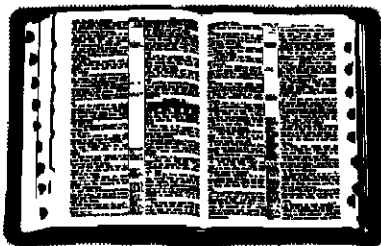


SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

"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 XXII

JANUARY, 1981

NUMBER 1

THINK ON
THESE THINGS

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AN EXPLANATION AND SOME GOALS

It is time that I made some explanation for not writing for *Searching The Scriptures*. Several have asked about it, and some have written to inquire if I continued to have health problems, or if there were other reasons for not writing. Let me assure the reader that it has not been the fault of brother Connie Adams. He has asked me several times to prepare articles for the paper, and I told him I would, but circumstances intervened and I was unable to fulfill my promise at that time. I have no ill will toward any writer for the paper; I have no problem with the editor, in fact we are best of friends. I am not opposed to the paper in any sense. The problems have been my own.

In the May, 1973 issue of *Searching The Scriptures*—the last issue I was to edit before transferring the editorship to Connie W. Adams—I said in the editorial, "I shall continue, the Lord willing, to write regularly for *Searching The Scriptures* and shall continue both financially and otherwise to help him keep this good work going."

In the same issue brother Adams wrote of the future of *Searching The Scriptures* and said, "It should comfort and reassure us all to know that he will have space in this paper to write on any subject he chooses whenever he wants to do it, even to criticizing the new editor and his efforts." I have found no cause to write any critical articles of the editor's work thus far, and I am sure he will continue on the same course.

Soon after this transfer of the paper to brother Connie W. Adams, he asked if I would write regularly on the front page. To this I agreed and we had a verbal understanding that I would write on this page of the

paper under the heading, "Think On These Things." I have not been able to fulfill by obligation because of health problems known to most of the readers of this journal. In addition, I have undertaken additional work, when health permitted it, that combined meeting work and preparing some more permanent work in book form. Within the past year I have done more meeting work than usual, and have spent about one month in Italy, Switzerland and Germany. I am not complaining, just explaining. I have now put some things in order that will permit me to do regular writing for *Searching The Scriptures*.

Crossroads Church

With some degree of disgust I have read various views of the "Crossroads Church of Christ Philosophy" (Gainesville, Florida) over the past several months. Ira Rice, Jr. leveled his big guns at Crossroads two or three times. The Gospel Advocate had their turn at bat. Yater Tant made a visit to Crossroads and wrote his impressions of their work from his point of view. More recently Jimmy Tuten visited with the elders and preacher at Crossroads and examined their program of work, and he reported his impressions in several articles in *Truth Magazine*. I have noted in several bulletins that others have had their say about this church and its phenomenal success (?) in converting people to Christ. My curiosity is aroused: I must make some observations of the Crossroads Philosophy. I lay no claim to possess full knowledge of what this sectarian group is doing, but I know enough about the working and organizational structure of this church to know it is thoroughly denominational.

I moved to Gainesville, Florida to work with the East University Avenue church in the summer of 1953. At that time the institutional issues had not developed to the point of dividing churches, even though some very hot battles were going on. I knew that the elders and several of the members there were of "liberal" persuasion, but they really did not know what the "issues" were all about. In the 1950's I talked to Richard Whitehead and Rogers Bartley, who are now the "elders" at Crossroads, about some growing problems at the 14th Street church of Christ

(which is now Crossroads Church of Christ), including the problem of Premillennialism, which the preacher there believed in part at the time. I was well acquainted with these men and most of the members at 14th Street church for the more than seven years I was there. Even then the emphasis was upon the appeal to college students via the "social gospel." It was important to them, long before Crossroads was thought of, to make whatever compromise they could afford in order to be accepted by all, both liberal churches of Christ and denominationalism.

Through the years it was inevitable that 14th Street church in Gainesville, Florida should eventually arrive at the place in departure from the faith where we now find Crossroads. As far as I am concerned, this body of people is a "liberal" denomination among denominations. I have been disturbed by the reports of visits to Crossroads and the commendable appraisals that have appeared in some of the religious papers over the past several months. The impression made upon me as I read these approving articles is that these inspectors have been beleaguered by the smooth denominational operation and the impressive number baptized each month, plus the near cultic demands made upon all members. They call this "Total Commitment"! Other persuasive characteristics include the emotional appeal that they will "meet with anyone to answer any question about their work." This is not altogether true. I doubt that they would agree to meet with me because I would be considered hostile to their organization, doctrine and work. I have good reason to believe that they will not meet with everyone who wants to examine what they are doing. We shall see what we shall see!

In articles to come I intend to speak my personal evaluation of Crossroads Church of Christ, and why I consider it a serious danger to God's people wherever they may be. I have no desire to hurt anyone, but neither do I want to see men and women go to hell for following a multitude to sin. It is far better to me to see Crossroads destroyed, if possible, than to see innocent people, young and old, be lost by the ingathering of the whirlpool of false teaching and practice that drown men in the destruction of their faith. A series of articles will appear under this heading in the months to come on the Crossroads Church of Christ.

Brother Adams has also asked me to prepare some articles on the "Pentecostal, Emotional Devotionalism" that has captured so many young men and women in the last few years. This thing is seldom understood when it first appears and is often ignored in communities around the country. It is pictured as enthusiastic, scriptural work of young people who want to fulfill their own spiritual needs and help others be "strong in the faith." It is in reality a denominational gimmick to hypnotize the young and impressionable minds of many who want to do something, but lack knowledge of the word of God and the wisdom to discern between right and wrong. They become easy prey to those who have ambition of "leadership" and the applause of their followers. This unguided and unnatural emotional "devotional" is as dangerous to the faith as the doctrine of Calvinism. In

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the last few years there have been two or three waves of this "emotional fever" which included several college students. I spoke several times on the subject.

I have also been requested by brother Adams to write something on the "Church" and "Collectivities" of the present day. This is not as innocent as it appears to be, because so many are involved. It is like preaching against common and popular sins; too many are guilty, and it is easier to fire the preacher than to change so many lives. When men have built programs and institutions that cost much money and the lives of many men and women, it is almost impossible to get them to listen to anything that discredits their programs. What is right is right because it is in harmony with the doctrine of Christ. What is wrong is wrong because it can not be proved by the doctrine of Christ. To be right must be the goal, regardless of the cost. Think on these things!

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Editorial

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THE WORK OF AN EVANGELIST

"But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, *do the work of an evangelist*, make full proof of thy ministry" (2 Tim. 4:5). There is a woeful lack of understanding among brethren as to the work of an evangelist. While all the reasons for this may not be known, it is certain that, to some extent, denominational concepts have molded the thinking of some who have not bothered to search the scriptures to see what the Lord taught about it. Denominationalism has its "clergy-laity" distinctions unknown to the New Testament. This concept has resulted in undue power falling into the hands of preachers, and the further robbing of many of the blessings of services which all Christians should perform.

What His Work Is Not

(1) It is not the duty (nor the right) of an evangelist to "take over the work." A few years ago a brother asked me when I was moving to a certain place to "take over the church." I informed him that I was not going to "take over the church" at all, that the congregation had elders to oversee the flock, to rule, and to watch for souls, including my own, and that I was simply going to labor with them in the preaching and teaching of the gospel. Even where there are no elders, preachers are not to rule. A preacher has one voice in business matters, along with other faithful men, but no more. It is regrettable that there are some preachers who are determined to "rule or ruin."

(2) It is not his work to help the church "climb the social ladder." Some are disposed to put great store by what they call being a "good mixer." Preachers, like other Christians, should be conversant with ordinary social amenities (evidently some are not), should show hospitality, and not withdraw themselves into ivory towers of isolation from the brethren with whom they work. But there are some who want us to "mix" with the fraternal orders and business clubs of the town, court the favor of the ministerial alliance and in general pursue the course of increasing the prestige of the church in the community. All Christians, including preachers, should conduct themselves honorably in all things. When that is done then God is glorified and the church will be "in favor" with honest people. But it is not the work of a preacher to be some sort of social butterfly flitting here and there to satisfy all the social aspirations of some untaught members.

(3) It is not his work to be a church coach, planning and executing recreational activities for the young or older members.

(4) It is not the work of an evangelist to be the of-

ficial visitor of the sick as the bona fide representative of the congregation. As a Christian, he shares with all other Christians a responsibility toward the sick, but that is not his duty because he is a preacher.

What His Work Is

(1) He is to "preach the word" (2 Tim. 4:2). An evangelist is a herald of good news, the word coming from the same root as the word "gospel." "Preacher" means "proclaimer." He is to be an instructor (2 Tim. 2:25), and a good minister (servant) of Christ (1 Tim. 4:6). His service of proclaiming and instructing is to be done both publicly and privately as opportunity arises (Acts 20:20). Some men pride themselves on being great pulpiteers, but are deficient in personal teaching. Others develop great skill in "personal work" but give little attention to the effectiveness of their public teaching. Both are deficiencies.

Jesus often taught the individual (Nicodemus, the woman at the well, Zacchaeus). Philip could reach great crowds in Samaria and then go teach and convert one man (Acts 8:5-39).

Notice the restrictive nature of what is to be preached—"the word." There is no place left for opinion ("it seems to me", "probably", "maybe", "perhaps"), for book reviews, PTA talks in the pulpit, philosophical disputations and speculative theories. It is the "engrafted word" which is able to save the soul (Jas. 1:21). The preaching of that word involves reproving error, rebuking ungodliness and exhorting to faithfulness (2 Tim. 4:1-5). This is to be done with "all longsuffering and doctrine."

(2) In order to "preach the word" it is necessary to "give attendance to reading" (1 Tim. 4:13), to "meditate upon these things" (verse 16) that our "profiting may appear to all" (verse 15). Who can teach what he does not know? Who knows what he has not studied? This requires good translations, books and more books. These are the tools of an evangelist. Carpenters need hammers and saws, mechanics need wrenches, and preachers need books. Then there must be a generous portion of time spent in diligent study. Paul had "books, but especially the parchments" (2 Tim. 4:13). It is a mistake not to add useful tools of study as finances permit. But it is also a grave mistake to neglect the study of the actual text of what *God* said while giving most of our study time to what *men* have said *about* what God said.

If a preacher allows himself to become the errand boy for the congregation, or the official arbiter of all marriage problems so that he has little time to study, it will soon become apparent. He will arise to speak having to say something but having nothing to say. Time will hang heavy on his hands and will impose his lack of preparation on a people whose patience will gradually wear thin. This is commonly known as "running out of soap." Audiences will have much more confidence in what a man teaches when it is evident that he has studied the matter through and knows whereof he speaks.

Most local preachers have five or six public lessons to present each week (not counting gospel meetings, bulletin and newspaper articles, and sometimes radio programs which require extra time and preparation), to say nothing of occasions for private studies. Besides

that, every preacher needs to discipline himself to study subjects for his own edification, and not just because he has to "get up a lesson." Such diligence will greatly enrich his teaching and edify his hearers. Having devoted himself to the will of God, he can then "speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority" (Tit. 2:15).

Faulty concepts, unscriptural and unreasonable demands, and malpractice on the part of some preachers have created much ill-will within congregations and have contributed to the serious shortage of gospel preachers. The work of an evangelist is vital to the well-being of the kingdom of God and should neither be retarded by untaught brethren nor by lazy and inefficient preachers,

BEGINNING VOLUME 22

We enter our twenty-second year of service with the same purposes which have marked this work since it began. We desire to promote and encourage that which is good and stand opposed to whatever is contrary to sound doctrine. Issues come and go but truth remains constant. We intend to continue searching the scriptures to settle every question or subject for study in terms of a "thus saith the Lord." That good and worthy men shall differ in judgment and in application of various passages we are certain. Such papers as this provide a means by which timely Bible subjects can be studied. Reason demands that some limits be set as to how much space to allot to any given discussion. That is why an editor's job is not always easy to fill. But as long as this work is in my hands, I will do the best I can to direct this effort to do the most good possible. It is comforting to have the help of so many capable writers and the counsel of trusted friends to help. We covet the prayers of devout Christians everywhere that this effort may contribute something worthwhile to the spiritual enrichment of those into whose hands it may fall.

EDITOR'S MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 1981

During 1981 the editor is to speak in gospel meetings in the following places:

March—Gonzales, Louisiana and Madison, Indiana
April—Wellandport, Ontario, Canada and Tomlinson

Run, Pennsylvania *May*—Lakeview,
Hendersonville, Tennessee and

Sandy Ridge (near Barnesville), Ohio *June*—
Houston, Mississippi and Bruce, Mississippi *July*—
Warner Robins, Georgia and Buckhorn (near
Pontotoc), Mississippi

August—Dade City, Florida and Kansas City,
Missouri *September*—Eastside, Bowling Green,
Kentucky and

Wellsburg, West Virginia
October—Southeast, Akron, Ohio and Martinez,
Georgia *November*—Paden City, West Virginia and
Lake City,
Florida

Watch for specific dates in these areas and attend if you can. We meet readers everywhere we go and consider that a fringe benefit in our work.

"THE COVERING"

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I suppose that ever since the Restoration Movement no subject has been discussed more than the "covering" mentioned in 1 Cor. 11. It has been said that most of the material written has been on ONE side of the question namely—by those for the covering. However, I have preached for over forty-five years and have not found this to be so, in my reading of articles on the subject.

I have also observed that many who say it should not be made a "test of fellowship" are sometimes slow to recommend preachers who believe in the covering and, especially if they preach on the subject.

I believe it affects only the individual—not the church but, I also believe those who believe in the covering should be allowed to preach on the subject. Personally, I am interested in saving both the church and the individual.

Some criticize those who believe in the covering, with consulting "scholars" instead of the Holy Spirit and then turn right around and quote "Berry's Greek Interlinear" and give us what "scholars" tell us is the meaning of the Greek word "Sunetha". There is not a gospel preacher anywhere that has not resorted to what "scholars" have had to say on many subjects. In fact, we must rely on "scholars" for our English Bible.

I do not believe anyone, on either side of the question, should tear the church up over the issue but, I do believe both sides have the right to teach what they believe and, I have no respect for any preacher who will not preach his convictions; even though the majority of the preachers or, brethren, do not agree with what he says. I do not have to agree with the majority or the minority of the preachers, the brethren, a paper or a school. I must answer to God alone and for that I am thankful.

It has been said the "covering" is not the subject but "authority". I maintain that if the "covering" is not the subject then why discuss it?

Why did Paul instruct them, on the covering, if it was not the subject? No, we do not differ on the matter of "authority" in the chapter, but on the "covering". When Paul said, "we have no such custom" was he talking about the "covering" or authority?

A hat, scarf, mantilla, kerchief, veil, shawl or snood—any of these may cover ones head, and since that is the subject under consideration, then it doesn't seem to me, to be too many answers to this Bible question.

Since, as some say, "the K.J.V. and the A.S.V. are backed by about 150 of the ripest Greek scholars and the K.J.V. does not call the covering a veil, but a covering, then I believe any of the above mentioned coverings answers the purpose of "a sign of authority" (1 Cor. 11:10). The Greek word for "veil", in 2 Cor. 3:7-16 (when Moses veiled his face) is not the word given for covered in 1 Cor. 11:6,7. The covering may have

been a veil, but the word, according to Vines Expository Dictionary of the New Testament, is simply a "covering" as stated in the K.J.V.

What size should the covering be? The Bible doesn't tell us the length, color, breadth or material out of which it is to be made. These things matter not, if it does what Paul says, but remember—it doesn't have to cover the face to cover the head—"anoint thy head and wash thy face"... (Matt. 6:17).

I have seen my daddy and older brothers cover a wagon of cotton many times. However, the tarpaulin never covered the end or sides. I think it is obvious a woman's head can be covered without the covering being over her face or ears. I think a bikini covers; that is, what is intended to be covered. Some may think it is an argument against a woman's head being covered, as in I Cor. 11, but I don't.

The translators of the A.S.V. changed the word "covered" (in the K.J.V.) to "veil". Moreover, if I hit someone on the head—must I hit him a dozen different places (ears, nose, mouth, eyes, etc.) before he is hit on the head? If not, the covering of a woman's head does not have to cover her eyes, ears, mouth, nose, etc. to be a covering for her head.

Did the women of Paul's day cover their heads when they prophesied and prayed and take the covering off when they gave, sang and observed the Lord's Supper? The Bible doesn't say, and since it doesn't, no one has the right to say a woman must do so today. Since she was told to pray and prophesy covered and she could have left it on while giving, singing, etc. then, a woman can do the same today. If not, why not?

When should the woman be covered? The letter, including chapter 11 discusses worship and periods of instruction, in the presence of men and women, and the position they occupy with reference to one another. This being true, when there are assemblies of men and women, for these purposes then, we have identified the WHEN!

Notice the contrast between men and Paul:

Paul	Men
1. Man covered, dishonoreth Christ—1 Cor. 11:3,4	1. Only a custom
2. Woman uncovered, dishonoreth man—1 Cor. 11:3,5	2. Only a custom
3. Woman uncovered, a shame—I 11:6	3. Only a custom Cor.
4. Man not to cover his head because he is the glory of God—1 Cor. 11:7	4. Only a custom
5. Woman to cover her head because she is the glory of man—1 Cor. 11:7	5. Only a custom
6. Woman to cover her head because of the angels I Cor. 11:10	6. Only a custom
7. Woman uncovered, same as if she were shorn' not to be shorn because her hair is given her for her glory. Therefore, she should be covered.	7. Only a custom
8. Long hair a shame to a man—I Cor. 11:14	8. Only a custom

If, as some say, Paul advised the women (in the church at Corinth), to wear a covering because the women in general at Corinth (those not Christians) wore one to show the headship of man (and they should follow this custom lest they offend) then, did he advise the men, in the church, not to wear one because they would offend (since the men, in general in Corinth, did not wear one lest they should fail to show the headship of Christ? No, my friends, it was no more a custom for the women to wear a covering than it was for the man not to wear one. Who would affirm these heathen men were interested in showing the headship of Christ? It was not a matter of CUSTOM with Paul; it was a matter of doing what the Holy Spirit taught, with reference to the women showing the headship of man and the men showing the headship of Christ.

"Brethren had better read such passages as I Cor. 4:6; Gal. 1:6-9; Rev. 22: 18, 19; 2 Pet. 3:16 and give up their theory for what the word of God says."

SET FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE GOSPEL

T. G. O'Neal

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A RESPONSE

Elsewhere in this issue is an article entitled "The Covering" by my friend of many years and brother in the Lord, R. Ervin Driskill. This is a response to an article I had in the November, 1979, issue of *Searching The Scriptures*. It would be well to go back and reread that article before reading either of the two in this issue.

What I had to say in my original article, point number 3, under the subhead "Why Discussed" did not apply to brother Driskill and I see nothing in his article that indicates that he thought I had him in mind. I *do not* consider brother Driskill one who has "extreme views" on the subject or who is "unreasonable" in his treatment of the subject. In his response, brother Driskill said, "I believe it affects only the individual—not the church but, I also believe those who believe in the covering, should be allowed to preach on the subject. ... I do not believe anyone, on either side of the question, should tear the church up over the issue but, I do believe both sides have the right to teach what they believe and, I have no respect for any preacher who will not preach his convictions; even though the majority of the preachers or, brethren, do not agree with what he says. I do not have to agree with the majority or the minority of the preachers, the brethren, a paper or a school. I must answer to God alone and for that I am thankful." With these views I am in complete agreement as well as the fine attitude of his article.

My criticism of "scholars" was not of their definition

of Greek words, but was a criticism for taking what they say *as authority* for what a passage taught instead of what the *Holy Spirit said*.

Basically, my original article set forth these points: (1) the covering of I Cor. 11 is the "veil," (2) it was to be worn "when praying or prophesying," and (3) it was a "custom" and not divine law for all generations.

Brother Driskill says of point number 1, "a hat, scarf, mantilla, kerchief, veil, shawl or snood—any of these may cover ones head, and since that is the subject, under consideration then, it doesn't seem to me, to be too many answers to the Bible question." The text of Scripture still says "covering" (K.J.V.) or "veil" (A.S.V.)—one answer. Grunting, moaning, singing, whistling, talking and whispering are all sounds of the voice, but God specified one, "singing" (Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19). We are told "The Greek word for 'veil,' in 2 Cor. 3:7-16 (when Moses veiled his face) is not the same word given for covered in I Cor. 11:6,7." Check it for yourself; in 2 Cor. 3 it is the noun form of the word and in I Cor. 11 it is the verb form of the same word.

Concerning point number 2 of when the covering or veil was to be worn, brother Driskill says "when there are assemblies of men and women, for these purposes" and the purposes he gives are "worship and periods of instruction." Yet, the text of Scripture still says when "praying or prophesying" and "prayeth or prophesieth" (I Cor. 11:4-5). Where did the Holy Spirit say a woman could leave the covering on while giving or singing? Since one is to sing, could they continue to sing during preaching, the Lord's Supper and prayer?

Concerning my point number 3 on "custom" brother Driskill mentioned this but did not deal with my argument in my original article.

Ervin Driskill and I have been friends for years and will continue to be such. If more had the attitude he has, the question of the covering would not be the problem that it has been in some places. We should continue to study this question over which brethren differ with a good attitude.

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HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM

QUESTION: Peter in his rehearsal of the events that took place at the house of Cornelius states, "And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, just as he did at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he used to say, 'John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit'" (Acts 11:15,16 NASV).

My questions are:

1. What significance is there in the Spirit falling upon them "as (Peter) began to speak?"
2. Why were the words of Christ spoken in Acts 1:5 called to the remembrance of Peter on this occasion?
3. By "just as He did upon us at the beginning," does Peter mean in the same way that is recorded in Acts 2:1-4?
4. Why are Acts 2 and Acts 10,11 the only examples of the baptism of the Holy Spirit?
5. Elaborate on these two events in light of the teaching in Ephesians 4:5, which I understand to mean the baptism for the remission of sins as explained in Romans 6. —J.A.

ANSWER: Answers to the above questions can best be appreciated in the light of some observations concerning Holy Spirit baptism.

Joel's prophecy (Joel 2:28-32) should be understood in the light of Peter's quote on Pentecost (Acts 2:17-21):

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:.

In Peter's expression, "I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: . . .," the preposition "of" (Gr. "apo") denotes origin or source, and is often translated "from." This makes Joel's prophecy, in the light of Peter's inspired commentary on it, mean "I will pour out from my Spirit." This is significant. The Holy Spirit Himself, the third person in the Godhead was not poured out. Persons are not poured out as water, sand, etc. The Holy Spirit Himself remained in heaven with the other two persons in the Godhead—God the Father and Christ the Son. Then what was poured out? Jesus commanded the apostles to "tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Lk. 24:49). He also called this Holy Spirit bap-

tism (Acts 1:5). We read of their baptismal reception of this power in Acts 2:4. The person of the Holy Spirit was not fragmented so as to be distributed among the apostles, but the power (influence or energy) from the Holy Spirit was. Understanding this would go a long way in solving the issue of the Personal Indwelling Of the Holy Spirit.

It should also be remembered that the expression "Holy Spirit" is often used by metonymy, a good example of which is found in Matt. 7:11 and Lk. 11:13. Here "good things" revealed or promised by the Holy Spirit is used interchangeably with the "Holy Spirit." A study of this use of the expression "Holy Spirit" is very interesting and enlightening. However, limited space just here forbids such now.

The power received by the apostles on Pentecost was extended in varying degrees upon "all flesh" (Jews and Gentiles) in the form of spiritual gifts received through the laying on of the apostles' hands (Acts 18:8). I see in this the full and complete fulfillment of Joel's prophecy—and this, without the baptism of the Holy Spirit at the household of Cornelius (Acts 10).

In the light of the meaning of the word "baptize," namely, "to dip, to plunge, immerse," I conclude that Cornelius and his house received Holy Spirit baptism. Their spirits were submerged in the energy, influence, power from the Holy Spirit. This is what happened on Pentecost, and Peter said, "And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, even as on us at the beginning" (Acts 11:15).

While the two cases of Holy Spirit baptism (Acts 2 and Acts 10) are similar, they are not identical. The manner of reception was the same, and the outward manifestations were alike in some respects. Enough so that it caused Peter to recall the promise made to the apostles concerning Holy Spirit baptism (Acts 11:16; Acts 1:5). However, there is no evidence that the experience in Acts 10 served the same purpose as that of Acts 2, as stated by Jesus to the apostles (John 14:26; 16:7-13), nor were those of Acts 10 empowered to the same extent. Nevertheless, it was indeed a "like gift" (Acts 11:17) or equal in that the experience constituted Holy Spirit baptism. Acts 2 and Acts 10 are the only instances of Holy Spirit baptism in the inspired record.

What purpose was served by Holy Spirit baptism in Acts 10: Obviously, it convinced the six skeptical Jewish brethren who went with Peter to the house of Cornelius (Acts 10:23,45; 11:12) and the apostles at Jerusalem (Acts 11:1-4, 17-18) that the gospel was for Gentiles as well as Jews. Peter's experience on the housetop (Acts 10:9-20) and the baptism of the Holy Spirit in Acts 10 served to convince the Jews, who until now had preached only to Jews (Acts 11:19), of the universal nature of the gospel.

Peter had preached its universality on Pentecost (Acts 2:39), but without understanding its full import. It took the miraculous experiences of Acts 10 to convince the Jewish Christians of their duty to fully apply the gospel they preached—namely, to Jew and Gentile alike. Acts 10 demonstrates the power of God to intervene and execute His plan of salvation for all men in spite of man's failure.

Now, for the answers to the questions submitted:

No. 1. To convince the Jewish brethren with Peter (and later the apostles and others) that he was pursuing the right course. If, as some say, it was to show that the recipients were saved before water baptism (V. 28), then it would follow that they were saved without faith. Why? Because faith comes by hearing the word (Rom. 10:17) and they had not yet heard. The Holy Spirit fell at the point of beginning of Peter's sermon. Remember the account in Acts 11 is a rehearsal of the events in order of occurrence (Acts 11:4).

No. 2. Because of the similarity of the events.

No. 3. Yes, or in the same manner. The power "fell" upon them and their spirits were submerged (baptized) therein.

No. 4. Because other examples would serve no divine purpose.

No. 5. The one baptism of Eph. 4:5 is obviously water baptism. The Ephesian letter was written about A.D. 64. By this time Holy Spirit baptism had served its divine purpose which qualified the "holy apostles and prophets" (Eph. 3:5) to reveal "all truth" (John 16:13). We now have "all truth" which is "the faith once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). Water baptism is administered by man and is to continue to the end of the world (Matt. 28:18-20). Water baptism is indeed a burial (Rom. 6:4) and is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) making possible one's walking in "newness of life" (Rom. 6:4).

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A CHRISTIAN'S REVIEW
OF "CAMPELLITE QUESTIONS
AND BAPTIST ANSWERS"
(No. 9)

Eugene Britnell
P. O. Box 5624
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"18. 'As Baptists claim to take the Bible as their rule of faith and practice, why do they persist in such unscriptural teaching and practice as the following: Exhort sinners to the mourners' bench to get religion?' Most of them don't do it. Those who do, do so for the same reason that Philip joined himself to the chariot of the Ethiopian Eunuch, namely, to instruct or teach the sinner how to be saved."

Number 18 has seven questions on the same general thought, and we shall quote each one of them along with the Baptist answer and then our comments.

Baptists may have become so fastidious that they have removed the old-time mourners' bench which many of us have seen them use in their revivals, but they have not changed their doctrine on the sinner's prayer. We all know that they continue to invite lost sinners to accept Christ by faith alone and "pray the prayer of a sinner." They don't instruct the sinner to pray for guidance, but rather for salvation. Therefore, the case of Philip and the Ethiopian is not relevant. Philip never told the Ethiopian to pray. He joined himself to the chariot in order to guide the man to an understanding of the scriptures and the acceptance of Jesus Christ.

The conversion of the Ethiopian was not like Baptist conversions today. There was no Holy Spirit baptism, no prayer, no voting, no confessing that "God for Christ's sake has pardoned me"—as Baptists teach and practice. The Bible says, "Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth" (John 9:31).

"Declare feelings to be the evidence of sins forgiven?" Because God says so. God says we know we have passed from death unto life because we love. Love is more than feelings, but love has 'feelings'; and the man who loves, feels it. We believe in a salvation that is better felt than told, too. The child of God can feel a peace that 'passeth understanding,' but he can't tell the height nor depth nor length nor breadth of any of these experiences. We are sure we know some Campbellites, who have the same kind of salvation we have, namely, one they can feel; and we are awfully sorry for the rest of them who haven't got that kind."

God does not say so! Certainly we believe in heartfelt religion, if one understands the Bible heart and the true function of the feelings or conscience. But to rely upon the feelings as evidence that one is right is often deceptive. Saul (the apostle Paul) had a feeling that he was right while persecuting the church and involved in the killing of Christians. He said, "I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day" (Acts 23:1)

and "I verily thought within myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts 26:9). Did his feeling right make him right? No!

To trust our feelings is to follow subjective authority and every man becomes a law unto himself. Instead, we are to seek and follow objective authority—Jesus Christ—and learn what he would have us do. Only when we have obeyed his will can we be safe in feeling that we are saved. Our feelings are based upon our knowledge or understanding, and if we believe the wrong thing we can practice the wrong thing with a good feeling. But that doesn't make it right. The Bible is right!

