

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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THE BAPTISM OF SUFFERING

Wilson Adams

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In Mark 10:32-40 there is recorded for us the account of the coming of the sons of Zebedee, James and John, to our Lord with a request for place of prominence in His future kingdom. It seems they (as well as the others) still expected Christ to be their political champion, military hero, and warrior king who would lead them in a victorious onslaught against their heathen oppressors, and in so doing would construct a physical, political kingdom of which He would be the ruling Messiah. Naturally they were concerned (along with their mother — see Matt. 20:23) about their place in such a kingdom and, as it seems, wanted to get their reservations in early for the chief seats of preeminence, one on the right and the other on the left of Christ. Suffice it to say that Jesus would later show that His kingdom was "not of this world" (John 18:36). It would not be a physical kingdom but a spiritual one. For now Jesus makes this reply to their request:

"You do not know what you are asking for. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?"

And they said to Him, "We are able." And Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you shall drink, and you shall be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized. "But to sit on My right or on My left, this is not mine to give; but it is for those for whom it has been prepared" (V. 38-40).

There can be little doubt that Jesus is referring to His coming sufferings and persecutions to which He had just afore-mentioned (V. 32-34). He so ably reminds James and John that such a request for glory in His kingdom would also mean certain suffering for those who followed Jesus. Both would later

come to realize the truthfulness of these words as James would die a martyr's death (Acts 12:2) and John would be exiled to the island of Patmos (Rev. 1:9).

Christ often referred to His sufferings in prospect as a baptism (Lk, 12:50). By the synonymous use of "cup" and "baptism," Jesus reveals that the time will shortly come when He will be buried or immersed in total suffering. Although He had given a brief glimpse of such suffering back in verse 34 the apostles still could not have imagined the suffering that Jesus or they would undergo. And like the apostles we, too, fail to fully comprehend all the suffering and agony that our Lord went through on our behalf. He truly received the baptism of suffering.

Try to imagine if you can the thoughts of Jesus as He partook of the last passover meal with His blessed apostles realizing that He soon was to be taken from them. See the anguish in His face as He reveals that it will be one of them who would be the betrayer. Feel the hurt as Judas replies, "Surely it is not I, Rabbi?" Picture the blood flowing tears of Christ as He pleads with the Father in the Garden of Gethsemane. See the hypocritical kiss that Judas plants on the blessed face of the Lord Jesus. One of His very own had now betrayed Him. Try to imagine the feeling Christ had when He reached out for a hand, but none was there for His apostles were following "afar off." Then see His eyes meeting the eyes of Peter immediately after Peter had cursed and sworn saying, "I do not know the man!" Envision if you can the gruesome, repulsive, and illegal trial of Jesus as He was shoved here and there, being mocked and ridiculed by the very ones He had created. Conceive of the pain of that thorny crown and picture the hurt in the eyes of the Lord as the spit and the slaps landed on the face of the Son of God. Imagine the weight of that cross and hear the snide remarks as He struggled toward Golgotha's rugged heights. Feel the pain of that first nail as it is driven by glancing blows through His hand. See His anguish, distress, and agony as the cross is raised and the Savior's weight pulls the torn and battered flesh of His nailed hands. SEE IT ALL! Jesus truly underwent the baptism of suffering. He was immersed in total suffering. And for what reason? Dear Reader, HE DID IT FOR YOU! Are you willing to suffer for Him?

I believe some of us have become a little warped as to what suffering for the Lord really involves. Why it has gotten to the place that if the preacher goes overtime (meaning 30 minutes these days) and we miss Battlestar Galactica — why that is suffering for the Lord! Or if we get that 20% pay increase and decide to "kick in" an extra dollar in the contribution — why we're suffering for the Lord! And such ought not to be.

Suffering involves standing up for what is right no matter what the cost. It cost Jesus His life as well as most of the apostles. No, our lives may never be put on the line but our convictions will be. Are we willing to be reviled, persecuted, and spoken against for the cause of Christ? Are we willing to run with the Lord instead of with the crowd even though such a choice will cause us to be ridiculed and laughed at? Are we willing to put the kingdom first before anything else? Are we really willing to suffer for the Lord? Let us remember the pain and agony that Christ went through because He was willing to suffer for us. Someone had to pay the price and He was that someone. What a Savior! May the Lord help you and me to stand strong and to possess a willing attitude to suffer for His cause when such occasions arise. Finally, may we all realize that it is not the way of the world but the way of the cross that will lead us home.

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Editorial

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DRIFTING

"For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it" (Heb. 2:1 — NASV). God has spoken to man. Through history he has 'spoken in diverse ways and through numerous messengers. God "hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son" (Heb. 1:2). What Jesus said and what the Holy Spirit empowered the apostles to speak and write was a revelation of *the* mind of God for our instruction and guidance. The Holy Spirit guided the apostles into "all truth" (Jno. 16:13-14). They had "the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2:16). John said "he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error" (1 Jno. 4:6).

Some have so hardened their hearts against what God said that they have never stood in the truth. Others have received the word with joy only to drift away from it in times of trial. The greater our familiarity with what God said, the greater should be our reverence for it. Unfortunately, with some, "familiarity breeds contempt." Some have preached the will of God to others with telling force only to conclude that they were exempted from the same truth in their own lives.

What Causes Drifting?

1. Obviously, drifting occurs where there is no anchor. Hope is the anchor of the soul (Heb. 6:19). When that hope is dimmed or obscured, then we have raised anchor and are set adrift to whatever port circumstances shall direct.

2. Drifting is hard to perceive at first. Little by little and step by step we move away from foundation truths and principles. It is easy to rationalize sin until we awaken one day to realize how far we have drifted from what we used to be.

3. Some drift from the truth because they never developed enough familiarity with it. "These have no root . . . and in time of temptation, fall away" (Lk. 8:13).

4. Some drift because of the pursuit of material things. Their hearts are thus divided and their values distorted. Jesus said "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mt. 6:33).

5. Some drift because of evil influences. Family and social ties have strong influences on us all. Employment pressures cause some to weaken and drift. Peer pressure takes its toll on the young. The influence of the entertainment world is antagonistic to godliness. The Christian is not exempt from the

strong social pressures of the day. So many have called evil, good, for so long, that it is all too easy for us to join in the chorus before we know what is happening.

Congregations Drift

In just a few decades the Ephesian congregation had drifted to the point that the Lord said he would remove their candlestick if they did not repent (Rev. 2:5). Here was a work established by Paul who had labored night and day with tears. He "kept back nothing that was profitable" unto them and "shunned not to declare all the counsel of God" to them (Acts 20:17-27). What had happened in such a short time? Had they become doctrinally unsound? No, that was not it. They had left their first love. They were drifting. Continued drifting would carry them far enough away from the Lord that he would remove their candlestick and claim them no longer.

Whenever a congregation settles down into a simple house-keeping routine, content to drift from week to week as long as everything runs smoothly, ignores uncorrected sin, pays little attention to its overall teaching effort within and without, then the drift has already started.

Signs of Drifting

Many of us have pointed out often the signs of drifting among those of the institutional persuasion. For this no apology should be offered. Now, some of that persuasion are speaking out plainly along similar lines, up to a point, at least. But while we have been busy doing that, it does not seem to have occurred to some that among those of conservative attitudes toward scriptural authority, there are also signs of drift. We would be less than honest to ignore them or pretend they do not exist.

(1) There is drifting in the pulpit in many places. Too many preachers have become theological lecturers. Their preaching (if it may be called that) is on such a level that it misses the needs of ordinary people. It lacks urgency. Novel and catchy approaches and "cute" phrases are being substituted for old fashioned gospel preaching. Fundamental truths are by-passed in favor of sensationalism. We have so many specialists that we are in dire need of dedicated general practitioners. Is this too strong an indictment? All right. How long has it been since you taught on the distinction in the covenants? How much preaching have you done (or heard) lately on Bible authority, or the nature, work and organization of the church? A new generation is on the scene and they have not been grounded in these truths. Have you preached definitive sermons on faith, or repentance or baptism lately? I don't mean a few hastily made remarks at the end of a lesson while the audience has already turned you off and is fumbling with song books. What are you saying about the difference between the church of the Lord and denominationalism? Have you dealt with scriptural worship? How long has it been since you either heard or preached a sermon on instrumental music in worship? Have you said anything lately about the Bible teaching on the Holy Spirit? Are you speaking out militantly against the works of the flesh, or closing your eyes to known sin among the brethren?

Are you afraid or ashamed to name names when necessary to warn against error confronting the people of God? What are you preaching about the need for corrective discipline in the case of the unfaithful and rebellious?

Is "soundness" to be measured only in terms of what is not in the budget or the building? There are congregations which have passed through the fire in years past in resisting the institutional and social gospel promotions which have clasped to their bosoms every form of ungodliness by their fellowship with unrepentant scoundrels. "Brethren, we are drifting" to quote the late J. D. Tant.

(2) Some elders are drifting. Instead of feeding the flock, they are confounding the flock with indecisive leadership, weakness in the face of error, and timidity in handling the ungodly. Patience and longsuffering are in order with the weak, but even the patience and longsuffering of God have a terminating point. Churches need men who truly watch for souls and provide strong, aggressive direction. Many of the troubles caused by preachers who have become weak in faith and therefore in preaching would have been averted had elders everywhere been alert to what was taking place.

