

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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BACK to the SCRIPTURES

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PRESUMPTION

"Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me" (Psalm 19:10).

Have you ever taken a hard, straight look at presumption? Chances are that you have met him and did not enjoy it a bit. He is obnoxious, assuming liberties with a calm and confidence that stuns the average person. Is he for real? Presumption is personified as the boy who goes around telling all his friends that a certain girl (whom he has never dated) is crazy about him, is going to break her engagement to her present fiance, and then they will marry at the first of the summer. It never occurred to presumption that he should ask first, or that she just might say no. Presumption is the fellow who takes his hospitalized neighbor's car on a thousand mile trip (without asking), comes bouncing into the sickroom with reports of what a fine car it is and how great the trip was, and compliments the stunned owner with an "I knew you wouldn't mind since you were sick and couldn't use it yourself." Presumption is your house guest who opens your mail, calls you at work and reads the letter to you, and then takes it in hand to write an answer for you. Presumption makes plans for you, commits you to obligations, openly and freely asks personal questions, and acts as if your mind and your things are for his own personal inspection and entertainment. There is one good thing about presumption (this is what he likes about himself) — he is not a sneak. No sir. He is open. If only he weren't so ... so presumptuous!

The presumptuous person obviously does not see himself as he is, or as others see him. He certainly needs to be corrected, but this is most difficult. In the nature of the case presumption's blindness is exceeded only by its confidence. By definition it is "supposition of the truth ... without direct or positive proof of the fact;... something taken for granted or assumed to be true until proved otherwise" (Webster).

Every illustration offered was one of a supposition without direct or positive proof of the will of the one imposed upon, a taking for granted what it wanted to take for granted and which is held with unquestioning confidence "until proved otherwise." That means presumption will be halted only by being challenged and having its hand called. It requires a confrontation of some kind, or else it continues on its merry way.

However distasteful and repelling presumption is in the social and business affairs of the common day, it is infinitely more so in religion. Social presumption imposes on one's neighbor; religious presumption imposes on God. Many ugly and disruptive scenes have occurred in social and business circles when presumption was halted by a challenge, and it has been no less so in religious matters. But there is one significant difference. The same presumption that is commonly deplored in society is popularly practiced in religion. Many a man gives God a treatment in the name of piety that he would be embarrassed to give his next door neighbor in the name of courtesy.

The proof of the proposition is to be found simply by reading the definition again, to wit: "supposition of the truth ... without direct or positive proof of the fact." How much supposition have men done in religion? How many doctrines are preached and practiced because men think they are "good" though they admittedly have no direct or positive proof in Scripture? Look again: "... something taken for granted or assumed to be true until proved otherwise." The time-worn argument, "the Bible doesn't say not to," is nothing other than the voice of presumption whether it be spoken by the advocate of sprinkling for immersion, instrumental music, church-sponsored recreation or societies to do the work of the church. But my interest just here is not in detailing any of

the many practices issuing from sheer presumption; it is rather to focus attention on the nature of presumption.

Imagine again the man who took bold and unauthorized liberties with his hospitalized neighbor's car. And what of the guest who had the gargantuan gall to rip open the host's mail and to pen a reply based on his own reactions? This is man in his dealings with God! He presumes to know what God likes and thinks in areas where God has said nothing. He presumes to speak in the name of Christ doctrines found nowhere in the word of Christ. He presumes to command and to approve practices utterly unknown to the New Testament.

What an indictment for a man to resent and deplore presumption in his fellow man regarding trifling matters of the common day, and then turn around with calm assurance and smug piety and to speak in the name of God that which God has not spoken, and to practice as the will of God that which God has not authored. The Bible says, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (I Thess. 5:21). "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name (by the authority) of the Lord Jesus ..." (Col. 3:17). "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me" (Psalm 19:10).

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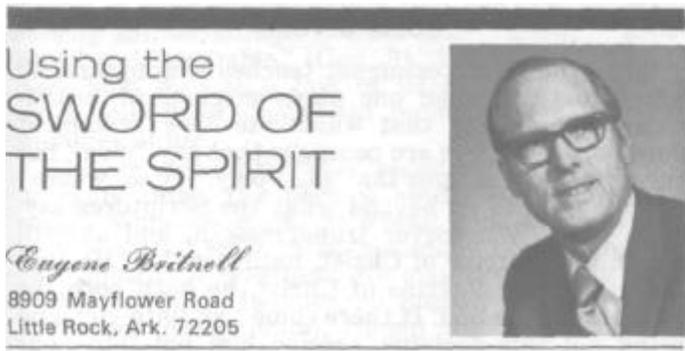
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CORRECTION

In the January issue of this paper, I made some statements about a Mormon temple which is being erected near Washington, D. C. It has been called to my attention that I implied that the Mormons sprinkle for baptism. I can see that I did, and I want to correct that. I knew better. They are guilty of enough error as it is without charging them with something of which they are not guilty.

THE VALUE OF TIME

In a current television commercial, the statement is made, "Today is the first day of the rest of your life." How true that is — with any day. Regardless of what we have or have not done, each day is a good time to begin again for a better life. The apostle Paul said, "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Eph. 5:15,16). To "redeem" time, as it is here used, means, "buying up the opportunity, i.e., making the most of every opportunity, turning each to the best advantage since none can be recalled if missed" (W. E. Vine).

Goethe said, "Time is infinitely long and each day is a vessel into which a great deal may be poured, if one will actually fill it up." Americans have more time-saving devices and less time than any other people in the world. Time gives us an opportunity to do something worthwhile for God, ourselves and others. Remember, footprints in the sands of time were not made sitting down.

OBSERVING DAYS

Do you remember when all gospel preachers used to quote Galatians 4:10,11 and condemn the sectarians for observing such days as Christmas, Easter and Halloween? Not any more. I can prove that some churches of Christ in this area have observed these and more. I have a brochure advertising an area wide Valentine youth banquet which was sponsored by the Northside Church of Christ in Benton, Arkansas. Where is the scriptural authority for the Lord's church supporting a Valentine banquet? Like the majority of other "holy" days, this one originated in Catholicism.

