The Sycamore elders have become brotherhood elders. All of the contributing churches are functioning (at least in this work) under the oversight of one church. They have formed a universal organization — a collectivity of churches. They have a universal treasury from which to function. All of this is foreign to the pages of the New Testament.

No Authority

The thing wrong with this sponsoring church arrangement is that there is no Bible authority for it. Paul said that we must do all things in the name of Jesus Christ (Col. 3: 17). John wrote that those who go onward and do not abide in the doctrine of Christ do not have God (2 Jno. 9). We had better make sure that we can find book, chapter and verse for a practice before we engage in it.

When God is silent on a matter that does not give us permission to act. Rather, it is a prohibition to act. Consider Heb. 7: 14 where Jesus was said to be of the tribe of Levi "of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood." Thus, Jesus could not be a priest on earth because God had not spoken on the matter. God had only authorized it for the Levites.

There is no Bible authority for the elders of one church to oversee the work of even one other church, not to mention over 2,000 churches. If it is authorized, where is the passage?

There is no Bible authority for one church to send money to another church to preach the gospel. If it is scriptural, where is the verse?

Parallel To The Missionary Society

Those who have supported the "One Nation Under God" project have opposed the missionary society. However, the sponsoring church is parallel to the missionary society. Every argument that can be made to justify the arrangement at Cookeville, TN can be used to justify the missionary society. Every objection to the missionary society can also be made against the sponsoring church.

Are We Opposed To Cooperation?

Not at all! When each church is working independently under the oversight of its own elders, each church

is cooperating with the others to accomplish the same end — spreading the gospel. All of the churches do not have to be joined together in a universal structure or put their money in the same pot or under one eldership to cooperate. Let me clarify that with an illustration from Raymond Harville. When three farmers plow a field with each man having a mule and a turning plow, these men are cooperating to accomplish the same goal — plowing the field. Even though they are cooperating, each mule is working independent of the others. Now, suppose that with double trees and single trees they tie all three mules together to the same plow. There are still cooperating, but each mule has lost his independence. Two of the farmers have surrendered control to other. In one case the mules are functioning concurrently and in the other they are working jointly or collectively.

No one opposes cooperation. What I do oppose is local churches functioning collectively under the oversight of one eldership. One is in the Bible, the other is not.

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OF WHAT DID JESUS EMPTY HIMSELF?

Robert L. McDonald

**4400 West Marshall Avenue
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During the early days of the church, there was an influence of philosophers who denied the actual humanity of our Lord and others who denied his Deity. To deny either is blasphemous. Evidently, these heretics were some of whom John wrote in his first epistle (**1 John 2: 18-ff**). It is sad when such characters can have an influence with some disciples so that the faith of the innocent can be destroyed by men who have lost their love for the truth of the Almighty.

I have been closely following the controversy in periodicals published by conservative brethren regarding the **Deity of Christ** and have tried to digest what they are saying. Some have been pressed that they have denied the Deity of Christ. This position has been denied! Then, I read where they say that Jesus did not divest himself of his Deity, but he "emptied himself of those powers and attributes to become man" (Wayne Greeson, *Faith & Facts*, October, 1990, p. 78).

When the position that Jesus emptied himself of the attributes of Deity is expressed, I have noticed that many writing on this issue make the same approach to what they are saying by turning to Philippians 2: 6-8 and implying that their doctrine is actually taught by the apostle Paul. But how do they prove their proof-text teaches such an idea? They go to other passages to prove their application of the controverted passage. This wandering through a maze of arguments is confusing to many by turning attention away from the passage which is supposed to prove their position.

What is the issue under consideration? Wayne Greeson explains that the issue is: "Do the scriptures teach that Christ possessed all the powers of God in the flesh?" He then affirms that the Word became flesh and "he emptied himself of certain of the attributes of God" (See *Faith & Facts*, October, 1990, p. 78). So really, the whole controversy must focus upon Philippians 2: 6-8. Let me invite you to turn to the text and analyze what is actually taught.

The Philippian epistle was written at a time when Paul was in prison at Rome and perilous times were confronting the saints of God. The reality of persecution and apostasy of saints prompted the inspired apostle to exhort the Philippians to maintain their faith regardless of the extent of their suffering. In the second chapter, the apostle urges them to be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord and mind. Nothing should be done through strife, but in all humility and without any ambition of superiority of one over the other, but to esteem other better than themselves.

With this setting, Paul then writes, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2: 5-8). Let us look at the passage to see if the claim of some is actually taught therein.

"Who being in the form of God." The present participle, being, "implies His pre-existent Deity, previous to His Birth and His continued Deity afterwards" (Expository Diet., Vine). The declaration of the unchangeable one is the same person who is "yesterday today and forever" (Hebrews 13: 8). The expression of Paul is a similar affirmation as found in Exodus (3: 14), when Jesus applied the same to Himself (John 8: 58), and also indicated by John (Revelation 1: 4). All of these expressions show the pre-existent state prior to the moment and a continuance after the fact.

Before the Word became flesh (John 1: 14), He was in the form of God. The word form (from morphe) is defined by Thayer, "the form by which a person or thing strikes the vision; the external appearance" (Lexicon, Thayer, p. 418). In heaven the Word bore the form of Deity with all of His attributes, power and splendor. Is it possible for the human mind to grasp the idea of Deity and at the same time able to express it in the language of men? The human mind can only come forth with a minimal of understanding of His Being of the highest degree of omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence and glory. The form here referred to must have been something before he became a man, or before he took upon him the form of a servant... He himself speaks of the glory which he had with the Father before the world was" (Albert Barnes, **Philippians 2**, pp. 169-170).

"Thought it not robbery to be equal with God." The word robbery (arpagmos) is an interesting word and especially so in this text. It means "a thing seized or to be seized, booty, (Lexicon, Thayer, p. 74). Thayer adds "a thing... to be retained, Phil 2: 6" (ibid). The import of this truth is Christ in reality was in the form of God, but He did not jealously seek to retain His equality with God, but was willing to divest Himself so as to appear to sinful man.

"But made himself of no reputation." The King James Version translates the word keno in our text, "of no reputation." Most of the translations of my reference use the word empty rather than reputation. Thayer tells us the word meant "to empty, make empty" (Lexicon, Thayer, 344). He further comments, "he laid aside quality with or the form of God (said of Christ), Phil 2: 7" (ibid). There was something of vast importance which our Lord was willing to give up, or empty Himself, so as to become a sacrifice for sinful man. The context tells us of what He emptied himself. It was not His Deity nor any of the attributes of Deity, but He divested himself of the form of God. This was in order to appear to man, not in the form of God, but in the appearance of man, in the form of a servant. Some of the liberal commentators express the idea of Jesus divesting himself of His

Deity (See William Barclay, *Philippians*, p. 45). I believe Albrecht Oepke expresses the truth on the matter. "What is meant is that the heavenly Christ did not selfishly exploit His divine form and mode of being, but by His own decision emptied Himself of it or laid it by, taking the form of a servant by becoming man" (Kittle, Vol. 3, p. 661).

"And took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." The word took (laubano) means to "take in order to wear, i. e. to put on" (Lexicon, Thayer, p. 370). Our Lord laubano, i. e. He "put on" flesh of men. His being was in the form of a servant. His mission was to perform the work of a servant and was regarded as such. By so doing, He descended to the lowest condition of humility, without a place to lay His head, and regarded as the lowest of any of the human family. He was defamed. False charges were brought against Him. He was rudely assailed. Men spat upon Him, smiting with their hands. Sport was made of Him as a means of entertainment. But, as a lamb, He opened not His mouth and went to the slaughter. However, nothing in all of the Word of God reveals that the **attributes of Deity** were divested, or emptied, when our Lord took on the form of man! To those who think that Philippians 2: 6-8 teaches that Christ emptied Himself of His Deity, will you please take the controverted passage and give us an exegesis which convinced you to believe such an idea?

"And being found in fashion as a man." The incarnation of Christ was a man in "form, bearing, language, action, mode of life, wants and their satisfaction, etc, in general the state and relations of a human being, so that in the entire mode of His appearance He made Himself known and was recognized as a man" (Philippians Epistle, H. A. W. Meyer, p. 77). Emptying Himself of the form of God and existing as a man with **all of the attributes of a human**, and at the same time possessed **all of the attributes of Deity**, provision was made for the only acceptable sacrifice for the salvation of man.

"He humbled himself, and became obedient." Christ humbled Himself, not to appropriate the dignity nor the appearance of an earthly sovereign before a materialistic people, rather that the demands of God's law might be fulfilled, in order that man might be redeemed. Jesus, our mediator, redeemer and saviour obeyed His own law in the giving of Himself as the only offering which could be made. Christ humbled Himself as He allowed lawless men to nail Him to the cross, abusing Him as they regarded Him, not as a man, but as a worm (Psalms 22: 6-ff) — and they killed Him!

And, I read where some have said, "Jesus was a man. He had given up, limited, surrendered, abdicated, or divested the privileges, prerogatives, and powers of the divine Son of God. While on this earth, he lived as a man, not a superman" (John Welch, *Faith & Facts*, October, 1990). No, reader friend, Jesus was not just an ordinary man, a guy like you and me! Jesus Christ, indeed the Son of God, "in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2: 9). (From *The Discerner*, August 1991 originally in the *Preceptor*).

EDITOR'S NOTE

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BRASS
TACKS

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The foregoing article by brother McDonald expresses my own views on Phil. 2. Since I am unable right now to do my normal work at my desk (while recovering from back surgery), I wanted this to appear.

Brother John Welch in the last issue of *FAITH AND FACTS* has challenged for a debate in Louisville and has left the churches and preachers of this city under a cloud. It is his contention that the issue of the Deity of Christ is linked to the questions of "continual cleansing" and whether or not man "has to sin." The other preachers in Louisville can speak for themselves, but I do not believe there is a single one who would link these matters together.

I want to go on record that I believe brother John Welch and some other writers in *FAITH AND FACTS* have taught error on the nature of Christ. I do not believe that when he came to earth, he divested himself of the attributes of Deity. It is foolish to say one believes in the Deity of Christ and then start subtracting from him those attributes which make him divine. Others have already offered to publicly discuss the issue of the Deity of Christ with John Welch. I will add my own name to the list. I will debate him on the following propositions, provided honorable and equitable circumstances can be arranged:

RESOLVED: The Scriptures teach while Jesus was on earth, he possessed the attributes of Deity.

Connie W. Adams, affirms; John Welch, denies.

RESOLVED: The Scriptures teach that when Jesus came to earth he divested himself of the attributes of Deity and was just an ordinary man.

John Welch, affirms; Connie W. Adams, denies.

We have seen issues come and go but it is the studied conviction of this writer that no more serious issue has arisen in my lifetime than this one. The nature of Christ is central to everything I believe about him and all I do in his service. It is directly linked to my salvation. We shall see what we shall see.

Do A Friend A Favor

Do you have a friend or relative who could benefit from reading *Searching the Scriptures*? Why not buy a subscription for someone?

HOW DO I KNOW WHAT MY PRIORITIES ARE?

The young man who came to the Lord asking what good thing he should do to have eternal life probably would have said that spiritual concerns were his highest priority. But when he was told to sell what he had, give to the poor, and follow Jesus, "he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions" (Mt. 19: 22). What he may have said about his values indicated one thing. His actions indicated another.

If we are not constantly careful, our list of priorities can become disordered. At such times, being honest enough to face the truth about the situation is not easy. When anyone asks what is most important to us, the tempting thing is to answer in terms of what we know **should be** most important. Because we think we are moving more or less in the direction of putting first things first ("**I plan** to pray and study my Bible more just as soon as I can get my schedule under control, etc., etc., etc. "), we may think that gives us the right to say that spiritual concerns are our top priority right now. But the Lord does not judge what our priorities are by listening to our theories. He looks at our practice. And if we do not somehow gather our courage and look, as He does, at what means the most to us in actual **fact** — and repent accordingly — eternity holds no hope for us. Before it is too late to make any changes, we need to be asking ourselves some blunt questions about what our priorities really are.

What would others say our priorities are? Others may not know us as well as we know ourselves, but they are often more objective about what they do know. The neighbor who lives next door could probably sum up in a word or two what we are really about. Perhaps more than anybody, our children are able to cut through our preachments and tell what actually matters most to us in the rough and tumble of daily living.

What do we think about? Our true priorities are the things our minds are drawn to when they are "in neutral." When activities and obligations do not require us to be thinking about anything in particular, our thoughts are attracted, like filings to a magnet, to our real enthusiasms. The person who finds that he meditates on God only when he forces himself to do so is lying if he says the spiritual life is his overriding concern.

What do we talk about? The conversations we engage in arise quite naturally out of the things that are

on our minds. If we have to admit that we rarely talk about the Lord except in connection with the services of the church, that ought to tell us something. And even if we do sometimes talk about spiritual matters, if our acquaintances would have to say that our conversation gravitates more naturally and enthusiastically toward other things, then there is serious doubt whether our ultimate priorities are really spiritual.

How do we spend our time? Hardly anybody has as much "spare" time as he would like. But all of us have some, and the way we spend it displays our priorities. I have known families, for example, who "vacationed" by traveling to gospel meetings or Bible lectureships at congregations in distant states. Judging from their use of time that was theirs to do with as they pleased, one would tend to believe such folks if they said they loved the Lord more than anything. On the other hand, I have known folks who all their working lives complained that they did not have as much time as they wanted to do the Lord's work — and then spent virtually all of their retirement years in personal leisure, with perhaps less time devoted to the Lord than before! The fact is, the way we spend our time speaks loudly regarding our values.

How do we spend our money? Suppose a Bible class teacher recommended a \$25 reference book that would help us in our study of the Scriptures, but we said we could not afford it. Suppose a preacher recommended a \$15 a year periodical that would help us grow spiritually, but we said it cost too much. If it was known that we sometimes spent that much on sporting events and recreational activities, that it was not unusual for us within a month to spend that much eating out, that we would not object to spending that much on decorative home furnishing, etc., could anyone take seriously our claim that the Lord is our uppermost concern?

What "gives" when we face a conflict of priorities? Of the many conflicts involving priorities, perhaps none are more annoying than "scheduling" conflicts. Unable to be two places at the same time, we very often have to sacrifice one activity for another. When that happens, if we subordinate the things of the Lord to worldly activities, we give the lie to our professed priorities. In the matter of sports, to take a familiar example, if we can manage it such that our Softball league and the services of the church hardly ever conflict, that is all well and good, but it says relatively little about our priorities. When the occasional conflict does arise, **that** is when we make a statement about our priorities. The same is true of work. If, in order to make occasional business trips, we have been willing to violate our commitment to assemble with the brethren (we have likely persuaded ourselves that we "had no choice" but to go—without even telling our boss that we wished to be excused), we may try to make it look as if we chose between one thing that was "optional" and another that was not. But, in truth, we have simply demonstrated which of our various priorities we are willing to make the bigger sacrifice for. Indeed, it is when priorities **collide** that we learn the most about ourselves, our values, and whether the Lord reigns within us or not.

How then do I know — in all honesty — what my

priorities are? By looking at what I am, in fact, doing with my life. Paul wrote, "To whom you present yourselves selves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin to death, or of obedience to righteousness" (Rom. 6: 16). At least one thing would seem to be clear: I cannot pour the first and the best of what I am into pursuing what has euphemistically been called the American Dream and still turn around and say I love the Lord with all my heart. I cannot go "all out" for one thing and then truthfully claim that something else is more important. Jesus said, "No one can serve two masters... You cannot serve God and mammon" (Mt. 6: 24). Where my priorities are, there will my energy and enthusiasm be also.

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MULES IN "HAWSE" HARNESS

Mammy, the indomitable slave in Margaret Mitchell's literary masterpiece, **Gone With the Wind**, had these pointed words of rebuke for her young mistress:

"... Miss Scarlett, lissen ter me. You ain' nuthin' but a mule in hawse harness. You kin polish a mule's feets an' shine his hide an' put brass all over his harness an' hitch him ter a fine cah'ige. But he a mule jes' de same. He doan fool nobody. An' you is jes' de same. You got silk dresses an' de mills an' de sto' an' de money, an' you give yo' self airs lak a fine hawse, but you a mule jes' de same. An' you ain' foolin' nobody needer. An' dat Butler man, he come of good stock and he all slicked up lak a race hawse, but he a mule in hawse harness, jes' lak you."

Wouldn't you agree that there are a lot of mules in hawse harness around today? Some of our national leaders fit that portrayal. They exhibit a lot of glitter. They manufacture a lot of smooth talk. But they show little concern for the true welfare of the nation. Solomon said, "Better is a poor and wise youth than an old and foolish king who will be admonished no more" (Eccl. 4: 13); and, "I have seen servants on horses, while princes walk on the ground like servants" (10: 7).

I have known of some church bosses who were nothing but mules in hawse harness. Some of these were self appointed, and some were recognized as elders of a congregation. But "bosses" best describes both their attitude toward the church and the relationship they sustain to it. They will have their way or bust. They are lords over God's heritage and the worst sort of examples to the flock (1 Peter 5: 3). They are cast in the mold of Diotrephes, who "loves to have the preeminence" (3 John 9).

Some preachers are mules in hawse harness. They are like the Pharisees who were meticulous about the external things of the law (which they should have been), paying their tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and yet neglecting the weightier matters of justice and mercy and faith (Matt. 23: 23). They strain out the gnats (which seems to be a prudent exercise), but they swallow the camel, hump and all.

These lords of the pulpit and printed word survey the brotherhood terrain faithfully to see if something is said that they might possibly take issue with. They give no quarter. They show no mercy. They are defenders of the faith, and pity him who dares to question their methods.

They are not invincible. But they often fit the description that Andrew Jackson gave of an opponent: He said that fighting the man was like wrestling a pig. You both get dirty, but the pig likes it.

These champions often leave a local church bruised, broken, and divided by their diatribes, tirades and polemics; and the community amused at the incongruity of one who knew it all and was aware of so little. They are "jes' mules in hawse harness."

Many women fit the description that Mammy gave of Miss Scarlet. Even some in the church. They are much like the women whom Isaiah described. The Living Bible paraphrases: "Next, he will judge the haughty Jewish women, who mince along, noses in the air, tinkling bracelets on their ankles, with wanton eyes that rove among the crowds to catch the glances of the men... the Lord will strip away their artful beauty and their ornaments, their necklaces and bracelets and veils... their scarves and ankle chains, headbands, earrings, and perfumes, their rings and jewels, and party clothes and negligees and capes and ornate combs and purses; their mirrors, lovely lingerie, beautiful dresses and veils..." (3: 18-23).

Not that most of those things are wrong in themselves. But those women were like those of whom Solomon had spoken: "As a ring of gold in a swine's snout, so is a lovely woman who lacks discretion" (Proverbs 11: 22). A girl can wear her gold, diamonds, and expensive clothes; her false eyelashes, mascara, and beautifully coiffured hair. But her true beauty will not exceed her standard of righteousness and morality. Without such, she's "jes' a mule in hawse harness."

Let's look beyond the brass harness, and the spit and polish and take note of the critter that's prancing about.

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THE SPIRIT OF THE LAW

Those who take liberties with God's revelation sometimes justify their practices by saying that while they are perhaps not adhering to the letter of the law, they are keeping it in spirit. By "the spirit of the law" they mean its general intent. They often brand those of us who insist on doing exactly what God has said, no more and no less, as legalists. Do we need to loosen up a bit? Is the spirit of obedience sufficient to please God?

The Letter and the Spirit

Paul contrasted the letter and the spirit in 2 Cor. 3. He said the letter kills but the spirit gives life. Does that mean doing the gist of what God says results in life, but following Him more closely sounds the death knell? Besides being illogical, such an interpretation ignores Paul's context. By the letter and the spirit (or Spirit), he meant the old and new covenants. The old was a ministry of death, of condemnation: it had no means of taking away sin. The new is a covenant of life, of righteousness, thanks to Jesus' atonement. Therefore it is clearly superior and far more glorious. Yet some at Corinth were stubbornly clinging to the letter, the inferior covenant, whose glory had faded. This was Paul's point. To make this general vs. exact obedience is to insert a completely foreign idea into the text.

Romans 2: 27-29 presents the same contrast with a different emphasis. The Jews gloried in their unique relation to God, their superior law from God, and circumcision, the sign of these things. But they made such poor use of their advantages that they were really no better off than the Gentiles. The value of circumcision was contingent on keeping the covenant it represented. To fail to obey it was to become as one uncircumcised, as one outside the covenant. Conversely, some Gentiles did a better job of keeping the covenant than the Jews did! That led Paul to conclude, "He is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, **but** from God." As William Barclay ably put it, "To be a real Jew is not a matter of pedigree but of character."

