

SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

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



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

"DEVOTED TO THE SEARCH FOR DIVINE TRUTH"

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I MARVEL Galatians 1:6

James P. Miller

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Cocoa, Fla. 32922



THE DANGERS OF NEW TRANSLATIONS

For many years all translators handled the word of God with respect. The King James version was given to the English world by forty-seven of the world's finest scholars. It was given at a time when the English language was at its fullest flower. This translation gave us the restoration of the blood-bought church of Christ and is the most common version of the Bible until this day. It is true that Alexander Campbell published a translation called "The Living Oracles," but it was little used and Campbell continued, as did other restoration preachers, to use the King James version. Although some of the words used in the King James have changed their meaning, it should be remembered that no translation is made of words that all understand. A good dictionary overcomes this problem in short order. The pronouns such as "thee" and "thou" are not archaic for all know them and what is meant by them.

The Revised Version was given to the public in 1881 and was the first serious attempt to improve on the King James. It was followed in 1901 by the American Revised, thought by some to be the most literal translation ever made. All of these versions handled the word of God with respect and the truth of the gospel could be established by any of them. Translations such as Goodspeed, Phillips, Weymouth, and Williams posed little threat to the church of the Lord for they were used mostly for **comparison and study.**

In our day, however, this has not been the rule. The market is being flooded with modern translations that do not regard the word with respect, hence teach all kinds of false doctrine. The American Bible Society has joined in an effort to pass these translations off to the public as the word of God. The most serious of these is a translation called "The New English Bible" which was used by the American Bible Society in the version, "Good News for Modern Man." In translating Acts 20:7 it reads, "On Saturday night in our assembly for the breaking of bread."

I am sure I do not have to point out what this would do to God's people. They would not know when to partake of the Lord's supper. It has been pointed out time and again that we know when by this divine apostolic example. Paul waited a full week to be present on the Lord's Day. It was on this day that the church of the Lord had its beginning, on this day that the Holy Spirit filled the apostles, on this day that about 3,000 were added to the church. See Isa. 2:3, Joel 2:28, Dan. 2:44, Acts 2:38-47, etc. There is not a Greek text on earth that would justify the translation, "On Saturday night." This is not what Luke said and is contrary to the Greek, and to all "church fathers" who testified it was the practice of the early church to observe the Lord's Supper every Lord's Day.

The question as to why any translator would render it Saturday night may be clearly answered: modern scholars give their interpretation of what the verse means instead of a translation. The Lord's Supper is of small importance to them. It makes little difference whether it is observed on Saturday night, Sunday, or not at all. They do not regard it *is* important. The alarming thing is that the American Bible Society would push such a work. If the church of the Lord does not "give diligence" to make its calling and election sure, we will have a generation that does not know the difference in an interpretation and a translation and therefore a generation that does not know even when the Communion should be observed. I marvel.

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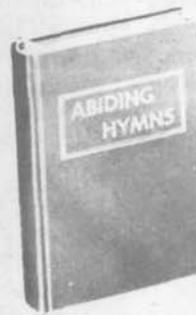
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Editorial

Connie W. Adams

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SCHOOLS AND PAPERS

All through the stormy days of conflict with those brethren who advocated the right of congregations from their treasuries to contribute to schools and other private enterprises, conservative-minded brethren generally granted the right of individuals to operate, support and/or utilize the services of privately operated service-type businesses. In recent years a few men have begun to raise their voices, rather loudly, in opposition to the right of Christians privately to contribute to a school which has a Bible department. Some deny the right of parents and students to utilize such service. According to some of these men, such a school can be operated by Christians but they cannot teach the Bible in it, for that becomes another "collectivity" to preach the gospel.

The Bible teaches that it is the work of the congregation to support the preaching of the gospel. It is also the duty of individuals in the home, school, business or wherever their influence may be exerted, to teach the truth.. It is the duty of parents to see that their children are educated. Teaching school is an honorable profession and when Christians run a school, if they honor their calling at all, then the environment they create will reflect the influences of the gospel in their own lives and they will surely use their opportunity to teach the Bible.

Daniel Sommer waged warfare on the schools for many years "in the AMERICAN CHRISTIAN REVIEW. He argued that since we are "complete" in Christ, that the schools are not needed and said that when a Christian gives to the congregation as he should that he will have nothing left to give to a school anyhow. Interestingly, he waged his war through his paper., which was not the church, and did not seem to see that if his argument on contribution was so, that his readers violated it when they paid their subscription to his paper.

A debate was recently held in Pasadena, Texas on this issue (the debate will be printed) in which both of these arguments were made. Frankly, I would like to know how brethren who espouse this position can successfully carry their battle without a paper to give voice to their views. If they operate a paper and sell it on a subscription basis, then they are selling a teaching service, which the school also does. However simply they may organize and run such a paper, it will fall under their own definition of "collectivity."

Every privately operated paper I know anything about is a legal entity, whether it is incorporated or not. They receive donations (whether money, time or service from various ones), have names, mailing permits and can be sued. Even those not incorporated are styled by law "quasi-corporations." We have not heard one argument against the school that cannot be made with equal force against the papers and publishing houses. Indeed, "happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth" (Romans 14:22).

