

# 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 BUILDING UP THE CHURCH

*H. E. Phillips*

"That we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may GROW UP into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, MAKETH INCREASE OF THE BODY UNTO THE EDIFYING OF ITSELF IN LOVE" (Eph. 4:14-16).

A favorite slogan today is: "Get the church on the March." By this is generally meant: "Let's get the church to doing bigger things in bigger ways and keep reaching for bigger and better goals." No one resents or objects to a scriptural and sound growth of the church both in numbers and in spirit. In fact, that is the very goal every sincere Christian desires and labors toward. If calling in question this idea of putting the church of the Lord "on the march" in the sense of adding all sorts of "programs" to win approval of men, causes some to charge us with being against the growth and progress of the Lord's church, be that as it may. We are NOT against scriptural growth; we oppose modern innovations that are called growth. We speak against the methods employed and the goals set by these churches "on the march." When we have to serve doughnuts and coffee following "worship" to get the crowds; or when we have to join the "Little Angels Softball League" and dress "our young people" in their "church uniforms" to plan the Methodists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, etc. in order to "save" our young people; or when we must build, maintain and promote "Hobby Shops," "Church Camps," and "Church Play Grounds" to "win souls for Christ," we are not growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord; we are "on the march" in reverse—we are marching straight toward apostasy.

In New Testament times the "word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly." (Acts 6:7). This was accomplished by sound, firm preaching of the gospel, and only that. No schemes or worldly appeals were made, yet the church grew greatly. "And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women" (Acts 5:14). That is the kind of "marching forward" we need today. The preaching must be the kind that draws the line between right and wrong.

Also, one of the greatest means of the church growing in New Testament days was the strict discipline of the unruly and false teachers under the direction of the apostles. There is no doubt about it: the church really "marches forward" under sound gospel preaching and proper discipline of all who walk not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel. When death was administered by the Lord upon Ananias and Sapphira for their sins against God, as recorded in Acts 6, "great fear came upon all the church" and "the believers were the more added to the Lord." (verses 11, 14). We are commanded to withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not after the word delivered by the apostles. (2 Thess. 3:6). But it is not now considered "expedient" and "diplomatic" to enforce scriptural discipline in the church "on the march." Don't speak against the modern dance; don't oppose divorce and remarriage; don't preach against social drinking and the like. To do this will drive people away and we will not grow as we should! Apparently this is the philosophy of these modern day "growing churches."

Another view generally held by many churches is that NUMBERS and CONTRIBUTION are the only real gauge of growth. Nearly any effort to get more people in attendance and raise the weekly contribution is deemed scriptural. By this standard the church at Philippi was everything but a growing church because they were in poverty as compared to some when they sent relief to the poor saints. Yet this church was commended by Paul in his letter to them. The church in Smyrna was suffering tribulation and in poverty, but in Revelation 2 Christ said "thou art rich" as he spoke of their spiritual condition. Not one word of condemnation was spoken against this church which did not have the "sign" of a growing church. In the same connection the church of the Laodiceans considered themselves "rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing," but the Lord said they were "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." (Rev. 3:17,18). This "growing" church was sickening to the Lord, if, indeed, growth is determined by the wealth of a congregation.

The constant begging, employing of schemes, and setting and raising of goals to increase the revenue of a congregation is a very common practice of the "marching" church of today. We are not speaking against the scriptural teaching on the obligation of each member to give of his prosperity liberally on the 1st day of the week. This must be done to obey God. I Corinthians 9 shows that the church is to support the preaching of the gospel, and chapter 16 shows that there are obligations to relieve poor saints who are really in need. But we are here speaking of the over-emphasis on the financial standing as an indication of a "growing church." Many ex-

tremely wealthy churches are far from growing in the way that pleases God; they are simply growing as the Catholic Church—growing wealthy but not spiritually.

As to the increase of "members"—large numbers—as a sign of a growing church, this, like that of the financial measurement, is often over-emphasized. No one can say that the increase in those being added to the church as in Acts 2:41,47 is wrong, or that it is not an indication of good growth. However, to ignore all other elements and make this one test of a growing church is wrong. The various denominations are increasing in numbers, but all the while they are thus increasing they are declining in morals and religious conviction. I personally know of some congregations that have steadily, and even rapidly, grown in numbers during the past five years, but there is far less spirituality and conviction among the members that are being added. Yes, they have even grown in weekly contributions. Even though having a much larger membership, and much more financial power, these churches have NOT grown; they are not "on the march" in a scriptural sense. We want the "number of disciples" to "increase greatly," but we want this growth to be on a sound basis with deep spiritual conviction. Spiritual growth is the kind that counts, and this kind of growth will produce the increase in numbers without all the "extra aids" used by many today.

One other disgusting practice that grows out of the concept that numbers prove growth is that of proselyting members from other congregations. Many preachers become so busy trying to convince members of other congregations that they should leave and "place membership with us" that they have little or no time to teach the lost the word of salvation. It is possible that these preachers are more interested in making a personal reputation of making the church "grow" than in converting souls to Christ. They are especially gifted in "selling" the faithful and prosperous Christians of other congregations on the idea of "coming over to help us." Perhaps you have been approached by some preacher of another congregation with, "We need you more than they do." "We are small and you will be happier with us because you can do more." "We will give you a class to teach, etc., etc."

Now let me make this one thing clear: Any time Christians are attending a place where error is taught and are themselves teaching and practicing error, it is the duty of any gospel preacher, or anyone else, to teach against sin and try to save as many as possible. If a congregation is teaching the false doctrine of Premillennialism, any true preacher of the word will try to teach and save as many as possible from that congregation. But the "sheep thieves" operate on an entirely different level; they are trying to persuade *faithful* members from other congregations to leave and "come with us." They are not trying to convert a sinner to the truth. They are robbing other churches to "build up" their own congregation.

The verses read at the beginning teach that the speaking of the truth in love, the fitly joining together of each member supplying what he can to the growth of the body, and the edifying of itself in love are the means of spiritual growth. Proper growth of the church includes individual growth in knowledge of truth by each member. If such spiritual growth is obtained, the growth in number and financial ability will follow.

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## Editorial . . . H. E. PHILLIPS

One of the greatest joys in the work of the Lord is to find a church working at peace among themselves. "And be at peace among yourselves" (I Thess. 5:13). The kind of peace that really counts comes from God. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you" (John 14:27). "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:7). "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints" (I Cor. 14:33). This peace that comes from God is bound upon His children by commandment. "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" (Matt. 5:9). "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Rom. 12:18). "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you" (2 Cor. 13:11). "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3). "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful" (Col. 3:15). "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" (Rom. 14:19). "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psa. 133:1). "Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to the man by whom the offence cometh!" (Matt. 18:7).