"Insist that we are justified by faith alone; that baptism has nothing to do with remission of sins; that it in nowise concerns our salvation?" Right there our good Campbellite friend gets down to the milk in the coconut. Baptists teach that we are saved before and without baptism; while Campbellites teach no baptism, no salvation. This man is honest enough to teach old-fashioned Campbellism, which some of them now try to deny. Baptists don't connect baptism with the procuring or appropriating of the assurance of salvation as do real Campbellites, because to do so would make salvation or the new birth to depend on 'the will of the flesh' (i.e. the will of the man himself) and the 'will of man' (i.e. the will of the baptizer), when in John 1:13 Jesus Christ says plainly that the new birth is neither of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man. We don't connect baptism with salvation because the one book in the New Testament written to sinners, the Gospel of John, does not mention baptism in connection with the instructions given by Jesus Christ to any inquirer. It does mention faith every time. Baptists do not connect baptism with salvation because they believe that salvation depends wholly upon the finished work of Christ, which doesn't need to be plussed by any sacrament of church or priest. As H. T. Anderson well said, 'Baptism for the remission of sins is essentially Romish.' Baptists wear none of the toggerly or tinsel of Rome. Campbellites get their church salvation, baptismal regeneration, baptism for (in order to) the remission of sins, their teaching that baptism and communion are sacraments that confer grace on those who receive them, their weekly communion and their one-man reception of members from the Roman Catholic Church, not from the Bible."

Let us see what the Bible teaches about baptism, and whether or not it connects baptism and salvation. We know that Baptists do not, but what about the Bible?

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15, 16). In order to obey the Lord, what did his disciples to whom he gave the commission have to do? They had to go AND preach. They could not have obeyed the Lord by preaching without going, nor by going without preaching. The two commands were joined by the conjunction AND which made them of equal importance. Now, what were the commands for those to whom they preached? To believe AND be baptized to be saved. This cannot be obeyed by believing

and not being baptized, nor by being baptized without believing. The word "and" connects the two (faith and baptism) and makes them of equal importance.

To believing Jews on Pentecost, the inspired apostle said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins ..." (Acts 2:38). Here, repentance and baptism are joined by AND and are both for (unto, American Standard) the remission of sins. The word "for" does not mean "because of" in this verse.

In comparing Noah's salvation by water with the purpose of baptism, Peter said, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us ..." (1 Peter 3:21). The New King James Version, which is a good translation and has been endorsed by many prominent Baptists, translates the verse, "There is also an antitype which now saves us, namely baptism.

Is one saved in Christ or out of Christ? The Bible says salvation is in Christ (2 Tim. 2:10). There are only two verses in the Bible which tell us how one enters into Christ, and they say we are baptized into him (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27).

In view of this teaching (and many other scriptures could be given), who or what is it that connects baptism and salvation—the Bible or the Baptists? The honest reader knows the answer!

His use of John 1:13 is a perversion of the passage, and would contradict John 3:5. Certainly baptism is not of the will of man, but rather the will of God. Did the baptism which Jesus commanded come from heaven or men? From heaven, just as did John's baptism (Matt. 21:25). Obeying the Lord's command to be baptized for remission of sins is no more depending on "the will of the flesh" than faith or repentance. All of these are obeyed by man, according to the will of God.

Where on earth did he get the idea that the Gospel of John was the "one book in the New Testament written to sinners"? I don't know, and it isn't so! What about Matthew, Mark and Luke? To whom were they written?

The Gospel of John does connect baptism and salvation. The scholarship of the world justifies the conclusion that the "water" of John 3:5 refers to water baptism, and Jesus made that a part of the new birth without which one cannot enter into the kingdom of God. He says that faith is mentioned every time. Certainly faith is essential to salvation, but we might also observe that baptism is mentioned in every case of conversion in the Acts of the Apostles, and every place in the New Testament where baptism and salvation are mentioned together, salvation follows baptism.

We get down to "the milk of the coconut" of Baptist doctrine and see some of the Calvinism which they teach by his statement that they "believe that salvation depends wholly upon the finished work of Christ." The word "wholly" means entirely, totally, completely, solely and exclusively. If they really mean that, then there is not a thing on earth that a man can or should do for salvation! If that eliminates baptism, it also eliminates faith, repentance, and righteous living.

We do not defend nor practice any sacraments, baptismal regeneration, one-man reception, or tinsel of

Rome. If baptism for the remission of sins is "essentially Romish," then all of the Lord's apostles were Romish, for that is exactly what they taught.

As for "church salvation" and "weekly communion," there is Bible authority for believing in these. The Lord adds the saved to the church (Acts 2:47), therefore the saved are in the church. The church is the body of the saved (Eph. 5:23). His problem is, he doesn't know what the church is. As to the frequency of the Lord's supper, the Bible says that the early Christians observed it on "the first day of the week" (Acts 20:7). True, it doesn't say "every first day," but it doesn't need to. Every week has a first day, and, therefore, that day is included in a command concerning "the first day of the week." The command to the Jews to observe the sabbath day did not say "every sabbath" (Exodus 20:8), but the Jews had sense enough to know that every week had a seventh day or sabbath, and that it was a weekly observance.

(To be Continued)

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FOUR GREAT FOUR-LETTER-WORDS—CARE

The story of the good Samaritan is a story of care. In verse 34 (Lk. 10), the narrative says, "And he went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him." This deed by an unlikely, but gentle man was obviously not just an isolated and one-time incident in his life, but rather his habitual manner of handling day-to-day situations. And he likely did not consider his benevolence to be any more than his duty to his fellows, his opportunity to be of benefit to all. He did what he did because that's the way he lived. He cared.

Care means more than just serious mental attention. And it means more than merely a charged mind or what we commonly refer to as anxiety. It also has to do with concerned mental action with a view toward protection, preservation, guidance, even provision. When we care for someone we want to be of service to them, protect them, provide for them. And so it is said that the good Samaritan "took care of him." In I Pet. 5:7 both the definitions are set in one context: "Casting all your care (anxiety, worry perturbations) on him, for he careth (seeks your interests) for you."

We very often care for wrong things. It should be obvious to all of us that "it is appointed unto man once to die" (Heb. 9:27), and that "we brought nothing into this world and it is certain that we can take nothing out" (I Tim. 6:7). But somehow the Devil is able to delude us so that we seldom give much attention to these obvious facts. As a result we tend to overemphasize worldly things, to exalt temporal status, to earnestly seek after carnal ends. Such activity is foolish. It makes no sense to involve ourselves with that which we know for a certainty is perishable, empty of substance, devoid of longevity. To "sow to the flesh" is to reasonably expect corruption, for all flesh is bound to deteriorate and diminish (Cf. Gal. 6:7-8). We should be suspicious about giving too much thought time to any project or endeavor which does not connect to a spiritual end. Spiritual things last, worldly things do not (Rom. 8:6).

We need to care for family and friends. We have great opportunities as a result of our being a part of a family relationship. In a family there is room for care, room to show respect and regard for parents, room to appreciate and love brothers and sisters. And the family, by its very nature, is tolerant of weaknesses, long-suffering to imperfections, slow to condemn personal idiosyncrasies, all because of care for one another. The same is true to a large extent regarding

friends. Furthermore, it is true to an even greater extent as regards Christian associations. Our friends are more likely to excuse our faults because they care for us. They care what happens to us. They care about our feelings, our failures, even our faults. Care is bound to enhance any relationship, making it durable, resilient, harmonious.

We need to care about the cause of Christ. The apostle Paul said that one of his more exhausting problems was "that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches" (II Cor. 11:28). We should care for the cause of Christ just as did Paul. Far too many of us are unconcerned that we are failing in our efforts to pervade the world's thinking in areas of morality as well as doctrine. Too many of us show little concern that we are losing battle after battle in our efforts to stem the tide of immodesty, lasciviousness, filthy communication. All this, I aver, is caused by our lack of care for the cause of Christ. I greatly fear that we are passing on far too weak a legacy of care to the next generation of our people.

Jesus cared. When Jesus was being taunted and spat upon, he took it because he cared. When he was reviled and beaten, he endured it because he cared. When they mockingly pushed the crown of thorns onto his sinless brow, he meekly bore it because he cared. And when, suspended appropriately between heaven and earth, he begged his Father, "forgive them, for they know not what they do," he showed us how very much he cared. "Yes, Jesus, cares, I know he cares ..."

Do you care about the really important things or is your life absorbed in a futile quest for the perishable? Do you really care for family and friends or is yours at best a rather tentative relationship? Are you involved in promoting and illustrating the cause of Christ in your life? Do you really care? Let us "be careful to maintain good works" (Titus 3:8). And since He cared so much for us, let us care for one another. To care is to be like Him.

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LET US RISE UP AND BUILD The Characteristics of Leadership As Seen In Nehemiah

In Nehemiah 5 we find the value of a consistent example in the life of God's leaders. There was a great problem facing Nehemiah and his task of rebuilding the walls, a problem which forms the lesson we need to study.

It seems that the problem was a great outcry of the common people of Jerusalem against the rich Jewish merchants. This outcry caused a halt to the rebuilding of the walls and thus had to be dealt with by Nehemiah. There were three groups that came to Nehemiah with three different sets of complaints which had to be resolved if the rebuilding was to continue. First, came the merchants and the laborers. While they worked on the walls they were not able to earn a living, so their income ceased and their resources dried up. (5:2) Another group, made up of farmers, came to Nehemiah with their complaint. These farmers were vulnerable to two great sources of danger: (1) the robbers that would come and steal the crops, and (2) the forces of nature that could cause crop failure. If either of these happened, then the farmers would have to go to the "loan sharks" and borrow money to live on. While they worked on the walls they were unable to earn the money to pay back the lenders. The result was that the farmers were losing their lands and their families were going to be sold into slavery (5:3). The final group to come to Nehemiah were those who were unable to pay their taxes because the rich had set the tax rates so high.

The city of Jerusalem was in a state of economic chaos!

Nehemiah had just withstood the threat of Tobiah and Sanballat to use force to stop the building of the wall. No sooner had he taken a deep breath than this new problem cropped up that he must deal with. Nehemiah had two great feelings at this time: (1) a genuine care for the people, and (2) a burning desire to see the Lord's will done in the rebuilding of the walls. Therefore, Nehemiah will establish for us an abiding principle of leadership: **LOVING ENOUGH TO CONFRONT**. Notice how Nehemiah deals with this problem.

First, he rebukes the nobles' guilt of economic exploitation. The nobles react to his rebuke with stone silence. The situation seems to be building toward a real power struggle. After all, this condition had existed for many years without remedy, and the wall

had just caused it to come to a boil. He must have both the business men and the common people to labor together to rebuild the walls. Still, he knows the business men and merchants are wrong. What does he do? After his rebuke that had met with silence, his second move was to challenge the nobles to return the fields and houses to the poor Jews of whom they had taken advantage. Then finally, in his concluding appeal, he takes his garments, showing himself as an example, and shakes them out in front of all. It is possible that he kept his personal finances in the "fronts of his garments." Even today this is true in the Middle East. The Ayatollahs in Iran keep thousands of dollars in the front pockets of their garments. Yet, he by the power of his personal example clearly demonstrates that while he has been acting as their leader, he had taken nothing from the people (v. 15-16). What brought about a solution in this economic standoff? The power of his sincere and consistent example! What was the result? "We will give it back and require nothing from them; we will do exactly as you say." Nehemiah set the proper example, "I did not demand the governor's food allowance because the servitude was heavy on the people."

The setting of an example is one of the most powerful forces for righteousness that any leader has. In a Stanford University study it was remarkably concluded that **"STUDENTS CAN LEARN AS EFFECTIVELY BY MODELING (example) AS BY DIRECT EXPERIENCE!"** The power of modeling is clearly seen in the Old and New Testaments: Joshua had his Moses; Elisha had his Elijah; "the 12" had the Savior; Paul had Barnabas; and Timothy and Titus had Paul. In each case the work of modeling or setting the example before the younger by the elder produced great men of God!

As leaders we must be ready to set the proper example before those with whom we live. Are you teaching a Bible class? If so, there is no more potent place for the proper example. Every aspect of our lives as teachers must radiate faithfulness and devotion to God. Have you ever seen the rivers of tears in the eyes of a 4-year-old who wanted to sit by his Bible class teacher on Sunday night, only to find out that she didn't come? "Why, why wasn't my teacher here?" How do parents answer a sobbing youngster when they know it was because of the bowling league? How can we as leaders expect to have any influence for good when our lives smack openly of what we condemn? Preachers preach on the home and some of us are the world's greatest failures. We preach on giving and everyone knows we give the least. When the eldership does not lead the way by example, the church is destined to failure. Because of the unique responsibility of the eldership, they **MUST LEAD THE WAY IN EVERY ASPECT OF THE LOCAL WORK!**

Let us note a panoramic view of the work of the local church in regard to the example of the elders. They must lead the way in regard to giving of their means. They ought to stretch themselves to give more percentage-wise than any other members. They must lead the way in Bible class teaching. Paul said "apt to teach and able to convict the gainsayer." They ought to

strive to be the best teachers in the congregation. Are they oftentimes the poorest? They ought to lead the way in regard to Bible study and knowledge. What about personal evangelism? They ought to lead the way in teaching the lost! They ought to lead the way in reclaiming the weak and spiritually disheartened. Restoring the erring brother ought to be his function. They ought to lead the church in the area of their family and domestic relationships or situations. They should be the type of father from which every young father could pattern his life. Their wives should be the type women that every young woman could look to and from which advice could be received.

When the shepherds of the flock stand and say we are moving in this direction: be it a work day to clean up the building, or be it a withdrawal from a member, they need to lead the way by example. In regard to withdrawal, how many times has an elder led the church in withdrawing from someone when there are people in his own family that should be withdrawn from but have never even been talked to about it? In the plainest way of all speaking, this is perceived by those that follow as **PHONYISM**. If a leader or leaders are perceived as phonies the cause is lost. The sheep will not respect a phony shepherd! In the Kingdom of God a leader leads by holding the respect of those who follow. God's leaders cannot use force, intimidation, or coercion to lead because those are the ways of the Gentiles. He leads only by virtue of the fact that others respect what they see in his life. A Bible class teacher in the auditorium class has one qualification which gives him the privilege of standing while all others sit and listen. He has prepared something to say from the Word of God! He knows his lesson. He knows his Bible, and he can tell others about it. If he has not studied and prepared, then he has lost his right to lead that class. If he seeks to teach without that right he is a phony! People allow us to lead because they respect us. Lose that respect, and WE HAVE LOST ALL.

Listen to Paul in Phil. 3:17 as he says "follow my example." Then in Phil. 4:9 "things you have ... heard and seen in me, practice these things." Even though he was an Apostle, Paul was just a man. So, here we find a man telling others to follow him. How can this be? The answer is in I Cor. 11:1, "Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ." We follow Paul because he followed Christ. Every one of us has someone following us. Every one of us has an influence on someone else. The only question is, who are we following and who has an influence upon us? As leaders, if we are not following Christ, then we are steering the life boat straight out to sea instead of toward the shore.

Dwight D. Eisenhower said, "In order for a man to be a leader he must have followers. And to have followers, he must have their confidence. Hence, the supreme quality for a leader is unquestionable integrity. Without it, no real success is possible ... If a man's associates find him guilty of phoniness, if they find that he lacks forthright integrity, he will fail!"

On the subject of "setting the example, and leadership," I shall never tire of telling the story I heard Pap tell so many times about the fellow that obeyed the Gospel in a morning service after years of rejecting the invitation. Dad asked him what moved

him after all those years. The old boy, who was dressed in over-alls, and had tears in his eyes, answered with his own story: He said, "I was going to the barn to milk early this morning without a moment's thought to where my youngest child was. That little fellow is the apple of my eye, because he came after the other children were grown and gone from home. As I rushed for the barn, I heard him call out, 'Dad, wait for me. I'm hittin' every step.' When I turned around, sure enough the little fellow was jumping from step to step where my boots had brushed away the dew. He knew his mother would spank him if he got his feet wet. Then, he said, it hit me like a light; 'yes, and if you hit every step I take, I'll lead you to a Devil's Hell.' So, with knuckles white as he gripped the end of the bench, he said, 'I'm gonna fix it this morning where he can hit every step his dad takes, and I'll lead him to a home in Heaven.'" He lived the lesson of Nehemiah!

Using the SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

Ken Green

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IF ANY WILL NOT WORK

One of them dug a pack of cigarettes from his levi pockets and lit up as the two young men retreated from the church parking lot. They had made a brief appearance after the Sunday morning services and asked to see the preacher. I silently wished they had asked for the pastor as I strolled toward them. Then I could direct them to one of our elders.

They had gotten laid off a few days earlier, they related. Food stamps were about to run out. They were broke. Could we help? I don't often turn beggars away without at least checking their stories. But here were a couple of able bodied men. Looked to be in their early twenties. There was plenty of work to be found if they wanted to work. Why weren't they knocking on doors asking for odd jobs instead of standing on the church steps begging for a handout? I told them so in as kind a way as possible. It wasn't the easy way out. It would have been much easier to have given them five or ten dollars. Other brethren would have probably followed my noble example, and their venture would have paid off rather handsomely.

Every evangelist and elder can relate to stories such as this. Every church is regularly approached by beggars who could and should be working for a living. I'm not a hardhearted fellow, and I probably wind up spending as much as about anyone in feeding and relieving the needs of folks whom I feel may possibly have legitimate needs.

While living and preaching in Louisville for over six years, I saw a few of these professional beggars as they made their rounds for the second and third times. One

lady called with a plea for \$25.00 to complete her apartment rental. She had just moved from Philadelphia where she had cared for her invalid husband for the past twelve years. She had a job in a restaurant, but would not be paid for another week, etc. etc. Finally upon her persistence I agreed to meet her at the church building at a given hour the next afternoon. J. T. Smith, who also lived in Louisville at that time, was present with me when this elderly lady arrived. Hers was a heartbreaking story, She cried, J. T. cried. I almost broke down.

I asked her if she had any references who could vouch for her and she did not. In that case, I advised, I cannot help you. I just couldn't believe that a person with her alleged background (her late father a medical doctor, her late employer a medical doctor) would be unable to provide a couple of character references back in Philadelphia.

Two or three weeks later, a front page article in the Louisville Times reported the beginning of a new organization among Baptist churches in that city. A central agency was being formed and staffed to which all requests for aid were to be reported along with pertinent details. Our little lady from Philadelphia was described right down to her invalid husband and the comment was made that she had taken almost every Baptist church in town for \$25.00 to \$50.00 apiece!

While in a meeting in Illinois earlier this year, a family that some of the brethren were housing in a local motel attended services. They got a free night's lodging, some free meals, some free fuel, and perhaps some extra cash and were on their way with prayers and blessing the next day to Canada. A month or so later in Indiana I learned that the very same troop had been served by the brethren there just a few days before they hit Illinois. They were not traveling toward Canada.

Such tales could be multiplied almost endlessly. While most preachers soon learn by experience, perhaps a few words to younger men would be helpful.

1. Always check before you give aid to a transient. We are told to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, but we are also told to be good stewards. If one claims to be a member of the church, it shouldn't be difficult to check that out. A long distance phone call isn't that expensive. If one does not claim to be a Christian, his character and story should still be checked. It has been my experience that most transient beggars become indignant when asked for references. Often they exclaim something like: "Well, just forget it, if you don't trust me!"

2. Never give money. If the story checks out as far as you can ascertain, provide the needs. Buy some groceries. Put some gas in the car. Provide a lodging place. Don't give cash that can be spent at the nearest tavern.

3. Don't feel guilty for following the Biblical admonition: "If any would not work, neither should he eat" (2 Thess. 3:10). We do not help chronic beggars when we give them the handouts they seek. We merely assist them to evade their responsibility of properly caring for themselves and their families.

THE GOOD LORD'S WILL

"If the good Lord didn't want it to happen, she

wouldn't have gotten pregnant." That's a quotation from Tom who is 16. His wife, Susan, is also 16. Their daughter, Laura Sue, is five months old. The names are fictitious as reported in *"The Huntsville Times,"* Oct. 26, 1980 in an article on teen pregnancy. One would almost surmise that Susan's premarital pregnancy was another case of miraculous conception. Tom and Susan were in no way responsible. The good Lord clearly wanted her pregnant. Now doesn't that take the prize? But, you know, Tom's thinking is no fuzzier than most people's when it comes to this matter of the will of God. Think of a situation in which a fellow gets drunk, drives in that condition, and hits and kills a child. The grieving parents will likely be told several times that such was God's will. But was it really?

Was it God's will that the fellow get drunk? No, that was contrary to God's will (Gal. 5:19-21). Was it God's will that he drive his car in such a condition? No, that was against His will (Rom. 13:1-4). Then how could it have been God's will that he hit and kill a child while driving drunk?

No, Tom, it wasn't the good Lord's will that your young wife become pregnant before marriage. It was clearly against His will: "Flee fornication" (1 Cor. 6:18). Chances are, Tom will never learn that. We're told that for teens who marry, nine out of ten such marriages end within one to five years. Tom will probably think that it just wasn't the good Lord's will that it work out, if worst comes to worst.

MODERN-DAY NUMEROLOGY

Those of us who have enjoyed studying the book of Revelation have necessarily taken notice of the use of the numerals therein. I have read many times that numbers are of far greater significance from a symbolic standpoint to orientals than they are to us of the Western hemisphere.

An article which was published in the *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*, March 27, 1980, underscored the preoccupation that those in the East have with numbers.

According to the UPI release (datelined Hong Kong), **"Waves of 'oohs' and 'aahs' from the well-heeled bidders rippled through the city hall auction."**

"The merchandise was so valuable it was kept under wraps. Each piece's number, written on a blackboard, had the audience squirming in dark business suits and fur jackets."

"At stake was a \$2.00 black and white Hong Kong license plate."

"Chinese who believe 'lucky numbers add years to their lives and produce fat bank accounts eagerly dole out tens of thousands of dollars for the right license digits."

"To facilitate demand, the government conducts auctions of prized license plates. Anyone can reserve a number and bid on it at one of the auctions held every five to six weeks."

"I've been assured that this is a very lucky number. It means an easy life for someone," said an auctioneer, pointing at CC 323 written on a blackboard."

"The Chinese audience chuckled and the number was quickly disposed of for \$3,367."

"CA 88 (double prosperity) brought much more -

\$12,449.

"CC 1, however, proved that being No. 1 is even better. After an offer of \$10,2000, bidding proceeded to end in minutes at \$32,653.

"The record price for a lucky license number is \$70,000 reportedly paid by Hong Kong movie mogul Sir Run Run Shaw for a lone 6. The digit connotes longevity..."

While the word of God gives no credence to a superstitious adherence to numbers, it does make use of the symbolic significance of certain numbers which were generally recognized in the first century.

THE BEGINNING OF CHRISTIANITY IN "CAMPANIA FELIX" (1)

**Vincenzo Ruggiero
Via Pendino, 16
84010 S. Marzano Sul Sarno
Italy**

At the end of the month of February, 61 A.D., the apostle Paul landed at Puteoli. He was directed to Rome after having been in chains for more than two years in Caesarea. He had been allowed to appeal to Caesar and to be judged by an imperial court because he was a Roman citizen. There were with him other prisoners who had to be judged for common crimes. Officer of the troop of escort was a centurion of the Augustan cohort. Paul was accompanied by Luke and Aristarcus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica (Acts 27:2). After a compelled stop of three months in Malta island, after the stormy shipwreck they had with the boat of Adramittium, they set sail in a ship which had wintered in the island, a ship of Alexandria whose sign was Castor and Pollux, generally frumentarious ships supplying Rome needs. After a stop of three days at Syracuse, they made a circuit and arrived at Rhegium and after two days they sailed in the Neapolitan bay in the sight of Puteoli. This city could boast the first large and great harbour of all Italy. The Neapolitan poet Titus Statius wrote : **"litora mundi hospita"** (Silv. III, 75 s.), **"an open window on the world"**.

In the city of Puteoli products and goods of every sort poured in from everywhere, but men of every country and language too. There were represented all social ranks which introduced new ideas and new customs. There were various artistic, literary and philosophic trends. In the year 64 there landed the Jewish historian Joseph Flavious, who wrote that he found there a Jewish settlement in prosperous economical conditions. According to a legend there would have landed the master Apollonius of Thiane and the would be Messiah Bar-Kockeba. The Jews practised banking businesses and the industry of the purple, cloths and carpets. The cults that there flourished were the more different and dissimilar. The Macellum (Market) was consecrated to the Egyptian divinities, Phoenician people pleaded for the worship of the Syrian god Atargatis, Arabs for that of Dusares. There were also worshippers of Baal, Mitra, Jupiter

Dolichenus and of Magna Mater Cybele (The great Mother Cybele). Indigenous divinities were already too many and foreign cults adding themselves to the local ones provoked an unpleasant feeling of void and bewilderment, but a continuous opposition remarkable in a proselytism having no way out, which offered all and nothing.

For this reason perhaps philosophical currents flourished among the elite of culture, among intellectuals, to offer to the exhausted minds a purifying and a raising mean. Here came to fashion stoicism, but it proposed a passive subjection to the fate, a raw and cruel fatalism without hope and certainty of eternal life. The syncretism of Hellenism and of Judaism tried by Philon remained only among a little circle of learned and intellectual men. The neopythagorism had even the charm of thaumaturgy in the person of the half-legendary Apollonius of Thiane, who proselyted among humble environments, but it attracted before all the elite of aristocracy and intellectuals. Many religious beliefs and observances were quite immoral and reveal in those times the common tendency of a religiosity which consists in the mere and simple delight in the material things and in sensual satisfaction. The Gospel word came to collide against this high wall and might seem to the least cultured, to the barbarians, a risk for their demand of carnal and earthly pleasures. This was the ground on which apostles and primitive Christians worked. The word was accepted, but not easily, among humble and poor classes, among uncultured slaves and freedmen who were imbued with the most various and strange religious beliefs, but who were eager for liberty and social equality.

The Historical Context in the Italic Cities

The only opened door for the Gospel's word spreading remained the Judaism of diaspora, which in Puteoli was well represented. The Jews of dispersion, disseminated everywhere in the Empire Lands, enjoyed a favourable treatment on the part of Roman law which allowed them to practise freely their religion and to make proselytes too. For this reason the Lord's word, started from Palestine, found Judaism like a spreading vehicle in every side of the Empire. Indeed in the day of Pentecost the large assembly which listened to Peter's preaching was of the most assorted origin. "Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians, we hear them telling in our tongues the mighty works of God" (Acts 2:9-11). Here was a cosmopolitan assembly which brought, on their way back to their original places and where long since they emigrated, the word of Christ. Certainly visitors from Rome were Roman citizens, not necessarily of exclusive residence of Rome city. Paul was a Jew and a citizen of Tarsus in Cilicia, but a Roman citizen too (Acts 21:39, 16:37; 22:25). It is likely that Jews from Puteoli, as from Rome and different Italian cities, would have been in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost of the year 33 and that on their return they might have brought to Puteoli, or Pompei, or Nuceria Alfaterna, or

Capua, or Herculaneum, or Liternum, or Neapolis, the word of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior. In Rome the word's seed penetrated into praetorian militia and among the freedmen of the Imperial Palace and aristocratic families. Paul writing from Rome to the Philippian brethren made himself a mouthpiece of salutes to the brethren **"especially those of Caesar's household"** (Phil. 4:22). Already before his arrest, in the spring of the year 59, writing the letter to the Romans, he seems to know many brethren to whom he sends his greetings; some of them Christians before him (Rom. 16:7,11).

In those times it wasn't difficult to confuse Christianity with the cultural, esoteric and mystic cults, which were at that time in a full expansion and development. And this was explicable with the doctrine of Arcanum at that time existing among mystic religions and in the suspicion of the initiates. There was with all a sequel of accusations causing infamies against Christians. Sometimes they were charged with atheism, other times with being cross or donkey worshippers. They were accused of sully themselves by horrible crimes like incest and the Thiestean suppers. (Atreus had lost the kingdom on account of his brother Thiestis who incestuously had sexual intercourses with his own mother. For this reason his mother gave him the kingdom. Atreus feigned to become reconciled with his brother and offered him a sumptuous supper with the cooked meat of his own sons, whom he ate unknown to him. This is the mythological story on which pagans embroidered to charge Christians with things like these).

Tertullien (220 A.D.) in his book *"Ad Nationes"* (1,14) and *"Apologeticum"* (VII, 1, 16; XVI, 12) draws up a list of a long series of calumnies and tells the disgusting incident of the apostate Jew who exhibited to the people's jests in the Carthage amphitheatre the **"Deus Christianorum onocoetes"** (The donkey's son, God of Christians) in a painting representing a monster dressed in toga (gown) having kevels, a foot provided of a hoof and the Bible in hand with a blasphemous inscription. A sacrilegious allusion to the Lord's supper could be seen in one of the last episodes of the book *"Satyricon"*, whose characters would have acted in a city of the Neapolitan area. The author imagines that Eumolpus makes one's will giving his goods to his various friends and aspirants, on condition that after his death they would tear in peaces his corpse and publicly devour it.

Notwithstanding these horrible calumnies the preachers of the new message acted with intrepid boldness, drawing advantage from political structures instituted by the Empire in the Mediterranean basin. Above all the good news sank its roots into the large coastal cities, large centers of traffic and trade, which were afterwards strategic centers of great lines of communication. On the arch of Naples gulf this role could be rightly boasted by Cuma and Puteoli at the west, by Herculaneum, Oplonti, Pompei and Stabiae at the east, all connected by an efficient system of roads.

