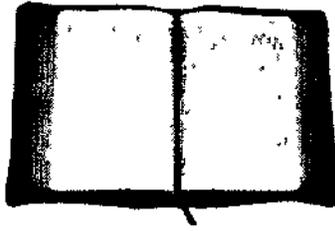


SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES



Search the Scriptures; for in them ye shall find 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.

VOLUME VI

OCTOBER, 1965

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WHY SO MUCH RELIGIOUS CONFUSION?

Donald R. Givens, Novato, Calif.

Have you ever wondered why there is so much confusion and division in the religious world today? Why are there so many "churches" and different groups of people all claiming to be followers of Jesus Christ? Is religious division what God desires? Or is it displeasing to God?

These questions demand an answer. They demand a true, scriptural answer. In this article we shall look into the Bible for the correct answer to the above serious questions.

Yes, there is **much** religious division in our present world. Just pick up any newspaper, listen to the radio, or walk down any street and you will observe hundreds of different religions and religious bodies claiming to follow God and be "Christians." But is Christ divided? Is Christ so confused as to what He wants us to believe and practice? All of the various groups each teach a different slant of religion and they are NOT united in doctrine and practice — this is very obvious. Is this the way God wants it? (To help you answer that question study I Corinthians 1:10-14). Does Jesus desire that we be divided? Surely not. Do you not remember the earnest prayer that Jesus prayed in John chapter seventeen? This is what our Lord prayed just before His betrayal and crucifixion: "Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word **THAT THEY MAY ALL BE ONE**; even as thou, Father, are in me and I in thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me. And the glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them. **THAT THEY MAY BE ONE, EVEN AS WE ARE ONE**: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be **PERFECTED INTO ONE**; that the world may know that thou didst send me, and lovedst them, even as thou lovedst me (John 17-20-34, emphasis mine, DRG). Therefore, as we can plainly see from the Lord's own prayer to His Father, Christ wants **all** believers to be ONE. Jesus desires that His followers be UNITED just as He and His Father are united. Christ wants all men to be ONE as He and the Father are ONE.

Now, here is the important question: Is the religious world today ONE? Most certainly not! In fact we even have people today who will thank God that we are NOT ONE and that "everybody can go to the church of his choice!" This is thanking God

that Christ's prayer has not been answered!

The fault and sin of religious division and confusion lies squarely with men and not with God. Men today have divided themselves and enforced their own man-made rules and humanly devised doctrines and denominations and have left the true gospel of Jesus Christ. Consider Galatians 1:8,9.

The reason there is so much religious confusion is because men have not been content to stay **within the bounds** of God's own commands. Too many individuals have refused to abide in the sound doctrine of Christ and have turned away their ears from the truth just as Paul predicted they would in II Timothy 4:3,4.

God is not a God of confusion (I Cor. 14:33). God desires that all men obey Him and be added to the ONE church. There is only ONE God, ONE Lord, ONE Spirit, ONE faith, ONE baptism, ONE hope, and ONE body (which is the **one church**, Eph. 1:22, 23). For proof of this read Eph. 4:3-6.

Yes, all persons can be UNITED in the ONE church or else Christ failed in His mission and died in vain. Jesus built just ONE church (Matt. 16:18; Acts 2; Eph. 1:22,23 and Col. 1:18). This is the only church you can read about in the Bible. This church belongs to Christ and therefore wears the name of Christ.

Religious division is very displeasing to God (Psalm 133:1 Prov. 6:19; and I Cor. 1:10). It cost the blood of God's only begotten Son to purchase the church (Acts 20:28) and we must not treat it lightly. Anything that is this precious and valuable is certainly necessary to our salvation. The Lord adds the obedient to the church (Acts 2:47).

Would you like to go to heaven and live forever? You can. Yes, you can become and remain a Christian in the very same way the people did in the New Testament record. You must hear the gospel (Rom. 10:17) and believe in Jesus (Heb. 11:6). Then you must repent of all sins (Acts 17:30) and confess Christ as God's Son (Rom. 10:9,10) and be buried in baptism (I Peter 3:21; Rom. 6:4). Then continue steadfastly in living a faithful Christian life (Acts 2:42) and a crown of righteousness will be yours. This is the way to become and remain a cleansed child of God, a member of the Lord's own church, on the road to heaven and eternal glory.

There is NO salvation in man-made and man-ruled denominations. No man was crucified for you. No man can forgive your sins. ONLY in Christ is salvation found (Acts 4:12). Will you not leave the reli-

gious confusion of men and become nothing more nor less than a Christian? The Lord desires that you be a Christian, a member of His body, His church (Col. 1:18) and reject all doctrines, creeds, dogmas, and denominations of mere men. This is the only way to go to heaven (Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16).

Why would anyone REFUSE TO GO TO HEAVEN? Will you?

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EDITORS

H. E. PHILLIPS
P. O. Box 17244
Tampa, Florida

JAMES P. MILLER
2523 W. Diana
Tampa, Florida

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Editorial . . .

H. E. PHILLIPS

WHAT IS TRUTH?

When Christ was before Pilate in the judgment hall he was asked about being King of the Jews. Jesus answered that he was born to that end, and said his kingdom was not of this world. Jesus also said he came to "bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate saith unto him, What is truth?" (John 18:37-38).

Truth has a great power. It will ultimately be victorious regardless of the odds. There is no way one can avoid, refuse or resist God's truth and be happy in eternity.

What is truth? The answer to this question will vary with different people. We cannot determine the answer from men; we must turn to the word of God for a true definition.

The New Testament says Christ is truth. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life . . ." (John 14:6). He is the very essence of truth, and the very opposite of Satan. "He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him . . ." (John 8:44).

Jesus is the truth because truth comes from him by the word of God. He prayed to the Father and said, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17). This word (truth) came by Christ (John 1:17).

The truth was delivered to the apostles by the Holy Spirit. To the apostles Christ said, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come" (John 16:13). This truth delivered to them was the gospel of Christ. "To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the

gospel might continue with you" (Gal. 2:5). "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of **truth**, the **gospel** of your salvation . . ." (Eph. 1:13). "For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the **truth** of the **gospel**" (Col. 1:5).

The truth is the word of God. "Thy **word** is truth" (John 17:17). "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth . . ." (James 1:18). Peter said, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the **truth** . . ." (I Peter 1:22). "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the **word** of God . . ." (vs. 23). ". . . And this is the **word** by which the gospel is preached unto you" (vs. 25). The truth is the word of God, which is the gospel.

The Bible definition of **truth** is clearly set forth as Christ, the word of God which came by Christ and delivered to the apostles by the Holy Spirit, and the gospel by which we are saved. Anything else cannot be truth as defined by the word of God.

But how do people act toward this truth? Not everyone who hears the truth responds to it in the way to be benefited by it. The word of God tells us how one should respond to the truth. We should be willing to **hear** the truth and **know** it. Jesus said, ". . . To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth **heareth** my voice" (John 18:37). In John 8:32 he said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

We should **obey** the truth when we have learned it. "Seeing ye have purified your souls in **obeying** the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" (I Peter 1:22). Some who know the truth do not obey it, and thus do not receive the blessings that are promised. "But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath" (Roman 2:8). "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth . . ." (Gal. 3:1).

