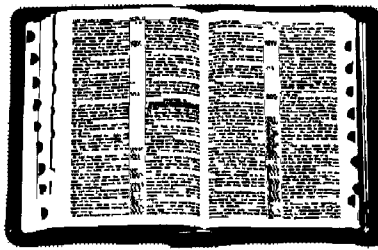


SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

"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"

VOLUME XXI

JULY, 1980

NUMBER 7

FOR OR AGAINST?

Irven Lee

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Hartselle, AL 35640



Various ideas, doctrines, and practices constantly come toward us from different directions. People who do public work or stand in places of leadership in the Lord's church are expected to oppose these doctrines if they are unscriptural and to support them with zeal if they are in harmony with the will of God. It is a shame for men in positions of responsibility to dodge or shun the issues where the truth is involved. The masses of people are not required to follow the elders and preachers on all occasions in matters of doctrine. Christ is head of the church, and no group of men can make a doctrine right if it does not have the Lord's approval.

It is sad when a large portion of the preachers and elders over the land accept and promote some highly advertised unscriptural plan of action. Yes, it is sad, but such things do happen. Each wave of digression or apostasy comes this way. As long as men who have special opportunities to teach publicly stand for the truth their leadership helps hold all the brethren in the safe way. These same teachers who are in strategic positions can take the many down the wrong road with them (2 Pet. 2:1-3).

When there is a falling away of a large segment of the church, social pressure becomes one of the chief weapons in trying to force every one to follow the crowd. Some efforts are made to make the unholy movement look like a revelation from God, but prejudicial titles and pressure tactics to force all to line up with the parade becomes more effective than arguments in favor of the erroneous doctrine. Pointing to the large number of highly respected men that favor the innovation is treated as if their approval of the idea is more or less equivalent to scriptural authority.

Many poorly informed people will get on the band wagon under the urge of such social pressure. They then finance the popular projects and scorn those who call for Bible authority.

It is not safe to promote those things which the Lord does not approve, and it is not safe to oppose or hinder the works which the Lord does approve. We are in no position to fight the Almighty One (1 Cor. 10:22). The religion of Christ is of such nature that true Christians diligently work to advance the faith, and they work just as diligently against the things that would hinder the truth in unrighteousness. The Lord has no place in His army for those who will not fight for the right by means of the spiritual armor (Eph. 6:10-20; 2 Cor. 10:3-6). One who would be faithful needs the wisdom to "approve things that are excellent," and to "earnestly contend for the faith" (Phil. 1:9-11; Jude 3; Heb. 5:12-14; 2 Tim. 2:15).

A Christian is to rebuke sin (2 Tim. 4:2; Tit. :13; 2:15). This is part of the good warfare. He is to wrestle against wickedness, even in high places. He is to be well armed for the fight so that he will be able to stand against the fiery darts of the wicked one (Eph. 6:10-20). Even though he is to fight a good fight against evil, it is not fair to say that he is against everything. It would not make sense to say that such men are "against." The question would immediately follow as to what they are against.

"Anti" is a prefix that is intended to be used with some other word. It is not a word to be used alone. This four letter prefix means against the idea, habit, doctrine, philosophy, or practice implied in the word to which it is attached. An example of this is that many Americans are anti-Communists. This means that they are against the beliefs, plans, and goals of the Communist Party. Each time a large segment of the church would run rough shod over the informed brethren who stand for the way of truth, the factionists call them "antis" as a prejudicial name to help deceive the masses. All men are against some things, and the prefix used with these words that identify which things are being opposed is appropriate. When it is used to close minds to further investigation and study, it is only an act of cunning craftiness of those who lie in wait to deceive (Eph. 4:14).

Some people are born in the "objective case" and

oppose many things that actually deserve encouragement. Often these radicals come to be known as "antis," and they add special unpleasant significance to this prefix so that those who would introduce unscriptural programs can do more harm than ever by calling defenders of the faith "antis." The ability to discern between good and evil comes with spiritual maturity and much exercise of the mind (Heb. 5:12-14). This wisdom or skill is something for which we should pray and study (James 1:5; 2 Tim. 2:15). Be careful to reserve your disfavor for that which is evil, and be glad to manifest your approval boldly for that which is good. A cowardly refusal to have part in a battle between truth and error is no compliment to any one.

What are the things that have come among the churches today that should be opposed? If we think of the new and unscriptural practices that have come to one place or another we come to realize that there are many. These additions can be grouped for study. Church support for various forms of projects which involve food, fun, and frolic are being emphasized as if they were a primary part of the church work in some areas. Financial support for schools, hospitals, camps, and other works that are considered good works are looking to the church for money, but there is no scriptural authority for the churches to become fund raisers for such organizations. The church has a great work of its own to finance without undertaking to pay the bills that the public should pay. There are many chartered corporations under boards, or under the supervision of "sponsoring churches," that are set up to do evangelistic or benevolent work, which are pressuring churches to finance them. Each church is to do its own work under its own elders. Several churches may relieve the need of the saints in one area by sending to the elders in the area of special need (Acts 11:27-30; 2 Cor. 8,9; 1 Cor. 6:1-3). Several churches may support a good man to preach (2 Cor. 11:8). The Bible examples show no corporation between the churches and the work being done.

Another unfortunate change is emotionalism and sensationalism in the place of gospel preaching. The gospel is God's power unto salvation, and it appeals to every aspect of man's mind and not just to the emotions. Pride and appeals for worldly recognition are also easy to find. One way this is demonstrated is by the great number of very extravagant buildings which may cause poor people to feel uncomfortable but which cause high society to stop and look.

A fact that is sad to contemplate is that basically good people who are not for these wild ideas often use preachers that are for them for their regular work and in meetings and special efforts. They may be drifting closer and closer to the ways of the denominations without realizing it, and they may be unwilling to let any one warn of the danger in the things mentioned in the above paragraphs. How wonderful it would be if truth could have free course. All truth asks is that honest people be able to hear it. Is it sinful to speak out against dangers that are in evidence?

Searching The Scriptures

Volume 21

July, 1980

Number 7

Published Monthly at
BROOKS, KENTUCKY

Second Class Postage Paid at Brooks, Kentucky
and at an Additional Mailing Office
USPS-487-440

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Office of Publication
52 Yearling Drive
Brooks, Kentucky 40109
Phone (502) 957-2257

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Editorial

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RURAL CONGREGATIONS

As these lines are written, the editor is half way through an enjoyable gospel meeting with the Antioch congregation in Ohio County about 20 miles from Beaver Dam, Kentucky. This is an old congregation which has flourished at times, diminished at intervals as members have moved to Louisville or other places seeking work, and flourished again as good men have assisted them. The church at present has about 50 in attendance on Sundays. Meeting attendance so far has ranged from 61 the first night to 80 by the fourth night with several community visitors and support from brethren in other places.

The building is situated in a grove of trees on a gravel road. It is a white frame structure which has had an addition to the back (for two extra class rooms and a baptistery) and an addition on the front for a vestibule, rest-rooms, a small class room and a nursery. The interior is neat and adequately furnished. Adjoining the parking area surrounding the building is a cemetery which is well kept and where many who were formerly active members of this congregation have been laid to rest. The surrounding countryside consists of gently rolling hills and fields with an occasional house or barn in view. The community is on the fringe of the vast coal fields of western Kentucky where strip mining harvests the precious "black gold".

The people of the community have their roots deeply embedded in this area. Some are young families supported by the mining industry or jobs in nearby town. Some farm. One brother farms extensively while his wife runs the only general store for miles around. Some are older people who have worked until retirement in some industrial area and have returned "home" to live out the rest of their days in either the houses where they were born, or else in a mobile home or small dwelling standing on or near the site of their childhood. The housing ranges from the occasional mobile home, to the small two, three or four-room frame dwelling, to a few brick or stone dwellings of larger size. The people are friendly, unassuming, unhurried and conversation comes easy. The general store has its "sitters and talkers." One elderly man sat in his yard and whittled with his pocket knife while we discussed with him the serious concerns of the soul. Oh, there are people here who are prejudiced and are not willing to discuss the Bible. No community is free of that entirely.

Preaching in such rural churches provides a contrast to working with congregations in the towns and large

cities of the nation. It is my conviction that nothing better brings a man back to reality and to basics than such experiences. We have lived and worked with churches in the Louisville area for the past ten years. Many of the elders, deacons, preachers and older members who have been faithful through the years have their roots in such places. Several of the members at Expressway in Louisville grew up in this community and attended Antioch or some similar rural congregation in Ohio, Grayson or Butler County. The family life and congregational influences of these communities have had far reaching consequences for good. In spite of the fact that economics have forced a number to migrate to other areas, the memories of the family circle, the struggle to live off the land, the ties to former days and influences have not been lessened and the attachment felt for the communities where they were born and spent their formative years is strong.