The contrast is made a third time in Rom. 7: 6. "But now we have been released from the law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of Spirit [or spirit] and not in oldness of the letter." Like a woman whose husband has died, the Jews

are dead to the law of Moses through the body of Christ and free to remarry. Christ is the groom. When joined to Him we can bear fruit unto God. As in the earlier comparisons, the letter and the spirit stand for the old and new covenants. There is no hint of ballpark vs. precise obedience. In fact, Paul went on to explain that one of the great benefits of the old law was **that** it precisely defined right and wrong. The problem was that it had no means to remedy violations of it.

An Illustration

Having looked at the passages which make the letter/spirit distinction, let us now consider an O. T. incident which demonstrates God's thinking about obedience.

God assigned King Saul the task of punishing the Amalekites for ambushing His people when they were on the way to Mt. Sinai. His instructions were explicit: "Now go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, ox and sheep, camel and donkey" (1 Sam. 15: 3). Saul amassed a great army and immediately went into battle, winning a decisive victory. The general intent of punishing Amalek was accomplished. However, Saul spared Agag and the best of the animals.

Saul met Samuel on the way home from his conquest and greeted him readily. "Blessed are you of the Lord! I have carried out the command of the Lord!"

When Samuel pointed to the animals Saul was bringing back as evidence that God's will was not done. Saul explained that these were for sacrifice, but all else was utterly destroyed. Samuel was not impressed. Again he challenged Saul: "Why then did you not obey the voice of the Lord...?"

"I did obey the voice of the Lord, and went on the mission on which the Lord sent me, and have brought back Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites."

Saul felt good about his standing with the Lord. He was confident that he had obeyed, that following the spirit of God's command was sufficient. Samuel was equally confident that it was not. Which was right? Let God answer. "I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not carried out My commands" (v. 11). Through Samuel, He went on to accuse Saul of rebellion and insubordination.

Conclusion

God did not reveal Himself so that we would have some ballpark idea of what he expects of us. The Holy Spirit directed the very words of Scripture to assure us a precise account of God's mind (1 Cor. 2: 12f). Who are we to dismiss the details of His requirements as non-essential, or to substitute for what He has specified under the guise of keeping the spirit of the law? If the spirit of the law is to do what God wills, what better way is there to show that spirit than to do precisely what He says?

Do you pray to God everyday?
(Daniel 6:10, 13)

MUSINGS

J. Wiley Adams

103 Ridgeland Drive
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THE QUEST FOR THINGS

This is a true story. The names have been omitted, not so much to protect the innocent, but to tell this account in a more objective way.

In a major southern city there was a fine family. The father and mother were both Christians with two fine small children. They all attended faithfully at a nearby church of Christ. They were a big asset to the church. They were all happy and the church was happy with them.

Things changed. He decided to take an early morning paper route in addition to his nine to five job. This was the beginning of sorrows. To get up in the wee hours in order to deliver his papers he had to go to bed very early and family life was interrupted in the evenings. On Sundays the delivery was very time-consuming due to the size of the paper. He started getting home too late to get ready to go to services so he sent the family on without him and he attended the evening service.

Things changed again. She decided to help out on their bills by taking a job also. She needed some new clothes and another car. This necessitated the need for a maid to come in and take care of the children. So in order to make more money it cost more and more to live thus increasing the need for more and more money. The rat-race was on.

The family life began to disintegrate. They hardly saw each other except to wave at each other in passing. Then the children became more and more unruly and would obey only the maid. They wondered why they loved the maid more than themselves. Well, the maid was there. That's why.

They became irritable and edgy and had quite a few family spats. Church attendance was relegated to the background in spite of the urgency of the elders for them to be faithful. Others from the church went to see them to encourage them to once again take their proper place in the congregation. All of this did not avail.

Finally, thank the Lord, they became so tired that they could hardly make it from day to day. Then, like the prodigal son they came to their senses. Once more they would allow the elders to help them figure things out. Here's what happened.

He quit the paper route. She quit her job. They sold the second car. They discharged the maid. They got their family back. They decided to live within their means on his salary, maintain a proper family life, regain their children, and came before the Lord and the church

asking forgiveness for their covetousness and resulting unfaithfulness. They cried for joy when they came forward and brethren cried with them. This case turned out all right in the end.

I am thinking now of many other cases here and there. It is evident that some are making the same mistakes as those we have mentioned. They are on a tread mill which gets faster and faster. Some cases have already resulted in a broken home and leaving the Lord and His people. Others will soon be there as well. Unless they heed the Word of God and the advice of faithful brethren.

Some of the most enriching times of our lives were when Wilma and I had less of this world's goods. That's when the family really has to pull together. That's when the family is truly close. That's when we learn truly what happiness and contentment is all about.

Let's now hear from the Scriptures on this. Hebrews 13: 5 says, "... be content with such things as ye have..." Proverbs 15: 16, "Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith. Better is a dinner of herbs where love is then a stalled ox and hatred therewith." Again in Proverbs 17: 1, "Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices with strife."

Less is better than more if more leads you away from the God of Heaven and the family goes down the drain. I plead with the young families to heed the warning. We who are now older can see where you are heading. Will you take heed?

A BURNING FIRE

(Jer. 20:9)

Jim Deason

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Culleoka, Tennessee 38451



WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO GIVE UP?

"Again the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it" (Matt. 13: 45, 46). Jesus used this man to demonstrate that when something is of supreme importance to us we're willing to give up anything to attain it. This certainly should be our attitude toward the kingdom of God.

One does not become a Christian and remain faithful without sacrifices. It's important that before you make the commitment to live for Christ that you "calculate the cost" (Luke 14: 28) of that commitment. Jesus said, "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14: 23). Is going to

heaven the most important goal in your life? What are you willing to give up to go to heaven?

ARE YOU WILLING TO GIVE UP YOUR PAST SINFUL CONDUCT? The Corinthians had to give up their sin (1 Cor. 6: 9-11). The idolater had to give up his idolatry, the adulterer his adultery, and the thief his stealing, in order to obey the gospel and have his sins forgiven. I am amazed at the fact that some seem to think that they can obey the gospel and continue to live just like they had before. People seem reluctant to give up their immoral dancing, their immodest dress, their corrupt language, and their social drinking. But give it up you must if you want to please God! If going to heaven is the most important goal of your life you'll be glad to make this sacrifice however difficult it may be.

ARE YOU WILLING TO GIVE UP SOME OF YOUR FRIENDSHIPS AND FAMILY TIES? Jesus taught that this is sometimes necessary (Matt. 10: 36) and continued to say, "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me" (Matt. 10: 37). One young man I know took a stand for the truth years ago and he remains in isolation from his father till this day. Some are counted as dead by their families because of their acceptance of the gospel. Are you willing to make that sacrifice? Is going to heaven that important to you? It ought to be!

ARE YOU WILLING TO GIVE UP SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE? Sometimes that decision on whether or not to give up social acceptance is not altogether yours. If you make the determination to leave a life of sin and live godly there are some who "are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excess of dissipation, and they malign you" (1 Pet. 4: 4). Past friends and acquaintances sometimes become uncomfortable with your new lifestyle and will feel betrayed because you have chosen to no longer live in the ways that they continue. They begin to avoid you. But such is sometimes the price of following the paths of righteousness. Whether or not we are socially accepted means little compared with the importance of going to heaven. If we must sacrifice such to go to heaven then so be it!

ARE YOU WILLING TO GIVE UP MATERIAL POSSESSIONS? Speaking to the Hebrews, the writer said, "you... accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession..." (Heb. 10: 34). They obviously believed that going to heaven was important enough to give up their material possessions if necessary, and they did! However, we live in such a materialistic age that I fear more would be like the rich young ruler (Matt. 19: 16-22) than these Hebrews. The time that is needed to develop ourselves and our families spiritually is often sacrificed on the altar of materialism. The extra car or bigger house, to many, are more important than going to heaven and helping others to get there. But it should not be so! "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul" (Mark 8: 36)? On the day of our death the make or model of our car and the number of bedrooms in our house will make no difference at all. However, whether or not we made heaven the most

important goal of our lives will make a great deal of difference. No material thing in this world is worth the loss of even one soul. If you miss heaven, then you've just missed everything!

What is the most important thing in your life? Where is your time, talents, energies, and resources being spent? I hope, and the Bible teaches, that your most important goal should be heaven. Is it?

SIMPLICITY IN CHRIST

P. J. Casebolt

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PULPIT AND PICK-UP MINISTERS

A few years back I received an unusual request to perform a marriage ceremony. Prospective brides and grooms have been known to be irrational at times, but this particular request was still a bit unusual.

First, the couple waited until the night before the wedding to call the preacher. All other arrangements had been made, and they knew that they would need a preacher, but they still put it off until the last minute. I had made other arrangements, and could not grant the request on such short notice.

When I told them I could not meet their deadline, they asked, "Well, do you know any other preacher who has a pick-up truck?"

Then I found out why they wanted me for the ceremony — I owned a pick-up. It seems that they wanted someone to haul their wedding presents from the reception to the house, and they lived on a side road that was more receptive to pick-ups than to automobiles. Besides, a pick-up had more cargo volume than the trunk of a car. I suggested another preacher who had a 4-wheel drive Bronco, and I guess the couple got married. I never heard.

The moral of this little episode is not that preachers are above lending a helping hand, or even a pick-up truck if he has one, but that some folks have some strange notions about the official functions of preachers.

Some brethren use the term "pulpit minister" in a derogatory way, indicating that some preachers follow a sectarian pattern in the performance of their duties, as opposed to a Bible pattern. I guess one would have to be blind, ignorant, or both, to deny that such situations do exist.

But on the other hand, just because a preacher spends a good deal of time behind a stand, or in an area designated as a pulpit, does not necessarily prove that

he subscribes to ministerial functions of a sectarian nature.

First, there is nothing wrong with standing or on a pulpit while preaching. The people built one for Ezra (Neh. 8: 4). When a preacher is situated where he can see, and be seen by, the audience, it makes more sense than sitting or standing out in the audience or in the back of the house.

Second, a preacher can still be called a minister, and perform the duties inherent in that term, without subscribing to some sectarian practice or theology (1 Tim. 4: 6). Further, he can preach to all who are in need of the gospel message, including weak or strong church members (2 Tim. 4: 1-5; Titus 2: 1-15). Most of the New Testament is addressed to those who are Christians, and after the apostles had baptized penitent believers, those converts were to be taught further (Mt. 28: 19, 20). Paul, Barnabas, Mark, and Silas went back and exhorted brethren in the churches even after elders had been appointed (Acts 14-15).

Therefore, while I am not going to endorse doctrines and practices of sectarian origin, neither am I going to be intimidated by the just-as-sectarian idea that a preacher cannot "locate" with a congregation and preach to an audience which contains members of the church. A few preachers have been born in the objective mood and kickitive case, weaned on sour grapes, while professing to be "free spirits" and accusing their brethren of being in bondage. Often, the very ones who accuse others of being judgmental, sectarian, and bond servants, are themselves guilty of that which they condemn (2 Pet. 2: 19).

In all this, preachers still need to keep themselves free from any situation which would tend to compromise their effectiveness and independence as good ministers of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 9: 19). And brethren need to refrain from expecting the preacher to do his work, as well as the work of elders, deacons, and half the congregation. If he is going to hold down four jobs, he should be paid for doing four jobs—now, and in eternity.

Under the best of conditions, preaching is a stressful activity. The very brethren who heap more stress upon him will sagely remark at his nervous breakdown or funeral, "It's a shame. He should have taken better care of himself."

For years I owned both an automobile and a pick-up truck. For the past few years, I have driven only pick-ups, and have no desire or plans to own another automobile. I enjoy the convenience of a pick-up for my own personal use, and delight in using it to help a brother or friend.

And, I have preached in all shapes and sizes of pulpits from Canada to Florida, and to the Philippines Islands and back. Brethren who know me also know that the gospel I preach is not for sale or compromise, and love me for it.

But if some strangers out there somewhere think that they can take advantage of a preacher just because he stands behind a pulpit or sits behind the wheel of a pick-up, they need to be educated in no uncertain terms.

PRECEPTS AND PERCEPTIONS

James R. Cope

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Temple Terrace, FL 33617



GOOD SAMARITANS FOR FLORIDA COLLEGE

They all showed up the same day and all except one left about the same time two weeks later. They came from "all over" in response to a genuine need of Florida College. Some were experts in carpentry, some in painting, some in general maintenance. All of them are active and well-along-in-years citizens in heaven's kingdom. They paid their own expenses to come from several states to be "Good Samaritans" in behalf of the young people who attend Florida College and to lend a helping hand to an already overworked year-round maintenance crew of Florida College. Some of them had sent their children here and grandchildren of some have been or are now enrolled.

The men who responded to our new President's request are the following: Gene Compton, Baytown, Texas; Willard Derryberry, Spring Hill, Tennessee; Jack Dugger, Nashville, Tennessee; Jeff Haselden, Sr., Lugoff, South Carolina; and Don Roberts, Brentwood, Tennessee.

Any person who has spent even a short time on the campus of Florida College is aware of various on-the-spot needs of this school. Some of these needs are obvious at a casual glance but to the carpenter, painter, plumber or general maintenance worker, that which needs attention immediately becomes an "eyesore." Fortunately Florida College is rich in such "friends of youth."

Our new president, "Colly" Caldwell, is well acquainted with many men who qualify as "friends" to hundreds of young men and women who have come here as students and left as graduates. Some have sent their own children and others have sent their dollars or become "overnight" parents to students and teachers visiting their areas in recruiting students, traveling with the chorus, debate, or athletic teams. Many who have never been on campus are among the most loyal supporters the College has.

So what did Colly do in his first few days as President of Florida College? The answer: He called on men who could carpenter, plumb, paint and pray to come for a few days in August to work with their heads and hands because their hearts were known to be identified with what the College has done for their own children and seeks to do for their grandchildren! Most of these men I have known firsthand for some 30 years or longer and one was a classmate 57 years ago.

With their own heads and hands these men have attended to physical needs on the Florida College campus which have gone unattended for many years — not because none was aware of these needs but because there were already a dozen needs ahead and crying for attention. These men have given more than money. They have given themselves! Yes, their time, their expertise, their energies, but most and best of all — themselves! This is the spirit that has made Florida College possible and will keep it going as long as there is need for the type education this school offers.

Only one other man has been officially connected with Florida College longer than I and none other knows better than I the thousand-and-one things needed to "make the old mare go!" When I see men my age willing to give their time, money, energies, and expertise as these men who have been here for the past two weeks have given, I know that there must be hundreds of others alive who thank God that their own sons and daughters were able to drink from the same fount of which they drank decades ago.

With the resignation of brother Lloyd Copeland from the Board of Directors at its last annual meeting, not one of the original Board members remains. Yet all present Board members I have known many years. There is not one of their number I do not trust implicitly regarding both character and his soundness "in the faith once delivered to the saints." Practically all of them are alumni or sent their children here. This Directorate made no mistake in its choice of Colly Caldwell to be the new President of the College, successor to Bob F. Owen, who served well for nine years.

The response of aging brethren of many talents to Colly's invitation to come and assist mentally and physically is evident that those who have known Florida College through the years believe it deserves their sweat as well as their dollars and tears. That God may bless you richly with students and finances essential to Florida College's continuing progress is the prayer and hope of your friend and brother, James R. Cope.

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PREACHER SUPPORT

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Preachers depending on outside support are pleading for help. Without immediate relief many will have to stop preaching. Our economic recession is hitting them very hard. This is especially true overseas. An American preacher in Japan lost \$2000. 00 per month. In the first 15 days of January, one not-very-large congregation received 22 desperate appeals from preachers who had lost support. That number may be unusually large... but not much, and the situation is common.

I am also experiencing this while trying to raise funds for my March 1991 preaching trip to the Philippines. Faithful brethren there have appealed for me to come help in their work. Many churches have replied they are unable. Their letters read, "We have lost members, and our contribution is down," or "We are fully committed and cannot help anyone else," or, "The recession caused many of our members to cut their contributions. "

U. S. brethren are retrenching. Nowhere is this more so than in churches supporting preachers besides their local men. Church contributions are dwindling as members reduce their giving. In time of lowered incomes, this seems only proper. We regret sincerely the hardship we cause those who depend on our support. However, we believe it is beyond our control.

Nothing could be father from the truth.

I have a fair knowledge of life beyond our shores. I spent five military duty tours overseas, and later made five preaching visits to the Philippines. Even in recession, our standard of living and prosperity still far surpass every other nation on the top side of God's earth! We have duped ourselves into believing yesterdays' luxuries are today's necessities. We wallow in things. We take for granted we need refrigerators, stoves, freezers, TVs, electricity, VCRs, inside plumbing and all this means, telephones, air conditioning, dishwashers, and many other conveniences unavailable until recently.

In sharp contrast, I have been in the homes of many Filipino saints who have NONE of those. These brethren would give all they have just for running water in their homes. What we call "poverty level," they consider undreamed of wealth. Brethren, 50 years will get most of us. One hundred will get us all. Then it will not matter whether we had a new car every three years, one or two TVs and VCRs, wore silk or cotton socks or went bare-footed, ate steak, hamburgers, or went hungry. Only one thing will count. That is what John wrote in Revelation 2: 10.

This is more than a matter of perspective. By "re-trenching" and reducing our giving to maintain our standard of living, we jeopardize spreading the gospel by preferring our conveniences above others' salvation. Putting our "gimmies" ahead of the needs of Christians making great sacrifices to preach the gospel elsewhere, we slow the spread of God's Word. We also undermine our own salvation. Read James 2: 14-26.

Brethren, please don't quit supporting preachers because "times are hard." Don't let spreading of the gospel stop because we want to maintain our "standard of living." We don't know how exceedingly well off we are materially, even in the midst of "recession," nor how desperately others need our help.

I AM A SOUL WINNER

Thomas C. Hickey

5127 Holman Avenue
Hammond, IN 46320

I am happy to be a soul winner because more than anyone else in the church I, and thousands of others like me, insure that the church of the Lord will continue to exist in our communities.

No matter how great or polished a speaker may be, the churches of America today will cease to exist if we are to depend solely upon the effect of pulpit preaching within the four walls of our meetinghouses.

Little is known about Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, but that he heard John the baptist identify Jesus of Nazareth as the "Lamb of God," and went immediately to tell his brother (John 1: 41).

Philip achieved early notoriety by searching out Nathaniel and telling him, "We have found Him, of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth..." (John 1: 45).

Jesus commissioned the twelve apostles and sent them out to preach only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 10: 1-15). He later sent out seventy (Luke 10: 1). After His death and resurrection He expanded the commission — "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation" (Mark 16: 15). This latter plan was mapped out at the Ascension when He said, "You shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth" (Acts 1: 8).

The apostles worked from house to house, and the number of the disciples was increasing daily (Acts 2: 46-47; 5: 32). The apostles thought it improper to neglect the word of God, but rather used their time in prayer and the ministry of the word (Acts 6: 2-4), "and the word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly" (Acts 6: 7).

Even those who were scattered by violent persecution

went about preaching the word, and people "were being baptized, men and women alike" (Acts 8: 4, 12).

Although the church of the first century grew by great additions, and proceeded further even to multiplications, the people did not beat a path to the doorway of the apostles. Rather, the apostles and others had to carry the gospel to the people. They were like salesmen for the Lord, presenting the message of the gospel to the people, and "asking for the order." People had to be persuaded with reasoning about righteousness, self-control and judgment to come (Acts 24: 25). Not every one obeyed, just as not all obey the Lord today. Learning to accept rejection is necessary for salesmen and soul winners! When one person declines, it is necessary to go on to the next one. Good and honest-hearted people like the eunuch, Cornelius, Lydia and the Philippian jailor are waiting eagerly for an opportunity to obey the gospel, but we need soul winners to teach and persuade them.

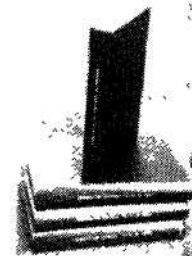
There is a growing spirit of professionalism on the part of some of our preachers by which they deem it improper to go out to win souls. They feel rather that they should do the studying, and the members should bring others to them. Even some elders see themselves serving only in an "advisory capacity." Such attitudes lead to the death of the local church. Soul winners must carry the banner forward, for only soul winners can blaze the trail which leads to growth and expansion in the kingdom of Christ.

Soul winners save souls from death, and cover a multitude of sins (James 5: 19-20).

As a soul winner you can do more to insure that the church will be here for your children and grandchildren than anyone else. Soul winning fills the pews. Standing in the forefront of the battle for truth sharpens our skills, strengthens our personal resolve to do right, and exposes our weaknesses like nothing else will or can.

"I want to be a soul winner for Jesus every day; He does so much for me!"

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TOMMY THORNHILL SR. — I have been laboring with the MacDill Ave. Church of Christ, 5008 S. MacDill Ave., Tampa, FL 33611 since August 15, 1990. The attendance has increased and so has the contribution. There have been 8 baptisms and 3 restorations. This church is the closest congregation to MacDill Air Force Base. If any readers have relatives or friends that you would like me to contact. I will be glad to do so. The spirit is good and the brethren are determined to grow stronger. You can contact me at the above address, or telephone (813) 837-2384 (office) or (813) 837-5225 (home). I might add, this is my second time to work with this church. I labored with them from Sept. 1964-Sept. 1966, before I moved to Bergen, Norway for five years. Let us hear from you.