The New Testament tells us how some people treat God's truth. We have many today who act exactly as these did in New Testament days. Some change the truth of God, at least they try to do so. Speaking of some Paul said, "who changed the truth of God into a lie . . ." (Rom. 1:25). This is because they do not love the truth. "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they receive not the **love of the truth**, that they might be saved" (II Thess. 2:10).

Some never come to a knowledge of the truth for various reasons, but primarily because they are so involved in sin. Paul said of some in this class, "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (II Tim. 3:7). The very next verse tells us that these will resist the truth. "Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith" (II Tim. 3:8).

Some people have at one time come to a knowledge of the truth, and have obeyed it. But somewhere along the line they turned away from the truth; they no longer walk in that truth. Paul said some would not endure sound doctrine "but after their

own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the **truth**, and shall be turned unto fables" (II Tim. 4:3,4). To Titus Paul said, "This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the **truth**" (Titus 1:13,14). The commandments of men turn from the truth. Paul rebuked Peter and those with him at Antioch because they "walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel" (Gal. 2:14).

What is truth? It is the word of God, the gospel of our salvation, the revelation of God through His Son Jesus Christ. To turn from what is revealed in the New Testament and go beyond is to reject the truth and walk not according to the truth of the gospel. But when we tell some that they are not obeying the truth, they become our enemies. "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" (Gal. 4:16). We must, however, teach the truth and try to correct any brother who errs from the truth. "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (James 5:19,20).

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ANSWERS FOR OUR HOPE

Address questions to:

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I Peter 3:15

—Marshall E. Patton—

QUESTION: Can a Christian belong to a labor union? I read that you cannot serve God and mammon (Matt. 6:24; Lk. 16:9-13). Also I read in Luke 3:14 that we are to do no violence and be content with our wages.—D.L.

ANSWER: It will help to answer the above question, if consideration be given first to the meaning of the passages cited.

Matt. 6:24 teaches supreme loyalty to Christ regardless of the **relationship** under consideration. No matter how strong the desire within **self**, it must be **denied**, if it conflicts with duty to Christ. Even if it means suffering (cross bearing), the will of Christ must be done! So far as this verse and the above question is concerned, it follows that if the labor union (or any other organization) should demand of its members a violation of the will of Christ, a choice must be made between the two—the will of Christ must prevail. There is nothing in the passage that forbids any legitimate means, whether through an organization or otherwise, of seeking an honest, equitable wage.

The objective of Lk. 16:9-13, especially verse 13, is loyalty to Christ over and above monetary or material considerations. It is right to seek and obtain a legitimate wage in honest toil, but it is wrong to allow such considerations to become our God.

Luke 3:14 has to do with repentance. In answer to the question of what they should do to show fruits of repentance, John called upon them to cease their evil and to do that which was right. The soldiers were to cease the abuse of their power as soldiers, cease their false accusations, and be content with their wages. The fact that they were told to "be content with your wages" implies that such was fair, legitimate, and proper. If so, their attitude of **dis-satisfaction** was wrong. Christians should be content with wages that are legitimate, equitable, and proper.

Labor unions can be a means of obtaining and maintaining a fair wage from capital for the laborer. They can also violate principles of honor and become violent in efforts to extort from capital that which is not deserved.

Our Lord laid down some fundamental principles governing the employer and employee (Eph. 6:5-9; Col. 3:22-25). If these principles were carefully observed by both labor and capital, there would be little use for labor unions. This, however, is not always done. Organizations that function in subjection to the "powers that be" (Rom. 13:1) to accomplish worthy objectives without violating the will of Christ are worthy of respect and Christians may belong to such.

Have You Mailed Your Renewals?

ALL CHURCHES SHOULD BE A LIKE

James P. Miller

The God of Heaven established the church for which his Son gave his life to do his work on earth. He made it perfect and made every congregation exactly alike. Just as all true Christians are alike, all churches should be alike. They should have their own elders, deacons, evangelists and members (Phil. 1:1, 1 Tim. 3 and Titus 1).

No elder of the church in the New Testament has any authority over any other congregation save the church over which he serves. Peter calls it "the flock of God which is among you" (I Peter 5:2). In exactly the same way no elder ever tried to do the work for an elder of another church and no set of elders ever set themselves up as "brotherhood elders" to do the work of many churches. No such thing as a sponsoring church was ever heard of in the Bible.

For any eldership, large or small, to even offer to do the work of other elders and for any church to attempt to do the work of other churches leads straight to Rome. No elder can turn his work over to another in another place.

Every church in the New Testament was complete and the local congregation is the only unit God has on earth. A church in need in the days of the apostles could be helped by another church in seeing to its needy. Paul declares this to be so "there may be equality" (II Cor. 8:14). In other words that all may be the same. **NOT ONE DIME WAS EVER SENT FROM ONE CHURCH TO ANOTHER CHURCH TO PREACH THE GOSPEL.** This was always sent directly to the preacher (Phil. 4:15).

The practice of churches today to set themselves up as great "sponsoring churches" to handle hundreds of thousands of dollars for thousands of other churches threatens the very existence of the church as the true body of Christ. This is not a matter for elders to decide because it is without one shred of Bible authority.

The gospel should be preached on the radio, but no congregation can take over the preaching for many churches. The gospel needs to be preached over television, but where is the verse that gives one church the right to do it for another? The end does not justify the means. This was the very argument made for the missionary society a century ago.

When a church surrenders its work, it surrenders its autonomy. It is no longer God's separate unit but a part of something far larger than the local church. Men everywhere who want to speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent need to awake to the danger before it is too late. God has no unit but the local church.

You owe it to your soul and to the purity of the church of which you are a member to investigate these matters.

THE IMMUTABLE COUNSEL

L. T. SHIFLETT

In Hebrews 13:8, we read, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever." This passage suggests that the Author and Finisher of our faith is

the epitome of constancy and that He provides for His followers an example of stability of purpose and steadfastness of effort.

During the brief period of time during which He lived upon the earth, Jesus was identified on at least two occasions as the Son of God by the Father Himself. His crucifixion made of Him a sacrifice for the sins of many; it sealed the new covenant whereby the exceeding great and precious promises of God were made available to men of all nations. The very establishment of this new covenant was a result of the immutability of the promise of God.

The position of Christ and the character of his authority are revealed in the New Testament. His name is above all; He has been made head over all things to the church, which is His body; all authority has been given unto Him in heaven and in earth. We are taught that to have the Father and the Son, we are to abide in the doctrine of Christ (II John 9). Further we are taught that in these last days God has spoken unto us by His Son, (Hebrews 1:2), and that we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard lest at any time we let them slip (Hebrews 2:1). The previously mentioned text teaches that He is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

The inspired apostle Paul, giving instruction to the church at Ephesus, emphasized seven "ones." In addition to one God, one Lord, one hope, one baptism, one Spirit, and one body, he noted that there is one faith. That the attribute of inconsistency is a human failing is made clear when he pointed out that the necessity of edification of the body was to the end that we be no more children tossed to and fro, carried about by every wind of doctrine.

The same apostle in his instructions to the young evangelist, Timothy, cautioned by the express word of the Spirit that some would depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits. In his second letter to Timothy he warned further of these and charged Timothy to preach the word even though there would be those who would not endure sound doctrine. And to Titus he wrote, "Speak thou the things which become sound doctrine."