Antioch is served by Dale Barnes who lives seven miles from Beaver Dam and who served as one of the deacons there until he resigned because of the demands on his time from the needs of the church at Antioch. He works through the week for the Peabody Coal Company. On Sundays and Wednesday nights he will be found at Antioch, and sometimes through the week visiting in the community. This week he has taken time off from work to be able to visit more in the community and help the meeting. I am staying in his home where many other gospel preachers have been shown such warm and gracious hospitality. As I write these lines, his good wife has gone to stay with a sister while her husband has surgery in the hospital at Hartford. Their children are well-mannered and obedient. Brother Barnes is accumulating a good library. It is not large, but his books have been carefully selected and are useful tools for his work. His study must be done at night on his time off from the mine. It is obvious that the brethren at Antioch hold him and his family in great respect. At this point, Antioch is not able to provide the needs of a full time preacher. Thank God for men who have the drive and spiritual concern to push themselves so hard in order to help congregations which otherwise might not have anyone to preach.

City dwellers often develop an air of sophistication which regards rural communities and churches as substandard, quaint and somewhat out of date. Rural churches do not always have buildings as large and ornately furnished as some in the large towns and cities. Parking lots might not be black-topped. Classrooms might be small and sparsely furnished. But if you were to remove every elder, deacon, preacher, Bible class teacher, and each family that is spiritually strong from the larger, more prosperous appearing city churches, which have their roots in such congregations as Antioch, then much of the strength and influence of these city churches would be gone.

Rural churches have historically been more tolerant and patient with the feeble, beginning efforts of young men who desire to preach the gospel than some of the large city congregations. It was a rural congregation in a remote farming community which heard my first

"sermon" one Sunday night in August of 1945. They sat patiently and gave their attention while a 15-year-old boy delivered all his "wisdom" on "The Excuses of Moses" for 20 whole minutes. They did not seem embarrassed over my poor choice of words, long pauses occasioned by having to hunt for a verse which was in my notes and I knew good and well was "in the Bible someplace" but which for the time had mischievously disappeared. It was a small, rural congregation which allowed me to conduct my very first gospel meeting in 1950. Some of my finest memories from preaching are centered not in the air conditioned, finely carpeted, padded seated, elegant and imposing structures of the great city churches, but in the plain, frame buildings situated in a grove of trees, back a few yards from a gravel road. Places where there was no air cooling system except what breeze might flutter through an open window or might be generated by the use of paper fans from the funeral home. Places where there were no overhead projectors and pull down screens and the only visual aids were chalkboards and dusty erasers or a cloth chart tacked to the wall behind you (scornfully called "rag sermons" by some). Places where bashful young men stood outside and listened through open windows. Places where older brethren sat in the "amen corner" with their thumbs hooked in their galluses (suspenders to the uninitiated). Places where unassuming people heard the gospel, were touched by it, and stepped forward to make the good confession or to acknowledge grievous wrongs in their lives. Places where you had to go almost every night to a river, creek, or pond and baptize the penitent while gathered brethren sang "Oh Happy Day" or "Trust and Obey". Places where the meeting might be extended a few more days because of the interest. Places where the last service closed with "God Be With You Til We Meet Again" while the preacher and good brothers and sisters wiped the tears from their cheeks.

The world is changing. The pace of the technological society is frantic. Population centers have shifted. Many former rural communities have been swallowed up by the sprawl of suburbia. Many rural churches have long ago folded. But frankly, it is refreshing to find a few Antiochs, Fairviews, Flatwoods, Etnas, Bethels, Elk Forks, and many others we could name, which are still alive and where the word of God is still being preached and saints are yet being encouraged to make their calling and election sure. Thank God for what such congregations have meant and continue to mean to the cause of Christ.

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After the better part of two decades of being a paid professional writer, you would think that the thrill of seeing one's name set in type would rub off. Not so, especially when it is in such good and noble company. This is a greater feeling than when we were asked to write for a monthly trade publication with a readership of a quarter million.

The theme for this series will be taken from II Tim. 2:2 wherein Timothy is called upon to begin a series of long term linkage that covers the remaining age of man. It had it's beginnings with the Apostles and comes on down to us. The question now comes to us ... will we continue this effort? And of almost as great a concern, will we do it with ability?

This will not become a pure scriptural study as in most of the articles contained in this journal, instead, it shall concern itself with a sort of how-to-do-it polishing process we all need so very much to become better teachers. And most of us are in very great need of improving our ability in this area.

Nothing in this series will be original. I have had very few original thoughts in my whole life. One or two, at the most. I know of very few who have had more than half a dozen. We shall combine the techniques of various educational disciplines with some basic scriptures and reason out goals or targets we need to reach. Our God is a reasonable God as He stated to Isaiah in verse 18 of chapter 1. We will try to keep to this reasonableness, in our determination to share with you some of the things we have seen and experienced in the past three decades in the church of our Lord as a teacher His word.

At the beginning we may go a bit astray from our theme. If so, please bear with us, as we are laying some ground work or 'setting the stage' for some more difficult stuff later on. Anyone who writes has to be aware of the perils of plagiarism. That means stealing the other man's words and thoughts. This, we will be guilty of if we limit our theft to one person. However, if we 'borrow' words and thoughts from twenty authors that changes the classification from plagiarism to research. We'll try to remain in the latter camp at all times.

The theme of this series will be interwoven about seven basic laws that concern teaching. These are not mine, I was lucky enough to 'research' them many years ago. I'd like to share my findings with our readers. The author is John Milton Gregory who organized and helped establish the University of Illinois. He wrote his "Seven Laws of Teaching" in

1884. They have been used in the educational halls of our nation as a 'classic text' for years. Each of the seven laws has a strong scriptural basis as you will soon recognize.

These seven laws may be best classified as being about people, tools, processes and application. That determination is, at least, original. The first two laws cover all the people involved in this teaching program given to Timothy.

Law number one covers that of the teacher: "The teacher must know that which he would teach". Simple, isn't it? Yet this past week, while out of town, we visited another congregation of the Lord's people. We heard an adult class Bible teacher offer far more opinion than scripture. And then to top it off, claim he was not prepared to teach this particular subject. He did not have all his facts straight.

Law number two is about students: "The learner must attend with interest to the material to be learned". Maybe Mr. Gregory got this from the last few words of Nehemiah 8:3, "and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law". Mr. Gregory was a Bible student as well as a dedicated public educator. His knowledge of scripture seeps through his work, if you look for it.

Laws three and four concern themselves with tools of our professional work. We are not just workers for God. We are, in one sense of the word, professional people. If we are not, we should be. Number three states: "The language used in teaching must be common to both". If there is the slightest gap in understanding . . . the cause has been damaged by our failure to communicate. In the business world the art and science of communication stands up near the top of any priority list. So should it be in the work of the Lord. Preachers, please take note. Some sermons are over the heads of many. It shouldn't be that way.

Law number four is about our second tool, that of the lesson. "The truth to be taught must be learned through truth already known." This is as obvious as the whole subject of math. Can anyone learn advanced algebra before the multiplication tables? Or solve advanced navigational problems of angles and degrees and drift and speed before knowing basic addition? Yet quite often we throw babes in Christ into adult classes and into the depths of the Roman letter when they know very little of basics, of even the very first principles of the type listed in Hebrews 5:12 and 6:1. We need a re-evaluation of our whole teaching program in most congregations. If the slipshod planning for classes and overall teaching were used in business and industry, most planners would have been dismissed long ago.

Laws five and six are process laws, the first of them on teaching: "The teacher must excite and direct the self-activities of the pupil, and as a rule tell him nothing that he can learn himself." Most adult classes violate that principle. That is a crime against the whole teaching program of the church.

Law six is the most difficult to really understand. The area of concern is the human mind of our learner. "The pupil must reproduce in his own mind, the truth to be learned." Here we enter into the region of the

basics of the three R's of first year college psychology; retention, recognition and recall. Without these there is no learning. And they are not new nor is my statement the philosophy of men and therefore . . . heresy! Know and understand from where it came before you mark it up as from man. It's as old as can be as a matter of divine principle. Read Jeremiah's comments on this subject in Lamentations 3:17 through 22. There, you'll find such terms as 1) forgetting, 2) remembering, 3) in remembrance, 4) recall to mind. If that's not on the sixth law then nothing is. Most teachers don't fully comprehend this process, nor understand how it works. This, we will cover in depth. When you do it God's way it does work.

Last of these laws are about review and application. Here, we have left Mr. Gregory and adapted his laws to the reason for our theme. We have called it the application to life. The work of teaching is confirmed, first by review, and finally, by application through the conversion of others.