When Floyd A. Decker left the Christian Church, he wrote an article in 1944 giving thirteen reasons why he left. One of them was, "The Christian Church celebrates days of heathen worship, such as Easter,

Mother's Day and Christmas; the church of Christ does not (Gal. 4:10)." They do now, all over the country. On this point, as well as many others which he mentioned, many churches of Christ are as unscriptural as the Christian Church has ever been!

ABORTION AND CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

"In ruling on abortions, the Supreme Court traveled down a new path, exploring probably for the first time such questions as when does life begin and whether the unborn have any constitutional rights."

Thus reads the first paragraph in an Associated Press article concerning the Supreme Court's recent ruling on abortion. Now that the Court has ruled on the right to take life at both ends — abortion and capital punishment — let us see where we stand.

The Court has ruled that the State may permit the killing of the unborn, but may not permit the killing of the adult criminal. The reasoning (if that's the right word) seems to be this: It is right to kill the innocent, but if the innocent lives, and then kills the innocent, it is wrong to kill the guilty. I don't get it!

I believe in the courts of our land. I am not trying to discredit the Supreme Court, but I believe in the higher laws of God and that even the Court should consider His will. As I understand it, the Court's decisions on life and death are the exact reverse of the laws of God. Will He continue to bless a nation under such influence ?

NATION-WIDE

Many of us have predicted that the area-wide movements among some brethren would become nation-wide. We were right. A "Nation-Wide Youth Campaign" is to be conducted in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area (Firm Foundation, Jan. 30, 1973). Thirty congregations have already promised to support it, and the elders of the Garland Road church "have assumed the oversight of this united effort." All there is left for them is to go world-wide, then eliminate all of the Garland Road elders except one, and they are right back in Rome!

HOMOSEXUALITY

As ridiculous, repulsive and incredible as normal people may find it, we must agree that homosexuality is gaining in practice and respectability. In reply to a "broken hearted mother," DEAR ABBY gave the following quote from Freud:

"Homosexuality is assuredly no advantage, but it is nothing to be ashamed of, no vice, no degradation, it cannot be classified as an illness; we consider it to be a variation of sexual functions produced by a certain arrest of sexual development."

Now, in case they are interested, let's see what God considers it to be: "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind; it is abomination." "If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them" (Lev. 18:22; 20:13). See also Romans 1:27. This sounds like God considers it a shame and a vice.

WORSHIP IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH

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ONLY "SING" IS TAUGHT

The worship of God is often perverted because men do not search the Scriptures in order to see what God has said. So often men act without ever thinking that just maybe God has said something on this subject. Men think that as long as they worship that God is pleased with what they offer. Jesus said that worship after the commandments of men was vain, therefore, it would not be received by God (Matt. 15:7-9).

Just what do the New Testament scriptures on this subject of music have to say? There are not so many passages in the New Testament on this subject but what we can list all of them here. Look at these verses to know what the New Testament says.

"SING"

(1) "And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives" (Matt. 26:30).

(2) "And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives" (Mark 14:26).

(3) "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them" (Acts 16:25).

(4) "What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also" (I Cor. 14:15).

(5) "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19).

(6) "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. 3:16).

(7) "Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee" (Heb. 2:12).

(8) "And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name" (Rom. 15:9).

Unless I have overlooked some passage, the nine passages above constitute the total of what the New Testament says on the subject of music in worship. It says singing. Therefore, I affirm and teach singing. No one will disagree that the New Testament teaches singing. Not even those who use instruments in their services will deny that the New Testament teaches singing. With this all are in agreement.

GOING BEYOND

Since the New Testament teaches singing and all agree to this, when one plays mechanical instruments he is doing that which the New Testament does not say. There are passages that say "sing" but these are no passages that say "play." If so, where?

To play is to go beyond what the Scriptures say. John said, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that bid-deth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (II John 9:11). One in such condition is not saved.

THE DEVIL: A MASTER STRATEGIST Ron Halbrook

The devil uses expert methods, or "wiles" in an effort to defeat all that is right and good (Eph. 6:11-12). He is not only subtle, or crafty, in the application of his methods, but he uses also another ingredient of success—persistent determination, determined persistence. See how he constantly "prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (I Pet. 5:8).

He knows at just what points mankind is weak, by his long experience in trying millions of souls. And™ pray God's help!—he knows at just what points each one of us is weakest. Witness how "Satan entered into Judas," stiring and fanning the flames of covetousness to a white hot; "he went away and discussed with the chief priests...and they...agreed to give him money" (Lk. 22:3-6). Demas, who (like many today) "loved this present world," fell victim to he who probes every corner of the heart, mind, and soul with evil intent (II Tim. 4:10).

A soul is lost from the bliss of heaven; the devil walked in by "the lust of the flesh" and devoured. The flames of hell will receive many who were approached by the devil through the avenue of "the lust of the eyes." "The boastful pride of life" has been the downfall of millions—millions literally, not figuratively (see I Jno. 2:15-17). Because the devil reads the hearts of men and moves accordingly, "many wise" "many mighty" and "many noble" are unconcerned, indifferent, even callous, to the call of the gospel (I Cor. 1:26). The devil manages to find all those who find "pleasure in unrighteousness;" he deludes them "that they should believe a lie;" and they "perish" are "damned" to the very last one "because they received not the love of the truth" (II Thess. 2:9-12).

In Eve's moment of weakness, the devil drove the iron wedges of rebellion into her heart with one solid blow after another. With chilling confidence, as though he saw the damning accuracy of his shot beforehand, the devil boldly lied in the presence of God and man, "You surely shall not die!" He who was "more crafty" than all the creatures of life, so

moved in cunning temptation that Eve saw sin, soul-cursing sin, as though it were truly "good," "a delight" and "desirable" (Gen. 3). And this is the same devil who sees each one of us in our most trying times, our most unguarded moments, and our extremities of life.