While we speak about peace in the church, it is not to be understood from this that the Bible permits Christians to be at peace at any cost. Sometimes it is impossible to be at peace with some. Even Jesus, who is the real source of the peace we are speaking of, said he came to bring the sword rather than peace in some instances. "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword" (Matt. 10:34). When it is a matter of right and wrong there can be no peace or compromise with them. Jesus came to make war and not peace with evil. Paul said, "If it be pos-

sible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Rom. 12:18). This statement implies that in some cases, and with some men, it is not possible to be at peace. But just as far as possible Christians ought to strive to have peace, but not to the point of compromising with any evil or false doctrine. This peace must be "among yourselves." The so-called peacemakers of our day in the church would have us all compromise with the practices and doctrines of liberal thinking brethren in about any departure they wish to promote. The idea is not to oppose the "great" and "big" preachers and churches, but just go along with them and do not cause trouble by bringing up the matter. If it be a matter of faith, we SHALL bring up the matter, and besides that we shall PRESS the matter until the unscriptural teaching and practice have been stopped. We strive for peace among brethren, but only on the Lord's terms.



There appears to be evidence that the days of creation were days of ordinary length since there is mention of "evening and morning." If these days were, as some contend, thousands or millions of years in length this would present quite a problem. In Genesis 1:16 we read that two great lights were made, one to rule the day and the lesser to rule the night. Since these days were divided, according to Genesis 1:15, into "evening and morning" we would have to assume that the sun came up but did not go down for a few thousand or a few million years!

There is another problem if we assume the "days" were eons of time. The plants were brought about on the third day of creation and the sun on the fourth day. Plants must have sunlight in order to produce their food through a process of photosynthesis. Animals are dependent upon plants as a basic source of food. Carnivorous animals are ultimately dependent upon plants for food which are, in turn, dependent on the sun. It is inconceivable, in the light of the knowledge we have in this matter, that plants and animals could exist for these millions of years without energy supplied by the sun. It is contended that the plants could have been supplied by the "light" of Genesis 1:3. If this was done it would be necessary to contend that plants were supplied by this "light" for a great and unknown period of time and then their dependence was transferred to another source of energy, the sun, at the end of this period of time.

God tells Israel in Exodus 20 to observe the Sabbath Day because He rested from His labor on the seventh day. There is no evidence that either God or Israel observed a period of time longer than our normal day of today. Even "days" of millions of years would hardly satisfy the evolution theory. Even the evolutionists are not in agreement as to the millions of years needed for the evolution of living organisms, according to their own theory. The evolutionists readily admit that they are not sure of the time necessary for the events of their theory to come to pass. They willingly or unwillingly must admit that they cannot be sure that their theories answer the questions as to how these organisms came about in the first place. In light of the lack of evidence to support their theory, they are ready to say that they are at least sure that the creation did not occur in seven solar days as indicated by

the record in Genesis. This attitude is neither new nor limited to this area of discussion. Men have always been ready to reject evidence that does not aid their positions or beliefs.

## BIBLE ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS

By E. L. Flannery

### I. WAS PAUL SENT TO BAPTIZE?

Paul was sent to preach the gospel. He preached Christ. He preached Christ's will. He preached baptism washes away sin, puts us into Christ, into his death. Paul was inspired by the Holy Spirit and hence equipped to reveal God's will. Any uninspired Christian helper of Paul's could attend to the baptizing, just as uninspired men could attend the widows table in Jerusalem, leaving the apostles free to preach and teach. Had the apostles become waiters, which they were capable of doing, it would have left the preaching of the gospel undone, because uninspired men were not capable of revealing God's will. However, Paul himself was baptized to "wash away" his sins (Acts 22:16) and he did baptize some folks, Crispus, Gaius, the household of Stephanas. But he let others handle that part, for he was sent primarily to *preach* the gospel, letting his helpers assist believing sinners to *obey* the gospel.

### II. IS BAPTISM PART OF THE GOSPEL?

Certainly. Jesus said, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark 16:15-16). Philip preached the gospel to the Eunuch, and his first question was, "What doth hinder me to be baptized?" (Acts 8:36). Some mis-teach Paul's statement, "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel" (I Cor. 1:17) to mean that baptism is no part of the gospel. They write up a syllogism like this:

1. Christ sent Paul to preach the gospel.
2. He did not send Paul to baptize.
3. Therefore, baptism is no part of the gospel.

This sounds very "logical" but it is in error. To keep it in proper order it should read like this:

1. Christ sent Paul to PREACH.
2. He did not send Paul to BAPTIZE.
3. Therefore, PREACHING is not BAPTIZING, or to PREACH is not TO BAPTIZE.

Now it is true when a man is preaching the gospel he is not engaged in the act of baptizing. Paul was to engaged in preaching, others could baptize those who believed and repented. Paul feared some would not see that baptism was to be in the name of Jesus, in the name of the one CRUCIFIED, and wrote, "Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius, Lest any should say that I had baptized in my own name. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel . . ." (I Cor. 1:13-17). If God forbid Paul to baptize why did he baptize a few? If baptism is not essential to salvation, no part of the gospel, why did Paul "re-baptize" 12 men who had received John's (the Baptist) baptism, baptizing them in the name of the Lord Jesus? (Acts 19:1-5). Baptism may not seem logical to men, but we do not walk by sight (human reasoning) but by faith; by what the new testament plainly teaches. It was not "logical" to deliver the Israelites by going through the Red Sea, but God chose that way. It is not "logical" that Naaman could heal his leprosy by dipping in Jordan, but God located

his healing there. It may not appear "logical" to men today that baptism is essential to salvation to the alien sinner, but that is where God has chosen to forgive a penitent believer. God has revealed this unto us by his new will, the new testament. It is a matter of faith whether we believe it or not. We affirm that the new testament teaches that water baptism is essential to the salvation of the alien sinner. Who will deny it in light of the scriptures?

## BIBLICAL WORD STUDIES

By E. V. SRYGLEY, JR.

*Hamartano*, "I sin"—No. 7

In the LXX *hamartano* is equated with the Hebrew *ma'al*, "act unfaithfully:" "And it came to pass, that in the fifth year of king Rehoboam Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, because they had transgressed (LXX, *hemarton*) against the Lord," II Chron. 12:2. The RSV is faithful in following the Hebrew and rendering the text "because they had been unfaithful to the Lord . . ."

Further equations of *hamartia* and idolatry of deserting Jehovah to play the harlot are seen in two passages in Ezekiel: ". . . Son of man, seest thou what they do? even the great abominations (in Codex A, *hamartias*) that the house of Israel committeth here?" Ezek. 8:6. The latter passage in Ezekiel reads: "Neither hath Samaria committed half of thy sins; but thou hast multiplied thine abominations (in Codex A, *hamartias*) more than they," Ezek. 16:51. In both of these passages the sin of idolatry is meant: deserting Jehovah to play the harlot.

### "THE SPONSORING CHURCH"-NO. 2

Thomas G. O'Neal, Jasper, Ala.