If there is any single need in the church, it is this. For the Lord said in Mark 4:13 "Know ye not this parable? And how then shall ye know all parables?" The subject matter is the word as the seed. But that is really secondary. The major thrust is on explaining the mystery of the kingdom. But more on that verse later.

Stay with us, let's learn together. We all have much room for improvement.

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RISE UP AND BUILD: Nehemiah's Call To Leadership Nehemiah 1:1-4

Who are God's leaders today? To answer this question we need to return to ancient history of the Old Testament prophets and see what made God's leaders in days past. By such an examination of the past we will know who are God's leaders today and in the future.

Nehemiah teaches us the lesson that the key to leadership is feeling the burden. As we begin our study of Nehemiah, we find him in Chapter 1:2, asking about the Jews who are now living in Jerusalem: "... and I asked them concerning the Jews who had escaped and had survived the captivity, and about Jerusalem." Nehemiah was now in the capital city of the Persian Empire, Susa, serving as cupbearer to the king. Even as Nehemiah asks this question, he is about to become clay in the hands of the potter. The answer would bring Nehemiah to his knees. The response is found in verse 3: "the remnant... are in great distress and reproach, and the wall is broken down and its gates are burned with fire." Maybe he expected better news, because he had heard of the work done by Ezra and Zerubbabel in the rebuilding of the temple and teaching the people. Maybe at his last inquiry the situation in Jerusalem was good, but now that was not the case. The news from Jerusalem, his home and motherland, was desperately tragic.

Nehemiah's response to this terrible situation is found in verse 4: "I sat down and wept and mourned for days; and I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven." How this recent information tore at his heart! He was dismayed by the magnitude of the problem concerning his loved ones and God's people. He poured out his soul in grief over the plight of Jerusalem by weeping, fasting, and prayer. So great was his pain that he was moved to do everything possible to correct the situation in Jerusalem.

Now as we have seen, the attitude of Nehemiah when he receives this news becomes important. Note for a moment what Nehemiah is and what Nehemiah is not. Nehemiah was not a priest, nor was he a king. All such functions were absent from Nehemiah's list of credentials. All three of the orders: prophet, priest, and king, were at various times included in God's plan, but Nehemiah did not fit into any one of these three categories. He was not a priest offering sacrifices, nor did he wear the kingly vestures that would command attention when he spoke. It is at this point that we are about to learn our first great lesson of true leadership.

The leaders of God's choice are those WHO ARISE BECAUSE THEY FEEL THE NEED TO DO ALL THEY CAN TO SERVE GOD. Nehemiah was moved to the depths of his being to such a degree that he HAD to do something to serve not only his people, but also his God. He had the fire burning in his bones to such an intensity that it could not be quenched. Even though he possessed no great earthly qualification, he felt the need to arise!

WHO THEN ARE GOD'S LEADERS TODAY?

The first lesson we must understand is the need for this burning desire to correct the wrong, to strengthen the right, and to serve in any way that we can. A common problem is that today there are some trying to lead, but they have never heard the call or felt the burden. They are termed "leaders", but all they do is occupy an "office." Their hearts, their minds, and their love is far away in other fields of interest. They may be called elders, preachers, teachers, deacons, husbands, mothers, or personal workers, but unless they have heard the call, they are not leaders in God's order. When we speak of hearing the call, we are not speaking of the denominational call of miraculous salvation, but rather the burden of desire that moves an individual to give his life to one goal. That goal is spiritual service to the maximum of their capacity. The condition of the people moved Nehemiah to give up the number one advisory position in the world's greatest and most powerful kingdom in order to serve his Lord. Cupbearer before the King was one of the most trusted and guarded positions of his day. He had all the privileges of royalty and all the glory of the King's most trusted confidant. All of this meant nothing to Nehemiah, just as the earthly power and prestige meant nothing to Saul of Tarsus when he was moved into a position of leadership.

This is the very principle that Paul draws from, as he writes to Timothy concerning those that are to be the leaders in the New Testament church. Paul tells Timothy that they must "desire the office." Here we find the Old Testament definition of what "desire" really is; rambling here and there about what "desire the office" means can be voided by this Old Testament example. For one to consider preaching as a way of life, this burning passion to lead people to Christ is an absolute must. My father used to say, "Son, don't make a preacher unless you can't help it." Down through the years, how much better could the cause of Christ have been served, if those who had not really "desired" to preach had made other choices.

Brethren, who are God's leaders today? Even though they may not be prophets, priests, nor kings, nothing will stop the common man who matures and becomes so spiritually attuned to the needs of God's people that he puts his hand to the plow without one thought as to what he has left behind. Paul says that we have become "fools for Christ"; we have become "a spectacle to the world" (I Cor. 4:9-10); we have "become the scum of the world, the dregs of all things" (I Cor. 9:13). Why, and how could Paul give up the pinnacle of political power in Judaism to become the scum of the earth? Paul tells us of this burning power that drove him into spiritual service: "Woe, be unto me if I preach not the Gospel of Christ." Paul had a fire in his bones

that could not be quenched. This was the reason for his commitment. Listen to what had no effect on Paul: "servants of God, in much afflictions, in much endurance, in hardships, in distresses, in stripes, in prison, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fasting, in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in love, in the word of truth, in the power of God, by glory and dishonor, by good report and evil report, as unknown yet well known, as dying yet living, as punished but not up to death, as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet rich, as having nothing yet possessing all things" (II Cor. 6:4-10).

This, brethren, is the picture of God's leader. Paul **KNEW HE MUST PREACH** the Gospel. God's call to leadership is not for those who want to "play church." As we read the sacred pages of Old Testament scriptures the wrath of God is poured on those who **CLAIMED** to be leaders without a burning passion to serve. Woe be to the leader who wants to claim leadership, yet does nothing but make decisions on how to set the thermostat. Woe to the preacher that uses the church for his own reputation and advancement, when our Lord came to make Himself of no reputation. Woe be to the Bible class teacher that only teaches because he or she has to or it will make them look bad. Woe to the teacher that quickly reads his lesson Saturday night and hopes there are enough questions to take up the allotted Bible study period. Woe be to the men in a business meeting who argue for two hours over what kind of garden hose to buy and what color to paint the auditorium.

The church today faces a crisis in leadership. Elders are needed who feels the passion of Nehemiah. Preachers are needed who are willing to be fools for Christ as did Paul. We need men and women who feel the burden of generations of young people who were "raised in the church", only to bolt for the door at the first opportunity. One man calmly told me that "we have lost an entire generation of teenagers." Yet, why was he not moved to have an all out effort to train their Bible class teachers? And, why was he not moved to teach on the home, and family and its place in society? He felt no burden to make one single attempt to do anything different in order to keep from losing the group now in the Jr. High class. The tragedy was that he was called an elder! The real problem? He was a leader without a passion to meet the need.

What do you think would have been Nehemiah's reaction to that type of news? He would have fallen on his face before God in tears and left the court of kings to meet the challenge.

In conclusion: Who are God's leaders? They are the faithful who will arise in whatever way they can to serve Jehovah.

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EAT, EAT, EAT

From the *Sentinel Star*, Orlando, Fla., Jan 25, 1980, comes this AP release regarding eighteen-year-old Amy Brown who eats a dozen eggs for breakfast and two steaks for lunch to keep her weight up to 90 lbs.

Before you say you wish you had her problem, read on:

This young lady suffers from an unusual syndrome called mal-absorption. She is required to eat almost hourly to replace lost potassium in her body. Her food bills take \$170 a week, \$8,840 a year, out of her father's \$13,000 annual salary.

Her father's salary is too high to qualify for food stamps and welfare officials reject the claim that Amy's food is a medical expense. Only help from friends and civic groups keeps the family afloat.

Doctors say mal-absorption, which usually afflicts younger children, can strike a range of fats or vitamins needed to keep the body's system in balance. A faulty valve in Miss Brown's kidney is releasing almost all the potassium in her system, and the doctors say there is little Miss Brown can do except take potassium supplements and eat.

I've long marveled at the good percentage of folks who have been members of the church for years, perhaps decades, and who have sat in Bible classes year after year and heard literally thousands of gospel sermons, yet when a spiritual showdown comes they weigh in as 90 lb. weaklings with no stamina whatever.

What's wrong with these people. I now know. They suffer from a syndrome (not unusual, unfortunately) which we may describe as spiritual mal-absorption. As in the case of little Amy Brown, enough soul food is taken in to nourish four adults, but not enough is absorbed to give them strength to walk unaided.

The doctors have no remedy for Amy. They predict that her condition will change, for better or worse, as her body completes maturity in the next few years.

Happily, the Great Physician holds greater power in the matter of spiritual mal-absorption: "*I will meditate in thy precepts, and will have respect unto thy ways*" (Psalm 119:15); "*He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.*"

LOVE NOTES

Is there no end to the silly antics of the brethren?