The young genius Virgilius had been a disciple at Syron's school, who was on Pausylipon promontory (the greek word **Pausylipon** means **"place where troubles cease"**), in the flourishing otiosa (idle)

Neapolis (Naples), ideal place to escape from grief, fundamental epicurean canon. I wonder whether Paul could see, during those seven days of stay at Puteoli among brethren, the charming nature of Pausylipon with a light slope, covered with prosperous vineyards sloping down to the sea. Perhaps he rejoiced in the smoking Vesuvius' view and could see Sorrento peninsula and gulf's isles of Capri and Ischia. Here the "villa" of Syron, teacher of Virgilius, with annexed kitchen garden which could give in miniature the idea of the garden of Epicurus at Athens. Probably here Virgilius vaticinated **"the new progeny"**:

"The last time of Cuman poem has come A
great series of centuries is born anew Even
the virgin comes back, Saturn's
kingdom returns

and a new progeny descends from heaven.

(Translation from latin)

(This material appeared in Italian in *Sentieri Diritti* in Vol. 5, No. 8, August, 1980 and appears here with consent of its editor, Sandro Corazzo).

(to be continued)

Using Great Plainness of Speech

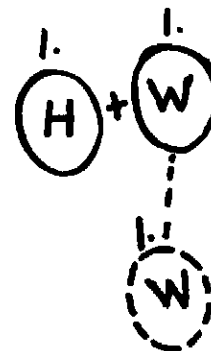
J. T. Smith
3433 Studebaker Road
Long Beach, CA 90808



A SECOND "PUTTING AWAY"

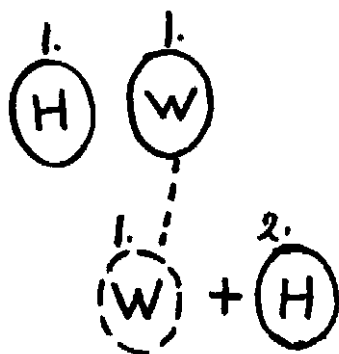
One can receive a variety of answers from brethren when the subject of divorce and remarriage arises. No one, to my knowledge, has all the answers to all the questions that can be raised on this subject. It is a difficult one indeed. There seem to be as many, if not more, problems on the "second putting away, than any other aspect of this subject.

Before we begin a discussion of the subject, I want to state the case as it is usually stated to me.



As you observe the above diagram, husband # 1 is married to wife # 1. They are bound in the sight of God. They decide that they are incompatible, and thus at the advise of friends or lawyers, there may be, by mutual consent or by one being the aggressor in the

matter, a "putting away" resulting in a civil declaration of the same as the situation ends in a divorce. The Scriptures are very clear on what should be done in the situation. They should "... remain unmarried or be reconciled" (1 Cor. 7:10-11). Now, let's weave the web a little wider in our next diagram.



I believe it will be obvious to all from the above diagram that wife # 1 has taken a second husband. I believe all will agree, that according to every passage in the Bible that discusses this subject (Matt. 5:32; 19:9; Mk. 10:11-12; Luke 16:18; Rom. 7:2-3; 1 Cor. 7:10-11), both the wife and her new husband are not bound in the sight of God but are committing adultery.

Now comes the difficult part. Do the Scriptures authorize husband # 1 to NOW "put away" his wife for adultery and be in a position to remarry without committing sin? Many will immediately say "yes" because the husband is the "innocent one," and according to Matt. 19:9 the "innocent party" may put away the one guilty of fornication (adultery) and have the right to remarry without committing sin. My question is, "innocent of what?" He is guilty of putting away his wife. He is held responsible by God for "causing her to commit adultery" (Matt. 5:32). And, at the time of the 1st "putting away" both were "innocent" in the sense that the word "innocent" is being used to describe the one who has remained unmarried—that is neither were put away "for fornication," hence no guilty or innocent party from that standpoint.

Let's look at it from another angle. Since we are supposing (and we are going to see that all of this is just human reasoning and sympathy pleas), let's just suppose that husband # 1 was a cruel, ruthless drunkard who, while his wife begged and pleaded with him not to put her away and divorce her, did it anyway and vowed never to have anything to do with women again. The wife, according to our diagram, now meets and falls in love with a nice, loving, gentle man and marries him. All have already agreed that they are living in adultery, and many have concluded that the first husband, that scoundrel, now has the right to remarry without committing sin. However, I believe many have reached their conclusion on what they would LIKE the Scriptures to teach (human reasoning) rather than what the Scriptures actually teach.

Jesus was very plain in His teaching on the subject of those who did the "putting away" and those who were "put away" when no fornication (adultery) was involved. Let's look at Luke 16:18. Jesus said that the

one who put away his wife and marries another commits adultery. However, at this point in the situation as we have already observed, many would say that when one remarries that the other may THEN put the one away who has remarried and is now living in adultery. But notice what Jesus said about the "so called" innocent one. "And whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery" (Luke 16:18b). Jesus obviously did not know anything about a "second putting away" and the one who is left being able to remarry without sin. He says she **COMMITTS ADULTERY**.

Jesus said, when two people divorce, where no fornication is involved, both the one who **DOES THE PUTTING AWAY** and the one **WHO IS PUT AWAY** are living in adultery if they remarry. In view of what Jesus said, I say they are both living in adultery. What do you say?

PRAYER—PARTNERS?

O. E. Watts
Box 895
Craig, CO 81635

James 5:16, "Confess your sins one to another and pray one for another that ye may be healed." Deduction: This wording in the King James and American Standard versions might lead us to "deduct" the following: It says, "one to another". That means one-to-one, indicating a pair. We could decide that in order to do this we should each have a confession-partner and prayer-partner. "After all, one-to-another and one-for-another does not mean a whole group." After we get entrenched in this notion, the reading of other translations saying "one another" and "each other" does not quickly shake us from the concept of "by two's."

Another: We learn that these conclusions are not correct by considering other verses in the same translation which have the wording the same as here (and from the exact same Greek form). Luke 7:32 relates that Jesus spoke of "children that sit in the marketplace, and call one to another." The following sentence ("We piped unto you—") shows that some were calling to others. Did any of us ever decide that these children paired off and each set of two partners called back and forth to each other?

How about "pray one for another" demanding prayer-partners? We turn in the same translation to a verse in which "one for another" is the same as here. (Both are from the same Greek word, letter-for-letter.) That verse is 1 Cor. 12:25. "The members should have the same care one for another." Who would claim that we must pair off for this? If James 5:16 demands "prayer-partners", then 1 Cor. 12:25 certainly demands "care-partners." Obviously the care "for one another, or "for each other" (other translations) is to extend to every one among those who are addressed. Translations—A version which uses "each other" is the New International. Some which have the ren-

derings, "to one another", and "for one another" are Robert Young's "Literal Translation", The Revised Standard Version, and The New American Standard Bible.

The partner-couple concept can not stand up against this wording in our language. The reciprocal and mutual application throughout the group addressed cannot be denied.

Greek—Anyone studying the original language can learn about the reciprocal pronoun used. Its letters correspond to ALLELON (pronounced, al-LAY-lone). It has only plural forms in the oblique cases, not nominative (We can not have "each other" as the subject of a sentence.) The genitive form is the same in all genders. But the endings vary for other cases. In English only singular forms can properly (understandably) translate this pronoun.

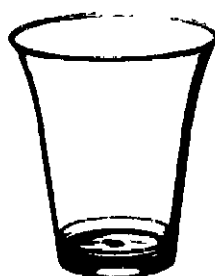
In His New Testament God used this word no less than 78 times. It means and is translated, "one another". It was sometimes used when only two people were discussed or addressed. Paul and Barnabas once separated from one another (Acts 15:39). The two on the way to Emmaus talked with one another (Luke 24:27; also verse 32). An exhortation to a married couple says "one another" (1 Cor. 7:5). Group But when a larger group is mentioned or addressed the action described or commanded applies throughout the group. Shepherds, women, disciples, Jews, talked "one to another." It did not mean, "in pairs." Whole churches were discussed. Romans 12:5 states that "we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another." No one would claim that this is "by two's." "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love." Beyond any question the devotion is to be to every member, and not just "in bunches of two each."

By this word many actions and attitudes are urged on a reciprocal and mutual basis. These include: peace, honoring, saluting, preferring, edifying, comforting, considering, exhorting, esteeming, bearing burdens, hospitality, subjection, and fellowship.

The "one for another" teaching appears often. But it does not mean that the duties taught and urged are to be done in pairs of partners.

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THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

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PREACHERS NEEDED

ORANGE, CA — The church in Orange, CA (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: Andy Anderson (714) 581-3523, Bill Fix (714) 633-3950, or Dale Jackson (714) 997-1161. Or write the church at 1838 N. Shaffer Ave., Orange, CA 92665.

MINERAL SPRINGS, NC — The church in Mineral Springs is looking for a full-time preacher. We have about 40 in attendance. Outside support would be needed. The church is located in a rural community that has a need for much personal work. Contact: Michael A. Helms (704) 843-3715. Or write to P.O. Box 263, Mineral Springs, NC 28108.

MUSKOGEE, OK — The Southside church of Christ which meets at 2001 South Cherokee is in need of a preacher. We are the only sound congregation in Muskogee standing for the truth. We have about 20 members and so outside support would be needed. Billy Moore of Butler, MO and Jimmy Tuten of Mobile, AL have held gospel meetings with us recently. For more information contact: Wilmoth Crossland at 1410 Summit, Muskogee, OK 74401.

ADDRESS CHANGES

OSBY WEAVER— Old Address: P.O. Box 387 Raymondville, TX 78580. New Address: 2224 Jeanne Dr., Las Vegas, NV 89108.

H. BROWNLEE REAVES— Please note my new address: 93 Hartland Way, Shirley, Croydon, Surrey ENGLAND CR08RJ. Our new phone number is 01-777-1065.

ALBERTA, CANADA

ELDEN GIVENS, 2108 — 2nd Ave. N.W., Calgary, Alberta T2N 0G7 CANADA. The Lord's work here in Alberta continues to prosper. The church here in Calgary now has about 45 members. Twenty-four people have been baptized in the last four years. Since the first of the year, a new congregation has been meeting in Airdrie, just north of Calgary. They are presently looking for a preacher to work with them. If interested, write: Allan Michaud, Box 254, Airdrie, Alberta. In the spring, one of the young men from here moved to Medicine Hat to work with Larry Boswell and the church there. In June, Marvin Nerland, with whom I worked the past four years, moved to Lethbridge.

We have a good program of classes and studies going here in Calgary. Just recently we had 10,700 invitations to enroll in our Bible Correspondence Course distributed in the area. We are

hopeful for a good response. Three young men are presently preparing themselves to preach. It has been the desire of all the American preachers that I have known who have been here in Western Canada, to have as many native Canadians preaching as possible. If Brian Clarke (one of the young men here) could receive enough support, he would like to devote his full time to preaching. He has made an appeal to several churches, but has not yet been successful in obtaining support. If anyone can help support Brian, please contact us.

Calgary is a growing city of 600,000. With rapid growth and soon to be the financial capital of Western Canada, it is a booming city. Last August marked the beginning of our 7th year here in Western Canada. If ever in our area please stop in and visit with us.

CHARLES DEGENHART, Rt. 1, Box 284R, Berkeley Springs, WV 25411. My wife and I recently moved here to begin work with these brethren. They are about 22-25 in number and have come out of another congregation because of ungodliness that prevailed. They have rented a storeroom as a place for worship. They are not conversant with the present issues confronting the church, but when I preached on it they were receptive saying, "We want to go by the Book!" This is a challenging work as there are no other sound congregations in the area. Berkeley Springs is in the northeast tip of West Virginia about 25 miles south of the Maryland line. Presently I have \$450 outside support. I will need to raise around a thousand dollars additional support. Will you join with us in building a strong, sound church in this area?

EDGAR E. HOLCOMB, 263 Massachusetts Ave., Elyria, OH 44035. The North Ridgeville church closed a weeks meeting with Connie W. Adams proclaiming Christ in a superb manner. There were 5 restorations, 2 baptisms, and good attendance with several non-members at each service. Our spring meeting was very capably conducted by brother Morris Norman and special classes were held daily. I began working with this fine church March 1 of this year. We are optimistic about the congregation's future progress. We have as fine a group of young people as I have seen anywhere. When in our area look us up. You will be greeted warmly.

GARY FISHER, Box 97, Greenville, IN 47124. I have recently moved to preach in Galena, IN. This area, just across the river from Louisville, is very fast-growing and there are undoubtedly many backslidden Christians and potential converts here. Do you have friends, relatives or acquaintances in this area (including Galena, Greenville, Palmyra, Floyds Knobs, Georgetown and Corydon) that you would like for me to contact? If so, please write me at the above address. We are anxious to see the gospel spread in this area.

JIM WHIDDEN, Merritt Island, FL. Since June of this year when I began the work here with the Merritt Island church on Plumosa St., our average attendance has increased to 61. Through the work of several families, there have been four baptized and six have been restored. Home Bible studies are being held weekly.

EARL MORRIS, Polk City, FL. The Polk City church of Christ recently hosted Frank Whidden preaching his first gospel meeting. Frank is a young man who preaches for the County Line church in Opp, AL. Good crowds were present each night in what were record numbers for this small congregation. Many Christians from neighboring congregations and non-members from the community attended throughout.

WORK IN HAITI

Jerry Blount, Rt. 27, Box 390-A, Parkville, MO 64152. I am writing to request support for a preaching journey to Haiti. I have made the trip to Haiti twice in the past year and a half and the trips have been fruitful. Through our efforts, several local preachers have been converted and there now are several congregations scattered throughout the countryside. The growth and zeal of these churches reminds me of those recorded in the book of Acts. In our last trip we visited three congregations, preached to over 800 people and baptized 52. These people have the general mood that existed in this country in the 1800's. They are fed up with denominationalism and are thirsting for the truth. We have preached in congregations from Pentecostals to Baptists, and have seen entire congregations turned around. For the present trip I need \$1,350. That will cover air fair, motel, etc. We are planning on spending two weeks in Haiti. A complete account of the results and record of the money spent will be sent back to the congregations communicating in this effort. Feel free to contact me for further information. References are: Norman Fultz, Raymore, MO, Glen Redmond, Savannah, GA and Jerry Eubanks, St. Petersburg, FL.

ALSO...

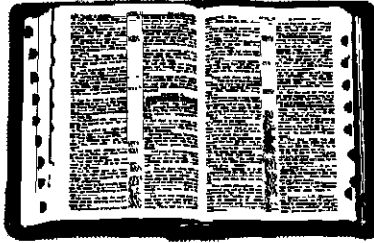
We have received some news items recently that have been very difficult to read. Please take special care in writing so that mistakes can be kept to a minimum.

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	301
RESTORATIONS	126
(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)	



SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES



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

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

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VOLUME XXII

FEBRUARY, 1981

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Deer Park, TX 77536



FOUR GREAT FOUR-LETTER WORDS—GIVE

One of the greatest of the words of worth spoken by the Saviour is related by the apostle Paul in Acts 20:35. "Remember," said he, "the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." Never was there a person more qualified to make such a grand assertion, for he, as the Saviour of mankind, is the great example of gratuity, the source of all grace, the greatest of all givers.

When Jesus made that statement he did not mean to imply that receiving is not good. He simply wants us to understand that our relationships are all made better by our giving. Paradoxically, his point is that he who gives receives more than he who receives. Just a cursory examination shows us why. It is not the value of the gift that is important, but the attitude of the giver. That one who gives, gives more than the gift, he gives himself. His love makes the gift valuable. "It is the thought that counts," we say. Religion has to do primarily with giving oneself to God (Matt. 16:24). And worship is not merely a matter of various acts, rituals, and ceremonies, but the dedication of one's soul to God. It is giving at its most efficient level. We show our love for God when we give ourselves to Him.

There are things better to give than money. In Acts 3 when Peter and John went up to the Temple to pray, they saw a certain lame man begging alms at Beautiful Gate. Peter arrested his attention and he followed the tone of his voice, expecting some gratuity. "Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up and walk." We too have something to give. Oh, we cannot with miraculous power cause a lame man to

walk, but we have the gospel and by its power those who are diseased with sin can be made well, those impotent to forgive themselves can claim the forgiveness of God, those who are blind in ignorance and superstition can be shown the way to freedom from their enslavement. And what better thing to give? I can be the instrument through which this greatest of all gifts, Jesus Christ, is appropriated to the lives of a sin-sick and decadent society.

We can give ourselves. There are many gifts which are of greater value than money. Time, for instance. And energy. And enthusiasm. And concern. Do you give any time to God? How much time do you give in attending to and improving your character so that you can "let your light shine"? And much good could be done for the cause of Christ if only the energy necessary to get the job done were expended. Furthermore, only the successful, the winners, those that overcome really see the value of giving some enthusiasm, some zeal to a project. And how about giving thanks? Anybody can and yet almost nobody does. It is important that we invest the time, energy, and zeal in Christ's cause so that we can confidently show the world our dedication to our own salvation and to the salvation of the world. But we will not give time, expend energy, enthusiastically participate until we first give ourselves.

We must learn to "give place to wrath (Rom. 12:19). To assume that we, after becoming Christians, will exist in a germ-free atmosphere, totally protected from the outside world is to be foolish to a fault. We are persons. The church is persons, forgiven people. And as long as there are people there likely will be problems; and problems cause wrath. When we have been ill-treated it seems almost inevitable that we plan some retaliation, some retribution. To "give place to wrath" is a hard "giving." It is best explained in the statement, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Rom. 12:19). The human mind is not properly fitted for the toleration of wrath and its resultant vengeful actions, and it does not operate efficiently when fueled with such inordinate thoughts. Wrath has its place, but we must be acutely aware that even righteous indignation serves for good only when we give proper place to wrath and are "angry short" (Eph. 4:26).

Jesus was a giver. All that we have with any quality or substance is a gift. Creation is a gift. Life is a gift. Even the food we eat, the light by which we see, the rain which causes the earth's productivity, the warmth of the sun, the cool of the evening, all are but gifts from God. Jesus was God's greatest gift (Jno. 3:16). Jesus gave himself for us because he knew that we had nothing with which to procure our salvation. Precious Saviour, the great giver of good! And he continues to give. He gives us hope by his own resurrection (I Pet. 1:13). He gives us courage to endure (Heb. 12:2). He gives us the will to serve (Heb. 5:8-9). And he gives us the confidence to "come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16).

It is a privilege to give, an opportunity to show Christ living in us. Life would be barren, wretched if all we did was take from it. To take away giving from life would be to take away love from life, for giving is merely the action of a loving heart.

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Editorial

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THINGS WHICH MAKE FOR PEACE

"Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" (Rom. 14:19). In the midst of battle no word is more pregnant with hope and comfort than the word "peace." The weary soldier thinks longingly of the days when he went about the quiet and orderly pursuits of his life. War disrupts all of that.

In the spiritual realm, there are often great struggles as faithful soldiers of Christ must wrestle against "principalities, powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12). Sometimes the struggles are long and intense and take a heavy toll of the weak and fainthearted. Jude 3 and 4 is an earnest appeal to saints of God to contend for the faith when false teaching comes into the church. When such battle must be joined, there are often rude jarrings, shattered ties, heartaches and finally open division. In the midst of such conflicts, the thoughtful child of God sighs for peace.

New Testament Usages of the Word

The term "peace" has a variety of usages in the New Testament. Proper distinctions must be made in order to understand the will of the Lord and profit thereby. Observe these usages:

(1) Cessation from war and strife. Tertullus came to inform the governor against Paul and said "Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness" (Acts. 24:2). This is the same word translated peace and bespeaks the national tranquility they then enjoyed. "Then had the churches rest" (Acts 9:31). Again, this is the word for peace and indicates the cessation of persecution against the churches.

(2) Harmony between individuals. We are to "seek peace" (1 Pet. 3:10-11), "follow peace with all men" (Heb. 12:14), and as much as is in us "live at peace with all men" (Rom. 12:18).

(3) Security or safety. "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are at peace" (Lk. 11:21). "For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them" (1 Thes. 5:3).

(4) Form of blessing or good will. "Your peace shall rest upon it" (Lk. 10:6).

(5) Peace between sinner and God. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God" (Rom. 5:1). Peter came to the house of Cornelius "preaching peace by Jesus Christ" (Acts 10:36).

(6) State of assurance of one who has obeyed the Lord's will. "To be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Rom. 8:6). "Now the God of hope fill you with

all joy and peace in believing" (Rom. 15:13). "That ye may be found of him in peace" (2 Pet. 3:14). Then, there is the "peace of God, which passeth all understanding" (Phil. 4:7).

(7) Blessed state of devout men in the world to come. In Romans 2, Paul foretold the judgment and stated the basis on which men would be eternally saved or lost. "But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile" (Rom. 2:10).

(8) By way of contrast to a state of discord and strife between brethren. This is the case in Romans 14 where Paul discussed the problem of eating meats offered in sacrifice to idols. Some said it was proper while others said it was not. There was the danger that the weak brother might be emboldened to eat in violation of his conscience, thus the strong brother was taught not to cause him to stumble by acting contrary to his conscience. It was in this vein that Paul wrote "Let us therefore follow after things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" (Rom. 14:19). To the Ephesians Paul wrote "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3).

Peace at Any Price?

While all should desire harmony between brethren, peace at any price is not peace with God. Those who walk not in the doctrine, have not God (2 Jno. 9-10). Peace with God is shattered when brethren cease to abide within the doctrine of Christ. Shall truth be compromised in order to have peace? "Buy the truth and sell it not" (Prov. 23:23). We could have harmony with the Catholics if we would accept their terms. Is it worth it? In the digression which spawned the Christian Church, we could have had peace if everyone had accepted the innovations without question. There could have been peace with the premillennial brethren fifty years ago, if all had been willing to accept their speculations.

There is presently a state of division over church supported human institutions, sponsoring churches and assorted aspects of the social gospel. We could have peace by compromising what the Bible teaches about the nature, work and organization of the church. The so-called fellowship-unity movement of recent years has spawned not brotherhood and peace but estrangement and war. If they had their way we would have truce and compromise with error but in the bargain we would forfeit peace with God. In each of the above cases we would have to leave the doctrine of Christ and then we would sacrifice our blessed relationship with him. In order to have peace with God, it is sometimes necessary to be divided from men. Jesus asked "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: for from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three" (Lk. 12:51-52).

Peace is also jeopardized by those among us who seek to bind their own private conscientious scruples as articles of faith and lay them as heavy burdens upon the shoulders of all others. That is the other end of the kind of problems discussed in the preceding paragraph. In both cases human opinion and judgment

are elevated to the status of divine revelation and the peace is destroyed.

God grant that those who yet stand in the truth shall have the courage and persistence to continue in the good fight of faith. We pray as well that those who have broken the peace by inventing and then adhering to man-made dogmas and practices, will realize their error and return to the truth. It would be so pleasant were the necessity for battle ended so that we might confront an unbelieving world with our full energies trained on the sin, error and spiritual ignorance leading multitudes into everlasting ruin.

ARROWS of
TRUTH for
denominational
error

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THE MULTIPURPOSE BUILDING

It all happened down South in a little town called New Albany, Mississippi. One of the good brethren here in Booneville is in the contracting business and received a contract to erect a building for the Church of Christ in New Albany. The preacher for this church is J. A. Thornton, former preacher here in Booneville and a life time resident of Northeast Mississippi. I worked with Jean (spelled with a "j" instead of a "g") during a gospel meeting at Corinth, Mississippi back in the early fifties. About the same time, he authored a book called, *I was a Sky Pilot* which was somewhat of a misnomer in that he was never a pilot at all. Back in those days the "mystery of iniquity" had begun to work in the church but only in the fertile imagination of the mind of man. Brethren, at this time were united, at least, in a physical way. I found Jean to be a sort of "happy go lucky" fellow with a likeable personality. When the ugly innovations made their way into the church, in the fifties, he acquiesced to the encroachments of the hour. Since Jean was a rather flamboyant character and well known in this area, his influence was felt far and wide. As one might suspect, he helped carry many of the churches in Northeast Mississippi into apostasy. It has only been through the valiant effort and sacrifice of fine and faithful brethren that congregations have been planted in this part of the state. Since my wife is from this area and I have spent much time teaching in the area. I feel I can be rather pragmatic with reference to these matters.

Back to the building syndrome, the contract called for the erection of a building which most people would call a gym. The contract called for a basketball court with baskets and all. While the building was being constructed, one of the workers asked, "What is this going to be, 'a gymnasium?'" Jean Thornton replied, "Some might think of it as a gym, but we prefer to call it a MULTIPURPOSE BUILDING." There you have it,

neighbor. It looks like a gym; it feels like a gym; it smells like a gym and if one could taste, it would taste like a gym but it isn't. Call it a multipurpose building and this cures everything. Pshaw, who is he kidding? Incidentally, in the same conversation one of the workers told Jean about a gymnasium they had built for the Baptist people up the road a little way. Jean responded, "Yeah, that is where we got the plan for the building." The only difference is that the Baptists were honest enough to call their building a gym but our brethren prefer to call theirs a multipurpose building. Now kind friend, does a horse become a cow because someone says it is? If one calls a man a mouse, is he a mouse? Some are ready to ask, "Why is brother Thornton apprehensive about calling the building a gym?" The answer is obvious. You see some members of the church do not have the acumen to see that this building is really a gym. They are not ready to accept a gymnasium but will accept the multipurpose building. Besides, the term multipurpose sounds much better than gymnasium. To the average member of the church it sounds unscriptural for the church to build a gym, but much better if it builds a multipurpose plant. Like Mike and Ike they look alike but the purpose of the innovator has been achieved.

In all apostasies brethren have been careful not to "scare" the brethren with their terminology. Paul talks about men who would spoil "through philosophy and vain deceit" and warned by using the word "beware" (Col. 2:8). When brethren want a social function in the meeting house, they will say, "The meeting house is not sacred nor a shrine." When they want a recreation hall, you will hear them say, "The church should take care of the whole or complete man." When one hears this nomenclature he had better look out because nine times out of ten someone is trying to slip his error under the door.

But alas, it seems all is not peaceful on the Northeast front. It seems that Jean is losing some of his clout among his brethren. The flak seems to be falling on Jean and his gym. Just last week, the preacher for the East Main Church in Tupelo, W. N. Jackson, wrote an article titled, *After the Gymnasium, Then What?* He lowered the boom on Jean and the gym. He said there was no authority for such activity. He went on to say, "Just a few years ago who would have thought any of our congregations would come to this?" Well, I have news for brother Jackson, many of us warned twenty years ago that churches would have gymnasiums in a few years. At this time they said we were shouting "wolf" when there was no wolf! Now the chickens have come home to roost and they are crying crocodile tears. Brethren need to stop that crying and get back to the Bible. This preacher in Tupelo believes in the sponsoring church and the support of orphan asylums but he is weeping over Jean's gym. He will find the authority for all three on the same page of his Bible.

I see in all of this a ray of sunshine which I haven't seen for years. Like the proverbial mule who has to be hit between the eyes to get his attention, it seems the gymnasium has gotten the attention of a few! A case in point is a call last week from a woman in a liberal church who said she along with others were going to leave a church if they brought in the "Church Sup-

pers." It seems the preacher was insisting on using the meeting house for social purposes. I realize this isn't much but every little bit helps. It might mean that a few will get their eyes open before it is too late. W. N. Jackson, that preacher in Tupelo, said, "By the 'reasoning' of some in 'justifying' the gym, what is next — a swimming pool? Swimming is one of the best exercises! How about a golf course, a bowling alley? Why not have a stable of horses, and thus the members could exercise both themselves and the congregation's mascots? The riding trails could be planned to circle the golf course, go around the gym, circle the swimming pool and the polo field, etc." When a liberal preacher starts writing like the above surely some will see the light. At least we hope so.

Kind friend, the gym for Jean will be built. Nothing can stop it now. Articles written by men like W. N. Jackson, who bemoan the fact that the church would go this far will not stop the gymnasium. But where will they go from here? Will some return by starting back the other direction? Let us hope so. I will make a prediction that in a few years no one will be ashamed to call their multipurpose buildings gymnasiums. They will tell it like it is. By this time they will have so many other innovations that a gymnasium will look diminutive. There is an old song which says, "Turn out the lights, the party's over." Friend, when Churches of Christ start building gymnasiums, the lights have been out for a long time and the party is history.

THE BEGINNING OF CHRISTIANITY IN "CAMPANIA FELIX" (2)

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Only God knows what throbs had to pervade Paul at the sight of Puteoli harbour wharf, which went into the sea for quite 372 meters resting on 14 imposing large arcades. His boat had to dock beside those coming from Sidon and Ephesus, from Alexandria of Egypt and from Gaul, Spain or Africa. From Alexandria there was a regular service of frumentarious cargo boats, in addition to the passengers service, for the supplying of cereals to Rome.