In a previous article, we called attention to the 'sponsoring church'. This article showed how the 'sponsoring church' was a product of our time; that it had been tried in days gone by and rejected. For the benefit of our reader who did not see the last article, a 'sponsoring church' is a church through which other churches or a church work in performing her work. This is the meaning that has been given to the 'sponsoring church' in our time.

We want in this article to look at an advanced step in the 'sponsoring church' concept. In the *Firm Foundation*, March 1, 1960, Pages 136-137 can be found this advanced concept of the 'sponsoring church'. In order to preach to those in foreign countries, a campaign was launched to raise one million dollars for each of the following places: South & Latin America, Africa, Europe, Middle & Near East. This drive is called "THE MILLION FOR THE BILLION."

Taking the lead in this effort is the Gladstone church in Frederick, Okla. This church proposes to do the following in the campaign: 1. "Find out the needs of each Asian or Australian project whose sponsoring congregation volunteers to receive and disburse money from this million-dollar campaign." 2. "Donate the advertising of their needs to churches,

preachers and members everywhere." 3. "Those who participate in this campaign are invited to send the money raised or contributed directly to the church sponsoring the particular Asian or Australian project they have chosen voluntarily to help." 4. "Contributors are invited to report to Frederick the amount of money sent to the sponsoring church. The reason for this reporting is to keep the record straight." 5. "Sponsoring churches whose names appear below are invited to send a report of the money received through the efforts of this campaign." 6. Thus, while the Frederick elders continue to record and digest these reports and further advertise these needs to the brotherhood the churches sponsoring projects will exercise freely their autonomy to disburse these funds as their respective projects may require."

However, there are "three things the Gladstone Elders wish to emphasize:" 1. "All reporting of funds sent or received will be strictly voluntary." 2. "The Gladstone Church of Christ does not seek to receive funds." 3. "This campaign in no way is designed to take the place of other efforts churches interested in Asia now have in progress, or will have in progress in the future."

There are two things about this arrangement that should be kept in mind: 1. All of this sending and receiving is on a voluntary basis! 2. The Gladstone elders at present do not want to "seek to receive funds." This writer wants to know what would be *scripturally* wrong if the sending and receiving was not on a voluntary basis and these elders did receive funds? (I am sure more brethren than just this writer would like this question answered!)

## THE EIGHTH CHAPTER OF ACTS

Jas. P. Miller

In my last article I suggested that the second chapter of Acts carried four great lessons:

1. The beginning of the New Testament Church.
2. The work of the Holy Spirit.
3. The beginning of the reign of Christ on David's throne.
4. The answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved?"

Now let us study the eighth chapter of Acts. We will find that three of these lessons are continued.

1. Philip is preaching the Kingdom of Heaven.
2. The Holy Spirit is at work converting men.
3. Men and women believe and are baptized and thus are saved.

Read the first four verses for the setting. "And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women, committed them to prison. Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word" Notice that the preaching of the Word is the work of those early Christians and they were ready to sacrifice that the Word might reach fallen mankind. The work of Philip, the preacher in the three cases of conversion recorded in this eighth chapter, begins with these words: "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did." Now let us notice the order of New Testament preaching:

1. Philip preached Christ.
2. They gave heed to the words he spake because they saw and heard the miracles that he did.

This was the order of all New Testament day preaching. The gospel was God's power to save, Romans 1:16. The miracles that accompanied the preaching of the gospel were to make men believe that high heaven had given its indorsement to the speaker.

If many denominational preachers are correct, men were saved when they believed, but the Bible does not so teach. Let us continue our study. Acts 8:9-12: "But there was a certain man, called Simon, which before time in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries. But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized both men and women."

Notice now that the people believed the word that Philip spake and were baptized, both men and women. We found in the study of the second chapter that the men on the Day of Pentecost were commanded to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of their sins. We find here that both men and women believed and were baptized. Christ gave the great commission as recorded in Mark 16:15,16, in these words: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." It is not surprising then that the preaching of Philip caused men and women to believe and to be baptized, for this is what Christ commissioned him to preach. This is what all men and all women must do to be children of God. Christ declared it, and the apostles preached it.

### SIMON

See now that Simon does exactly the same thing, verse 13: "Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done."

Now, let us ask the question, "Was Simon a saved man?" Well, put it to the test:

Christ said, Belief plus baptism equals Salvation, Mark 16:16:

Simon Believed, was baptized and thus was saved.

Men who deny that a child of God can fall from grace, deny this, but if Christ spoke the truth, Simon met the requirements and was a helpmate of Philip in his work in Samaria.

After the apostles came down from Jerusalem, Simon, who had been laboring as a child of God, was tempted and tried to buy the power of the Holy Spirit with money." Hear the record. "And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter; for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness: and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee: For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond on iniquity."

### THE SECOND LAW

The second law of pardon is here found, namely, repent-

ance and prayer. We have already found that the sinner must take the following steps to be saved:

He must believe (Mark 16:16).

He must repent (Acts 2:38).

He must be baptized (Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38).

John had this to say, in I John 2:1, "My little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

Thus, when man sins, the law that Peter lays down here is the rule to follow:

He must repent (Acts 8:22). He

must pray (Acts 8:22). Christ

will intercede (I John 2:1).

The little child who disobeys his parent returns and says, "Father, I am sorry: forgive me." The father gladly forgives the child. God stands ready to forgive also. Therefore, the sinner must do one thing, and the erring or disobedient child must do another to be forgiven and be reconciled to God.

### THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH

The last case of conversation found in the eighth chapter, is one of the most famous in all the Bible: The conversation of the Ethiopian eunuch. We will take up the story in the thirtieth verse. "And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. The place of the scripture which he read was this. He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: In his humiliation his judgement was taken away; and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus."

Observe that we have this simple statement, "And preached unto him Jesus." That is all that Philip preached. Now listen to the record. "And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?"

There is only one answer to this principle. When men preach Christ, they preach baptism into Christ (Galatians 2:27). No man preaches Christ as Philip and the apostles preached Him unless they preach that by baptism we are baptized into Christ and thus put on Christ. "And Philip said, if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." That is the good confession. Now let me read Romans 10:9,10, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

Now, notice scriptural baptism exactly as it should be practiced today. This is the ONLY way that the Bible approves, Acts 8:38-40: "And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch: and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus; and passing through, he preached in all the cities, till he came to

Caesarea.

## SUMMARY

Sinner, friend, no man needs to comment on this plain example of conversion. It is easy and clear for all. Trace the steps of the eunuch and we find that he Believed the gospel, Confessed his Savior, Was buried with his Lord in baptism. Thus we find the following steps unto salvation recorded in Acts 2 and Acts 8:

The Pentecostians	Repented—Baptized—Saved
The Samaritans	Believed—Baptized—Saved
Simon	Believed—Baptized—Saved
The eunuch	Believed—Confessed—Baptized—Saved

Can any man say more? Will you resolve now to obey the gospel?

Believe with all your heart that Christ is the Son of God.  
Repent of your every sin.  
Confess his name.  
Go down with Him into the waters of baptism, to be born of water and of the Spirit.