(3) Many are drifting when it comes to personal involvement in the work of the church and especially in personal evangelism. The year-end reports of many churches of considerable size reflects a pitiful rate of conversions for the number of members. That spells out the fact that either there is an absence of personal evangelism among the members (including the preachers), or else it is not being properly done.

(4) There is equivocation in the press. While we stand squarely opposed to irresponsible journalism and have no desire to fan into flame matters of personal judgment, it must be recognized that much of what is written nowadays is pretty bland. There are important issues which need attention. Fear of upsetting "brother Somewhat", or of bringing down the wrath of influential brethren involved in various projects of great proportions should deter none of us "from speaking the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15). Human institutions have their place when properly organized and operated. They are out of their place when they solicit the funds of churches to build, maintain or defend them. But human enterprises have a tendency, as time passes, to forget the principles upon which they were founded and to close their ears to the warnings and criticisms of their own best friends. Schools and papers have often deserted their original ground in the second and third generations. Some have not taken that long. Let none of us cry "Wolf" when there is no wolf except in our own excited imaginations. But let none of us fail to speak out when times and circumstances demand it. We detect a definite sensitivity to criticism from some of those related to some private enterprises, which enterprises are not reluctant to ask for help from any and all when they need it.

Some of you may not see the drifting which this writer does. We would like to discover that we are simply mistaken. The future bears watching. In the meantime, the words of the Hebrew writer should be earnestly pondered. Indeed, let us "pay much closer

attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it."

A STUDY OF I CORINTHIANS 7:1-15

— Part 3 —

This study considers the claim that I Cor. 7:11 gives conditional permission to leave a marriage partner. We have pointed out that the obligation to establish authority for our action places the burden of proof on those who make this claim. If interpretations that do not grant such permission are shown to be possible, then the claim fails. We considered two such possibilities in the previous article.

The Third Non-Permissive Possibility PASSIVE, FUTURE

(If she is left sometime in the future, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband.)

The verb translated "should she depart" is passive. A. T. Robertson's Greek grammar says, "Significance of the Passive: the subject is represented as the recipient of the action. He is acted upon." (p. 815)

A number of impressive scholars affirm that this is the proper view.

Cambridge Greek Testament, p. 111. "This contemplates a separation taking place in spite of the command, i.e., by the action of the husband. A case is put in which the husband, in violation of the Christian law, divorces his wife. A rule is then given for the divorced wife."

Calvin, *Commentary on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, p. 240. "But if she has been expelled from her house, or has been put away, she must not think that even in that case she is set free from his power. . . ."

Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol. IV, p. 126. "If in spite of Christ's clear prohibition, she gets separated (ingressive passive subjective) let her remain unmarried. . . ."

Gromacki, *Called to Be Saints: An Exposition of I Corinthians*, p. 90. "The verb 'depart' is an aorist passive imperative, 'choristhenai.' It implies that departure was forced upon her".

On the other hand, some interpret this as a "reflexive passive." The subject acts on itself. In this case, the woman would be acted upon by herself, by separating herself from her husband.

This is Lenski's position. "... regarding the wife's action, a passive: she is separated from her husband by something, she leaves him. . . ." *Interpretation of I and II Corinthians*, p. 287.

However, this is not the primary, natural use of the passive, but is possible when clearly indicated by the context. It is a matter of interpretation, not grammar.

The context is in the direction of prohibition, not permission. It involves a solemn charge, "depart not." Where is the contextual indication hinting at an interpretation that would grant permission for her to depart? There is none. Rather, the context plainly and authoritatively affirms the opposite.

The Passive Christian vs. 11-15

On the other hand, a consideration of the obligations of the deserted Christian follows naturally at this point. While telling the believing wife not to leave and telling the believing husband not to leave, it is reasonable that Paul would give instructions should they find themselves left.

Furthermore, in the following verse (v. 12), Paul considers the possibility that the unbelieving wife might not be content to stay with the believer ("If . . . content to dwell"). In other words, she might be discontent and decide to leave the believer. In the next verse (v. 13), he considers the possibility that the unbelieving husband might not be content to stay. Discontented, he might decide to leave her. Of course, that would mean that the passive believing wife would be left.

In fact, the point being emphasized is that they must be sure that they are passive. The believer is not to act. In verse 12, Paul says, if the brother has an unbelieving wife content to stay, "let him not leave her." In verse 13, if the sister has an unbelieving husband content to stay, "let her not leave her husband."

Unbelievers determined whether to go or stay on the basis of their own contentment. Obviously their decisions would not be made on the basis of the Lord's commands. When we consider the great contrast between the life of a Christian and the life of those in that grossly immoral society, we can understand why an unbeliever might become discontent. As a result of the radical change in the life of their newly converted spouse, they might decide to leave. Paul was powerless to change such a decision.

However, that should not be the case with a believer. Paul's plain instruction to the believer married to an unbeliever was "Do not leave!" Under the circumstances just described, we can understand that the believers might well become discontent. They might piously say, "I just can't live in that environment and be a Christian." While that may seem right to us, the wisdom of the Holy Spirit is very different. The time for such considerations is before marriage. After one has been "joined" by God, having become one flesh, the believer is commanded not to leave. If discontentment should occur, any active leaving would have to be on the part of the unbeliever. The believer must remain passive.

We will point out later that the lack of conditions in verse 11 argues against the presumption that conditional permission is granted. Feeling the weight of this problem, some have gone all the way to the latter part of verse 15 to find their conditions. They argue that the clause, "God hath called us in peace" suggests that a lack of peace justifies a believer deserting his marriage. This passage says nothing about the believer departing, nor does it speak of

peace as a condition determining whether anyone should depart.

Rather it deals with the obligations of believers when they are left. "Yet if the unbeliever departeth, let him depart: the brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases." In other words, the believer is not required to continue struggling to maintain their obligations in the relationship if the unbeliever determines to leave. Having emphasized the requirement to maintain the marriage even with the unbeliever of that day, Paul finds it necessary to tell them that a continuing, hopeless struggle to keep up the obligations of their marriage is not necessary if the unbeliever departs. It is in contrast to that kind of struggle that peace is urged.

The idea that believers are given conditional permission to act in deserting their spouse is completely foreign to this verse and the entire context. They are commanded to remain passive.

Summarizing; the idea of permission to actively leave one's spouse is opposite to the context, while the idea of the believer passively being left is a primary subject of the context.

Therefore, the reasons for concluding that the woman of verse 11 does not act in leaving (rather, she is left, being acted upon) are as follows:

1. The verb is passive.
2. The primary sense of the passive involves the subject being acted upon.
3. Exceptions to the primary sense of the passive require clear indication from the context.
4. The idea of actively departing is forbidden by the context. It is opposite to the context.
5. The idea of Christians being passively left is the subject of the following verses. It fits perfectly with the context.

Of course, if the passage deals with a woman being left, it could not authorize future, purposeful action. Permission would not be granted. The plain, clear prohibition would stand.

The Fourth Non-Permissive Possibility PAST, PASSIVE

(If she has already been left, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband.)

We have pointed out that if the action under consideration had taken place in the past, it would be impossible for the passage to grant permission for future action. It was shown that if it is passive, it would be impossible for the passage to authorize future action. We have presented good reasons for believing that both are correct; that the passage involves passive action that had already taken place.

However, if neither position is correct, (if it is both active and future) there are still at least five factors, presented earlier, which demonstrate that permission cannot be established.

In other words, if the passage is either passive or past action, permission is impossible. If it is neither, permission is still not established. Therefore, the Christian who would hope to authorize the desertion of his or her spouse is left in a hopeless condition.

**RESULTS OF SEPARATION
"DEFRAUD"**

I Cor. 7:2 — "Because of fornication. . . ." I Cor. 7:5 — "Defraud ye not . . . that Satan tempt ye not. . . ."

Thayer defines this term to mean, "to defraud, rob, despoil," p. 60. This is the same word found in James 5:4 — "Behold the hire of the laborers who mowed your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth out. . . ."

Paul says that when sexual privileges are withheld (necessarily involved in separation), robbery, fraud occurs. That which belongs to individuals by right is taken from them.

"TEMPT YE"

Furthermore, Paul indicates that one of the effects of being defrauded is that temptation is forced upon the deserted spouse.

The seriousness of tempting one to sin is emphasized by Christ in Matt. 18:6,7.

"But whoso shall cause one of these little ones that believe on me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depths of the sea. Woe unto the world because of occasions of stumbling! For it must needs be that the occasions come; but woe to that man through whom the occasion cometh!"

Departure by one party brings temptation to both. Experience teaches that, almost invariably, at least one will eventually succumb. Such tragedy emphasizes the wisdom of I Cor. 7:2,5.

MATT. 5:32

In this passage, Christ is concerned with such temptation and pronounces everyone guilty who "puts away" (with one exception).