FROM AROUND THE WORLD

PHILIPPINES — Dominador J. Neniell, 9404 Magpet, Cotabato reports ten restorations, four baptisms and two preachers to come out of the liberal group.

Body C. Gumpad, P. O. Box 808, Tuguegarao, Cagayan — Perhaps you have heard about the continuous eruption of the volcano in the province of Zambales. By God's help we are not directly hurt here in our area. We thank you for your prayers for us. Four volcanoes located here in the province of Cagayan (Mt. Didicas) are also showing abnormality and might also erupt. If this happens, great tidal waves are expected. May God continue to protect his people.

The effort at Tuguegarao continues to prosper. We had four baptisms in June. However, we have lost ten due to transfer. We also lost a young couple who went back to the Devil. We had 59 in attendance last Sunday (July 7, 1991) with P328. (\$12. 61) collection.

The dry cough of our little boy, Teddy, (two months old) has turned into a whooping cough, besides that he has Allergic Bronchitis and Allergic Rhinitis. We hope he will be cured soon.

William R. Lagan, Sr. — I don't know if there is a church of Christ in Samar, a neighboring province of Leyte and Bicol. Since I have been a member of the church, I have not heard of a single church of Christ in Samar. Samar is the birthplace of my wife. Since there are some relatives there (that we taught last year), my wife and I are willing to go there. I have seven languages to speak and preach, so I believe I can do the work of an evangelist in that area.

Samar is a place where many rebels are, such as the New People's Army and Communist Party, in the Philippines. This is the prime cause why many are afraid to go there. Please help us.

SOUTH AFRICA — Paul K. Williams, P. O. Box 324, Eshowe 3815 — On the second Tuesday night of the meeting David Ngonyama preached at Mapumulo, he introduced six young women who had been baptized that day. Several of the young boys at Mapumulo who were

baptized last year are not attending. Whether we can restore them I do not know.

Gladys Wells (81 years old) of Sacramento CA arrived in Johannesburg on July 14. Each morning Tressa Mithethwa (18 years old) comes to the house where Gladys tutors her in Braille. It will not be long until she will be able to read well enough to read the Bible in Braille. We are to put her on the plane for London Aug. 5.

Ray Votaw, Box 801, Springs 1560 — Brother Michael Mabena asked me if I would accompany him and others to Phola Village in the Witbank Highveld area for some preaching. As it turned out the preacher for the local "liberal" church met with us with most of *his* members. He wanted to speak and the Phola brethren gave him permission. He told them he knew all about me and how I had divided the church there and "carried away" some members. Brother Alfred Mogani stood up and went back some 20 years and related how that brother "Vote" had first brought the gospel to that area. With a vivid remembrance of people and dates he mentioned those who had been converted through the years by me and the preachers I had introduced in the area. Then he related how that just a few years ago apostate brethren from Withwatersrand (Benoni) came out and tried to disrupt the faithful church there. Although I enjoyed the activities there, it was through tear filled eyes that I drove back to Springs while thinking about all the sunshine which had recently gone out of our lives through the deaths of 2 daughters in the past year. What I'm trying to say, brethren is, Yes, I cry a lot these days. I get so tired I hurt. Many times I feel almost overcome with depression. But my work continues.

I have been urged by the white church in Port Elizabeth to come down in a couple of weeks for 2 or 3 days and evenings of "open forum." The church there is split into 5 or 6 different groups (Institutional), Christian church and Crossroaders).

I received a message from brethren in the independent black state of Venda — way up on the Zimbabwe border — to come and do some teaching. I still plan to work with and through the local black (Kwa-Thema) church in strengthening other black churches in both urban areas and homeland villages. We especially want to be active in the tribal state of Lebowa.

I realize that some of you have probably planned your budgets with the view in mind of my returning soon. In fact, I have already lost \$200 per month. We would like for you to keep us in mind as you make your plans for the future.

ITALY — Rodolfo Berdini, Via G. Perego, 58 H, 00144 Rome — Our congregation in Aprilia meets twice during the week, on Tuesday and Thursdays for Bible Studies, and on Sundays for Bible classes and worship. In June I was invited by the Pomezia church to lecture about

Mary. The lesson was well received, not only by brethren, but also by the non-Christians.

The Pontino local paper published several articles which I wrote on various Biblical subjects. I still marvel of what a good possibility we have to preach through a local paper.

Francesco Foschi, Via G. Leopardi, 5, 04011 Aprilia — In Latina Church the things are doing fine. Now we are studying about the devil's personality and in which way he is "seeking whom he may devour." In this way we will be able to fight against every error. Last Sunday there was 15 of us in attendance to worship. My radio program is continuing on Sunday morning. This is heard in many cities: Lantina, Aprilia, Cisterna, Nettuno, Anzio, Velletri and so on. We are receiving some phone calls from our telphonic secretary, but every one of them without result. I was invited by Pomezia Church (where Roberto Tondelli preaches) to preach about the Jehovah's Witnesses doctrines.

EASTERN EUROPE — Gary Ogden, 803 W. Maloney St., Plant City, FL 33566 — In June 1991 brethren Harry ("Buddy") Payne, Jr., Gary Ogden, Joe Rose, Lonnie Fritz, and David Teel spent three weeks on a "soil testing" mission in several Eastern European countries. We spent some time with the New work in Prague, Czechoslovakia. At least six have been baptized in the last few months. That work is going well, but the American preachers are leaving by the first of the year and we need someone to go and take up their work.

From Prague, we spent a couple of days in Brno, Czech, and found conditions ripe for the gospel. Dale Smelser is now going down to Brno from Prague and doing some follow-up teaching. After that, our itinerary included Budapest, Hungary; Bucharest, Romania; Sofia, Bulgaria and Belgrade, Yugoslavia. In each city we handed out Bibles and correspondence courses, talked with people on the streets and invited them to Bible studies back at the hotel in the evening. We distributed 1200 Bibles in English and various languages and studied with 60 people, some of them more than once.

We are convinced that there is indeed an open door of opportunity in these countries and that we must take advantage now. The denominations and our institutional brethren are going in by the droves. We must increase our efforts to spread the simple message of the gospel to a truth-starved people. If you would like more information about the work and what you can do, call Buddy Payne (813) 988-9426 or Gary Ogden (813) 752-2227.

SOUTH AMERICA — Fernando Venegas P., Casilla# 122 C. C., 5500 Mendoza, Argentina — The work in Mendoza continues to march steadily forward. We have between six to ten visitors in attendance for most of our services. This is due to many factors. The Christians here have been sharing their faith with others. Our radio program, which has been off the air for nearly six months, still brings us some searching for the truth. It has been nearly three weeks since one visitor, Liliانا Bermudez, in her late twenties, was baptized into Christ.

MEXICO — Ray Madrigal, 165 Hillington Drive, Paducah, KY 42001 — During the weeks of July 28 - August 4, I had the opportunity to preach a series of Gospel Meetings in Guadalajara, Mexico. The series was unique in that special classes were arranged for the young people on the subjects of atheism, denominationalism, authority, evidence, courtship, marriage and divorce. Young people from all over the country (Monterrey, Matamoros, Linares, etc.) traveled to Guadalajara to participate in these classes. In many cases, they had to endure a 21-hour bus ride one way. Many had to take a week off (without pay) in order to attend. Typical housing arrangements included 10 or more people sharing a single bathroom and blankets on the floor for sleeping. The state of the church in Mexico is full of hope and prosperity. Much of this spiritual strength can be attributed to the work of Apolos Rodrigues, the local preacher in Guadalajara. On the final night of the meeting, four were baptized into Jesus Christ.

DEATHS

DORVAL L. McCLISTER, who labored in the Chicago area for 32 years as a preacher of the gospel, left this life on July 22, 1991, at the age of 62. He labored with the church in Crestwood, IL for 10 years and with God's people in Burbank, IL for 22 years. In January of this year he moved to Jamestown, KY to work with the brethren there. On April

5 dad was diagnosed as having an inoperable brain tumor. After his diagnosis he was not able to preach again due to the aggressive nature of his illness, the effects of the radiation and chemotherapy.

The funeral was held in Colombia, KY, just a few miles from where dad was raised. He was buried on July 25 in the McClister family cemetery in his home town of Fairplay, KY. Melvin Curry, a longtime friend of our family, and who first encouraged dad to take up the work of preaching the gospel, preached the funeral. Our family was well-comforted by several brethren in the Lord. To them all we express our sincerest appreciation. — David McClister, 7845 Cottonwood, Lenexa, KS 66216.

SPECIAL SERIES AT ANNANDALE, VA

The Annandale church of Christ is planning a special series of studies designed to "equip the saints" for the work of the ministry. The dates are Oct. 28-Nov. 1, 1991. There will be four sessions each morning.

At the 9: 00 a. m. hour the theme will be "Starting From Scratch — Building A New Work." Mon.: "Picking a place" — David Brewer. Tues.: "Door knocking" — Alan Williamson. Wed.: "Starting Classes" — David Brewer. Thurs.: "Discouragements" — Alan Williamson. Fri.: "Set in order" — Ron Roark.

At the 10. 00 a. m. hour Ney Rieber will speak each day on "Prison Efforts — Bible Correspondence Courses — Use Of Tracts."

At the 11: 00 a. m. hour the theme will be "The Church In The Twentieth Century." Mon.: "Using TV" — Rick Russell. Tues.: "Using Computers" — Tim Stringer. Wed.: "Using Newspapers" — Floyd Chapelear. Thurs.: "Newsletter." Fri.: "Ethnic Diversity" — Sam Turrentine.

At noon hour Floyd Chapelear with address the theme: "How to Teach The Bible In The Class Setting."

On Saturday (Nov. 2) there will be a special four hour class (9: 00 a. m. to 1: 00 p. m.) on song leading taught by Alan Malone.

If you are interested in attending and want a place to stay contact Derrick Proctor, 4731 Hersand Ct., Dale City, VA 22193 or call (703) 680-3420.

NEW WORK IN LAKE CHARLES, LA

A new conservative church has been established in Lake Charles, LA. We began meeting Sunday, Aug. 4. We are meeting, temporarily, in the Kinder Care Learning Center at 4630 Nelson Road, across the street from the new Wal-Mart Store, located on the corner of McNeese and Nelson Road.

There were 12 present for our first morning worship service and 13 present for the evening service. Our mid-week services will be conducted on Thursday evenings at 7: 00 p. m.

If you know of any contacts we can make in the Lake Charles area, please write to: Kenneth R. Hoyle, P. O. Box 6414, Lake Charles, LA 70606. If you are traveling in this area, we would be happy to have you visit with us.

SAINTS IN STURGIS, MS SUFFER FOR CHRIST AN UPDATE

BOBBY HOLMES, 219 Timothy Trail, Duncanville, TX 75137, **RON HALBROOK**, 654 Gray St., West Columbia, TX 77486 — As we pointed out earlier, when the Sturgis building was constructed about 1984, these brethren were put under the oversight of the Lee Blvd. church. The Sturgis brethren learned the truth about the autonomy of the church and requested in early 1988 that their treasury and deed be turned over to them, in keeping with the scriptures.

The Lee Blvd church relinquished Sturgis' treasury, but retained the deed to Strugis' property, though they offered to sell Sturgis the property for \$35, 000. When additional efforts were made in late 1990 to persuade Lee Blvd. to give the Sturgis deed to the Sturgis brethren, the deed was transferred instead to a third church: the Hwy. 82 church in Starksville. The Hwy 82 church planned to sell the property and evict the Sturgis brethren. When the Sturgis church asked for help in resolving this injustice, brother Thomas D. Keenum, Sr. of Booneville, MS recommended that Sturgis offer \$17, 000 to Hwy. 82 to settle for the property.

The Hwy 82 church agreed to sell the Sturgis church building to the Sturgis church for \$17, 000 but set a deadline of May 1991 to receive the money. Brother Keenum told Hwy. 82 that more time would be needed to raise the money, and understood that Hwy. 82 accepted this arrangement. Appeals for individual help in raising the

money began appearing during June and July 1991 in gospel papers published by faithful brethren. The response has been good. As this "update" is being prepared in mid-July, well over \$3, 000 has been received.

The Highway 82 church notified the Sturgis brethren to vacate the Sturgis church building because it has been sold to a denominational group for \$19, 000! Furthermore, Hwy. 82 says they have already spend the money on a building program for themselves!

Rather than take the Lee Blvd. and Hwy 82 churches to court, brother Keenum urged the Strugis brethren to suffer the wrong and *let the final accounting be made at the Judgment Bar of God*. He had urged them to find another piece of land to purchase, offered to provide any needed legal services free to secure a clear deed, and promised to locate brethren who will donate their labor to construct a new meeting place. He estimates that a modest building could be put up for about \$20, 000, including the land and materials.

These brethren are already searching for a new piece of property. Error and liberalism have no ethics. Let us unite our hearts in prayer on their behalf. Let those who have the ability to send \$5, \$25, \$50, \$100, or whatever we can to the Strugis Church of Christ Building Fund, P. O. Box 418, Booneville, MS 38829.

PREACHERS NEEDED

CLEVELAND, TENNESSEE — The Hwy. 64 church of Christ at Cleveland, TN is seeking a full-time evangelist. Cleveland is located 30 miles north of Chattanooga. The church is small (35 members) and has great potential for growth in a city of 29, 000. Some outside support will be required. If interested call Larry Butler (615) 479-9483, Bill Woodall (615) 339-0094, Robert Callahan (615) 479-8892 or John Stiner (615) 334-9664.

OGDEN, UTAH — The church in Ogden needs a preacher to work with them. Being small in number, they need a man who has retirement income, social security or who can raise outside support. They have a house, pay utilities and health insurance. If interested, write to Church of Christ, 910 23rd St., Ogden, UT 84401 or call (801) 394-1397, or call Mike Umphrey (801) 399-6363.

LAKE CITY, FLORIDA—The Lakeview congregation in Lake City, FL is in need of a full-time evangelist. We are self-supporting. Please address all correspondence to Lakeview Church of Christ, P. O Box 34, Lake City, FL 32056-0034, or contact Vernon Crawford (904) 752-2829 or Harold Taylor (904) 752-2476.

MERCED, CALIFORNIA — The 20th St. church in Merced, CA is looking for a full-time preacher. Attendance averages 50. Located in the center of the San Joaquin Valley 60 miles north of Fresno and 120 miles south of Sacramento. If interested call the elders: Wes Cox (209) 722-5440 or Dean Gibson (209) 722-7967.

PREACHER AVAILABLE

JOHN D. BERLIN, 3558 Concerto Dr., Cincinnati, OH 45241 — After nearly five years with the church in Evendale, OH we are looking to relocate. I have been preaching for 18 years. Please call if you are interested (513) 563-7439.

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	369
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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"

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Connie W. Adams

P.O. Box 69
Brooks, Kentucky 40109



ARBITRARY REQUIREMENTS FOR PREACHERS

Paul told Timothy to instruct "faithful men who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2: 2). "Faithful" and "able" pretty well cover the field. All who are faithful to the Lord are not "able" when it comes to public instruction. By the same token, all able men are not "faithful to the Lord. Such men are to "preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine... watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry" (2 Tim. 4: 1-5). Timothy was told to "give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine" and was to "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: 13-16).

When I ponder this uncluttered divine instruction, I am made to wonder what some of the brethren have been reading when they start searching for a preacher. I have seen requirement sheets put out by brethren which would eliminate from consideration the apostle Paul, Timothy or even the Lord himself.

One church wants a man between 40 and 45 years old. Paul would have qualified only for a short time, Timothy would have found it necessary to wait several years to be useful to that church. And the Lord Jesus could not have qualified at all since he was only 33 when he was crucified.

Many churches insist on a married man. They want an image of family stability. That would have ruled out Jesus and Paul, I understand why preachers with families need to have them under control. The same is true of all men who are Christians. And single preachers, like married ones, ought to behave themselves. But to make this an absolute, binding law, is arbitrary.

One congregation which owns the house for the preacher forbids a preacher having a pet. So, if you want to go there, give away your cat or dog, or take them to the pound. Really!

Some congregations are unwilling to have the treasurer write any extra checks beyond salary to cover insurance, utilities, or such things. That often puts a man in a different tax bracket and fails to allow him to take advantage of legitimate tax breaks allowed for preachers. To add insult to misery, some churches which make such an iron-clad ruling are not willing to pay an adequate wage to allow for the extra amount it will cost the man under such requirement.

Some churches want a preacher with a secular degree, preferably at least a Masters Degree. It is foolhardy for brethren to become "anti-education." A good, well-balanced education should be an asset to any brother in whatever he does, including preaching the gospel, provided his greatest education is in his knowledge of the word of God. If he is too much in love with the wisdom of the World, he will not be what any church needs. Does he know THE BOOK?

Over and over, when brethren have asked me if I know of an available preacher, it has been said "Now, we don't care if he is not very good in the pulpit, just so he is a good personal worker." What's that now? Do brethren really mean that they want a preacher who can't preach? This puts a premium on ineptness and mediocrity. I do not know of a strong church anywhere which does not have a strong pulpit. Certainly, a gospel preacher needs to know how to work with people on a personal level. But to "preach" means to "proclaim," to "herald" and a man needs to learn how to do that as effectively as possible.

It would do brethren everywhere much good, when they are searching for a gospel preacher to live and

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work among them, if they would all carefully read 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, 1 Thessalonians (especially noting chapters two and three) and 2 Corinthians. Some of the arbitrary demands of brethren searching for preachers are not remotely related to divine instruction on this subject. If some of those who prepare these lists would stop fancying themselves to be executives out to hire an executive, it would relieve the problem considerably.

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" QUOTE

**"A child, like your stomach,
doesn't need all you can afford
to give it"**

—Frank A. Clark

UNQUOTE "

Editorial

Donnie V. Rader

P.O. Box 9
Lexington, Alabama 35648



PRAYING LIKE JESUS PRAYED

When I think of the prayers that our Lord offered, two passages come to mind: Mark 1: 35 and Luke 6: 12. The reason being — these two verses are full of practical principles about prayer.

"Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there he prayed" (Mark 1: 35). "Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, **and** continued all night in prayer to God" (Luke 6: 12).

The prayers of Jesus set wonderful examples for us to imitate. They give us the opportunity to examine our own praying to see how it measures up.

One's spiritual life and maturity is measured by his or her praying. Prayer is the "dipstick" to measure the level of our spirituality. When you pull the dipstick out of the engine of your car or truck to check the oil, you will see one of two things. The oil level will either be on the full mark or it will be below it. Seldom will you find that you have too much oil. The same is true as we examine our praying. We may find that we are as spiritual and prayerful as we ought to be. It is also very possible that we will find that we are lacking in prayer due to a lack of spirituality. I doubt that anyone will find that they are overflowing to the point that they need to "drain" a little.

Let's look at our own praying in view of the prayers of Jesus.

Jesus Prayed In A Solitary Place

Mark tells us that Jesus went to a "solitary place" to pray. Luke tells us he went to the mountain to pray. Both texts suggest a *quiet* place that was free from distractions where he could concentrate on the words spoken to his Father. Jesus well understood that prayer must be from the heart and not just a recital of words or phrases.

While in a context of showing a contrast between an outward display of prayer and prayer offered in sincerity, Matt. 6: 6 may also give us some insight to praying in a place that is conducive for praying. Jesus said, "But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut the door, pray to your Father..."

Prayer was important enough for Jesus to *go to a place* to pray. It wasn't that he just happened to be in a solitary place or in the mountains when he decided to pray. He went there for the purpose of praying.

We probably wouldn't do what a few denominationalist would do by going to a chapel or "house of worship" for prayer. We well understand that prayer can be offered

anywhere, anytime. However, maybe our friends have learned something that we could use, that being the value of a place that allows us to pray without distraction.

In a busy, noisy and crowded place it is easy to let our minds wonder or rush through a prayer. With the TV blaring, the telephone ringing, the doorbell chiming and the children playing, it is difficult to think about praying.

Where do you pray? Is it the kind of place where Jesus would attempt to talk to his Father? Is it one that is helpful to your praying? Find a place that is solitary and conducive for prayer. For one, it may be in the bedroom at night or in the early morning hours. For another, it may be in the bathroom or in the shower. For some, it may be in the quietness of the office. And yet, another may find the living room to be the best. Others may go to a field, the barn, the woods or the basement. Where ever it is, prayer is worth finding a place to pray.

Jesus Made Time To Pray

There is a difference in praying as *one has the time* or *as he can find the time* and in *making time to pray*. There is also a difference in praying *because one has the time on his hands* and in *making time to pray*.

Jesus got up early, rising before daylight, just so he could pray. He did this in the midst of a very busy schedule.