Peter also gave counsel that if one would speak, he should speak as the oracles of God. He, too, warned of false teachers who would bring damnable heresies, denying the Lord and bringing on themselves destruction. He further stated that many would follow these false teachers.

The New Testament scriptures had not been completely written before these warnings were shown to be true. Jude stated that it was needful for him to write of the common salvation and to exhort them earnestly to contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints. He noted that there were already certain men at work turning the grace of God into lasciviousness and denying God and Christ. The letters dictated by Christ to the seven churches of Asia reveal that these forces were at work. Some churches had resisted them and some had not. Of the Galatians Paul marveled that they were so soon removed from him that called them into the grace of Christ unto another gospel.

These scriptures make two things manifestly clear: 1) man needs the one faith. He must be constant even as Christ is constant; and 2) it is a tendency of man to depart from the faith; i.e. to be

inconstant. The teaching of the New Testament reveals both of these truths by urging the first and warning against the second.

Throughout the Bible we are taught that man is dependent upon God and is responsible to Him. Jeremiah wrote, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23). The wise one urged, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." (Proverbs 3:5,6). Again in Ecclesiastes 12:13, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."

The Psalmist wrote that the man who was blessed delighted in the law of the Lord and constantly meditated therein (Ps. 1). In Psalms 19:7-9, he praised the law, the testimony, the statutes, the commandments, the fear, and the judgments of the Lord.

Individual men need to recognize their need for God. They must realize that they sin, are weak, and are unable to have any hope for redemption from sins and an eternity of life without the grace of God. The realization that God has extended His grace toward us should be an occasion of rejoicing and humility. Our gratitude should lead us toward an insatiable desire to know more and more of the Father of Mercies. As we learn more of Him we are led unswervingly to the same conviction stated by the Psalmist. We must sacrifice any tendency toward presumptuous sin and speak as the oracles of God. We must try all things by the perfect standard of the divine revelation of God and hold fast to that which is good, being steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. We must recognize that as Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and as He has revealed that His word will never pass away, we must contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, for there is no escape if we neglect so great salvation.

The priesthood of Christ under the new covenant is described as an unchangeable priesthood. Thus Christians today and the church today are to be the same as Christians and the church were as we learn of them in the New Testament.

Dependent as we are on the mercy and grace of God for all we have and hope for, let us renew daily our resolve to serve Him as we live in the hope of dwelling with Him hereafter. Let us not worship Him in ignorance as did the Athenians who worshipped an unknown God. Neither let us worship Him vainly as did the Pharisees teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. But rather let us worship the Father in spirit and in truth, following the doctrine of Christ as He has revealed it by the Holy Spirit guiding His disciples into all truth.

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"UNTIL DEATH DO US PART"

Luther W. Martin, Rolla, Mo.

The title for this article is taken from the commonly used marriage vows or agreement, that most of us in the Western world contract before God and man when we become husband and wife. To make it more complete, we copy as follows:

"I, (name) take thee (name) to my wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part . . ."

The foregoing vow is made in all solemnity before both God and man, with no qualifying clause that can be honorably used as an "escape hatch." No words such as "IF," "EXCEPT," or "BUT" are to be found in this contract. The only word that approaches a qualification is "TILL" or "UNTIL" . . . "DEATH DO US PART."

INSTRUCTIONS TO CHRISTIANS

'A wife is bound as long as her husband lives; but if her husband is dead, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord" (I Cor. 7:39).

In the foregoing scripture, the Apostle Paul uses the equivalent of "BUT," "IF," "AS LONG" (as her husband lives), and finally when she becomes free to marry again, then it is **ONLY IN THE LORD**. Not a word giving any exception to this rule.

"For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband. So then if, while her husband is living, she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress, though she is joined to another man" (Romans 7:2-3).

This instruction harmonizes exactly with all other passages in the New Testament dealing with the subject as it applies to Christians.

INSTRUCTIONS UNDER THE LAW OF MOSES

". . . Because of your hardness of heart, Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way. And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another commits adultery. The disciples said unto Him, "If the relationship of the man with his wife is like this, it is better not to marry" (Matt. 19:8-10).

Note that this instruction of Jesus was directed to the Jews as a result of the Pharisees tempting or testing Him. This instruction was directed to people who were under Moses' law . . . not Christians. Prior to the liberalizing of the marriage laws under Moses, Christ indicated that God's way for man was so strict that the disciples then remarked . . . "it is better not to marry." Christ also stressed the principle, "What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate" (Matt. 19:6).

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

It is generally the conclusion of Bible students that the "Sermon on the Mount" was designed to introduce the principles by which the kingdom of

Christ would be governed, and a contrast or comparison was made with various tenets of the Law of Moses.

On the matter of divorce, Christ stated: "And it was said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of dismissal'; but I say to you that every one who divorces his wife, except for the cause of unchastity, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery" (Matt. 5:31-32). In this passage Jesus noted that the Law of Moses had permitted the giving of a certificate of dismissal. But Christ taught that when a man divorces his wife, he makes her commit adultery, unless she has already been unchaste, or thus adulteress. Note that the "unchaste" woman is already an adulteress prior to her being divorced . . . and, if she is divorced for some other reason, she is made to become an adulteress. Consequently, this passage cannot be used as an "excuse" for divorce and remarriage . . . if it taught this, then it would contradict Paul in Romans and 1st Corinthians.

In Mark's record of Christ's teaching on the subject of divorce, which compares with the passages in Matt. 19:1-9, beginning with Mark 10:9, we copy: "What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate." And back in the house again, the disciples began questioning Him about this matter. And He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her; and if she herself divorces her husband and marries another man, she is committing adultery" (Mark 10:9-12).

Nothing is mentioned in any book of the New Testament that would even hint that God tolerates divorce and subsequent re-marriage among Christians. The book of Matthew is the only record that deals with "except it be for fornication" and then it is directed to those under the Law of Moses. The other records of the Gospel of Christ do not deal at all with any alleged "exception" that would permit divorce and then re-marriage. This was strictly a Jewish tradition that Moses had introduced because of the "hardness of their hearts."

CONCLUSION

For Christians, it is one husband one wife UNTIL DEATH DO US PART. If any "mental cruelty," "infidelity," "mental illness," "she can't cook," "he's a drunken bum," . . . whatever the excuse . . . I repeat, IF ANY of these could be shown to scripturally allow, permit or justify divorce and re-marriage . . . then the New Testament teaching on repentance and forgiveness (seventy-times-seven) would have been written for nothing.

The New Testament does not permit divorce and re-marriage for Christians. Nor, does the usual "marriage vow" that was referred to, in order to introduce this article.

If anyone thinks this teaching is too hard or too strict, then you are simply reacting as did the disciples when they concluded . . . "it is better not to marry." May I suggest that our young people (and older people too) be taught not to marry in haste . . . and also be taught to marry "only in the Lord."



ISAAC'S MARRIAGE

The subject of marriage is a very proper subject for study. Many of the mistakes that are made would not be made if there were more use of common sense and of the holy word of God. Those who are yet unmarried need to think carefully of this subject. Parents and teachers also need to study to improve their own homes and to train the young.