Unfortunately, many are under the impression that this passage says the same thing as Matt. 19:9. While the construction is basically the same, the primary subject is different. Matt. 19:9 deals primarily with divorce and remarriage. Matt. 5:32 deals primarily with "putting away." Here, the one "putting away" does not remarry. He is guilty, but not of adultery. He is guilty of making his wife an adulteress.

Of course, the wife is not literally and necessarily forced to be an adulteress. However, as a result of being deserted, she is exposed to the very temptation that marriage is supposed to combat (I Cor. 7:2,5). She is forced in the direction of, tempted to become, an adulteress. Because of this temptation, Paul forbids separation, "except by consent for a season." One who "puts away" indefinitely exposes their mate to temptation whether they remarry or not. This is why Paul forbids such action. It is why Jesus says that everyone putting away his wife is guilty.

There is one exception. Most brethren fully understand the implications of the construction used in this passage. It is the same construction used in Matt. 19:9 which speaks of divorce and remarriage. There is little doubt that the passage clearly and

forcefully teaches that divorce and remarriage are absolutely wrong, with only one exception. In the same manner, Matt. 5:32 teaches that "putting away" is absolutely wrong, with only one exception.

MATT. 19:9	MATT. 5:32
Whosoever shall put away his wife (except for fornication)	Everyone that putteth away his wife (saving for the cause of fornication)
and shall marry another committeth adultery maketh her an adulteress	
RULE:	RULE:
DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE IS ADULTERY	PUTTING AWAY MAKES ADULTERESS
"Whosoever except for fornication" MEANS ONLY ONE EXCEPTION	"Everyone . . . saving... fornication:" MEANS ONLY ONE EXCEPTION
DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES?? OTHER EXCEPTIONS??	DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES?? OTHER EXCEPTIONS??

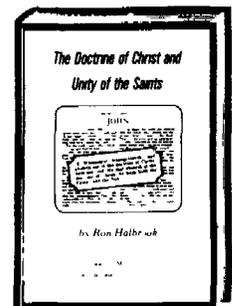
Consider the comments of John Murray on Matt. 5:32. ". . . it is not the exceptive clause that bears the weight of the emphasis in the text. It is rather that the husband may not put away for any other cause. It is the one exception that gives prominence to the illegitimacy of any other reason. Preoccupation with the one exception should never be permitted to obscure the force of the negation of all others." Divorce, p. 21.

We should realize that justifying separation necessarily involves a justification of those things the Bible says are involved: temptation to both parties which the Holy Spirit defines "defrauding"; and the guilt Jesus places on everyone "putting away" (with one exception).

In our concluding article we consider some of the pragmatic problems of both the permissive and non-permissive positions.

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Overseas Preaching Report

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RUBEN C. NOTARTE. A GREAT MAN AND A PRINCE IN ISRAEL HAS FALLEN

On 5 July 1979, I received the following overseas cable: "Daddy three weeks seriously sick. Spent loan. Died. Burial Friday. Please secure benevolence for us. Inform supporters. Letter follows." It was signed by Ruben Notarte's son. He left his widow and nine dependent children. He was fifty when he passed from this life. I read the message through tears. I was unaware he was even ill. All who knew him have sustained a deep personal loss, as has the work there.

Bro. Notarte was converted in 1972 out of the denominations. Since, his determination to serve the Lord has been a source of great inspiration to those privileged to have contact with him. All Americans who had opportunity to work with him recognized this and valued him for it. He spent most of his work preaching the gospel among the cultural minorities in Calinan and Magsaysay, on the southern island of Mindanao, in the area north of Davao City. With several other preachers, he established at least seventeen churches having a combined membership of approximately 600. He was the "glue" that put and held this work together. I endorsed him strongly and encouraged him in this, as did other Americans who worked with him among these cultural minorities.

Ruben was one of the most capable half dozen men there, but he didn't boast of his ability; recognizing it came from God and was to be used in His service. That is exactly what he did, pressing with a determination to do all the good he was capable of, no matter what the opposition. He did not seek the important, the rich and the socially prominent. Rather, he went into the highways and byways, working with a people as poor as any in that nation. They loved him for his concern for them. Ruben was the stimulus behind my appeal in the summer of 1978, to provide benevolent assistance for these brethren who suffered the loss of what little they had because of a drought. I was privileged to work closely with him in the distribution to these needy saints. His love for them was obvious.

The kingdom will continue; God's work there will be done, but that which he had been doing will be hard-put because of his departure. God called him home, and the loss is very definitely ours. 2 Sam. 3:38, 39 partially expresses my feeling: "And the king said unto his servants, Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel? and I am this day weak. ..." Ruben C. Notarte was truly a great man and prince in Israel; we are made poorer by his death.

Perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God

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DEVALUING DOCTRINE

A regrettable thing has happened to our way of thinking in the United States. We began two hundred years ago by affirming the liberty of all human beings and the freedom of each person to speak his mind. These liberties were held to be among the inalienable rights of persons equal before their Creator. In recent times, however, this noble belief in the right of each individual to hold his own convictions has degenerated into the notion that anybody's ideas are as true as anybody else's. And that shift in our thinking has already begun to lead to an even more perverse way of thought: one in which we cynically view every person's ideas as equally worthless.

To see how far we have drifted from the original intent of freedom of thought and speech, we have only to study the lives of the men who made those freedoms possible for us. They were vigorous men who maintained clear distinctions between the true and the false, the helpful and the harmful. Their conviction that humans are free to believe as they choose did not sway them from an equally firm conviction that it really matters what humans actually DO choose to believe. No doubt the founding fathers would agree with a statement this writer heard Jerry Clower, the Mississippi comedian, make not long ago: "I hope you will always have the right to do whatever you want to do in this country. And I hope you won't be fool enough to do some of the things you have the right to do!"

Unlike our forefathers, we dislike dogmatism in any shape or form. Nothing is quite so offensive to our enlightened sensibilities as someone with the audacity to insist that he is right. For someone to argue that he is right implies someone else is wrong, and that makes us uncomfortable. At times we even catch ourselves feeling better about someone who is manifestly wrong than about his opponent who is right and has had the effrontery to be dogmatic about it. A case in point is the recent controversy over Anita Bryant's clear-cut stand on homosexuality. Not a few so-called Christians who themselves disapprove of homosexuality have been heard to complain about Mrs. Bryant's forceful insistence that she is right. The attitude behind such complaints is one which says, "Some of us oppose homosexuality and some of us don't. But it's a free country and, after all, who really cares one way or the other?" The irony of it all is that we defend this indifference to truth with an appeal to our American

freedom, a freedom which our ancestors intended as a means of aiding the discovery and defense of truth!

The effects of this re-interpretation of freedom have become more and more evident in the Lord's church. The ecumenical movement spearheaded by W. Carl Ketcherside is a good example. In theory brother Ketcherside has preached the freedom of each man in Christ to hold his own convictions. That sounds as patriotic and American as it does Biblical. In practice, however, this preaching has translated into a plea for freedom FROM any convictions at all! What appears on paper to be a war against intolerant factionalism, which unfortunately often accompanies doctrinal controversy, is in reality a war against doctrinal controversy itself. The factionalists who deprive others of the right to think for themselves are not the only objects of brother Ketcherside's fury. Anybody who values truth enough to spend time discussing doctrinal differences (no matter how courteously) and who presses his own case strongly enough to leave the impression somebody else might be wrong is accused of legalism, bigotry, and repressiveness. It is precisely the same reaction one so often gets these days in secular matters if he is so backward as to believe it matters very much what one believes. We are told that the worst sin against freedom is that of rocking the boat.

If nothing else, this devaluing of doctrinal truth is a form of laziness. When a person finds himself in the middle of a welter of competing ideas, it is tempting to try to avoid the whole arduous business of searching for the truth by denying that truth can be found or by convincing himself the entire question he has been pondering is no longer of any real consequence. Brother Ketcherside has adopted the latter posture. The drift of all his writings is that doctrinal discussions amount to much ado about nothing, and his sympathizers follow suit by superciliously pretending that disputes about all such petty matters have long since ceased to be of any interest to them. If a choice is to be made, they prefer to associate with brethren with whom they theoretically disagree on numerous doctrinal issues, rather than waste any time on brethren with whom they have many things in common but who still believe that doctrine matters enough to talk about!

These are sharp words, to be sure. But it is well past time for many of us to be standing up and pointing out that freedom of belief and speech, tolerant understanding of our adversaries, humility, and a reverent desire for the unity of god's people are ALL compatible with a determined emphasis on doctrinal truth. Devaluing doctrine disguises the problem of religious division and does nothing to solve it. At best, the approach of a man like W. Carl Ketcherside to our present doctrinal disunity is superficial. At worst, it is a serious departure from the responsibility we all share to sift truth from untruth. That work is often less than pleasant, but so long as any of us are accountable to our Lord for all our words and deeds, it will be necessary. Crawling into a theological cave and waiting for the end to come will benefit neither our Lord's church nor ourselves.