## OTHERS SEE THE GATHERING STORM

(We noticed that the editorial in the Firm Foundation of May 2, 1961 by brother Reuel Lemmons gives a good picture of the "Gathering Storm" which so many have ignored for too long. In this we stand with brother Lemmons. Following is the editorial in its entirety.)

### THE GATHERING STORM

Some three or four years ago we expressed the opinion on this page that certain brethren would allow "the issue" of church support of a private enterprise to be fought out on the orphan home level, where highly emotional values can be brought to bear, and where they can, and do, overshadow reason; and that later, when these brethren thought the time was ripe, the pitch would be made to put the college in the budget upon the basis that "church support of a private enterprise has already been proven." The low rumblings of the gathering storm have been heard for some time now, and more recently there have been flashes of lightning!

There are indications that some seem bent upon forcing the issue. We hope they do not. We do not believe any sizable segment of brethren are willing to let the "college in the budget" become a wedge to divide hundreds of congregations.

Colleges are expensive things. The never ceasing struggle to secure funds for their operation would cause most anyone to cast longing eyes upon an ever ready source of income raised by others and simply ear-marked. It is part of the business of the church, and of faithful elders of the church, to guard the church treasury against the designs of any and all who would dip fingers into it unscripturally.

Part of the present pressure has been generated by "the issues" of our times. Discussions of orphan homes and colleges have begotten a rash of both. Now, many are thinking of starting an orphan home. Many others are thinking of starting colleges. No doubt the discussions have generated this thinking. If anyone wishes he can start either, and then lay it on the doorstep of the church and say, in effect, "this is your baby; you take care of it," then the Lord alone knows where this trend may lead.

There has been much concern expressed recently regarding the beginning of so many new projects. All must be financed, and all sponsors and promoters seem to feel that they can go straight to "the brotherhood" for funds upon which to oper-

ate. Even most small groups wanting to build a church building seem to feel that this is the way to raise money. To say the least of it, this is an unhealthy trend. A feeling seems to be developing that the church is a sort of benevolent rich uncle whose sole happiness comes from dropping shekles into outstretched hands!

Maybe we are forgetting the purpose and mission of the church. The church was never intended to be institutional fodder. While the church may be benefited by many institutions, it is dependent upon none of them, and obligated to support none of them. Let us always bear in mind that our projects are simply that—our projects. The church does not depend upon any of them for either its existence or its growth. When any of these projects reach the point where they pose a danger to the unity of the church, it is time for them to be disbanded and folded up. Other arrangements can, and will, take their place. We must never become so wedded to our projects that we give them precedence over the church.

Some storm clouds blow over, and we hope this one will. But the continued rumblings we hear from pulpits and papers and preachers and people makes us to feel that the waves ahead may be rough on the old ship of Zion, and that in the path ahead there may be the rocks of institutionalism. Elders of the Lord's church in whose hands the helm is held up must keep a sharp lookout posted.

## GIVING THE ANSWERS FOR OUR HOPE

Address questions to:  
35 West Par Ave.  
Orlando, Florida

I PETER 3:15

Marshall E. Patton

### "SIN UNTO DEATH"

QUESTION: Brother Patton, will you please give us an article in SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES explaining the "sin unto death" in I John 5:16?-B.C.M.

ANSWER: In answering this question I do so in recognition of the fact that it is a difficult passage and that commentators differ widely as to its meaning. Space limitations forbid my identifying and replying to the many positions taken on this verse. Brief notice of one or two must suffice. However, I assure the reader that if he should desire an examination of any one of these positions in the light of Scripture, I shall be happy to comply with such request when directed to this column. Now, let us notice the verse:

"If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it." (I John 5:16).

Perhaps the most popular position is that which makes the "sin unto death" identical with the "blasphemy against the Holy Spirit" in Matt. 12:31. This I deny with emphasis and without doubt. Another popular position limits the "sin unto death" so as to include only those concerning whom "it is impossible to renew again unto repentance." (Heb. 6:4-6). I believe, however, that it is more general in its application.

The subject under discussion in the context is PRAYER—For what may a Christian pray with assurance of being heard and answered? The answer to this question is in verses four-

teen and fifteen: "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him." (I John 5:14,15). The conditional phrase, "if we ask any thing according to his will," is very significant and demands a clear understanding in order to arrive at truth on this subject.

It is God's will that all our petitions be overruled to our good. In Him we may have confidence that all our prayers will be answered to our good—maybe not the way we expected, but, nevertheless, in a way which in his wisdom is best for us. (II Cor. 12:7-10).

When it comes to the matter of praying for "life" (spiritual life or the forgiveness of sins) in behalf of a brother, God's will must be respected here as in all other matters. Early in this epistle John has shown what God's will is concerning forgiveness for the erring brother. He says such may be cleaned of all unrighteousness, IF he confesses his sins (I John 1:7-9). This confession, in the light of the context and other passages, necessarily implies a penitent confession. Thus, in the final analysis—no matter how willing and anxious God and all others are to forgive—God has made the erring brother's "life" (forgiveness) depend upon his own will. Of his own volition he must repent and confess! Until this is done we need not expect prayer for "life" in his behalf to be answered. No prayer of any person can possibly cancel the erring brother's free will. Such a brother is in rebellion to God the ultimate end of which is the "second death" (Rev. 20:14,15), hence, is "sinning a sin unto death." Such a sin, then, is one of which a person will not repent.

However, when the guilty brother repents of his sin and confesses the same unto God or unto God and the brethren, as the case may demand, his prayer and that of all others in his behalf will be answered. The sin for which forgiveness is sought is no longer "unto death" since it is one of which the guilty has repented. For such a person John says ask and "life" (forgiveness) shall be given.

In this verse John simply would have us to know that prayer on the part of one person will not substitute for repentance on the part of the guilty—either in life or after death—Catholic doctrine to the contrary notwithstanding.

There are things we may do and for which we may pray that might lead the erring brother to repent. To this end we should work and pray, but do not expect your prayer to take the place of repentance on his part. Until he repents he is "sinning a sin unto death" and prayer for "life" (forgiveness) on his part is to no avail. Such is contrary to God's will. However, if he repents, hence, is no longer sinning unto death, ask for "life" (forgiveness) for him—it shall be given!

## **DO JUSTLY, LOVE MERCY, WALK HUMBLY**

*F. F. Locke, Lawrenceburg, Tenn.*

I would like to discuss a verse of scripture found in Chapter 6, Verse 8 of Micah, it is as follows: "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to DO JUSTLY, and to LOVE MERCY OR KINDNESS, and to WALK HUMBLY WITH THY GOD.

**DO JUSTLY.** What is it to do justly? Here are some of the elements of doing Justly: Be benevolent and charitable. Always have a spirit of cheerfulness. Always do our best to be good citizens. Be content. What ever we do be consecrated, and have courage of our convictions. Never allow ourselves to be covetous. Always be diligent. Be honest, and

obedient. Be efficient in everything we do. Always tell the truth. Do not be false witnesses. DO NOT SOW DISCORD. THAT IS TERRIBLE.