To Puteoli converged CAPUANA ROAD, coming from Capua, ANTINIANA ROAD from Naples. After 33 years the arrival of Paul at Puteoli would have been opened DOMITIANA ROAD too. Here Paul had to find a well-established congregation of Christians. Most likely news of his arrival had preceded him and in consequence of his delay brethren perhaps were worried about his destiny. They welcomed him with great honour and joy getting by the centurion to let him stay with them for seven days. Rome was awaiting for him and into Paul's heart had to happen often an anxiety's or a wish's feeling, or perhaps a thrill or a throb because of the uncertainty which was waiting for him in the caput mundi (the world capital city), but I

believe before all a pressing stimulus to go there to embrace and know brethren, many of them perhaps well known to him by reputation. Some years before he had expressed this wish writing the Epistle to the Romans. After spending seven days there the group set out again for Rome. Through CAPUANA ROAD they went away from Puteoli; the city's noise was growing weak and to their sight were offering only the suburb's inns and taverns. Few years ago on a wall of a taberna (tavern) excavated near Puteoli amphitheatre, archaeologist Amedeo Maiuri found drawn among letters and scrawls a figure with folded arms. But on the same wall there were other graffiti (writings scratched on wall), which were caricaturist and licentious which according to a scholar like Ferrua prove the existence of the church indirectly corroborating what is written in New Testament, especially because these figures and graffiti were mockeries and insult against Christians. The very first who used the crucifix in that epoch were the pagans and for a completely and unlike purpose. Christians weren't idolaters. Sure to the tavern's customer liked perhaps to repeat against Christians the insulting slander of staurolatry (cross worshippers). POMPEI—Became a Roman colony in the year 80 B.C. with the name of Cornelia Veneria Colony, was in the first decennia of Empire a flourishing center of aristocratic and magnificent life. It was built by Samnite people coming from Sarno valley. Just inside our courtyard recently local Museum excavated and found interesting samnite tombs of ninth century B.C.). During August 24 of the year 79 A.C. it shared with Stabia, Oplonti and Herculaneum the exactly alike lot of death: in awfully apocalyptical scenery the city disappeared underneath a cover of stones and ashes having a thickness of many meters. Rich in patrician villas, decorated according the Alexandrian fashion and in majestic public buildings, Pompei was a fairly good trading center, furnished with its own harbour on the mouths of Sarno river. Hebrews were present in the city, even if they weren't organized by a community like that of Puteoli. A certain number of graffiti and inscriptions support sufficiently all that by documentary evidence. It is possible that isolated Christians would have tried in this city the proselytism just at dawn of missionary spreading work and is probable too that in a small number of people they had constituted the first ecclesia (church) at a willing family home. There aren't direct evidences, but we can deduce indirect ones from graffiti (even if in a small number): "XXXIGNI GAUDE CHRISTIANI" (Enjoy the fire Christian) with evident allusion to the Neronian fire of Rome and to the torches of Christians covered with tar and fired in order to light Nero's gardens.

"AUDI CHRISTIANOS SAEVOS OLLERE" (You hear wild and stinking Christians). Last in order of discovery the inscription on a wall of the villa of Poppea family. Poppea was Nero's wife. They had many sumptuous villas in Pompei and Oplonti, a residential palace 3 miles from Pompei. Just some years ago has been discovered a villa having 95 rooms in Oplonti (now Torre Annunziata) and a large pool belonging to this family. Latin inscription on an

amphora *'Secundo Poppeae* (To Secundo of Poppea family) let us understand where wine was sent to. Perhaps Secundus could be an administrator or a freed slave belonging to this family. Another important villa is in Pompei and in the courtyard (Peristilium) of this villa there were discovered many masks which indicate that it was used as a little family theatre where the Emperor could recite as actor, being fond of this art. Interesting is a graffito on the top at height of first excavation work **"Qui sunt a Deo amati"** (Those who are loved by God). One gropes one's way in the dark in order to interpret and understand the facts. This inscription could be not only a charge of massacre, but a certainty of their faith in God and of their eternal salvation too, while punitive ashes were yet warm. An inscription sure opposite to that of "enjoy the fire Christian" or of **"you hear wild and stinking Christians."** Paul left Puteoli and found by the way to Rome a first group of brethren coming from Rome as far as the Forum Appius and then another at the Three Taverns to meet him. Three Taverns, the present city of Cisterna, was an important post-stage and Inn on Appia road. All that reveals that in Rome was a consistent congregation, while in Campania there were only little groups in the coast cities which revealed a weak and scarce initial presence. Three years after Paul's arrival in Rome the Roman church, according Tacitus informations, became "an huge multitude". From the time of Carthaginian general Hannibal, the Jew community in Rome had been always consistent and sure this was the principal reason of the Lord's Word preaching success there. All that leads us to think that the Gospel's word could have started from Rome to penetrate deeply in Campanian cities. A scholar like Omodeo is of this opinion for further expansion of Christianity during following centuries. The church of Rome which had the blood bath during Neronian persecutions, was the most qualified one to send preachers and missionaries to Naples, Nola, Nuceria Alfaterna, Cuma, Pompei and Stabia. This perhaps is the echo of Pompeian graffiti in replay to these surviving preachers arrived from Rome to stir up atavistic pagan religions? It is an acceptable hypothesis that surviving Christians had slunk away from Rome and that they had directed their steps towards Campania Felix, famous for temperate and mild climate, for its schools and culture, for the riches of its trades, let alone for its tolerance about whatever creed and religion. The poet Titus Statius inviting his wife to leave Rome so wrote her: **"Don't believe that Vesuvius' top and the flaming surge downwards the pernicious mount had wholly depopulated the anxious cities: there are inhabitants, on the contrary they get on and grow in number"** (Selve, v. 72-4); later he gives an important news; although Naples city was narrow and condensed for its own population, however it didn't fail to open the gates to numerous foreigners. Listening to Titus Statius, immigration to Campania had to be stable rather than touristic owing to its fame which followed its name. "Over there flaps a serene peace, life is comfortable and relaxed, and rest, never upset, can be protracted by peaceful sleeps. There are no fierce meetings of electors, nor laws become instrument of wranglers:

citizens have an innate wont of life to be respectful to laws, nor there needs the power to achieve the justice" (vv. 84-8). **"In the surrounding places there is no lacking in the delights of a varied life, either you would like to visit with the steaming city of Baia, whose beach is a delight, or the inspired caverns of the prophetic Sibyl, or the Misenus hill, memorable for the Troian oar, or the juicy vineyards of Bacchic Gaurus Mount, or Capri, old abode of Teleboi people, where a lighthouse, emulous of the moon which wanders by night, raises its propitious light to the advantage of anxious sailors, or Sorrento hills which produce a dry and strong wine, or the salutary ponds of Ishia Island, or Stabia that revives."** (95-104). When he composed the poem of wishes for the neapolitan Menecrates, son-in-law of Pollius Felix, his dearest friend, in the villa of whom in Sorrento he was often guest, in occasion of the birth of a third child, Statius thus expressed his feelings and the need of a re-peopleing in which he believed: **"To my compatriot Julius Menecrates, young man of high rank and son in law of my Pollius, I address my congratulations having honored our Naples by a large family"** (Epis. 1, IV). Then he addressed to Parthenopes (the name of a Syren, old name of the city) inviting it to dress up by one's Sunday best; the prolificness of the neapolitans could **"restore the losses produced by the Vesuvius furies"** (v. 4 s.). It is much likely from what comes first that many Christians saved from the Neronian massacre had taken a way of escape for the cities of Campania Felix and that like the great persecution following the death of Stephen, the dispersion had produced a greater penetration of the Lord's Word in the Italic and Campanian cities (Acts 8:1-4).

Archaeological evidences at the end of first century and during next centuries are much more consistent and traces remain indelible. In Naples S. Gennaro catacombs with a large baptismal pool completely destroyed by an interesting carelessness, of which remains foundations and ruins, where of a surety baptism was done by total immersion, speaks a language of truth. In the city of Cuma, near Puteoli, there is another large pool for baptism. In Nuceria Alfaterna (four miles from my home) there is the large and very fine baptistery (named "La Rotonda") surrounded by binary columns, built on an old hall of a pagan Temple near a grove of trees. The baptistery is built on the old mosaic pagan floor to let water drain out after people had been baptized. It was built during V or VI century A.D., after Constantine's Milan Edict and is understandable that Temple was bought rather by political power than by money. It is understandable too that during this century baptism was done by immersion and administered only to the believing adults. As this monument had been saved from the destruction of a corrupted church, which in the dark centuries of Middle Ages by carelessness and ignorance, by refashioning and new constructions, cancelled footsteps and documents of past, isn't difficult to imagine. The Vesuvius thought it over. In the year 685 A.D., by another Vesuvius eruption, the dome-shaped vault of it collapsed and was interred for many centuries and preserved. During this century many church buildings were built and this one had no

importance having no images and statues. In a word it lacked the principal characteristic of a Roman church building: the altar and the idols. It was rebuilt during XIII century according to the new canon of Roman church, with the construction of an altar and of some paintings, but remaining of a minor importance compared with new cathedrals. Why they didn't destroy the large baptismal pool? Before all just near it was built another Roman church building and the dome-shaped vault had many collapses, the last in the year 1944. Remaining buried for many centuries and being soothed every doctrinal controversy, people didn't know anything about the pool and the true baptism, all was forgotten and the clergy could sleep peaceful rests, or the death's sleep. The ignorance interred what wasn't buried and those who had the darkness' power could continue to rule the play and to keep the reins of others destiny into their hands. All that will continue until the kings of the earth, who committed fornication and were wanton with her, standing far off will say: "**Alas! Alas! thou great city, thou mighty city, Babylon. In one hour has thy judgment come**" (Rev. 18:9,10).

MY SERVANTS THE PROPHETS

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LET US RISE UP AND BUILD The Place of the Individual, Nehemiah 3

Did you ever wonder why certain chapters are in the Bible? Oh yes, we know they are inspired but do we wonder what purpose they are to serve? One such chapter is in Nehemiah 3. Open your Old Testament to that chapter and you will simply see an endless list of names that no one except Alexander Scorby can pronounce. What was God's purpose in preserving in the sacred text this list of names? Is this portion of the Scriptures just "filler" to take up space? The answer is **ABSOLUTELY, NOT!** There are at least two important reasons why Nehemiah 3 is included in the text, and these two reasons are extremely important to us.

First, the list of names of families demonstrates to us that **GOD IS INTERESTED IN PEOPLE.** God's work has never been "program" oriented, but instead is always "people" oriented. There is no doubt about God's program by which He will save the world, but it is always linked to the activity of people. Every individual in that program is important to the Lord! These names may not mean much to you and me, but they mean a great deal to Him. He knows every individual most intimately. The individual is not simply a speck in His giant plan to bring the Messiah into the world. He is not simply a small gear in a big machine. Rather, each individual that walks on this earth com-

mands God's personal love, attention and concern. Consider for a moment how important people are to God. People are the only thing that God promises that He will rescue from this planet before its ultimate destruction. God will not rescue church buildings, colleges or para-church organizations. He will rescue only people. So, if we want a "labor" that will endure, don't try to build buildings, write books, or establish movements. Even the pyramids are subject to the ravages of time and are destined to destruction. But a ministry of people will last.

Secondly, the list of names in Nehemiah 3 shows us that God is not only interested in people, but He is also **CONCERNED ABOUT THE WORK THEY DO.** Our work seems too insignificant, doesn't it? Go to work, wash the dishes, mow the lawn, and clean the house—all are necessary, but so seemingly insignificant. Yet, when we give an honest day's labor, we are working as to the Lord. When we work in the home to raise a family, this seems so insignificant, or so we are told by the world. Yet the Scriptures teach us that there is not a more important and vital work in the world than raising a family. Notice in the text of Chapter 3 that no one goes unnoticed! Everyone that worked and everyone that didn't work was recognized by the Lord. V. 5, "next unto him the TEKOITES made repairs but their nobles did not support the work" God saw the effort of labor by the Tekoites, but He also saw those that didn't work. He saw the bricklayers and the gold-brick. Notice Verse 20, "After him Baruch, the son of Zabbai zealously repaired ANOTHER section...." Baruch must have put everything he had into the labor because he finished one section and then went to work for another section. God saw, recorded, and judged his effort. Again, in Verse 27, the Tekoites repaired another section. What we see in this section of Scripture is that God had a program of work, (to rebuild the walls), but every individual who gave of himself to achieve these goals was noticed by God. Doesn't that seem important to you, even today? Don't we really feel that God just doesn't see it if we fail to visit the new family that attended the services last Sunday? Don't we get discouraged when we try to teach someone the Gospel and they don't respond, even after we put in hours of Bible study? The lesson of Nehemiah is that God sees, knows, and remembers our efforts in His cause; that He is interested and concerned about us as individuals.

To view life from this perspective is both comforting and chilling at the same time. After you have spent 5 or 6 hours in preparation for a Bible class and 2 children show up, the question always flashing , through the mind: "Was it worth it?" "Yes," is the answer that must be, simply because God knows your efforts. Yet, on the other hand, when you spend 10 minutes while someone else drives the car, in preparing your class lesson, He knows that just as well. He knows when you have invited people you know to come to a Gospel meeting, and He knows when you haven't asked even one. Therefore, from this long list of names we find 2 most important lessons for our everyday living: First, God is interested in people and second, he is concerned about the work they do. In our next study we will talk about Nehemiah's working in planning as seen in chapter 3.

A CHRISTIAN'S REVIEW
OF "CAMPELLITE QUESTIONS
AND BAPTIST ANSWERS"
(No. 10)

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We continue our review of the seven related questions presented under question 18. Where does the Bible:

"(4) Invite people to join the Baptist Church?"
Answer: "For the same reason that Paul attempted to join the church at Jerusalem, namely, because they can't get in the Church of Christ without joining it (Acts 9:26)."

This answer reveals a typical sectarian concept of the church and salvation. When Paul obeyed the gospel in Damascus, he became a Christian then and there and was added by the Lord to the church. Remember, as a praying, penitent believer, he was told by Ananias to "arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). When one is born again, at that time and by that same process he becomes a child of God. God's children are in His family. His family (house) is the church (I Tim. 3:15). The idea that one is saved by one process and then enters the church by another is not taught in the Bible.

It is true that when Paul returned to Jerusalem he desired to "join himself to the disciples." That doesn't mean that he was out of the church, the body of the saved, until that time. He simply desired to identify himself as a Christian with the saints in Jerusalem, and because of his past reputation they were reluctant to accept him into their fellowship until they had been assured that he was a Christian. He left Jerusalem to kill Christians and came back one of them! When a Christian goes to a place and asks to be identified with fellow Christians and become a part of the work and worship, in that sense it would be scriptural to speak of "joining the church." There is a difference, in some ways, between the universal body of the saved and a local congregation of disciples. The Lord adds the saved to the first; man has a choice in the second.

Did you notice that in his answer Mr. Taylor referred to the church in Jerusalem (he gave Acts 9:26 and that's where that was) as the "Church of Christ"? We are making some progress. He must recognize that as a scriptural term, and we agree. But the querist didn't ask about the Church of Christ; he asked about joining the Baptist Church. Of course Taylor would contend that the Baptist Church is the Church of Christ, but we deny it. If it is, why don't they call it that and wear the term?

By taking the liberties with the word of God which they take, and using the same sophistry they use in trying to establish that "Baptist" is a scriptural name for the church and the disciples of Christ, we could

prove (?) almost anything. For some examples, consider the following:

1. "They" of Acts 2 refers to the church. They were united. This was on Pentecost. Therefore, it was the United Pentecostal Church.

2. First Corinthians 14:14 says "let all things be done decently and in order." Order includes method. Therefore, the Methodist Church.

3. The apostle Peter was a saint. He preached in the last or latter days (Acts 2:17). Therefore, he was a Latter Day Saint.

4. Christ commanded his disciples to go into all the world. They were the church. The world is universal. Universal means catholic. Therefore, the Catholic Church.

5. The church in Jerusalem was the first on earth. It was composed of Christians. Therefore, the First Christian Church.

Do I believe that the above examples are scriptural terms or names? Of course not! But they are as logical, reasonable and scriptural as the arguments used to justify the term "Baptist Church." Nothing is scriptural in name that is not named in the scriptures, and the Baptist Church is not named in the scriptures.

But we really have no argument or difference here. By their frequent use of the term, they admit that "church of Christ" is a scriptural designation. He has also admitted that the church is never called "the Baptist Church" nor the Lord's followers called Baptists anywhere in the Bible. That should settle it.

"(5) Call the church together to hear people relate their experience and then vote as to whether or not they are fit subjects for baptism?"

Answer: "Because the apostles so practiced (Acts 10:47). Because Paul taught the churches to do so (Rom. 14:1 and 2 Cor. 2:6-8). And also because Baptist churches are pure democracies, and the only way to ascertain the will of a democracy is by a vote. Monarchies, oligarchies, plutocracies, bureaucracies and aristocracies can settle things by ruling elders, or a bishop or a pastoral boss, but democracies let the people vote to settle things."

Again he perverts the scriptures and manifests an unscriptural concept of the church.

The conversion of Cornelius and his family (Acts 10), the first Gentile converts, was unusual in several ways. The requirements were the same as for all others, but there were some attendant circumstances which were not a part of the gospel plan of salvation. The Jews had been slow in preaching the gospel to all people, and, generally speaking, unwilling to accept the Gentiles into their fellowship. When Peter was called to go and preach to the Gentiles, he took some Jewish brethren as witnesses (Acts 11:12). As Peter was completing his sermon, there was a miraculous manifestation of the Holy Spirit. This was to show God's approval of what they were doing. This is stated very clearly in Acts 11:17,18: "Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I, that I could withstand God? When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."

Peter's question of Acts 10:47 was simply a way of saying to the Jewish brethren who accompanied him that they had no right to forbid the Gentiles into the body or church of Christ. They did not vote on anything. The issue had been settled once and for all!

The other passages he used do not justify the practice of voting. And what "experience" did Cornelius or any of the others relate? There is no record of such in the Bible.

He declares that the church is a democracy, and that accounts for much of his misunderstanding. The church or kingdom of Christ is an absolute monarchy. Christ is the king over the kingdom and head of the body. He rules with all authority through his will, the New Testament. It is true that congregations are autonomous, but each one is under the authority of Christ, and no one has the right to rule in the realm of faith or regulate the conditions of membership in the body of Christ.

When one obeys the gospel, if everybody on earth voted against him, the Lord would still add him to the church. If one has not obeyed the gospel, and everybody on earth voted for him, the Lord would not add him to the church. Then why vote? The only "voting" the Bible reveals is very simple: God has voted for you; the devil has voted against you; you have the deciding vote!

"(6) Baptize into Baptist church?"

Answer: "Because Paul said: 'For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body' (I Cor. 12:13). The church at Corinth was a body of Christ (I Cor. 12:27). Every local Baptist church on earth today is a body of Christ. He has no other kind on this earth today. We baptize people into Baptist churches because God told us to do so."

That is a bold statement to be completely without scriptural justification. Where in the Bible did God ever command anyone to be baptized into a Baptist Church? Paul was not speaking of a Baptist Church, for such did not exist then and he never heard of one! In that chapter and the two following, Paul is discussing the work of the Holy Spirit and miraculous gifts. It is by the teaching of the Spirit that people are baptized into the one body (Acts 2:4, 38). No one is baptized into a local body or congregation. And the church at Corinth was called "the" body there, not "a" body of Christ.

If it be true that the Baptist Church is the body of Christ, and he has "no other kind on this earth today," Since salvation is in Christ and his body it would follow that salvation is only in the Baptist Church today. That's the logic of the argument, but Baptists don't believe that. And if the Baptist Church is the body of Christ where salvation is, and the Bible teaches that we are to be baptized into the Baptist Church, that makes baptism essential to salvation. Again, that is the logic of their argument, but they don't believe that either. (To be continued.)

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THE BEATITUDES OF THE REVELATION #1

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When one mentions "the beatitudes" our mind vividly recalls the beginning of the Master's great mountain message recorded in Matthew five, six, and seven where Jesus placed a blessing on those who were humble of heart and who possessed a spiritual disposition. Yet, there is another group of beatitudes often overlooked and neglected which if considered would help us greatly. These appear in the Revelation to John.

The word "beatitude" has to do with happiness. **"Blessed** are the poor in spirit..." i.e. happy are they, truly fortunate are they who are not burdened down with the cares and labors here, but rather they are in a blissful state for they have laid hold of the great promises and blessings of God.

Happiness is the great question confronting mankind. Like Ponce de Leon's search for the elusive fountain of youth, man seeks in his own inventive genius to concoct some kind of formula that will deliver him a life of happiness. Many in the search turn down the broad avenue of sin. Satan holds up a sign advertising pleasure and most accept his invitation. Yet, while sin appears to grant happiness it is as the Hebrew writer concludes, a "passing" happiness. The pleasure of sin has no lasting value, no substance and grants only limited satisfaction. However, Jesus said if a man wants true happiness—**HERE IS THE WAY!** Here is the person who is happy and blessed because he has reached above the temporal and attained a hope eternal. The Savior taught that as long as we continue to reach down for the fleshly, material, and earthly there is no happiness. Only by reaching up to the spiritual and heavenly can there be true happiness and only then can it be said that we are "blessed."

- I. Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near" (1:3).

It's sad that the very book that can make one "blessed" has been so neglected, misunderstood and sorely perverted. The book of Revelation is a book of visions and symbols as announced in the very first verse, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show unto his servants, even the things which must shortly come to pass: and he sent and **signified** it by his angel unto his servant John" (A.S.V.). The message was "signified" to John, i.e. it was sign-i-fied to him. A failure to understand the symbolic nature of the book is at once a failure to comprehend its great and glorious message. That great message is that come what may God is in

control! While it may appear that the wicked are prospering and the righteous are suffering, in the end the wicked will be destroyed and the righteous raised to eternal glory! Victory through faith is stressed repeatedly. Seventeen times the Christian is encouraged by the word "overcome." How can we overcome? Through Jesus Christ. Why? Because He overcame! "And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb" (12:11). "Faith is the Victory" is what Revelation is all about. Note the progressive nature of John's writing:

Gospel of John—	written that we might believe.
1st John—	written that we might know that we have life through Him that we believe.
Revelation—	written that we might know that through Him we can overcome and attain the life.

So we are told in 1:3, "Blessed is he ..." He who? (1) "He who reads." The pronoun is singular. Because of the scarcity of the sacred scriptures each congregation probably had a public reader. Such an one who reads and enlightens the congregation is indeed "blessed." (2) "Those who hear." Not only is the reader blessed but also all in the assembly who listen receive the same commendation. (3) "Those who heed." Note the progression:

READ HEAR HEED!

The blessing is not just in reading and hearing, but the reading and hearing is to be done with a view toward ACTION! James remarked, "prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers" (James 1:22). Jesus said to His disciples, "Blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear" (Matt. 13:16). Jesus is not concluding that seeing is the thing and hearing is what it is all about. Rather, the seeing and hearing must lead to action. "Blessed are those who hear the word of God, and observe it" (Luke 11:28).

Why is such a blessing pronounced at the beginning of the book? The answer: **"For the time is near."** The book of Revelation has a historical setting surrounding historical events. It was written to encourage the saints who, because of their allegiance to Christ, came into direct conflict with the empire of Rome. Seeing Christianity as a threat to national security Rome tried to destroy the church. Revelation then is the account of Rome versus the church, Satan versus Christ, and the allies of the devil versus the allies of God. To say that Revelation pictures the rise of the Roman Catholic church or predicts future events presently unfolding is to deny the plain statements of the first and last chapter of the book! Note the time reference given by inspiration:

1:1 —"must shortly take place"
 1:3 —"for the time is near" 22:6
 11:6 —"must shortly take place"

22:7—"I am coming quickly"
 22:10—"for the time is near"
 22:12—"I am coming quickly"
 22:20—"I am coming quickly"

The Christian of the first century needed help. He was facing a great onslaught of persecution as had never been before. Revelation answered his need. Let it be here noted that while the book has a definite historical setting; the underlying principles involved (good versus evil) are timeless. Truth WILL triumph in the first century or in the twentieth. Evil WILL wage war now as then, yet the cause of our great God will always be victorious! WHAT A BLESSING!

II. "And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, "Write, '**Blessed** are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!' " "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them" (14:13).

Someone remarked that this is such a new concept of death that it took a voice from heaven to deliver the message. Death is usually pictured as the grim reaper, is greatly feared, and is uncomfortable to discuss. Yet we are told, "Blessed are the dead!" How can this be? We see the weeping loved ones, the silent march to the tomb, and the loneliness that accompanies the loss. How can the dead be blessed? The answer: "In the Lord!" There are only two places to die: in the Lord or out of the Lord. The latter holds no blessings, but with the former there is total bliss. How does one get "in the Lord?" The answer is in verse 12, "Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus." Yes, the dead are blessed in the Lord "from now on." From the moment of their death they are in a blissful state. To the thief on the cross Jesus said, "Today you shall be with me in Paradise."

What blessings are in store for the deceased saints? **"That they may rest from their labors."** What about those who gave in to the pressure? What of those who proclaimed Caesar as Lord and actively sought the pleasure of "the great city?"

"And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; and they have no rest day and night" (14:11).

What a difference it makes to follow the Lamb! Can't you picture the Master as He with open arms extends His invitation and says, "Come to me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." What a joy it is, after working eight to ten hours a day on the job, to come home and find temporary rest and refreshment. And what a greater joy it will be, after laboring amidst all the toils and difficulties here below, to find that death is nothing more than an entrance into a home where there is an eternal rest and refreshment with God. The Hebrew writer plainly asserts that God provides a rest for His people (Heb. 4:1, 8-11).

Just think of the conflict that was theirs. It was so easy to give in, so easy to rationalize. Rome said, "You either worship the emperor or you can't live!" Unless you were willing to put a pinch of incense on the altar and proclaim "Caesar is Lord," you couldn't buy a loaf of bread! Just imagine if you were the father of a

household, the head of a family, and you, because of your loyalty to Christ, couldn't provide for your own. And you had to watch your wife and children literally starve to death before your eyes. And you could end the hunger, you could end the pain, you could end the misery by just placing a little incense on an altar and saying "Caesar is Lord." Brethren, we don't realize the price they had to pay. Many paid the price, and paid it with their own lives. To them and to us God comforts by saying, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.. that they may rest from their labors."

To Be Continued...

PRAYING AND SINGING TO JESUS

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There are some brethren who sincerely believe that it is unscriptural to address Jesus in prayer or singing. Several years ago brother James W. Adams penned an excellent article on the subject which appeared in *The Gospel Guardian* (Vol. 14, p. 775). Supplemental to what has already appeared on the subject is some additional material which is also recommended for consideration.

Well meaning brethren, who attempt to sustain their contention that it is wrong to pray or sing to Jesus, refer to several passages in the New Testament which teach that we are to pray to the Father through the Son. Their conclusion is that we cannot address our prayers or songs to Jesus. This approach reminds us of the Baptists, who in their attempt to prove that salvation is by faith only, list the many passages that teach that we are saved by faith. We do not deny that we are saved by faith. We accept all of the "faith" passages, but the question is: are there other conditions of salvation? Is salvation by "faith only"? So, while none of us deny that we are taught to address God in prayer or song, the issue is: are we also authorized to pray and sing to Jesus? Are we to pray and sing to God the Father "only"?

Thomas addressed Christ, "My Lord and my God"! (Jno. 20:28). That Thomas was testifying to the deity of Christ cannot be denied. Those who object to songs or prayers specifically addressed to Jesus admit that Jesus is deity. But when they refuse to sing or pray to Jesus they only address one third of the deity, God the Father. They can sing or pray to one part of deity but they cannot sing or pray to another part, God the Son. According to these objectors, the only part of the Godhead that can be addressed is God the Father. This is really a serious matter, thus these brethren should stop and reconsider their position. Jesus is deity but they cannot address Him. However, Thomas did. He declared, "My Lord and my God". How pathetic it is

that some cannot sing, "Fairest Lord Jesus" and other such wonderful songs addressed to Jesus our Lord which exalt Him and praise Him!

Stephen prayed to Jesus, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" (Acts 7:59). That this was a prayer, no one can successfully deny. Referring to the petition of Stephen as being after the pattern of Jesus' own dying prayer, R.C.H. Lenski asserts, "That prayer was heard" (The Interpretation of the Acts of the Apostles, p. 309). That the request made by Stephen was a prayer is very obvious.

Albert Barnes, commenting upon Acts 7:59, wrote as if the question of praying to Jesus was one of the live issues of this day. His comments are noteworthy, in view of modern day objections to praying to Jesus. "The word *God* is not in the original, and should not have been in the translation. It is in none of the ancient MSS. or versions . . . That is, he was engaged *in prayer* to the Lord Jesus . . . This was, therefore, an act of worship; a solemn innovation of the Lord Jesus . . . And this shows that it is *right* to worship the Lord Jesus, and pray to him. For if Stephen was *inspired*, it settles the question. The example of an inspired man in such circumstances is a safe and correct example . . . the inspiration of Luke, who has recorded it, will not be called in question. . . . (1) there is every evidence that he regarded the conduct of Stephen in this case as right and praiseworthy . . . (2) It is one of the cases which has been used to perpetuate the worship of the Lord Jesus in every age . . . (3) The case is strikingly similar to that recorded in Jno. 20:28, where Thomas offered worship to the Lord Jesus *as his God* without reproof. If Thomas did it in the presence of the Saviour without reproof, it was right . . . (4) These examples were used to encourage Christians and Christian martyrs to offer homage to Jesus Christ. Thus Pliny, writing to the emperor Trajan, and giving an account of the Christians in Bithynia says that they were accustomed to meet and *sing hymns to Christ as to God* (Lardner) (5) It is worthy to remark that Stephen, in his death, offered the same act of homage to Christ that Christ himself did to the Father when he died (Lk. 23:46). From all these considerations, it follows that the Lord Jesus is a proper object of worship; that in most solemn circumstances it is right to call upon him, to worship him, and to commit our dearest interests to his hands" (Notes on the New Testament, Acts of the Apostles, p. 135).