MY SERVANTS THE PROPHETS

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HAGGAI — GOD'S PREACHER:

The Method — Part I

Because Haggai was one of the most successful preachers ever to present God's TRUTH we have taken time to observe the message and now we need to observe the method. His job was to motivate God's people to rebuild the temple and this he does in Chapter 1, Vs. 2-3, but by the time we read Verses 14 and 15, only 23 days have gone by and the people have responded to the urging of Haggai. This is almost beyond belief! After 16 years of neglect he is able to move the people in a 23-day period of time. Any kind of preaching that will conquer materialism, discouragement and procrastination deserves your attention and mine. As a matter of fact, it deserves more than attention. It deserves emulation. What then did he do to produce this great result? I. Reform Begins at The Top.

Notice in 1:1 "The word of the Lord" came by the prophet, Haggai, to (1) Zerubbabel, THE GOVERNOR and (2) to Joshua, THE HIGH PRIEST." The important point here is that reform begins at the TOP because he begins his message of rebuild, rebuild, rebuild, not with the man in the field, or the merchant in the store, but with the two most important men in Israel, the CIVIL Leader and the RELIGIOUS Leader. This blazes the most important truth in moving God's people to do God's work. IT MUST BEGIN with the Leadership.

Thus, brethren, the first application is that to move God's people to do God's work, it must begin with the Eldership. The local congregation will live or die based on the action or non-action of the Elders. Haggai's method of beginning at the top illustrates 5 important points that we need so desperately to see today:

1. The Leadership Must Have Vision — "Where there is no vision the people perish" is a Divine decree as well as a picture of the every day life. These men had no real vision as pertaining to the needs of those following them. They saw no real need to rebuild the temple because of the crush of materialistic pressure which they had to face every day. God's true Shepherds or Leaders must not only see today and its needs, but they need to see tomorrow and the day after. Where are we going? What are our plans? What do we want to accomplish? We must have wisdom and foresight or the next generation will be lost! Haven't we seen enough of our own children lost in past generations to know it will happen again and again if we are not careful and if we do not plan? Brethren actually plan for

FAILURE by neglecting to plan for success. Every good teaching program or personal evangelism program must be planned if it is to ever come about. Good things will not happen by accident.

2. God's People In Failure Have Always Been Lead There. What kind of leader will you be? One that leads others into failure or one that leads others into success. Every great indictment of God's people began with a scathing rebuke of the shepherds for scattering the flock. Ezek. 34 is a crystal clear example of the shepherd that scattered the flock. Matt. 23 is not an indictment of the people generally, but specifically the leaders. "Blind guides" so the Lord called them. We generally think of leaders who lead others into false doctrine as not accepting what God reveals, which is Truth, but those that simply lead others in inactivity are just as bad. It is so much easier to ask others to act rather than lead others into it. Consider: How many persons were baptized into Christ by personal evangelism of the Elders where you attend? How many Elders are teaching effective Bible classes where you attend? The sad truth is that in many places those in leadership do less than any other member of the body!

3. We Are No Better Than Our Leaders. With a condition as described above, what are the chances of turning this organization around and converting it into an active teaching and preaching congregation? ZERO is the general answer UNLESS THE LEADERS CHANGE FIRST! I have seen too many examples where Bible class teachers, because of their opportunity to be trained and properly motivated, have wanted to "turn over a new leaf" and begin again. To do so there is the need for approval and support of the eldership who scheduled the training in the first place. Without such support, they VETO the results to improve. Why, you ask? Simply because a need for a change automatically indicts the OLD methods and priorities which they were responsible for evolving. A local congregation in the grass roots of its membership lights a new fire, but unless the LEADERS are first committed, division will result.

4. Without The Approval Of The Eldership The Result is Revolution, Not Reformation. Every member and every leader must be aware of this situation. Too often preachers have been guilty of by passing the leadership and starting a new breath of enthusiasm in another pew because maybe they were more sympathetic. But, such is not God's order. His order is from the TOP down. How difficult it is to move the elders, and they must be moved first or the effort will end in revolt. Before one seeks to "fire up" anyone, he must begin with those in authority.

5. The Leaders Must See Today's Problems. There are cities today in which there is no faithful church but in times past had been good working bodies. The problem was that somewhere in the passing of time someone failed to see the problems of the future and the future lost with the devil winning. It could and will happen in your city if you are not the proper leader or if where you attend does not have the proper leadership. When Paul told Titus to set in order the things that remained, he simply said that

until you have godly elders the picture is not complete.

How desperately we need men who can scripturally be appointed so that the needed things might be set in order in congregations today. No local congregation will be much stronger, much more active, or much more zealous than its eldership. At the root of dead churches is a dead eldership and at the heart of thriving churches is an active and vibrant eldership. In the human body, many parts and some organs can be removed and while handicapping the body, it can still function. Yet, when the heart or the brain is impaired, the entire body must suffer. Why? Simply because of the centrality of influence that both the heart (all blood and oxygen functions) and the brain (control of voluntary and involuntary as well as reasoning) command.

If the eldership is not alive, active and vibrant the right kind of programs (spiritual growth activities) will not be planned, carried out, or participated in. Because they hold the keys to what congregational activity is going to be engaged in and because they know they will be expected to lead the way in that activity, they are not going to initiate programs to cause them embarrassment. Elders who don't plan on knocking on doors themselves seldom call the other Christians around a personal work program which involves that kind of activity. Elders who don't plan on learning to develop better teaching methods are seldom going to rally a teacher development program to aid the members and other Bible class teachers. Elders who are not interested in an active, zealous, participating congregation are seldom going to hire a preacher known for his work and involvement with a local congregation. Elders that don't believe in the POWER of the gospel will seldom commit the kind of money necessary to preach the gospel in foreign lands, on the radio, or in the local newspaper.

The overseeing of the flock involves all of these types of decisions that must come from commitment, dedication, and zeal. So, when an eldership doesn't want to "roll up its sleeves" and get to work it is like the body when the brain decides to take the day off.

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"WEIGHTIER MATTERS" REVIEWED

In the July issue of ENSIGN, the editor, R. L. Kilpatrick wrote an editorial entitled "Weightier Matters" in which he came to the conclusion regarding baptism that I had thought for some time that the "grace — fellowship" brethren were going to be forced into. However I never thought it would be put into print this soon or this emphatic.

On page two of the article, R. L. Makes the following statement. "Let's face it, we have in times past majored in minors and left the "weightier matters" of the gospel unattended. We have placed undue emphasis on the fundamentals, namely, our obsession with baptism, until we have lost our spiritual perspective. When someone said that 'baptism is an outward expression of an inward heart' he spoke the truth. As to whether or not God forgives sins at the point of heart obedience or at the point of the literal act is, as far as I can see, completely immaterial. That's God's business."

R. L. then gives examples that are supposed to show that his statement is true. He says, "The outward act of obedience is merely the expression of what is already present in the heart, whether of sin, obedience, or worship. Let's look at several examples." He then gives the examples of Adam and Eve, Abraham offering his son, David when he and his men trespassed into the tabernacle's Holy Place and ate the forbidden "shewbread," when Jesus and his disciples were plucking ears of grain and eating on the Sabbath day, and in a reverse case R. L. says, "The rich young ruler kept all the commandments outwardly, but broke all of them inwardly. . . ."

One of the things that R. L. is getting at is trying to show, you guessed it, death-bed salvation, and being saved like the thief on the cross. For, he continues his article by citing both of these situations. Lest I misquote him, I want to quote his entire thought on these subjects.

"When does God forgive? At the point of obedience? or at the point of the physical act? The examples above should have already answered this question, since the outward act of baptism is an expression of what's in the heart. There is nothing here that will likely cause us any problem, except possibly in those 'death-bed-repentance' cases, i.e., where the dying call upon the Lord at the last minute for salvation — but are never baptized. Let not our brethren belittle death-bed-repentance. If the thief on the cross is not a genuine case of it, then I don't know what is."

I have known all along that these brethren were Calvinists to the core. They not only do not understand the design of God in conversion, but they fail miserably in their understanding of the Scriptures that there are some things that God chose not to know. Such is true in the case of Abraham. Could God have known the heart of Abraham before he went to offer his son Isaac on the altar? Who is willing to deny that he could have? But what does Genesis 22:11-12 show? It shows that God said, when Abraham had placed Isaac on the altar and was about to plunge the knife into him, "Now I know that thou fearest God." Also, when did God cast Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden — before or after they had eaten of the forbidden fruit?

James said, "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:14-15). Being tempted is not sin. But when we are tempted and drawn away of our own lust, then that is what brings forth sin, James said.

Does He, or Doesn't He?

Paul said of Christ, ". . . he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:9). Does He, or doesn't He? Neither I, nor any other man, have a right to tell anyone that God will save him on any terms other than those that God has revealed. If God decides to do it, that will be fine. But I have no right to tell him anything other than that which God has revealed. The only way I can know the mind of God is by what is revealed in the Bible. "For what man knoweth the things of man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God" (I Cor. 3:11-12). So, I have no right, and neither does R. L. Kilpatrick or any other man, to tell anyone, anything that the Spirit of God has not revealed. And nowhere in the Scriptures, that I know anything about, has the Spirit of God revealed that a man can be saved on his deathbed without being baptized. If so, where is the passage?