Sometimes we are so busy in the mornings getting showers, eating breakfast, getting the kids off to school and going to work that little or no time is left to pray. Our days and evenings are packed full of work and family activities. When night comes we are so tired that we fall asleep while trying to pray. Thus, another day passes without praying as we should. I said *sometimes* this is true. Hopefully, this scenario does not describe all or most of God's people.

Prayer is important enough to *lose sleep* or *get up early* in order to make the time for it. Make time in your schedule for prayer when you are most alert and your mind is clear and spend some time talking to your God.

Jesus Had A Lot About Which To Pray

I have often wondered about the statement, "and continued all night in prayer to God." I wonder if this means that Jesus offered one continual prayer or were there several prayers broken by moments of rest and meditation? I wonder if through the night he ever repeated a thought, thanksgiving or request or did the night consist of prayer for different things? Any of these possibilities would seem to harmonize with the text.

However you may interpret this text, Jesus did a lot of praying. This does not suggest that our prayers must be long. It does, however, suggest that we too have a lot about which we can and should pray. The list is endless. We have much for which to be thankful: a wealth of spiritual blessings, an abundance of material blessings, friends, brethren and family. If we are we were to specify just *some* of these blessings, we would be praying a lot.

There are many expressions of praise and adoration that can be given to our Father. When we begin to praise him for his creation, his wisdom, his power and might, we again will have a lot to say in our prayers. A look at

the Psalms will be helpful in this area.

Then as we begin to make requests for help, strength, protection, wisdom, the weather and forgiveness, we again will have a lot to express before God.

A lot of time could be spent in making intercessions for the rulers of our nation, alien sinners, erring children of God, those weak in the faith, the sick, elders, preachers and others for whom we have love and concern.

If the sinless Son of God needed to spend a lot of time praying, there must be a need for me to spend some time doing the same.

Jesus Prayed Before An Important Decision

I don't know all that Jesus said in his prayer in Luke 6, but, choosing his disciples must have been on his mind for the context shows that when he had finished his praying, he immediately selected his twelve.

When we face great decisions in life, it is a time to ask for wisdom that will aid us in making such decisions (Jas. 1: 5).

Before making major decisions like getting married, having children, a job, college, selecting elders or a preacher, or taking on some considerable responsibility, we ought to approach the throne of God and ask for his help.

Conclusion

Jesus left us an example of prayer to follow (1 Pet. 2: 21). We should try our best to imitate what we see in him. Our first efforts may seem a little feeble, much like a first grader trying to make his ABC's just like the example on the board. Yet, with practice, our own efforts take on a form that looks more and more like the Master's.

VICTORIO R. TIBAYAN

VICTORIO R. TIBAYAN of Manila, Philippines, passed away on September 19. He had been in failing health since a heart attack a few years ago and died of a stroke. His death leaves a tremendous void in the work in the Philippines. It was my privilege to work side by side with him on two trips to the Philippines, and hear him preach and defend the truth. He was one of the ablest preachers I have ever heard. His debates with representatives of error were many and resulted in the conversion of many. I considered him a dear friend. Two of his sons are gospel preachers of ability. He was host and traveling companion to most of the American preachers who visited the Philippines during the last 21 years. Our sympathy is extended to the Pasay church in Manila and to his dear wife and children. A more extended notice will appear later.

—Connie W. Adams

THE NATURE OF CHRIST (1)

Hoyt Houchen

1833 S. Fairplay Street
Aurora, Colorado, 80012



The nature or person of Christ while He lived upon the earth has been and is, a subject of much dispute. Basically, there are two opposing views: (1) that Jesus was no more than a man, and (2) that He was both God and man — that He was God manifested in the flesh.

Denials that Christ was God during His sojourn upon the earth are not new. The Ebionites (a sect of Jews who lived in the early centuries A. D.) denied the divine nature of Christ. Although accepting Jesus as a prophet and the supreme lawgiver, they denied His deity.

Modernists, through the centuries have denied the supernatural, vigorously attacking the deity of Christ, His miracles and His vicarious atonement. The teaching that Jesus was the greatest man who ever lived, yet that He was a mere man is widespread. We must observe, however, at the very outset; that if Jesus were only a man and no more, then He could not have been a good man. A good man would not make a false claim, yet Jesus claimed to be God, as we shall see.

This article affirms the proposition that while Christ was upon earth He was both God and man—He was God manifested in the flesh. The humanity of Christ and the divine nature of Christ are both affirmed. He thirsted, He hungered and was tempted. The question proposed in this essay: "Was Christ God?" is addressed because there are those who deny that He was. No one, to our knowledge, denies the humanity of Christ. The fact that Jesus lived as a man upon the earth is not an issue. The issue: was He Also God, was He deity, Did He possess divine power?

It is proposed by some that when Jesus came to earth He divested Himself of deity or divinity or both; and since Jesus as a mere man lived a sinless life, therefore, we do not have to sin. We agree that we do not have to sin, in the sense that we are free moral agents, being creatures of choice, not robots. We also agree that sinlessness should be the goal of every one of us, thus it should be our aim to follow the steps of Christ "who did not sin" (1 Pet. 2: 22). Perfection should be our goal (Matt. 5: 48), but we must face a fact that is clearly taught in the Bible: we DO sin. (Eccl. 7: 20; 1 Jno. 1: 8). In our efforts to overcome sin and live above it, there is no reason to deny the supernaturalness of Christ.

Deity and Divinity Defined

Scholars make a distinction between two Greek words, both of which are translated "Godhead." In Acts 17: 29, "the godhead" (ASV, KJV) is the Greek **to theion**, but is translated "the divine nature" (NKJV, NASB),

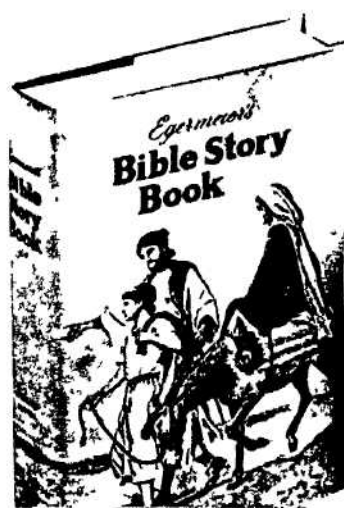
and "the divine being" (NIV). A. T. Robertson says that "to **theion** is strictly 'the divine nature' like **theiotes** (Rom. 1: 20)" (**Word Pictures in the New Testament**, Vol. 3, p. 289). J. H. Thayer defines it "divinity, divine nature: Rom. 1: 20" (Greek-English Lexicon, p. 285).

The other Greek word which is translated "Godhead" is found in Colossians 2: 9 (ASV, KJV). It is **theotes**, also translated "deity" (NASB). Thayer defines the word: "**deity** i. e. the state of being God, **Godhead**: Col. 2: 9" (Ibid., p. 288). The distinction that is made by Robertson and Thayer is that **theion** (Acts 17: 29), **theiotes** (Rom. 1: 20), denote divinity as an attribute of God, whereas the other Greek word, **theotes** (Col. 2: 9) denotes the essence of God, "the state of being God." Arndt and Gingrich make the same distinction (see Greek-English Lexicon, pgs. 354, 359). Although the words **theion** and **theotes** are similar in appearance, they are not the same words and are distinct in meaning. Men may learn some things about God's divine power through nature, but never can they learn His person nor His essence by this means. As R. C. Trench states it: "men may know God's power and majesty... from his works; but would **not** imply that they may know Himself from these, or anything short of the revelation of his Eternal Word" (**Synonyms of the New Testament**, p. 8).

Colossians 2: 9 sums up the person of Christ, "for in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." All scholars do not make the distinction between the divine attributes of Christ (from **theion**, Acts 17: 29, **Theiotes**, Rom. 1: 20) and "deity, the state of being God" (**theotes**, Col. 2: 9). Edward Robinson, for instance, defines **theiotes** (Rom. 1: 20): "Godhead, deity, i. e. the divine nature and perfections" (**A Greek and English Lexicon of the New Testament**, p. 331). But he also defines **theotes** (Col. 2: 9): "**deity, Godhead**, the divine nature and perfections" (Ibid., p. 334). However, granting that such distinction is to be made between the two Greek words considered (and the evidence seems to indicate it), the fact remains that Christ was God (deity) and possessed divine powers. He was both deity and divinity. How Colossians 2: 9 is translated is noteworthy. One version (NIV) has it: "For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form..." Another one (New Century Version) translates it: "All of God lives in Christ fully (even when Christ was on earth)."

There are real problems if Jesus was divested of either deity or divinity, or both. If He divested Himself of deity, then He was not God while upon the earth; and thus one person in the Godhead was non-existent. The word "God" in the Scriptures is used to designate each of the three persons in the Godhead: God the Father (Jno. 3: 16). God the Son (Jno. 1: 1) and God the Holy Spirit (Acts 5: 3, 4). The Godhead is deity, composed of three persons — one God, but three persons. God is eternal. If Christ was not God while He was upon the earth, then He was not eternal. If Jesus was no more than a mere man while He was here on earth, then He ceased to be God for that period of time. So, only two persons existed at that time — God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. Remember that "deity" is defined as "the state of being God." So, if Jesus gave up His deity when He came down to earth, then the second person in the Godhead (God the

Son) disappeared. Did He become God again when He ascended to heaven? On the other hand, if Jesus retained His deity, but voluntarily gave up His divine powers (as some contend), then Jesus was God without being divine. Who can believe it, God without divine powers? Also, if Jesus were not God, yet retained His divinity, He could not have been a mere man because He would have been a divine human being. But if Jesus divested Himself of BOTH (deity and divinity), then He would have to be relegated to a mere man, nothing more — a man who was sinless but was neither deity nor divine. This is the category in which the modernists have generally placed Him. As we all know, the root of modernism is naturalism, a denial of the supernatural. Jesus claimed to be God (as we shall see) but if He was not what He claimed to be, then as we have already observed, He could not even be a good man; for a good man would not make false claims. Augustine expressed it: "If Christ is not God he is not good." An honest investigation of evidence will reveal that Christ was supernatural; that is, He was more than just a man. The Scriptures teach that when Christ inhabited the earth He was both God and man. (More to follow).



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Herschel E. Patton

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The Social Gospel

Brother Connie W. Adams sent the July, '91 issue of "African Christian Hospitals," a quarterly publication of ACHF, located in Searcy, Ark., to Donnie V. Rader with the request he get someone to write an article on the "Social Gospel" as reflected in this. I have been asked to do this. The heading on this publication says "Promoting Medical Evangelism—Ministering to the whole man in Nigeria-Ghana."

The expression "ministering to the whole man," heard frequently among religious leaders, including liberal brethren, reflects the Social Gospel concept.

There are many physical and social problems facing humanity—sickness, abject poverty, slums, drunkenness, abortion, drugs, prostitution, juvenile delinquency, organized crime, gangs, divorce, racial and sex discrimination, etc. Social gospelers believe the gospel of Christ requires the church to deal with these problems. The contention that converting people to Christ (making Christians) would make for a better society is rejected as not enough. They deny that the gospel of Christ is only spiritual in its aim or purpose.

The social gospel concept is manifested by the presence of church hospitals, fellowship halls, kitchens, family life centers, recreational activities, ball teams—fields—equipment, gymnasiums, singles groups, counseling services, day care centers, schools, low rent housing buildings for the elderly (retirement centers), and numerous institutions, involving the church universal.

A large liberal church here in Huntsville uses in their ads the slogan "We care." Another has as its slogan, in ads and on a large banner on the building, "Save The Family". Without these ads and banners one can see from their "church Plant" (Gyms, play grounds, kindergarten, low rent housing complex, etc.) that they are committed to the idea of "ministering to the whole man." In fact, this often takes precedent over ministering to souls.

Origin

Brother Ed Harrell (Nationally known Historian), in a lecture at Florida College (3/23/60) described the origin of "The Social Gospel" concept from a historical standpoint. He said "The social gospel movement is a phrase used by twentieth century American historians to describe a socio-religious movement which began in the years following the Civil War and reached a climax in the years immediately preceding the First World

War."

Brother Harrell went on to show that the movement grew out of the many social problems that developed "as the United States was transformed from an agrarian-rural society into an industrial-urban one with such rapidity that there was little time to even consider the momentous social changes involved in such a revolution."

According to brother Harrell, the problems of slums, drunkenness, prostitution, organized crime, juvenile delinquency, poverty, etc. evoked a plea from leaders in most of the vocal professions (Journalist, educators, social workers, industry, labor, religion) for something to be done. Many Communists, Socialists, and Darwinist joined the fight for social justice, and offered suggestions for solving social problems. Religious leaders from nearly all denominations joined the fight for social justice.

These religious leaders, especially the more liberal (toward the Scriptures) "felt that a primary, and in many cases THE primary message of the gospel was social justice... They felt that the church, as the institutional manifestation of Christianity, was obligated to do something about the contemporary social mal-adjustments" (Ed Harrell).

The Gospel — Spiritual or Social?

As we look at the manifestations of social gospelism, and listen to their preaching today, it is easy to see that while some continue to preach the gospel of salvation of the soul, the welfare of man (society) is regarded as equally important, if not more. The gospel of Christ is thought to have a dual purpose — salvation of the soul and the betterment of society. The church is thus regarded as both a spiritual and social institution with the responsibility to act in each realm.

It is true that the gospel of Christ involves certain social duties and obligations for the Christian. This is why many contend that making Christians of people (which the gospel does) will make for a better society — will lessen injustice among men.

The great question is does the gospel (Scriptures) authorize the Lord's spiritual body to focus only on the spiritual, or go beyond the natural results of making Christians and organizationally, politically, and functionally do combat with social ills? What is the scriptural course? Where should the emphasis be? I believe the scriptures (gospel) places the emphasis on the spiritual.

Suppose you teach your neighbor the gospel of Christ and, also, when he is sick, visit him. Both acts are required of a Christian; one is spiritual, the other is social. Which is more important? For a Christian, one is as important as the other because both acts are scripturally required. But, for the neighbor, from the standpoint of the design of the gospel, teaching him the gospel (converting him) is more important. From the standpoint of the soul and eternity, absolutely nothing was done for the neighbor when you visited him in his sickness. Only converting him brought about the design of the gospel.

The African Christian Hospitals, promoting medical evangelism, in their publication, tell of the treatment of seriously ill people in various villages, and in their

hospitals and Clinics, referring to it as "the wonderful ministry of the Lord's mercy that they (medical missionaries) undertake very day." After this "work of mercy," evangelists are sent to the villages or to certain individuals to teach the gospel of Christ. Only a few of those treated are converted. Here again, only those converted when the evangelist came received anything with regards to the soul and eternity. All other recipients of this "Lord's mercy" received absolutely nothing spiritually. Only the work of the evangelists accomplished the design of the gospel of Christ.

When Jesus told Pilate "My kingdom is not of this world," and Jews expecting the kingdom to come with observation (armies and earthly headquarters) he said, "The kingdom of God is within you", he obviously had in mind a spiritual kingdom that would make itself manifest, not by institutions, societies, hospitals, organizations, entertainment, eating and drinking, etc., but by people humbly submitting to the demands of the gospel.

Social gospelers often call our attention to Jesus' feeding the multitudes and other acts of mercy to prove that social action is as much a part of the gospel as the spiritual. A study of these incidents show otherwise.

Jesus never performed such acts of mercy as important to attracting and saving people. All were for the purpose of proving His Divinity.

The reason Jesus fed the 5, 000 was not to encourage them to hear him (They were already doing that), but because he had "compassion on the multitude because they had gone all day without food (Matt. 14: 15-16). He fed the 4, 000 because He had "compassion on the multitude because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat; and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way" (Matt. 15: 32).

The next day, after feeding the 5, 000 the multitude came seeking Jesus, but not because they were interested in salvation. Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracle, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled" (Jno. 6: 26). They were not seeking Jesus for their spiritual good but for their material good. Jesus rebukes this attitude and says "Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life" (Jno. 6: 27).

This latter motive is an essential part of the gospel of Christ; the materialistic one is not a part of his gospel, and is condemned by the Lord.

The July '91 issue of "African Christian Hospitals" tell of their mobile clinic going to certain villages, with no medical care, treating their sick, and receiving urgent pleas from the chiefs and elders of other villages for "medical assistance." After treating many in a village, this organization, using doctors, nurses, and evangelists, send an evangelist or two into these villages to preach. A small percent of those treated are converted. Only these evangelists do for these people what benefits them spiritually. The doctors and nurses only render a physical benefit. Their plea for these "medical missionaries" to come is that they might be healed physically. They have no interest in the "meat that endureth unto eternal life," at least, until after the evangelists come.

We should be able to see a parallel in this and the feeding of the multitudes, and learn from what Jesus said the utter uselessness of material actions to accomplish the aims of the gospel of Christ.

Jesus went on in John 6 to present himself as the bread of life, showing that the manna in the wilderness, loaves and fishes, could never give life, and instead of seeking after these, they needed to believe in and come to Him, the bread and water of life. When the multitude understood that Jesus' mission was not to feed them, but to save, "many went back, and walked no more with him" (Jno. 6: 66-68).

In 1 Cor. 11, Paul rebuked the Corinthians for eating a common meal in connection with their worship, saying "What? have you not houses to eat and drink in? or despise ye the church of God?" This shows that the home is where eating and drinking belongs. Paul also pointed out to the Romans (14: 17) that "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink." In other words, eating and drinking is not a function of God's spiritual kingdom.

Feeding the hungry, visiting the sick and other acts of mercy truly benefit others, and Christians do have an obligation toward these that they must fulfill, but to make these actions essential to evangelizing the world is to go beyond what is written, and place upon the Lord's kingdom an impossible task.

Gospel of Christ Vs Social Gospel

The gospel of Christ, God's power to save (Rom. 1: 16), consists of the death of Christ for our sins, His burial, and resurrection (1 Cor. 15: 1-5). Thus, Paul resolved "not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified (1 Cor. 2: 2). This is the gospel of the great commission that was to be preached in all the world (Mk. 16: 15-16).

The social gospel is "another gospel" and Paul said "but though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1: 8-9).

The social gospel and the gospel of Christ differ in many ways. The purpose of the gospel of Christ is the saving of the soul for eternity; of the social gospel, the improvement of social conditions for the here and now. The gospel of Christ treats the disease while the social gospel treats only the symptoms. The former seeks to convert people to Christ; the latter to a better way of life. The social gospel seeks to make Christians through social adjustments while the gospel of Christ seeks to make society better by making Christians. For example, educators are urged to combat social diseases, unwed motherhood, and other related problems by teaching and making arrangements for "safe sex," whereas the gospel of Christ simply says "Flee fornication."

Social gospelers are motivated by a desire for a better life on earth while the motivation of the gospel of Christ is a desire for an eternal home in heaven. The standard of authority for each is also different—for the gospel of Christ, it is Scripture, the wisdom of God; for the social gospel, it is human wisdom (See Jas. 3; 13-17; 1 Cor. 1: 20-25). The social gospel offers only earthly benefits with an earthly reward, while the gospel of Christ offers spiritual benefits with an eternal reward.

Conclusion

Once the social gospel is embedded in the mind, respect for truth — Scriptural authority — vanishes. Ministering to the ills of society requires organizations, actions, and equipment that are not authorized in Scripture for the gospel's aim or purpose. The things done, used, and instituted are not aids to gospel work, but unauthorized additions of human wisdom, and come under the curse of Gal. 1: 6-8 and 2 Jno. 9-11. Churches that embrace the social gospel apostatize from the Lord and His truth. They are no longer a church of Christ, but a Church of Christ denomination.

SIMPLICITY IN CHRIST

P. J. Casebolt

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"THE LATTER RAIN"

Spring had come early. The usual May frosts had not **appeared**, the early rains had come, and gardens were **growing** well. **But** by the middle of June, the grass was **brown and** garden plants had ceased to grow. There had been **no latter** rain.

Then, late one Sunday evening, the latter rain came, **gentle and** continuing. I sat on the porch for two hours **and watched the** flowers, plants, shrubs, and even the **birds**, as they literally seemed to reach out for the rain. My thoughts went back to God's people in the land of **Canaan**—"I will give you the rain of your land in his **due season**, the first rain and the latter rain..." (Deut. 11: 14).

The same Sunday evening, visiting brethren had **worshipped** with us, and when the assembly was over, **they remarked**, "We haven't heard a good Bible sermon **like that** for a long time." These were mature Christians **who had** seen the early rains of bygone years, but **they were still** **hungering** and thirsting for the living **water that could** give eternal life (Mt. 5: 6; Jno. 4: 10ff).

As I **watched** the latter rain of mid-June, my mind **went back to another** time in the history of God's **people**, portrayed by the language of Jeremiah — **Therefore** the showers have been withholden, and **there hath** been no latter rain..." (Jer. 3: 3).

While God "sendeth rain on the just and on the **unjust**" (Mt. 5: 45), as far as I am able to determine, all **references to the** "early and latter rains" are applied to **God's people**. And in most instances, the references **have a spiritual** as well as a literal application.