The worship of Jesus is proper. In Matt. 28:9 we read, "And behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and took hold of his feet, and worshipped him". Praying and singing are acts of worship; therefore, we are authorized to pray and sing to Jesus.

Paul's petition to Jesus to remove his "thorn in the flesh" (2 Cor. 12:8) is another example of a prayer to Jesus. "The Lord" in this verse has reference to Jesus as is apparent in verse 9 . . . "that the power of Christ may rest upon me".

In the book of Revelation we take note that songs and praises were uttered to Jesus. When the Lamb had taken the book from the right hand of him that sat on

the throne, the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fell down before Him and sang a new song. It was a song of praise to the Lamb (Rev. 5:9). In the 11th and 12th verses we observe that the great host around the throne (angels, the living creatures, and the elders) praised the Lamb with a great voice. There is no doubt that "the Lamb" in this passage refers to Jesus.

One of the very last utterances in divine Revelation is a prayer to Jesus. Toward the close of the last book in the New Testament (the book of Revelation) John wrote, "Come, Lord Jesus" (22:20).

But not only do we have examples of prayers to Jesus in the New Testament, we are actually commanded to pray and sing to Jesus. In Jno. 14:14 Jesus said, "If ye shall ask anything in my name, that will I do". Lenski's comment on this verse is very interesting and worthy of consideration. "The textual evidence supports the retention of *me*, as well as of *ego*, in place of *touto*; with this the inner evidence agrees. The stress is no longer on *what* the disciples shall ask but now on *the person* who answers. To the silent implication that the disciples will direct their petitions to the Father (vs. 13) there is now added the explicit statement that they will also address them to Jesus, 'if you shall ask me,' etc. The enclitic pronoun has no emphasis and thus no contrast of this 'me' with the Father. In verse 13 we have only an implication that it is the Father who is asked, for this is altogether usual; and likewise in v. 14 the enclitic *me* implies that asking Jesus is also usual and in the nature of the case. The objection that, after the Father is indicated as the one to whom the petitions are addressed, Jesus cannot also be indicated, is pointless, because the very thing Jesus wants to say is that he as well as the Father may be so addressed. If, however, it is assumed that the Scriptures show no warrant for praying to Jesus, this dogmatical assumption, lowering the person of the Son, is more than answered by the Scriptures themselves in Acts 2:21; 7:59, etc.; 9:14 and 21; 22:16; Rom. 10:12, etc.; I Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 12:8; 2 Tim. 2:22" (*The Interpretation of John*, p. 993). Marvin R. Vincent also comments on Jno. 14:14, "Some authorities insert *me*. So Rev. This implies prayer to Christ" (*Word Studies in the New Testament*, Vol. 2, p. 243). A. T. Robertson also observes, "The use of *me* here is supported by Aleph B 33 Vulgate Syriac Peshitta ... If it is genuine, as seems likely, here is a direct prayer to Jesus taught as we see it practiced by Stephen in Acts 7:59 and in Rev. 22:20" (*Word Studies in the New Testament*, Vol. 5, pgs. 251-52).

And now, consider Heb. 1:8. The author quotes from Ps. 45:6, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever ..." Jesus is addressed as God in this Psalm because Heb. 1:8 begins, "but of the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God is forever and ever". This is one of many verses which teach that Jesus is deity. We are admonished in Eph. 5:19, "speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord" (see also Col. 3:16). We are to sing Psalms and Jesus is addressed in the Psalms (see also Ps. 110:4). Is it not scriptural, therefore, to sing Psalms which address Jesus?

Some might question whether the psalms in Eph.

5:19 and Col. 3:16 refer to the Old Testament psalms. For what it is worth to our study, let us consider a few comments on some music passages. "Since psalmos is something historical (Lk. 20:42; 24:44; Acts 1:20; 8:33), the word should here retain the meaning of Old Testament Psalms, which were well-known and had been accepted in public service" (*Karl Braune on Ephesians in Commentary on the Holy Scriptures* by J. P. Lang, p. 192). "It denotes sometimes the Book of Psalms (Lk. 20:42; Acts 1:20; 13:33)" (John Eadie, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians*, p. 400). "... a religious song in general, having the character of an Old Testament psalm" (Marvin R. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, Vol. 3, p. 269). "With psalms (psalmois, the Psalms in the Old Testament originally with musical accompaniment) ..." (A. T. Robertson, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, Vol. 4, p. 505). "The Psalms of David were sung by the Jews at the temple, and by the early Christians (*Notes*, Matt. 26:30), and the singing of those psalms has constituted a delightful part of public worship in all ages" (Albert Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament*, Ephesians, p. 105). "When we are differentiating the three forms of poetic utterance, not only the etymology but also the use of the terms must be noted. 'Psalms' thus seem to refer to the Old Testament psalms, their use being carried over into the Christian Church. They have ever served to voice our feelings" (R. C. H. Lenski, *Ephesians*, p. 620). "Psalms, psalmoi, may probably mean those of David" (Adam Clarke, *Commentary on Ephesians*, p. 462). It seems evident from the testimony of these scholars that the psalms which we are admonished to sing at least included those in the Old Testament.

Scriptural authority is established by (1) command, (2) example and (3) implication. Having examined the scriptures, we have evidence from all three of the above that it is scriptural to address prayers and songs both to God the Father and Jesus the Son. We appeal to our good brethren who oppose this action to reconsider their position. May we honor deity by honoring both the Father and the Son and readily sing and pray to both. In view of what the Bible teaches we should sing with fervor from our hearts such beloved songs as "My Jesus, as Thou Wilt" and "My Jesus, I Love Thee". We believe it is proper to pray and sing not only to the Father but also to the Son.

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"DE-SEXING" THE SONGBOOK,

The Mass, and The Bible

The first two of the above would not merit much comment except for the fact that they are reflections of the general drift of our time. There has fallen into my possession a copy of the little songbook, "Because We Are One People" published by the Ecumenical Women's Centers, Chicago, Ill., and in use by several modernistic groups. The preface states: "As persons become increasingly aware of the impact of sexist language on our private and collective thought, many women and men are finding they can no longer participate in worship events with a sense of joy . . . Because of the power of language to shape our images and attitudes, we have chosen to rewrite traditional hymns which are frequently used in church worship services.

Here are of couple of the revisions:

**"Dear Mother-Father of us all,
Forgive our foolish ways;
Reclothe us in our rightful mind,
In purer lives Thy service find, In
deeper reverence praise."**

**"In the dawn of the ages, God created the earth,
To all the creatures she gave birth,
To the birds in the sky, to the deer in the wood,
And God said," It is good, it is good.
One God and Mother of us all
Creator of all things large and small,
We praise your name in all the earth,
And we worship you, O Lady of Birth."**

Now if referring to God in the masculine gender is "sexist", why isn't referring to Him in the feminine gender "sexist" as well? And if this poor, foolish group sees a need to revise "Faith of our Fathers" to say, "Faith of our Ancestors," why not, "Round yon radiant (sic) Mother and child," to "father and child" or "parent and child"?

But then, along the same line, *The Parkersburg (W. Va.) News* of November 16, 1980, reported that this nation's Roman Catholic bishops had voted the previous week to "eliminate sexist language from their prayers of the mass, rewriting Christ's declaration He would shed His blood 'for all men.'"

These folks are certainly free to apply their foolishness to their song books and humanly ordained rites. But it makes our blood boil when they discuss "de-sexing" the Bible. Such talk has been heard now

and again for the last few years. *U.S. News & World Report* recently editorialized on the matter and observed that such a possibility is now under study by a panel of the National Council of Churches.

A task force of "religious scholars and officials" describes the thousands of passages referring to God as "Father", "Lord", "King", or "He", as "accidents" resulting from "limitations of human language."

Feminists and their sympathizers are clamoring for sexually neutral language in a new edition of the Revised Standard Version which is scheduled to be completed in the mid-1980's. The following quotations show some examples of the sort of changes envisioned:

"God loved the world, loved it so much that the beloved child of God was given to the world, and all who trust in this unique being will never perish but have eternal life."

"I am returning to the Source of my being, for my Source is greater than I."

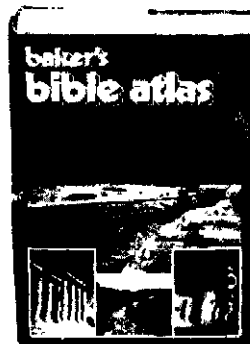
"And because you are sons and daughters, God has sent forth the spirit of the Child of God into our hearts, crying 'My loving parent!!'"

In case you didn't recognize those quotes, they are perversions of John 3:16; John 14:28; and Gal. 4:6.

One letter writer, a woman, called the idea, "sacriligious, asinine, inflammatory, hell threatening and so stupid that it's hard to believe."

The only words I know that more aptly describe it are those of Proverbs 15:2: "The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness."

And I'm just curious enough to wonder how they plan to de-sex I Cor. 11:3 "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God."



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THE TERMINATED SOLDIER

Keith E. Clayton
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When I was in secular employment in a statewide public television network, all employees were required to give a one month notice before terminating their employment. In return, the company would requite with a two month's notice of any change in position, pay or status. Our contracts were granted on July first of each year, but we would know by April first (usually) whether our position was to be continued for the following fiscal year. When I left their employ I gave them a six month notice that I would no longer grant to them my services as their chief video tape editor. Although there were several attempts by various producers and directors to dissuade me, there were no hard feelings. I gave them fair and ample warning of my changing status . . . which they also would have given me if they were the ones changing status.

I would that brethren learn this basic courtesy which most of the heathen world has learned. Too many times I have heard of brethren being "cut off" or terminated as a soldier in the vineyard of the Lord. Especially, it has been too many times without any kind of notice whatever. The ungodly of this world have more consideration than that! No, I am not saying that brethren are obligated to support false teachers and indeed, false teachers need to be cut off.. but fairly. What I am specifically referring to is the idea that brethren have that if a preacher does not "toe the line" with every elder in every "whim, opinion, human tradition" and other matters of expediency, then that preacher must be terminated as far as receiving support is concerned.

Preachers are people? I do not know if I had to determine it by the way some congregations treat them. Preachers have families to care for. Not according to the way some brethren treat them. One would get the idea that the preacher never has needs, does not have a wife and children who also need a consistent amount of care. Of course, we all know that there are no financial obligations for the preacher and his family, right? I mean, if we cut off the preacher, that is no big thing ... he does not have any "legitimate" bills to pay. He should not have obligated himself financially the way the rest of us do. After all, why doesn't he realize that "we" might cut him off without any notice! We do not want him to get all that secure and be able to concentrate on anything except "our" pet projects. He needs to be worried about our opinions, not out there concentrating on truth and the winning of souls. Certainly, the preacher must come to know that "our" pet traditions are more important . . . we will teach him that by destroying his families welfare (without notice, of course). Then, after we cut him off we will have to castigate him as a dead-beat for not paying all those obligations that he should not have had. It is his own fault!

Brethren, if you can see yourself in the previous

paragraph, then shame on you! Preachers are people. Preacher's families are also made up of people; moreover, they are brethren! People we are to fervently love. "Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart" (1 Peter 1:22). Brethren, when we put preachers and their families out in the street, we bring a reproach upon ourselves as the people of God. The world and the heathen who occupy it rebuke us by their care for fellow human beings. The world recognizes that just being a person, made in God's image, entitles one to be treated in a kind and considerate way. The world would not put out a person on the street without any notice, yet my brethren, I am ashamed to say, have treated preachers that way times without number.

I see this happen and I can very definitely say with Jesus, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you . . . Look, your house is left to you desolate" (Matthew 23:37-38). I suppose there is no way of knowing how many have left preaching and gone into secular employment to support their families, but one is too many. I have even heard of some who have become so down-trodden by brethren that they have left the faith entirely. "Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way" (Romans 14:13). Brethren, we must be more supportive of preachers. We need more preachers and the Lord's church must be more supportive of them as they go forth preaching the kingdom and truth in a dark and hostile world. The church is to be a pillar and support of such men (1 Tim. 3:15). Where else can these men turn if they cannot rely on their brethren in Christ?

Probably the largest class of preachers who have been affected by this problem (support cut off without notice) are those in what some brethren refer to as "mission" fields. Sometimes there is very poor communication, if any, between the supporting church and the supported preacher. The brethren sending the support are to be commended for trying to do as much as they can to spread the borders of the kingdom. However, in such arrangements, the supported brethren sometimes become simply liabilities instead of real, touchable people with real human needs. Such preachers become (in the eyes of brethren sending the support) simply numbers, objects with price tags on them which can be used as budget cutting and balancing items. Their attitude seems to be summed up by "we will have our newly paved parking lot (rug, air conditioning, etc.) even if we have to terminate a soldier of the cross . . . after all we must take care of our NEEDS first." All the while souls are being tossed into eternal torment. Such brethren need to come spend some time in a spiritually desolate place for training in "wants" and "needs."

Lest any get me wrong, I am not saying that a congregation must send support outside their locale, or to a certain place. I am simply saying that this is a Biblically enjoined principle and that the great commission is world wide. I thank God for the many congregations who recognize this and treat these "mission" soldiers with concern and care as befits

brethren. Additionally and more importantly, God praises the ones who look out beyond themselves in service to the King. The world is a big place and we, Christ's churches have a great responsibility to have a part in the salvation of the most precious thing in God's sight, a soul! "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field" (Matthew 9:37-38). Let us resolve to treat preachers like brethren, with greater love, concern and consideration. If we find it necessary to terminate support to a faithful preacher, then let us not stand rebuked by the world. Let us send them on their way "in a manner worthy of God." Let us all pray, as the Judgment Day approaches and as people die in sin every day, that we will have fewer terminated soldiers of truth and more active in His service. Pray also that the attitudes of brethren, God's only people on earth sanctified by truth, will be ready and eager to help and not hinder this God-enjoined goal. Brethren, let us pledge to be mutually more considerate of such that God's name is held up to the world, especially in the way we conduct ourselves in the matter of preacher support.

SUITED TO THE OCCASION

**Truman Smith
901 Kilgore Dr.,
Henderson, TX 75652**

Just suppose you were Paul. Enemies of the truth were plotting your death. Forty men had bound themselves under a curse that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed you. Your nephew brings word to you of this plotting, and you send him to the chief captain with this information; then with the help and protection of several hundred soldiers you are taken out of the city of Jerusalem and finally into Caesarea, where you appear before Governor Felix. A letter from the chief captain informs the governor that his findings had not resulted in proving you had done anything worthy of death or of bonds, so the governor places you in the Praetorium, the judgment hall with prison cells attached, because he cannot accept the chief captain's findings as final. You are to be kept in this place until the arrival of your accusers.

Now, while you are held there as a prisoner the governor sends for you to appear before him to hear you "concerning the faith in Christ" (Acts 24:24). In other words, you now have the opportunity to preach to this one in high authority. What would be your subject? What would you preach about in such circumstances? You could use a break! The decision of the court could result in the death sentence, so now is your opportunity to make a special appeal for your life. You might even be able to appease the governor in such a way that he will decide to simply dismiss the case and set you free. What will you say on this momentous occasion? Well, what did Paul do? Acts 24:25 tells us.

1. "... he reasoned of righteousness." This word "righteousness" means "Up-rightness, correctness in thinking, feeling, and acting." When one possesses

this attribute he will conduct his dealings with his fellowman in the proper and correct way. What? You mean Paul discusses this as a topic in his sermon to such a man as Felix? History tells us that Felix had not treated his fellowman right, for he had murdered Jonathan, the high priest, by the hands of the Sicarii. And, Josephus claimed that Felix had used a Cyprian sorcerer to help him seduce Drusilla, the beautiful wife of Azizus, king of Emesa, to leave her husband and marry him. He had lived everything but a righteous life! Verse 26 tells us that he expected Paul to pay him a bribe for his release. Well, he needed a sermon on "righteousness," but Paul certainly was not being very diplomatic in his choice of sermon material, was he?

2. "He reasoned of temperance." This means "self-control, or self-mastery." It has been defined to mean "The virtue of one who masters his desires and passions, especially his sensual appetites." This was especially applicable to Felix and Drusilla. Their marriage was based upon lust instead of love. He had used deceit and fraud to get her! Felix knew nothing of self-control. He even used his governmental powers to satisfy his desires. Thus, when Paul dealt with this subject, we know he was not using any tact.

3. "He reasoned of ... judgment to come." What did Paul say about the judgment? "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:12). Again, he said, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10). Do you suppose for a moment that Paul was able to paint a very hopeful picture of the judgment day for Felix and his wife? Certainly not! From all accounts, their marriage was an adulterous union, and as we have already seen, his entire life was so drenched in the filth and slime of sin that there was no hope for him at the judgment. So, it seems that Paul "bombed out" again if he thought he was dealing smoothly with the governor.

No, gentle reader, Paul did not use craftiness nor cleverness and try to simply "win friends and influence people." He hit people where they lived! One time he said directly to a man's face: "O full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" (Acts 13:10). Such straightforwardness is reminiscent of the way Jesus preached. For example, His sermons were characterized by such expressions as "Thou hypocrite. . . ." (Matt. 7:5). Note again, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation" (Matt. 23:14). Note other such language which the Lord used in Matthew, chapter 23.

Well, the record says as Paul preached these exalted themes "Felix trembled," but we have no information to indicate that Felix ever gave up his old life of sin and turned to Christ; thus, he will have to face the Lord in judgment as a guilty sinner condemned to spend eternity in a devil's hell. And, while Paul had to remain there in prison for two years, and in Rome for two more years, was released for a short time, then recaptured

and finally beheaded in the Roman prison—yet his conscience was clean—his sermon was SUITED TO THE OCCASION.

Restoration Footnotes

Earl Kimbrough

2212 Malibu Dr.
Brandon, Florida 33511



"A LITTLE NONSENSE"

T. B. Larimore, the well-known gospel preacher of a past generation, never spoke or wrote a word for public consumption that could properly be called "nonsense." It was only on rare occasions that humor or anything remotely foolish crept into his preaching or writing. So when he wrote a short item for publication with the above title, he very appropriately put it in parentheses.

This man of God was very likely the most successful evangelist of his day, if such may be measured by popularity, influence and visible results. Yet he never relied on gimmicks, but depended fully on the power of the word of God alone to bring lost souls to Christ and Christians to greater purity of life and deeper devotion to the Lord.

The fact that some people turned up their noses at plain Bible preaching, and went into ecstasies over learned preachers "who always put their masterly arguments into 'logical form,'" disturbed him. While he himself was highly intelligent, well-educated and skilled in the use of the English language, he made no attempt to appear profound or to sound scholarly. His sermons were delivered in words most common people could readily understand.

The "little nonsense" Larimore wrote about was an imaginary conversation engaged in by a fictional brother, his wife and son, after returning home from a meeting where one of the "learned preachers" preached. The dialogue, as he related it, went like this:

Brother Earnest: "I couldn't exactly get the hang of what Brother Bigum was a-preachin' about to-day. What is the 'Kurnel precepts of a sillybub?'"

Sister Earnest: "That's not what he said, John. He said 'the Major precepts of a sillybub.'"

Johnny, Junior: "No, ma; that's not what he preached about. He said it so often that I just wrote it in my song book. This is it exactly, letter for letter: 'the Major pennies of a sillygism.'"

Brother Earnest: "Well, that's exactly what I said."

Sister Earnest: "No, John; you said **Kurnel**, and it's **Major**."

Brother Earnest: "S'pose I did? What's the difference?" (Letters and Sermons of T. B. Larimore, Vol. 2, pp. 435-436).

Larimore did not say who won the argument, but so

far as the sermon that prompted it is concerned, brother Bigum might as well have been preaching about the Battle of Bunker Hill, at least in the mind of the Earnest family.

The sad thing about this little tale of nonsense is that, while the thing was invented, it was too true to life to be devoid of good sense. That is why Larimore wrote it, and the point he made is still needed.

Whenever preachers are more interested in impressing people with their learning than in impressing them with the plain and simple truth of God, the Earnest families will always go home wondering whether the preacher was talking about a "Kurnel," a "Major" or a buck private.

TAKING SIN SERIOUSLY

Leon Willis
355 Parkway Terrace
Brandenburg, Kentucky 40108

A highway patrolman was announcing on the radio about why people should observe the 55 mile an hour speed limit. He explained how it would result in less gas consumption and save lives by causing less traffic accidents. But his last reason really caught my attention. "The best reason," he explained "for going 55 mph is because IT'S THE LAW!"

Do we really take sin seriously? An acquaintance of mine was "goin' on" about his new car and bragged that on the interstate the other day he checked on the CB (to see if any "smokies" were around), then set his cruise control on 80 and barreled down I-64. This is typical of all too many people (including Christians) who, while solemnly denouncing such crimes as debauchery and murder, think nothing of exceeding the speed limit, telling "little white lies", cheating on their income tax, "borrowing" things from work, drinking socially ("as long as I don't get drunk"), overeating, gossiping, wearing revealing clothing, using vain and profane language, and otherwise courting the world. It's as if life were a smorgasbord in which they can pick and choose which sins are "bad" and which sins are somehow all right.

Such a flippant attitude toward sin involves several problems:

1. **It arbitrarily categorizes sin** into "big" sins and "little" sins and then concludes that "little" sins are relatively unimportant. But God has no such value system. Sin is a transgression of the law of God (I John 3:4) and it is still SIN no matter which law is broken. The liar is no better than the murderer — they will both be in the same boat on "the lake that burns with fire and brimstone," (Revelation 21:8); neither the covetous man nor the homosexual, the jealous woman nor the drunkard "shall inherit the kingdom of God," (I Corinthians 6:9-10, Galatians 5:19-21); the boaster and hater of God are "worthy of death" (Romans 1:29-31). And sin is sin whether it's running a stop sign or snatching a purse or fire-bombing a crowded hotel building.

2. **It can cause a subtle but steady deterioration of moral values.** If a person can justify taking company pencils and paperclips home for personal use, what is to stop him from eventually justifying embezzlement of company funds? Or if he can rationalize drinking an occasional beer or cocktail, odds are sooner or later he will become a drunkard. In other words, if we can manage to make one sin a "little" sin, it will become that much easier to do the same thing with other sins, until (in extreme cases) EVERY sin is a "little" sin! Such rationalizing (or "ration-of-lies") is a hardening process by which the conscience becomes increasingly calloused toward sin (SEE Hebrews 3:12-13 and I Timothy 4:2).

3. **"Little" sins become second nature to us.** They

are committed easily and frequently without even really considering them as sins, they are seldom repented of and seldom confessed — which has serious implications. If, as the Bible says, we must both repent and confess our sins to be forgiven of them (Acts 8:22, I John 1:9), then we are carelessly putting our souls in dire jeopardy by our thoughtlessness and callousness toward such sins.

What is the answer? It calls for a total re-evaluation of our actions and attitudes. Have we relegated any sins to the realm of insignificance? Do we really understand and appreciate the severity of sin — of any and every sin? The next time the speedometer swings past 55, just ask yourself, "Do I really take sin seriously?"

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

PREACHER NEEDED

PIGGOTT, AR — The church here is looking for a full-time preacher. We are self-supporting. Contact Oather Williams, 357 N. 4th St., Piggott, AR 72454.

DEBATE

KEN GREEN, 2212 Jordan Lane S.W., Huntsville, AL 35805. On the dates of March 2-5 (4 consecutive nights) I will be debating Mr. Jesse F. Pratt of the church of God of Union Assembly. The starting time each evening will be 7:00 P.M. and each speaker will have three twenty minute speeches. The propositions are as follows: **Monday** — The word of God teaches that miraculous divine healing ceased forever at the end of the apostolic age. Also all other miraculous gifts of the Spirit have ceased.

Tuesday — The word of God condemns the use of mechanical instruments of music in the service and praise of God in the church.

Wednesday — The word of God condemns using the word "Reverend" in giving reverence to anyone except God.

Thursday — Washing feet is a commandment of Jesus Christ and is to be practiced in the church as well as the Lord's Supper. Bro. Green will affirm the first three propositions and deny the last. The Von Braun Civic Auditorium in Huntsville has been rented for the discussion. Seating capacity — 2,400.

JIM ALLEN, P.O. Box 181, Oglethorpe, GA 31068. After 3 1/2 years with the church here in Oglethorpe, I have decided to move to work with the new congregation in Brandon, MS. This church had its beginning about a year ago when some families left the liberal church in Pearl, MS. They met in a home for a short time but are now meeting in a club house in Brandon. The church in Brandon is small (30) and not self-supporting at this time. We are making plans to move the first of February to start work with this congregation. We will need a great deal of financial support. If any of the readers of STS can help us in this new work I would appreciate you getting in touch with me at the above address. Or phone (912) 472-8734. For references brethren may contact Ron Halbrook, H. F. Sharp, Wiley Adams, David Tant, or Bruce James.

DONALD P. AMES, P.O. Box 516, Leland, IL 60531. The new work in Leland is going very well. We are happy to report one Adventist man baptized, an unfaithful liberal restored, and three Baptists are expected to obey the gospel any day! We are meeting in the old school building and invite you to stop and worship with us when in this area.

LARRY R. DeVORE, 7872 Cleveland Rd., Wooster, OH 44691. Since my last report we have had one baptism and one restoration. On December 31st, 1980, I will complete four years work with the Bur-bank Rd. church. Bro. Craig Meyer of Zion, will follow me in the work here. I will be available for preaching appointments within 75 miles of Wooster. If I can be of service please call me at (216) 345-5330.

EARL KIMBROUGH, 2212 Malibu Dr., Brandon, FL 33511. The church at Brandon (10 miles east of Tampa) has grown to the point that thought is being given to beginning a new work in the area. The facilities have been enlarged twice within the past few years but have expanded all they can at the Bryan Road location. Three active elders oversee the congregation, assisted by ten deacons. Discipline is maintained, an effective educational program is in its eighth year, considerable interest is given to evangelistic work locally, and nearly half of the current budget goes to help support preachers in other places. The congregation has always been "missionary minded."

The church recently began conducting services on Sunday afternoons at the Zephyrhills Correctional Institution, one of the major prisons in the state. A Bible correspondence course is advertised in the local papers and about 35 are presently enrolled. One was baptized last week as a result of the course. Three others have been baptized within the past few weeks as a result of personal teaching by members of the church. A young people's class is conducted in various homes on Tuesday nights, with about 30 in attendance. For several years, a preacher-training program has been carried on by the church, but this has been temporarily suspended. About a dozen men in the congregation take turns preaching on Sunday evenings and on other occasions. The present evangelist of the church is now in his ninth year at this place.

TWO CONGREGATIONS UNITE

GLEN R. BURT, Pasadena, TX. On December 14, 1980 the Red Bluff church of Christ and the College Park church of Christ will be united into one congregation. The congregation formed by the union of these two congregations will be known as the College Park church of Christ and will meet in the present building of the College Park church at 1202 E. P. Street in Deer Park, TX. After this date the "Red Bluff church of Christ" will no longer exist "as such" and the building which the congregation has assembled in for over twenty years will become the meeting house of the Randall St. church of Christ, a Spanish speaking congregation in Pasadena.

Many will wonder, why combine two active congregations? There are a good number of reasons which have been considered for over a year, and several recent factors have caused the union to be pursued and agreed upon at this time. Among those reasons is the firm conviction that all the changes brought about by this union will result in a better arrangement and effort for the cause of the Lord in the Deer Park — Pasadena area, including reduced expenses on physical facilities. They will be reduced from three to two with the move of the Randall St. church from their over-crowded, inadequate facility into the Red Bluff building.

The Red Bluff elders and deacons will resign and the College Park elders and deacons will continue to serve in that work for the combined group. Bill Collett, evangelist with the College Park church, and Glen Burt, evangelist with the Red Bluff church, will work

together as evangelists. The program of work now being done by the two congregations will continue as the work of the one congregation. Among those works are two radio programs over KXYZ (1230 AM). "Gospel Lessons" with Bill Collett can be heard on Sunday mornings between 7:30 and 8:00 and "Bible Answers" with Glen Burt can be heard each night between 9:00 and 9:30. People in the Houston area are encouraged to listen to these programs. Also, all are welcome to visit with us at the College Park church of Christ. A warm welcome awaits each one.

NEW CONGREGATIONS

BEATRICE, NE — A new work has begun in Lincoln, NE. Approximately half of the group from Beatrice, NE have begun worshipping in Lincoln. Anyone wishing to make contact with this new work can contact Bob Cann, 3330 S. 31st Street, Lincoln, NE 68502. Or phone (402) 423-7373. This now makes four congregations of the Lord's church in Nebraska.