Yet, it is our conviction that these have a right to function in the realm of private enterprise and offer their services for sale to any who need them. We deny the right of a local church to contribute to a single one of them. But we affirm the right of individuals to run such businesses and the right of interested parties to make use of their services. Can congregations or individuals buy tracts, class literature or books from a publishing house? Or does the "completeness" argument mean that they must publish their own Bibles, tracts and class literature? If these are purchased from brethren in such business, then have the churches or individuals become guilty of patronizing another "collectivity" to preach the gospel?

There is absolutely no excuse for this issue ever dividing brethren unless some undertake to make laws which the Lord did not and make their consciences the guide for others. We have never thought less of a brother if he did not contribute to a school or send his children there. That is his own affair. If we contribute or send our children, then that is our affair. If one does not wish to subscribe to this paper, then that is his choice and we will think none the less of him. But when brethren take to their pulpits to air such matters, take up space in church bulletins, send for men to come and lecture before the congregation for a week on the subject, and begin to say that those who favor such activities are digressive, unsound and to be avoided, then factionalism has already started and "I pray thee, have me excused."

Supporters of schools or papers should not leave the impression that they question the spirituality of those who do not see fit to use their services. We believe it is out of place to use church facilities or functions to advertise and promote schools or papers. Some promoters of such activities, in their zeal, may at times have become the objects of just criticism. But abuses do not rule against a just principle itself.

Many occupations are spoken of favorably in the Bible. Further, the right of personal choice in the use of one's resources is also taught. Peter said to Ananias, "Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power" (Acts 5:4)? Ephesians 4:28 teaches the honor of work for the Christian "that he may have to give to him that hath need." This implies personal choice in the use of honorably earned wages. Of course, every Christian should give as he has prospered to the congregational treasury in order for the work God

gave the congregation to be accomplished. But it is not the business of the church to run schools or publishing businesses. These fall into the realm of private activity and that is where they ought to stay. This writer sincerely hopes that other oral debates on this question will not be forthcoming for awhile. We are not opposed to debates and have participated in several. Much good has come from them. But it appears to us now that further such discussion might generate considerable heat and pose the threat of fracturing peace and fomenting parties before enough time has elapsed for careful study to be given to the questions involved. Perhaps the papers would provide a better forum for discussion of questions which involve private enterprises since that is really what the papers are anyhow. Meanwhile, there is a need for careful thought, brotherly concern, long-suffering and patience. Objectivity should mark all such studies and detracting personal remarks should be left out entirely.

Paper To Be Enlarged

With the January, 1975 issue, *SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES* will increase its size from 16 pages to 20 pages enabling us to include more teaching material each month. We think you will be glad (and perhaps surprised) to know that we propose to do this without a price increase in your subscription. We think this is a bargain in these days of ever-increasing prices. The bulk of the teaching articles each month is by those men who have been asked to cover certain assignments. This means that other articles must wait until space is available. Because of this lack of space, many good articles have accumulated which we hope in time to print. After January, we will be able to include more of these. We will also accept about 15 more church ads which will help defray this cost. Book advertising space will remain the same as it is now. Stay with us. By the way, when you renew, why not do someone a favor and subscribe for him?

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WORSHIP

The account of the conversion of the man from Ethiopia, with which we are familiar, is recorded in Acts chapter 8. Verses 26 through 28 bring into focus the statements to serve as launching points for this study. "But an angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, the same is desert. And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was over all her treasure, who had come to Jerusalem to worship, and he was returning, and sitting in his chariot and reading the prophet Isaiah."

Worship, defined very simply is, "reverence rendered to God." Obviously it involves both attitude and actions. The importance of worship is complimented in that it is required of all men who want the proper relationship with God. It is inseparably connected with right relationship. Stress is placed upon meeting certain requirements in order to make it acceptable to God. The man of this text obviously felt very keenly his responsibility to worship since he had traveled several hundred miles to do so. There are several lessons to be gleaned from this man's actions.

We might note the object of his worship from a negative standpoint for emphasis. He had not traveled this great distance to worship some man. Any reverence thus rendered would have been as misdirected as was Cornelius' action when he bowed down to Peter. That rebuke must still be heard, "Stand up; I myself also am a man" (Acts 10:26). Neither angels, idols, nor devils had brought this nobleman from the lands lying south of Egypt to render reverence. Who then? Only Jehovah, the God of heaven and earth. Jerusalem, the Site of the temple, synonymous with the presence of God, challenged the presence of the Jew each year in his worship obligation under the Law. We cannot with certainty state whether the eunuch was a Jew or proselyte of the Jewish religion. In any case he was zealous in pursuit of his religion, an admirable trait we should cultivate. The purpose of his visit to Jerusalem was "to worship" according to the Law of Moses, for as yet he knew no other way.

He was returning homeward, probably by way of Egypt, the first leg of his journey being from Jerusalem to Gaza. Gaza is in southern Palestine, in

Judea, about 60 miles southwest of Jerusalem. As he was riding along he "was reading." The word thus translated is "*aneginosken*" which means that he was reading aloud as Philip "heard him." Historians note this was common for the Jew when traveling alone. Whether by command or by common practice such reading was no doubt a pleasant and profitable pastime. May I suggest the lasting impression made by his period of worship in Jerusalem activated this nobleman in seeking greater knowledge. Prompted by his worship of Jehovah he wished for a better understanding of His will and so he traveled along reading from Isaiah the prophet. Question: "Are we motivated by our periods of worship today to seek greater knowledge and understanding of God's will?"

The eunuch teaches a profitable lesson here.