Now from the *Star Reporter*, Jan. 80, we find an ad which features a "Note of Love to All Single Members." The copy says:

"*This 'Love Note'* (hearts are substituted for the o's in those two words) *is to those who have been taught to date Christians and to marry only 'in the Lord' (another member of the church of Christ).* (That's their parenthesis, not mine, K.G.) *A group of concerned brethren want to do more for you than say, 'Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled.' They want to help supply that which is needful to your body and soul (James 2:16; Gen. 2:18).*

"*Somewhere, someone is lonely waiting just for you. If you long for the help of sincere Christians in finding that one, answer this Love Note for further information. The Bible will be our guide all the way.*"

The address is given along with a suggestion that a contribution would be appreciated.

Why on earth didn't Paul think of that?

I believe I can speak for Brother Adams and say that Searching the Scriptures will not be a forwarding agent for this service.

THE A CAPPELLA CHORUS

Bro. Charles Holt, writing in the church bulletin he edits for the Westside Church of Christ in Rossville, Ga. says, "Do you have any idea what the above refers to? It is not what you may think. In the October, 1979 issue of *Mission* (a 'brotherhood publication') there appeared an article under the above caption. It is an edited version of an interview conducted by Lynn Mitchell, Jr., representing *Mission*, with three homosexuals ('gays') who claim to be members of the Church of Christ . . . These three 'gays' wanted to speak up for and in defense of 'the gay community of the Churches of Christ', and *Mission* furnished them an open forum for such. These 'gays' think it is 'time for homosexuals to make a comment to the brotherhood.'"

Bro. Holt continues: "The 'A Cappella Chorus' is the name of their 'gay community, and its 'purpose' is to serve as 'an outreach to the people in the Church of Christ who are gay.' They adopted the name 'as a name we can all identify with' because Churches of Christ believe in a cappella music' All the denominations have a name for their 'gay fellowship' and now our 'gays' have a name for theirs. And they are 'coming out in the open', out of the closet of secrecy and cover-up, hoping to find acceptance of their 'lifestyle'—with their 'lover'—by Churches of Christ. They are 'coming out in Houston' to test the waters of acceptance. They have apparently surveyed the climate and found the time is ripe to make their move. They have gotten off to a good start with the publicity given them by *Mission*."

The standard arguments are used by this "A Cappella Chorus." We are told that homosexuality is not really condemned in the Scriptures. One of those interviewed said, "My sexuality is a gift of God. Being homosexual is what God has given me and I've got to learn... to use that as I would any gift that God would give me."

Lynn Mitchell, the *Mission* interviewer comments: "... knowing what to say to a gay Christian is one of

the most painful and unpliable dilemmas that a sensitive minister can face." Bro. Holt ably responds: "Does he have the same trouble with the fornicator, adulterer, thief, idolater, or drunkard? His trouble is that he is too 'sensitive'. He does not want to believe and say what the Scriptures teach he should say . . . Thank God, Paul didn't have Mitchell's 'dilemma.' Paul boldly and plainly classifies 'homosexuality' as unrighteousness and he converted people from such, just as he converted them from fornication, adultery, drunkenness, and idolatry. Those who don't 'convert', give up their 'gay lifestyle' and get 'straight'—are unrighteous and 'shall not inherit the kingdom of God.'"

Later in this same issue of *Mission*, we see a word that's beginning to be tossed about a good bit. We are told by Mitchell that many who plainly condemn homosexuality as sin are guilty of "homophobia". This is defined as "our irrational, dishonest, confused, cowardly, sinful *fear* of homosexuality and homosexual persons."

"Mitchell even tries to make 'homophobia' worse than homosexuality," comments Bro. Holt. "He (Mitchell) says there is 'no doubt God can forgive homophobia, but that makes it no less destructive, degrading, painfully demeaning of spirits of those whom it affects.' Wonder why the apostle Paul did not list 'homophobia' right along with homosexuality when he wrote his epistles? He did not even include this terrible 'homophobia' in his list of the 'works of the flesh' in Galatians 5! It may well be that Mitchell has described a new sin!"

Bro. Holt closes his vigorous and scriptural response, just a sampling of which we have quoted here, with the words: "**The 'gay community' (the A Cappella Chorus) of the Churches of Christ, along with *Mission's* compromising stance on the matter, is one of the 'signs of our times' that needs to be read carefully by all Christians who love truth and righteousness. Where will it stop? The road of compromise and digression is unending. It is time to wake up to what is really happening to Churches of Christ. 'A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.' Do you care?'**"

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**HEAVEN AUTHORIZED
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THE APOSTLES OBEYED IT**

Luther W. Martin-Rolla, Mo.

Please consider the exact wording of the following translations:

NEW AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION

Matt. 16:19 — "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you shall bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven."

Matt. 18:18 — "Truly I say to you, whatever you shall bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven."

AMPLIFIED VERSION

Matt. 16:19 — "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind—that is, declare to be improper and unlawful—on earth must be already bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth—declare lawful—must be what is already loosed in heaven."

Matt. 18:18 — "Truly, I tell you, whatever you forbid and declare to be improper and unlawful on earth must be what is already forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit and declare proper and lawful on earth must be already permitted in heaven."

NEW WORLD TRANSLATION

Matt. 16:19 — "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens, and whatever you may bind on earth will have been bound in the heavens, and whatever you may loose on earth will have been loosed in the heavens."

Matt. 18:18 — "Truly I say to you men, Whatever things you may bind on earth will have been bound in heaven and whatever things you may loose on earth will have been loosed in heaven."

J. B. PHILLIPS TRANSLATION

Matt. 16:19 — "I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; whatever you forbid on earth will be what is forbidden in Heaven and whatever you permit on earth will be what is permitted in Heaven!"

Matt. 18:18 — "Believe me, whatever you forbid upon earth will be what is forbidden in Heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be what is permitted in Heaven."

KENNETH S. WUEST TRANSLATION

Matt. 16:19 — "I shall give to you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth (forbid to be done), shall have been already bound (forbidden to be done) in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth (permit to be done), shall have already been loosed in heaven (permitted to be done). Matt. 18:18 — "Assuredly, I am saying to you, Whatever you forbid on earth, shall have already been forbidden in heaven. And whatever you permit on

earth, shall have already been permitted in heaven."

A. S. WORRELL'S TRANSLATION Matt. 16:19 — "I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; and whatsoever you shall bind on the earth shall have been bound in Heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose on the earth shall have been loosed in Heaven."

Matt. 18:18 — "Verily, I say to you, whatsoever ye bind upon the earth shall have been bound in Heaven, and whatsoever ye loose on the earth shall have been loosed in Heaven."

CHARLES B. WILLIAMS TRANSLATION

Matt. 16:19 — "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you forbid on earth must be what is already forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth must be what is already permitted in heaven."

Matt. 18:18 — "I solemnly say to you, whatever you forbid on earth must be already forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth must be already permitted in heaven."

ROBERT YOUNG'S TRANSLATION

Matt. 16:19 — "And I will give to thee the keys of the reign of the heavens, and whatever thou mayest bind upon the earth shall be having been bound in the heavens, and whatever thou mayest loose upon the earth shall be having been loosed in the heavens."

Matt. 18:18 — "Verily I say to you, Whatever things ye may bind upon the earth shall be having been bound in the heaven, and whatever things ye may loose on the earth shall be having been loosed in the heavens."

GEORGE SWANN'S TRANSLATION

Matt. 16:19 — "I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall have (first) been bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall have (first) been loosed in heaven."

Matt. 18:18 — "Verily I say unto you that whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall have (first) been bound in heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall have (first) been loosed in heaven."

KING JAMES II TRANSLATION

Matt. 16:19 — "And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of Heaven. And whatever you may bind on earth shall occur, having been already bound in Heaven. And whatever you may loose on earth shall occur, having been already loosed in Heaven." Matt. 18:18 — "Truly I say to you, Whatever you shall bind on earth shall occur, having been already bound in Heaven. And whatever you shall loose on earth shall occur, having been already loosed in Heaven."

SUMMATION

Please note that when the apostles gave an answer to such questions as: "Men and brethren what shall we do?" (Acts 2), and "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16) . . . **THE APOSTLES TAUGHT WHAT CHRIST HAD ALREADY TAUGHT!** For example: Christ taught the need for BELIEF (John 8:23-24, Mark 16:15-16).

Later, the Apostles taught the same (Acts 16:30-34, Romans 10:8-17).

Christ taught REPENTANCE (Luke 13:3,5; Luke 24:27).

Later, the Apostles taught REPENTANCE (Acts 2:38, Acts 3:19, and Acts 17:30-31).

Christ taught the need for oral CONFESSION OF CHRIST (Matt. 10:32-33).