THOMASVILLE, GA — On Oct. 19, 1980, black members from the Moultrie Rd. congregation in Thomasville, GA became the Westside church of Christ. Since the beginning of the church on Moultrie Rd., black and white Christians have worshipped and worked together. After discussing how the cause of Christ in Thomasville could be more productive, we decided to begin a black congregation on the West side of the city with the prayer that more blacks and whites could be reached with the gospel. Among the black members, Walter Marria was asked to work with this group. Walter, his wife Andre and their two children are a fine, faithful and respected family. Bro. Marria is capable, knowledgeable, and very zealous. There are very few sound black congregations in the Southeast, and we believe the brethren at Westside will truly be a power for good. Bro Marria is trying to get support and is presently receiving less than half of what he needs. I can recommend Bro. Marria as worthy of any support you can give him. If you can help him, address your letters to: Walter Marria, 707 E. Walcott St., Thomasville, GA 31792. Any questions you may have about him, his work, or our work at Moultrie Rd., I will be happy to answer — Bill Pierce, 123 Lakeview Dr., Thomasville, GA 31792.

SARASOTA, FL — On Sept. 14, 1980, fifteen Christians met in a rented building to begin a new work in Sarasota. The church meets in the Sarasota County Agriculture Extension Building, 3,000 Ringling BL, in Sarasota. This new work is of special interest to me. For years a conservative work has been needed in Sarasota. Osprey is the only other congregation to my knowledge in Sarasota County free of institutional ties or extremism. I am accepting this challenge

by faith and taking on this workload without support. Surely, the Lord will provide. If any church can help, your assistance will be appreciated. For more information about the work contact me: J. Paul Branch at 2505 - 20th Ave. W., Bradenton, FL 33505. Or phone (813) 748-5592 or (813) 792-5107. References from faithful brethren available upon request. This church will be known as the church of Christ in Sarasota until permanent location is found. When in the area worship with us. Call myself or Paul Johnson (813) 953-6964 for meeting information,

E. L. Upham

Bro E. L. Upham departed this life on 27 November 1980. Let me quote from a note from his wife. "On November 13, late afternoon, he fell from a tall ladder as he attempted to remove the egg some prankster evidently threw on the white part of the end gable. The ladder slipped into a hocusing it to fall in one direction, and he in another. He sustained multiple injuries. He fought valiantly to live but could not overcome the complications...."

Brother Upham was one of God's unknown but faithful servants. He, his wife, and very few others had sustained a small country congregation for years after liberalism swept through that part of the country. And even after most of the young people moved off, he remained. He was retired from military service and in addition, had an independent source of income. But he did not lavish this on himself. He and his faithful wife sacrificed in their service to the Lord. I am sure only the Lord is fully aware of the extent of their service, but this much I do know: they supported five Filipino preachers personally, in addition to the other work they did.

He will be missed—by his wife and family, by those beloved in the Lord, by me and by all who knew him. The greatest tribute I can give is that he was determined to serve the Lord with all his heart. Now, he has departed to be with the Lord he served for so long.

Wallace H. Little
1201 Meeks St.,
Corinth, MS 38834

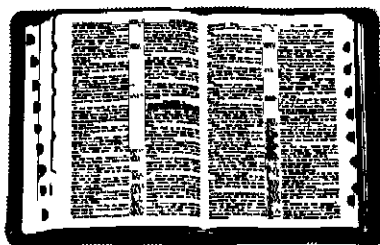
IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

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(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)

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 XXII

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NUMBER 3

EXPOSITION: TEXT and CONTEXT

Weldon E. Warnock

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Akron, Ohio 44301



THE MOON SHALL BE TURNED INTO BLOOD

Quoting from the prophet Joel (Joel 2:30-31), the apostle Peter said on Pentecost: "And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come" (Acts 2:19-20).

Some take this language literally and they believe that the moon, among other things, will become real blood (or as blood) when the Lord comes again. But we need to recognize that Joel was using figurative language, denoting judgment. Similar or identical terminology is used several times in the Bible, signifying God's judgment.

Speaking of the judgment of Babylon, Isaiah stated: "For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine" (Isa. 13:10). Ezekiel spoke of God's judgment upon Egypt as follows: "And when I shall put thee out, I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light" (Ezek. 32:7). Babylon was the agent used by God to execute judgment on Egypt.

Unless Judah repented Jehovah would visit her in judgment. The judgment is described: "The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining" (Joel 2:10). Concerning the nations who reject the Messiah, Joel prophesied of their judgment in the following words: "Multitudes,

multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining" (Joel 3:14-15).

Jesus, in describing the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, used the same kind of language (Mt. 24:29, Mk. 13:25; Lk. 22:25-28). Matthew's account states: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken."

The opening of the sixth seal in the book of Revelation depicted "a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood. And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth — " (6:12). Cloaked in this figurative language is God's forecast of judgment on the Roman Empire.

By now, it has become obvious that the preceding terminology, involving the heavenly bodies, is used to denote God's judgment rather than some literal phenomenon of these celestial orbs. The symbolic language portrays the gloom and woe that settle over a people at the fall of their government, dignitaries, rulers and religious and social institutions.

The Expositor's Greek Testament states on Matt. 24:29: "It seems to me that in true prophetic Oriental style the colossal imagery of the physical universe is used to describe the political and social consequences of the great Jewish catastrophe: national ruin, breaking up of religious institutions and social order" (Vol. 1, p. 295).

Now, then, back to Peter's quotation of Joel. It has become evident that the darkening of the sun and the moon turning to blood is figurative language, referring to judgment. The blood, fire and vapor of smoke in verse 19 refer to bloodshed and burning of cities, during which time the billows of smoke ascend upward. The issue that remains to be settled is what is the great and notable day of the Lord of which Acts 2:20 speaks?

The great and notable day of the Lord has been variously interpreted. Some say it means the final judgment day, some say the destruction of Jerusalem, while others say it means the day of Pentecost. Though we are not able to prove conclusively to what event the

"notable day" refers, I am inclined to think Joel meant the destruction of Jerusalem.

As Matthew Henry said in his commentary, "this was the chief thing that Christ himself had foretold (Matt. 24) at his entrance into Jerusalem (Luke 19:41), and when he was going to die (Luke 23:29) ... it put a final period to the Mosaic economy; the Levitical priesthood and the ceremonial law were thereby forever abolished and done away ... it was the day of his vengeance upon that people for crucifying Christ, and persecuting his ministers."

R.L. Whiteside, commenting on Joel 2:28-32 that Peter quoted: "Verses 30 and 31 evidently refer to the destruction of Jerusalem and of the Jewish nation" (Reflections, p. 30). Adam Clarke commenting on Acts 2:20: "These are figurative representations of eclipses intended most probably to point out the fall of the civil and ecclesiastical state in Judea,"

Homer Hailey, writing on Joel 2:30-31, said: "So, the outpouring of the Spirit and His work for the redemption and salvation of man would result in judgment on those who rejected His message. The rejection of the truth of the Spirit by the Jews, and their persecutions of Christians, became the forerunner of God's great judgment upon Jerusalem by the Romans, A.D. 70. The destruction of Jerusalem, which fulfilled the prophecy, in turn becomes a prophetic type of the ultimate end of the world and of the judgment of God on the world of the ungodly ..." (Com. on the Minor Prophets, p. 54).

In conclusion, let us always keep in mind that even though the language used to describe God's judgment was figurative, the judgment itself was real.

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Editorial

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PEACE IN THE CONGREGATION

So often the work of a local church is greatly hindered by internal dissensions. Some congregations have a history of prolonged fussing and feuding over one thing or another. They have very little influence for good in the community, for they have become so lost in their own conflicts that they have lost sight of the fields "white unto harvest" and are completely taken up in biting and devouring one another (Gal. 5:15).

I have been to places for meetings where there was so much strife and ill-will that every lesson would have to be directed toward the church in an effort to settle such unnecessary squabbles. Sometimes brethren caught up in such disputes cannot even remember what started the trouble.

At Peace or Dead?

Some brethren have boasted that they are at peace when in reality they are dead. The church at Sardis had a name that it lived but was dead (Rev. 3:1). One brother bragged that the congregation he attended had no friction. Another, who knew the congregation well suggested that it takes moving parts to have friction. There are congregations which expired long ago and just need someone to come and preach their funeral! The peace of the cemetery is not that of which we speak here.

Things Which Destroy Peace

(1) **Being soon angry.** Some have explosive tempers which can be ignited with very little spark. Turn one of these men loose in a business meeting, or a hotheaded sister loose on the telephone, after they think they have been wronged and then run for cover. Things could get bad! Paul said to put off anger (Col. 3:8). An elder is not to be soon angry (Tit. 1:7). Solomon gave us the way to respond to anger. "A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger" (Prov. 15:1).

(2) **Selfishness.** There are those who are determined to have their way at all cost. In matters of judgment, theirs must always prevail. In such matters, all will not agree. Someone must yield. Elders must not be "self-willed" (Tit. 1:7), but then neither should other members who sometimes demand that they have their way or else they will disrupt the peace of the church, divide it if possible and lure just as many members away as they can.

(3) **Desire for preeminence.** John wrote of "Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence

among them" (3 Jno. 9). Some men are natural-born leaders. If you do not think so, just ask them! Some men and women are determined to run things or else they will not play. They do not want to be just a laborer in the vineyard - they must be a supervisor.

(4) **Self-justification.** It is difficult for some to admit wrong. A position is taken, wrong words are said or improper acts performed, and rather than confess the error and change the course of action, self-justification sets in. Then there is the Devil to pay. When we do wrong, we need the spirit of the prodigal son who came home and said, "I have sinned."

(5) **Ignorance.** Some disruptions in churches come about because of sheer ignorance of what the Bible teaches. Jesus said those baptized were to be taught to "observe all things" he had commanded (Mt. 28:20). God said "Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge" (Isa. 5:13). Hosea said "My people are destroyed for lack of Knowledge" (Hos. 4:6).

Things Which Promote Peace

(1) **Genuine love for the church.** Jesus loved the church and gave himself for it (Eph. 5:25). The welfare of the church is of far greater importance than any one of us. The church is the "pillar and ground of the truth" and ought not to be retarded in its work to satisfy the whims of immature, selfish and ignorant members. Those who really love the church will not want to see it suffer and bleed.

(2) **Sincere interest in the souls of others.** Not only are we hindered in reaching the souls of aliens when discord is present in the church, but we often fail in our responsibilities to each other as Christians. "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Phil. 2:3-4). Many weak members and babes in Christ have been destroyed because of thoughtless disturbances caused by hard-hearted brethren who would rather argue than work.

(3) **Retaliation forbidden.** "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for is so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:19-21). Has someone in the congregation slighted you? Have you been shamefully mistreated? Then forget about "getting even." Leave that up to the Lord.

(4) **Try to understand the other person.** The prophet Ezekiel said he went to those of the captivity and "sat where they sat" (Ezek. 3:15). All of us are different. Our personalities, backgrounds, likes and dislikes, and daily circumstances vary. One may be in poor health at times, another distraught over family problems of which others are ignorant. There are babes in Christ who have not had time to grow to maturity. Some are weak and need patience and understanding. Each of us should give the other person the same understanding we desire for ourselves. The "golden rule" must be applied by Christians in their treatment of each other.

“Able to teach others also”

Thomas Hughes
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Louisville, KY 40299



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real problem. The cause of Christ suffers when brethren cannot rise above pettiness. Let us strive to follow after things which make for peace, doing nothing through strife or vainglory. Brethren, don't let splinteritis destroy the work of God.

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ATTENDING WITH INTEREST

When we go from the first Law of the teacher to the second law of the learner we run smack into problems. It isn't long before we find out that the Learner must attend with interest to the material to be learned. That statement expresses why some learn and some don't. It also let's the teacher know his very first responsibility when presenting a lesson. If the learner has to be there with some degree of interest . . . what is incumbent upon the teacher to aid in getting that degree of interest?

In times past we have often had some very strong arguments presented that this is 100% the responsibility of the learner. Strange thing is that this argument usually comes from teachers who have great difficulty in getting students interested. A sort of Catch 22.

To me, this is one of the two most difficult of laws. The other being the Law of the Learning Process. These two are somewhat outside my pure scope of control. They are within the mind of the learner. I can influence the thinking but it is beyond me to control. I might like to, but God did not allow for that type of thing in the teaching/learning processes. Jesus came to this principle between a few of his miracles. What does Mark 8:17-18 say? Picking up part way through the 17th verse: "Perceive ye not yet? Have ye your heart yet hardened? Having eyes, see ye not? And having ears, hear ye not? And do ye not remember?" Here is the greatest teacher having learning problems with the students.

Basic to his questioning is the word perceive. What does it mean? Too many teachers have not a pure understanding of the word and how it affects their ability to get over to their students the major points of a lesson. To define perception we have to go beyond the mind and thought processes to the influence or stimulants that put it there. Most definitions include

the following: to attain awareness (understanding) through the use of and stimulation by the senses.

Please note that in the context of Mark 8 as we are between miracles, even then they had not perception about what had just taken place. They had forgotten again. Now is it strange that under some miracles the learners could use one or two senses. Yet in this forgotten miracle they could have used all five! Is this an accidental lesson? Hardly. Yet here it is that they, the disciples, had just completed a learning session wherein all the senses could have been used. Maximum effort for enforced learning. In this feeding of the multitude they used their eyes, their ears, their hands for touch, their mouths for taste and even fish has a smell! All five senses engaged in the lesson and so promptly forgotten. The role of the teacher is not an easy one. In this matter of perception, it is not new either. For we see the word within Proverbs 4:5-7. The exact word used here is understanding. Our term perceive is old middle English and French, with the per being for thoroughly and capere being to take more of. In modern terms we'd be more likely to use understanding or awareness. Just as in Isaiah 28:13 "But the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept." Would that this were true today. There isn't near enough perception going around. Scarce as hen's teeth so to speak.

Perhaps that is the trouble, too much speaking and not enough stimulation of all the learning senses. Of course we'll cover this in the section on the learning process but to briefly state just one point: If learning takes place with sound in the ears at x level of understanding, it will take place at 6x level when sight is combined with sound. This is why you remember certain key points of a sermon. The preacher has noted a few key words and reference points on the board. He has helped us to remember. Some never use the board, never make a note of a key point and are upset when no one remembers what was the thrust of the message. There are many examples.

I have asked adult classes, ten minutes after the close of a sermon, to give the key point of the invitation, and the scripture upon which it was based. Out of twenty to thirty class members, including the preacher's wife . . . no answers! And this is just ten minutes after the lesson closed. Sure, we all heard it. Sure, we even saw the words on the board . . . but did we really move ourselves to active listening? To active hearing to active understanding? I doubt it.

Now leave the adult classes for a second and enter the world of the third grader or the eighth grader or the teen ager. How much interest are you as a teacher going to generate if your own effort is not 100% in preparation? If you have slacked up on Law no. 1 about the Teacher must know that which he is to teach . . . then you are working with a shortage of interest-provoking power from the word. And the class will find it out quickly.

When in the military some one screamed "TEN-SHUN!" Eyes snapped, heads popped, muscles tensed and full 100% concentrated effort was expected and even gotten. Now this is not the modern Army I am speaking of, not the post Nam group. Not even the

post Korea group. This was the old time of discipline. Which was a time of concentrated effort directed toward obedience. A command was given, it was obeyed.

We can't do that in schools today. Not even in Universities. Times and conditions have changed drastically. Even in a few decades. The old days will never return. Therefore, we have to be flexible enough to move with the winds of change and adapt ourselves to them. Since the Lord's army is composed of 100% volunteers and our discipleship has to be internally inspired, it must be a type of self-generated interest. It must be an internal motivation. Teachers must do their very best to stimulate to learning. Not to cast stumbling blocks in their path. I once quoted a publisher who stated something like this: "The number of people who put themselves out to attend classes of any sort are few. When material is presented in such a poor fashion, it fails to interest those few learners. It is not the fault of the material, excellent though it may be, it is the fault of poor presentations, stealing time from the few who are giving and not receiving." That's a botched up paraphrase I am sure, but it means we who teach have a great responsibility to stimulate the learners to come back again and again to learn more and more.

It's not an easy task. It's a very difficult role to fill. It has much to be said for it. "And he gave some, apostles, and some, prophets, and some, evangelists, and some, pastors and teachers" (Eph. 4:11). That's recognition enough.

There's a bit of a cycle in learning-interest here. If the teacher hasn't had it, doesn't get it, doesn't keep after it, then he will never be able to impart this desire to his students. Strange that this is, the more you give (of this stimulation) the more you have. It's a whole lot like the oil in the cruse in I Kings 17:14.

We must keep the oil of learning flowing from teacher to student. God won't let it run dry there either.

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LET US RISE UP AND BUILD Leadership / Planning, Nehemiah

3

In our last study we introduced Nehemiah 3, by asking why God included a long list of nothing but names in his sacred text? We observed that there are at least 2 good reasons for their inclusion. (1) To demonstrate God's concern with people, and (2) to show His interest in the Work they do.

Now, we move to the heart of Chapter 3, **the need for planning**. In every phase of life we are either involved in planning ourselves, or we are functioning under the plans of someone else. That is, in every phase except in the name of religion, where we think that planning is totally unnecessary. The average congregation doesn't have the foggiest idea where it is going or what it wants to accomplish. How many sessions were held in the church where you attend "to determine what we are going to do this year?" Then, at the end of the year, evaluate what you have done and see if you came close or not? Without planning we can't determine if we have accomplished anything or not. Has anyone ever sat down and determined what he wanted a young person to do and to be spiritually at the end of his Senior year in High School? After all, that student has been in Bible class from the time he or she went into the pre-school class, and now he is finished with the Senior High Bible class. What do you want him to be spiritually? If we do not have some kind of goal in mind, how will we know if he has become what we had hoped? We blindly shot an arrow into the air and missed the target every time. Nehemiah 3 will enable us to learn about the three things necessary for doing God's work.

I. Cooperation.

The first factor needed for spiritual planning is cooperation. Nehemiah forged together 3 diverse groups into one cooperating unit to build the walls. Notice the 3 groups in Chapter 3: (1) the priests, even the high priest; (2) the nobles, or the princes; (3) the common people. These three groups had to unified if the wall was to be constructed. Listen with me to the conversation at a typical business meeting that Nehemiah is conducting. First, the priests say: "You can't expect us to build the wall, we are teachers," and "our gift is to offer sacrifice," so "we can't work on the wall." Then the nobles and the princes speak up: "Well, we can't work on the wall because we are the decision makers. We are supposed to call the plays and make the decisions." Finally, the people speak up, "Well, we aren't going to build the wall; that, is what we pay the priests to do."

Nehemiah took these three diverse groups and blended them into one unit so that each one worked toward the overall goal, completion of the wall, rather than serving his own personal interests. In Acts 4 we find people in the New Testament doing this very same thing as they sold their houses and possessions and gave the money at the feet of the Apostles. Each subordinated his personal goals to the goals of the group. In this case personal sacrifice was made for the good of the body. Ananias and Sapphira couldn't do this. So it is today if we fail to cooperate in the work God has given us to do. In God's wisdom, He determined that we could accomplish more together than we can as individuals, so He established a unified fellowship called the body, or the church. Then he taught us the lesson of inter-dependency by using the human body as an illustration. Just as we need the hand, the eye, the foot so none can say because "I'm not the eye, I'm not of the body." and thus say that we don't need each other in the church. We live in a day of independence: "do your own thing," but we must submit to one another to the common goals. If there is a failure to submit, oftentimes small groups, cliques, or factions develop and the seed of division is not long in bearing fruit.

II. Coordination.

In the 3rd Chapter, Nehemiah records 31 times the phrase "next unto him" or "after him." As we study a diagram of the city walls we can see the entire job laid out before us. Can you imagine the business meeting when this work was discussed? "I want to build by the Water Gate because I get thirsty when I work." Or, "I want to build by the Old Gate because it has so many memories." Or, "None of us want to work at the fish gate because of the smell." Nehemiah divided up the work and made specific assignments based on where each one lived. Each family was to work on the wall closest to where they lived. This was done for 2 reasons: (1) **Convenience.** Why spend all morning in traffic getting to where you were going to work? (2) **Concern.** If you worked on the wall closest to your home you would give it all you had, because no one wanted the enemy coming through his own back yard or door.

The difference between cooperation and coordination is great. A football team may be behind 68-0, so in the huddle every player has a plan. The quarterback wants to run a quarterback draw. The flanker wants a 50-yard pass. The fullback wants a run off tackle. All are excited and committed, but guess how many points you'd score? If we all decided how we were going to work, then each runs off in a different direction, we'd do little good in the kingdom. There is no coordination in this type of activity. "Stir an anthill and you'd have activity, but no coordination."

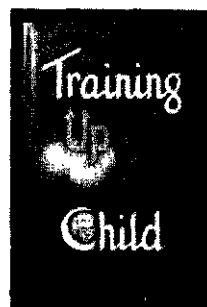
Coordination involves three principles: (1) **discovery** of spiritual talents, (2) developing spiritual talents, and (3) **deployment** of spiritual talents. **Discovery** means that we find our most infectious people and put them to work. Developing means that no one is born full grown in the body of Christ; each of us has to develop. "I can't teach", many say. "Well, have you ever tried?" "No." "Then, don't say you can't teach." What

you need is training, practice, and help to develop your potential. Finally, deployment. This is simply getting the right person in the right job and going to it.

III. Completion.

Once we have cooperation and coordination, then comes the final aspect of spiritual work, **COMPLETION.** Notice in Chapter 3 you find more that 41 times, — "they repaired." The past tense of the verb, "repair." They finished what they started! Both then and now it is easy to see how wonderful it is as we observe a people who were given a task by God and worked on it continually until it was finished. In Luke 14:28 we find people who began a task but were not able to finish it. Why? Because they did not count the cost. The difference between the work of God and the work of man is that God finishes His work, while man's work is still incomplete. Consider the tower of Babel for a moment. God confused their languages and the text says "they left off building the city." How many half-completed towers does the Lord see in our lives, monuments to mediocrity. We actually plan for failure because we **DO NOT PLAN AT ALL.** The church at Sardis (Rev. 3:2) did not complete its work either and was going to lose its candlestick. Oh, it's fun to get all excited and start a new work, a new program, new bible study, a new visitation schedule, but what about the old one? So many of us are just like Sardis. We never finish what we thought at one time was important enough to start. Nehemiah saw his work of rebuilding the wall completed (Neh. 6:15). It was finished in 52 days!

In conclusion, planning takes 3 things: I. Cooperation, II. Coordination, II. Completion. In the Lord's work we must set a target then evaluate to see if we hit it or not.



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FOUR GREAT FOUR-LETTER WORDS—HELP

In our very early years we must have help to survive. From that time on, the need for assistance from others never leaves us. As we grow we need help to learn how to care for ourselves. In our adolescent years we must have help to learn to become useful, productive members of society. When we are old we often need help again. And so it goes through life.

Since we all must have help at some time or the other, we are obliged to be helpful ourselves. It would be a thankless person indeed who took the aid and assistance of others all through his life and gave nothing in return. We must reciprocate such actions and return such favors. The Preacher, in Eccl. 4:9-11, sets forth the principle of our helping one another. "Two are better than one," says he, "because they have a good reward for their labor." There is always some hope when there is someone around to help.

We should help one another. In Heb. 10:24 we are advised, "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works." Such provocation to dutifulness is an act of helpfulness. Oh, we may be able to lift the load by ourselves, but how much easier becomes the task when there is someone to help (Gal. 6:2). The help provided for our fellows may range from a meekly applied restoration (Gal. 6:1) to outright chastisement (Heb. 12:5-6). But the help supplied will be out of love and concern for others and not in the spirit of self righteousness. And such help is offered without any thought of reciprocity, but with a view toward heaven both for oneself and the object to whom he extends such courtesy (Phil. 2:4).

We should help bring someone to Jesus. I am impressed with the fact that when Andrew heard Jesus speak, the Scripture says, "He first findeth his own brother Simon ..." and "... brought him to Jesus." It is a grand and glorious thought that we, impotent and imperfect, senseless and sinful, finite and feeble, can actually bring someone to Jesus! The admonition to help bring others is ever-present in the revelations of the divine record. Jesus' assignment to his apostles demanded it (Matt. 28:18-20). The early day disciples illustrated it (Acts 8:4). Paul's advice to preachers enjoins it (II Tim. 2:2). And we are all included within the scope of it (Jas. 5:19). In fact, the greatest help we can be to another is to bring him to Jesus.

We need to help the cause of Christ. We are engaged in the most outstanding conflict ever waged. Our strivings are for righteous ends, our purposes for the most noble aims; our designs are for the very highest good, for we seek to help the cause of Christ. And there

is no one among us who does not have his place to fill, his duty to perform, his work to do. "For the body is not one member, but many" (I Cor. 12:14). There is not time for petty jealousy, juvenile ambition, self-aggrandizement. There is only time to be about the Master's business—helping others to know Jesus, helping the weak who have fallen back into the world, causing others, by our example of good works, to want to join us in glorifying God and in seeking after Him. Every man is needed, everyone must help. We must raise His banner together—each sharing the burden, each sharing also the honor.

Jesus is the great helper. He came into world for that purpose (Matt. 1:21; Lk 19:10). Never was there succor like he gave, never was there a quality of aid which compares with that which he provided. What a Saviour! He "made himself of no reputation" to save us from our sins (Phil. 2:7). He "gave himself for our sins that he might deliver us from this present evil world" (Gal. 1:5). He made it possible for his to be "holy and unblamable and unreprouvable in his sight" (Col. 2:22). There is no man who is not the object of his love, no person who is not the subject of his salvation (Titus 2: 10-11). Even to those who have not come, he yet holds out his hands of love, offering peace, forgiveness, rest. Hear the pathos, the longing, pitiful extension of himself as he cries out, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, How often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not" (Matt. 23:37). What refreshing love! An ever-present help is he!

Let us follow the example of our Lord. Let us help. Let us help our brethren. Let us help the cause of our Lord. Let us help someone find Jesus. Let us be faithful to him who has so wonderfully benefited us, "so that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper and I will not fear..." (Heb. 13:6).

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I. "Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near"(1:3).

II. "And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, "Write, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them" (14:13). III. "Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his garments, lest he walk about naked and men see his shame" (16:15).

Why is such a blessing here proclaimed? As verse 14 announces, "the war of the great day of God" is about to begin. It is imperative that the Christian be ready for the inevitable conflict. Throughout the book the great battle has been building and intensifying and growing toward a climax, and here it is — **THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON!** It is Rome versus the church, Satan versus Christ, and the allies of the devil versus the allies of God. This is "the war" of which there is to be no comparison.

To understand the hope of the Christian during this conflict one must back up to verse 12:

"And the sixth angel poured out his bowl upon the great river, the river Euphrates; and its water was dried up, that the way might be prepared for the kings from the east." To the Jewish mind the Euphrates River signified

military power and strength. In Isaiah 8:7-8 the prophet declares:

"Now therefore, behold the Lord is about to bring on them the strong and abundant waters of the Euphrates, even the king of Assyria and all his glory, and it will rise up over all its channels and go over its banks. Then it will sweep on into the land of Judah, it will overflow and pass through..." Thus, the Euphrates symbolized military might, here given to represent the invading Assyrian army into Israel. In Revelation 16:12 we see that while the saints are in preparation for "the war," that God dries up the Euphrates. Now if the Euphrates River was synonymous with military power (and to the Jew schooled in Old Testament history it was), then what are we being told? Somebody's power is being dried up! Now a couple of questions are in order: (1) Who **dries up the waters?** God does! (Ex. 14; Jos. 3; 2 Kgs. 2) (2) For whom? God always dries up the waters for His people! So what do we have? This "drying up" is a work of God for His people, and it speaks of the putting down of military might. The drying up of the water is telling the first century saint that God is **going to intervene and "dry up" the military power of persecuting Rome.** Why? In order to prepare the way for the "kings of the east." Who are they? They are the same ones who will be walking through on dry land. Who is it that always walks through on dry land? **GOD'S PEOPLE!** The "Kings of the east" represent the redeemed of God (5:9-10). The premillennial notion that advocates that God is going to dry up the literal Euphrates River and 200 million Chinese will come marching through to do battle with His people has one great flaw: **GOD DOESN'T DRY UP THE WATER FOR THE ENEMY.** The Christian of John's day was facing a great military power that was set on destroying the church. But God intervenes, dries up the water i.e. He takes away their power, thus giving the saints a preview of victory.

Verse 16 gives the location of the battle-ground as Armageddon. Again one must be familiar with the Old Testament to get the significance. Here was the place where God defeated every army that came against Him in rebellion. And here it is given to represent the final battle ground between the armies of Satan and the Christian. Now I ask the question, if the battle is going to stand or fall on natural terms — who will be the victor? Why Satan of course. What gives the Christian hope is seen in the fact that God will step in, dry up the water, and His people will come marching through on dry land to victory.

Is this a literal battle? Why of course not. If verse 16 be literal then verses 13-14 must likewise be literal. If such be the case before the battle begins there must be some literal miracle-working frogs going about recruiting for the devil. Such is to silly too consider. This is a symbolical battle portrayed to offer the Christian assurance in a time when he needed to be assured. And so the Lord says, "Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his garments ..." We should always be ready for the coming of Christ, whether in national judgment (as portrayed here), or the final

judgment of all. We are admonished to "Keep our garments." Only those with pure garments, i.e. clean lives, will be presented to the Lord (Col. 1:22; 2 Pet. 3:14).

IV. "And he said to me, 'Write, **'Blessed** are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb'" (19:9).

What a privilege it is to follow the Lamb. Chapter 19 is a vision of victory for the saint. Its message is: Hallelujah, Praise God! In verse 6 the reason is given for the praise, "For the Lord, the Almighty reigns." There is the why. Rome thought she reigned. She was the "iron army" that crushed everyone and everything in her path. But there was one king who stopped her cold. He is the KING OF KINGS and **He reigns**.