Though some men take "vacations" from God and heavenly duty, the devil is awake and active year round. While we work, he works; and, while we rest, he works still. We may occasionally be yielding, but he is invariably relentless. We may tire, but the devil pushes on. Hugh Latimer, an English preacher of the Protestant Reformation, caught the spirit of Satan most vividly in the following words.

"Who is the most diligentest bishop and prelate in all England that passeth all the rest in doing his office? I can tell, for I know who it is; I know him well. But now I think I see you listening and hearkening that I should name him...And will ye know who it is? I will tell you: it is the devil. He is the most diligent preacher of all other...never out his diocese...never unoccupied...ever in his parish...ever at his plough...ever applying his business, ye shall never find him idle" (The Reformation, Hans J. Hillerbrand, Harper & Row, 1964, pg. 335).

Brother Earl West bore testimony to the fact that the devil rotates his crops in his tract on *Congregational Cooperation*. How did brethren get into a web of confusion and uncertainty on the subject?

"In the past forty years, brethren have faced many other issues-chief of which is premillennialism--and consequently, we have neglected re-affirming these old principles involved in the whole problem of congregational cooperation" (pg. 27).

But, lest we forget this crop *rotation*, we might well ask ourselves: In the past fifteen years of "re-affirming these old principles involved in the problem of cooperation," have we "neglected" some "other issues" such as "premillennialism" immodesty, gambling (You would be surprised at what many "Christian" young people think about this subject!), the work of the Spirit, dancing, formalism, sectarianism, instrumental music. How does the devil seem to get *the initiative* in these matters? Too often, we give it to him by our own neglect and complacency.

The devil is A master strategist, but not THE master strategist. For God ALL-MIGHTY, "hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 1:3; 3:11). That purpose cannot be broken, even by A master strategist.

"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justified" (Rom. 8:33). Remember Satan, the Accuser, tried to heap condemnation upon Job, "a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil" (Job 1:8). He sneered in the face of God and brought railing accusation against Job. "Doth Job fear God for nought?" (1:9-10). Though Job could not find the reason behind his terrible ordeal of suffering, he could still say in child-like faith, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him" (13:15). In the end, "the Lord blessed Job" greatly, and the perverse Accuser was so soundly defeated as to be beneath mention in the closing chapter of the story.

The devil's greatest strategy move of all ages did no more than to wound his enemy's heel, for his enemy

was the Son of God. Satan used weak men, pressing for every advantage in their weakest points, to "take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." God laughed and overturned the satanic strategy and thundered from the eternal palaces of heaven, "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion" (Ps. 2). In taking the victory, Christ fatally bruised the head of Satan, wrenched from him "the keys of hades and of death," and sat down in glory at the right hand of God (Gen. 3:15; Ps. 2 with Acts 13:33; Rom. 1:4; Rev. 1:18; Acts 2:33-36).

The Good News of the Great Physician is that we need not be at the mercy of this fearful Adversary. Though man sees his own filthy rags of sin and selfishness, though he is bewildered by his own inability to direct himself safely, God is merciful (Isa. 1:16-20; Jer. 10:23). "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. 8:12).

This mercy is in the New Covenant, the Covenant sanctified and made effectual by the blood of Christ, who became "the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 8:13; 5:9; 10:1-12). Thus, by the merit of Christ and upon our obedient faith, God delivers us "from the power of darkness" and translates us "into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Col. 1:13; 2:12).

Recognizing our need for continued strength, God has prepared an entire suit of armor and weapons... the only suit stamped *made in heaven*...the only suit fortified in the power of God's might "against the wiles of the devil" (Eph. 6). Recognizing our need for continual forgiveness when we stumble for continual forgiveness when we stumble and err, God applies "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son" to our needs (I Jno. 1).

For all his mastery of strategy and human weakness, the ultimate and eternal doom of "the devil and his angels" is set. God has prepared "everlasting fire" as the final abode of Satan...and all those who serve him (Matt. 24:41).

Sinner friend, flee the wrath to come! "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (Ja. 4:7). Join in singing praises to Christ with all the hosts of God. "And they sang a new song, saying, 'Worthy art Thou...; for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. And Thou hast made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God...Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing...Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ'" (Rev. 5; I Cor. 15:57).

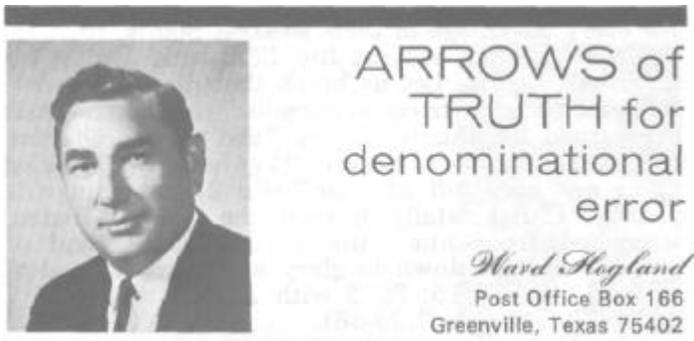
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"KEEPING IT IN CONTEXT" — NO. 3

In this series I have tried to emphasize "Keeping words in their context." Our study this month is on the word "Law." One of the reasons the book of Romans is difficult is because of this three lettered word. If you are in doubt just follow Paul as he throws this word around in the book! Sometimes I become "dizzy" when I try to figure out what LAW Paul is talking about.