Worship involves three primary considerations: authority, place and the activity. The source of authority for both the eunuch, for you and me is God. The statement of Jesus to the woman at the well was "God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). Two essentials are here emphasized, "spirit" and "truth." To worship "in spirit" involves our conscious attention and involvement in the significance of what we are doing. This requires concentration and self discipline. "In truth" comprehends the things divinely appointed. "Thy word is truth" (John 17:17). Neither aspect as here stated is unimportant that it can be ignored. Neither is super-important to the neglect of the other. Each of these requisites must receive careful attention to be acceptable unto God.

"Meaningful worship" is a reference in common usage today and is apparently the object of much searching by some. To accomplish this some have adopted the atmosphere of the spiritualist by turning out the lights, joining hands, engaging in chain prayers, spontaneous singing and a lot of other "tomfoolery." Mark it, meaningfulness will not be found among these or other externals. Worship, filled with meaning, will be found where "spirit and truth" are combined in our expression of reverence unto God.

The place of worship for this eunuch, a Jew still bound to the Law of Moses, was Jerusalem. It was a matter of geography, a fact recognized by Jew and Gentile alike. The woman speaking to Jesus at the well reminded that the Jews said, "in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship" (John 4:20). Worship after the New Testament order, for you and me, requires rather than place, a relationship. It is in Christ, in the church, that men render acceptable worship unto God. This relationship embraces every true worshipper. Outside none can worship acceptably.

The activity of this eunuch in his worship of God in Jerusalem was regulated by the Law of Moses. Ours today is undergirded by the "apostles doctrine" (Acts 2:42). Nothing more nor less than that circumscribed by the New Testament may be engaged in. Five distinct avenues of expression for the worshipper are authorized. I trust every reader

remembers these as singing (Eph. 5:19), prayer (Acts 2:42), Lord's supper (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:23), giving (1 Cor. 16:1), teaching (Acts 2:42). These items comprehend the whole of God's requirement, His authorization for the worshipper. Involvement in these acts is personal and requires conscious attention, concentration and self discipline as we meet the demands of worshipping "in spirit." With minds centered upon God and hearts attuned to His will we commit ourselves to these expressions of reverence.

If we could turn back the pages of time, where would men of faith in yesteryear worship? Men like Peter, Paul, James and John. Certainly not where the Old Testament is still held as the standard of authority. Not where Roman Catholicism is the system with its image worship, bead counting and papal domination. Not in some protestant denomination, the name of which cannot even be found in the Word of God. I suggest, not even in all designated "churches of Christ." But where? In the place where every activity is backed by the authority of the scriptures, where they could worship "in spirit and truth." Would this be where you worship, gentle reader? If so, would it be because of my or your personal contribution to the worship atmosphere, or, in spite of it?

What about our worship? Yours and mine? Is it what it ought to be, what it must be? How do we compare with the sterling attributes evident in this eunuch? Favorably? He was of the people of God. He was a zealous worshipper, willing to overcome the hardship of time and distance for his God. He was a student of the word of God, a sincere seeker, who when he found the truth obeyed it. Are you, am I, a sincere seeker of truth? When confronted with truth will we obey it? Consider ye well!

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SPEAKING TRUTH

O. E. Watts

In trying to plead against the use of extreme (false) arguments it is easy to make statements which are stronger than we intend. In the article, "Much Grape Juice?", my statement about requiring "more of others than does the Lord" was one of these. We, ourselves, "oppose social drinking" so certainly do not regard all others who do so as "extremists" and too "zealous".

But, my partners, some of your wild assertions and contentions are weakening the otherwise good and conclusive teaching you are giving on the subject. That is the point. Below are some examples.

The claim that ancients preserved fresh grape juice (with no trace of alcohol) the year around can not be proved. Recipes given will not work. Every sister who cans fruit juices knows that a little olive oil poured on top of a container of juke will not prevent fermentation. Her confidence in a preacher is weakened when she hears him claiming that it will.

There are those who use the "ancient preservation" argument for maintaining that early churches used fresh grape juice in the Lord's Supper. Then, they admit that all of them did not do so all the time. Those reading or listening naturally ask, "What is the point?" Yes. Why go through all that?

We are pleased to see a good brother who did equate alcohol with poison now admit what historians and travelers assert. The light wines of Palestine had enough alcohol in them to purify them but not enough to make one drunk ("unless you drank a barrelful"). This is true now of those of the lowlands of Europe, of northern Mexico, etc. Are preachers of the gospel there going to insist that these be given up?

The contention that wine was leaven was shown to be false by an article in another gospel paper. But his persisting in that error will continue to weaken every good thing any brother might say against social or recreational drinking.

Personal references are sometimes necessary even though not profitable. Please be advised that this unknown from the cow-country has never been intoxicated. Never have we done any social drinking. When we attend professional banquets preceded by a cocktail hour we go after the drinking is finished even though friends urge us to come and "drink a coke". We do not have a "drop of anything on the place". Never do we obtain wine, brandy, or rum to use in cooking. Are you teetotallers? We, more!