Oh, but notice in the above quotation from one who claims to be a Christian, a member of the body of Christ, he says that "the thief on the cross is a genuine example of it." However, he anticipates just what answer might be given to this "weighty" argument and says, "Our orthodox comeback to this argument is that 'the thief lived under the law of Moses and not under the law of Christ.' This point of argument leads us into a much graver error. When we say that the thief lived under the law of Moses and therefore not subject to the provisions of the New Testament concerning baptism, we make two fundamental mistakes. First, to say that the thief did not live under the NT law implies that salvation is by 'law', which is not the case. Secondly, it reverses the roles we normally assign to the 'old law' and 'new law'; that is, we assign justice to the law of Moses and mercy to the law of Christ, which is correct

(John 1:17); but here it is reversed!"

R. L. is in grave error on his arguments on the thief. First of all, he could not prove to save his life that the thief was not baptized unto John's baptism. Secondly, he misses the point of the Law of Moses and the Law of Christ. The reason this is stressed today is because today we are subject to Christ's baptism. The thief was not subject to Christ's baptism because when they were both on the cross, Christ had not commanded that men be baptized by his authority. That was after His death, burial, and resurrection (cf. Matt. 28:18-19). Paul said of those who are obedient to Christ, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:1-2). Thus Paul refers to that by which we are saved as being the "Law of the Spirit" of which baptism for the remission of sins is a part. If, as R. L. says, God looks on the heart and one is saved "at the point of heart obedience," then Saul of Tarsus was saved before he was ever baptized. For the Scriptures teach that Saul called Christ "Lord," and asked what Christ wanted him to do. If he was saved at the point of heart obedience, then he was saved in his sins. For when Ananias came to him in Damascus three days later he told Saul, "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Thus Saul had not been forgiven of his sins at the point of "heart obedience" R. L. Kilpatrick notwithstanding.

R. L.'s doctrine of death-bed-salvation is as far from the truth as any denominational preacher that ever preached it. Neither He, nor any other man, has the right to presume what God will do for anyone — UNLESS God has stated it. And the fact of the matter is, Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. . ." (Mark 16:16). Now in these instructions, does baptism come before or after salvation? The fact of the matter is, brother Kilpatrick, the doctrine that one can be saved without being baptized is rotten to the core, and is, in fact, a flat denial of what Jesus said. It is a failure to believe what Jesus said. Thus the latter part of Mark 16:16 is applicable to you and all who fail to believe what Jesus said, ". . . he that believeth not shall be damned."

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THE CHRISTIAN AND EMOTIONALISM

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Introduction:

1. Visit to "Holy Rollers" meeting — high pitch of excitement, get religion, lose control of self, roll in floor, sometimes speak in "tongues." This religious experience was better felt than told, so they said (told!). The Holy Spirit had come into their lives and they would not trade what they felt in their hearts (erroneously located as the physical blood pump) for all the Bibles in the world.

2. Ignorance of the Scriptures and dependence on emotions create a religion of excitement. Several forms of analysis are possible; let us note these:

I. GOD NEVER PUT THE OPERATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND FEELINGS TOGETHER.

A. The Apostles on Pentecost. (Acts 2:1-4).

1. No reference to how the apostles felt.
2. What they did was rational - they spoke in other languages - and it was understood by those who heard. They preached Jesus!

B. Philip preached at Samaria, many heard preaching and were baptized. (Acts 8:12).

1. Peter and John came and laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.
2. Again - no reference to how one feels. (Acts 8:17).

C. The household of Cornelius. (Acts 10:44-46).

1. The Holy Spirit fell on them. The Jews were amazed . . . "for they heard them speak . . ." This was a rational act.
2. How did they feel? No indication!

D. The Twelve Men at Ephesus. (Acts 19:1-7).

1. The Holy Spirit came on them "and they spake and prophesied." (v. 6).
2. Again - a rational act and no mention of feeling.

E. The Prophets of the Church in N.T. Times. (1 Cor. 14:32).

1. The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

F. To assume that feelings were an evidence of salvation in the New Testament and then to make feelings, emotionalism and non-rational behavior the evidence of salvation today is both illogical and unscriptural.

II. IF FEELINGS, EMOTIONALISM AND NON-RATIONAL BEHAVIOR CAN NOT BE RELIED UPON AS AN EVIDENCE OF SALVATION NEITHER CAN IT BE AN EVIDENCE OF SPIRITUALITY OR ACCEPTABLE WORSHIP.

- A. Dull, routine church services are being blamed for a lack of spirituality. 1. Americans are bored! We constantly seek some artificial means of

stimulation. We pay others to entertain us and keep us happy for a few minutes. It is no wonder that this "boredom" becomes evident even in our religion. 2. Many Christians have a yearning for a more meaningful, gratifying, religious or spiritual experience. Regular church services are often found to be dull, routine, lifeless, even boring.

3. Pat Boone, in his book; *A New Song* (Creation House, 1970), tells of his reception of the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues, and the general revitalization that has since taken place in his life. Pat says "Church services seem completely out of context with the world we live in the other six days of the week." (p. 18). "Sure, we'd go to church, but my children would have to punch me to keep me awake." (p. 19). "When we sit down in a church service, we know somebody is going to preach a sermon. We know we're going to sing songs we've sung many times before. We've done this so many years that we can predict what the next move will be without opening our eyes." (p. 19). "I had many friends who said, 'I just don't get anything out of church.'" (p. 19).
4. Even though Pat claims that the coming of the Holy Spirit caused him to feel differently about religion, to show emotion, and to sing "A New Song," his book fails to admit that it was his own unfaithfulness and unwillingness to apply the teaching of Christ to his life that caused church services to be so boring and unmeaningful. The book also fails to show the correlation between his unfaithfulness and his acceptance of the doctrine of the direct operation of the Holy Spirit. Pat's life became empty. Yet he had a need, a longing for the spiritual that was going unfulfilled. This made his heart fertile ground for the emotionalism of these Pentecostal doctrines.
5. Earlier in the lesson we showed that there is no relation between the Holy Spirit and feeling in the New Testament. The New Testament never tells how anyone felt when he received the Holy Spirit. We emphasized that feelings, emotionalism, and non-rational behavior can not be the evidence of salvation or of a right relationship with God.

B. Dependence upon emotionalism as an evidence of spirituality is making its way into the churches of Christ. 1. Leroy Garrett, (extremely to the left among churches of Christ), reports on what he likes to call The Underground Church of Christ, and of a Holy Spirit Retreat held in Dallas, Texas, Dec,

1969; also reprinted in *The Gospel Guardian*, March 20, 27, 1969. Note some excerpts from his article:

"Much of it yet in its embryonic stage, taking the form of cell groups within well established congregations. It is in prayer and study groups that the underground is emerging. In many of the larger congregations there is cellular activity, which forms more or less spontaneously, which becomes what may be called a second church. It is usually a case of the more concerned, more spiritual ones being drawn together by their common interests. The minister himself is sometimes involved, being a rather status quo preacher in the pulpit, but a deeper, freer, more daring individual within the cells. The underground members understand that he can go only so far, and they excuse his mainline orthodoxy in the pulpit on the grounds that if he went too far he would only destroy his chances to liberate the congregation.

"Underground elements are as prevalent in some Sunday School classes as anywhere. These are often independent cells within a huge congregation, enjoying a freedom that enables them to do surprising things, such as reading from *Restoration Review*, and debating the issues raised in *Voices of Concern*. There have been denunciations of Church of Christism and a call for renewal in these Sunday School classes that would rival what any of us have been saying. Occasionally the preacher has a rather select group, an underground element, in one of these classes, at which time he is so different from the man who occupies the pulpit that people might suppose they have two different ministers. Somehow he gets by with saying unorthodox things in the class that he could never say in the pulpit and keep his job. Either the cell doesn't tell on him or there is something about a room in the southeast corner of the basement that allows for more equivocation than does the sacred desk in the auditorium. If a man is given to relatives, he knows to forget them and to speak in absolutes when he enters a Church of Christ pulpit."

2. Garrett continues to tell of "consciousness of the Holy Spirit" that over shadows all else; candle-lit rooms; spontaneous observance of the Lord's Supper by individuals; an observance of Lord's Supper by entire group at a time other than the Lord's Day;

- tongue-speaking, casting out of demons, etc.
3. I do not object to proper attitude, disposition in our life and worship. Our worship could not be acceptable without it. But when we begin to emphasize feelings, emotionalism and non-rational behavior in our worship I become concerned. May I raise a Voice of Concern?
- C. The use of artificial means to try to create an "atmosphere" for worship concerns me.
1. Turning lights low or out. Candle-lit rooms. One group even tried to make secret worship places like those they assume the early Christians met in.
 2. Leave building and get out under the stars or by the lake, river, etc. The building is not sacred; it is the approach here that is of concern. Others have used the same reasoning for building elaborate cathedrals.
 3. Touching prayer; holding hands. Touch and tell. We may be closer to one another — but not necessarily closer to God. (Some are simply adapting the questionable practice of sensitivity or encounter groups.)
 4. Spontaneous, unstructured worship becomes a structure — a ritual. A group may become known for its ritual use of the unstructured.
 5. This has a show of wisdom in will-worship (Col. 2:23). Vine defines "will-worship" as "voluntarily adopted worship, whether unbidden or forbidden, not that which is imposed by others, but which one affects."
- D. Some dangers in these new trends.
1. Danger: Presuming that one has attained a superior spiritual status and relegating others who are more "orthodox" to a place of second-class citizenship in the kingdom. Students who derive a great benefit from the "devotions" conducted at college tend to think of the worship back home as dull, etc. Brethren are not unspiritual because they happen to sing three songs, have a prayer, another song, and then the sermon!
 2. Danger: This "spiritual attitude" often adopts an ecumenical spirit which says it loves everyone, even those whom they believe to be in error. But it soon embraces the error and becomes sectarian to the point that it can not tolerate those who question its liberal attitude.