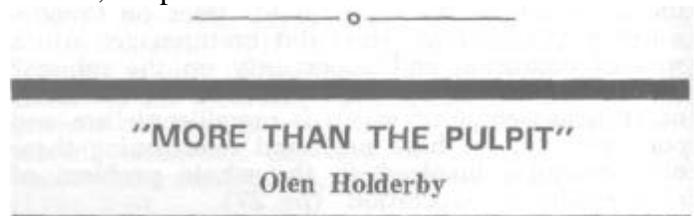
The word "law" from the noun "Nomos" is used many times in the New Testament. Since it is used in so many different ways the context must come to our rescue. W. E. Vine says, "The word 'ethos' custom was retained for unwritten law while 'nomos' became the established name for law as decreed by a state and set up as the standard for the administration of justice" (Page 313).

Another noun, akin to "nomos" is "Anomia" sometimes translated iniquity or lawlessness. In I John 3:4, the R.V. says, "Everyone that doeth sin doeth also lawlessness and sin is lawlessness." This text gives us the real definition of sin. However, it must be understood that a law must be binding on an individual before transgression could occur. For example, one could not transgress the "law" of animal sacrifice because that law is not binding today.

In Rom. 2:12-15 Paul says, "For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another). If I have counted correctly the word "Law" is used eleven times in this brief text. The next question is, what does it mean? It is apparent in the context that Paul is talking about the law of Moses in the first part of the text. When he talks about people sinning in the law, and being judged by the law it is obvious that the law of Moses is under consideration. When he talks about the Gentiles, not having the law and doing by nature the things contained in the law and thus becoming a law unto themselves, we have another problem. Paul is evidently arguing that the Gentiles will be judged by those things they knew to be right, but did not practice.

For years denominational preachers have used Rom. 3:27-28 to deny the essentiality of baptism. It reads, "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay; but by the law of faith. Therefore, we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." Baptist preachers will argue that the "deeds of the law" refer to baptism, the Lord's supper, etc. Therefore they argue that baptism does not save. However, if one will keep the verses in context he will find that Paul uses faith, not as the mental act of believing but in an objective sense. He contrasts the New Testament with the old Mosaic Law. He is teaching one is not justified by the law of Moses but by the New Testament law. In chapter five he shows that Abraham was not under the law of Moses, yet he was justified. Paul knew how stubborn the Jews were. He was trying to teach them they were not under the law of Moses. In doing this he used many illustrations.

Remember, friend, when you see the word "law" it could mean many different things. It could mean the law God gave Noah; it could mean the law he bound on the Gentiles; it could mean the law of Moses; or it could mean the perfect law of liberty. Please, keep it in context.



In that excellent publication, "Plain Talk," edited by Brother Robert Turner, Brother Dan S. Shipley had a brief but splendid article under the above title (Oct. 1971). I am indebted to Bro. Shipley for the above title and for several quotations which I shall make from his article. I have long wondered if we were wisely and with the best of judgment carrying out the instructions of the Great Commission. In many instances I am convinced that the answer must be negative. This article is an effort to examine some of "our" efforts along this line.

Brother Shipley said, "While the need for pulpit and classroom teaching cannot be discounted, it is simply not enough. We need to get out of our own 'front yard' with the incorruptible seed that can save souls!" With this statement I wholeheartedly concur. I think the need is well expressed in the second paragraph of Bro. Shipley's article, which I give here, "We must go because many will not **come**. Relatively few non-Christians are attending worship services and Bible classes. Those who do attend seldom do so with any regularity and even then are not likely to hear lessons that are most appropriate to their needs. Let's face it, most who need the gospel are not coming to our front yard to get it. If they are to be reached it will take more than the pulpit — and it will take more than the man who stands in the pulpit."

There can be no doubt that the Lord intended that every qualified member of His church be about the business of teaching others the Gospel — II Tim. 2:2. While this is accepted as true, I would now like

to deal briefly with what appears to me to be the attitude of some preachers. I have personally heard some preachers say that they would not or could not do what they seemed pleased to call "door-knocking." Most hastened to add that when called, they certainly would not decline. This simply is not the point. The Lord said, "Go," and I can find no evidence that this meant to wait until the invitation was issued. Some have more recently been quoted as saying the emphasis in the Gospel was on pulpit preaching. I do not find this to be so. While there may be some disagreement on what Bible examples might be classed as pulpit preaching, I have tried counting them with the following results: In Matthew, there are 10 examples of what might be called pulpit preaching, as compared to 49 examples of other arrangements — more closely resembling what is called "personal work" or "cottage classes" today. In Mark the ratio is 8 pulpit and 54 other; and, in Luke it is 9 to 71 in that same order. John gives 5 examples of public (pulpit) preaching to 47 that are less than public. Acts of Apostles presents the same sort of picture, giving a 29 to 60 ratio. Even allowing for a margin in judgment on this matter, it simply is not true that emphasis is on pulpit preaching. Most of the teaching done by Jesus and His apostles was done under arrangements that permitted questions and answers to repeatedly pass back and forth; and, this does not resemble the pulpit preaching of today.

I am aware that the command to teach is generic and that many methods may be used, but it would be my conclusion that apostolic example would furnish the most effective way or combination of ways for this being done. Such apostolic example is clearly set forth in Acts 20:20, "And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house." Both of these should be done by every Christian, including the preacher. I know of no truth that would cause me to feel any other way; though I realize the limitations placed upon the women folk. I am not so naive as to think that I can spell out the abilities or limits of my preaching brethren in the matter of "door-knocking." I am criticizing the attitude that prevails in some places. I trust it is not widespread.