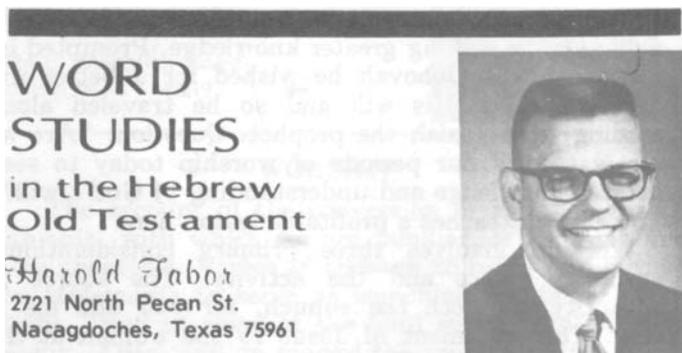
Yes, Brother Adams and Brother Holbrook, we oppose every drinking practice that you do. But do not include us among the believers in the fables of Josephus. We do not fall for those and we do not think that you should either.

Box 895

Craig, Colo. 81625

(EDITOR'S NOTE: We are glad to give this space to Brother Watts to state his case and glad for all to

see that he opposes "social drinking." We are still of the persuasion that some of his statements in his previous article "Much Grape Juice" were too loose and capable of misunderstanding. It was for that reason that we did not think it best to publish his article without a "disclaimer" attached.)



COVENANT — BERITH

The Hebrew word for covenant is BERITH. The meaning of the word is a real etymological problem. There are at least three suggestions: 1) it may be related to the root BRH meaning "to eat"; 2) it may be connected with the Accadian word BARU meaning "to bind"; 3) and it has been connected with the verb CIRTH meaning "to cut in two or cut off".

The word is consistently rendered by DIATHAKA in the LXX except in Deut. 9:15 and I Kings 11:11. The usual translation of BERITH is "covenant" but is rendered also by "alliance, bond, compact, disposition and treaty" (cf. Girdlestone, Synonyms of the O.T., p. 213).

The Hebrew concept of the word may be divided into two main groups. These are the nature of a covenant between man and man and the second between God and man.

Secular or legal covenants followed a basic outline: 1) a historical prologue, 2) a statement of the stipulations, 3) an oath or document from each party, God of gods being their witness, 4) and curses and blessings (cf. *Eerdmans Bible Handbook*, p. 199). For comparison, study the covenants of Isaac (Gen. 26), Jacob (Gen. 31) and David with Jonathan (I Samuel 18; 20; 23).

The general thought of covenants between God and men and those between men and men are similar. Not all covenants were contracted between parties of equality (i.e. king-vassal relationship). In a divine covenant, God is the superior party and always initiates the covenant. Jehovah stipulated commandments and offers certain blessings or promises. Men accepted these conditions or commandments and recognized the penalties for disobedience. Some of the blessings are conditioned on the obedience of men. The earliest covenant recorded between God and man is with Noah (Gen. 9:9-17). A covenant with the nation of Israel is made at Sinai (Ex. 19:5; 24:4-8) and reaffirmed in Moab (Deut. 29:1). The prophets spoke of a new covenant (Jer. 31:31-34).

LEARNING from the PARABLES

Ken Green

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THE UNMERCIFUL SERVANT Matt. 18:23-35

All of the parables recorded in Matthew are about the kingdom of Heaven. In the parable of the sower, the seed represents the word of the kingdom (Matt. 13:19). This same seed is identified as the word of God in Luke 8:11. When the word of God is preached, it produces the kingdom of Heaven, the reign of Christ, in the honest and good hearts.

The kingdom is likened to a mustard seed in Matt. 13:31. Jesus taught that the kingdom would be gradual in its development — not immediate and spectacular as the premillennialists would have it. Matt. 13:41,42 indicate that the second coming will not be a time of establishing the kingdom, but a time of gathering out of the kingdom those who offend.

The parable of the unmerciful servant also sets forth a lesson on the kingdom of heaven. It reveals a quality that must be found now in the lives of its citizens. The central lesson is that recipients of grace must be willing to show grace. The forgiven must be willing to forgive.

Such is not an isolated lesson in God's word. In the model prayer, Jesus said we should pray: "... and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (Matt. 6:12). He proceeded to elaborate: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

The ability and willingness to forgive others is as much a condition of salvation as faith, repentance and baptism. Eph. 4:32 demands that we "forgive one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." James 2:13 states: "He shall have judgment without mercy who hath shown no mercy . . ."

Like the Gentiles of old, there are many, even in the church, who are "implacable" (Rom. 1:31). This means "constant in enmity, relentless, not to be pacified or appeased."

If you happen to cross such a person one time, you have made an enemy for life. You can tell him you didn't intend to offend. You can ask forgiveness. But there is nothing you can do that will reconcile you to such a one. These kind refuse to let bygones be bygones. They are implacable.

I feel sorry for such people because of the misery they bring to their own lives and because they cannot

be saved with their present attitude. Furthermore, I fear such people because of **the damage they can cause the Lord's church.**

Contrast their attitude with the **teaching of Jesus:** "Then came Peter to him, **and** said, **Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, until seventy times seven"** (Matt. 18:22, 23).

Then He taught this **parable.** Let's take a closer look at it:

I. THE KING AND HIS CONDUCT — 23-27

A. The king was a man of **great dignity and wealth.** Though the size of his kingdom is not told, the amount owed him indicates **great domain.**

B. **He was not negligent in the affairs of the kingdom.** He expected **an accounting from those who were indebted to him.**

II. THE INDEBTED SERVANT:

A. The amount he owed suggests he was not a slave in the usual sense. **Perhaps he was a prince** over a smaller territory, or one employed to collect taxes who then **squandered the money.**

B. Regardless of how he **made the debt, he had no more ability to pay than most of us would have.** 10,000 talents of silver would be equal to perhaps **\$3 million.** The same amount of gold would be much more than that. "He had not to pay."