Conclusion: Note these warnings to Christians. Let no man deceive you through persuasive speech; let no one make spoil of you through vain deceit; let no one rob you of your prize through his voluntary (mock) humility. (Col. 2:4, 8,18). *(To Be Continued)*

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WHEN GOD HAS NOT SPOKEN

In a publication called *The Banner of Truth*, January, 1979, pages 2-3, editor Fred O. Blakely has an article, "The Blade Cuts Best the Other Way" in which he seeks to uphold the practice of having instruments of music in the worship of God today. He says if we have "banned musical instruments from the worship of God" we have made a "misapplication" of the New Testament. He argues in the article that the silence of the New Testament is "in their defense."

In response to this article, Professor Dwaine E. Dunning of Dakota Bible College writes a note of appreciation for his article in *The Banner of Truth*, March, 1979, page 12. Dunning claims to "have done a great deal of study over the years on the musical instrument issue" and his conclusion is that those who do not use instrumental music in the worship of God have borrowed "the old Anabaptist principle of forbidding the uncommanded."

Two Attitudes

There are at least two attitudes toward the word of God that people have. (1) The first is man must do only what is authorized in the New Testament. (2) The second is when the New Testament is silent, man is then at liberty to act as he pleases and do whatever he wants to do in service to God.

Editor Blakely admits that in New Testament days "the apostolic writings have nothing to say which would indicate that mechanical instruments were used in Divine worship." Professor Dunning's "great deal of study over the years" did not produce (1) any command of God for its use in worship, (2) any record of a New Testament church using such, (3) any evidence that a New Testament Church should use it, or [4] any evidence that anyone knows of a New Testament church using it.

The argument of these men is this: since God has not spoken on the subject of instruments of music in worship, one way or the other, then man is at liberty to use instrumental music in the worship of the New Testament church. Thus, their argument, if they have one, is on the silence of God, not on what God has said. Will they consistently accept their argument?

(1) *Angels Are Superior To Jesus*. In Hebrews one, Paul makes the argument that Jesus is superior to angels on the basis that God did *not* say to any angel but did say to Jesus "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee" (Heb. 1:5; Psm. 2:7) and "I will be to him a Father and he shall be to me a Son"

(Heb. 1:5). If either editor Blakely or Professor Dunning had been present, they would have reasoned on the silence of God and concluded that angels were superior to Jesus.

(2) *Priests of the Tribe of Judah*. In Heb. 7:14 Paul is showing that Jesus could not be a priest of the law of Moses even if he were on earth today for Jesus was of the tribe of Judah "of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning the priesthood." Now if our friends, Blakely and Dunning, were present, they would have made priests of the tribe of Judah upon the basis of "nothing" being said.

Finding instrumental music used in the Old Testament is not authority for it in the New Testament church. Incense, circumcision, animal sacrifice was found under the law of Moses. Will our friends bring these into the New Testament church? If not, why? If their argument will permit the instrument, it will also permit animal sacrifice.

Because God *said* to Christ "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee," Jesus is superior to angels. Because God *said* priests were to be of the tribe of Levi (Dt. 10:8) only Levites could be priests. Because God *said* "sing" in the New Testament, only singing is authorized (Mt. 26:30; Mk. 14:26; Acts 16:25; I Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 2:12; James 5:13).

Jesus Christ never authorized his church to use instrumental music, no apostle ever taught it, no New Testament church ever used it, no historian ever said New Testament churches used it, and no one every heard of a New Testament church using it. Read the New Testament all you want and all you will find is "sing."

Can either the editor or the professor be persuaded to discuss these propositions; (1) "New Testament teaches the church to sing" or (2) "The New Testament teaches the church to use instruments of music." I will affirm the first and deny the second. What will the editor and professor do?

-----PREACHERS NEEDED-----

FLINT, MICHIGAN — We are in need of a preacher to work with a small congregation to replace Joel Wilsford who goes to England the middle of September to work with Phil Morr. We own our own building and can provide partial support with the rest having to be raised elsewhere. Those interested may write or call: Frank Raisin, 8412 Birch Run Rd., Millington, Michigan 48746, or call (517) 871-4667.

BUTLER, ALABAMA — The church in Butler, located in southwest Alabama, is in need of a preacher. The congregation has an average attendance of 20-25 and is able to fully support a man for several years. Our twelve year old building is debt free and is very adequate. Interested individuals should contact either: Don Green, Rt. 1, Butler, AL 36904 (459-3393) or C. Q. Smith, P.O. Box 671, Butler, AL 36904 (459-2122).

SPENCER, INDIANA — The church in Spencer needs a full time preacher. Steve Mosely who has been with us has moved to Indianapolis. The church is self-supporting and has elders. Those interested may write the church at P.O. Box 64, Spencer, Indiana or call Bernard Bucklew at 812-3207.

PENSACOLA, FLORIDA — The Myrtle Grove congregation in Pensacola needs a preacher. There are 80-90 members and the church is self-supporting and has elders. If interested contact: Ken Davis, 1625 N. Austin, Foley, AL 36535 (205) 943-5754; or, Jardine McKeelie, 16 Fountain Abbey, Pensacola, FL 32506 (904) 455-0508.

CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA — The church located at 5327 York Rd., Charlotte, NC 28210, is seeking a preacher to come and work with us. Those interested may write to the above address.

THE PARADOX OF UNBELIEF

Part I

Morris W. R. Bailey

965 Brown St. Moose Jaw
Sask. Canada S6H 2Z1



Definition of Terms Employed

In a meaningful discussion of any controversial subject, it is essential that the terms used are well defined. The attention of the reader is thus directed to two words.

1. Paradox: The word, paradox, may be defined as, 1. A statement that is seemingly contradictory. An Example would be Paul's words to the Corinthians, "...for when I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Cor. 12:10). 2. A person who makes contradictory statements, or who can be quoted on both sides of a controverted issue. 3. A position, or a philosophy held by some one that involves him or her in an inconsistency. An example would be, rejecting a proposition or an explanation of some phenomenon as incredible, and then adopting one that is even less credible.

2. Unbelief: The word, unbelief, may be defined as the rejection of a stated proposition, or of an explanation that is offered for any fact or occurrence. Unbelief parades in many forms, and appears in varying hues and shades. Jesus equated disobedience with unbelief. "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life: but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life" (John 3:36). In rebuking the Corinthians for unseemly conduct, Paul said, "But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before unbelievers" (1 Cor. 6:6). Thus Paul regarded those who are not Christians as unbelievers.

In the famous treatise on faith in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, the writer said, "And without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing unto him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him" (Heb. 11:6). Here is an implied unbelief that rejects the existence of God. It is this type of unbelief that I propose to discuss in this article and some others to follow.

So when I speak of the paradox of unbelief, I mean just this, that the unbeliever rejects as incredible the well substantiated position held by the theist that God is, and that he created all things, and in its place will adopt an explanation for the beginning of things that is not only without any evidence to prove it, but in spite of evidence to the contrary.

Different Schools of Thought

Among those who refuse to believe in God as the creator of the universe, there is no complete agreement. About the only thing that they agree on is that God does not exist. On many details they are in obvious disagreement.

One form of unbelief is agnosticism. The agnostic accepts as having existence only such things as are perceptible to the physical senses of seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and touching. Since it is obvious, and is admitted, that God cannot be discerned by the natural senses, the agnostic refuses to accept the fact of his existence. He does not go so far as to say that he knows that there is no God. He merely says that he does not know there is a God, therefore does not believe he exists.

A more aggressive form of unbelief is atheism. Some defining of terms is needed here. The word, theism, is used to designate the philosophy that God exists and is the creator of all things. The word, theist, is used to identify one who believes that God is. But with the addition of the prefix "a" which is negative in its effect, we have the word, atheism, which designates the school of thought that denies the existence of God, and the word, atheist, that identifies a person as one who denies the existence of God.

The atheist, in denying the existence of God, must account for the existence of the universe and all living creatures on the earth on some other basis, since there can be no denying the fact that they exist. He may therefore adopt the extreme and illogical hypothesis that all things are the result of blind chance. That was, in fact, the position adopted by Mr. Wolsley Teller in his debate with James D. Bales. The proposition affirmed by Mr. Teller was, "Resolved: The Universe is the Product of Non-intelligent Causes." (Bales-Teller debate, Page 5). Mr. Teller was at that time the president of the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism, therefore should have been a capable representative of that school of thought.

