

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

NOVEMBER 1991

NUMBER 11

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

U.S. Postal Service STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION (Required by 39 U.S.C. 3685)		
1A. Title of Publication SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES	1B. PUBLICATION NO. 4 8 7 - 4 4 0	1C. Date of Filing 10/7/91
2. Frequency of Issue MONTHLY	3A. No. of Issues Published Annually 12	3B. Annual Subscription Price \$11.00
4. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Street, City, County, State and ZIP+4 Code) (Not printer)		
315 YEARLING DRIVE P O BOX 69 BROOKS, BULLITT COUNTY, KY 40109-0069		
5. Complete Mailing Address of the Headquarters or General Business Office of the Publisher (Not printer)		
315 YEARLING DRIVE P O BOX 69 BROOKS, BULLITT COUNTY, KY 40109-0069		
6. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (This item MUST NOT be blank)		
Publisher (Name and Complete Mailing Address): CONNIE W ADAMS P O BOX 69 BROOKS KY 40109-0069		
Editor (Name and Complete Mailing Address): CONNIE W ADAMS P O BOX 69 BROOKS KY 40109-0069		
Managing Editor (Name and Complete Mailing Address): CONNIE W ADAMS P O BOX 69 BROOKS KY 40109-0069		
7. Owner (If owned by a corporation its name and address must be stated and also immediately thereunder the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners must be given. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, its name and address, as well as that of each individual must be given. If the publication is published by a nonprofit organization its name and address must be stated.) (This item must be completed.)		
Full Name Complete Mailing Address		
CONNIE W ADAMS P O BOX 69 BROOKS KY 40109-0069		
8. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages or Other Securities (If any are now or here)		
Full Name Complete Mailing Address		
NONE		
9. For Completion by Nonprofit Organizations Authorized to Mail at Special Rates (2010 Series 42312 only). The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for Federal income tax purposes (Check one):		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months <input type="checkbox"/> Has Changed During Preceding 12 Months (If changed, publisher must submit explanation of change with this statement)		
10. Extent and Nature of Circulation (See instructions on reverse side)	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	Actual No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
A. Total No. Copies (Net Press Run)	5285	5000
B. Paid and/or Requested Circulation 1. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales	---	---
2. Mail Subscriptions (Paid and/or requested)	4603	4468
C. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation (Sum of B1 and B2)	4603	4468
D. Free Distribution by Mail, Carrier or Other Means Samples, Complimentary and Other Free Copies	517	367
E. Total Distribution (Sum of C and D)	5120	4835
F. Copies Not Distributed 1. Office use, left over, unaccounted for after printing	165	165
2. Return from News Agents	---	---
G. TOTAL (Sum of E, F1 and F2—should equal net press run shown in A)	5285	5000
11. I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.	Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner <i>Connie W Adams, Editor</i>	

PS Form 3526, Feb 1988

Searching The Scriptures

VOLUME 32 NOVEMBER, 1991 NUMBER 11

Published Monthly at
BROOKS, KENTUCKY

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

CONNIE W. ADAMS, Editor

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

SUBSCRIPTION RATES
\$11 per year in advance

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\$9.00 per year for 4 or more

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Group subscriptions:
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24 for \$15.00 per month

Foreign Subscriptions: \$14.00 per year

Address subscriptions and manuscripts to Connie W. Adams, P.O. Box 69, Brooks, Kentucky 40109-0069.

Address supply orders to Religious Supply Center, Inc., 4001 Preston Hwy., Louisville, Kentucky 40213. Phone (502) 366-9014 (Ky. residents), 1-800-626-5348.

POSTMASTER: Send change of address forms to P.O. Box 69, Brooks, Kentucky 40109-0069.

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

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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),

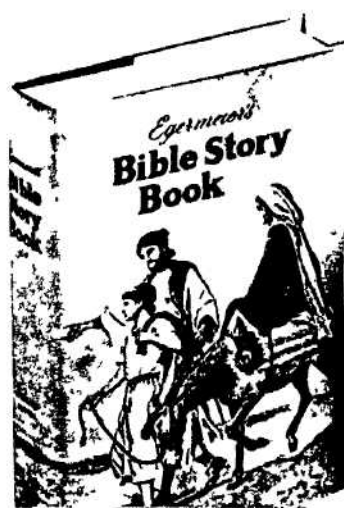
and "the divine being" (NIV). A. T. Robertson says that "to **theion** is strictly 'the divine nature' like **theiotes** (Rom. 1: 20)" (**Word Pictures in the New Testament**, Vol. 3, p. 289). J. H. Thayer defines it "divinity, divine nature: Rom. 1: 20" (Greek-English Lexicon, p. 285).

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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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

Rt. 1 Box 210
Middlebourne, WV 26149



"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

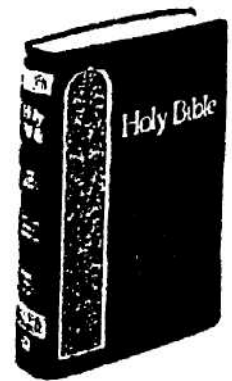
land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord" (Amos 8: 11).

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

J. Wiley Adams

103 Ridgeland Drive
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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.

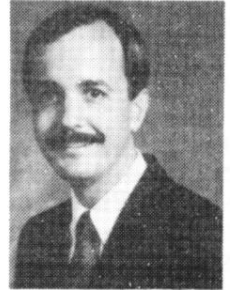
I have found no place in God's Word for this supposed gray area or twilight zone. I do find two categories into which everything may be placed. The first is that which is **lawful** and the second is that which is **unlawful**. Expediency itself belongs in the category of that which is first of all lawful. 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

**Hoyt Houchen
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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.

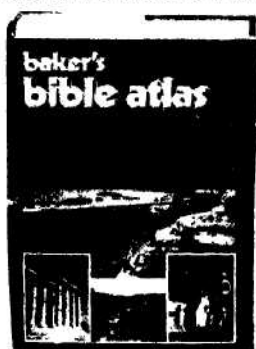
Regarding this subject, as well as much of these matters included in this article, I have had the occasion to thoroughly study for myself. My faith is not my father's faith; it is my faith, as indeed it must be for me to be pleasing to God. But it is the **word of God** that speaks of local churches 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)	