III. THE COURSE ADOPTED BY THE KING:

A. **He demanded payment, v. 23, 24.**

B. **He ordered punishment, v. 25.** The family would be sold into slavery **and the king would get as much as he could in payment of the debt.** This was his legal right. Justice **demanding punishment.**

C. **He freely forgave, v. 26, 27.** The servant did not deny the debt. He threw himself on the mercy of the king and begged **for patience.** The king had compassion and extended much more **than patience.** He forgave the entire debt.

IV. THE UNMERCIFUL SPIRIT OF THE FORGIVEN DEBTOR — v. 28-30:

A. The debt of his fellow servant was small.. It was equal to about seven or eight dollars.

B. The fellow servant could not pay. As the old saying goes, "you can't get blood out of a turnip." But you can take the turnip and that's what the forgiven debtor did (v. 30).

C. In spite of the fact that the fellow servant begged for patience, no patience was shown . . . not to speak of mercy and **forgiveness.**

V. THE COURSE THE KING THEN ADOPTED — v. 31-34:

A. The unmerciful servant was delivered to the tormentors until he should pay all that was owed. This would be for the rest of his life or until another paid the debt for him, an unlikely prospect.

B. The real lesson is in V. 35: "SO LIKEWISE SHALL MY HEAVENLY FATHER DO ALSO UNTO YOU IF YE FORGIVE NOT EVERY ONE HIS BROTHER THEIR TRESPASSES." I cannot pay my debt to God any more than I could pay a debt of three million dollars. I must throw myself on the mercy of God. If it were not for His grace, none of us could possess hope.

C. He is willing to forgive. The terms of His grace are plainly revealed (Acts 2:37, 38). When I again sin and go into debt to God, I am to pray that He will forgive me as I also forgive those who trespass against me.

Conclusion: Let us not be as the unmerciful servant. There can be no salvation for those who are unwilling to show forgiveness.

ANSWERS for our hope

Send Bible questions to:

Marshall E. Patton

806 Muriel Dr., S.E.
Huntsville, Ala. 35802



QUESTION: In Matt. 5:43 Jesus said, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy." My reference Bible gives as a reference for the latter statement of this verse Deut. 23:6. Is this the verse Jesus referred to, or is there another more accurate? It seems to me that our Lord's quote is too generic to come from Deut. 23:6 which is very specific (see verse 3).

— M.A.

ANSWER: Our querist is probably laboring under the erroneous view that Jesus is here setting forth a moral law superior to the law of Moses. The truth of the matter is that Jesus was refuting and exposing the errors of the Scribes, Pharisees, and teachers of Israel. While Jesus frequently referred to statements found in the law of Moses, he, nevertheless, was exposing their perverted views and use of such. Hence, the contrast was between their traditional perversions and the truth. Matt. 5:43 is a good example.

There is no verse in the law of Moses that said: "hate thine enemy." Deut. 23:6 does refer to specific nations and how Israel was to treat them nationally. It has nothing to do with personal retaliation. Remember, reference columns and other reference systems in our Bibles have been supplied by men and should be treated accordingly.

The popular concept of the Jewish leaders "hate thine enemy" grew out of their interpretation of the command to "love thy neighbour as thy self" (Lev. 19:18). They generally restricted the word "neighbour" to mean relatives, friends, those of their party, and at most those of Israel. The lawyer asked Jesus "Who is my neighbour?" (Lk. 10:29) in order to "justify himself." Both the question and the motive of the lawyer pinpoint this particular error. Jesus told the story of The Good Samaritan which exposed the error of this restricted view of "neighbour" and showed it must be understood in the unrestricted sense. The Jewish teachers not only restricted the meaning of "neighbour," but also inferred therefrom that they should "hate their enemy." The latter

inference was but a very short and easy step from their first error.

They should have known that the word "neighbor" is often used in the Old Covenant to embrace those not of Israel. Here are two examples: "Speak now in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow of his neighbour, and every woman of her neighbour, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold. And the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians. . . ." (Ex. 11:2); "And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him. But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God" (Lev. 19:33, 34). The latter reference shows clearly that the command to "love thy neighbour as thyself" embraced more than those of Israel. Thus, the command to "love thy neighbour" should have been understood as an obligation to love all men.

There is no difference between what Jesus taught in Matt. 5:43-48 and what was taught in the Old Covenant: "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the Lord" (Lev. 19:18); "Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth:" (Prov. 24:17); "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Lord shall reward thee" (Prov. 25:21, 22).

SUFFICIENT IN CHRIST

John M. Trokey

The life of the apostle Paul stands in the scriptures as a testimony of steadfastness and patience. He counted not his life dear unto himself but gave his life to minister the gospel of Christ even in the face of sure and impending bonds and afflictions (Acts 20:22-24). The apostle Paul suffered imprisonments, stripes above measure, stonings, shipwrecks and many perils, hunger and thirst, fastings, cold and nakedness for Christ's sake (II Cor. 11:23-28).

However, on one occasion, Paul besought the Lord three times to have a thorn in the flesh removed (II Cor. 12:8). This thorn in the flesh was given to him by Satan to buffet him (II Cor. 12:7). He wanted to be rid of this affliction. The answer he received from Christ is one of the most meaningful passages to me in the scriptures of comfort. Jesus said to Paul, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (II Cor. 12:9a). The apostle Paul's response was humble and wise, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (II Cor. 12:9b).