Abraham wanted Isaac to have a wife with the same racial background. Having more in common and fewer natural differences makes it easier to maintain the unity of the home. Children, also, are happier if they fit into one race group or another rather than being a misfit in either. There were, likely, some very capable home makers in the land of Canaan near Abraham, but they were not of Isaac's race. Later Isaac wanted a wife for Jacob from among his own people. When the nation of Israel arose the matter of foreign wives became a problem to the rulers. As to law, there is no demand in the New Testament that there be no crossing of race barriers in marriage, but observation, wisdom, and common understanding still remind us that there are problems of adjustment and difficulties when the two are of different racial backgrounds.

Isaac and Rebekah were of a similar economic background. The work, the financial and social background were very similar in their respective homes. Rebekah was leaving her parents and going a few hundred miles to be among strangers, but she would not be a stranger to her work, or to the common experiences in the work of Isaac and his people. The experiences of her childhood and youth fitted her for her place rather than disqualified her. The New Testament does not make a law that the extremely rich must not marry the extremely poor, but, as we said about race barriers, wisdom and experience still advise this similar background. The wife from a background of wealth may feel a bit of self-pity in her privations while her husband may feel that she is extravagant. Conflicts may arise that annoy because of such different training and experiences in youth.

Isaac and Rebekah respected Jehovah God and were aware of His providence. This oneness in religion is a most important point of unity in two people's effort to be one in all the ways the Lord ordained. Abraham, no doubt, must have had this in mind when he sent back to his own people for a wife for his son. Religious beliefs are a matter of teaching. It is not something for a husband to force on his wife. No individual is in a position to take religious convictions off like a coat and lay them aside for a new. One can learn but it is through teaching and not by demands. When one's convictions can be laid aside as a garment there was not much conviction in the first place.

It seems that marriages in our area are arranged with little or no thought to religious background. Imagination is used in supposing that there will be no conflicts. If neither has any conviction their differences may be laughed off as trivials. One simple but unfair plan is often stated as law by some husbands who demand that their wives change doctrines, methods of worship, and religious practices as if they were lords in the place of Christ. Conscience is involved. Beyond this, the law of God is involved. The wife is taught to be subject to her husband but not if his law conflicts with the law of God concerning the name, the Lord's supper, church government, etc., which are fundamental teachings of our God.

Unhappiness that comes from different religious training comes not alone from the husband's trying to change his wife's faith by his own law rather than teaching, but there is the difficult and delicate problem of training children. Comparatively few couples sit down patiently with Bibles to study so that they can correct their errors of doctrine by the Bible and get together on truth. It is more common for the subject of religion to become a forbidden topic, when it should be discussed daily before the children. Isaac and Rebekah had a common faith. There is no way to overemphasize the significance of this wonderful point of unity.

Abraham's servant prayed for guidance when he got to the well in the community among Abraham's people. Abraham before had indicated his confidence that God would be with him. If we may pray in any matter, surely we can pray in regard to a decision as fundamental as this. One's daily happiness depends on the home situation. Young people, please pray over this matter. Abide by the laws of God in making your life's plans. Your whole future, even your eternal destiny, is involved in this decision about marriage. The Lord loves us and gives wonderful advice on this, very important subject. By all means you should take time to consider His will carefully.

In Isaac's day it was a common custom for parents to select the marriage companions for their children. Abraham sent his chief servant to get a wife for Isaac. She was there for the wedding before Isaac ever saw her. This effort was not intended to try to turn the custom back to their day. Parents could use very poor judgment, too. Social pride, worldly ambition and other such foolish standards could blind parents, just as lust might blind the young. A very happy picture is the situation when the young, their parents, and the Lord are pleased by the plans. We have already suggested prayer and Bible study in preparation for the day of marriage. Surely it is not out of place to recommend respect for the judgment of parents.

Young people, your parents love you and want the best for you. They are older and have gone further down the road of life. Their advice should carry weight with you. Many young people rush headlong into unhappy situations which their parents and many other people who love them could have helped them avoid if they could have found hearts open to loving counsel. It is very foolish for some very young person to reject wisdom, the law of God, and the advice of parents to marry one who is unworthy or

completely unsuited to make a suitable companion for life. Parents arranged for weddings in Isaac's day. They could and should give wise advice today. Isaac loved Rebekah, the text says. That was natural since they had so many things in common. The providence of God had a part in this selection.



EPITHUMEO, "TO LUST"

I have been asked to prepare a study of the word "lust"; particularly as that term is used in Matt. 5:27,28, which reads as follows in the King James Version: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."

SEVERAL WORDS

In our English Bibles the word "lust" is used to translate either one of several Greek words, but the verb "lust" in Matt. 5:28 comes from epithumeo, which literally suggests the idea of turning one's anger or passion upon. This meaning comes from the preposition epi, "upon" plus thumos, "passion," "angry heat." The verb epithumeo occurs in sixteen passages in the New Testament.

GOOD SENSE AND BAD SENSE

In our English language the word "lust" usually has a bad connotation; however, the verb epithumeo, which is usually translated "lust," is used in both a good and a bad sense. It is used of Jesus in Luke 22:15; it is used of the angels in I Pet. 1:12; it is used of good men for good things in Matt. 13:17; I Tim. 3:1; Heb. 6:11. It is used in a bad sense to denote evil desires in Matt. 5:28; I Cor. 10:6; Gal. 5:17.

It may be seen, therefore, that epithumeo, "lust," basically means simply to have a desire or longing for something. Whether this is a good desire or bad desire must be determined from the context.

WHAT ABOUT MATTHEW 5:28?

In Matt. 5:28 epithumeo is used in the sense of coveting a woman illicitly for sexual purposes. In fact, the text, in its more literal phraseology, says, "everyone who sees a woman (seeing a woman) to covet her (lust for her) has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

It is clear from the construction of the sentence that Jesus is not speaking of a fleeting or momentary thought that might pass through one's mind. Such a thought might come into one's mind and then just as quickly go, being dispelled by more noble mental activity.

The present participle translated "looketh" in the King James Version of Matt. 5:28 would suggest

continued, purposed, mental activity. Further, the phrase "to lust after her" suggests "with a view to lusting after her." In ether words, the stated design of the "looking" is illicit sexual activity.

REVIEW OF THE SPEARS-WADE DEBATE

J. T. Smith, Oklahoma City, Okla.

For those of you who could not attend the debate between brethren Dudley Ross Spears and Ronnie F. Wade, let me say unto you that you missed the opportunity of a lifetime to hear two men get on the polemic platform and discuss their differences as gentlemen and Christians. Never have I (and I have heard dozens of others express the same sentiment) witnessed any discussion carried on with better spirit on the part of any two men. And, even though both men pressed their points, there was never a time when either one became angry.

Not only did both men conduct themselves in this high fashion, but both men seemed well prepared to present their conviction on what they believed the Bible taught with regard to their propositions.

I realize that when one is so closely connected with a discussion as I was with this one, it is difficult to give an un-biased account, and yet I shall attempt to do so.