**PRACTICE FELLOWSHIP.** Be prayerful. Have pride in what we do. I do not mean haughty, I simply mean to do what ever we do to the extent that we will be proud of what we have done and not be ashamed.

Always be prudent, and have the spirit of purity. Be penitent, and always do the best we can in everything. Train ourselves to be righteous. Not mind sacrificing ourselves and our means for God's plan. Serve our fellow man and give GOD AND JESUS CHRIST THE GLORY.

Always examine ourselves and be mindful of ourselves so that we can keep ourselves under control at all times. Be sympathetic. Guard against temptation. God will not allow us to be tempted beyond that which we are able to bear, but we must guard ourselves at all times against worldliness.

Be friendly and forgiving, practice gratitude. Try to always be happy and not lazy and slothful. Help to make good homes. Not be hypocrites. Never be idle, but keep busy doing good all the time. Practice fidelity. Study the Bible and be apt to teach. Practice integrity. Be joyful. Be liberal. Have love. Not be lustful. Carry no malice in our hearts. Be meek. One of the Beatitudes is BLESSED ARE THE MEEK FOR THEY SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH. Be patient, steadfast, and zealous. Do not forget to worship, and always give God and Jesus Christ the Praise, Honor and Glory for everything.

### **MERCY OR KINDNESS**

Small kindnesses give greater charm to character than the display of great talent and accomplishments.

I wonder why it is that we are not kinder and more merciful to each other. It is so easily done, and the world needs this badly.

We should guard ourselves so that we know how to give without hesitation—How to lose without regret—How to acquire honesty and kindness always showing mercy to those with whom we deal.

Life is made up not of great sacrifices of duties, but of little things such as smiles, kindness and mercy and small obligations given habitually. This is what preserves the heart and secures comfort.

Industry, economy, honesty and kindness or mercy form a quartet of virtue that will never be improved upon.

We do not pass through life but once, and if there is any kindness or mercy that we can do to our fellow beings, let's do it because we will not pass this way again, and if we do not do it now it will be everlastingly too late.

When you find yourself over powered by melancholy and restlessness go out and do something kind or show some act of mercy, and will find that this is the best tranquillizer you can get.

Our greatness is measured by our kindness or mercifulness and consideration and tolerance we have for others.

The world measures us by our kind looks, kind words, merciful acts, even if nothing but warm handshakes.

We are all sowers of seed, and seeds of kindness and mercy, goodwill and human understanding, when sown in fertile soil spring up into untold fruits that will never fade out.

Kindness or mercy practiced by ourselves is the honey that blunts the sting of unkindness or unmercifulness in others. Shakespeare said, "Sweet mercy is nobility's true badge."

Only acts of kindness or mercy will give us peace and a joyful life. BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL FOR THEY SHALL OBTAIN MERCY.

Humility is the part of wisdom and is most becoming in men.

We bask in the sunshine of accomplishment and lose the spirit of humility which helps us visualize all the factors which have contributed to our success.

It is no great thing to be humble when you are brought low; but to be humble when you are praised is a great and rare attainment.

There are three things that we can hold fast and prize: 1. Gentleness. 2. Frugality. 3. Humility, which keeps oneself from putting oneself before others. Be gentle and you can be bold; be frugal and you can be liberal. Avoid putting yourself before others and you can become a leader among men.

We should not lose ourselves in vainglorious schemes for changing human nature all over the planet. Rather we should learn to view ourselves with a sense of proportion and Christian HUMILITY before the enormous complexity of the world in which it has been given us to live. Humility leads to strength and not to weakness. It is the highest form of self-respect to admit mistakes and to make amends for them.

We come nearest to the great when we are great in humility.

Pride is a deeply rooted ailment of the soul. The penalty is misery. The remedy lies in the sincere, lifelong cultivation of humility, which means true self-evaluation and a proper perspective toward the past, present and future. Some persons are always ready to level those above them down to themselves, while they are never willing to level those below them up to their position. But he that is under the true influence of true HUMILITY will avoid both these extremes.

Praise those that are worthy of rising, and acknowledge those that are worthy of praise.

Lack of proper HUMILITY, which is the fundamental aspect of Christianity is the reason many men fail to display the courage and foresight that comes through complete faith in God.

Greatness is a two-faced coin, and HUMILITY is the reverse. **WE MUST BE HUMBLE TO BE ACCEPTABLE IN THE SIGHT OF GOD.**

In closing I would like to say that we can find in the New Testament by reading it carefully without prejudice what it is to **DO JUSTLY, LOVE MERCY OR KINDNESS AND WALK HUMBLY WITH OUR GOD.** If after reading the scriptures, we find that we are not doing so, simply do like Paul of olden times when he realized that he was not doing right. When he said "WHO ART THOU?" the answer was, "I am Jesus whom thou persecuteth." **IMMEDIATELY** he answered, "What wilt thou have me to do?" If we have that spirit, then we will have no trouble following old Mica's quotation. "I HAVE SHEWED THEE O MAN, WHAT DOTHTHE LORD THY GOD REQUIRE OF THEE, BUT TO DO JUSTLY, LOVE MERCY OR KINDNESS AND WALK HUMBLY WITH THY GOD."

### **WHAT'S WRONG WITH MODERN MARRIAGE?**

*H. E. Phillips*

A booklet dealing with an important subject for all today. 25 causes for failures in marriage today are given, and the way to avoid these mistakes is discussed. Unless the homes are kept pure we cannot expect the church to be pure.

Price — \$ .75

# I MARVEL

**GAL. 1:6**

**James P. Miller**

I have before me on the editor's desk a little pamphlet announcing in bold type "THE GREAT PREACHERS SERIES." Interested in great preachers, I opened the page expecting to find the announcement telling more of some of the giants of the past or perhaps the apostles, but behold there were the pictures of seven preachers of today. Under the picture of each of these great preachers was a small paragraph telling why he was a great preacher. Here are all of the reasons given. Some were television and radio speakers, others were listed as world travelers, orators, editors, brilliant scholars, lecturers, presidents and vice presidents, lectureship directors and prominent evangelists. To be sure all of these in their rightful place are wonderful recommendations, but one is strangely missing. The one that is not there is the **DEBATER**. Not one of the men who are carrying the fight for the institutional brethren was named. Not a one of those who in the heat of the day are serving as the "hatchet men" of the "New Frontiers" was given.

I marvel that these men cannot see "the handwriting on the wall." There will be no place for their talents in the new order of things. The brethren will no longer believe in debating or contending for the truth. All seven of the ones named are on the sweeter side and can show no scars of battle. There are no dents in their armor and no wounds in their bodies. They have made a career out of preaching to the church and for it. The only opposition they encounter is from sound brethren who are opposed to their selling the blood bought church into the hands of the denominations. They are not willing to meet this opposition face to face.