Our lot in life does not call upon us to meet such opposition as did Paul. I doubt if any of us will ever be beaten for proclaiming the gospel. But life to all Christians has its hard and difficult moments. And at times we wonder, "How can I possibly carry on?" We

become sick and we search for comfort. Temptations to sin are strong and we wonder how we can overcome. Christians we know and love, many of them our relatives, turn away from God and His church and it makes us doubt and wonder. On and on the problems, small and great, confront us; what do we do, where do we go? Jesus says, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (II Cor. 12:9a).

"GRACE"

In this context, grace has its simplest meaning, as the Divine help, the unmerited gift of assistance that comes from God. Into this grace the apostle Paul encouraged Timothy to be strengthened (II Tim. 2:1). God has granted us all things in this regard (II Tim. 3:16-17; II Pet. 1:3). Hence, when afflictions arise and difficult times arrive, find your strength and comfort in Christ Jesus your Lord.

"SUFFICIENT"

The grace of Christ is sufficient and all we need. David said in Psalm 23:1, "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want." We will never be in spiritual want in Christ for God "hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3).

"MY STRENGTH"

The Christian who tries to overcome and be strong in his own strength cannot be long sustained. Paul found his strength in Christ; "I can do all things through Christ which strengthened me" (Phil. 4:13).

"PERFECT"

This passage is not teaching that apart from man's weakness Christ would not be perfect in strength but that the weakness of man has its perfect complement in the strength of Christ. The Greek word "TELEITAI" is the word translated "is made perfect." It is third person singular, present passive indicative of TELEO. It literally says, "is being made perfect." Christ's strength is fully realized in the weakness of Christians.

"WEAKNESS"

Man is weak and full of infirmities. We need to be made strong. This can only be accomplished in Christ. The Hebrew writer said of some Old Testament worthies: "out of weakness were made strong" (Heb. 11:34). They were made strong by their faith in God.

"GLORY IN MY INFIRMITIES"

Since strength is found in our weakness in Christ, we should rejoice, take joy in them. This does not mean try to be weak. We should grow strong but when we have trials, glory in Christ for the comfort and strength in Him. Infirmity is translated from the Greek word ASTHENEIA which means, want of strength. The Holy Spirit said in Romans 5:3-4, "we also rejoice in our tribulations: knowing that tribulation worketh steadfastness; and steadfastness,

approvedness; and approvedness, hope." James said by the Holy Spirit, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (Jas. 1:2-4).

"POWER OF CHRIST"

Once again, Paul is seeking the power (DUNAMIS) of Christ. The power of Christ can never come to the Christian who tries to rest in his own power. I Pet. 1:5 says, "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

"MAY REST UPON ME"

Literally this means, "may tabernacle over me." Paul was seeking the power of Christ to tabernacle over his life of weakness and affliction.

The grace of God calls for recognition on our part to submit to Christ and the glory of His power; to be strong in Him.

9132 Sierra Ave.
Fontana, Calif. 92335

MISUSING THE DOCTRINE OF GRACE

Johnny Stringer

From the time the gospel began to be preached by the apostles until the present, the beautiful doctrine of God's grace has been perverted. Faithful brethren have vigorously fought the false teachings regarding grace which have prevailed among the denominationalists. Now, however, some of our own brethren in Christ grossly pervert the scriptural teaching concerning the grace of God.

According to the concept of grace which some embrace, if brethren sincerely believe they are right, their erroneous teachings and practices regarding the worship, work, and organization of the church will not hinder their salvation; for, it is argued, God's grace will cover those sins.

It has been replied — and properly so — that in order for a Christian to obtain God's gracious forgiveness, he must repent of his sins, confess them, and pray for forgiveness (Acts 8:22, 1 John 1:9). A Christian cannot persist in error and expect God's grace to cover that error.

Impossible to Comply?

There are attempts to refute the truth that the Christian must comply with God's terms of pardon in order for grace to cover his sins. From the writings of some, I gather that they actually believe it is **impossible** to meet the terms of pardon for every sin committed. They seem to think that the necessity of seeking God's forgiveness implies that we must name every single sin specifically as we pray for forgiveness. **I know of no one who so contends.** Such would indeed be impossible. Surely all of us sin from time to time, and none of us can call to mind each specific sin; but we can, as David,

pray for God's forgiveness for all our sins — including those which we do not call to mind — and do so with a determination not to commit such sins again (Psalm 19:12).

In seeking to show the impossibility of meeting God's terms of pardon for every sin committed, the author of one bulletin article which I recently read penned the following:

"According to this extreme position not one of us has a chance of being eternally saved! How many sins of omission have we committed? And can any man say that he has confessed each of these and asked for forgiveness (that is **honestly**) do so? This is what we are being told must happen to each and every sin committed!"

Regarding the sins of omission to which my brother refers, I ask, does not this brother experience sorrow because of the knowledge that he has from time to time failed in his responsibility to do good; does he not determine within his heart to be more diligent in the future; and does he not penitently pray for God's forgiveness? I imagine he does, thus meeting God's terms of pardon for his sins of omission.

Perfect Law Keeping?