Brother Wade affirmed the first night that the fruit of the vine used in the Lord's Supper could be served in only one container to the congregation, and based it on **Matt. 26:27**), where Jesus took the cup and blessed it. Brother Wade and those who endorse his position believe that **the cup** that is spoken of here refers to the **container**. Brother Spears contended that **the cup** that is spoken of in the New Testament never referred to the container but to the contents. He used **Matt. 26:27-28**, to show that when Jesus took "the cup" vs. 27, he identified it as His blood by saying, "this is my blood," the word THIS referring to "the cup." Brother Wade brought up the fact that when Paul talked about **the cup** in **I Cor. 11:25**, he recognized this as a figure of speech called "metonymy." The word "metonymy" simply means "The container standing in the place of the thing contained." Brother Wade recognized this in many passages, but would not recognize it in other passages. Brother Wade believed that all the apostles put their lips to the same container because the Scripture says "drink ye all of it," or "all of you drink (ek) out of it!!" Notice the Greek word (ek) which means "of" or "out of." Brother Spears showed the fallacy of this argument by showing that according to **John 4:12** Jacob and his sons and his cattle **all** drank of (ek) Jacobs well. But, this didn't mean that they all put their lips to the well. They all could have been drinking of the well at the same time by using different containers for the water.

Then on the third and fourth nights, the propositions involved Bible Classes and women teachers. Brother Wade contended that the Bible class was an un-Scriptural arrangement because you cannot find it in the Bible where such an arrangement per se was ever used. However, brother Spears pointed out that if a thing was **lawful** that several different "arrangements" could be used to expedite the command. Brother Wade admitted it would be expedient to have

an arrangement with a radio station for a program to teach, to make arrangements for tracts or church papers to be printed as a medium through which to teach, and he also admitted that you could not find an example of these arrangements but that it would be all right to use them. But even though he **allowed** these things with a command or apostolic example, he still contended that we were wrong for using the Bible classes as an arrangement for teaching the Bible. He **had** to say that or give up his proposition. We pray he will do the latter.

Brother Wade said that a woman could teach privately, informally, or in an individual capacity — and that she could teach children according to **I Tim. 2:11-22**, **I Cor. 14:35**, **Tit. 2:3**. Brother Spears pointed out that even though our Bible study was in a public building, that it was a private class arranged according to classification of age and mental ability, and thus even according to brother Wade's own argument that she would not be prohibited. There are only two restrictions placed on women teaching. One is in the public assembly (**I Cor. 14**), the other is over the man (**I Tim. 2:11-12**).

The services were well attended with around 600 to 800 each evening. The deportment of the audience was exceptionally fine.

If you would like to obtain copies of the debate on tape, you may write to brother H. E. Phillips, P. O. Box 17244, Tampa, Florida, and you can get all four night for \$12.00. This is the next best thing to being there.

Debate Tapes

OF THE

SPEARS-WADE DEBATE
1965

FIRST NIGHT: "The Bible plainly teaches that an assembly of the church of Christ for the communion must use one cup, drinking vessel, in the distribution of the fruit of the vine."

WADE AFFIRMS — SPEARS DENIES

SECOND NIGHT: "The Bible plainly teaches that an assembly of churches of Christ for the communion may use individual cups, drinking vessels, in the distribution of the fruit of the vine."

SPEARS AFFIRMS — WADE DENIES

THIRD NIGHT: "The Bible plainly teaches that when the church comes together for the purpose of teaching the Bible, it is scriptural to divide into classes for the teaching some of which may be done by both men and women."

SPEARS AFFIRMS — WADE DENIES

FOURTH NIGHT: "The Bible plainly teaches that when the church comes together for the purpose of teaching the Bible, it must remain in this undivided assembly for this teaching, and this teaching must be done by men only, speaking one by one."

WADE AFFIRMS — SPEARS DENIES

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The News Letter Reports

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

LEE GUNTER- A GREAT MAN HAS FALLEN!

Carrol R. Sutton, Albertville, Ala

Lee Gunter was born in Blount County, Alabama on January 25, 1925. He preached his first sermon in Boaz, Alabama in 1947 and his last one in Plant City, Florida on July 7, 1965. Although a relatively young man, Bro. Gunter preached the gospel of Jesus Christ nearly eighteen years. His preaching carried him into six states. He preached in the following states: Alabama, Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, Missouri and Florida. He did regular local work at the following place: Sharpe, Kentucky in 1949-1950, Ashland City, Tennessee in 1951-52, East Albertville in Albertville, Alabama in 1952-1960, Stevens Avenue in Huntsville, Alabama in 1960-1963, Largo, Florida in 1963-1964 and Merritt Island, Florida in 1964-1965.

Bro. Gunter departed from this life on July 27, 1965 in the Huntsville Hospital, Huntsville, Alabama at the age of forty years. He is survived by his wife, Mrs. Willie Lee Black Gunter and one daughter, Mrs. James Ray Ford of St. Petersburg, Florida and a number of other relatives. At the time of his death, he was residing at 1111 Hickory Lane, Cocoa, Florida. Funeral services were conducted by Charles G. Maples, Quentin McCay, Arvid McGuire, Baxter Evans and this writer. His body was laid to rest in Marshall Memory Gardens at Albertville, Alabama to await the resurrection.

When Abner, the son of Ner died, David, King of Israel, said unto his servants: "Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel" (II Sam. 3:38). It is the judgment of this writer that these words very aptly describe Bro. Gunter. Although he made some mistakes, he was a great man! No, he was not considered great by the people of the world. He did not possess worldly wisdom or wealth. He did not make any outstanding achievements in the political, social, scientific or entertainment fields. Neither was he popular with the world because he was not of this world.

He was great because he was a man of faith! At an early age his faith in God and in Jesus Christ as being God's Son moved him in obedience to the first principles of the oracles of God. Thus upon a confession of his faith, he was baptized into Christ. He believed the Bible to be inspired of God and was willing to accept its teaching as he learned the truth. His faith caused him to move with fear in his worship and service to God.

He was a man of courage! He had an uncompromising spirit when truth was involved. He did not shun his duty to rebuke error. Those who knew him and heard him preach did not wonder where he stood. On different occasions he preached a sermon on "NO MIDDLE GROUND." He reproved sin and error wherever he saw it existing — whether out of or in the church. Although his preaching was with great boldness and plainness of speech, it was characterized by a kind disposition.

He was a lover of truth! He realized the importance of truth. It was valued very highly by him. He hated error. His battle against spiritual error and wickedness was an aggressive one. His love for the truth and the Lord's Church and his hatred for human systems was evidenced by his preaching.

He was a man of humility! Although Bro. Gunter was courageous enough to fight sin and error wherever he saw it raise its ugly head, he did so realizing his weaknesses and feeling his dependence upon God. Pride and arrogance were no part of his life. He endeavored to glorify God. He was humble enough to perform any needed service.

He was a man of hope. His thoughts often centered on the beauties and grandeur of heaven because he spoke of them often. He lived and died in hope of eternal salvation.

It has not been the purpose of this writer to "glorify" Bro. Gunter but to simply give "honor" where "honor" is due. This writer feels a personal loss in the departing of Lee Gunter. I feel that my life, as well as hundreds of others, has been enriched by my knowledge of and association with this humble servant of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Aude, McKee, Murray, Ky. — I have now been in Murray a little over two weeks (from Sept. 9, 1965). The first Sunday we had 31 both morning and night and the contribution was a little over \$140. Last Sunday we had 57 in the morning and 41 at night, with a contribution of \$153. We have high hopes for the West Murray church.