The prophet Amos says, "Behold, the days come, **saith the Lord God**, that I will send a famine in the

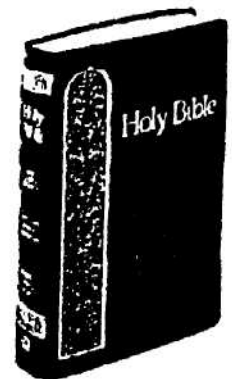
land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord" (Amos 8: 11).

The principle of the early and latter rain declares the possibility of apostasy. Without the latter rain, the former comes in vain. "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain" (Jas. 5: 7).

God's people may survive for a season without latter rains for their gardens, but they cannot survive without latter rains for their souls. And this paints a sad picture, when, in the words of the old song, "the living well is so near by." May the words of the prophet be ours, as he says, "... Let us now fear the Lord our God, that giveth rain, both the former and latter, in his season: he reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest" (Jer. 5: 24).

We all embrace the early rain,
Without it naught can grow or live;
The farmer soweth but in vain
If skies do not their blessing give;
But once the roots have had a taste
Of Nature's nectar we call rain,
All early efforts go to waste
If clouds do not return again.
God's breath was mingled with the dust
And life was born we know not how;
But cultivate that soul we must,
Though not with rake or hoe or plow;
Begotten by the word of God
We hope for fields of golden grain,
But all is lost in tares and sod
If God withhold the latter rain.

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MUSINGS

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IS EVERYTHING BLACK OR WHITE?

Some time ago a prominent preacher spoke rather disrespectfully of his parents by saying that they believed everything was either black or white. Then he proceeded to talk about some things that he considered to be neither black nor white but **gray**.

If we mean by black the works of darkness and by white the works of light then everything is surely either right or wrong, light or darkness, yes, black or white. This may even startle a good many but this writer believes also that everything is black or white — right or wrong.

Some must have misunderstood the apostle Paul in Romans 14 on the matter of the eating of meat. It must be remembered that, first of all, eating meat is lawful therefore right. It is not a gray area. You cannot even discuss the word expediency, as some are quick to do, until you first discuss whether a thing is lawful or not. Paul said in 1 Cor. 10: 23 "all things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not." Therefore, things that are lawful come under the heading of right, light and white. Things unlawful must come under the heading of wrong, darkness and black. Where is the **gray area**?

Some want to put fellowship under expediency. Some want to put modesty there also. He said folks looked at modesty differently in Florida. Some want to put "social drinking" and mixed bathing under expediency also. When called in question on this some get sarcastic, cute and not a little angry. They do like the sectarian preachers do sometimes in debate. When they run out of soap, they get cute and personal. One preacher said to a class of preachers that when someone had to resort to such, it was evidence they felt the flimsiness of their arguments. I believe this to be so. Relative arguments such as how long is long and how short is short do not answer the question at hand. They are dodges because no real argument is available in the scriptures.

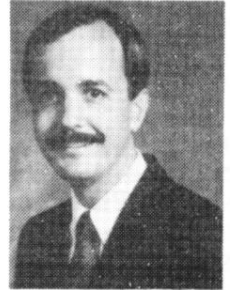
I have found no place in God's Word for this supposed gray area or twilight zone. I do find two categories into which everything may be placed. The first is that which is **lawful** and the second is that which is **unlawful**. Expediency itself belongs in the category of that which is first of all lawful. It is therefore in the white area. Any choice made under expediency is first of all to be circumscribed by law.

The scriptures speak of light and darkness, right and wrong, black and white. There is no in-between! If so, where is it?

WRITTEN FOR OUR INSTRUCTION

Frank Himmel

1575 14th Ave W.
Palmetto, Florida 33561



THE RECHABITES

Students of Old Testament history know about a number of "ites": Israelites, Moabites, Edomites, Ammonites, Amorites, Hittites, Canaanites, Jebusites, and a host of others. Have you ever heard of the Rechabites? They were the descendants of Rechab, of course. But who was Rechab, and what did he and his descendants do that is of value to us?

Rechab was a Kenite (1 Chr. 2: 55), a descendant of Moses' in-laws. However, the story of the Rechabites really begins with Rechab's son Jehonadab.

The dynasty of Omri was a bleak period in the history of the northern kingdom. Omri was more evil than all who were before him, and his son Ahab was even worse. He and his Sidonian wife Jezebel popularized Baal worship in Israel. Countless prophets fell victim to her bloody hands. Finally God had enough of it and commissioned Jehu, king of Judah, to completely cut off Ahab's house. Jehu was joined in that work by Jehonadab. Together they zealously executed God's charge, killing not only every member of Ahab's house but also every Baal worshiper in Israel (2 Ki. 10).

The luxury and license associated with Baal worship were appalling to Jehonadab. In protest against it, and doubtless in an effort to prevent his own family from falling prey to it, Jehonadab commanded his children to rigidly adhere to a simple nomadic lifestyle. They were not to drink wine, nor build houses, nor farm, nor plant or own vineyards, but were to live in tents all their days. This regulation extended to all succeeding generations, to all Rechabites.

The Rechabites then disappear from history for two and a half centuries until Nebuchadnezzar's invasion of Judah forced them to take refuge in Jerusalem. It was then and there that God brought this family into view. The story is recorded in Jeremiah 35.

God told Jeremiah to bring the Rechabites into the house of the Lord and give them wine to drink. Jeremiah promptly obeyed. "Then I set before the men of the house of the Rechabites pitchers full of wine, and cups; and I said, 'Drink wine!' But they said, We will not..." (vv. 5, 6). Was this a case of God, through Jeremiah, tempting

men to do evil? No. He knew how they would react. That is why He was able to use them to teach the lesson. And what was the lesson?

God said to Judah: "The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab, which he commanded his sons not to drink wine, are observed. So they do not drink wine to this day, for they have obeyed their father's command. But I have spoken to you again and again; yet you have not listened to Me" (v. 14). The lesson was faithfulness, commitment.

Had they been so disposed, the Rechabites might have rationalized drinking on this occasion. After all this rigid lifestyle was Jehonadab's idea, not theirs. Now he was dead; he would never know. Besides, they had been doing this for 250 years; perhaps it was time for a change. And the "extenuating circumstances" of the Babylonian invasion had already forced them to make one adjustment, so why not another? Such thoughts seemingly did not even enter their minds. They were determined to honor their commitment.

Like ancient Judah, some of us need to learn the lesson of faithfulness, of living up to our commitments, of dependability. To begin with, we must be faithful to our commitment to the Lord, who said, "My righteous one shall live by faith; and if he shrinks back, My soul has no pleasure in him" (Heb. 10: 38). God expects faithfulness in our business agreements. Athletes who sign lucrative long-term deals, then a year ago or two later demand that their contracts be renegotiated, are poor role models. The citizen of Zion swears to his own

hurt and does not change (Ps. 15: 4). Jesus taught us to live up to our word in whatever context we give it (Mt. 5: 33-37).

Need I say something about faithfulness in marriage? "Till death do us part" is too often a hollow phrase, uttered by people who have no intention of entering such a demanding obligation. Some are now changing that to "as long as our love shall last." They say that is more honest. Well, it may be more accurate, but it is certainly not dealing honestly with what God says about marriage! And given the broad-based confusion between love, infatuation, and lust, I question the accuracy of it, too.

The Rechabites also teach us something about being examples. Three qualities made their example notable. One, they were consistent, regardless of circumstances. They made up their minds beforehand what they would do, then did it. Faithfulness means obedience. Two, they were unashamed of their commitment. Doubtless this unique lifestyle made them stand out. Nevertheless, they freely kept it and openly explained why, making neither excuse nor apology. Three, they were scrupulous in observance, keeping every aspect of Jehonadab's charge. Because of these qualities, God could use them to teach others. Because of these qualities, God blessed the Rechabites. May He strengthen us to imitate them and thereby reflect the light of Christ in our lives.

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HARVEY PORTER PASSES

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After a long illness and much suffering, our beloved Harvey Porter departed this life at his home in Abilene, Texas at 9: 16 P. M. on August 29th, 1991, at the age of 89 years. Those of us who knew and loved him dearly, have lost a dear and highly esteemed friend and brother in Christ.

Our family first met Harvey and Bertha Porter when we moved to Abilene from Lufkin, Texas in 1960. During the period when controversial issues were especially critical over the country, faithful brethren declared their stand for the truth. The Porters could no longer remain at the Highland church in Abilene because of its unscriptural practices, so they identified themselves at North Park in Abilene and he was preaching there when we arrived at work with the church. I preached there for six years.

A warm friendship was formed with the Porters and has become even dearer through the years. They were a great source of encouragement to us personally, as well as to the Lord's work at North Park, and in particular during that critical period when the issues controversy was so intense. They were most hospitable, often opening the doors of their home to guests.

For a number of years the Porters owned the Ben Franklin store in Abilene. During the time that we lived there, our three sons all worked for them. Later, they sold the store and retired, but not from the Lord's work. All who have known the Porters through the years have been impressed by their energy and their untiring efforts in the Lord's work. Two more devoted Christians could not be found anywhere. Brother Harvey Porter was always willing to preach, teach Bible classes, do personal work and anything else that he might be called upon to do. Bertha has taught Ladies' Bible classes for years and has been a faithful, devoted, encouraging and loving wife to her beloved husband. During the time our dear friend and brother in Christ was incapacitated, she provided all the kind and loving care possible to make him as happy and comfortable as she could. Even though they were devoted to each other, they put the Lord first in their lives.

In addition to preaching at North Park, he preached at Woodland Heights in Brownwood, Texas and other places where he was needed. After his retirement from the store, the Porters traveled to Salida, Colorado, where they worked with church for a period of time. Then later they assisted the church at Kaysville, Utah, where they both did much teaching and edification.

Harvey and Bertha have been (and she continues to be) consecrated Bible students. The Bible was their textbook, but brother Porter had a library which surpassed

that of most preachers in size and quality. He used it diligently when he was well, and she continues to **devote** herself to study. They were both excellent teachers **and** careful students of God's word.

The fatigued body of our bosom friend and brother in the Lord was quietly laid to rest in Ennis, Texas where the Porters had lived before moving to Abilene. A graveside service was conducted by our good friend **and** beloved brother Jay Bowman. Jay presently preaches for the North Park congregation, and he and his family have grown very close to the Porters as did we. A memorial service is planned in the near future to be held at the North Park building in Abilene.

My heart is heavy as I write these lines on the day after our dear brother's departure. His spirit is departed to be with the Lord where we believe he is now safe in the arms of Jesus and free from all the sorrows, aches and pains of this present world. He was a grand old soldier of the Cross (2 Tim. 4: 7). Although unable to be at the graveside, where the body of this godly saint is to be lowered into the ground tomorrow afternoon, our thoughts and prayers are in behalf of his dear wife and our beloved friend and sister in Christ, Bertha, and all the members of his family. The good influence which this godly couple has had upon others and for the Lord's work cannot be measured.

We say good-bye to our dear brother, having the assurance that we shall someday see him in the land of fadeless day where all the God's people will be gather forever.

The following tribute to a Christian from an unknown author is dedicated to our brother Porter:

"I have seen the gleam of the light that flashed at midnight, athwart storm swept skies, mid chaotic clouds, till clouds, darkness and shadow haunted earth glittered in noon day splendor, and I thought that was grand!

But the grandest light, next to the radiance that flows from the Almighty throne of God, is the light of a beautiful life, wrapping itself in die benediction of man, and seeking its rest in the bosom of the Almighty God. "

Truly a great soldier in God's army has fallen, but his works shall live after him!

Commending you to

**THE WORD OF
HIS GRACE**

Marshall E. Patton

1024 Coronado Dr., S.E.
Huntsville, Alabama 35802



**THE LOVE OF GOD —
ROMANS 8 — NO. 6 GOD'S
PROVIDENCE — ALL-INCLUSIVE
— VS. 28-30**

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified."

These verses are somewhat of a summary and recapitulation of the theme that runs throughout the whole chapter. They even extend the theme beyond things specifically mentioned so as to make **the love of God** all-inclusive of things done by the Father in effecting our ultimate glorification.

Unfortunately, these verses have been misunderstood, misused, and abused, especially the "**all things**" of verse twenty eight and the **foreknowledge** and **predestination** of verses twenty nine and thirty. Hopefully, this study will clarify and resolve some of these problems.

Misconceptions

Some understand the "all things" (v. 28) to be without qualification or any limitation; that such includes the tragic experiences in the life of a Christian, e. g., the loss of loved ones, financial reverses, illnesses, and other disappointments. On such occasions it is quite common to hear someone (likely a preacher) say in an effort to comfort, "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose."

Some go so far as to say that such experiences are a part of the "chastening of the Lord" (Heb. 12: 5-11) as a punitive measure because of some sin in our life. Evidence of this concept may be found in expressions frequently heard by those suffering some tragedy. "Why is God doing this to me?" Again, "What have I done to deserve this?" I take issue with all of these concepts. I believe that such misses the lesson intended

and involves a misuse of the text.

The Chastening: of the Lord

While it is not my purpose here to present a lesson on the chastening of the Lord, I will make the following brief observations for the sake of clarity. I do believe that some of the tragic experiences in the life of a faithful Christian are a part of "the chastening of the Lord," but I do not believe that his chastening is punitive! God does not intervene directly to punish us in the here and now. This world is not one of retribution, but rather one of injustices, inequities, and irregularities. Unless one believes that God is a respecter of persons, and He is not (Acts 10: 34, 35), it should be obvious that all injustices are not made just, all inequities are not made equal, and all wrongs are not made right in this present time. This will be done in the judgment. While there is some suffering in this life that follows as a consequence of wrong doing on our part, such involves no direct intervention on God's part as a punitive measure.

There are verses that teach that our suffering as a Christian (1 Pet. 4: 16) is beneficial; that afflictions work for us (2 Cor. 4: 17), and that our endurance "striving against sin" is the "chastening of the Lord" which "yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness" (Heb. 12: 4, 5, 10, 11). However, the careful Bible exegete will use these or similar verses to prove such, and not force a meaning upon our text contrary to what the context demands.

"All Things" Limited

The expression "all things" is often limited in the Scriptures. Paul says, "all things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not" (1 Cor. 10: 23). Paul was not saying that murder, lying, stealing, etc., were lawful for him. The context shows that the things under consideration were things lawful in the first place, but not all of these were expedient. Again, John says, "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things" (1 John 2: 20). John was not saying that they knew all things, period — scientific, geographic, historic, etc. He obviously was referring to "all truth" (John 16: 13) into which the Holy Spirit ("unction" — KJV; "anointing" — ASV) would guide. Thus, "all things" is frequently limited by its context.

So it is with our text—even for them that love God and are called according to His purpose. Otherwise, we involve ourselves in a contradiction of facts. It is a fact that all things, without qualification or limitation, do not always work together for our good. Paul said, "For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols: And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?" (1 Cor. 8: 10, 11). Here is something that happened to a brother, though weak, nevertheless, who loved God and was called according to His purpose, that did not work together for his good. Again, Jesus said, "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold" (Matt. 24: 12). Again, we see something that happened to

saints that did not work together for their good. Surely, we understand that the "all things" of our text does not include the devil and his works, his agents, and the lust of the flesh which war against the soul (1 Pet. 2: 11),

Furthermore, it does not meet the issue to say that God overrules all things to our good. This involves a subtle shifting of the issue from all things that happen to us to the overruling power of God. There is a fundamental difference between the two, and it seems to me to be poor exegesis to shift the issue to the latter. Either the "all things" refer to everything that happens **to** us, or it refers to everything God does **for** us in effecting our eternal salvation. While, as we learn from other Scriptures, God overrules in some things to our good, it is not so that He overrules all things to our good (Note the examples already given—1 Cor. 8: 10, 11; Matt. 24: 12). Such would demand that God infringe upon man's volition — this He never does! Hence, there are some things God **cannot** and **will not** (commensurate with His will and nature) overrule to our good. He cannot otherwise allow man to be man (a volitional being). Hence, the error of applying the overruling power of God to **all things** that happen to us.

Furthermore, while the matter of human suffering is introduced in verses seventeen and eighteen, the **thrust** is upon what God does **for** us in the midst of such that enables us to overcome despair, e. g., He gives us **hope** by which we are saved (vs. 19-25). The focus is upon what God does **for** us — not upon everything that happens **to** us.

Demands of the Context

It is true, however, that the "all things" (v. 28), when limited to the demands of the context, do work together for our good.

Every article in this series combines to show that the theme of the whole chapter is **the love of God** (involving God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit) in effecting our redemption and ultimate glorification. This love is manifested in the following: the freedom provided in Christ (vs. 1-4), the Holy Spirit as our guide (vs. 5-14), the assurance given by the Holy Spirit (vs. 15, 16), the hope given to sustain us through human suffering (vs. 17-25), and the help given by the Holy Spirit in prayer (vs. 26, 27). All of these things do work together for our good! It is only fitting that such things should be summarized with the statement in verse twenty eight: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose."

That this is the meaning intended is evident from the first word in the next verse (v. 29), which is translated "For" from the Greek "hoti" and means "because." This conjunction ("hoti") joins the "all things" of verse twenty eight with the things of verses twenty nine and thirty, which recapitulate the whole scheme of redemption from beginning to end. This means that the conjunction "hoti" makes the latter the **reason** for the former. Since the latter involves

what God does in making possible our eternal salvation, the "all things" (vs. 28) must necessarily relate to it.

The Over-All View

In our text Paul shows that not only the things specifically mentioned heretofore in the chapter work together for our good, but that everything that God has done, is doing, and will do for us combines to make possible our ultimate glorification. In verses twenty nine and thirty Paul presents with brevity the over-all view of God's "purpose," (v. 28) from the viewpoint of the whole being completed. Such viewpoint is not uncommon in the Scriptures when the fulfillment is certain even though the actual fulfillment is future, e. g., Gen. 17: 5. This **purpose** as well as the **good** toward which "all things" work involves God's foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justifying, and glorifying.

The **foreknowledge** of God is part of His Omniscience. This does not mean that God has foreseen and determined beforehand just who will be saved and who will be lost, as far as individuals are concerned — as per Calvinism. It does mean that God has foreseen and approved beforehand the type of character He would save. Paul, as well as other inspired writers, often used the word "know" in the sense of **approval**, e. g., 1 Cor. 8: 3; Rom. 7: 15 (ASV); Matt. 7: 23. Thus, God foreknew the attitude of heart of those He would save and ultimately glorify in contrast to those who would be indifferent, disobedient, and even rebellious. Such approval beforehand in no way infringes upon the volition of a single soul. Yet, such infringement is a consequence of the doctrine of Calvinism. Furthermore, it makes of God a respecter of persons, which He is not (Acts 10: 34, 35). Only those of that character approved before-hand are the ones included in God's scheme of redemption — all others are excluded. Remember, God created man a volitional being—with power to think, reason, and choose between good and evil. This is that part of man that is created in His own image (Gen. 1: 27) and which distinguishes him from the lower order of creation. Man, therefore, is an accountable being (2 Cor. 5: 10) and must suffer or rejoice in the consequences of his own choice of character.

Likewise, the **predestination** on God's part, in these verses or anywhere else, had absolutely nothing to do with electing one to be saved and another to be damned. Rather, it had to do with the type of life to be lived by those approved by Him, namely, "to be conformed to the image of his Son."

The "**called**" are those who have obeyed the gospel of Christ. Paul said we are called by the gospel (2 Thess. 2: 14) — not by some mysterious "experience of grace," as per Calvinian theology. Let it be clearly understood that no one is of the "called" unless and until he answers the call by obeying the gospel. This fact is corroborated by Paul when he said of the gospel, "it is the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1: 16). Again, "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence

of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (2 Thess. 1: 7-9).

The "justified" are the same ones who have answered the call. The word "justified" means they have been forgiven, acquitted — they are no longer guilty — and are now righteous individuals.

The word "glorified" refers to the ultimate state of those under consideration. It identifies the "purpose" of God finally climaxed in that beautiful place the Bible calls heaven.


I know not where in all the word of God any passage

may be found that presents the development of the whole scheme of redemption more succinctly, more completely, or more beautifully than the verses under study in this lesson. How sublime is the concept of one being lifted from the state of an unworthy, condemned, sinful creature on this low, sin-cursed, terrestrial sphere to a plane of righteousness in the sight of the Almighty — the creator of us all — and ultimately into the realm of glorified saints to bask forever in the blessings of the celestial world. O what love, magnificent love, yea, infinite love, is here made manifest!

LESSONS
MY DAD TAUGHT ME

Leon Mauldin

204 1/2 Dean Avenue
Hanceville, Alabama 35077



When a loved one dies, it is normal to engage in some reflective thinking on the life of the deceased. One's memory seems to select those incidents and occurrences, which, now that death has come, take on special significance. Perhaps this is a factor that helps the survivors in the "healing process" that needs to occur when we "have said 'Good-bye' to the dearest on earth" to us. It has just now been two years since my father died of cancer. This has given me the occasion to reflect upon lessons that I learned from him, for which I will always be thankful.