Later, the Apostles taught CONFESSION OF CHRIST (Rom. 10:9-10, 1 Tim. 6:12)?

Christ taught BAPTISM UNTO SALVATION (Mark 16:16, Matt. 28:18-20).

Later, the Apostles taught BAPTISM UNTO THE REMISSION OF SINS (Acts 2:38, 1 Pet. 3:21).

Therefore, we have proved without doubt or question that Heaven (through Christ) first laid down the requirements for man's faith and obedience, leading to the salvation of man's soul. Then, later, the Apostles echo the same requirements of faith and obedience, leading to man's salvation.

Christ's teaching was basically to the Jews, while the Apostles taught ALL nations.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing ten versions of the English New Testament demonstrate the accurate rendering of Matt. 16:19 and 18:18, both grammatically as well as in accord with New Testament teaching. I sincerely wish that ALL English versions were as accurate in rendering various New Testament passages.

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IF I WERE EIGHTEEN

Ronny Milliner
 P.O. Box 371
 Middlebourne, WV 26149



It is hard to imagine that ten years have passed since I was eighteen years old and a senior in high school. We all at times like to look back and reflect on our lives and see what changes we might or might not want to make. If I could be eighteen again here are some things I would do.

Remember My Creator

One of the wisest men who ever lived advised, "Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near when you will say, I have no delight in them" (Eccl. 12:1). One would first begin remembering his Creator by obeying the gospel (Mk. 16:16; Ac. 2:38), He would need to continue to remember Him by daily prayer and study of His word (1 Thess. 5:17; Ac. 17:11). One needs to remember God in his youth because that may be the only time he will have (cf. Jas. 4:14).

Realize The High Price of Sowing Wild Oats

A lot of people want to have a "good time" in trying all kinds of worldly pleasures while young. They give their best to the devil and then think they will be able to give the leftovers to God later in life. But they fail to consider the price of sowing wild oats.

I can recall some cases in high school. Our class president was killed in a car wreck because he and another boy had been drinking. A very popular young girl, a cheerleader, had to drop out of school to have a baby out of wedlock. The Bible teaches that we reap what we sow, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life" (Gal. 6:7-8). The sowing of wild oats can cost us our health, our freedom, our lives, but more importantly our souls.

Rule Self

The Bible places a lot of emphasis on the importance of self-control (Prov. 16:32; 1 Cor. 9:27; 1 Pet. 3:10-11; 2 Pet. 1:5-6). One needs to control his actions (2 Cor. 5:10), his words (Mt. 12:36), his thoughts (Phil. 4:8), and his time (Eph. 4:16). There are youthful lusts from which one needs to flee (2 Tim. 2:22). I should learn how to say "no." I should not just follow the crowd and use the excuse "everybody is doing it." Learning to say "no" places me in company with such young faithful servants of God as Joseph and Daniel and his three friends (Gen. 39:7-9; Dan. 1:8; 3:17-18).

Rally Around Good Friends

Paul wrote, "Do not be deceived: Bad company corrupts good morals" (1 Cor. 15:33). If one runs around with the wrong crowd, he is asking for trouble. I need to choose my friends by a high standard. Parents need to recognize they have a big responsibility in providing young people the opportunity to be with good Christians their own age.

Radiate A Good Influence

When the Bible speaks about Christians being shining lights, it does not say that just older Christians are to let their light shine (Mt. 5:16; Phil. 2:15). Young people, I believe, do not fully realize the influence they can have with others. Sometimes they can have a far greater influence with other young people than those who are older. There are even times when some older people will more fully appreciate a young person's faith and thus be influenced by him. Consider the influence of Alexander the Great who was king before he was thirty years old, and Napoleon who ruled France when he was thirty years old. Look also at Jesus who did all that he did in about 33 years.

Reach My Place in the Church

We occasionally hear the cry, "Our young people are just not interested in the church." Maybe they have been made to feel that the church is just for older members. We need to give them responsibilities and use them in every way possible. They can teach classes, lead singing, read the Bible, preach, help in the care of the building and grounds, conduct religious surveys, set up Bible classes with their school friends, and visit the shut-ins and sick. They can do anything, and should do everything, that a Christian is supposed to do. The only way the young people will be the church tomorrow is if they are an active part of the church today. What a beautiful sight to see younger and older Christians working shoulder to shoulder in the work of the Lord.

Respect My Parents

The Bible teaches, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth" (Eph. 6:1-3). We may not while we are younger think our parents are very wise in their decision-making, but generally as we grow older we will see their wisdom. They have our well-being at interest (Heb. 12:9-10).

Reflect Upon Choosing A Mate

I would *start* considering such a choice. Some by this age have already made the choice, and they bring many hardships upon themselves by marrying too young. We should not think that unless we are married by the time we are twenty that we will wind up as an old maid or lonely bachelor. Some have committed fornication, been "forced" to marry, and thus given up their right of choice. I need to exercise great caution as to whom I date, because I will most likely wind up marrying someone that I date.

Above all the considerations for a mate should be that he or she be a Christian, You might be able to find

a tall, dark, and handsome unbeliever, but the short, light, and ugly Christian will make a better husband, "Oh", you say, "I'm going to convert him." If you wanted a Thunderbird, you would buy a Thunderbird. You would not buy a bicycle and then convert it into a Thunderbird. Marry someone who can help you get to heaven, not hinder you and your children.

Conclusion

I'm not eighteen, but I believe these things are what the Bible teaches that an eighteen year old ought to do. What about it?

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J. T. Smith
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BETTER THAN PREACHING?

Recently in one of their bulletins, Marvin Phillips, who preaches for the Garnett Road Church of Christ in Tulsa, Oklahoma, wrote an article entitled, "It Should Have Been On Nationwide TV." I quote several things from the article.

"The time was last Monday night. The place, Garnett Road Annex. The occasion, '**Parent Appreciation Banquet.**' It is my firm conviction, had it been screened on national TV, it would have done our country more good than a Presidential conference. **It had more spiritual worth than a wagon load of sermons**" (emphasis mine, JTS). Boy, it sure must have been powerful to have done the country more good than a wagon load of sermons. Wonder what it was? Marvin continues,

"First of all, it was a class event. Our young people simply wanted to honor their parents. The food was excellent, the decor lovely. The entertainment, an uplifting time of song ministry by our own 'Heavenly Generation Singers.'"

"And then, came the main course . . . completely unrehearsed! These young people were asked if any wanted to come up to the microphones and express their love to their parents. I guess there must have been 25 to 30 who did so. Generation Gap, gone for awhile, they just unloaded their love and appreciation to Christian and non-Christian parents alike. It was an emotional, heart rending experience."

Now how about that? According to brother Marvin Phillips, food, a lovely decor, entertainment by their own choir (chorus), and personal testimony, (which provided "an emotional, heart rendering experience") would have done the country more good than a wagon load of sermons. Well maybe it would have done the country more good than a wagon load of sermons from Marvin Phillips, but not the kind preached by Peter, Paul, John and others. And how about such a

statement in view of the fact that the apostle Paul said, "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (I Corinthians 1:21).

OFT - ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT ANGELS

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The curiosity of many is peaked by the subject of angels. In this article we propose to study the subject by looking at some "Oft - asked questions about angels."

Where Do Angels Come From? Do Good People Become Angels When They Die?

Angels are a creation of God even as man is a creation of God. Paul said in Col.1:16, "For by him (Christ hh) were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him." Somewhere in the terms "all things . . . that are in heaven," or "whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers," angels are almost assuredly included—hence created.

In Ps.148:2-5 the Psalmist tells the heavens, the heights, the angels of God, God's hosts, the sun, the moon, the stars, the heaven of heavens, and the waters above the heavens to praise God saying, "Let them praise the name of the Lord: For he commanded and they were created." Here angels are plainly said to be created.

The fact that angels are created beings should be sufficient to show that people do not become angels when they die. In Mt.22:30 some are said to be "as the angels of God in heaven" when they are raised from the dead. Note, it says, "as the angels." It does not say they become angels. In Lk.20:34-36 we are told that those of the resurrection will not be given in marriage; Neither will they die for they are to be "equal to the angels." Things can be equal in some aspects without being the same things. A pound of dirt is equal in weight to a pound of gold, but gold is not dirt. The resurrected will be "equal to" and "as" the angels in that they will not marry nor die, but the resurrected will not become angels.

What Do Angels Look Like? Do Angels Have Wings?

When visiting earth, angels sometimes fashioned themselves as men. This seems apparent in that there are instances recorded where people thought them to be men, not angels (Gen. 19:1,5,8,10; Judges 13:16). Hebrews 13:2 also tells us some have entertained angels unawares.