The church was about to be destroyed and now she is saved. Daniel said it long ago:

"And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever." (Daniel 2:44),

To celebrate the victory the picture is given of a wedding feast. The saints have overcome and rejoice in their praise to God. We too should join in praise to God. He is the creator, the sustainer of our life, and the giver of all that is good. Yet it seems at times like such an unbearable burden to get folks together to praise God. People, if we don't enjoy praising God now, then heaven isn't for us. For there we will praise Him forever and ever. Yes, Rome will come and go but the kingdom of our Lord will forever stand.

V. "Blessed, and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years" (20:6).

Here a blessing is pronounced on those who continued steadfast, who refused to give up or give in to the pressures of the day. They had had a part in witnessing the resurrection of the cause of Christ. The church had been bruised and persecuted but she survived and surpassed and is seen being raised to her rightful place. To the Christian who paid the price and remained faithful and true, "Blessed..."

Three rewards are here offered the saints who overcame: (1) the second death would have no power over them, (2) their special relationship as a holy priesthood unto God would be forever, and (3) they would reign with God for a thousand years. The number 1,000 refers not to time, but rather it speaks of the perfect and total triumph of the church. Again the Old Testament unlocks the symbol as passages such as Psa. 50:10; Deut. 7:9 show the number 1,000 was used to speak of completeness and perfectness. Here it speaks of the total and complete victory of God's people. To the ones who proved their allegiance • "Blessed..."

VI. "And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book" (22:7).

Here is the same beatitude as in 1:3. The Christian then was faced with all manner of difficulties and

stress. He needed this book, and so do we. Brethren, we don't know what the future may hold. We've had it good as far as being allowed freedom to worship God. But what will life be like for our children? Our grandchildren? May I suggest that we spend time learning the message of Revelation and begin to teach that message to our children so that whatever the future holds the child of God can take comfort in knowing that his/her Father is in control.

VII. "Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gate into the city" (22:14).

The wise man concluded, "Behold, I have found only this, that God made man upright" (Ecc. 7:29). When we come into this world our robes are innocent and free from the pollution of sin. Eventually however, our robes become soiled and blemished with deeds of unrighteousness (Rom. 3:23), and we must do as Ananias instructed Saul in Acts 22:16, "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins." In God's great scheme of redemption there is the (1) divine participation, and there is the (2) human participation as illustrated by Paul's statement in Eph. 2:8 where he says that we are saved "by grace" (God's part), "through faith" (man's part). Man must provide the faith in order to have the forgiveness. Such a faith is not an inactive faith but rather it is an active faith that leads one to be baptized in order to cleanse his robe (1 Pet. 3:21).

To the one who follows God's instructions is the promise of "the tree of life." However, please be aware that such a privilege can be taken away. Verse 19, "And if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life ..." Therefore, it is imperative that we wash our robes and remain unspotted from the world in order to have right to "the tree of life." Conclusion

What a book! To have the comfort of knowing that whatever may happen; be it persecution, suffering, or various difficulties, the saint can take courage and have consolation in having the assurance that the God who created the universe is able to rule the universe and is able to achieve His ultimate purpose. God reigns and loves His people. WHAT A BLESSING!

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WHY CHURCHES GROW

A book by the above title by Flavil R. Yeakley, Jr., Ph. D., was published in 1979 by Christian Communications, Inc. P.O. Box 238, Arvada, CO 80001. The sub-title is: "A Social Scientist Looks at Patterns of Growth in Churches of Christ."

Research reported in this publication began in 1973 with a mail survey of 2,000 randomly selected congregations. 48 of these were selected for in-depth study, 16 each in the top, middle, and bottom 20% in regard to net growth (conversion rate minus drop-out rate). Conversions of the children of Christians were not included.

The data were collected from church records; interviews with 48 "pulpit ministers"; 240 recent converts; 240 people someone had tried and failed to convert; 240 people who dropped out of church soon after baptism, and 513 members who did the teaching in these efforts.

Brother Yeakley (who serves as an elder in an institutional congregation) states that between the years 1945 and 1965 the churches of Christ were the fastest growing religious group in America. Then from 1965 to 1975, churches of Christ slipped to 12th in growth rate. In 1975, the typical congregation of around 160 members had 8 baptisms, 6 of whom were children of members. Half of these eventually dropped out. When the annual death rate is subtracted, the growth rate was less than 1%.

He estimated zero % growth rate in 1980, and flatly stated that if the trend continues, churches of Christ will be half their present size at the turn of the century and will disappear entirely in this country in the next generation's lifetime.

But what about the large institutional churches that we hear of that are baptizing 100 or more per year? Brother Yeakley mentions those groups which report very impressive baptism statistics. But he also mentions what we do not hear about. That's their "equally impressive drop-out statistics." He claims that some of these congregations that have been reporting over 100 baptisms per year for the past 5 years still have essentially the same total membership they had five years ago.

Congregations which seem to be growing are "really just swelling" with transfers from other congregation. 75% of members added in the typical congregation "come by transfer." Many churches showing remarkable increase in attendance have brought this about entirely by children brought in

through a bus ministry. Brother Yeakley apparently does not view such as real growth.

I think his analysis of this situation is worthy of our attention. First of all, from the standpoint of what does not affect growth. The age of the preacher is not a significant factor. What little statistical difference there was favored the older rather than the younger preachers. The educational level of the preacher did not turn out to be statistically significant. Organized social events did not appear to be a factor in church growth.

What did appear significant were: 1) balanced gospel preaching; and 2) close personal relationships. While Brother Yeakley emphasized that a generally positive approach in preaching was most productive, he also pointed out that "Just as surely as it is a preacher's duty at times to comfort the afflicted, it is also his duty at times to afflict the comfortable."

Regarding relationships among members, it was observed that when converts formed personal relationships with members of the congregation, they were more likely to remain faithful. When they did not form such relationships, they were likely to drop out.

A good springboard is there provided by which we might pounce on the liberals like "slick on okra" (I got that from Lloyd Nash). But my mood is a bit more reflective as I ponder such findings. I'm moved to address my brethren and myself in these conservative circles: May we not be warned by these alarming statistics?

"Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things" (Rom. 2:1).

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REDEMPTION (1)

Redemption is defined "to liberate by payment; to free from the bondage of sin." W.E. Vine defines "exagorazo" as "denoting to buy out. Ex. Especially of purchasing a slave with a view to his freedom." "Lutroo" (redeem; cf. Titus 2:14 "who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity") this is the spiritual sense.

The grand central theme of the Bible is REDEMPTION. Redemption and blood are inseparably connected in the Scriptures. As a crimson thread there is an interweaving from the first example to the last. Paul emphasizes the significance of the blood of Christ to the Ephesians like this. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1: 3,7). Only as we appreciate the grand central theme of the Bible and view the overall presentation of it can we properly fit the bits and pieces. Limited perception is, no doubt, in part traceable to a failure to see the continuity of revelation. Hopefully, these articles can contribute to a more objective and comprehensive view.

With the sin of Adam, the world, every accountable man, woman, boy and girl, came under condemnation to thus stand in need of redemption. The act of sin is in evidence with Adam's disobedience to God in the Garden of Eden. "But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die" (Genesis 3:3), was ignored by Adam and Eve in favor of the serpent's statement, "Ye shall not surely die." The result of this was alienation, separation from God. Adam and Eve began to die. By the same disposition and action the same result has been the plight of all. "And you that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled" (Col. 1:21). The fact of sin from that time imposed a plight which was to ultimately be averted in Jesus Christ.

God, unwilling that man be without an alternative, having created him with will, the power of choice, envisioned the need for an option to provide free exercise of will. This posed a problem. How could divine law be upheld, justice vindicated, and at the same time, how could the rebellious heart of humanity be touched and man reconciled? Punishment alone was not the answer. What then? Only by an extraordinary manifestation of love. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever

believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16). Such a demonstration would magnify divine law, demonstrate God's mercy and goodness, open the way of redemption and give free agency to human will. This would provide the option. Man could accept the way provided by God or reject it.

Thus redemption is "the eternal purpose of God," it is the "mystery of his will" kept secret until finally revealed "unto the apostles and prophets by the Spirit." "Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit" (Eph. 3:5). God's purpose was to send Jesus in the fullness of time; establish the church; publish the gospel; redeem and reconcile all unto himself. Our initial effort in this series will begin the tracing of the eternal purpose of God from Adam through Moses.

We have come to refer to the first 2500 years of biblical history as the age of Patriarchy. One has to read but three chapters into the book of Genesis until he is given first hint of God's eternal purpose. The gospel, "good news of salvation", is glimpsed for the first time in Genesis 3:14-15. A "veiled" reference admittedly, but obviously envisioning divine purpose as the "germ" of every future prophecy concerning Messiah is recorded. The forces of evil would indeed bruise the "heel" of the seed of woman but in so doing a more severe wound would be inflicted to the "head" of the serpent. The "seed of woman" is a reference peculiar to Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:16). Thus we are projected to the ultimate expression of God's love and the consummation of his purpose in and through the death, burial and resurrection of the Son of God. Bruised in death, but in overcoming death, hell, and the grave through resurrection, a mortal wound is inflicted upon Satan and through the blood there shed, a way is paved and paid for the redemption of mankind. Here indeed is a pointing to the climax of a plan foreordained but hidden until consummated in Christ and revealed in the gospel. "But with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you" (1 Pet. 1:19-20).

In complement to our understanding of the eternal purpose of God, be it remembered that during this first age of human history sacrifice was a positive institution. The first of record concerns Cain and Abel (Genesis 4:1-12). Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering, Abel brought of the firstling of his flock. "And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering." Why? Hebrews 11:4 says, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." Since "faith comes of hearing and hearing by the word of God" we conclude Abel offered according to God's direction (Rom. 10:17). In so offering his sacrifice was typical of the ultimate blood offering, the blood of Christ, and began a continuity in sacrifice pointing to it. Cain's was not so recognized and accepted. Fact is, every sacrifice from the first to the last of the Old Testament economy, as respects purging and sin was a pointing to Christ, to the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8). Herein is the peculiar sanctity of blood which obtains through the

Old Testament. The type is sanctified till the anti-type, the shadow till the substance materializes.

Growth of the human family brought the development of marked wickedness identified in the circumstances leading up to the flood (Genesis 6). God decreed the destruction of the unrighteous and the salvation of the righteous. Noah was saved by faith (Heb. 11:7) and obedience to divine instruction in the building of the ark. Peter refers to it as a salvation by water and makes it typical to the faith and obedience which leads to baptism for the remission of sins. "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 3:21).

The emphasis upon the purpose of God which underlies the first eleven chapters of the Bible gives way to the gospel in promise with the opening of the twelfth. Here the initial statements record the selection of a single family through whom God is to consummate his eternal purpose to redeem sin cursed mankind. With the promise to Abram, "I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing" (Gen. 12:2), God's plan develops through Abraham's seed. Type and prophecy revealed the budding of the plan that was to blossom in Christ and shed the sweet fragrance of love and mercy upon all. It is thus that the Old Testament helps to establish the New Testament.

From the call of Abram, one family of peculiar sanctity is the object of the inspired record. This does not admit the remainder of the human family without the knowledge of God for such is not the case. However, vanity and foolishness becoming the rule, there was produced a darkened heart and depravity became the rule of life (Rom. 1:19-22).

The life of the patriarch Abraham is fraught with tests of faith, the more memorable of which is the case of Isaac (Gen. 22:1-14). The command to offer the son of promise can but be viewed through our eyes as a supreme test of faith which brings a thrill to our hearts. We, through faith's eye, walk with Abraham to the designated place, pick up every stone in the building of the altar, select every stick of wood for the fire. Isaac's question, "where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" is faintly heard through the ears of faith. "God will provide" is the answer, and He did. In the sparing of Isaac there is a typifying of ultimate hope, resurrection, in figure (Heb. 11:17-19), along with continuity in the development of the promise.

Subsequent history involves us with Isaac, Jacob, Joseph's betrayal and Jacob (Israel) and sons in Egypt. Moses graces the pages of inspired history, a type of Christ, and deliverance from Egyptian bondage sees a family becoming a nation. At Sinai the Law is given, nationalizing the seed of Abraham, and the Israelite nation is born. This marks the end of an era of limited duration, Patriarchy, the father rule period. Nevertheless, an era in which a cardinal rule is stressed and exemplified in the God-man relationship. There is one overriding and underlying principle: obey and be BLESSED; disobey and be CURSED.

(to be continued)

Overseas Preaching Report

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This time, I want to write concerning several subjects vital to preaching in overseas areas, and make three basic points. **First**, support of gospel preachers, Scripturally, IS on the basis of need. **Second**, churches of one nationality and race may send support to a preacher of another. **Third**, preachers' "need" may well include the responsibility to support others than those in his immediate family; others for whom he is responsible also fall under the authority of 1 Tim. 5:8.

Point # 1: I recently listened to a well-known gospel preacher state he questioned need as the basis of preacher support. His contention, primarily, was that need is not the way secular wages are determined—that in this area, these are paid on the basis of the job, its productivity, etc. He claimed the needs of the individual worker were incidental to deciding this wage. Perhaps, but surely unions would argue this point. Anyway, whatever be the basis of secular wages, NEED is the Scriptural basis for determining what the support of a preacher ought to be. See 1 Cor. 9:6-14 (especially verse 14), 2 Cor. 11:8,9; Php. 2:25,30; 4:15-18 and Acts 20:34 on this.

Point # 2: Churches of one nationality and race MAY send support to a preacher of another. Those congregations which supported Paul, for the most part, were composed of Gentiles. If we want to look at differences in race and nationality, it would be difficult to find any greater than existed between the Jew (Paul) and Gentiles (Philippian brethren). The Mosaic Law demanded a separation. Jewish tradition carried this far beyond the intent of the Law. In retaliation, the Gentile cut off the Jew and persecuted him. Yet Paul's support once and again came from Gentile brethren. See Php. 1:5-17; 2:25,30; 4:15-18.

Point # 3: A preacher's need may well include more than his immediate family. With increasing frequency, I am hearing that in matters of support, a preacher (especially a native preacher overseas) does not have a responsibility under 1 Tim. 5:8 beyond that of his immediate family. See Acts 20:34: ". . . them that were with me". Surely, if Paul would consider it his responsibility to take care of these when he was engaged in his tent-making, he would also consider it his same responsibility to do the same when he received support from churches. Or, do we want to contend he would let these others go hungry while he ate? That ought to be put to rest, along with the erroneous contentions in points 1 and 2.

General Comments: All of these criticisms of support, to my knowledge, have been directed at native preachers in nations overseas. We seem to set up a

special set of rules for these men that we don't apply to ourselves. Now note: I am NOT contending a preacher should or may take on a bunch of "dead-beat" dependents, then seek additional support because of them. I AM contending, if he has dependents, and they are legitimately his and living as they ought (2 Thess. 3:10 and Php. 1:27), a preacher has a RIGHT to provide for these; nay, an obligation to do so.

I will illustrate here by the Philippine concept of "pakikisama", but keep in mind I am discussing all nations, including the U.S. This has been attacked as if preachers in the Philippines are unscripturally seeking financial support beyond their legitimate needs as authorized under 1 Tim. 5:8. Properly understood, this "pakikisama" establishes the right of preachers to provide UNDER SOME CIRCUMSTANCES for the needs of others not members of their immediate families. 1 Tim. 5:16 is the guiding principle. Hear it: "If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged;... ." I doubt any in the U.S. today would object to a preacher HERE taking the responsibility for a widowed mother, either his or his wife's. The Filipino concept of "pakikisama" translates, roughly, "plenty of faith and sympathy, and a desire to fulfill my RESPONSIBILITY (emp mine—whl) to help." In that nation, this obligates one to assist certain others. Failure here is taken as an indication of refusal to accept responsibility, and is a shaming thing. Under such circumstances, how much attention do we suppose the preacher will get when he tries to present the gospel of Christ? And particularly, listen for the hoots and laughing he generates when he tries to teach on 1 Tim. 5:8.

To be sure, there is a limit to this responsibility. I have already mentioned two Scriptures (see Php. 1:27 and 2 Thess. 3:10). Further, need would have to exist on a permanent basis as opposed to the temporary situations described in Acts 2, 4 and 6. Yet more, these enrolled for an extended period of time would have to be in a close relationship pre-existing the need. In practical application, this is not a whole lot different than the U.S. today. The primary distinction is, here, we would not go beyond family, and SOMETIMES, the Filipino would. This is not a firm, rigid guideline, but I believe just as we have little difficulty determining the limits of our responsibility, so they have no difficulty in deciding theirs.

Each society has its own customs, traditions and cultures. It functions on the basis of these. We can no more expect to spread the gospel of Christ while violating these, or creating situations where they are violated than we can be disregarding other responsibilities the Lord has given us (see 1 Cor. 9:22 on this also).

In sum: support of preachers, Scripturally, IS according to need; churches of one nationality and race MAY support a preacher of another; a preacher's "need" may include more than his immediate family. Brethren, let us not be silly. Scripture, not our preferences and prejudices ought to govern us, in support of gospel preachers overseas, as well as in all other areas and activities (Col. 3:17).

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THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM

In the rock founded city of Cesarea Philippi, our Lord said, "Upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18-19). He went on to say, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." The word "keys" has come in for its share of controversy back through the years. Some of the old time premillennial debaters such as A. S. Bradley believed the Lord referred to TWO keys. Since the Lord used the plural "keys" Mr. Bradley and others jumped to the conclusion he was talking about two keys. I have never been able to understand why "keys" plural would mean two, why not a half dozen? Mr. Bradley, in his debate with C. R. Nichol, argued for the two key position. This debate was conducted around the turn of the century (1906). Mr. Bradley said, "Now respected friends, my opponent all the way through his speech has used the word 'keys' and says I admit that Peter used the 'keys' of the kingdom on Pentecost. I don't admit any such thing, and he knows it. There were two keys, and Peter only used one 'key' on the day of Pentecost; and he will agree with me on this subject, too. Don't misrepresent me," He went on to say, "My friend would have you to believe that Peter used both keys on Pentecost. I have shown you that he used one key then, and that showed them how to enter the church, and the other key was to teach them how to live a Christian, that they might enter into the kingdom" (Page 21, 22).

The word "keys" or "key" seem to symbolize power. This word (kleis) is used metaphorically in the New Testament. There doesn't seem to be any particular significance in the plural form. For example, in Rev. 1:18, our Lord said he had the "keys" of death and of hades. In Matt. 16:19, he said he would give unto Peter the "keys" of the kingdom. About the only difference in these two expressions is that in one we find two prepositional phrases and in the other only one. In Revelation the Lord said he had the "keys" of both death and hades. In Matthew he promises Peter the "keys" of the Kingdom and that is all. If one wanted to be fastidious, he could argue the "two key" idea with more propensity in Revelation than in Matthew. For example, one could say the Lord used one "key" to unlock the door of death and the second key to unlock the door of hades. At least that would sound pretty good. The truth about the matter is that he used the

same key to unlock both, if one insists on using the word key to symbolize unlocking doors. When Jesus was raised from the dead, he used this power "key" or "keys" to unlock both the door of death and hades. It would be foolish to insist that he used the power of his resurrection to unlock one of these doors and left the other locked for some other power.

The word "keys" (kleis) is used figuratively and to insist that it means using a key to unlock a door, does injustice to the text and context. I would not deny that in a secondary sense this might be implied in the text, but to carry it far enough to insist on "two keys" is going too far! Actually if we insist on more than one key, we might as well argue for a dozen. Since the word symbolizes power, the idea is that Peter and the other apostles would have the power to reveal the remedial system under the guidance of the Holy Spirit which they received on Pentecost.

Speaking of keys, I have two keys to my house but they are just alike! I have "keys" to my house but that does not mean they are different. If one is going to argue the literal "key" syndrome, why not argue that all of the apostles were told to bind and loose (Matt. 18:18) therefore Peter was given twelve keys so he could pass them out to all the apostles and therefore they could all unlock the door of the church. This would be more logical than the "two keys" argument.

This word "key" is used more in the book of Revelation than anywhere in the New Testament. In Rev. 3:7, the Lord says he had the "key" of David. Here the singular is used. Thus the Lord let it be known that he had the Power and authority to open or shut. Since he came from the loins of David, he certainly has the key of David. In the text he talks about "openeth and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth". This is similar to the Lord's statement in Matthew sixteen where he talks about "binding and loosing". He had the authority to lay down the terms of admission into his church. His authority is final.

In Revelation 9:1, John sees the fifth angel as he sounds, and there was given to him the key to the bottomless pit. It could not be denied that this angel had the power to open the pit. So again, we observe the significance of the word "key". In Revelation 20:1. we read again of the angel who had the "key" to the bottomless pit.

Wherever the word is used, the idea of power is in the context. To insist on a literal key and a literal door is carrying the figure too far.

It has been pointed out that if Peter used the keys of the kingdom to unlock the door of the church on Pentecost and they are not the same, he could be charged with burglary. The premillennial idea is that the church started on Pentecost but the kingdom will come later. Since most premillennialists freely admit Peter used at least "one" key on Pentecost, they have trouble finding the right key for the right lock and even more trouble locating the building and the "key hole".

AFTER DEATH, THE JUDGMENT

Charles Boshart
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Hebrews 9:27, 28 states, "And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment; so Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him, unto salvation."

The foregoing text teaches us that, just as men die once and then are judged, so Christ died once and shall appear a second time to judge. As human life, with all its works, comes to an end in death, and judgment necessarily follows, so Christ died once and judging necessarily follows. The end of human life in death and the following judgment are sobering events. Let's consider them based on these verses.

I. It is APPOINTED unto men once to die and after this the judgment.

The appointment to die is a divine appointment and it grew out of the consequences of man's sin.

God told Adam, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:16,17).

But Adam and Eve chose to eat the fruit of the forbidden tree. Eve "took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and she gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat" (Genesis 3:6).

Now, among the trees of the garden to which the First Pair had access was "the tree of life" (Genesis 3:22). The fruit of this tree would counteract the mortal or dying tendencies of the bodies of Adam and Eve for of its fruit they could "eat and live forever" (Genesis 3:22). But God "sent him forth from the garden of Eden" (Genesis 3:23). He "drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden the Cherubim and the flame of a sword which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life" (Genesis 3:24).

Since the posterity of Adam and Eve have been born out of the garden of Eden and away from the tree of life, and have not had access to its death counteracting fruit, the appointed sentence of God has been enforced, "for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Genesis 3:19).

II. It is appointed UNTO MEN once to die and after this the judgment

The word "men" emphasizes mankind and shows the universality of the pronouncement. Rich men, poor men, the great and the small, the middle class and other classes, — there are no exceptions. The healing physician will one day find himself incurably ill. The "picture of health" will one day find himself fatally diseased. The amazingly strong will one day find himself wasting away. Because human nature cannot last. Because, "All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again" (Ecclesiastes 3:20).

Please Renew Promptly

One might, as in the case of King Hezekiah (II Kings 20) have his death delayed. But this was simply the prolongation of his life. It was not the cancellation of his death. For death is appointed "unto men."

III. It is appointed unto men ONCE to die and after this the judgment.

The doctrine of the transmigration of the soul, or reincarnation, is, therefore, specifically negated by this statement. For this doctrine calls for the soul to be reborn in another body to die again. And this rebirth and death may happen many times until that soul is purified and goes, finally, to a place of peace. But the Bible teaches that men die once.

Now, if men die once and that death is followed by a judgment then man's lot in eternity is determined exclusively by what he does now on earth. For there is no room made for intervening new and additional periods of probation. There is no second chance. Muff this one and you have had it.

I Peter 3:18-20 is often appealed to as evidence that some men have been given a second chance and that, therefore, others will be. Peter says, "Because Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; in which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison, that aforetime were disobedient, when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.

The allegation is made that Jesus, after death and before his resurrection, preached to the disembodied "spirits" of the disobedient, i.e., those "in prison" or under divine restraint. And it is insisted that this preaching was done in order to allow them another opportunity for salvation.

But if this is the case, why was this preaching limited to the spirits of those who were disobedient "while the ark was a preparing?" Why should the alleged second chance be limited to them? This idea clearly makes God what Peter said he was not, "a respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34), and cannot be true.

Peter does not say that these who heard the preaching were "in spirit" or disembodied and "in prison" or under restraint when the preaching was done but when he wrote. They had heard the preaching "when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah."

II Peter 2:5 refers to Noah as "a preacher of righteousness." That which God says or does through an agent, he is said to do himself. Matthew refers to that "which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet" (1:22). Just so, Jesus preached to these before the flood through Noah. They had their chance then and they were not given another.

IV. It is appointed unto men once TO DIE and after this the judgment.

Dying is the result of the separating of the soul or spirit from the body. Genesis 35:18 states, "And it came to pass, as her soul was departing (for she died)..." And death is the state of the body apart from the spirit. James 2:26 says, "For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead." When the spirit leaves the body, it is

inoperative and without power to perform, hence dead.

It is worth noting here that the Scriptures do not say that the spirit apart from the body is dead. For death is a mortality event and is, therefore, characteristic of that which is mortal. The direction of Romans 6:12 is, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body..."

The materialist Watchtower Witness or Seventh Day Adventist (or some other stripe of modern Sadducee) opposes this conclusion affirming that man is wholly mortal and denying that death is the result of the separation of an immortal spirit from a mortal body by insisting, among other things, that God is the only one who has immortality. He tries to support this with Paul's statement in I Timothy 6:16 where he speaks of God "who only hath immortality."

But in Luke 20:35, 36 Jesus spoke of those who had attained to "the resurrection from the dead" declaring "for neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels." The reason given why these "cannot die any more" is that "they are equal unto the angels." Hence, angels do not die and are, therefore, not mortal but immortal.

The statement of I Timothy 6:16, then, that God "only hath immortality" is not teaching that God is the "only" one who "hath immortality" but that "immortality" is the "only" property God "hath" in contradistinction to man who also has mortality,—a mortal body which will die.

That man's mortal body will die is not a depressing fact leading to despair. For the Christian has the hope of entering upon a better life, a hope that is accomplished through dying.

V. It is appointed unto man once to die and AFTER THIS the judgment.

Death is not the end. The men who are appointed to die do not decompose and disintegrate into nothingness. The men who die are to have experiences "after this."

Jesus said in Matthew 10:28, "And be not afraid of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." When men "kill the body", the body, of course, dies. But when men "kill the body", they are "not able to kill the soul." The soul, therefore, lives when the body dies. It is the soul, then, that has experiences of consciousness "after this."

Paul wrote in Philippians 1:21-23, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if to live in the flesh,—if this shall bring fruit from my work, then what I shall choose, I know not. But I am in a strait betwixt the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for it is very far better: yet to abide in the flesh is more needful for your sake."

The apostle shows very clearly a distinction between himself and his "flesh." He uses the expression "to live in the flesh" and "to abide in the flesh." The flesh was not Paul but was where Paul lived and abided. And he had the desire to depart from the flesh (to separate the spirit from the body) and be with Christ. Paul realized that when he died this was not the end but that there were experiences of consciousness "after this" and "with Christ."

VI. It is appointed unto men once to die and after this THE JUDGMENT.

II Corinthians 5:10 states, "For we must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

Jesus says, "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then shall he render unto every man according to his deeds" (Matthew 16:27).

Clearly, the retention of our identity is demanded by these verses. Judgment comes after men die but it will come for deeds done in the body. It is, therefore, the person who did the deeds in the body who will be judged. We retain after death the identity we had before death.

Further, this judgment "according to our deeds" is complete. "For God will bring every work into judgment, with every hidden thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:14). Our brief earthly existence is sufficient time for the inner man to develop the character of his after life and establish the basis for reward or punishment.

Judgment, reader, is a moral necessity. If there is no judgment, then the righteous will have suffered more in this life for righteousness than the wicked in the next for their wickedness. Moreover, men are not adequately punished for sins in this life. Some who have wrecked the lives of others through abuse, murder, robbery, aggressive warfare, gross immorality, etc. have not only not suffered significantly for it in this life but have even prospered in this life up to the point of death. If justice is not to be outraged, there must be judgment and punishment after death. And the word of God says there will be.

It is critical that men make the most of life before death and the judgment. It is imperative that men give themselves and their lives to God before death and the judgment. It is necessary that men realize that the only period of probative opportunity is before death and the judgment. This is part of God's motivation to dignify our lives now by faith and obedience and serve eternal life there through grace and lovingkindness.

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FUN AND GAMES

Jack H. Kirby
1325 Panlener
Las Cruces, NM 88001

In the recent David Harkrider—Kermit Webb debate in Denver (December 9 — 11), bro. Webb repeatedly voiced objection to gymnasiums and basket-ball courts in a church-owned building while at the same time affirming that "It is in harmony with the scriptures to come to eat a common meal in the church building."

Bro. Bill Dillon of the Bellview church of Christ, Pensacola Florida (reprinted in the Par Street church of Christ ANCHOR, Orlando, Florida, December, 1980), wrote an excellent article "How Far To The Country Club?". Bro. Dillon, according to the editor of ANCHOR, is "an institutional preacher". In his article, Dillon severely rebukes churches which he says could be better described as "country clubs" because of the spending of large sums of the "Lord's money" for gymnasiums, sunset rooms, lake repairs, and pool, horse, and rifle range expenses. He chides churches for their emphasis on "Fun and games".