The Bible Is Right

My father had absolute faith in the inspiration and infallibility of Scripture. For example, he had unquestioning faith, childlike faith, in the Genesis account of **creation**. When God's Word said in Genesis 1: 1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth", that settled the matter. In looking up at the skies, the handiwork of God was seen. No theory of evolution was ever seen as a plausible explanation of the things "that have been made" (Rom. 1: 20; Heb. 11: 3).

Likewise, in the matter of God's provision for our **salvation** in Christ (Isa. 53; John 3: 16) and obedience to the Gospel that we might receive salvation, the Bible is right (Mark 16: 16; Acts 2: 38). One of my Dad's favorite passages was that of the conversion of the Ethiopian nobleman (Acts 8: 26-40). Just weeks before his death, when he was no longer able to locate references, he asked me to find that text for him.

I learned from my Dad that in **all matters**, the Bible is right. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3: 16, 17).

The reason that this attitude toward Scripture is important, is because it is the attitude that **Jesus** had toward the word of God: God's Word is right! "**and the Scripture cannot be broken**" (John 10: 34).

My father taught me that Scripture is **that which is spoken to you by God**; that it is God's word for us today. When Jesus was asked a "knotty" marriage question that was really intended to disprove the resurrection, He replied, "But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read **that which was spoken unto you by God**, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not God of the dead, but of the living" (Matt. 22: 31-32). Although the words to which Jesus referred (Exodus 3) had been spoken more than 1400 years earlier, the Scripture had direct application and relevance for His audience. This is the exact view of Scripture which we must have!

The Futility of Denominationalism

While there was never hatred or malice for our friends and neighbors who were members of various denominations, I learned from my father a very important principle: that the doctrines and traditions of men are futile. If name, or doctrine, or belief or practice was not from heaven (revealed in God's Word), then it was man-made, and was to be rejected. With my father, it was as simple as that.

This principle is not true because he believed it, but because God's word reveals it: "Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition... And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15: 6, 8-9). "Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted... And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch" (Matt. 15: 13-14). (Please read also Gal. 1: 6ff; 2 Jno. 9; Matt. 7: 21-23; Lk. 6: 46).

That Liberalism Is Wrong

When we moved to Sumiton, Alabama, in the early 60's, the Sumiton church had not been established. I remember my Dad making a call to brother Pryde E. Hinton, who was preaching at Sayre (Jefferson County), whom we had never met, and asking him how the Sayre church stood regarding church support of human institutions. Upon learning that the church was scriptural in its organization and work, we began to worship there.

Even before that, I remember hearing discussions with relatives, where Dad would maintain that there is a difference between an individual's money, and the

treasury of the church, and a difference between what he could do with his money, and what the church could do with the Lord's money.

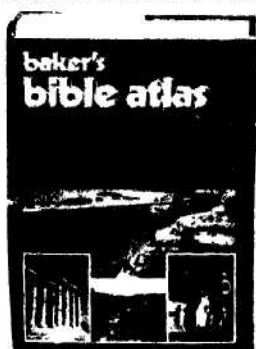
Regarding this subject, as well as much of these matters included in this article, I have had the occasion to thoroughly study for myself. My faith is not my father's faith; it is my faith, as indeed it must be for me to be pleasing to God. But it is the **word of God** that speaks of local churches with bishops and deacons (Phil. 1: 1); of elders who tend the flock among them (1 Pet. 5: 2). It does not authorize such arrangement as the sponsoring church, with elders overseeing the funds and work of many churches. The Bible teaches that the work of the church is evangelism, edification and benevolence (relief of needy saints). The work is not recreation, entertainment, or social program. Jesus did not shed His blood to purchase unto Himself a people that would duplicate the services of various human organizations (Red Cross; Human Services, etc.). I learn from reading the Bible that the church is not authorized to build and maintain human institutions that propose to do the work that God assigned to the church.

Sensitivity To People

From my father I learned to care about people; to be sensitive to people. He was observant as to whether one "had something on his mind," or was upset, or had hurt feelings. In this regard, he readily saw what others either do not see, or else have to be told.

Repeatedly in the ministry of Christ, we read that He was moved with compassion. We also should have a heart of compassion (Col. 3: 13) that is sensitive to the needs of others, and be tenderhearted (Eph. 4: 32).

This should find expression in our **family**. Truth must be lived and practiced, but that includes conveying to one's spouse and children tenderness toward them, and genuine care for them.



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This is true regarding our **brethren**; sensitivity is needed here also. Each of us are at different levels of growth. It is clear that if one is unruly (disorderly, ASV), he is to be warned (1 Thess. 5: 14), and if that warning is not heeded, he is to be withdrawn from (2 Thess. 3: 6). Truth must never be compromised. But we need to be sensitive to the fact that not all are unruly; some are faint-headed, others are weak. Some may struggle with problems which they have not informed others about. "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the faith-hearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all" (1 Thes. 5: 14). This calls for wisdom, and for sensitivity. In all of this our goal should be to strengthen our brother's hand **in God** (1 Sam. 23: 16).

Toward those **not yet children of God**, there is a need for sensitivity. I must ever keep in mind that "by the grace of God, I am what I am" (1 Cor. 15: 10). Error must be met forcefully, but I must not be motivated by glee in answering the opponent's argument. Remembering that people in error have feelings too, I need to approach them as I would want someone to teach me if I were in their shoes (Matt. 7: 12). Each Christian is told to be "ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with **meekness and fear**" (1 Pet. 3: 15). That individual we teach in his home, in an effort to convert him, must see that we are not merely filling our quota of calls for the week; he must see that we have a genuine interest in and love for his soul.

Conclusion: I have not written about opportunities that were fumbled, and blunders that were made. There were many weaknesses in his life of which my father was aware, and many things of which he was rightfully ashamed, but I will always be thankful to have had these foundational truths from God's Word to build on. These principles have helped fortify my faith, and it is my desire that in some small way they may strengthen your faith also.

SALE

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THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

Send all News Items to: Connie W. Adams, P. O. Box 69, Brooks, KY 40109

ANYONE KNOW OF A CHURCH IN UGANDA?

Recently a young woman from Uganda, attending school in this country, obeyed the gospel. She will be returning to her home in Uganda in May 1992. She is not aware of any sound churches in her homeland and is concerned for her continued spiritual growth after her return. Anyone having information concerning sound churches in Uganda, or anyone who has gone to Uganda to preach the gospel, please contact me as soon as possible. **Robert Sochor, 1313 Giel Ave., Lakewood, OH 44107.**

NEW WORK IN PORTLAND, TN

In June a new congregation, known as the North Sumner church of Christ, was formed in Portland, TN. Christians living in Portland have desired for some time to begin a work here. Some have been driving to Nashville and others to Franklin, KY to worship.

We acquired a rented meeting place at 603 S. Broadway and began meeting the second Sunday in June. Our attendance has averaged in the 20's, with a high of 34.

I am serving as the preacher at the present. If you know of anyone in the area who is looking for a conservative church, or anyone whom we may contact, please let us know — **Delton Porter, 110 Hood Trail, Portland, TN 37148**

TIME AND PLACE SET FOR THE SMITH-HICKS DEBATE

The September issue of STS carried an announcement of the debate between J. T. Smith and Olan Hicks on the marriage question. This will take place Nov. 11, 12, 14, 15, 1991. The location will be the Gump school auditorium located at the corner of Pima and N. Sahurara Ave. (1705 No. Sahuara Ave.) in Tucson, Arizona. Sessions will begin each evening at 7: 30.

PLATEMAKER TO GIVE AWAY

H. Arden Lawrence of Mineral, TX (78125) has a #111 A. B. Dick platemaker that he would like to give away to any faithful Christian or congregation that would use it for the growth of the church.

FROM AROUND THE WORLD

PHILIPPINES—WILBERT G. ENOSTACION, P. O. Box 9, San Fernando 2500, La Union, Philippines — In January 1991, Jeff Kingry invited me to join him in preaching the gospel in Hong Kong. I went and stayed for a month (as long as a Filipino tourist visa holder can stay). While there I saw 14 people baptized into Christ. Jeff baptized seven in China, one in Hong Kong; Bob Small baptized four and I baptized two. The brethren there wanted me to stay longer. Plans were made by the brethren for me and my family to come back and work until 1997 when the communist government takes over. My wife, Nena, and I and our family have decided to labor for Christ in Hong Kong. Reluctance among U. S. brethren to support a foreign evangelist seem evident, due to the negative replies. The amount being raised per month is \$5, 000. To breakdown the amount: salary — \$2, 500; housing—\$1, 500; children's education— \$600; water, lights and phone bills \$400.

While I am busy raising support for Hong Kong, my present support for the work in the Philippines faces dangers. By Jan. 1992, my support will be sliced \$ 150 per month and if moving to Hong Kong goes through, the remaining \$200 will be stopped. In March 1991 I lost \$150 from a brother in Kentucky. In April I lost the quarterly funds sent to my printing *Speaking the Truth* and a correspondence course,

etc. I need an additional amount of \$300 per month before the year ends.

REY O. UGALE — P. O. Box 0003, Tuguegarao, Gagayan 3500, Philippines — The Lord's work continues to prosper at Amulung. We began the regular worship at Baculod, Iguig, Gagayan. During our first gospel meeting there (March 29, 1991) five were baptized into Christ. One of the men here at Amulung, named Francisco Duque is desiring to work with the saints at Baculod full-time. He needs support to make this possible. If you can help, contact him at 26 Calamague, Amulung, Cagayan 3505, Philippines. Also, two were baptized here in July and August.

WILLIAM R. LAGAN, SR. — Since January 1991 we have baptized five Vietnamese and one Filipino. All in all we have reached eight Vietnamese. However, only two are faithful now. We have 3-4 Vietnamese attending a Saturday afternoon Bible study. We have a Bible study with one Pentecostal couple. She is an apprentice pastor. This makes our teaching hard. If you can send any tracts or reading material. I will appreciate it very much.

JULIE D. A. NOTARTE, P. O. Box 232, 8002 Digos, Davao del Sur, Philippines — On May 19 three were baptized. On May 22 four were baptized. On May 26 five were baptized. On June 26 five were baptized. Only July 10 two were baptized. Only July 16 one was baptized. On July 21 five were baptized including Doinesio Tol who was a preacher for ten years in the ECOFI church (denominational). Now we are doing our best in training him in preaching the truth.

INTERESTED IN HELPING IN THE GOSPEL IN ROMANIA?

Those who are interested in either going to Romania to help spread the gospel or helping financially please contact **David Teel, II**, 4651 Sissonville Dr., Charleston, WV 25312. Call him at (304) 342-0459.

SOUTH AMERICA — CARLOS CAPELLI, Casilla #83, 1665 Jose C. Paz, Buenos Aires, Argentina — I am happy to report one baptism in the Jose C. Paz church on July 21. Brother Ruben C. Amador of Houston, TX will be with us for a meeting Sept. 13-16. My nephew Jorge David Rodriguez was baptized in January. He is 16 years old and is preaching the gospel. He preached to his family and called me to come and help teach (700 km from Jose C. Paz) on August 15-20. Three were baptized. I was in Mendoza and preached for the San Sebastian church on August 21-25. I will go to Venezuela to preach on Sept. 22-Oct 14. I will need extra assistance to go.

SPAIN—EFRAIN F. PEREZ, Apartado 27026, 08080 Barcelona, Espana, Spain — We baptized one person on Aug. 15 and another on Aug. 28. The congregation in Roquetas invited me to preach in a gospel meeting on July 18-21. We had excellent attendance and support from Badalona and El Prat congregations. They are 14 members and now they stand for the truth.

SOUTH AFRICA — SAKKIE PRETORIUS, P. O. Box 3788, Nelspruit, 1200, Republic of South Africa — Our attendance is still fluctuating quite a bit due to the work schedules of the members, but we had to buy 10 chairs in June to have adequate seating and we are at present shopping for 10 more. Our high for July was 42 with two

regular families not present. Our garage will seat around 65.

Although I am short by about \$370 on a monthly basis, we are able to cope. Most of the shortfall comes under the "work fund" and it is limiting us in many ways. As of September this country will be going to a new system of sales tax called "Value Added Tax." Everything from food to services will be taxed 12%.

I'm starting a teaching program with one member who wishes to preach.

If you have any old "Sacred Selections" not in use, could you please donate them to us? We do not need new ones. Having to cart them around to the various places, new books would be a waste of money. Any study material and tracts you can spare will also be welcomed.

● Short Stuff ●

by: Donnie V. Rader

SIMPLICITY AND A. C. GRIDER

Brother Glider's family asked if I would photograph the cloth charts that he had used for many years in his preaching and debating. This would give them a more permanent record of his work since many of the charts are beginning to fade and some of the sheets are deteriorating. Also, a couple of preachers have spoken for these charts and this will leave the family with a copy.

Most of the charts were prepared for debate. One thing that kept coming to mind as I looked at chart after chart was how simple his points and illustrations were. He used illustrations like $2+2=4$ and others just as simplistic. Everyone could see the point he was making.

Many disliked what he said, but they didn't misunderstand. With these simple points he converted literally hundreds.

My second thought was how that some have become to scholarly and sophisticated to make their teaching so simple. We may think it is better if a little "depth of mind" is displayed. Brother Grider didn't care about that. He just wanted to teach men the truth. Preachers, we could still learn a little from A. C. Grider. "He being dead, yet speaketh."

NOW, WAIT JUST A MINUTE!

I was in a meeting sometime ago where the brethren had asked that I address some dangers or threats to our faith. On the first night I put my lesson title on the board—"Fornication And Adultery." Just a few minutes before we began, the local preacher told the brother making announcements that I had spent some time studying the announced topic (referring to my book on divorce and remarriage). When the brother made the announcements, he turned around and pointed to the board and said, "As you can see brother Rader is going to speak on fornication and adultery. Now, John (the local preacher) told me this, he said that brother Rader has **spent a lot of** time in **fornication and adultery.**" After a pause (that to me seemed like forever) he realized what he had said and added, "I mean he has spent a lot of time **studying** the topic." John looked at me and said, "I'm glad he explained." Me too, brother, me too!

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS

212

RESTORATIONS

76

(Taken from bulletins and papers
received by the editor)

SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

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



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

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VOLUME XXXII

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THINK ON THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 1631
Lutz, FL 33549



THE PROMISED SEED OF ABRAHAM

"Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12: 1-3).

The promise that God made to Abraham was repeated to Isaac, the promised son of Abraham and Sarah (Gen. 26: 4). It was repeated to Jacob the chosen son of Isaac (Gen. 28: 3, 4; 13, 14). The same promise was made to Judah by Jacob (Gen. 49: 8-12; Heb. 7: 14). Finally, the promised seed was made to the house of David, the tribe of Judah, the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham and Sarah. Matthew 1: 17 tells us that there were fourteen generations from Abraham to David, and this is the line of the promise seed.

The Holy Spirit by prophecy and fulfillment tells us who the promised seed is in whom all families of the earth would be blessed. Nathan the prophet told David, "and when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever" (2 Sam. 7: 12-13).

The prophecy said that David's seed would "build an house for my name" after David's death. The church is called the house of God (1 Tim. 3: 15). And God would establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. David's seed would be seated on the throne to reign until the last enemy was destroyed (1 Cor. 15: 24-26). This refers to the same people and the fulfillment is at the same time and the same place. The church and the kingdom refer to the same people.

Jesus Christ is that PROMISED SEED of prophecy to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah and to the house of David. The New Testament tells us so (Rom. 1: 3; Gal. 4: 16). The fact that he was the son of David was not disputed while Christ lived (Matt. 22: 41-46).


This was a promise God made to Abraham, and repeated to Isaac, Jacob, and to Judah and to the house of David, that the promised seed in this line would bless all nations of the earth, and this seed would sit upon the throne of his father David and rule in his kingdom forever. This one seed is Christ (Gal. 4: 16). God has but one nation of people, and they are in this seed who is Christ. "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3: 29). This refers to the people of God. The church is that one body of people in Christ who are referred to as "Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

The authority of Christ is complete (Matt. 28: 18). He is "the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all (Eph. 1: 22, 23). Moses said Christ would be a prophet—a law giver—like he was, and all who did not hear him would be destroyed from among the people (Acts 3: 22, 23). All the prophets from Samuel and those who spoke afterward foretold of this (vs. 24).

God called Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees, and made the promise that "in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12: 3). He promised him a land for his seed (Gen. 12: 3, 7; 13: 15; 22: 18). "And he gave him none inheritance in it, no not so much as to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child" (Acts 7: 5). His faith in the promise of God caused Abraham to act as if he had children (cf. Rom. 4: 16-22).

Christ died to redeem us from all iniquity and to purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works (Titus 2: 14). This "peculiar" people are all those purified unto him as his own possession. They are his people, all of his people. They are a "chosen generation" — an elect race. They are built up a spiritual house on the elect foundation, Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 2: 4-9). They are called a "royal priesthood." Christ is High Priest and every saint a priest, composing a royal or kingly priesthood. They are called a "holy nation," who were not a people, but now are the people of God. (1 Pet. 2: 9).

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" QUOTE

"Disciplining children is a lot like taking out the garbage. If you don't do it, you have no right to complain later if something smells."

—Ann Landers

UNQUOTE "

Editorial

Connie W. Adams

P.O. Box 69
Brooks, Kentucky 40109



EDITORIAL STEW

Here is my annual mixture of bits and pieces, none long enough for a full-fledged editorial, but all of them things I want to say.

Potlucks and Shorts

Over the years it has been a joy to get together with other Christians on Sunday afternoons during a gospel meeting, or on other occasions, to share good food, laugh together, and generally just have a good time. I believe that early Christians had such occasions for they "broke bread from house to house" and "ate their meat with gladness and singleness of heart" (Acts 2: 46). Our Lord enjoyed being in the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus as well as other social gatherings.

But I have come to look upon some of these with less enthusiasm than in the past. Such occasions often become painful reminders of how some of the Lord's people are being fashioned after this world. More and more are showing up in shorts or other casual attire which are not decent. At one place, after a sermon on "Modesty" one of the Bible class teachers appeared at a potluck in shorts. He was joined by another man in the same sort of attire. For the benefit of those among us who now speak of "long shorts" and "short shorts," I believe we would have to say these were of the "short" variety of "shorts." What is even of more concern is the fact that such folks seem to have no trace of blush nor give any indication that they have any idea this might be out of place. Brethren, "we are drifting."

Evolution and the Mississippi River

Mark Twain was a steamboat pilot on the Mississippi for a time and in his book "LIFE ON THE MISSISSIPPI" commented on how much the river had been shortened by cutoffs in his lifetime.

"Therefore, the Mississippi between Cairo and New Orleans was twelve hundred and fifteen miles long one hundred and seventy-six years ago. It was eleven hundred and eighty after the cutoff of 1722. It was one thousand and forty after the American Bend cutoff. It has lost sixty-seven miles since. Consequently its length is only nine hundred and seventy-three miles at present.

Now, if I wanted to be one of those ponderous scientific people, and 'let on' to prove what had occurred in the remote past by what had occurred in a given time in the recent past, or what will occur in the far future by what has occurred in late years, what an opportunity is here!

Geology never had such a chance, nor such exact data to argue from! Nor 'development of species,' either! Glacial epochs are great things, but they are vague-vague. Please observe:

In the space of one hundred and seventy-six years the Lower Mississippi has shortened itself two hundred and forty-two miles. That is an average of a trifle over one mile and a third per year. Therefore, any calm person, who is not blind or idiotic, can see that in the Old Oolitic Silurian Period, just a million years ago next November, The Lower Mississippi River was upwards of one million three hundred thousand miles long, and stuck out over the Gulf of Mexico like a fishing rod. And by the same token any person can see that seven hundred and forty-two years from now the Lower Mississippi will be only a mile and three quarters long, and Cairo and new Orleans will have joined their streets together, and be plodding comfortably along under a single mayor and a mutual board of aldermen. There is something fascinating about science. One gets such wholesale returns of conjecture out of such a trifling investment of fact" (Mark Twain, *LIFE ON THE MISSISSIPPI*, p. 120).

Gathered Together Praying

It was a sad time for the church in Jerusalem. The wicked Herod had vexed certain of the church and had James, the brother of John, killed with a sword. Peter had been arrested and imprisoned. What would become of him the brethren did not know, but they knew where to take their cares. They called a prayer meeting at the house of John Mark's mother. When Peter was released and came to join with the disciples he found many "gathered together praying" (Acts 12: 12). Men ought always to pray and not to faint. Prayers should be without ceasing knowing that the effectual fervent prayers of righteous people avail much.