Robert J. LaCoste, Glendale, Ariz. — Bill E. Fain of Portland, Oregon, will be with the 60th and LaMar Road church in Glendale, October 17-24 for a gospel meeting. I am the local preacher at 60th and LaMar Road.

I will be in a meeting at Portland, Oregon where brother Fain preaches September 12-19. I will also be in McMinneville, Oregon, where Choice L. Bryant is the faithful preacher, September 26-October 3; and with the church in Powell, Wyoming October 6-13; and with the Miller Valley, Prescott, Arizona church November 14-21.

FLORIDA COLLEGE LECTURES

Keep in mind the lecture week at Florida College, Tampa, Florida during the week of January 24-27, 1966. The subjects and speakers will be announced later. By making note of this date you can make preparations to attend these lectures.

Maurice W. Jackson, Jr., Titusville, Fla. — After four years of a most enjoyable and rewarding work with the church in Titusville, Florida, I am bringing my labor with this church to a close. At the moment we can recall some 12 baptisms and 14 res-

tortations over these four years. The church was small and still is, but is growing—steadily. The present average attendance is approximately 85. While there is yet much work to be done, these figures do indicate the constant progress that has been, and continues to be, made. The church is worthy of recommendation as a sound and faithful congregation.

The Lord willing, we will begin work with the Stevens Avenue church, 1500 Stevens Avenue, N. E., Huntsville, Alabama in October. This is a faithful congregation, with two worthy elders, brethren **L. F. Kilpatrick** and **George Curtis**. With anticipation we look forward to this new field of labor. In addition, we feel extremely fortunate in being associated with two excellent co-laborers in the city, brethren **Arvid K. McGuire** and **Marshall E. Patton**.

PREACHER WANTED

Maurice W. Jackson, Jr., Titusville, Fla. — The church in Titusville, Florida desires to secure the services of a full-time sound and able gospel preacher. The Titusville area is growing. Peace and harmony prevail, and the future is one of promise. The congregation is sound, and stands foursquare against the tide of liberalism. Any experienced and able gospel preacher interested in moving to Titusville please contact **Ed Barker**, P. O. Box 1384, Titusville, Florida 32780.

Presently the preaching is being done by brother Max Gregory, of Orlando, Florida. Brother Gregory is a deacon with the Holden Heights church in Orlando, and is an able proclaimer of the gospel. We feel very fortunate in having the benefit of his services while looking for a permanent preacher.

GOSPEL MEETING

Maurice **Barnett** of Phoenix, Arizona will be the speaker in a series of gospel services with the church meeting at 2323 South 46th St., Fort Smith, Arkansas, October 3-10. Services nightly at 7:30. **Cecil B. Douthitt** is the local preacher.

Floyd Thompson was with **Luther G. Roberts** and the Market Street church in Salem, Oregon, September 19-26 in a gospel meeting.

W. M. Tally, Jr., Columbus, Miss. — It has been some time since we submitted a report concerning the work here, so here is what is happening in this area.

The East Columbus church has recently begun to help in the support of two fine gospel preachers. **W. Eural Bingham** at Corinth, Mississippi, and **Lynn D. Headrick** located at Tuscaloosa, Alabama. It is our desire to eventually expand this program to include other worthy men who are in need of assistance.

We are conducting a radio program with a different twist. The program is entitled "Fone-Forum" and it gives the radio audience an opportunity to call on their telephone and ask their questions live on-the-air. As you might suppose this set-up pro-

vides us with many opportunities for answering false doctrine. Brother **Aubrey Belue**, and **L. E. Murray** are the elders overseeing this work. Brothers Belue, Murray and **Hampton Couchman** are a tremendous asset to this work. We are hopeful that the program will create much interest as time goes by.

We are also busy in the selection of qualified men to serve as deacons for this church.

So you can see we are busily engaged in teaching the gospel to the limits of our ability, but that does not mean we are satisfied with our efforts now, nor do we envision a time this side of eternity that we will be.

For the information of any that may wish to know, we want to report that there is not a faithful church in Starkville, Mississippi. This is where Mississippi State University is located. If you have a son or a daughter that will be attending there this year we would like to invite them to attend at East Columbus or the Highway 45 N. church in West Point, Miss. Both of these congregations are about twenty miles from Starkville, Miss. For further information you may write **W. M. Tally**, 105 Gaylane Dr., Columbus, Mississippi.

GOSPEL MEETING

TARPON SPRINGS CHURCH OF CHRIST

TARPON SPRINGS, FLORIDA
on Orange Avenue

October 17-24, 1965

H. E. Phillips, speaker

7:30 nightly

ALONG THE FAR WESTERN U. S.-MEXICO BORDER: Monthly Report, August 31, 1965.
Charles F. House, P.O. Box 641, San Luis, Arizona USA — 85349.

TIJUANA, BAJA CALIFORNIA, MEXICO:

We give thanks unto God for the second wonderful opportunity of helping to establish a church standing for the truth here in this great sin-filled city of more than 250,000 people. We (conservatives) lost our first opportunity 11 and 10 years ago due to general indifference. Brethren, let's not let the devil win again. It's true, he has won several battles (some very recently), but the victory belongs to the Lord. HE WILL WIN, either with or without you and me. You and I can be a part of the victory if WE remain faithful and do our part. He promised He would be with his people until the end of the world, and He cannot lie. Do you believe Matt. 6:33? We in Mexico do.

FILIBERTO PREACHES THE TRUTH IN HIS FORMER DENOMINATION:

As I reported last month, **Filiberto Jiminez**, the former **Church of God** denominational preacher who obeyed the Gospel last December moved here recently with his family to oppose sin and liberalism, and plant the truth. Filiberto, his wife and daughter,

Marvel (my wife), one other North American, and I, presently make up the church here of six members worshipping here regularly. Filiberto is partially supported by the local church. He augments his income by selling vitamins and patent medicines, plus benevolence on the part of individual members of the local church. In addition to Filiberto's preaching the truth several nights per week to 100 or more people in his former denominational church building, he is also conducting private classes among his friends in their homes, in the interest of the truth.

HOUSE FAMILY CONDUCTS 40 CLASSES THIS MONTH:

On Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays of each week, Marvel and I conducted a total of 40 classes of one to two hours duration, each. This included my preaching each Sunday morning at Tijuana, and several times at Tecate. Average attendance at Tecate, including non-member visitors was 20. At Tijuana, it averaged 12 to 15, including non-member visitors. Contributions at Tijuana this month were over \$90. Filiberto used this to buy food for himself, his wife and eight children. A new baby is expected next month. Benevolence on the part of individual members of the local church, in a little over 30 days, amounted to \$245. This was also given to Filiberto, which included two month's rent, medicine, lights, clothing and shoes for the children, plus getting his old car in running shape, while he tries to build up a clientele of customers for his vitamins and patent medicines. Next month, he hopes to buy new tires for his car. He has received no income since leaving the denomination last December, but in the next few months, these expenses will not be so great, Lord willing.