There is another brand of atheism that attempts to account for the existence of all things by what they call evolution. But this ascribes to the word evolution a meaning that involves much more than the basic meaning of the word allows. Basically the word evolution means development or improvement that takes place within something, or in a species of living things. It does not account for the origin of that thing, nor does it ever result in one species being transformed into another species.

But the atheist, when he speaks of evolution, thinks of a hypothetical process in which, over billions of years, the universe, without any guiding intelligence, developed from the simple to the complex, and that lower forms of life evolved into higher and more complex forms. Many think of evolution as the theory that man sprang from the monkey or ape. But that is actually an oversimplification of the theory. For the theory actually begins man's upward climb with the amoeba down in the bed of the sea, and the smallest of all living creatures. But over billions of years, we are told, this tiny amoeba evolved upward through successive stages of fish, reptile, bird, animal, and ape, to finally emerge as man, the highest of all living creatures. While this theory is more logical than that advocated by many atheists, in that it always has things coming from something that existed before, it

is nevertheless beset by grave difficulties, as will be pointed out in a later article.

A Defensive Position Not Sufficient

In many cases our approach to the subject of unbelief has been from the defensive standpoint. In other words it has been a matter of answering the arguments of unbelievers, where and when they have made their attacks on Christianity and the basis on which it rests. For centuries unbelievers have scoffed at and sneered at what they call the blind faith of the theist. They would leave the impression that it indicates a lack of intelligence. And since the theist believes that God is a spirit (John 4:24), unbelief has held Christianity up to ridicule as a superstition predicated on belief in ghosts which they say intelligent people have outgrown.

We are grateful that in every generation there have been capable and fearless men who have successfully met the attacks of unbelief, wherever and whenever they have been made. In every such encounter the evidence on which we base our faith that God is, has stood the test, and has emerged to shine with even greater brilliance.

But I am persuaded that a defensive posture toward the attacks of unbelief is not sufficient. No country could prosper very long if it did no more than defend itself against the attacks of enemies. Many of my readers will remember the last war, and how it was not until after D day and the invasion of enemy-held territory that the tide of battle turned, and victory for the Allies was finally achieved. In the battle with unbelief it is not sufficient that we be satisfied with a defensive posture, regardless of how brilliant the defense. If there is to be a real victory for Christianity it must come through an offensive assault against the strongholds of unbelief.

Atheism, Also A System Of Belief

I said earlier that atheism holds Christianity up to ridicule because it is admittedly a system of faith. The atheist will ask, can you prove that there is a God? If by proof, he means something that can be discerned by the physical senses, then I will have to admit that I cannot prove God's existence to his satisfaction. And certainly no well-informed believer in God will deny that his conviction is a matter of faith (Heb. 11:1-6). But he is convinced that the evidence on which his conviction that God is, is sufficient to justify such a faith.

But since the atheist ridicules theism because it is essentially a faith, let us ask him this question, Can you prove that there is no God? Whatever his explanation of the beginning of the universe is, he will have to admit that it is not a matter of first hand observation, or that can be demonstrated to the physical senses. If he ascribes the beginning of things to spontaneous combustion, he will have to admit that he was not there to witness the gigantic explosion. If he ascribes the origin of things as they now are to a process of evolution, he can come no nearer to proving that, for he has not lived the millions and billions of years that he tells us were required for things to evolve to their present state. In fact there is nothing that the evolutionist can produce

that even begins to prove his theory. On the other hand there is abundance of evidence that deals a death blow to his speculation. Thus any explanation that the atheist offers for the origin of the universe, and of life on this earth is in the field of philosophy, and therefore a matter of faith.

Seeing then that the Christian accepts the existence of God and that he is the creator of the universe on the basis of faith, and the atheist's explanation is also a matter of faith, the difference between the two philosophies boils down to a simple question, Which faith is the more reasonable? Which is the easier for the honest mind to accept?

Difficulties In Theism Admitted

Atheist are wont to gloat over difficulties — real, or imaginary — that are encountered by those who profess to believe in God. That there are difficulties no one denies. They are to be expected when men of finite minds endeavor to comprehend the infinite. No Christian who is well informed will profess to have a perfect understanding of God, nor to explain all that God does, and why he does it. To make such a claim would be extreme presumptuousness. Our contention is this, that difficulties are not all on the side of Christianity. There are much more serious difficulties that face the atheist when he endeavors to account for things without God. His explanation — whether it is that of spontaneous combustion or evolution — involves him in a tangled web of absurdities that no rational mind can accept, and which he, himself, would not accept in regard to any other proposition.

Herein, then, is the paradox of unbelief. It holds theism up to ridicule because it is a system of faith, albeit a faith that is based on the most convincing evidence. Yet it espouses a philosophy that is essentially faith, yet a faith that has no supporting evidence and persists in spite of evidence to the contrary. Unbelief rejects theism because of difficulties — which are admitted by the believer. Yet it adopts a hypothesis that is fraught with difficulties far greater than any faced by the one who believes that God is and that he is the creator of all things.

In some articles to follow I propose to deal with some of the difficulties encountered in the atheist's philosophy as to the beginning of things, which will reveal that it is a tangled web of absurdities and inconsistencies that expose its paradoxical nature.

The New Testament Book by Book

By Roy E. Cogdill. A preacher of over fifty years, Brother Cogdill has tried to give an introduction to each book of the New Testament, covering, author, date, addressees, purposes of writing and outlining each book. For home or class use. Paper \$3.00, cloth \$4.50.

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THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

JADY W. COPELAND, 2510 Lakeland Hills Blvd., Lakeland, Florida 33801 — I seldom report to papers, but since I have moved to Florida, I will at least give my change of address and report briefly on the work in Fayetteville, Arkansas. We spent five years in Fayetteville, Arkansas after 15 years in California. Fayetteville is where the main campus of University of Arkansas is located, and progress was made in contacting students coming to the University and providing for them a class and spiritual guidance while there. Most of the young people who are "Christians" coming to the University drop away, but we had a fine group there the past two years. Steve Cawthon of Murfreesboro, Tennessee is now working with the Old Wire Road church there and will be a great asset to the work. A goodly number of young married couples came to Fayetteville the last two years we were there, and attendance is now approaching 100, with an average of about 80 the last six months we were there. We are now enjoying the work with the Lakeland Hills church where Ferrell Jenkins did such a fine work for 10 years. Come by and see us when in central Florida.

MICHAEL HARDIN, 3433 Studebaker Road, Long Beach, California 90808 — After five prosperous and successful years with the Greencastle, Indiana congregation, we have moved to work with the Studebaker Road congregation in Long Beach, California. The brethren in Greencastle have been very cooperative and enthusiastic for the work of the Lord. We have conducted a daily radio program and a weekly newspaper article from which we have seen growth in both the congregation and the community. The church also conducted an active group visiting program from which we have seen good participation and spiritual growth. The congregation has continued to grow spiritually, numerically and financially during the last five years. They are a powerful influence for the cause of Christ in central Indiana. They are at present the only sound church in Putnam County. I commend them to you for their love for the truth and their service to God. They have recently selected two outstanding men to serve as elders. John McCort of Indianapolis, Indiana has moved to work with them.

TRUMAN SMITH, 901 Kilgore Dr., Henderson, Texas 75652 — I have resigned my work with the Greens Bayou congregation in Houston, Texas after seven years of service with them. I began work with the Highway 79 church in Henderson, Texas on August 5, 1979. Bulletin exchanges please take note of the new address above. My old address was 12402 Mylla, Houston, TX 77015.

LARRY R. DEVORE, 1839 Burbank Rd., Wooster, Ohio 44691 — Ken Cooper of Medina, Ohio held a gospel meeting here April 29-May 4. One was baptized and two restored since the meeting. Our VBS was conducted June 25-29. We are praying that the health of Jesse and Mary Wiseman will be such that brother Wiseman can conduct a gospel meeting for us this fall.

FRANK JAMERSON, 111 Guilford St., Dothan, Alabama 36301 — After seven years in Dothan Joe Corley is moving to Chances Crossroads in Cullman, Alabama. I moved to Dothan after six and a half years at Rose Hill in Columbus, Georgia. Jerry Accettura, who spent five years with Rivermont church, near Hopewell, Virginia, has moved to Rose Hill.

TV COMMERCIALS EFFECTIVE

GREG LITMER, 419 W. Wyoming Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45215 — We want to inform the brethren about a project we are involved with at the Lockland congregation which others might also find useful. In May of this year we produced a 30 second television commercial offering a free Bible Correspondence Course. The commercial ran six days a week throughout the month of May at random times from 10 A.M. to 3 P.M. We purchased random time because it was cheaper. The six spots cost \$150 a week, while the actual production of the commercial cost us \$60.00 using the television station's studios. So we were able to make the commercial, which we now own, and purchase 24 spots for \$660.00.

The results were fantastic. A total of 205 requested the Correspondence Course out of which about 60 have remained actively involved. Of those who did not remain actively involved five have consented to in-the-home Bible studies conducted by myself or one of the other men in the congregation. We still have over 90 of these left to visit. Not only has Lockland received many contacts from these commercials but so have other congregations in the Tri-State area. Classes have been set up as far away as Dayton, Ohio as a result of these commercials.