In that context I exhort our readers to earnestly pray for Phyllis Key, wife of David Key, who operates Religious Supply Center. Phyllis is battling a malignancy of the liver. She is truly one of God's noble women. While this is under way, their niece, Leah Key, daughter of Charles and Annetta Key of the Hebron Lane congregation, is undergoing treatment for a brain tumor. She will soon undergo bone marrow transplant. She is a devout young woman with a radiant personality.

Also, I learned this morning (October 17) that Julian R. Snell, long-time friend and author of a column in this paper, has suffered a heart attack and is in Parkview Hospital in Nashville, Tennessee. He preaches for the Downtown church in Lawrenceburg, Tennessee. At present it is expected that by-pass surgery will be necessary.

I am sure there are many who stand in need of the prayers of the righteous. I just wanted to make these known to you and ask you to speak with the Almighty about it in your private chambers and when you gather with others to pray.

Thanks to Donnie V. Rader

Faithful friends are truly a blessing from the Lord. That is where you turn for help in times of trouble. I am

much indebted to brother Rader for his able work the past few months. What started out to be a three month's work through the summer, turned into a much longer period of editorial work for him. He has done his work well and all who read and hold an interest in the work of this paper are in his debt for his devoted service. I am mending from back surgery though still under some restrictions and limitations for a few weeks yet. Still, I hope to edit the January issue and be back at my post for awhile to come.

In January we will begin a series of five articles by Donnie V. Rader reviewing the book, *Rethinking Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage*, by Jerry F. Bassett. This book is well-written and is being widely circulated. We believe error is taught in this book and have asked brother Rader to write this review. Watch for it.


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**THE NATURE OF
CHRIST (2)**

Hoyt Houchen

1833 S. Fairplay Street
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PHILIPPIANS 2: 5-8

Perhaps this is the main text upon which a discussion of the nature of Christ while He was upon earth hinges. It is believed by some that the phrase in verse 7 of the passage, "but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant," means that Jesus gave up His deity or His divine attributes and became only a man when He came to earth — that He was divested of His nature.

First, to determine what Jesus gave up when He descended to earth, we must consider the context of this entire passage. The thought of these verses is introduced by Paul when he urged his readers to be of "one mind" (of the same mind), "doing nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself (Phil. 2: 3-5). The key word is HUMILITY. These first few verses introduce what follows. Nothing was to be done "through faction or vainglory" (vs. 3), "but in lowliness of mind" (vs. 4). The emphasis in these verses is an attitude or disposition of HUMILITY. When this is realized, what follows is much easier understood. Christ serves as the example of humility; "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (vs. 5). What was the mind of Christ? Obviously, it was humility. He serves as our perfect example (1 Pet. 2: 21-23). Paul now proceeds to show HOW Jesus humbled Himself.

The humility of Christ is seen in the fact that "existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God, a thing to be grasped" (vs. 6). The word "form" (Gr. *morphe*) relates to one's appearance — his visage. "In his preincarnate state Christ possessed the attributes of God, and so appeared to those in heaven who saw him" (A. T. Robertson, op cit, Vol. 4, p. 444). Jesus took the "form" (Gr. *morphe*) of a servant. He was still God but now He has the appearance, the characteristics of a man — a servant is no different in nature from a king, but his role is different. So it was with Jesus. The role of Jesus changed, but not His nature. While with God before His incarnation, Jesus did not count His equality with God as "a thing to be grasped." The word "grasped" (ASV) is from the Greek word *harpagmos*, "robbery" (KJV). Jesus did not regard the visage of His role as something to be "grasped." J. B. Lightfoot comments that He "did not regard it as a prize, a treasure to be clutched and retained at all hazards" (*St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians*, p. 111). So, Jesus was willing to give up His heavenly appearance and role of splendor

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and glory to take upon Himself the appearance and role of a servant. Thus His mind (attitude), disposition of humility, is clearly illustrated to Paul's readers.

Christ Jesus "emptied himself (vs. 7). The word "emptied" is the Greek word *ekenose*, first aorist active indicative of *kenoo*, a verb from *kenos*, "empty." The *kenosis*, the doctrine that concerns the emptying of Christ has been a subject of debate among theologians for years. Of what did Jesus empty Himself? A consideration of the context in which "he emptied himself has already shed light upon the question (see preceding paragraph). Also, some other passages which we believe to be parallel, supply us with additional help. His humiliation is set forth in 2 Corinthians 8: 9, where Paul writes: "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich." He became poor; He condescended, lived among men and was deprived of an earthly home while He ministered here (Lk. 9: 58). Although this was a contrast in roles, He retained His deity and divinity. Jesus prayed in John 17: 5: "And now, Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." These passages are good commentaries on how Jesus emptied Himself (Phil. 2: 7). Of what did Jesus empty Himself? He emptied Himself of riches and glory. Arndt and Gingrich give as the meaning of *kenoo*, "make empty" in verse 7: "*he emptied himself, divested himself of his privileges* (op. cit. p. 429).

Some in-depth commentaries provide additional information upon our subject at hand. J. B. Lightfoot states: "He divested Himself, 'not of His divine nature, for this was impossible, but 'of the glories and the prerogatives of Deity. This He did by taking upon Him the form of a servant'" (*Epistle to the Philippians*, p. 112).

Benjamin B. Warfield wrote the following on this text: "So far is Paul from intimating, therefore, that Our Lord laid aside His Deity in entering upon His life on earth, that he rather asserts that He retained His Deity throughout His life on earth, and in the whole course of His humiliation, up to death itself, was consciously ever exercising self-abnegation, living a life which did not by nature belong to Him, which stood in fact in direct contradiction to the life which was naturally His. It is this underlying implication which determines the whole choice of the language in which Our Lord's earthly life is described. It is because it is kept in mind that He still was 'in the form of God, ' that is, that He still had in possession all that body of characterizing qualities by which God is made God, for example, that He is said to have been made, not man, but 'in the likeness of man, ' to have been found, not man, but 'in fashion as a man'; and that the wonder of His servant-hood and obedience, the mark of servant-hood, is thought of as so great. Though He was truly man, He was much more than man; and Paul would not have his readers imagine that He had become merely man. In other words, Paul does not teach that our Lord was once God but had become instead man; he teaches that though He was God, He had become also man: ("The Person of Christ," *Interna-*

tional Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Vol. 4, p. 2339).

The comments of R. C. H. Lenski on the Philippians passage are also noteworthy: "All grades of Kenoticism are answered by the fact of the *immutability* of God, of the one essence which is identical in the Father, in the Son, and in the Holy Spirit. All Kenoticism which subtracts attributes from God reduces deity to the nature of creatures. From a creature an attribute may be withdrawn and still leave the creature. To withdraw even one attribute from God is to destroy God. The God, for instance, who is no longer omnipotent, is no longer God. The revelation of Scripture regarding God is the truth that his every attribute is his essence or being itself which reveals one side of that being. All that we call attributes of God is not a plurality, is not divisible in its reality, but is the one unity — God... A Jesus who is devoid of one attribute of deity is no more the Son of God than a Jesus who had only one nature while He lived on earth, was not at all the logos, was only Joseph's natural son" (The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, pgs. 772=73).

Supplemental to Lenski's statements are the comments of Colin Brown, editor of *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*. "If Christ be divested of essential divine attributes, it is difficult to see how the doctrine of his divinity could still be maintained... it would make him, as the Arians believed, something less than God, but more than man" (Vol. 1, p. 549). Then he concludes: "Neither the gospels nor Phil. 2 present the picture of the abandonment of any divine attributes. They do, however, show Jesus clearly accepting the status and role of a servant (Phil. 2: 7; Mk. 10: 45; Lk. 22: 27; Jno. 13: 4-16; 15: 20; Matt. 10: 24). The motive or guiding principle in all Jesus' actions was love, humility and obedience to the Father, as Phil. 2 shows:" (Ibid. p. 549). We believe these comments well summarize the meaning of Philippians 2: 5-8.

Neither does Philippians 2: 5-8 nor any other scripture teach that Jesus was divested of His deity or His divine attributes and became only a man when He came to earth. His role was different, but His nature remained the same. A principle of biblical hermeneutics is that a passage must be interpreted in harmony with other scriptures; thus the Bible becomes its own interpreter. In the article that follows, we shall examine other passages which deal with the nature of Christ.

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ACCEPTED OF HIM

(2 Cor. 5:9)

Donnie V. Rader

P.O. Box 9
Lexington, Alabama 35648



DEAR SANTA

Dear Santa,

I hope this letter gets to you before you have made all your plans for your Christmas eve visit in our homes.

Though I am not one to complain, I do feel that at times you get a little carried away with your spirit of giving. Don't get me wrong, what you have given to me, my family and friends is greatly appreciated — at least on my part. However, don't you think that in the last few years you have overdone things just a bit? I have wondered if it would be better for some of these children if they were given a little less.

One of the things that prompts me to write this letter is watching my children and others open gifts during the Christmas season. I have observed children opening presents you have left for them in the homes of grandparents, aunts and uncles and friends as well as those you left in their own homes. All of this add up. I have been bothered as I watched children open one gift and cast it aside, without knowing what it was, so they could tear into another present. They sit in a maze of paper, ribbons, boxes, toys and candy having no idea what all they have been given.

I fear that what you are doing could lead the children of today to *materialism* or at least the spirit of *ingratitude*. Those of us who love God and his word want our children to set their affections on things above (Col. 3: 2) and not think that life consist of our possessions (Luke 12: 15). I want my children to be thankful for what they have (Eph. 5: 20). I pray that I can help teach them to be content, even if all they have are the basic necessities of life (1 Tim. 6: 8). I hope they never reach the point that they expect more and more to be given to them.

Surely, you are old enough to understand that it doesn't take much to make children happy. In reality it is not an abundance of toys and things that satisfies them. Many children have as much fun with the boxes you bring the toys in as they do the expensive toys themselves.

Maybe you have forgotten what you used to bring those of my parent's generation. It wasn't much, but they were excited. You gave them an apple or orange, some stick candy and, on a big Christmas, *one* toy. Yet, they were happy. For them, that was a big celebration. When my generation came along you felt we had to have far more than our parents had. I remember on some of

the best years you brought things that came from yard sales, yet repaired, cleaned and painted to look like new. I also remember some gifts being hand made. What we had on Christmas day we thought was a lot—and it was.

For some reason, however, you think that my children and others of their generation must have more than we received — which is far more than their grandparents ever got. I wonder what you will be bringing their children. If it continues to increase, I image you will need a bigger sleigh and more reindeer.

Yes, I want my children and others to have plenty, Yet, I begin to worry a little when new toys are quickly forgotten because they are lost in a mass of playthings in the toy box or because they are soon replaced by another new toy.

Presents are like money. The more we have the less we appreciate them. Those with less seem to enjoy what little they have more than those with a lot. One writer said that our children are a lot like our stomachs. They don't need all that we can afford to give them.

This may be too late to help much this year. If so, think about my warning. Maybe by the next year you can do better. Please don't ruin the children by flooding them with material things.

One last thing: when you make your list or check it twice you may want to make a note that I've been good this year.

Love,

Donnie

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(Rom. 4:3)

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WOMEN AND SONGLEADING

QUESTION: *Our preacher's wife occasionally starts a song on Wednesday evenings. It is usually a new song that we're trying to learn. Some of the brethren feel she is wrong to do so. When confronted with our beliefs, she replied that if she is asked to start it by the songleader, she is not usurping authority. Please print your views. Some of the brethren here think it's okay and some do not.*

ANSWER: For a woman to begin a song at the request of the songleader is no different in nature than for a woman to answer a question in the auditorium class at the request of a male teacher. Both actions are in harmony with God's word. Paul wrote, "But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness" (ASV). The Phrase, "nor to have dominion over a man" is a preferable rendition of the King James Version, "nor to usurp authority over the man." This passage prohibits a woman from teaching over man, thereby exercising authority over him. Merely starting a song under the above described circumstances hardly puts one in the role of domination.

On the other hand if a woman began to take control of the situation, correcting mistakes, offering suggestions, etc., even though seated, she has seized control, and for all practical purposes, she is in the same position as if she were standing before the assembly in the place of the male songleader. Let the women be in subjection, as also saith the law (1 Cor. 14: 34).

A woman's deportment and demeanor are to be one of submission and quietness. R. C. H. Lenski states that *quietness* equals "without herself talking, without placing herself on an equality with the men conducting the service and doing the talking" (Commentary on First Timothy, p. 562). This same principle would be applicable to leading the singing.

A man may not grant permission to a woman to do what Paul says, "I permit not." If a man granting permission precludes a woman from having dominion over a man, then a woman could preach, lead the public prayers, teach a class of men, serve as an elder or deacon, preside at the Lord's table, direct the singing, and never violate Paul's divine injunction in 1 Tim. 2: 12. Paul did not say, "But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man, unless she gets permission." This kind of rationale would permit a wife to rule

over her husband in the home providing he gave her permission.

Obviously, a woman would need permission to begin a song on behalf of the songleader or else she would be out of place. But this is also true of a man who would usurp the prerogatives of the songleader. For a woman to have to start a song for a songleader is rare, but sporadically such may be warranted. In the final analysis, she is doing only what God has authorized and that is —singing. However, it seems to me that a congregation wanting to learn new songs could invite a brother adept in singing from another congregation and teach them some new songs, rather than always depending on a sister to begin unfamiliar songs.

If a woman starting a song causes dissension, good judgment tells us to forgo the practice. Peace is more important than the exercise of a liberty to begin a song.

A BURNING FIRE

(Jer. 20:9)

Jim Deason

Rt. 1, Box 153
Culleoka, Tennessee 38451



GOD OWNS IT ALL

My earliest remembrances of Bible class go back to a small one room church building where we pulled curtains across the back of the auditorium for classrooms. There in humble surroundings I was taught by people who loved the Lord and who loved me. Those early lessons were most impressive. Lessons about Abraham and Noah, Daniel and David, were taught in earnestness and made an impact for good upon my young mind.

One of the more memorable lessons that I learned revolved around a song that is seldom heard today. The song is entitled, "He's Got The Whole World In His Hands". The message of the song is that God controls it all because He owns it all. That's an important lesson for all of us to learn.

The Lord said, "For every beast of the forest is Mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird of the mountains, and everything that moves in the field is Mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell you; For the world is Mine, and all it contains" (Psa. 50: 10-12). David said, "The earth is the Lord's, and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it" (Psa. 24: 1). Indeed, God does have the whole world in His hands.

Is it not true that the one who owns something has the right to control it? Is it not also true that we have no rights over that which belongs to someone else; except those rights that the owner might delegate to us? This is why the Bible calls us stewards. A steward is a manager, someone who has been put in charge of that which belongs to another and who is held accountable for its proper use. Since God owns it all, everything we are and

have belongs to Him. He has the right to control that which is His and delegate such responsibility as He chooses. Again, He has the whole world, including you and me, in his hands.

OUR BODIES BELONG TO THE LORD. Although this is true in general, there is a special sense in which the body of the Christian belongs to the Lord. It is "a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price..." (1 Cor. 6: 19-20). God lays claim to what belongs to Him and commands that we present our "bodies a living and holy sacrifice..." (Rom. 12: 1). We are not free to use our body as we see fit but must subject ourselves to the will of Him who owns it as one who will be held accountable for its use.


OUR TIME IS THE LORD'S. God is not governed by the limitations of time like you and me. Time means nothing to the Him (2 Pet. 3: 8) except as an extension of His patience. But it means a lot to us. Our time is limited (Job 14: 1; Psa. 90: 10; Jas. 4: 14). Since God has given us time, He lays claim to it and commands us to make the most of it (Eph. 5: 16). Jesus, while in the flesh, felt bound by the limitations which time placed upon Him and said, "We must work the works of Him who sent Me, as long as it is day; night is coming, when no man can work" (Jn. 9: 4). I am afraid that many of us are bad stewards of the time which God has entrusted to us. The vast majority of our time is spent in the pursuit of material security and temporal happiness while the work of the kingdom is neglected. My brethren, it should not be so!

OUR ABILITIES BELONG TO THE LORD. God has given to us the abilities which we possess (Rom. 12: 6-8). The purpose of the parable of the talents (Matt. 25: 14-30) is to make us aware of the fact that He claims our abilities for use in His kingdom and holds us accountable for it. Pity the man who neglects to use his ability in God's service.

OUR MATERIAL POSSESSIONS AND MONEY BELONG TO THE LORD. God "richly supplies us with all things to enjoy" (1 Tim. 6: 17). He claims authority over the things that we have by instructing us in the use of them (1 Tim. 5: 8; Eph. 4: 28; 1 Cor. 16: 1-2; 1 Tim. 6: 17-19). Our money and the things it can buy are meaningless except for how they can be used to advance the cause of Jesus Christ.

Many of you, like myself, have been taught these principles from childhood. But knowing that God owns it all and living with these principles embedded in our hearts are two different things. It is vital that we understand that God has the world in His hands. Only then can we begin thinking in terms of "stewardship" rather than "ownership". Only then will we begin thinking in terms of "using" instead of "possessing". Only then will we begin to think about and prepare for that day in which we shall stand before the Lord and give an account of our stewardship.

**SIMPLICITY
IN
CHRIST**



P. J. Casebolt
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DEATH AND THE PREACHER

The preacher is probably subjected to the vagaries of death more than any other person. Undertakers, medical personnel, and other professionals may have to deal with death, but they may not become as closely and emotionally involved as does the preacher.

Generally, the preacher is called before, during, or after death because the deceased or the family want it that way. And so, the preacher must not only try to comfort and support the family, but deal with his own grief.

This writer has stood at the door of death with the dying many times, and tried to look through their eyes and hearts into eternity. I have watched the ravages of cancer, heart disease, third degree burns, and other terminal maladies squeeze the last breath out of fleshly bodies, and be reminded, "There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death..." (Eccl. 8: 8).

Sometimes the preacher must try to suppress his own emotions in order to lead grieving loved ones through their own personal tour of Gethsemane. But there have been times when I asked myself if I were becoming hardened to the atmosphere of death.

In the course of one funeral service, I had three different family members request that I make my remarks as short as possible, so that they would have time to get back home and go to work on Monday morning. They planned the funeral for Sunday, so that it would not interrupt their social and secular appointments.

On another occasion, some of the family members were feuding and not speaking to each other. They agreed to help with the singing at the funeral home, but wouldn't go to the cemetery. Before the echo of my "Amen" faded away at the grave side, the nearest remaining relative allowed that they had better get home and do the milking. Not one tear did I see shed at that funeral. Like Jehoram, that poor soul "departed without being desired" (2 Chron. 21: 20). But at least, the undertaker and I saw to it that he had a decent burial (Eccl. 6: 3).

But then, I'm called upon to conduct memorial services for a dear friend, or sit before the corpse of such an one, and I'm reminded that you cannot altogether harden your heart in the presence of death.

But, how does the preacher deal with the death of a dear friend, or one of his own family? The same way he has

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admonished and exhorted others to deal with it. he practices what he preaches—life is short, death is certain, each must give account of himself unto God, there is hope in Christ and the resurrection, and comfort to be found in God's word.

But now comes the real test of faith. When the doctor tells the preacher that tests show a malignant cancer, and that further tests will determine the extent of the malignancy, what does the preacher do? He does the same thing he has counseled others to do on numerous occasions—he heads for Gethsemane and prays. And, he has the added consolation of knowing that others will watch and pray with him, and not fall asleep as did the Savior's disciples (Mt. 26: 40).

All my life I have preached that preachers are just common folks, and no different from anyone else when it comes to moral standards, death, and the judgment. Sure, the specter of death at one's door can instill a sense of urgency as to time and message that may benefit the preacher as well as the hearers, but really there is no dramatic change in direction or outlook, if the preacher has been practicing what he has preached to others. Now comes the challenge and opportunity to test his own faith, and draw upon those resources of strength and hope which are boundless in nature and free to all who ask (Rom. 10: 12).

Like other common folks, the preacher "himself also is compassed with infirmity" (Heb. 5: 2), but he has no monopoly on the privilege of prayer or offering "spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 2: 5, 9). And, I have seen preachers and others who displayed commendable faith, strength, and attitude when wrestling with the enemy of death.

And, we would be "of all men most miserable" (1 Cor. 15: 19), were it not for the "man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief (Isa. 53: 3), and the hope of the resurrection through Him (Rev. 1: 18).

Let us mark the Savior's footprints as they cross the brook Cedron, and lead into Gethsemane, for we may need to take that trail sooner than we think.

Hearken, ye of Adam's race,
Rest your soul and slow your pace,
Turn aside and cross the brook into
Old Gethsemane on Olive's breast;
When the flesh is worn and weak,
Entreat the Galilean meek—
He'll give you strength to climb
Your mountain, and beyond the
Pain and tears—eternal rest.

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MUSINGS

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FAMILY REUNIONS

There are several kinds of reunions. Some in the military like to get together every few years with their wartime buddies. There are also high school and college reunions, usually measured in decades. These are all quite popular and show how people who have been together in some common cause or situation like to get together and renew old times.

Then there are family **reunions**. In many large families these are usually annual events. These are very pleasant to be sure and relatives and friends will travel long distances to be together one more time. How wonderful such times can be.