As to the preacher doing this type of work, there are several passages worth some consideration. In II Tim. 4:1-5, we have recorded Paul's instructions to Timothy to "preach the word." Now, whose example do you think this close associate of Paul would follow in carrying out these instructions? If he should follow Paul's example, what would he have done? (Acts 20:20). Who would Timothy "reprove, rebuke, and exhort?" Would it be only those attending the public services? From the pulpits members of the church are urged to do this "door-knocking." This is as it should be, but Paul told Timothy, "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (I Tim. 4:12). By what line of reasoning would this exclude him being an example in "door-knocking?" If any one member of the church is to do such work, then every member is to do it, limited only by ability and opportunity. And, with effort both opportunity and ability can be enhanced. It appears to me that very

poor judgment is being used many times in choosing a man to begin or build up a new work. To choose a man who admittedly is not very effective in any way except the pulpit, is normally to add to the length of time necessary for "outside" support for such a work. I personally know of no such work that has been built upon pulpit preaching alone. Someone simply had to do some "door-knocking" (as to new converts). If one should say to me that he cannot do such work, I may raise an eyebrow, but will take him at his word. However, I pose the question — ought not he, then, to work in some place where the need for such is not so great? Is it doing the Cause of Christ justice by choosing to labor in a place where strong talents are needed that one simply does not possess? It is not the lack of such abilities to which I call attention, but the judgment used under such circumstances. Now, I realize that a shortage of "sound" Gospel preachers may produce a problem here, but is it not a problem that needs to be faced realistically? I have never been able to understand how some get "come" out of "go" in the Great Commission. Another quote from Bro. Shipley appears applicable here, "For these, and other reasons, it would seem a wise redemption of time for us to become more involved in this house-to-house kind of teaching. We need more kitchen-table lecterns and sofa-pews!" And again, "Let's just get out of the 'front yard' to do the sowing."

What is the advantage (s) in house-to-house teaching? Bro. Shipley expresses this better than I could, "We need to take the gospel to the lost because in their homes is often afforded the most favorable of teaching situations. There, the student is not lost in the crowd; the lessons have a more personal flavor. Where else could a student feel more 'at home' and feel free to ask pertinent questions without fear of embarrassment? There, he relates himself to the subject more readily; he hears lessons most relevant to his needs. With home studies the prevalent problem of absenteeism is almost nil. Many will keep an appointment with a teacher at home who won't do so at a church building. What better arrangement for teaching Bible truth?"

Some will criticize the idea of "door-knocking" while they reap the benefits of the "door-knocking" of others; and this certainly comes with poor grace. I am not urging indiscriminate, uninformed, and unprepared house-to-house efforts; I do insist that we need a great deal more of this type of teaching, including a dedicated effort on the part of preachers. I have said before and here state again — a preacher that will not do such work is not worthy of the support that comes from the treasury of the church!

It has been my experience that where there is a program of house-to-house teaching, involving preachers, elders, and members; the most conversions, the greatest ratio of faithfulness, and less difficulties will normally be found. When people have their hands full working for the Lord, they simply do not have time to introduce divisive situations into the church. There may be a problem with some in finding prospects who are interested. However, this problem will not disappear simply because we fail to do the work. There are still plenty of people who "would give anything in this world" for what the Christian has — if he only understood it. No, we cannot make a horse drink by merely leading him to

water, but we can labor to make him as thirsty as possible! Of course, all will not accept whom we may teach, but we will at least have given them a chance of making an informed decision. It is God that gives the increase (I Cor. 3:6,7). Let's, then, become "labourers together with God" (I Cor. 3:9). A more noble work cannot be found. Yes, it takes more than the pulpit!

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ON ACCEPTING CHRIST

L. A. Mott, Jr.

"Just accept Christ as your own personal Saviour." That is what the preachers tell the people. Protestant preachers of almost every shade and stripe are united on one point — that folk must accept Christ as their "own personal Saviour."

The idea of accepting Christ is certainly scriptural: "But as many as **received** him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:12). Nor should one quarrel with the idea of accepting Christ as Saviour, either. He is that, indeed, and one cannot truly accept him at all without accepting him as Saviour. "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (I Tim. 1:15), and is referred to in the Bible as "our Saviour Christ Jesus" (II Tim. 1:10). So Christ Jesus is our Saviour, and any Jesus who is not the Saviour of man is not the Jesus of the gospel.

But some folk have other ideas. They believe Jesus was just a good man who lived a fine life and set a good example of self-denying service, but Saviour? ... Bosh! How could one man die for another? They cannot accept all that stuff.

Now these folk may claim that they accept Jesus as a good man. But every believer of the Bible knows the truth. These folk have not accepted Jesus at all. In fact, the Jesus they speak of does not exist — and has never existed. There is no Jesus Christ who was a good man, but not a Saviour. The only Jesus Christ who exists is the Jesus Christ who is the Saviour of man. And one has not accepted him at all unless he accepts him as Saviour. Most any preacher will tell you that.

But let me state this truth in a more general manner so as to make it useful to a wider range of people. True, Jesus Christ is a good man. But he is much more than that. He is the Saviour. He is the Lord. He is the Head of the church. He is a Prophet. He is the Christian's High Priest. He is the Judge.

Some people, sometimes in doctrine but perhaps more often only in practice, try to separate one or more of these offices of Christ from the others. They want to accept Christ as this but not as that. But it cannot be done. Jesus Christ is one person, a unity; and must be accepted for all that he is. That person who has not accepted Jesus Christ for all

that he is must seriously question whether he has accepted the real Jesus Christ at all.

Some further illustration will possibly make this whole point clear. Jesus Christ is a good man and a perfect example. Correct. But he is more. He is the Saviour. And further, **he is the Son of God**. Paul's proclamation of Jesus included the proposition "that he is the Son of God" (Acts 9:20). And the Sonship of Jesus is more than the sonship you and I may have — it is unique; it involves deity. Jesus shares a common divine nature with his Father. He is even called "God" in John 1:1. The Jews understood that by calling God his own Father he was making himself equal with God (John 5:18). And their understanding was correct, for Jesus went on to explain that all were to "honor the Son, **even as they honor the Father**" (vs. 23). Thomas was not going too far when he referred to Jesus as "my Lord and my God" (John 20:28).