We dare not say that angels always appeared as men, nor do we wish to be so bold as to say that this is their form in heaven. We do not know for certain. We

do know that on some occasions angels were recognized immediately, and brought fear to those who looked upon them (Lk.1:11,12). This suggests a form different from that of a man. We need, also, to remember that Heb.1:14 calls angels "ministering spirits." "Spirits" no doubt has reference to their nature, just as Jn.4:24, "God is a Spirit," has reference to the nature of God. But who knows just what a spirit looks like?

Some of God's creatures are winged. The cherubs each have four wings (Ez.1:5,6; 10:15) while the seraphims each have six wings (Is.6:2). But angels are never described as having wings. Gabriel was caused to "fly swiftly" (Dan.9:21) and David saw an angel of the Lord "stand between the earth and heaven" (IChr.21:16), but neither is said to have wings.

Some have suggested that cherubs and seraphims are different orders of angels. This is only assumed. It cannot be proven by the scriptures. It is just as possible that cherubs and seraphims are yet other creations of God. There is therefore nothing to suggest that angels have wings, nor is there anything that tells us what angels look like except when they appeared on earth in the form of man.

Do People Have Guardian Angels?

In Mt.18:10 Jesus said, "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my father which is in heaven." In commenting on this verse, Pulpit Commentary (Mt., Vol.15,p.210) expresses well the thought of many saying, "that each soul has assigned to it by God a special angel is grounded on this and supported on other passages of scripture." Pulpit then lists Heb.1:14; Ps.34:7; Ps.91:11; Lk.15:7,10 as the "other passages."

Angels are indeed ministering spirits (Heb. 1:14). They have on occasions as they carried out God's charges guarded or protected individuals (Ps.34:7; 91:11). We question, however, if Mt.18:10 or any other passage necessitates that "each soul has assigned to it by God a special angel" at all times.

The idea of a guardian angel watching over individuals is consistent with Mt.18:10 and other passages but is not necessarily deduced from them.

Is There A "Death Angel"?

This question seems to imply that death has been committed into the hands of one certain angel, and that death is the result of a visit from this angel. Many would appeal to the plague of the death of the firstborn of Egypt to substantiate the existence of a "death angel."

In Ex. 12:23 we are told that the Lord would pass through to smite the Egyptians; but when He saw the blood upon the lintel and the two side posts, the Lord would pass over the door of the Israelites and would not suffer the destroyer to go in unto their houses to smite them. The Lord was to pass through, but there is mention also of a "destroyer." Ps.78:43-51 again speaks of the plagues which came upon Egypt. Verse 49 reveals the Lord brought about some of the plagues by sending angels among them. It is possible, therefore, that the death of the firstborn was ad-

ministered by an angel, referred to as the destroyer.

There are other occasions where we know an angel administered pestilence that brought death (2 Sam. 24:15, 16; 1 Chr. 21:12) and where an angel was the cause or slayer of people (2Kgs.19:35; Acts 12:23). But nothing suggests that it is the same angel each time, nor that there is one "angel of death." Neither can we reason that because angels have had a part in the death of some people that they have a part in the death of all people.

Are Angels Always "Men Angels"?

In commenting on the word "angel" W.E. Vine in his "Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words," Vol. 1, p.55, notes, "angels are always spoken of in the masculine gender, the feminine form of the word does not occur."

When angels visited earth and assumed a human form, they appeared as men (Gen.19:5,8,10; Gen.32:24; Judges 13:6).

These facts considered, we can most assuredly say that there are no "female angels." But I would still prefer the term "angels" to "men angels."

Is Satan A Fallen Angel?

Some reason that Satan was not created evil, but now is evil; therefore, he must be a fallen angel. We would agree that Satan was not created evil. This would reflect upon the holiness of God, making God the author of evil. We do, however, disagree with the conclusion that Satan must be a fallen angel. It seems to be based on the idea that there are no heavenly creatures but angels. This we do not know for a fact.

Is.14:12 says, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground." Some use this as their proof text to show that Satan is a fallen angel. Note Isaiah did not say Lucifer was a fallen angel. Furthermore, in context Isaiah was speaking of the king of Babylon, not Satan.

We do not say that Satan cannot be a fallen angel. No scripture though calls him such or proves him to be a fallen angel. I am, therefore, content to admit Satan's existence and not to speculate as to what he was before he became Satan, the adversary of God and man.

Are Angels Still Active In The Affairs of Men Today?

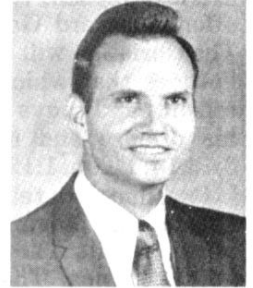
Angels are "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation" (Heb.1:14). Nothing in the study of angels pronounces an end to the ministering of the angels. It would seem, therefore, that as long as there are heirs of salvation who need ministering to that God would employ angels. We do not venture to say what angels are doing today. Perhaps one would find a study of what angels did in the Old and New Testaments profitable.

CONCLUSION

It is both right and good for us to know what the Bible says about angels. These things were written for our learning. We must, however, be content with what God has revealed unto us and not go beyond the truths of His word.

SOME THINGS YOU MISS BY BEING A CHRISTIAN

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A lot of people are not desirous of becoming Christians because of all the things they would have to give up. This was the problem with the rich young ruler - he did not want to give up his riches to follow Christ (Lk. 18:18-23). Occasionally, people of the world are heard telling Christians, "Just look what you are missing by being a Christian." But what are we missing by being Christians?

BEING ON YOUR OWN. Beloved, all who are not serving God are on their own. "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil" (1 Pet. 3:12). Many are experiencing severe difficulties and consequences from trying to be their own God. But still they look to themselves for guidance and strength. The Christian, however, has one greater than himself to whom he can go for guidance and strength.

Many non-Christians are trying to experience a solid marriage without having a solid foundation upon which to build. They are without the guidance and instruction of God as to how to have a happy, fulfilling marriage (Eph. 5:22-33). They are experiencing not a few problems in rearing their children because they refuse God's teaching on this subject (Eph. 6:1-4). Non-Christians are without the providence of God (1 Pet. 3:12), and they are missing one of the greatest privileges of all - prayer. When adversity and sorrows come upon them, they do not have the assurance that God will hear and grant their requests (Phil. 4:6, Prov. 15:29; 28:9).

THE DEGRADATION AND HURT OF SIN. The Christian constantly strives to avoid sin (Rom. 12:9). Hence, he averts the degradation and hurt of sin. Conversely, those who refuse to become Christians often find themselves wallowing in the filth and mire of sin and suffering its horrible consequences (Rom. 1:21-32, 3:10-18). Many who have chosen to serve Satan and have ridiculed the Christian, pointing out the things he is missing, have experienced the truthfulness of Solomon's announcement, ". . . the way of transgressors is hard" (Prov. 13:15). They have pursued mind stimulants such as alcohol and drugs and have become enslaved to them. In indulging in sensuality, they have contracted obnoxious venereal diseases and suffer the incapacity to enjoy true affection. They have been reduced to mere animalism, being dominated by lust and greed (2 Pet. 2:12-14).

THE TORMENT OF GUILT. By being a faithful Christian you can miss the torment of guilt. We can be

as the apostle Paul who exclaimed, "And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men" (Acts 24:16). The Christian will be convicted by his conscience when he does that which he knows is wrong but when he repents and prays for forgiveness he can forget about his offence and thus avoid a guilt complex (Phil. 3:13,14; I Tim. 1:12-15).

Psychiatrists tell us that one of the common mental aberrations plaguing people today is a deep, intense sense of guilt. They harbor this guilt and thus create a guilt complex. This we are also told, can and does manifest itself in different ways such as self-punishment and abuse.

SEPARATION FROM GOD. By being a Christian you also miss being separated from God. The cause of man being separated from God is clearly seen in the following enunciation: "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (Isa. 59:1,2).

Many suffer from a deep sense of unfulfillment, feeling of emptiness, and aimlessness. It is your writer's belief that this loneliness is often a product of man being separated from his Creator (Eccl. 12:13,14).

HELL. Not only does the Christian miss many things that are certainly undesirable in this life - being on your own, without the guidance of God's word, prayer, and providence, suffering the shame and hurt of sin, the torment of guilt, and separation from God - but he will also miss the anguish and everlasting punishment of hell (Matt. 15:46, Mk. 9:43-48; Rev. 14:9-11).

Christian friend, you are missing many things in being a Christian. None of these things, however, promote man's happiness (Josh. 1:8). Let us, therefore, not be envious of sinners and gladly count all things loss for Christ (Prov. 24:1,19; Phil. 3:7).