INDIVIDUAL BENEVOLENCE:

I do not make a habit of publicly reporting individual benevolence, because the Lord knows about it, and also it comes under the heading of personal business, and not church business. We in Mexico understand and accept the fact that heartache and suffering is part of life itself. We have no government agencies to feed the hungry, thus we as individual Christians, share with our neighbors and brethren, on an individual basis, with what we have been blessed. This is scriptural. We make plain to all people that the Church of Christ does not give out food and clothing to non-members because this is not the church's business. We teach that preaching the Gospel, doing certain acts of benevolence for the needy saints, plus edification of the local church is the business of the local church. Individual burdens are carried by individuals. In Mexico, along the U.S.-Mexico border, individual benevolence plays a great part in the lives of all of us. Thus, when Mexican preachers are practically the only ones with anything like near a regular income, think about the things he is expected to support on an individual basis, and pray fervently for him. If all the facts were made public, and they will be at the judgment, it just might be proven that he has been helping 50% or more of his total income. We should never begrudge any preacher (Mexican or American) his support. If he is a dedicated bond servant of Christ, whatever amount he gets is still not enough. He and

the Lord know and understand his own local problems better than any one else. Pray for him fervently, or not at all.



JOHN S. JOHNS-GOSPEL PREACHER

Paul Nagy, Dayton, Ohio

Brother John S. Johns is the faithful preacher for the Lord's church in the little town of Winchester, Ohio. He was born November 13, 1871. At 94 years of age his mind is still unbelievably sharp and his ability to reason is extraordinary. He obeyed the gospel when he was 17 years old at West Liberty, Indiana. His life is a great example for every gospel preacher. He started preaching when he was 35 years of age and has given almost 60 years of service to the Master's cause. Prior to that time he made his livelihood as a barber. The church helped him get started by sending him to Morris' 14 weeks Bible study. The Morris method was to have a few verses read and then comment on them, completing the entire Bible in 14 weeks. Brother Johns found this a suitable method and uses it to this day.

When I visited brother Johns for this interview he was working on his sermon for the following Lord's day. He titled it: The Progress and Development in Nature of the Plan of Redemption. When asked his opinion on the general condition of the church today, he replied, "The congregations that are loyal today are much better informed." I inquired as to what advice he would share with young preachers. He answered: "Preach the word in season and out, and keep in mind that the scripture is profitable for doctrine." He recalled that W. W. Otey one time in a meeting at Payola, Indiana stood on the town square and announced in a voice that could be heard down the street: "Hear ye, hear ye, there will be a baptizing at the creek at 4:00 o'clock." Brother Johns said it wasn't very uncommon for brother

Searching The Scriptures is a religious publication, devoted to the study of God's word. It is owned by H. E. Phillips and James P. Miller, editors, with an average circulation during the past twelve months of 5,275 per month. H. E. Phillips is managing editor. The subscription price is \$2.50 per year.

Otey to baptize up to a hundred people in a meeting. While talking about brother Otey I asked brother Johns about the Otey-Briney debate. He said he remembered Daniel Sommers comment about it. "Sommers said it will make a good book to read."

COMMENTS ON THE MUSIC DIGRESSION

Brother Johns said much about the division over mechanical instruments of music. I include here just a few of the "gems." "When the lines were drawn there, were only 13 congregations north of Indianapolis that remained loyal." "Restrictive clauses began to be put in deeds about 1907." "I had an uncle named Dave Quick, and because he wouldn't accept the organ they called him Dave Slow." "One congregation (against the wishes of some of the brethren) put the organ in and to keep the brethren from getting it they nailed the door shut from the inside. This caused a brother to say, 'When Moses came down from the mountain there was the golden calf.' What happened resulted in a court trial. The judge was running for re-election so he worked out a compromise. He let half meet on one side of the building at a certain time and the other half meet at another time."

COMMENTS ABOUT HIMSELF

There is nothing that could better characterize brother Johns than these statements I managed to get him to make about himself. "I was taught that if the three "R's" could be mastered, one was prepared for life." "One fellow had the audacity to ask me what college I went to." "To prepare myself to preach I was told to go out and talk to the jack rabbits, learn to hear myself talk and talk to the person in the back of the room." "We always fought the pastoral system back there" (referring to preacher control).

A PLEASANT MEMORY

In the infancy of his preaching, the congregation with which brother Johns labored had a gentleman by the name of Harvey who came for a meeting. At the conclusion of one of the services A. W. Dicus (a name quite familiar to brethren over the country) came forward in response to the gospel invitation. They all journeyed down to the river where brother Harvey told young, inexperienced brother Johns to put the boots on to baptize A. W. Dicus. It was the dry season and they had to wade "way out yonder." The water was cold and brother Dicus told brother Johns to wait a minute. Brother Harvey, thinking that brother Johns didn't know what to do, kept shouting across the water, "Don't forget the ceremony, brother Johns." Finally, thinking brother Johns forgot what to say, brother Harvey hollered across the water, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit," upon which brother Johns immersed brother Dicus.

John S. Johns is a great inspiration to all those who know him. Those who have heard him read the scriptures as he introduces his lessons realize the many years of study he has done to place proper emphasis on every word. Recently, while in his home, I noticed the many Bibles he has used and does use now in his constant battle against spiritual wickedness. Undoubtedly, they bring back many memories for him. Some discouraging and others

which brought glory to our God. Considering all of them brother Johns still says with an air of optimism to those younger than he, "Preach the word." We wish for brother Johns and his good wife many more happy years and thank them for their accomplishments in the cause of Christ in this area. If you are ever in the area and want to be edified, stop for a few minutes and visit with him. He will be happy to see you.

TO SANTIAGO, CHILE IN JUNE, 1966

Walter D. Bunnell, P.O. Box 423
National City, Calif. 92050

Nearly two thousand years ago Jesus gave the apostles the great commission to go forth with the Gospel and to preach it to all nations. Later we hear Paul saying to the young preacher Timothy, "And the things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also." During his personal ministry, Christ said, "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white already unto harvest" (John 19:37. Again, "The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest" (Luke 10:2). The harvest is still plenteous and the laborers are still few. The need to go forth is just as urgent today as when Christ spoke the above words.

For the past year I have attended night classes in the local high school studying the Spanish language, spending six hours each week in class work. Lord willing I will be attending classes again starting September 14th. My wife will be attending this fall also. This study of Spanish is the beginning of our preparations to go forth preaching to those who speak Spanish. We have decided to locate in Santiago, Chile. The need for preachers there is acute. The opportunities there are great, as the people are sick of Catholicism. Brother Philip Morgan and his family are already there and have offered to assist us in any way possible, and I know that they will be of much help to us.

I have been corresponding with Brother Morgan about the work in Santiago and about the needs of a preacher and his family. We will need \$500 per month personal support and work fund. We estimate our passage aboard ship and freight cost at \$1800. We are now partially supported by churches and individuals. If we can keep most of our present support we will need only \$300 additional support and our travel expense.

If you are interested in having a part in this great work please write us for further details of our plans. We will be glad to answer any questions you may wish to ask about us.

Why not assist us in this effort to carry the Gospel to people who would not otherwise hear the Gospel even once? There are hundreds of thousands of people in Chile who will live and die without ever hearing the Gospel unless we take it to them. We plan to remain in Chile indefinitely. May we hear from you?

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HISTORY OF APOSTASIES

Tom Bunting, Miami, Florida

It seems that some find it hard to believe that the people of God could ever be wrong. When they do realize that there are two opposing views among the children of God it is hard for them to accept the fact that either one or both must be wrong.