Jesus is also the Lord. "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord" (II Cor. 4:5). The Lordship of Jesus implies his supreme authority and right to issue commands and to expect and require obedience. Jesus claimed to possess all authority in heaven and on earth; and on the basis of this authority he ordered his apostles to make disciples of the nations, "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you" (Matt. 28:18-20). Let it be noted that Jesus did not say, "Teach them all things whatsoever I commanded you." He did say, "Teach them to **observe** all things whatsoever I commanded you." It is wholly inconsistent and even hypocritical to confess Jesus as Lord and then refuse to do what he says, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). Jesus' question will perhaps remind one of another statement: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21).

Following his resurrection, Jesus was installed as Head of the church, which is his body (Eph. 1:22-23). It is his province, as Head of the church, to give direction to the church, his body. The church, as his body, "is subject to Christ," according to Paul's statement in Eph. 5:24. That means the church is not free to go ahead and act on its own; it is to submit to the direction of its Head, to observe his instruction, to yield to his authority.

Perhaps you know of folk in certain religious sects who claim to accept Christ but do not believe in his deity. One would just have to say that these folk have not accepted Jesus at all. The Jesus Christ of the gospel is both Saviour and God. Any other Jesus is not the Jesus Christ of the gospel, but a counterfeit Jesus, a fraud.

But is it possible that some people have tried to accept Jesus as the Son of God and as their Saviour **without accepting him as Lord**? I believe it is. Perhaps such folk do not realize what they have done. But what other explanation can be given for the many acts of worship and service in which they show no regard for the authority of the Lord?

Examples of such disregard for the Lordship of Jesus could be multiplied. Jesus teaches that bap-

tism is a condition of salvation (Mark 16:16; compare Acts 2:38; 22:16; I Pet. 3:21). But many deny it and offer salvation to men on the basis of a faith in the heart which has yet to find expression in this act of faith appointed by the Lord. Jesus teaches that folk are to be baptized, immersed, buried in baptism (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12). But many substitute a few drops of water sprinkled on the head. Jesus teaches that the person to be baptized is that one who has received the word (Acts 2:41), the one who has believed (Acts 8:12). But many, acting on their own and without direction from Christ, baptize infants who can neither receive the word nor believe. Jesus teaches his people to sing praises (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). Many take it upon themselves to worship with mechanical, instrumental music in addition — something Jesus never sanctioned. Speaking for Jesus, Paul wrote that women were to "keep silence in the churches" (I Cor. 14:34); but some churches have women preachers. Many churches substitute complex organizations for the simple local organization Jesus ordained for his church (Acts 14:23; Phil. 1:1).

It would seem that such folk must seriously consider the question whether they have really ever accepted the real Jesus Christ at all. The Jesus Christ of the gospel is the Lord and the Head of the church. If the Jesus you have received is not the Lord and the Head of the church, then what Jesus have you received?

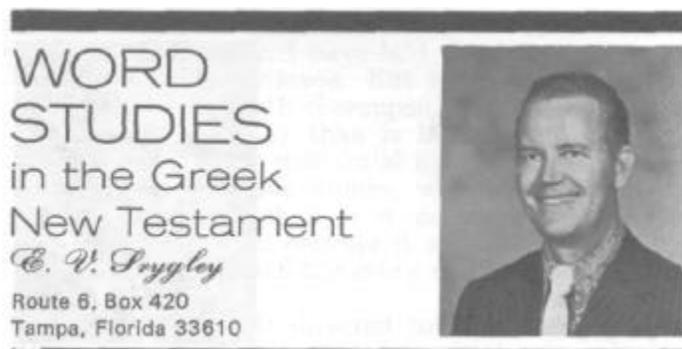
It is not too surprising that such unauthorized practices are found in the churches. Most of the preachers have given the impression that accepting Jesus involves merely some kind of mystical or emotional or mental reliance upon him for salvation. They have not taught the people that any true acceptance of Jesus involves accepting him for all that he is. And that means accepting him as Lord as well as Saviour.

Paul spoke of "another Jesus" (II Cor. 11:4) — an impostor, a counterfeit, a fraud. This Jesus who can be accepted as Saviour without being accepted as Lord is such a Jesus. The only Jesus who is the Saviour and the Son of God is the Jesus who is also the Lord and the Head of the church. There is no Saviour Jesus who is not also the Lord Jesus — no more than there is a Saviour Jesus who is not divine. And that person who does not acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus in his life and service to God has not really accepted the Saviour Jesus, but only a counterfeit Jesus who is neither Saviour, Lord, nor Son of God, and in fact is only a fictional Jesus, a fairy tale character, who only exists in the imagination of men.

Peter stood before the highest court of the Jewish nation to proclaim, "And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Peter was speaking of the real Jesus — who is Saviour, Son of God, and Lord! He is the one you must accept or face an everlasting doom.

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HELIKIA. "STATURE"

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus says, by implication, that a man cannot add even one cubit to his "stature," Matt. 6:27. The term "stature" is translated from the Greek word *helikia*, which occurs in eight passages in the Greek Testament.

Some versions do not use the word "stature" in Matt. 6:27, choosing rather "span of life," etc.

IN NON-BIBLICAL LITERATURE

In non-Biblical literature the term *helikia* is used to denote "age," particularly, the idea of "coming to legal age, etc." There are many papyri that contain this use of the word.

Hellenistic scholars would probably deny that the word *helikia* is used at all in the papyri in the sense of "stature," or "physical size."

WHAT DOES JESUS MEAN?

Is Jesus saying that anxiety cannot increase one's height? Of course, it is obvious that this is true; but is that what Jesus means in Matt. 6:27?

According to Luke 2:52 the young man Jesus increased in *helikia*. Did Jesus increase in height? Or, is the writer saying the Jesus increased in age? It is obvious that Jesus increased in both senses; but what is meant in Luke 2:52?