Some would argue that we who insist that God's terms of pardon must be met by the erring Christian are depending upon perfect law keeping, rather than God's grace, for salvation. The author of the aforementioned bulletin article said, "This position is nothing in the world but a dependence upon law keeping for salvation — **perfect law keeping!** The law demands obedience and when broken it demands recognition of that fact, confession of it, penitence concerning it and prayer for forgiveness."

I have never met the writer of that statement, but realizing that he is a mature, experienced gospel preacher, I was rather taken aback — **shocked** would be a more accurate word — that he would make such an assertion. It should be perfectly obvious that the very fact that forgiveness must be sought, the very fact that sin has occurred, is proof positive that the law has not been perfectly kept. To say that one who has **broken** the law is saved by perfect law keeping is a contradiction if ever there was one. Those of us who teach the necessity of seeking God's forgiveness cannot properly be accused of teaching salvation by perfect law keeping; for when we say that forgiveness must be sought, we are necessarily implying that the law of Christ has **not** been perfectly kept.

Brethren, our salvation is most assuredly by the grace of God (Ephesians 2:8-9). To say that salvation is by God's grace is to say that we do not deserve it. We do not deserve it because we have sinned. Thanks be to God that He gave His only begotten Son to shed His blood on the cross, so that He can forgive us our sins and we can enjoy the bliss of heaven **despite our unworthiness**. They are slanderers and liars who accuse us of not believing in the grace of God.

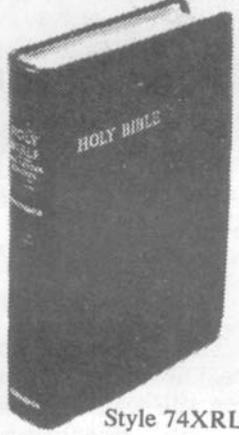
The Christian who maintains fellowship with God

and who will eventually enjoy the glories of heaven is not the one who perfectly keeps the law of Christ, for **all** of us sin from time to time; rather, it is the one who has enough **faith** and **love** within his heart to do his best to live according to the teaching of Christ and to continually pray **with a penitent heart** that God will graciously forgive him his shortcomings. This is the one who is walking in the light and whose sins are forgiven (1 John 1:7-9, Acts 8:22). Although he sins occasionally, there is no comparison between him and the one who persists in some sin, **never repenting of it**, never seeking God's forgiveness for it; but, according to some of our brethren, the one who never repents of his erroneous practices pertaining to the worship, work, and organization of the church remains justified by God's grace. The Bible does not so teach!

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THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

NEW PAPERS

SENTRY MAGAZINE, a monthly, edited by Floyd Chappellear began in September, 1974. Articles will stress living as Christians. Subscription price is \$2 a year with group subscriptions at six for \$10. Correspondence should be addressed to 3910 Glenbrook, Fairfax, VA 22030.

VANGUARD MAGAZINE, a 32-page fortnightly journal, will appear in January, 1975 with Yater Tant as editor and David Edwin Harrell as featured columnist. The editorial staff lists Franklin T. Puckett, Homer Hailey, Peter J. Wilson, Hoyt Houchen, Robert Farish, Colly Caldwell, L. A. Mott, Jr., Sewell Hall and Clinton Hamilton. A sample copy will be sent to all interested persons. Subscription price is \$7.50 a year. Write to VANGUARD PUBLISHERS, P.O. Box 3006, Memphis, TN 38103.

NEW CONGREGATIONS

WALTER T. STEPHENS, 127 Lake Street, Nicholasville, KY 40356. On September 1, 1974 a new congregation met for the first time in Nicholasville, Kentucky. Several members of the University Heights congregation in Lexington were living in this area and the work was planned and encouraged by University Heights. The writers' support will be furnished in part by University Heights until the new work can be self-supporting. A gospel meeting is planned for November 4-10. We are meeting at 127 Lake Street. If you know of people in this area we should contact, please let us know.

JERRY L. JAMISON, P.O. Box 332, Locust Grove, VA22508. A new congregation has begun in FALMOUTH, VA about two miles east of I-95. We meet in the Fredericksburg-Stafford Park Authority Recreation Center, 310 Butler Road, 1 block east of the junction of U.S. 17 and U.S. 1. Attendance runs from 10-15 at present.

SAM BINKLEY, JR., 110 French Way, Athens, Alabama 35611. The debate between Carroll Sutton and Albert Hill which was scheduled for last May was postponed due to an accident which injured Brother Sutton a few days before that. He is now recovered and able to participate, though no date has been set. Contacts with the brethren at Hobbs Street have met with the response that they are so busy in the process of finding another preacher and other matters that they do not have time to even think about when they can get together to discuss another date for the debate. If, and when, the dates are reset, we will try to let you know.

DON HASTINGS, 403 College, Waycross, GA 31501. After four years in Sarasota, Florida, I have moved to work with the church in Waycross. If you have friends in this area we can contact, please notify me. Along with a teaching column in the newspaper, a daily 15 minute program is conducted. We have hopes for a paper to use in teaching. If you are visiting in the area, worship with us.

DEATH OF FARRIS J. SMITH

With sadness we note the death of our friend and brother, Farris J. Smith, preacher for the Berea Points church in Birmingham. Brother Smith spent many years preaching in that area and was widely known and respected. He was faithful to the Lord. The editor of this paper will never forget the hospitality of his home a few years ago when making preparations to go and preach in Norway. The cause we love sustains a loss but our mourning is tempered with hope. Our sympathy is extended to his family.