In 1984 Barbara Adams was trying with a sense of urgency, along with Wilma Adams, to arrange an annual Adams family reunion. She died in March of 1985 with the plans incomplete.

In July of 1990, Wilma Adams, also with a sense of urgency attempted to set plans in motion for an annual Adams family reunion. She died before the month was over. Her plans were left behind incomplete.

Thomas Icard, my late brother-in-law, loved the Adams family. Like Barbara and Wilma he adopted the family as his very own. Although he did not make any plans for a reunion, he would have loved the idea and would have heartily jointed in to make it a success. He never got such a chance because he died in September of 1989. No plans had been completed.

Ironically, however, though unplanned, each of these dear family members provided the occasion for our family to have a total of three reunions. **We had our reunion.** But, oh what a price to pay!

There is yet another reunion which I want to mention. The Bible speaks of a place called Heaven, where the redeemed of all ages will be gathered together some day. There all our faithful loved ones will see each other again. Not only will we see Jesus, our Lord, but we shall also see our loved ones in Christ as well. What a great day that will be after resurrection and judgment!

As time grows shorter, as those dearest to us have gone on before, Heaven takes on even greater significance and we begin to yearn earnestly for that Heavenly reunion. God's family will have a reunion that will last forever. With Isaiah of old we say "how long" (Isa. 6: 11) and also with the martyred saints under the altar we say "How long, O Lord, holy and true... ?" (Rev. 6: 10).

We sing a song which says "it won't be very long, 'til this short life is o'er" but now it seems so far away. There is another song which helps us even more which declares "each step I take just leads me closer home." How wonderful that at the end of each and every day God's people are a little closer to that great and glorious reunion in that city foursquare.

"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22: 20).

THE WORK IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Bill Bynum

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In December, my wife and I will return to preach in Czechoslovakia. We returned to America the last week in May of this year after having spent just over eight months there. As the time for our return draws close, I would like to share some information concerning the work there and make some observations about the work.

At the time of this writing 13 Czechs have been baptized. Studies continue with numerous others. A number of the current contacts have been made as a result of the Czech Christians interest in helping spread the Word. While this proper and natural manifestation of growth was anticipated, it is still quite heartwarming.

There were some aspects of the work that were quite surprising. One unpleasant surprise was the proliferation of denominational and cultic influence. Charismatic and ecumenical ideology is very wide-spread. I truly believe that I spent more time discussing the work of the Holy Spirit than evidences or Catholicism. Also, the Mormons, Adventist, and Jehovah's Witnesses are well organized and typically evangelistic. Institutional churches are involved in some efforts there, but, to this point, have not been particularly effective, especially in Bohemia and Moravia.

The intelligence and study habits of the Czechs was a more pleasant surprise. They are surprisingly well read in many areas, including philosophy. In an early study with a young man who has since been converted I was asked to compare and contrast the Genesis flood account with the Epic of Gilgamesh, an Akkadian flood legend. The studies are often quite lengthy because of their enthusiasm. Many are also willing to do a great deal of reading between studies. On one occasion, after having asked a young man to read several chapters in Matthew, he replied that he would probably read the entire book. Also, they are critical listeners, ready to challenge what is presented. In addition to manifesting

the attitude of the Bereans (Acts 17: 11), it makes them less susceptible to the inevitable false teachers.

Since our return I have been contacted by a number of people who are interested in the work and want my thoughts on the best way they could be involved. Now I would like to put in print some of the things I have articulated in the discussions. I do not claim to have all of the answers. Some of the conclusions that I have reached have resulted from mistakes I have made or helped make. I also hasten to acknowledge that these observations are matters of judgment. Also, I am presupposing an interest in only scripturally authorized activities in the reader.

I commend the interest that many are expressing financially, with words of encouragement and prayer, or in actually planning to go. I hope this interest will be an enduring one. The part of the world under consideration has a population of around 400 million people. Many years of work and many laborers are needed. To this end, I offer the following thoughts.

In Czechoslovakia the work is in the process of "spreading out." Some of the people who have been baptized in Prague are actually from other cities in Bohemia and Moravia. Work needs to be done with these people in their home towns. Mike Morrow who has recently returned from several months there is planning to return in January to do this. Anyone interested in helping Mike in this work can contact him through me. Also, anyone planning to go to Czechoslovakia should at least consider locating in one of these areas.

The type and length of trip that will be profitable has also been an area of interest to many. I would like to preface my thoughts on this with a couple of comments. First, as suggested earlier, this is essentially a matter of judgment. Also, theoretically, any trip can be of some value. With this background accepted, I offer the following.

In most cases, trips of a couple of months or less will be of limited value. I am led to this conclusion by a combination of considerations. The culture shock is drastic enough that it takes some time to adjust sufficiently to truly communicate with the indigenous population, even those who speak English with some proficiency. Obviously, this time factor lessens the effectiveness of a very short trip. Also, while as a whole the people are open and receptive, conversion has been a protracted process. Few have been taught in less than three or four months. So the question becomes who will "follow up" with these folks and when will it occur? We went to Prague initially in part because we thought that we had a pool of contacts waiting to be worked with. These contacts were made during a short trip made earlier in the year. However, we were able to develop studies with only a couple of these people and neither was converted.

What about a broad distribution of Bibles and materials? Of course there is value in placing the Truth in the hands of people who have not had previous access to it. However, the tangible results of this have been very limited. Early in our work in Prague we tried this type of approach. Even with us living there and giving a local address we did not receive even one response from

someone we met during a general distribution of literature. Our success came from more personal contact with the people.

Previously, I stated that this described "most cases." What would cause the exception? One circumstance that creates a different situation is a person having prior contact with people in a specific area. If a person goes into an area like this and stays working with these people it may well be profitable. It helps to solve both the communication problem and the problem of spending too much time traveling. Also, I believe that it may be worthwhile for a person planning to move to Eastern Europe to go first to help them make good decisions.

Questions have also arisen concerning the value of trips that involve staying only a few months. I would preface my thoughts by acknowledging that ideally, capable men would determine to go to these places for a number of years to work. Having acknowledged the axiomatic, what is the value of a shorter stay? I offer two lines of reasoning to vindicate the legitimacy of this approach. The first is that the problems I suggested previously concerning short visits can be reasonably handled in a stay of a number of months. Also, the work that has been done thus far has been accomplished with workers staying a year or less, with the notable exception of the Young's, who have been there just over a year. Most of the doubts about the value of a stay of a year or less come from trying to apply basically valid generalizations about work in Europe to the central and eastern countries. The differences in the situations encountered in the UK, Germany, and the Netherlands, and those encountered in the formerly communist countries are too basic for the generalizations to legitimately apply. The people in Czech, Romania, etc. have been denied access to the Truth. Western Europe has not. Establishing credibility is a problem for gospel preachers in many

foreign works. However, in the Central and Eastern countries it is not. To this and other comments about short stays I would add that it is easier to be critical of others judgment from a comfortable house with no plans to go.

So what is needed in reaching these people? Christians who are willing to sacrifice and go; men and women who will do the work and be supportive of one another; people who are willing and capable of adapting to the culture of the country and respecting and loving the people; churches and individuals are needed that will sacrifice to send and support these people are the answer. (Surely some of the work on the building will wait.) All Christians are needed to offer the prayers and words of encouragement necessary to spread the gospel to this part of the world.

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Florida College Annual Lectures

February 3 – 6, 1992

Day Theme: Eternal Wisdom for Daily Living

Day & Hour	Feb 3	Feb 4 Moral Principles	Feb 5 Family Relations	Feb 6 Human Relations
8 A M		Chapel & Classes for visitors	Chapel & Classes for visitors	Chapel & Classes for visitors
9 A M Hutchison Aud		Walking in Righteousness • Charles E. Murray	Wisdom for Husband and Wife • Bobby Witherington	A City Without Walls • Forrest D. Moyer
10 A M Hutchison Aud		The Wise and the Fool • Jesse Curtis Pope	Train Up a Child • Gary Ogden	The Tongue of the Wise • Victor McCormick
11 A M Hutchison Aud		The Young and the Old • E. Glen Barnhart	Skilled in Work • Randy Pickup	Is Money the Answer to Everything? • Brian V. Sullivan
12 A M Hutchison Aud		Wisdom and the New Testament • David Thomley	Friends and Neighbors • Clinton Douglas III	Enjoyment of Life in a Broken World • Daniel King
9 A M Puckett Aud		The Book of Job • Phil Roberts	The Book of Job • Phil Roberts	The Book of Job • Phil Roberts
10 A M Puckett Aud		Song of Solomon • Marty Pickup	Song of Solomon • Marty Pickup	Song of Solomon • Marty Pickup
11 A M Puckett Aud		Ecclesiastes • Melvin Curry	Ecclesiastes • Melvin Curry	Ecclesiastes • Melvin Curry

Evening Theme: Wisdom to Face Human Problems

7 30 P M Conn Gym	The Beginning of Wisdom • Bob F. Owen	The Challenge of Suffering • Connie W. Adams	God's Ideal Man and Woman • Paul Earnhart	Hear the Conclusion • John Clark
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THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

Send all News Items to: Connie W. Adams, P. O. Box 69, Brooks, KY 40109

KEITH STORMENT, 6807 New Hampshire, Hammond, Indiana 46323—I began working with the Hessville congregation in Hammond, Indiana on Sept. 1. The current attendance is averaging around 50. Some outside support will be needed. Our new phone numbers are (219) 845-8065 (home) and (219) 844-2245 (study).

NEW WORK

A new congregation began meeting in the area of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Two families (totaling five members) meet in the home of bro. and sis. Rogerio Leal at 8151 Vinton in Sparta, Michigan, a suburb on the NW side of Grand Rapids. Call (616) 887-2566 for directions. They meet at 9: 30; 10. 30 and 6: 00 on Sunday and 7: 30 on Wednesday.

DOOR-TO-DOOR WORK IN THE UPPER MIDWEST

RICK LANNING, 6567 Bluebird Dr, Maple Grove, Minnesota 55369—In the past three summers there has been an extensive door-to-door effort by local churches in the upper midwest. In 1989 many

Christians came from several states to help reach souls in Duluth, MN. In 1990 the brethren in Red Wing, MN invited others to help them evangelize their city. This past summer the church in Eau Claire, WI did the same, with much success. In the summer of 1992 the church in Brooklyn Park (Minneapolis), MN is inviting anyone wishing to help us save souls to plan a vacation in the upper midwest. The dates will be sometime in July or August. The dates will be verified soon. We will be honored to have you with us for this two week effort, providing housing for all who would come our way. The second week we will likely have a gospel meeting tied with our door-to-door work. If you would like to come, please contact Rick Lanning (612) 425-2385 or Wilson Copeland (612) 424-4097 or write us at 8716 62nd Ave N. Brooklyn Park, MN 55428.

PULPIT COMMENTARIES FOR SALE

JAMES O. GABBARD, 49 Gabbard Road, Roundhill, Kentucky 42275 has a full 23 volume set of Pulpit Commentaries for sale (January 1950 edition). His phone number is (502) 526-5587

FROM AROUND THE WORLD

GERMANY—Steve Wallace, HQ USAPE/MWLC, PSC. 2, Box 7257, APO AE 09012—Things are looking up here at the church in Ramstein and with the work in the former communist countries.

Mary and I were in the U. S. visiting family and brethren (Aug. 20-Sept. 10). Our visit was encouraging to both of us.

During the 14 month period between Dec. 90 and Jan. 92, a total of 32 people at the church here (members and their families) have already been or are being transferred to new assignments. This is alarming in light of the fact that attendance at the church here has rarely been above 50. We have had 16 new faces to arrive since my last report. I have also received a letter from a family that will be coming to Ramstein in November. We have had two responses, both restorations, since my last report.

I am now preaching for the church in Bitburg on a once-a-month basis. They are doing well there. I have been going to eastern Germany during the week before I preach there on Sunday. During these times I have spent many hours on the town squares in Leipzig and Halle handing out literature and talking with whom I could.

During a trip to the Ukraine, USSR, we collected addresses from people who wanted Bibles. The total number was around 950.

Dale and Marlene Smelser have returned to the U. S. after six months in Prague, Czech. Jim, Dale's brother, has now come to take his place. Bill and Nancy Bynum of Rogersville, AL plan to return for another stint there the first part of 1992.

Jeff Archer and Richard Copeland and their wives and families are now settled in Budapest.

ITALY—Stefano Corazza, via Padre Pilippini 138, 00144 Rome, Italy — We are having Bible classes with a Catholic couple. We hope and pray to see soon their conversion to the Lord. They have two sons we hope to reach through their influence. We should begin another study with a man and his girlfriend. We also should begin new Bible study with a lady who attended our past gospel meeting.

We are handing out to people in the streets about 6, 000 copies of "CNT-Christianity of New Testament" (our four page bulletin). We also are preparing the printing of more than 12, 000 cards which will invite people to our regular Bible studies.

Francesco Fosci, Via G. Leopardi, 5, 14011 Aprilia—In the Latina church things are doing fine. When I started this work in Latina, there were only three of us. Then other people were added. Now there are eleven of us and fifteen in attendance.

On the first Sunday in October I started a new radio program.

SOUTH AFRICA— Paul K. Williams, P. O. Box 324, Eshowe 3815 South Africa, reports that two brothers (ages 21 & 24) were baptized as a result of the younger brother completing a correspondence course.

Dan Huddleston, Box 16072, Strubenvale 1570 RSA—We traveled to Zambia the first part of July to visit with six preachers we had worked with before and considered to be the most knowledgeable and boldest. When we arrived at Zimba (about 50 miles north of Livingstone) we found Ray Syanjina. Ray was very receptive in our study with him. When I handed him outlines and charts, he said that he would study them and teach them to his people. Ray is about 40 and is very respected among his people.

Thirty miles further north we turned to Namwianga. This is the heart of liberal territory. Here, the liberals operate a primary and secondary school as well as a teacher training college. Here we found Robby Banda. Robby (age 30) is a mechanic for the liberal's school. I asked if he would leave the liberals and work elsewhere. He said that he would, but there were no jobs in Zambia. However, he was saving his money to go to South Africa to look for work. We also met and worked with Peter Nyoni Siankuse.

I am mailing lessons to the other three men and hope to hear from them. The only way I can be sure that they will leave liberalism is to make another trip back. Brian and I could go in November. We should make a three week trip for less than \$ 1200. Our trip cost doubled what I had expected as the camping supplies alone cost \$1300. We had estimated \$1500 for the entire trip. It was a 2000 mile trip with gasoline at \$4 per gallon. Needless to say we ran the tab up to almost \$3000. Jim McDonald had contacted several churches and had raised \$1425. But now we are in the hole over \$1500. Two churches had had to drop their support to us. We are over \$ 1800 dollars in the hole. Help us, please.

SOUTH AMERICA—Ruben C. Amador, Box 924456, Houston, Texas 77292—I was preaching in Chile, South America on Sept. 4-12. I worked with the Calle Madrid church in Santiago. Attendance was excellent, having over a dozen non-Christian visitors. During the day much time was spent on home Bible studies dealing with several issues.

In Talagante I worked with the church that meets in the home of Nestor Sanchez, the local preacher. He is working hard to establish the work there, but has not had the results he would like. In Quillota I preached with the group that meets on Sunday nights. The building was full. The church consist of young people and young married couples converted out of pentecostalism. Several young men take an active part in preaching and teaching.

Just outside of Quillato, there is the El Progreso church where Miquel Hurtado preaches. Their auditorium was too small to accommodate the large crowd. I was invited to return to Chile in October of 1992. Many of these brethren and their families are hungry for the truth.

I was in Argentina, South America on Sept. 12-18. The Jose C. Paz church was prepared for the meeting. Attendance was very good. Some of the visitors were persons who listened to the radio programs. They are having much success with their radio programs. Several have enrolled in the correspondence course and others are attending on a regular basis.

DEBATES

GREESON—LOOPER DEBATE—Wayne Greeson of Pine Bluff, AR will engage Buddy Looper of the Oneness Pentecostal "Jesus Name Church of Christ" of Stuttgart, AR in a debate on the Godhead and miraculous gifts.

On Dec. 2 & 3 the debate will be on the number of persons in the Godhead. These two nights will be conducted at Stuttgart, AR.

On Dec. 5 & 6 the debate will be on Holy Spirit baptism and miraculous gifts. These two nights will be conducted at Pine Bluff, AR. For more information call (501) 879-2097 or 879-2036.

SMITH—TACKETT DEBATE—Steven Smith will meet Gerald Tackett in debate on Dec. 7 in Salem, IN at the Salem Middle School at 1: 00 p. m. It will last approximately 4 1/2 hours.

Proposition #1: "The Scriptures teach that a child of God may so sin as to be lost in Hell." Smith affirms. Tackett denies.

Proposition #2: "The Scriptures teach that a child of God cannot so sin as to be lost in Hell." Tackett affirms. Smith denies. For more information contact Steven D. Smith, 402 E. Salem Ave., Salem, IN 47167-2232 or call (812) 883-3346.

HOLT—BASSETT DEBATE—Jerry F. Bassett, of Eugene, OR, and Jack Holt, of Burnet, TX, have signed propositions for debate on divorce and remarriage. Jerry will affirm: "The Bible teaches an alien sinner whose marriage ended by divorce for a cause other than fornication, and who is now married to another person, may be forgiven by obeying the gospel and should maintain his second marriage."

Jack will affirm: "The Bible teaches an alien sinner whose marriage ended by divorce for a cause other than fornication (his first wife is still living), and who is now married to another person, may be forgiven by obeying the gospel provided he is willing to divorce his second wife."

On Feb. 10-14, 1992 the discussion will be held in the building owned by the West Ave. church of Christ in San Antonio, TX. On March 9-13, 1992 the discussion will be held at the building owned by the Coburg Road church of Christ in Eugene, OR. For more information write to Jack Holt at 601 E. Kerr, Burnet, TX 78611.

PREACHERS NEEDED

MT. STERLING KENTUCKY—The Oak Hill church in Mt. Sterling, KY is in need of a full-time preacher. Attendance averages about 40. The congregation can supply between \$1200 and \$1400 per month. Those interested should contact either Arnold Smith, 604 Brentwood Dr., Mt. Sterling, KY 40353 (Phone: 606-498-1375) or Russell Ginter, 3471 Hinkston Pike, Mt. Sterling, KY 40353 (Phone: 606-498-3811).

MAYTOWN (LANGLEY), KENTUCKY—The Maytown church is looking for a full-time preacher. The congregation is three years old

with approximately 20 members. We have a new building. There is great opportunity here for the Lord's work with no sound church in the area. Outside support will be necessary. Those interested should contact Okie Lawson, P. O. Box 370, Harold, KY 41635. Call him at (606) 478-2127 or 478-9550.

ALTO, TEXAS—The church in this small East Texas town is seeking a gospel preacher. Perhaps one who would like to retire in this beautiful area. He would need some independent income. We can supplement. If interested call (409) 858-3197 or write to Alto church of Christ, P. O. Box 58, Alto, TX 75925.

CHARLESTON, WEST VIRGINIA—The church located at 873 Oakwood Rd. in Charleston is seeking a sound and mature gospel preacher to work with them on a full-time basis. Pull support can be provided. We prefer a married man with children at home. Please contact Frank Linville (304) 346-2700 or Henry Williams (304) 727-2466.

● Short Stuff ●

by: Donnie V. Rader

REASONS FOR CHURCH SUPPORT OF THE COLLEGE

Craig Young of Birmingham sent a clipping from the FHU Today, the alumni newspaper of Freed-Hardeman University, entitled

"University seeks additional congregational support." In it, J. Walker Whittle, FHU's director of congregational support is quoted as saying the reasons for supporting the college out of the church treasury are varied. He said, "It's the Lord's work and it teaches the Word of God... Furthermore, it prepares workers for the kingdom, thereby performing a service to the church." Isn't there something missing here—like a little Bible authority? That would seem to me like a good reason to support a program like this. And another thing, doesn't that sound a little like the arguments made many years back to justify the missionary society?

WELL PUT

Earlier this year Maurice Barnett was in our area for a meeting. The night I was present he had an excellent lesson on lasciviousness. He warned of many dangers that are faced today. In the course of his study he raised the question that someone else had raised to him: is it wrong to kiss on a date? Here was his answer: It all depends on four things. 1. The circumstances or the environment, 2. who you are with, 3. where you are, and 4. how long you hang on. Well put!

OOPS!

I think every preacher can relate to getting carried away in a sermon and saying something he didn't intend to say. Several years ago I was making a point about the cases of conversion. I started naming some people that the Bible says obeyed the gospel. It went something like this: "In Acts 10 we read of a man named Cornelius. In Acts 16 we read of a woman named Lydia. In Acts 9 we read of a man named Saul. In Acts 8 we read of a man named Simon and again in Acts 8 we read of a man named the Eunuch." Oops! I should have stopped one name earlier.