Yet, if one makes a casual study of the Bible we find that the people of God were quite frequently in the process of falling away. The people of God have transgressed before so it comes as not too much of a surprise should we find them falling again. Why do we always think of an apostasy as something that happened before but can't happen now? There has been a long history of apostasies. One could begin with the garden of Eden, but we shall begin with the children of Israel in the wilderness.

They are only a few days out of Egypt and across the Red Sea when we find the people of Israel murmuring against God. When they came to Marah and the water was bitter so that they could not drink they murmured. Again on the fifteenth day of the second month they murmured for they were tired of the food they had and wished that they were back in Egypt where they could get all they wanted to eat (Ex. 16). Then not many weeks later while Moses was up on Mt. Sinai receiving the ten commandments, the people were busy making a golden calf. And Aaron proclaimed, "These are thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt" (Ex. 32:4). They rose up early the next day and offered burnt offerings. They had not learned their lesson. So when the spies returned from their visit into the promised land the people were afraid to go in and fight. Caleb admonished them to go ahead. He told them that they could defeat the people but they listened unto the others, who said that they could not. So they wandered for forty years in the wilderness. Surely, now they have learned their lesson.

Finally the children of Israel enter the land of Canaan and they possess the land. God sets over them judges to rule. The people served the Lord all the days of Joshua and the elders that had seen the work of the Lord. But there was another generation that knew not the Lord and they did evil in the sight of God, followed other gods, provoked the Lord to anger and forsook the Lord. They could now no longer stand before their enemies (Judges 2:6-14). This expresses precisely the story of Israel under the judges. They served the Lord under the leadership of judges like Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah, Gideon, Abimelech. But when they for-

sook the Lord, and they did many times, they could no longer stand before their enemies and were defeated by Mesopotamia, Moab, Jabin, Midian, etc.

One would have thought that they had learned their lesson after the first defeat, or at least the second, but it happened time and time again. Near the end of the life of the last judge, Samuel, the people felt that God's organization was inadequate. They began to cry for a king (I Sam. 8:6-7). They hadn't learned. God says, "And ye have this day rejected your God... (I Sam. 10:19). The prophets that followed, Ezra and Nehemiah, were deliverers of Gods people. However, by the time Christ came to this earth they had departed so far from the word of God that they knew more of the traditions than the commands of God. They had made void the commandments by their traditions (Mk. 7:13; Matt. 15:6).

Apostasies were not limited to the people under the old law. Jesus frequently warned the people of false prophets and false Christs. He told them to beware of false prophets that would come in sheeps clothing but inwardly they were ravening wolves (Matt. 7:15).

Similar warnings were repeated to the church. One would have thought that by this time they had learned their lesson from the examples of those under the old law; but not so. Paul warned the elders that after his departing grievous wolves would enter in not sparing the flock, and men from among your own selves would arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples from them (Acts 20:28-30). Paul warned Timothy, "The spirit speaketh expressly that some shall depart from the faith... (I Tim. 3:1). John warns, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits to see whether they be of God" (I John 4:1). It didn't take long for the signs of this apostasy to appear. Paul says, "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work; ... (II Thess. 2:7).

In this falling away the elders began to vie for power within a congregation. And when this power resided in a single elder then he would reach out and exercise authority over other congregations. Soon there was the formation of synods, councils, and associations. A few hundred years after the establishment of the Lord's church it had lost all or any of its marks of identity.

Men realizing that they had completely departed from the plan of God began, what is commonly called, the restoration. They realized that God is not the God of confusion (I Cor. 14:33). They knew through a study of the word of God that God was not pleased with religious division (Eph. 4:4-6); Jno. 17:20,21). Unity could be achieved by a return to the will of God.

It was realized that the departures from the truth could be solved. But solved only one way; by restoring the church of the New Testament. This would be done by speaking where the Bible speaks. If any man speak let him speak as the oracles of God (I Pet. 4:11). There must be the greatest respect for the authority of the scriptures. This plan was followed and the movement known as the restoration began. They restored, (as they had set out to do), the name of the church, the acts of worship, the conditions of membership, and the organization. Each was restored according to the

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authority in the word of God. They would do all that the Bible said, but no more than what it said!

However, the restoration was not long under way before signs of controversy again appear. Efforts were soon in motion to organize the churches into a missionary alliance or society. At first this society claimed no authority. They said that they would not exercise any authority over the churches. There was considerable excitement across the brotherhood. The controversy resolved itself into two major arguments. One was that the church could not do its work and therefore the society was necessary. The second argument was against the formation of such a society. They ask, "Where is the authority?" Pendleton, who favored the society, answered the question. He said, "We concede the point there are no scriptures, So what? Is everything unscriptural wrong?" Here we have the real issue expressed. The motto which they had been using for years, speak as the oracles of God, was now changed. It took on a new meaning. Prior to this time most brethren understood this to mean the unauthorized was forbidden. They understood that they could not and should not do that for which there was no authority. They had used this to sweep everything and challenge the sectarian bodies. So when brethren projected the missionary society, others naturally inquired, "Where is the authority?" Many individuals and congregations were lost to digression but the church weathered the storm and the faithful came out stronger. It was assumed that the principle was now understood about the authority of the scriptures. But what we thought was understood apparently was not.

The controversy then is the same as now, now the same as it was then. Today we have many brethren contending that the church can't do its work. They are suggesting that the wisdom of man is wiser than the wisdom of God. With the issues at hand we hear the echo of Pendleton in the words of brethren today, saying, "We concede that there is no scripture, but is everything unscriptural wrong? We thought that they had learned this lesson years ago but apparently not. There is probably no one as inconsistent as a member of the church on the road of digression. In questions of current interest, (societies, hospitals, homes for the unwed, orphan homes, colleges), we hear the cry, "we don't need scriptures." Yet, scriptures are demanded of others! They need them but we don't! The denominational world is asked for authority (scriptures) for the names they wear, for the way they worship, the type of organization they have. We demanded it of those who introduced instrumental music and the missionary society. Then should we not also demand it of those who introduce into the church: benevolent societies, sponsoring churches, gospel press, colleges? Is this asking too much? Are we unfair?

As in all cases of apostasy of the past, the present problems resolve themselves into two parts: (1) The question of authority. (2) The problem of or-

ganization. The question regarding authority is not an unfair question for it was used in answer to a problem in the days of the apostles in Acts 15:24. The wishes of man to change the organization as established by God has always been a major cause of all apostasies. From the time that the children of Israel desired a king, to the great apostasy in the early years of the church, and the establishment of the missionary society; men were trying to change the way God had planned the organization. Now, today we are faced with the same two problems: organization and authority. Men are contending that the church as God has organized it cannot do that which it must do. Therefore they need to reorganize and devise a better plan. However, in order to change the organization of the church they are forced to the position that they do not need authority. So they find themselves contending for that for which there is no scriptural authority. Once this position is taken then we open ourselves to all kinds and/or forms of digression. Now they even take up a contribution, not on the first day of the week, but on Thursday or some other day during the week. Where is the authority? It doesn't matter they say. They have no authority for their contributions to colleges, orphan homes, hospitals, neither do they have one for their mid-week collections. As Pendleton said, "is everything unscriptural wrong?" It is! but some brethren have yet to learn this lesson.

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