GARY HARGIS, Box 715, Byron, Minnesota. In the last year six have been baptized in the work at Rochester, four of these the last six weeks. Attendance now runs 25-28. Through the obedience of one Lutheran lady a new congregation has now started in Spring Valley, Minnesota. Visitors are coming regularly there and a gospel meeting is planned soon with Don Taafe of Dundee, Florida. One couple with three children have been driving 60 miles from Red Wing to worship with us. They are as regular as clockwork and he shares in the preaching both here and in Spring Valley. He is interested in beginning full-time work shortly. Things are looking up. We now have many prospects. But there is this bleak note. January 1, 1975 I will lose \$300 a month of my support. If anyone knows where relief might be available, please let us know.

EARL HARTSELL, Rt. 1, Box 38, Ruston, LA 71270. After two years of pleasant and rewarding work in Magnolia, Arkansas, I have moved to Ruston to help start a new congregation here. We met the first time September 1 with 14 present. We have since had as many as 22. We meet in the V.F.W. Hall on Route 80. If you know of any in this area we should contact, please inform us.

NEW SERVICE CONTEMPLATED

BOB WEST, 6121 Hudson St., Orlando, FL 32808. Would you be interested in a Clip Art Service produced especially for churches of Christ? Most likely it would be published quarterly on a subscription basis and would include reproduction quality art and type for ads, illustrations for articles, instructional cartoons, charts, column headings, etc. If you would be interested and would state what materials would be most helpful to you, please let me know. (Editor's note: Bob West is an elder of the Pine Hills church in Orlando, author of the popular THEOPHILUS cartoon series, and a graphic designer/illustrator/art director for more than 25 years. This proposed service could be of great help in bulletin preparation.)

HAROLD V. COMER, 521 Cumberland St., Florence, AL 35630. Franklin T. Puckett will teach a special series of lessons on "Calvinism and Modern Adaptations" for two weeks this spring from February 25 through March 7 in Florence, Alabama. He will deal with the traditional doctrines of Calvinism, misconceptions about what Calvinism teaches, the danger of it in various denominational writings and the place of Calvinistic thinking in certain current problems and discussions such as imputed righteousness, grace, indwelling of the Holy Spirit, etc. This should be of great value, especially to younger preachers. Some brethren in the Florence area are willing to open their homes to house those who wish to come but cannot afford to pay for lodging. Some homes will provide some of the meals. If you plan to come and wish such arrangements made, write to Franklin T. Puckett, P.O. Box 1166, Florence, Alabama 35630 or phone (205) 766-6179.

REPORT FROM THE PHILIPPINES

LESLIE DIESTELKAMP, c/o Max Burgin, Lot 43, Seaview Ave., Ferny Creek, Vic. 3786, Australia. The first part of September it was my privilege to spend two weeks in the Philippine Islands. This was a side-trip enroute to Australia where I now labor with support by the 77th Street church in Birmingham. Since they also support a native Filipino preacher whom they do not know, they asked me to go there and work with him briefly. Consequently, in two weeks I preached in 13 congregations in two provinces and spoke 32 times (in one seven day period I preached 23 times). Everywhere I was received with much gratitude and hospitality.

The usual custom for American preachers who go there is to go in pairs and to spend most of their time in lectureships and training sessions for preachers. This is a real good work, altogether worthy of support and of effort. However, because of my previous experiences, my personality and abilities, I believe I am more useful if I go directly to the people. Consequently, this I did in the Philippines. I ate at their tables, slept in their rooms and preached to their hearts. They were very grateful and receptive. Sometimes I was asked why I had come there alone. I replied that I was not alone, but in the midst of more than forty million friendly Filipinos. Never have I been treated better, and throughout my travels, even into remote mountain areas, I had not even one moment of fear or anxiety.

Many native preachers are doing an excellent work with American support there, and they demonstrate abilities quite comparable to those of preachers in America and Nigeria. I regret that I only scheduled two weeks there, and I hope that while I am in this quarter of the globe I may return to the Philippines for a longer time. In the meantime I am thankful for the opportunity that was afforded me of reaching into the Asian field and now for this additional privilege of laboring for souls in my fifth continent, Australia.

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	344
RESTORATIONS	267
(Figures taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)	

PREACHERS NEEDED

SHEPHERDSVILLE, KENTUCKY. The church here needs a preacher in November. We are self-supporting, own the building and a preacher's house. We are located just off I-65, 15 miles south of Louisville on Route 44 east. Contact Tony Lacefield, Rt. 4, Shepherdsville, KY 40165 or phone (502) 957-4633.

LOVELOCK, NEVADA. The small church in Lovelock needs a preacher on retirement income to work part time with this church. We can provide \$50 a week salary. For further information contact Damon Itza, 450 14th St., Lovelock, Nevada 89419.

PLYMOUTH, NORTH CAROLINA. The church which meets at Longridge Road and West Haven Drive in Plymouth needs a preacher in November. Joe Hickman, present preacher is moving to Sanford, N.C. in November. Interested brethren should write to the church at P.O. Box 711, Plymouth, N.C. 27962, or call Frank Hollowell at (919) 927-3172.

GRIER'S CREEK, KENTUCKY. The church in Woodford County, Kentucky, meeting at Grier's Creek, is in need of a preacher. This is a new work of three and a half years with great potential. For information write Morton Million, Rt. 2, Troy Pike, Versailles, KY 40383 or phone (606) 873-4385.