My non-Christian friend, you are also missing many things by not being a Christian - the guidance of God's word, prayer, and providence, help to avoid sin, its shame and hurt, freedom from the torment of guilt, being reconciled with God, and heaven. These things are necessary for your happiness and salvation. What you are experiencing is not lasting and enduring and does not offer substance (Heb. 11:25; Eccl. 12:13,14). Choose you this day whom you will serve (Josh. 24:15). Resolve today to become a Christian by believing in Christ's deity, repenting of sins, being willing to confess Christ's deity before men, and being baptized for the remission of sins (John 8:24, Acts 17:30, 8:37, 2:38). The Lord will then add you to his church (Acts 2:47).

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ARE WE "SOUND" ON EVANGELISM?

**Ronald B. Roark
841 Old Hickory Blvd.
Jackson, TN 38301**

A few years ago, Connie W. Adams wrote an excellent article entitled "Umbrella Religion" in which he warned of the fallacy of considering a preacher to be "sound" simply because he was against certain things (such as, the church support of human institutions) or **for** certain things (such as, morality). He pointed out that a "sound" preacher will be sound in every area of teaching. He stated further the same point in connection with local churches.

Tom Bunting desires to go to Norway to preach Christ. After letting brethren know of his desire, months passed with very few commitments for support. In fact, the only promise of continuing monthly support was from an individual. What's wrong? Brother Bunting is a qualified and mature preacher. He and his family have lived in Norway before. They speak the language. His wife Shirley is a qualified and capable teacher. What's wrong? I believe that a fundamental lack of soundness exists in many churches of Christ that are supposed to be "sound" when it comes to their practice in the realm of evangelism. Let's consider the scriptures.

CHURCH TO SEND

In Acts 13, inspiration has recorded the Holy Spirit directing that **THE CHURCH** was to "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." **THE CHURCH** "sent them away" (vv. 1-3). The work was evangelism. The scripture says that the church should select men to go and preach and **THE CHURCH** is to send them.

Our custom is to let the preacher spend the time, money, effort, etc., to determine where he is needed. He then must write articles, letters, and travel, speak, beg and plead to be allowed to give up the blessings of living in a well-to-do country among friends and relatives to go to some country that "knows not God" where language and customs and false religions produce inconvenience, barriers, anxiety, home-sickness and sometimes personal danger in order to accomplish the primary mission of **THE CHURCH** — preaching the gospel. "Thus ye have made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition" (Matt. 15:6).

The preacher has the responsibility to **GO** (Mk. 16:15; Matt. 28:18-20). The church has the responsibility to **SEND** (Acts 13:1-3). How many churches are "sound" on this point?

SOME RESPONSIBILITIES OF PREACHERS

1. To go (Mk. 16:15; Matt. 28:18-20).
2. To preach (2 Tim. 4:2).
3. To preach Christ (2 Cor. 4:5).

4. To preach truth (Eph. 4:15).
5. To reprove, rebuke, exhort (2 Tim. 4:2; Acts 20:1-2).
6. To be an example (Tit. 2:7-8).

SOME RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHURCHES

1. To send preachers (Rom. 10:13-15; Acts 13:1-5).
2. To support preachers (Phil. 4:10-18; 1 Cor. 9:1-18; 2 Cor. 11:1-15; Lk. 10:7).
3. To hear Christ preached (Matt. 17:5; 1 Thess. 1:5-6; 2:13).
4. To search the scriptures (Acts 17:11; 1 John 4:1).
5. To receive exhortation (Heb. 13:22).
6. To be an example (Rom. 1:8; 2 Cor. 9:1-5; 1 Thess. 1:7-8).

SUMMARY

Are we "sound" on evangelism? Are you willing to go to Norway? Germany? Japan? Australia? Africa? If you are, who will send you? And if you are not willing to GO, are you willing to SEND? Too few are going. WHY? Many "doors" are open that may be closed at any time. Do you know where? Do you care?

CHURCHES TAKE NOTE: If you are "laying up treasures" in your bank account while able men, willing to GO, cannot find a church or churches to SEND, are you "sound"? I challenge you to consider the fact that the Macedonians sacrificed financially to do "beyond their power" the work IN ANOTHER LOCALE for which Paul had shown them responsible. If you oppose the "missionary society" and the "sponsoring church" arrangement, then you must act; and you must act NOW! I challenge you to be sound in evangelism that the gospel may be preached to a lost and dying world, that souls may be saved, and that God may be glorified. And remember, that we have the responsibility to preach and to keep on preaching whether anyone ever responds to the message. (Remember Noah). Let us all pray for soundness in the work of evangelism and do our part to see that it happens.

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DIAL A BIBLE MOMENT

Larry Duncan
2222 Wendell Ave.
Louisville, KY 40205

For about two years now, we at Wendell Avenue have had a telephone Bible message program. It seems to be working rather well and several congregations have requested information about the program and recently some individuals have suggested that we describe this program via this medium.

This Dial a Bible Moment program is not "our baby", so I feel somewhat presumptuous to attempt to describe it. What we have done is take various ideas from around the country and try to put them together in a workable format. Brother Rod Boston, in Richmond, Kentucky, has to be given much credit for the work he has done in a similar program and for the aid and encouragement he has given me in this endeavor.

Basically, the system works like this: we use two Code-a-Phone telephone answering machines. We had the telephone company install a telephone line and jack, for each machine, that would be compatible with the equipment. We have used what is called a rotary dialing system. What this means is that if someone calls our DABM number and one machine is in operation, the call is automatically switched to the other machine. Only if both machines are in operation does the caller get a busy signal. Of course, you may use only one line and machine or several. The number used would depend upon the number of calls received. For more than a year we used only one machine, but finally the call volume was high enough to warrant another line. One way of telling whether another line and machine is needed is to have the telephone company run a busy survey. When they do they are able to tell you how many people call and hear a busy signal instead of the taped message. When we did this, we found that on one day 110 callers received a busy signal instead of hearing the Bible message. Surely, several of these 110 calls were repeats but still the number was too high. We immediately added the second machine and telephone line. As the number of calls builds up we will again have a busy survey performed and "take it from there."

Endless loop tapes are available to fit these answering machines in various time lengths ranging from 30 seconds to 3 minutes. I try to vary the length, and of course the time of the tape will depend upon the length of the message. We always try to leave about 15 seconds at the end of the tape for the callers to leave their names and addresses if they wish to receive the correspondence course we always offer. I try to tie the end of the message into a need for Bible study. For example, if the message has to do with the Judgment, I might have an encouraging tie in to the correspondence course like this: "How about you? Are you ready for the judgment? If not, we would like to

prepare to face God and so we offer free of any charge, a Bible correspondence course that will help you know what God would have man to do. You may request this study, taken in the privacy of your home, by leaving your name and address at the tone. ..." If a message fits in well with a particular tract we also offer that.

Material for the taped messages may come from various sources. I have found that many short bulletin articles make great outlines or scripts for the message. Basic sermon outlines also work well and sometimes a current event in the newspaper lends itself well to a message.

It seems almost impossible to predict how many people will leave their names requesting a correspondence course or tract. Some weeks we may have 700 calls and only 5 people will leave their name, yet on other weeks we may only have 500 calls and 50 people might request the study.

When we do receive a request, we send them Lesson 1 of the correspondence course (we use the 8 lesson Hurt series). We also include a welcoming letter that has a clip out section to return if they desire our bulletin, a home Bible study, or transportation to worship. On the back of the letter is a map showing our location, a little discussion on what to expect if they visit our services, the time of our services, and a short outline on the gospel plan of salvation.

When they finish the course (lesson 8) we then have a personal follow-up in their home. Since Louisville is so large and spread out, we try to enlist the aid of other faithful congregations in our area if the individual does not live close to us. We operate on the theory that a "searcher for truth" is going to be more willing to assemble and study with the Lord's people if they do not have to drive past 6 other sound congregations to get to us. While we would like to have them here, our ultimate interest is in the salvation of their soul. If that means another congregation gets the "body count," then so be it.

We advertise our program weekly in the Louisville newspapers and simply use an enlarged version of the sticker seen here. We also try to paste a sticker on each piece of correspondence that goes out of here and also encourage our members to use them. One of our elders is a doctor and he even puts these stickers on his monthly statements. Also, any time we have handouts, meeting announcements, meeting outlines, etc., we try to use these stickers.

We have been thrilled to see our number of calls increase from 200 monthly to nearly 3,000. We believe that if we can get 50+ people to hear a Bible message daily, surely some good shall come of it. Perhaps one thing to keep in mind is that not everyone will immediately respond and request the correspondence course or a home study. Personally, I have not been as concerned with this as I have in simply sending out the word. I guess it's just that "ole" idea of planting, watering, and the increase! It surely takes time to reap a crop from planted seed. I wouldn't be surprised to find that someone who requests a study this week might not be someone who first called months ago. I guess I'm trying to say, be patient. Remember, we have 3,000 calls now but first had 200. But I also

remember that we were thrilled with those first 200 calls, too!