No, in the new order there will be no place for those who want to contend for the faith and the very ones who are carrying the load for these great preachers today will not be welcomed in their pulpits tomorrow. I cannot help but marvel.

### **NOW IS THE TIME TO OBEY THE GOSPEL**

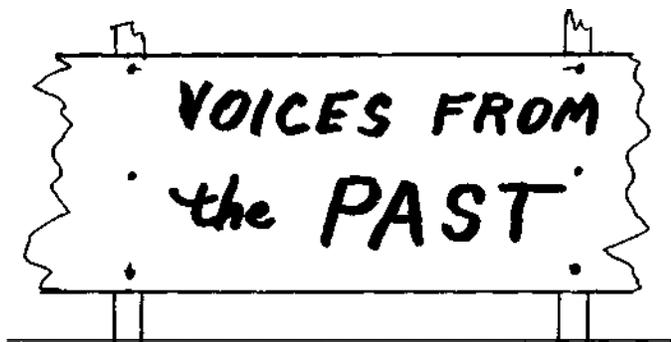
"Not yet," said the youth. "I don't want anything to interfere with my pleasure. When I grow older I'll think about my soul."

"Not yet," said the young married man. "I am just beginning to do well in my trade. When I see by business prospering, then I shall have more time."

"Not yet," said the middle-aged business man. "I have worked so hard getting my business to where it is today. I want to take it easy a while and devote more time to recreation."

"Not yet," said the gray-haired man. "Somewhere along the line I have picked up some bad habits I will have to conquer first. Then too, it would involve several changes, and when you get to my age changes are difficult and you don't want to make any."

And so he lived without God and died without hope. How sad. His big sin was procrastination. Is that yours too? "Today if ye shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts."—selected



(This article appeared in the Gospel Guardian, April 29, 1954, page 3.)

## ANOTHER NEW IDEA FOR THE CHURCH

H. E. Phillips

Brethren, I think I have another new idea for a combined program of churches of Christ in America. I have been read-about and listening to all the "wonderful" plans and arrangements "we" have made to do greater work in the church, and I have an idea for a "needy" work that will put our name before the world—and it is as scriptural as all "our" other great works. Honestly, with all the new ideas and plans we have to do the work of the church, we can't miss.

Now my plan is this: First, I realize that I must get a "sponsoring" church somewhere, but that should be easy with so many big churches eager to "sponsor" something big and new. Surely some "Board of Elders" or "Planning Committee" will see the possibilities of this great work and "sponsor" me and my program. Of course, I want it to be scriptural, so it must be under an eldership somewhere.

Now here is what the work is: We are neglecting to feed the poor and care for the sick as we should. Thousands all over this country are not being cared for as they should be. This is the WORK OF THE CHURCH to care for the poor and sick. Never can anyone say I "created" all these poor and sick people; it is as much an emergency as at any time and place in the world where poor and sick people are. Now we want to get the best workable plan to do this work. My plan is to get the "sponsoring" church to take the "oversight" of all phases of the work; that would make it scriptural. This eldership would employ and oversee all personnel: the treasurer, secretaries, doctors, nurses, chef and cooks, tailors and dress makers, collecting agents, and advertising men. Not only would this eldership oversee all this, but they would personally check all food, clothing, and medicine. We could call this "The Angels of Mercy." Now since this IS the work of the church, and since it WAS NOT an emergency created by any one church, and since it IS "under an eldership," *it is scriptural*.

We could set the budget for the first year at Two Million Dollars. It would take that much to reach all over the country and do the kind of job we want to do. The plan to raise this money would be the same as "we" have used in our other "big" programs. We could get the "sponsoring eldership" to contact 10,000 churches and have them "cooperate" in this program by sending regular contributions to the sponsoring church. Each "contributing" church could have its preacher or some member to contact each member of that church and solicit a contribution. Each church in turn could send the

amount to the "sponsoring" church. All checks should be made payable to: "Angels of Mercy," or to the eldership of the "sponsoring" church. Also, if any preacher or church knew of any poor or sick, they could get in touch with the eldership of the "sponsoring" church and "The Angels of Mercy" would dispatch some workers to the territory immediately to do the job. This plan would work because it has been proven. The Salvation Army, the Red Cross, and the Christian Welfare Board are all proof that it will work. We could do a much bigger job in less time with less money by this plan. Why not start it? Just think of how much more could be done in a disaster area by this program. It is the work of the church to care for the poor and sick. If someone objects that the church should only care for her own poor and sick, this plan would still be more effective to do "big" things.

By now nearly every one who has read this far is objecting to such a plan for the churches of Christ to do benevolent work, and they should. I doubt that very many would approve of this method of doing this work of the church. Someone may say, where is the Bible authority for such a method, and where is the Bible example? Another would object that such a plan would deprive the local churches of doing their own work in their own locality.

Now if the church can "Care for Orphans" through church supported "Orphanage Societies," or "Mission Work" in the foreign fields through church supported "Missionary Societies" (for this is what some of them are); and do "Home Evangelistic Radio and Television Preaching" through "Nationally Supported Elderships," why cannot the church have a "National Welfare Board" called ANGELS OF MERCY, under a "Nationally Supported Eldership?" I don't see any difference in any of them in principle.

The truth is, none of these organizations have any scriptural authority to exist. If one of them can be proved by the scriptures, all of them can. The absurd plan I outlined is as much scriptural as any of the church "sponsored" Missionary Societies and Nationally Supported Radio Programs. The Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the way, is still Head over "all things" to the church, never intended such "methods" to be used to do the work he outlined for the church to do. I am certain of that for the Bible will furnish us in "all things" to life and godliness, and will completely furnish us to every good work (2 Peter 1:3; 2 Tim. 3:16,17); and the Bible is as silent as the grave on any such combined organizational power in one church or a human institution to do any phase of the work of the church. Each local church should perform its work in its own community, according to its own ability, and to the extent of the oversight of its own eldership. There must be no relation of one church to another in any work that would impose upon the absolute autonomy of each local church. That is the Lord's way, and it is the best way. We cannot improve upon any plan or organization for the work of the church above the plan given by the Lord, that each church do its own work in its own locality under its own eldership. If any church should need help to do its own work in its own community, other churches may help by sending aid to be used by that church in the realm of its own work under its own elders and not beyond. We will do well to stop and survey our position in these matters before we reach the departure from the faith that divided the church a half century ago. If we continue in these practices the church will have "headquarters" somewhere in the United States in some "Super Eldership" in the next twenty-five years. One departure leads to another. Where will we stop?