In the past Lockland has mailed out as many as 20,000 pieces of literature at one time offering a free Correspondence Course but the results were never 1/4 what they have been with the television commercials and the commercials were far less expensive. Since we own the commercial, we can use it again any time we so desire. May I suggest that if you live in a community that has an independently owned and operated station, one that is not a network affiliate, this would be the station to deal with. That is what we did and the difference in cost was tremendous. For further information contact me at the above address.

DARREL HAUB, 903 Clarkdale Drive, Muncie, Indiana 47304 — After nearly five years with the Memorial Drive church in New Castle, Indiana, I have moved to Muncie to work with the North Broadway church. We leave the New Castle church at peace and self supporting with a very good potential for the future. The North Broadway church in Muncie has recently sold their meeting house and has purchased a commodious church building near the Ball State University campus. The address of this meeting place is at the corner of Gilbert and Calvert Streets, two blocks east of the Ball State Student Center. We occupied this building August 1. Since many students come to Ball State without knowing of this sound church in the area, we hope all who read this will help to spread the word. Please contact us about those in the area we might be able to help concerning their Souls. My phone number is (317) 288-5617.

RALPH BROUSSARD, 217 S. First Ave., Paden City, West Virginia 26159 — Our work here is off to an encouraging start. Four have been restored and 3 baptized the first month. The church is at peace and has a mind to work. Enthusiasm is running high and we look forward to a very rewarding work here. A few weeks ago, six other young preachers and myself went to Haiti to preach the gospel. The fields were white and our work rewarding. Not only were we able to help others, but we learned quite a lot ourselves.

W. P. RISENER, Route 1, Box 285F-1, Alto, Texas 75925 — About September 1, I am to begin work in the furtherance of the gospel with the friendly and faithful Christians in Sheldon, Missouri. Brethren, please pray for us as we work together for the Lord.

THAYER STREET SPEAKERS

The lectures at Thayer Street in Akron, Ohio will be conducted September 17-20 with the following speakers and subjects: 1st Morning period, "Imputed Righteousness, Gospel and Doctrine" — H. E. Phillips, Tampa, Florida; 2nd Morning Period, "Mothers of the Bible" — Steve Kearney, Dublin, Ireland; 1st Afternoon Period, Congregational Singing — Jay Guyer, Massachusetts; 2nd Afternoon Period, "Prophecies and Their Fulfillment in Christ" — Ray Ferris, Rockford, Illinois; 1st Evening Period, "Man's Work" — Leslie Diestelkamp, Palatine, Illinois; 2nd Evening Period, "Divorce and Remarriage" — Weldon E. Warnock, Akron, Ohio.

CRESCENT PARK LECTURESHIP

The 4th annual Crescent Park Lectureship in Odessa, Texas will be conducted November 4-8, 1979. The church meets at 1415 Royalty Ave., Odessa, Texas 79761. Robert L. McDonald is the preacher. Speakers and subjects are as follows:

Sunday, November 4

9:00 A.M. — Bible Study; 10:00 A.M. — "Preaching Christ" — Harold Fite, Lubbock, Texas; 7:30 P.M., Congregational Singing;

8:00 P.M., "Preaching Christ: The Son of God" — Robert A. Bolton, Dallas, Texas.

Monday, November 5

7:30 P.M. — Congregational Singing; 8:00 P.M., "Preaching Christ: As King" — Connie W. Adams, Louisville, Kentucky.

Tuesday, November 6

9:30 A.M., "Cultism: Influence and Damnation" — J. M. Gilpatrick, Hereford, Texas; 10:20 A.M., "Divorce and Remarriage: Moyer Position" — Robert A. Bolton, Dallas, Texas; 11:10 A.M., "Cultism: Scientology" — Leon Odom, Midland, Texas; 2:30 P.M., "Highlights of 1, 2, 3, John" — Robert L. Craig, Killeen, Texas; 7:30 P.M., Congregational Singing; 8:00 P.M., "Preaching Christ: As High Priest" — Harold Fite, Lubbock, Texas.

Wednesday, November 7

9:30 A.M., "Cultism: Astrology" — Tom Roberts, Fort Worth, Texas; 10:20 A.M., "Divorce and Remarriage: Fuqua Position" — Connie W. Adams, Louisville, Kentucky; 11:00 A.M., "Cultism: Influence and Damnation" — J. M. Gilpatrick, Hereford, Texas; 2:30 P.M., "Highlights of 1, 2, 3, John" — Robert L. Craig, Killeen, Texas; 7:30 P.M., Congregational Singing; 8:30 P.M., "Preaching Christ: Saviour, The Lamb of God" — Robert A. Bolton, Dallas, Texas.

Thursday, November 8

9:30 A.M., "Cultism: Scientology" — Leon Odom, Midland, Texas; 10:20 A.M., "Divorce and Remarriage: As Approved by God" — Harold Fite, Lubbock, Texas; 11:10 A.M., "Cultism: Astrology" — Tom Roberts, Fort Worth, Texas; 2:30 P.M., "Highlights of 1, 2, 3, John" — Robert L. Craig, Killeen, Texas; 7:30 P.M., Congregational Singing; 8: P.M., "Preaching Christ: His Second Coming" — Connie W. Adams, Louisville, Kentucky.

CONNIE W. ADAMS, P.O. Box 68, Brooks, KY 40109 — Through August of this year it has been my privilege to preach the gospel in meetings in the following places: In March, I was with the good Chapman Acres church in Huntsville, Alabama where A.C. Grider is local preacher. One was restored and good interest and attendance prevailed. A. C. Grider has published a book called "A. C. Grider's Reminiscences." It sells for \$3 and contains a few radio sermons, debate notes and numerous incidents (many of which are humorous) from the life and work of this unique preacher of the gospel. I wouldn't be without it. How about you? You may order it from him at 2137 Penhall Dr., N.E., Huntsville, AL 35811 . . . Also in March I spoke 15 times for the Douglas Hills church in Louisville where Jamie Sloan has done such a good work. One was restored and good interest prevailed.

In April I was with Lexington Road church in Danville, Kentucky where Royce Chandler has done a very effective work for the past 7 years. He has now moved to Franklin Rd. in Nashville, Tennessee and is followed in Danville by Steve Wolfgang, with whom we have enjoyed such a pleasant working relationship at Expressway in Louisville. Three were baptized in the Danville meeting. It was a privilege to spend about 8 hours of study with the 12 young men who are studying in the preacher training program there . . . Also, in April I was with the Pine Hills church in Orlando, Florida where we had spent three good years from 1962-1965. One was restored during the meeting and there

were several baptisms and restorations right afterward. Jere Frost has been with this congregation since 1965. Vic McCormick has now moved to Orlando to work at Pine Hills.

In May, I was in my second meeting at Hazelwood, Missouri where Ben Shropshire is the preacher. Here I spoke 13 times. Three were restored . . . The last of May found me at Jamestown, Kentucky in a good meeting where Edgar C. Walker is now the preacher. This congregation took a stand for the truth several years ago and is making good progress. There is excellent potential there. Many vacation in that area on or near Lake Cumberland and some have been under the impression that the church there is yet liberal. I assure you it is not. Ed Walker is doing a good work there. One was baptized in the meeting and two restored.

In June, I conducted my second meeting at 46th St. in Forth Smith, Arkansas. Harold Hancock is the respected preacher there. Good attendance prevailed and two were restored . . . Also in June I worked with the church at Etna (south of Ozark), Arkansas where Charles Morton is the preacher. One was baptized. We sat out chairs the last three nights to accommodate overflow crowds, Etna is an unusually fine rural congregation. If you think rural churches are all dead, you ought to visit Etna.

July found me in my second meeting at MacDale, West Virginia. This is just west of Morgantown. Again, I made my home with the Kelly Wilsons. These godly folks have kept countless preachers in their home over the years. It is always a great delight to be with them. . . . Later in July I was with the church at Greencastle, Indiana where Mike Hardin did excellent work for the last five years. John McCort has now moved to work with them. The church is served by two good elders. Advance work for the meeting brought out a number of community visitors.

In August I was in my third meeting at Martinsville, Virginia where Mike Johnson is the preacher.

In September I am to be at Westvue in Murfreesboro, Tennessee and at Evendale in Cincinnati, Ohio. In October meetings are set at Brooksville and Palmetto in Florida. In November I am to speak three times on the lectures at Odessa, Texas and am to conduct meetings in Las Vegas, Nevada (N. Charleston Heights) and at Bald Knob, Arkansas.

Several health problems forced me to cancel 7 meetings I had set for this year. The same will probably have to be done for the next year or so. This has been difficult for me to do since I have not been in the habit of canceling meetings once they are set. We hope all those involved will be understanding.

Health problems have continued to plague H. E. and Polly Phillips. In June Polly Phillips had a malignant tumor successfully removed. She is now making good recovery. Because of the press of family sickness plus his own health problems brother Phillips has not been able to have his regular column in the paper for the past two or three months. His material for the August special issue was prepared under great stress. We ask our readers to keep them in your prayers.

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	248
RESTORATIONS	85
(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)	