ANXIETY AND LIFE

In my judgment, Jesus is referring to one's "age" in Matt. 6:27. The irony of His teaching is seen in the fact that anxiety actually diminishes one's span of life.

WHAT ABOUT "CUBIT"?

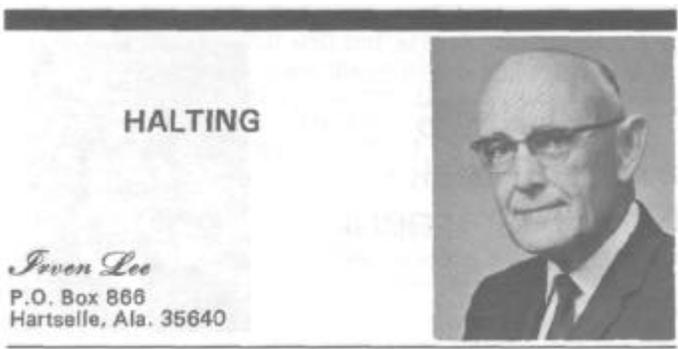
Someone might suggest that if Jesus is speaking of "age" He would not say that we cannot add a "cubit" to our "age." Actually, there is evidence that the term "cubit" is sometimes used in the sense of a "cubit" of time; that is, a small amount of time.

WHAT ABOUT ZACCHAEUS?

According to Luke 19:3 Zacchaeus was small of *helikia*. It is evident from the context of this passage that *helikia* means "stature," or "height."

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"Elijah came unto all the people, and said, how long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him" (I Kings 18:21). On this occasion the great prophet was trying to turn the people from idolatry to faithful service to God. God will not accept worship from people who also serve their idols. Only those who served the Lord with their whole heart were acceptable to Him. Sympathy toward Baal worship would make their worship to God vain.

Christians are taught to be patient and reasonable people and to realize that the progress of truth depends upon teaching. We are to exhort one another lest any be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. We are to endeavor to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Gal. 6:1). It is certainly true that any man may, at one time or another, be overtaken in a fault, therefore, the one to correct him should do so in meekness and should be very careful as to his own behavior. The time may soon come when he, too, will be overtaken in a fault.

Colossians 4:6 states: "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." This verse does not oppose the boldness of speech for which Paul prayed (Eph. 6:19,20). The motive is to be in harmony with a heart filled with favor or grace. The right words are to be used in the right way to indicate wisdom that is from above. James said, "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy" (James 3:17).

We have the question of Elijah very much in mind in our study at this time, but we also seek to avoid any idea of impulsiveness, unreasonableness, or impatience. Let all things be done in love for God, for the truth, and for man. Elijah asked, "How long halt ye between two opinions?" We should never hesitate in our choice of right over wrong, or truth in preference to error.

There is a correct answer in the complete word of God for each good question on doctrine. Gospel preachers of the past have taught the truth and were not afraid of questioning. If a man speaks as the oracles of God he has a solid rock foundation. A person who does not know the right answer to a good question should hesitate until he has searched the scripture. It is surely unwise to jump to a conclusion by

impulse, or to follow blindly the suggestion of some man.

It is necessary to take a certain bit of time to study an issue that arises in order to be certain of the safety of one's position. The profitable word is very suitable for correction and instruction, so one can take the safe position on each issue. Time is not the only thing needed. A man needs an open mind, a love for the truth, and courage enough to stand firmly with the truth at any cost.

It does not take long on a given issue to learn the truth. Beyond that time, there is no excuse for hesitancy or halting. To wait to see how the crowd will go, to be quiet rather than face opposition, to shun to teach the truth to avoid sacrifice or other such occasions of silence on vital issues are unworthy of the true Christian soldier.

Two people may be thought of together. One, in his weakness, does not yet know the truth, so he does not stand on the Lord's side. Another knows but hesitates for one reason or another. The latter is worthy of many stripes. May there be more and more men of grace and patience who study to learn, and boldly proclaim the whole truth on any false doctrine that arises to threaten the unity of God's people.

From time to time doctrines have been introduced and stressed that have the power to separate the chaff from the wheat. Those who use "great wisdom" in the "nations about them" follow the winds of doctrines the heretics make popular. Those who love the truth are steadfast and immovable at such times. II Thess. 2:10-12 speaks of him "whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

It seems evident that there is a great difference between a strong delusion, intended for those who love not the truth, and the truth itself. Halting between the delusion and truth is not characteristic of a good soldier of the truth. Vigilant overseers and teachers will warn their brethren day and night of the danger of deception so the false doctrines will be only for those who love not the truth but have pleasure in unrighteousness. To neglect teaching on such strong delusions may mean the loss of many weak sheep from the flock. To fail to warn is criminal. To fail to study and know is inexcusable.

"There must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." This is the reading of I Cor. 11:19. Each generation is to be tested. Each congregation is to be sifted. Who can stand? Those who study to show themselves approved unto God may be workmen who need not be ashamed. The Lord knows and loves His own, but He does not accept the service of those who love not the truth but have pleasure in unrighteousness. For such reasons strong delusions or heresies are sent to make manifest those who are approved. Only those who give earnest heed to the things written in the word avoid drifting toward the

day when they will not endure sound doctrine.

Our generation sees its false doctrines and testing heresies just as other generations have seen theirs. When it is time for the Lord to prune His vine, there are heartaches. The man with the pruning knife cuts many limbs from his peach tree or grape vine, but it is that there might be more and better fruit. It is also in order to save the tree or vine from total loss. Christ said, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad" (Matt. 12:30). Where is the middle ground? Those who gather with Him are His faithful servants. All others scatter. When the instrument of music was being introduced into churches of Christ in the last century to the division of the body of Christ, there were three groups. Some favored the instrument, some opposed it, and others tried to work with both groups. The groups were different. It was either right to make the addition or it was wrong. It was introduced where men favored it and where men did not oppose it. It was kept out only where it was actively and effectively opposed. There is a message of warning in this experience for our day and any day.