# The News Letter Reports

"... THEY REHEARSED ALL THAT GOD HAD DONE WITH THEM ..."—Acts 14:27

OLIN KERN is moving from Berea, Ohio to work with the church in Charlotte, Tenn. . . . HOWARD McCUTHEON has moved to his farm near Tennessee City in that same section and will be busy with the churches there. . . . HAROLD HOWARD reports, "Everything is still going fine with the work here. We have had a number of responses recently and broke another record in the Bible Study just two weeks ago." . . . BOBBY THOMPSON was the preacher in a meeting with the new congregation in Coral Gables, Florida. This is the location of the University of Miami and the work there is off to a good start. . . . L. E. SLOAN of Palmetto, Florida, preached in a meeting with the 7th Avenue congregation in Miami the first part of May. This effort closed on May 14th. . . . BYRON CONLEY baptized 5 in the meeting at Seminole in Tampa the latter part of April. The meeting was the best attended in the long history of the church in that Florida city. . . . CONLEY will do the preaching in a meeting with the small congregation at Ruskin, Florida the last half of May. The church at Ruskin has had a struggle and anyone moving to that city would do well to help in the work.

EARL FLY reports baptisms regularly in the work at Holden Heights in Orlando, Florida. . . . HUGH DAVIS of Lake Wales, Florida will preach in their fall meeting starting November 5th. . . . BILL LAMBERT of Fultondale, Ala., was guest speaker at the congregation where W. C. HINTON preaches in Atlanta. This new congregation meets in the Decatur Federal Saving building at 1807 Chandler Rd. in Decatur, a suburb of Atlanta. . . . CECIL DOUTHITT preaching in a meeting with the Haldeman Ave. church in Louisville where he worked so long. . . . EUGENE BRITNELL was in a meeting with the Preston Highway congregation in that same city. . . . FRANKLIN T. PUCKETT is to do the preaching at St. James, Mo., July 2-11. Readers take notice . . . HOMER HAILEY will be the speaker in an effort with the Wendell Avenue congregation in Louisville June 25-July 2nd. . . . W. H. ROY is the preacher for the church in Titusville, Fla., where BYRON CONLEY has recently held a meeting. . . . The North Street congregation in Tampa plans new class rooms and on May 1st had a contribution of \$639.37. They will have a Vacation Bible School the week of June 12th. JIM COPE and JOHN WITT will work in the school. . . . GROVER STEVENS of Spring and Blane in St. Louis had several additions in a meeting with the Jackson Heights Church in Columbia, Tenn., where T. T. CARNEY labors.

FERRELL JENKINS was sent by the Spring and Blane congregation to Memphis to preach in a meeting with the Whitney Avenue church where JAMES L. GAY is working. . . . LEONARD TYLER of Pine Bluff, Ark. is to be in Indianapolis for a series with the Belmont congregation. . . . RUFUS CLIFFORD of Eastland in Nashville was in two meetings in the last few weeks. He baptized 11 and restored 7 in a meeting with the Valley Station church in Louisville where HAROLD SAVELY preaches and then worked in another effort at Mt. Pleasant, Tenn.

LESLIE DIESTELKAMP and family will leave Nigeria about the first of July. He has done a great work in that country. . . . HOMER HAILEY to be with Spring and Blane in St. Louis, June 12-21st. . . . The church in Newbern, Tenn., where CONNIE ADAMS works in publishing a bulletin

called the *Admonisher*. The address is P.O. Box 72, Newbern, Tenn. . . . FRANK INGRAM was in a meeting with the MacDill congregation in Tampa in May. 4 baptized, one restored. . . . Nine responses so far in 1961 is the record of the church in Romulus, Mich., where C. L. McLEAN labors. . . . FERRIS SMITH of Birmingham is to be the speaker in a meeting with the Norwood congregation in Knoxville, Tenn. with WILLIAM H. LEWIS. Dates for the meeting June 18-24. . . . ROBERT JACKSON of Nashville is to preach in a meeting with the Academy Street church in Dickson starting June 10th. . . . JAMES P. MILLER co-editor of the paper was in a meeting with the 6th Avenue church in Pine Bluff, Ark. LEONARD TYLER has worked with the church there for the last 13 years and has done a wonderful job. The church is sound in the faith with good elders and deacons. There were 6 additions in the meeting. . . . MILLER followed the Pine Bluff meeting with a series with the Temple Crest congregation in his home city of Tampa. RHYMER KNIGHT preaches for the Temple Crest Church. . . . BOB TUTEN at Warner Robins, Georgia, PAT FARISH at Concord, N.C., and ALBERT ROBINSON in Ashville, N.C. are all good men working hard fields and making progress. . . . Records are being broken at Par Ave. where MARSHALL PATTON preaches almost every Lord's Day now. . . . Wm. R. LAMBERT in a meeting in Concord, N.C. the last days of April.

The special series on the issues before the church today in which H. E. Phillips did the preaching with the Forest Hills church in Tampa was well attended and received. Brother Phillips spent long hours in preparation for these sermons and this work showed in the clear and kind way the material was presented. Every phase of the Institutional and Co-operation problem was discussed in full with every statement made from others documented. Much good was done by this series. I am hopeful that brother Phillips will make himself and his material available to brethren over the nation who want a fair and kind series on these vital subjects. They will not be disappointed. JPM.

The following table will show the steady progress that the College View congregation is making in Florence, Ala. CURTIS FLATT is the preacher for this new church. They are now in the process of building a new house of worship and have as bright a future as we can find anywhere.

## FOR THE RECORD

	8 A.M. Classes	8:30 A.M. Worship	5:15 P.M. Worship
January	151	172	160
February	156	190	168
March	168	211	171
April	178	215	200

A complete lectureship on all issues before the church was recently conducted with the McArthur Heights Church in Jasper, Ala. In addition to THOMAS G. O'NEAL, the preacher for the church there, the following men took part. CURTIS FLATT of Florence, Ala., JOHN T. LEWIS of Birmingham, Ala., PRYDE E. HINTON of Dora, Ala., HOLLIS CREEL of Albertville, Ala., BOB CRAWLEY of Bir-

mingham and QUENTIN McKAY of Birmingham. This series was held in April 23-29. . . . JACK FROST baptized two at Milledgeville, Ga. last month.

Brother BAXTER EVANS and his family begin work with the church at Mango, Fla., as of May 1, 1961. Bro. Evans' address is: P.O. Box 284, Mango, Fla., Phone no. 49-2001. "Along with the church here we extend an invitation to all our friends and neighbors, to come study with us the truth of God's word." . . . A. HUGH CLARK preached in a meeting in East Columbus, Miss, and 12 were baptized. . . . EARL FLY will be in a meeting at Umatilla the first of June.

ROSS SAUNDERS-

The work at Lebanon, Kentucky, continues in a fine way. It was my privilege to speak in a gospel meeting here, in which two confessed wrong and one was baptized. One of the elders said the attendance was the best in ten years if not in the history of the congregation. This was because the members worked for it, which is indeed encouraging. Thus far this year, we have broken all of the attendance records, except one (during a meeting), in the church's history, and twelve have confessed wrong and two have been baptized into Christ. For this we rejoice and ask your prayers that Christ may continue to be glorified here.