We have found the Dial a Bible Moment program to be a very viable and cost effective way to proclaim the good tidings. You may too.

A WORD WITH YOU: WRITING-COPY

O.E. Watts
 — Box 895
 Craig, CO 81625

In the New Testament are several figures teaching us to fashion our lives after Jesus. He is our example or pattern (John 13:15). We are to follow Him (Matt. 16:24) and to imitate Him (I Cor. 11:1). Christians have fellowship with Christ (I Cor. 1:9 and I John 1:3). We are taught to emulate His specific traits (Eph. 5:2), walking as He walked.

Standing out among these is an expressive illustration mentioned only once. This is the word translated example in I Peter 2:21, "Because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in His steps." So interesting are the comments about this by Guy N. Woods that we quote the entire paragraph from his, "A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles."

QUOTE: "Example, in the text, is from **hupogrammon**, accusative singular of **hupogrammos**, from the preposition **hupo-**, under, and **gramma**, to write: thus, literally to write under; to copy, and here figuratively, a pattern or model for imitation. It is a figure suggested by the copy book method of teaching penmanship. Christ thus becomes the copy-head, the beautiful writing at the top of the page. Implied in the figure is a copy book, a perfect pattern of writing, a white, unblemished sheet of paper, the student's effort to transcribe the copy, the awkward attempts in the beginning, persistent determination, constant and unremitting practice; and then, eventually—success!" (End of quote.)

The Zondervan Analytical gives what it calls the proper meaning of this word as, "a copy to write after."

We see in a classroom above the blackboard a series of black cards with the capital and small letters upon them in white. They are written perfectly for the students to imitate and to drill upon. The ancient forms to copy from were similar to this in their arrangement and in the way they were used.

Thayer's first (the "**proper**") definition of **hupogrammos** is: "1. a **writing-copy**, including all the letters of the alphabet, given to beginners as an aid in learning to draw them." He then cites this use by a secular writer as he does several for the figurative usage, which he next defines as follows: "Hence 2 **an example** set before one." He states that this word is in our text, I Peter 2:21. He indicates that it occurs only this one time in the New Testament.

It is the figurative meaning of the term which has come down to our time in the language of the Greeks. Now they use it to mean a model or a pattern.

It was in this sense that the inspired Peter used the word. We should faithfully copy Jesus as our standard. Paul cautioned imitators of himself to do so only as far as he followed Christ (I Cor. 11:1).

Many years ago penmanship copy-books were printed with a line of writing across the top of each page. Below this were several blank lines for copying it. Teachers found that a pupil would copy his own bottom line each time. Thus, down the page, a defect would become more and more pronounced. So, an inventive person designed the "movable copy," a strip which was moved down a line at a time. This kept before the student the perfect model to copy on each line.

The application is obvious. We have heard and read many lessons urging churches carefully to follow scriptural precepts, examples, and necessary inferences. Copying copies would lead to following errors and increasing them. The same care is necessary in the lives of individual Christians as they work at directly copying Christ. We might write (live) after other copies (lives) Heb. 13:7. But we should constantly and carefully check them with the master-copy (Jesus). It is vital that we closely follow our original and perfect "writing-copy."

Please Renew Promptly!

THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

News Items to: Wilson Adams, 317 Trinkle Ave., N.E., Roanoke, VA 24012

DOUGLAS-AUGUA PRIETA NEWSLETTER

CHARLES F. HOUSE, P.O. Box 1031, Douglas, AZ 85607. We are happy to report that two precious souls were born into the family of God recently. Pedro Ramirez is the fine preacher at Agua Prieta and is assisted in the work by Camilo Villegas, another fine preacher and personal worker. We are anxiously looking forward to the day when we can see these two men installed as elders. The Augua Prieta church is a wonderful example of love, dedication, and pure doctrine. Concerning the English congregation in Pirtleville, we are

known as the Westside church of Christ. The building will seat 80 people although at present there are only three members. Come and visit with us when traveling or vacationing in the area.

LINCOLNTON, NC WORK

GILES PAINTER, P.O. Box 1323, Lincolnton, NC 28092. Lincolnton County, NC has a population of 47,000 people. Being a native of this good state and knowing the need, I have looked to this county with desire to establish the Lord's church here for a number of years. I

moved here June 21, 1979, and the following Lord's day began meeting in our home. While the work has been hard, we have seen two baptized into Christ. We are few in number, only a dozen or so, but we have work to do and we shall be about our Father's business. April 13, 1980 we began meeting in our building following a 12-day meeting with Benton Graves. Other meetings are planned for the coming months with Wallace Whitehorn (Aug. 3-8), and Irven Lee (Nov. 9-14). Keep us in mind when in our area and visit with us. We are located east of Lincolnton on Hwy. #27, just east of the junction of Hwy. #73. If you have friends who live in this area please let us know. Phone: (704) 735-4416.

WORK IN MOBILE, AL

JIMMY TUTEN, JR., 7911 Country Dr., Mobile, AL 36609. The reception among the brethren here has been the best that I have experienced in a long time. All are pulling together, are zealous, and demonstrating the true character of Christianity in their lives. We are greatly encouraged by what is taking place at Tillman's Corner. Several special classes have been conducted already. Group visitation and personal work is beyond the planning stage. A very special teenage class on Sunday afternoons has been responded to in an exemplary fashion. Plans for our "special Bible lessons," the first of May, are moving in a positive way and we are planning for a busy summer. If we can build on the foundation that has been laid in a very positive way, the future will look bright for us. If there is anyone we can contact within driving distance, let us know. Those of you who have encouraged me with your letters and notes, thank you and God bless you.

PREACHERS NEEDED

DALHART, TX — Darrel Shaw who labored with us for 15 years has now moved to Houston and we are in need of a preacher. We have about 30 members. Our building is paid for but we do not have a preacher's home. At the present we could provide \$200 a week in support and will do our best to increase that amount as we are able. As we do not have elders we would prefer a seasoned man to work with us, but would like to contact anyone who may be interested. Al Watkins of Amarillo has been preaching each Sunday for the past

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several months. His phone number is (806) 622-2054. Also Johnnie Monden (806) 249-2323, or BUI McMurry (806) 249-4018. The mailing address of the church is Box 622, Dalhart, TX 79022.

WESLACO, TX — The church of Christ at Weslaco, TX is in need of a preacher. We have 10 members and can pay one-third or more of his support. If interested contact R. Dodd, 310 South Texas Ave., Weslaco, TX 78596.

ORANGE, CA — The church in Orange, CA (located 30 miles S.E. of Los Angeles) desires a preacher to work with them. We are a congregation of 70 members, self supporting, with an average attendance of 90. For more information contact: Bill Barr, (714) 595-8073, or L. O. Anderson (714) 581-3523. Or write the church at 1838 N. Shaffer Ave., Orange, C A 92665.

MARKED TREE, AR — The church here needs a man to work with them. The church has an attendance of 50-60. Partial support and a house can be provided. For more details write the church at Box 115, Marked Tree or call Al Hale at (501) 358-2933. After 6 p.m. call 358-2707.

PEWS FOR SALE

WARNER ROBINS, GA — 18 pews, 12 feet long, light oak, good condition. \$2000, you haul. If interested, write Westside church of Christ, 158 Willow Ave., Warner Robins, GA 31093. Or call 1-(912)-922-1158, 1-(912)-922-5168, or 1-(912)-922-5902.

TERRY L. SUMERLIN — If anyone knows of a baby that is available for adoption by a faithful young couple, please contact them as follows: Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Finch, 1416 Ave. O, Freeport, TX 77541. (713) 233-8045.

DIOSDADO L. AENLLE IS DEAD

MACKEY W. HARDEN, 3535 N. Biscayne Rd., Indianapolis, IN 46226. The work of the Lord in the Mindanao region of the Philippines has suffered another loss in the death of another faithful gospel preacher. On Sunday, April 13, 1980, brother Diosdado L. Aenlle of Pagadian City, passed away as the result of a heart attack. He was approximately 58 years old. Brother Wallace H. Little was in Pagadian City preaching when brother Aenlle was stricken. He, along with several of the Filipino preachers, preached brother Aenlle's funeral.

I had been corresponding with brother Aenlle for well over a year and was very much impressed with his stand for the truth. His good widow, sister Charito Aenlle is in need of financial assistance. She is a very dedicated woman and is determined to do all within her power to ensure that her husbands work continues. If you are able to lend assistance you may contact her as follows: Mrs. Charito Aenlle, P.O. Box 1326, Pagadian City 7824, Republic of the Philippines. If you would like more information concerning this situation please contact me at (317) 897-7410.

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	270
RESTORATIONS	163
(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)	