To have recommended a man in the last century who favored the instrument to preach for an untaught congregation would likely have meant the loss of the congregation to digression. Thus bidding him godspeed would be a way of partaking of his evil deeds. To mark one who thus carries a divisive doctrine is more the spirit of Christ and His apostles (See Rom. 16:17.) If a fine conservative and faithful Christian labors to see a congregation begin, he may succeed in his worthy work. If he then encourages it to get a preacher who will work toward getting the church into recreational work, which is not its mission, or toward Institutionalism, or any other error, he may in a short time see that which he espoused to Christ as a chaste virgin defiled before Him. It would be a sin to open a great door of opportunity for a teacher who subverts whole houses. His mouth should be stopped with plain teaching of sound doctrine.

Perfection is not found in any man, so if one who was not perfect could not be recommended there would be none to recommend. Some people love the truth and are constantly learning. Some errors are private in nature and are not great threats to the church. For one to get deliberately into the trench with heretics in a destructive battle that is raging against truth is to mark himself unworthy of a place of responsibility in the Lord's army. For one to wander aimlessly in "no man's land" between the opposing armies is to identify himself as one who is not awake to the danger. He is in great danger himself, and he is in no position to gain respect from the right hand or the left. There is no middle ground between right and wrong, between truth and error. A man is a useful soldier in the army of the Lord only as he contends earnestly for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3). He is pure from the blood of his fellow man only if he shuns not to declare the whole counsel. See Acts 20:26,27. The days of the American Revolution were not the only days that tried men's souls. Every soul is tested as by fire. Look at I Cor. 3:10-13. "Accord-

ing to the grace of God which is given unto me as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is."

Preaching that is directed toward seeing people become rooted and grounded in the truth and able to discern between good and evil is directed in the right way. That which apologizes for error or fights the truth and faithful proclaimers of truth is not sound preaching. Let us all pray that the Lord will send more laborers into His vineyard who can stand the noon day sun, and who will not fall away in time of temptation. We should also work to this end as well as pray. Stand on the house top, as it were, and proclaim the truth far and wide. Send out a call for men who are unafraid, unashamed, and well informed.

ARE YOU ASHAMED?

Dennis Shaver

In the 25th Psalm, verses 1-5, we read the words of David: "Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. O my God, I trust in thee: Let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me. Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress without cause. Shew me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day." These verses state that one should not be ashamed of doing the work of the Lord. No one should be ashamed of being a Christian, a servant of God. The life of a Christian can be the most rewarding on earth, and it will be the most rewarding after death. It has been said, "Life is what you make it." This is especially true when we consider the life of a child of God, a Christian.

The apostle Paul understood fully the life of a Christian. In Rom. 1:16 he states: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of GOD unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." At the time of Paul's preaching, many thought the message he proclaimed was foolishness (I Cor. 1:21-24). Even though those around Paul thought it was foolish to believe a dead man could be a Saviour, he was not ashamed to continue to preach just such a gospel. He was not ashamed to admit that Christ had died upon a cross, even though this was a death reserved for the most vile of criminals. He considered himself fortunate to be allowed to proclaim these matchless truths (I Tim. 1:12). He loved to tell the story of a loving, merciful, and forgiving Saviour.

As we look to this psalm of David, we see that he pleads for others as well as himself. He asks for

God's help for all who serve him. I believe that David here shows us some ways in which we can prevent ourselves in ever being ashamed of serving God.

First, v. 2, "O my God, I trust in thee;..." The wise man Solomon says, "whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe." Again hear David in II Sam. 22:3, "The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; The God of my rock; in him will I trust..." Job never stopped trusting God, though he suffered because he was a follower of God. Job says: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him ..." Look to the re-proof of Jerusalem in Zeph. 3:1,2; she trusted not in the Lord. If we will put our complete trust in God, commend our lives to his care and guidance, we will never be ashamed of being servants of God, Christians!

Second, in v.4, 5a, we find David telling us to pray for His guidance, and study His words. God will be our continual guide, but we must allow Him to guide us (Isa. 58:11). We must pray for His guidance, and our humble submission. Along with prayer, we must be studious servants of God. II Tim. 2:15, study that we can be approved workmen of God, that needeth not be ashamed. If we will look to the word of God, we can find ALL things that pertain to life, and godliness (II Pet. 1:3). Prayer (I Thess. 5:17), and Study (Hosea 4:6) are important parts of the Christian life. If they are used as God has intended, one will never be ashamed to be a child of God, and proclaim the gospel of Christ.

Third, v.5b, never forget, He is the God of our salvation. Sometimes we might take this for granted. Those that are married, remember when you first met your wife? Your attention and service was only for her. When you went somewhere, you always opened the car door for her, and you always waited for her. Now that you have been married for awhile, she opens her own doors, and she has to rush to catch up with you. What's happened? You have started taking her for granted. The same is true with some today concerning the God of our Salvation. Peter says that we can completely forget that we were once purged from our old sins (II Pet. 1:9). If we fail to grow as Christians should, then we are taking for granted the sacrifice Christ made, and the mercy God has shown. Again look to the example of Israel (Isa. 17:10,11). This condition usually will come about because we leave our first love (Rev. 3:4,5).

Fourth, v.5c, wait on God, serve Him DAILY. David prayed for himself and all that wait on God. Paul was a completely obedient servant of God (Rom. 1:1), and he says, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (I Cor. 11:1). Our work is a "work of faith, labor of love." If we are faithful unto death, He has promised a "crown of life" (Rev. 2:10). Shouldn't this be enough to make us want others, as well as ourselves, to serve God, wait on him daily?

Let us never be ashamed to be Christians, but rather take a lesson from David; trust in Him, pray for His guidance and study His word, never forget He is the God of our salvation, and serve Him faithfully unto death. Are you ashamed?

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