Also, I take this opportunity to express my appreciation, though a little late, to all my beloved brethren who were so kind and helpful when looking for a place to move. All of my inquiries were answered. This is indicative of the closeness of brethren who love the truth and are willing to sacrifice themselves in defending the truth against innovations of any description which seek to destroy the purity of the Lord's church and the attitude of scriptural authority for that which we do. It is pathetic that this bond of interest for one another cannot be universal among preaching brethren.

A. H. Payne, East Columbus Church of Christ, Columbus, Mississippi. May 5, 1961—We are happy to report 12 baptisms during the month of April, 10 of which occurred during our meeting with A. Hugh Clark of Lubbock, Texas. Also, one man was restored and one lady identified with the church.

Aubrey Belue, Jr., Griffith, Indiana, will be working with the Columbus Air Force Base church the week of June 18. A number of East Columbus members have and are working in connection with this group. We would appreciate any interested contacts that you might have in that community. Send your letters to me at the above address.

AKRON, OHIO, May 1—"Have held meetings at New Martinsville and Martinsburg, W. Va., this spring, with six baptisms, two restorations. Have five more meetings this year. Five additions here at Kenmore recently." P. J. Casebolt, 2245 9th St., S.W.

MORRIS NORMAN, Plant City, Fla.—I began work with the Plant City church of Christ the first Sunday in April, having moved from Nashville, Tennessee where I worked with the Rosebank congregation. The church here in Plant City is having its vacation Bible school June 12-16 with night sessions 7:15-8:30. There will be two adult classes. I will teach a class on "The Christian Home" for young adults and Ed Britt will teach the epistle of James to the older adults.

RUFUS R. CLIFFORD, Eastland church, Nashville, Tenn.—Homer Hailey, Tampa, Florida preached in the spring meeting for the Eastland church, Nashville, Tenn. Crowds were large. More than 30 preachers attended. Two were baptized, two placed membership. There were 11 baptisms and 7 restorations during my meeting with the church in Valley

Station, Ky. in March. Harold F. Savely and the church there are doing an outstanding work. From April 17th through 26th I preached in Clintwood, Va. One was baptized. From May 7th through 14th I was with the Locust St. church, Mt. Pleasant, Tenn. Five answered the invitation. Delton Porter is the evangelist. Beginning June 18th I will be with the Loraine Ave. church, Cleveland, Ohio in a meeting. Two have been baptized and three restored at Eastland church in the past three weeks.

HERBERT THORNTON, Baton Rouge, La.—Brother B. J. Thomas of Haynesville, La. was with us in a meeting April 30-May 5. We had good attendance at each service, and several non-members attended. We feel we had a good meeting even though there were no visible results. We had a record number in attendance of 54 on the 30th of April. My address after the 1st of June will be: 9250 W. Inniswold Dr., Baton Rouge, La. I still need some support in my work here.

## COMMENTS TO EDITORS

"I certainly enjoy reading *Searching The Scriptures* and the good it does defending the truth. I know that when I study with good brothers who write for *Searching The Scriptures*, I study in good company in the Lord."—L. N. Clifford, Nashville, Tenn.

"This is a fine paper. I deeply appreciate the good work you are doing. I hope it will continue to grow and reach into every section of the country. Such soundness and fairness can do nothing but good—we need more of it."—Granville W. Tyler, Decatur, Ala.

". . . It's one of the best papers I have ever read."—Mrs. J. B. Boswell, Bowling Green, Ky.

"*Searching The Scriptures* is among the most enjoyable and profitable papers I receive."—Ross Saunders, Lebanon, Ky.

"Today I received the March and April edition of *Searching The Scriptures*. After reading 'A Case Reviewed' in the March paper I thought—'Boy, I've got to send in my renewal.' Then I read 'Worse Than Dunkirk' and thought—I'll do it right now! So I am enclosing my \$2.00. *Searching The Scriptures* is getting better, and better, and better!"—Wm. E. Wallace, Poteau, Okla.

"May the Lord richly bless you brethren for the fine work that you are doing. We enjoy receiving *Searching The Scriptures* very much."—Ray Brown, Newport, Ark.

"Enjoy and get a great deal of information from *Searching The Scriptures*"—Joe Young, Florence, Ala.

"I really enjoy *Searching The Scriptures*; it is dedicated to the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, but that is to be expected since two of the most dedicated men in the brotherhood are publishing it. I know you will continue to do a wonderful work through its pages." D. W. H. Shelton, Tampa, Fla.

"I like the paper and feel that you are doing a good job. Keep up the good work."—Ward Hogland, Houston, Texas.

AUTHORITY OF A SINGLE CONGREGATION: A single congregation of the Lord in any community can administer and execute the work of the Lord in all its parts. This is true of every congregation. When assembled it is a divinely-authorized body to act in the matters of the kingdom of God. There is no other divinely-authorized body on earth to act in matter of the kingdom of God. This body is under the old commission from the Lord: "Observe all things whatever I have commanded you." (Benjamin Franklin, Book Of Gems, page 243).

## IT IS WRITTEN

*D. W. H. Shelton, Tampa, Fla.*

Just as long as the Bible lies closed we may look at it, think about it and talk about it all our lives and we will never know one thing about the God of heaven, nor what He wants us to be and do.

It has been said truly that the Bible is not something to be worshipped; it means a great deal more than just that. A savage might bow down to a telescope and worship it, but an astronomer would know better, he would know that a telescope was not made to look *at* but to look *through*. Christians know the Bible like that, they know it must be looked through, for with the Bible we find God and by it we learn what He was to and what He did for those who have gone on who were obedient to His commands. And we want Him to be the same to us that we may learn of His power, and prove that power for ourselves and in ourselves.

Since the Bible is the only instruction God has given to us, we must know the Bible and be led by it. To really and truly know the Bible we must read it. The prophet Isaiah said in the long ago "seek ye out of the book of the Lord and read" (Isaiah 34:16).

All Bible students know that the Jews, and especially their leaders, hounded Jesus throughout His personal ministry endeavoring to defeat Him in His teaching and to entrap Him in His speech. Jesus asked those Jews over and over again—Have ye not read? (Matt. 12:3, Mark 2:25, Luke 6:3).

We know that Jesus read much and often. We read in Luke 4:16 "And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up to read." Paul wrote to Timothy: "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine" (I Tim. 4:13).

In Tim. 2:1,2 he said "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." These verses declare that every Christian is commanded to learn the gospel well enough to teach others, and teach them well enough that they in turn may go out and teach others. In this way and only in this way is the church built up and kept built up.

Paul said in Rom. 15:4: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." "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" (Rom. 8:24, 25). Hope is the anchor to the soul, but faith coupled with patience, is the chain which sustains that anchor.

In I Cor. 10:1-10, Paul is talking about the Jews, their disobedience to God, and what befell them because of that disobedience, and in verse eleven he said, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."

In John 20:30,31, we learn that "many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."

In Rev. 1:3, we find the statement: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and

keep those things which are written therein: for the time *is* at hand." But we must not add to nor take from the things which are written in this book (Rev. 22:18,19).

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