In the October, 1980, issue of **CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH**, Editor Ira Rice devotes the entire paper to the condemnation of gymnasiums owned by churches and "Gimmick Christianity". Like bro. Dillon, he quoted from the 1935 pen of bro. B. C. Goodpasture of Gospel Advocate fame, wherein the social gospel was severely condemned.

Both Rice and Dillon condemned Ben Zickefoose and his "Gymnastics To the Glory Of God" presentation. Ben is a P.E. professor who teaches "Bible lessons illustrated with gymnastics". Rice asked, "If there is any difference in principle between kissing a pig, jumping a long string of Toyotas, and 'Gymnastics To The Glory Of God', we fail to see it." These other things were being done by a Pentecostal and a Baptist church. My answer is the same as Ira's—there is none!

As for me, I can see little difference in "fun and games" and "food and fellowship". Kermit Webb affirmed the kitchen but condemned the gym. Both are fruits of the social gospel concept, i.e. that the gospel and the church are to minister to the whole of man, both physical and spiritual, instead of just to the spiritual.

Webb's affirmation for the kitchen centered around the fact that God nowhere mentioned church buildings. Therefore, since God did not speak concerning these things, there could be no sin connected with their use, he concluded. He said, "1 John 3:4, sin is a transgression of the law. Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth the law. Rom. 4:15, Where there is no law, there is no transgression. . . . Since there is no command for a church building, there is no law that says you shall not eat in the church building." (Harkrider—Webb debate, 1980—Webb's second

speech). Taking this position, how can these brethren oppose anything being done in or on the church-owned property that does not violate civil law?

When you accept one departure, the others naturally follow. When men like Rice in the 50's and 60's advocated and promoted cooperative, institutional innovations, they let the gate down for all other departures. It would be amusing, if not so sad, to read from their pens today where they are trying to keep such innovations as gyms and exercise parlors off church-owned property.

We beg these men to come back to the Bible as their sole rule of faith and practice. We beg them to stop making arguments like Webb made from the silence of the scriptures. Identical arguments were made by J. Carrol Stark (Stark—Warlick debate, 1903), and by J.

B. Briney (Otey—Briney debate, 1908), affirming the use of instrumental music in worship to be scriptural. These all stand or fall together.

Brethren, why cannot we learn from history the end results of this attitude?

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P.O. Box 68, Brooks, KY 40109

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

PREACHERS NEEDED

AIRDRIE, ALBERTA, CANADA—A new work currently meeting in the city of Airdrie (near Calgary) is in need of a full-time preacher. This is a rapidly growing community and much interest has been shown in the gospel. We need someone who's strength lies in the area of personal work. Please write us for more information. Church of Christ, Box 254, Airdrie, Alberta, Canada,

NEWPORT NEWS, VA—The church here seeks a full-time man. Local support is available to the extent of \$250. Contact Bob Mallard at (804) 464-9495. Or write to 1925 Sunrise Dr., Virginia Beach, VA 23455.

DEBATE

KEITH SHARP, 1800 Hairston Ave., Conway, AR 72032. On the evenings of March 2,3,5,6 I will engage a Baptist in public debate. My opponent will be Lyndon D. Whitley, Pastor of the North Jacksonville Missionary Baptist Church of Jacksonville, AR. The debate will take place in the building of the Woodrow church of Christ southeast of Vilonia, AR. The propositions are as follows:
Monday: The Scriptures teach that national Israel will be restored to the land of Palestine.

Tuesday: The Scriptures teach that, when Christ returns, He will set up a material, thousand year kingdom on this earth.

Thursday: The Scriptures teach that a child of God can so sin as to be finally lost in hell.

Friday: The Scriptures teach that a child of God cannot so sin as to be lost in hell.

I will be in the negative each night but Thursday. I will be fortunate to have the assistance of my father H. F. Sharp as my moderator.

COLUMBIA & ECUADOR SOUTH AMERICA

SANTIAGO CASTRO, 419 W. Wyoming Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45215. I am writing to inform the readers of STS of the Lord's work in South America. The church in Columbia began in 1978 when some of the American churches helped Carlos Restrepo move to Columbia to preach. Carlos learned the truth in the USA and it was his desire to go back to Columbia and start the church there. The church began to grow and now three years later the church in Bogota, Columbia has 100 faithful members. The people of Columbia show a great interest in the truth. The gospel is something new to them as most are Catholics. However, many are tired of Catholic tradition. Today the church is known not only in the city of Bogota but in many other cities of my country. The congregations in the cities of Cali and Manizales are beginning to grow but they do not have a full-time preacher. The problem is that

most all the Christians in Columbia are young and don't know how to teach other people. Carlos is the only one able to do the teaching and it is very difficult for him to keep traveling all over the country. So you can see the problem — thousands of people who want to study the Bible and only one teacher.

But the story does not end here. One month ago Carlos was invited by some to come to Ecuador to study the Bible. As a result of this four were baptized in the city of Guayaquil. My plans are to return to Columbia as soon as possible and to begin to help Bro. Carlos in the teaching. If anyone is interested in helping us in some way please write to Royce Chandler at 623 Woodett Rd., Nashville, TN 37211. Please keep praying for the work in South America and that God will give us the strength to increase the borders of His kingdom.

CARL McMURRAY, 3335 5th Ave., Sioux City, IA 51106. I am writing to recommend and raise support for Dennis McConaughy. Bro. McConaughy is 27, married, and spent four years in the Air Force and two years in one of the liberal preacher schools. Recently he took a stand against institutionalism. Because of this and his teaching on marriage, divorce, and remarriage (he teaches that adultery is the only scriptural cause for divorce and remarriage and that only the innocent one has the right to remarry) he was asked to "leave" the work in Vermillion, S. Dakota.

Several months ago a new conservative congregation began in Sioux Falls, S. Dakota. They have asked Dennis to come and work with them and he has agreed. To my knowledge there are only 3 or 4 sound churches in the Dakotas. Surely you can appreciate the need for laborers in this area and understand how hard it is to get someone to leave family and home areas and come here. Here is one who wants to come. He is studious and able to teach. If you can possibly help him on a monthly basis the Lord would repay. If not, then perhaps you could help one-time to help him with moving expenses. You may contact Dennis at 2586 N. Maple, Apt. C, Fresno, CA 93703. Another reference would be Olen Holderby, 2249 N. Meridian, Fresno, CA 93703 (209-251-6117). For more information on the area contact Jarrell Kay, P.O. Box 834, Rapid City, SD 57701.

ALBERT F. ROBINSON, Box 12, Bowling Green, MO 63334. I labor for a small group which is not able to pay me any support. Other congregations are helping me with a total of \$850 per month. At the present I need another \$300 per month to meet my bills. If you could help at all please contact me. References furnished upon request.

JACK H. KIRBY, 1325 Panlener, Las Cruces, NM 88001. 1980 was a good year for us here in Southwest NM. Twelve were baptized,

and thirty three placed membership with us. During our meeting with Yater Tant we set an all-time attendance record with 124. During the year we exceeded our budget by some \$45 per week. We continue our Sunday morning radio program and our monthly paper, THE DEFENDER. We had home Bible studies with Chinese students here at New Mexico State University and as a result two were baptized. Five preachers received partial support from us in 1980. Also we began mailing tapes free to any who request them. The response to this has been overwhelming. During the year I held meetings in Wickett and Cedar Park, TX; Madrid, I A; and Tularosa and Santa Fe, NM. The Sante Fe work was just recently established. Four were baptized in these meeting.

We also encouraged the brethren in Clovis, NM to establish a conservative church there. This has been accomplished and the brethren are meeting in an office building at 210 East Grand. We are still striving to establish faithful churches in NM areas where none are presently meeting. If any reader knows of any Christians in Farmington, Carlsbad, Gallup, or Grants, please inform us.

Here at Las Cruces we are planning a spring lecture program April 6-10 using five young NM preachers. Our meeting place is on the corner of Solano and Panlener Streets, six blocks north of New Mexico State University. If you are looking for a place to move out of the cold • try us here in the Southwest. We will be looking for you.

WILLIAM C. SEXTON, 1937 Judson, Manhattan, KS 66502. As this year comes to a close we wish for brethren to know that we still meet at 1112 Pierre St. in Manhattan, two blocks south of the City Building. The congregation has seen a lot of change in the last twelve months experiencing almost a 100% turnover. We expected that mobility would be a factor in Manhattan, in that we are near Ft. Riley Military Base and K-state University. However, we did not expect the rapidity with which it has come. Although many have moved out of the area we are thankful that others have moved in. Most of them are capable and willing to spend their energy in the Lord's work. During the fast moving year we had two meetings. One with Bro. Herbert Knight and the other with Bro. Joe Griffin. Good was done in both meetings. Some contacts were made and we pray that spiritual fruits will be born in time. I have had to raise about 3/4's of my support from other places and we are thankful for those who have helped. Remember us when you pray, visit us as you travel, and inform us if you learn of people in our area. My phone number is (913) 539-0458. God bless you is our prayer.

R.E. MORRE, P.O. Box 932, Oroville, CA 95965. This is to inform the readers of STS that a congregation of God's people is presently meeting in Oroville at 1650 Robinson St. This work was established in 1979 and we presently have seven families, and seven single members who attend. It is our intention to hold strictly to God's word and try to spread the gospel in this area. We recently concluded meeting with Bro. Olen Holderby. The meeting was well attended and Bro. Holderby did an excellent job. When in this part of the Sacramento Valley stop and worship with us.

JEFF KINGRY, P.O. Box 26, Milton, VT 05468. Since Bro. Connie gave me space in STS to ask for support I have heard from several who have sent money to help with our needs. At the present, all of our support has been raised, much of it coming from brethren who sacrificed to provide it. Such is encouraging to me. One family who is providing a portion of my support is Bro. and Sis. E.L. Upham of Quitman, TX. Bro. Upham, a generous brother of over four-score years, wrote and sent monthly support because of the need he read about in STS. I was saddened to hear from Sis. Upham that he had fallen from a ladder while trying to remove egg that vandals had thrown at his house. Paralyzed for a week or more, he finally succumbed to his injuries and fell asleep in the Lord. Bro. Upham had written and told me that he had made arrangements with the congregation where he worshipped to continue my support even though he might pass away. The monetary sum means nothing to me — but his love and unselfishness that would prompt such a move is indeed touching. "Blessed are those who die in the way, blessed are those who love the Lord." Whatever I may do for the Lord, what I share with Bro. Upham in his devotion to God will never pass away. It is sometimes difficult to permit brethren to "anoint" us in this way, but the sweet smell of his sacrifice is known to God and should be known by his brethren.

We have enjoyed the fruit of two baptisms since my move to Vermont in September. We have survived two meetings another move to our own home, a round of sickness, the hunting season, and 48 degrees below zero weather. Anyone who would like to visit in Vermont and who loves the Lord has family here.

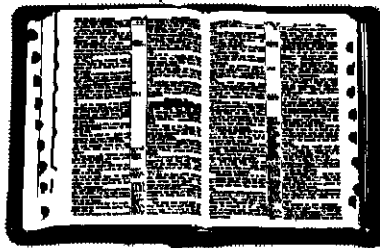
IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	310
RESTORATIONS	177

(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)

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 XXII

APRIL, 1981

NUMBER 4

THINK ON
THESE THINGS

W. E. Phillips
P.O. Box 17244
Tampa, Florida 33612



HOW TO DESTROY A SOUND CHURCH

Do you want to know how to destroy a faithful, sound church' of the Lord? There are a lot of people doing it, but I doubt any of them would admit that they are working toward this goal. You understand, of course, that I am NOT writing this article in the hope of finding some one to do such a dastardly deed. I am approaching the subject from a standpoint that will make the guilty realize what they are perhaps ignorantly doing to weaken the congregation of which they are members. If I do not reach the guilty, hopefully I will help all who are trying to make the church strong to identify by their actions those who are destroying the congregation of which they are members.

The formula for destroying the effectiveness of a strong and growing congregation is a rather simple and easy one. Of course, no one wants to admit that he wishes to be a party to any such work, but somehow the majority of religious people today seem to find and follow the formula to the letter.

There are many characteristics about a sound, strong and faithful church that distinguish it from others, and these are the vital points to attack first in destroying such a church. The devil knows this well, and he will plant in the hearts of as many as possible the will to do his work. We shall examine the approach of the weak and ungodly and their methods to destroy a sound church.

1. Every strong, effective congregation has a good teaching program. It must be acknowledged that a "teaching program" is not, within itself, an asset, but a good teaching program to teach the TRUTH is one of

the greatest assets any church can have. Consequently, to contribute something to the downfall or deterioration of the teaching arrangement and the effective implanting of the truth in the minds of children and adults alike will result in the destruction of a strong church.

There are a number of approaches to accomplish this destruction. Instead of regular and faithful attendance, an occasional attendance to Bible classes demoralizes the teacher, discourages the class, hinders the plan of teaching by the elders, and keeps you from learning. You could also roam from class to class in an effort to become lost and yet claim your fulfillment of responsibility for being present. That is a successful way NOT to learn and to keep others from learning.

I must not fail to mention that one of the most effective ways to destroy Bible study is to never prepare your lesson or participate during the class period. If possible leave your work material and Bible at home. Murmuring and complaining about the subject matter, the teacher, and other students in the class contributes to the destruction of an otherwise effective Bible study.

2. The second point in a strong church to attack and kill is the zeal and thirst for truth and righteousness. Just develop an attitude of apathy—I don't care—and encourage as many others as possible to do the same. Forget about the importance of expressing your love to God in obeying His commandments (John 14:15; 1 John 5:2,3). Be sure to come to the period of worship on Lord's day morning and Lord's day evening (if you are involved enough to come) with both the attitude and expression of doing as little as possible and expecting to receive as little as possible.

Find as many faults with the elders, deacons, teachers, preachers, and saints as you can think up. It makes little difference whether they are true or not. It will help distract your attention from the purpose in praying and singing the praises of God. Never bring your Bible to worship. Never listen to a lesson with self in view, and never make an application of any principle of truth to your own life. In substance, be as indifferent toward all that is done or said as is possible with you. Indifference on the part of a large enough number (and apathy is contagious) will completely

demoralize and destroy the work of a strong congregation.

3. One of the most effective tactics in destroying a sound church is to introduce false and divisive doctrines. Develop yourself into a professional critic, and attack under the guise of "deeper study" about every principle of truth that is presented privately or publicly. Try to make yourself a one man authority on every issue and an expert umpire in resolving every controversial issue. It does not require a great amount of knowledge of the Bible, but it does require a skill in perverting the truth and in ignoring other plain statements that are made in the Bible. It would help to enlist any others who might seem to think as you do to add to the false and contentious doctrines. It is important to undermine the oversight of scriptural elders and the sound doctrine from the word of God both privately and publicly. To make your opinionated doctrines even more effective, begin a campaign of setting one brother against another or one family against another within the congregation.

False doctrine is an effective method of destroying a sound church. But there is another very effective element to add to this false doctrine approach: adopt the practice of shifting responsibility to someone else, anyone else. Encourage the elders to give their responsibilities to others—to the preacher. This can be done almost without notice. The claim to oversight could be retained while literally assigning every decision and function of the elders to another person to the point that the elders do not really know what is going on. The quickest way for elders to lose their oversight and leadership is to lose the personal communication with the congregation to which they are responsible. This has produced more corrupt and unauthorized functions and organizations within the church than any other one single practice.

4. One other point in accomplishing the demise of a strong, faithful church is for a large number of the members individually to love the world and turn back to those things from which they were delivered when they obeyed the gospel. The word teaches us not to love the world, and then defines what the world is (1 John 2:15, 16). To love the world makes us enemies of God (James 4:4).

The slow drift both on the part of the ones who practice immoral conduct of the world and those in the church who tolerate it will in time lead to the ineffective influence of the church to preach the gospel of Christ to anyone. The Spirit said that they who are after the flesh will die, but those after the things of the Spirit will live. (Rom. 8:5-8).

The works of the flesh are listed in Galatians 5:19-21. The weakening of the church through immorality is made greater by the fact that immorality is tolerated and even excused by others in the congregation who do not practice it but will not take scriptural action to "purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump" (1 Cor. 5:7). One or two practicing the works of the flesh will soon destroy all the influence of any congregation and render it totally defenseless against the powers of this world. Such a church will lose its relationship to the Lord, and the candlestick will be removed out of its place.

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This is a sordid and sickening picture of the downfall of a good congregation and how to accomplish it. It is not a theory, but is in fact a cycle in which the history of many congregations is repeated many, many times. The purpose of this article is to impress upon everyone the need to avoid any part of this course that would lead to the destruction of any congregation.

It is so easy to allow oneself to drift from the truth, or to close our eyes to the drifting of another. The changes are slow and gradual, but the inevitable consequences are the same. This is the reason the word of God repeatedly exhorts each of us to watch and "examine" ourselves, whether we are in the faith (2 Cor. 13:5).

Editorial

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THE COURSE OF THIS WORLD

"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience (Eph. 2:1-2). With these words Paul contrasted the present happy state of the Ephesians with the former deplorable condition in which they were found. Before they were made alive unto God, they served the Devil, were permeated by that spirit which continually dwells in the disobedient, and ordered their lives after the "course of this world."

The word "course" here is from the word AION, often translated age and sometimes **dispensation**. In our passage it does not denote a period of time, but a mode of dealing, or the cycle or present round of things. (W. E. Vine, **An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words**.). The term "world" denotes the realm in which Satan's influence is felt.

Christians are ever warned against following the course of this world. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever" (1 Jno. 2:15-17).

The danger to the soul of a Christian from the course of this world is tragically exemplified in the report that "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world" (2 Tim. 4:10). Christians are taught to regard themselves as strangers and pilgrims who are not to indulge in practices which war against the soul (1 Pet. 2:11). "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier" (2 Tim. 2:4).

In spite of such sober warnings, it is a lamentable fact that too many who profess to be Christians have failed to heed these warnings and are so caught up in the course of this world, that little, if any, distinction may be noted between their lives and the lives of those who make no claim of serving the Lord.

(1) **The things of this world** have so captivated the hearts of many of the Lord's own, that they have excused themselves from those pursuits necessary to develop the graces which ever identify the Christian. Under the guise of "making a living" many have set their affections on things below, rather than those above. Bigger houses, more gadgets, cars, boats.

campers, sporting goods, a thicker carpet, a fashionable wardrobe, and such like have so occupied the thinking of many that they have lost interest in mansions in the sky and robes of righteousness. Such vain pursuits have robbed homes of mothers and children of natural parental affection and guidance.

(2) **The pleasures of this world** have captured the attention and occupy large segments of the time of modern people. It is unpopular in many places for gospel preachers to say anything against dancing, drinking, gambling, mixed swimming, movies and television shows which feature every unholy attitude or expression conceivable. Night time soap operas play to vast audiences among whom are found many who have been washed in the blood of the Lamb, but don't want to miss the next episode of Dallas or Knot's Landing, or Flamingo Road. Sex, both pre- and extra marital, lying, scheming, cursing, drinking, and you name it—all these and more are common fare. Sports- mania is epidemic in America today. Church members will miss worship periods, memorize statistics, and some congregations have even changed service times to keep from inconveniencing some sports nut. Boosters of rival teams have been known to have hard feelings though all were members of the same congregation. And if some player takes his hockey stick and knocks a rival in the head, or some football player is brutally injured, or a basketball player gets his legs cut out from under him after a lay-up, or there is a riot during a baseball game, then that makes it all the more spicy. After all, who wants a dull contest? We have heard Christians seek to justify their "innocent" wagers at a horse track or a Las Vegas casino. Social drinking finds more advocates all the time, even in Bible classes and pulpits.

(3) **The dress of this world** is more important to some than modesty, shamefacedness and sobriety, and that applies to both men and women. Indecent exposure is common among both sexes, including those who wear the name of Christ. Strapless, backless dresses are seen at worship gatherings, along with skin tight stretch pants and low necklines. Men, who obviously fancy themselves "macho" appear with their shirts unbuttoned nearly to their waist. I have seen a few of these real "he men" serve at the Lord's Table with their hairy chests exposed to the congregation. People who have "dress up" clothes and who wear them to appropriate occasions have decided that worshipping the God who made us is such an ordinary, common-place thing, that we must appear as casually as possible lest we allow someone to deprive us of our "liberty." Liberty is one thing; irreverence is another. Such passages as 1 Tim. 2:7-10 and Titus 2:3-5 are still in the Book and should be given due attention.

(4) **The speech of this world** has so invaded our ranks that many who ought to know better have become coarse and vulgar in expression. A few years ago my wife and I excused ourselves from a gathering in which a well known preacher was relating such an indelicate matter that we were both embarrassed. Upon leaving, we told him that we did not want to hear anymore of such talk. Some of the pulpit language is pretty salty

at times in some places. The vulgarisms of degenerate musicians have become part of everyday expression. Hear the word of the Lord. "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers" (Eph. 4:29). "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man" (Col. 4:6).

Having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust, let us not become again entangled therein and lose our reward. All too soon the journey here will be over and we must stand before our God to give an account. Heaven awaits the righteous, and "every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself" (1 Jno. 3:3).

ARTICLES ON THE CHRISTIAN AND WARFARE IN NEXT ISSUE

The long awaited articles presenting the two major views on the Christian and his relation to warfare will appear in the May issue. The editor and Ken Green and Eugene Britnell all regret the delay. The material is well written and thought provoking and we believe will be of great value to all Christians, but especially to young men who have to face this issue and decide what the proper course of action for them would be. Brethren Britnell and Green are both regular writers for this paper and personal friends. They have written without rancor and have tried to objectively set forth what each believes on this important issue of conscience. While both these men believe that debates, properly conducted, are profitable, and so does the editor, we have chosen a different format for this study.

We will print some extra copies in the event some may wish to order additional copies to hand to friends. We thank both men for the extra time and work this imposed on them. Both of them are extremely busy and have contributed this material only out of a desire to help in the study of this question. Watch for it in the **MAY ISSUE OF SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES.**

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REDEMPTION (2)

Moses to Cornelius

In the initial article of this series we have attempted to stress the eternal purpose of God, identifying the grand central theme of the Bible as redemption. We have taken note of the introduction of sin into the human family, via Adam and Eve, by which the world stands condemned. Adam disobeyed God, this act of sin alienated him from God. Sin always produces the same result, "alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works" (Col. 1:21). It was the fact of sin in Adam's case that alienated and it is the fact of sin in every son and daughter of Adam. This plight in God's purpose was to be averted in Christ. "For God sent not his son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:17).

God, unwilling that man be forever lost, conceived an extraordinary expression of love that would vindicate divine justice and touch the rebellious heart of humanity affecting reconciliation. To this end it was God's eternal purpose to **send** Jesus in the fullness of time; **establish** the church; **publish** the gospel; and reconcile all things unto Himself (Eph. 2:11-17). The admission of the Gentiles into the kingdom of God brought perfection to the plan of the ages.

The Old Testament era is generally accepted as the record of some 4000 years of human history which divides into the Patriarchal Age of about 2500 years and the Mosaic Age of some 1500 years. This last, the Jewish dispensation, is initiated with the giving of the Law at Sinai. The "words the Lord spake" were written in two tables of stone and Moses was mediator between the people and God as the Ten Commandments circumscribed the relationship of the nation of Israel and Jehovah (Deut. 5:5, 22). Such constituted a system ordained of God and designed to last until the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ. Then, a new law, the gospel, was established bringing to fulfillment all previous law instituted by God. "Blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross" (Col. 2:14). But, why was the law added? "It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator" (Gal. 3:16-25).

In relation to the system and purpose of God which was to succeed it, the Law must be viewed as typical. The continuity of contrast between the Law and the

Gospel, designed to stress the superiority of the Gospel featured in Hebrews, emphasizes the point. "Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount" (Heb. 8:5).

The record of some 450 years of history dealing with a system of Judges who ruled and championed the cause of Israel is followed by the setting up of a kingdom. Saul, David, and Solomon ruled 40 years successively, giving us the 120 year united kingdom period. With the death of Solomon, division into two kingdoms develops. Ten tribes defect to become identified as the Northern Kingdom of Israel, and two tribes remain faithful to the house of David, the Southern Kingdom, Judah. Subsequent decline and fall of these bring us to what we here refer to as the gospel in prophecy.

The prophets occupy a major portion of the latter history of Israel. The scope of their work was both physical and spiritual. To this end they, as the mouth of God, taught and admonished the people in the right way of the Lord and kept in constant focus the promise of Messiah and His everlasting kingdom. They, in this sense, preached the gospel prophetically. They predicted every facet and development of the redemption to be consummated in the coming Messiah and establishing of the kingdom.

In character and power the Messiah was to be called, "Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." His was to be an everlasting government of peace established upon the throne of David to dispense judgment and justice forever (Isa. 9:6-7). He was to be an everlasting priest, "Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek" (Psa. 110:4), the Son of God (Psa. 2:7), possessed of unlimited power and dominion. "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool" (Psa. 110:1).

Messiah was prophesied as born in Bethlehem of Judea (Mic. 5:2), of a virgin. "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isa. 7:14). He was to be rejected, shamefully treated and crucified (Isa. 53); betrayed by one of his own (Psa. 41:9). The Psalmist prophesied that he would be raised by the power of God (Psa. 16:9-10), then the gospel would be preached from Jerusalem (Is. 2:2-3) and the kingdom would be thus established in the days of the Roman kings (Dan. 2:44). This is the gospel in prophecy of which Peter says, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1:21).

The fourth phase in the development of God's eternal purpose may be designated **preparation**. The time chosen for the advent of the Saviour into the world was ripe. Every circumstance of human history blended to bring to fruition God's plan. Jesus was born of a virgin, lived and died under the Law of Moses which he unerringly kept. Only in His death could the

Law and the prophets be fulfilled, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matt. 5:17-18).

Forty days following the resurrection of Jesus was spent in teaching his disciples about the kingdom (Acts 1:3). Finally, they are told to tarry in Jerusalem "until ye be endued with power from on high" (Lk. 24:49). Jesus then ascends to heaven, as the disciples stand watching, there to be crowned king. Incidentally, if the church is not the kingdom, as some would have us to believe, Christ is king without one. Ten days later, on the day of Pentecost, the gospel was proclaimed in fact for the first time. No longer is it a matter of purpose, neither promise. Prophecy is fulfilled, preparation is complete, the plan of the ages has been nurtured and developed to maturity. Circumscribed by three cardinal truths which also are its focal point, the death, burial and resurrection of Christ is preached, the gospel as a matter of established and unquestionable fact is proclaimed.

The first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ is both a beginning and an ending. The ending of the Jewish or Mosaic Dispensation and the beginning of the Christian Dispensation, the age of grace. The cross plus 50 days ushers in a period of apostolic activity commanded in "go ye into all the world and preach the gospel" which sees the Jew as the initial object of preaching. Finally, the Gentile as represented in Cornelius, hears, believes and is baptized, thus completing God's remedial system. God has done all he purposed and promised to do toward redemption, man must do the rest. (Our third installment in the series will deal with the completion of God's remedial plan).

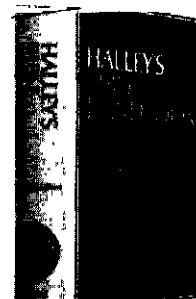
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FOUR GREAT FOUR-LETTER WORDS—LOVE

Everyone deserves the privilege of being loved. But more than that, everyone deserves the privilege of loving. Man thrives on love, both extending it and receiving it. Without it there is a void which cannot be filled, a nagging feeling of incompleteness and lack.

Love is very close to a lot of things. It has to do with devotion. It has to do with sympathy. It has to do with physical attraction. It is a part of mercy. It is the motive for grace. It is the reason for salvation. It is so high and so noble a sentiment, so great a quality that John affirms that "God is love" (I Jno. 4:8) and that "love is of God" (I Jno. 4:7).

Love is that disposition or state of feeling which shows itself in the seeking of the best interests of the object of the affection. Not only does it seek the approval of the object of such affection, it usually delights in the presence of that one. It is prompted by many motives: physical attraction between the sexes; sympathy for one's ill fortune; common interests and goals; but in all cases true love seeks the best for the one loved. When the Scriptures say, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son," it is a statement about his concern for and interest in mankind, the object of His affection.

We are to love God and our fellows. Remembering our definition, it becomes apparent what John meant when he said, "For this is the love of God that we keep his commandments," for to love God is to seek His approval, His fellowship, as well as the promotion of His cause. To love our fellows is to perfect His love in us, for "if we love one another, God dwelleth in us" (I Jno. 4:12). And in this simple statement is seen love's relation to approval as well as fellowship. When Jesus says, "on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matt. 22:40), he seeks to show us that love is the supreme motive for all service. "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God" (I Jno. 4:7).

We are to love our enemies. When we come to understand that the love commanded in Scripture is not the maudlin sentimentality promoted by worldly sources, that it is rather an intellectual commitment to another's well being, then we can comply with the Lord's command, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you" (Matt. 5:44). When we "were yet sinners (enemies, Jas. 4:4) Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). By such actions "he

commendeth his love for us." Such devotion to mankind is graphically illustrated by Jesus in his injunction in the mountain message of Matthew five. We must be like him. What a terrible fate would be ours if God had rejected those who rejected Him. How horrible our eventuality if Christ HAD called down his legions of angels (Matt. 26:53). Instead he willingly and out of great love, died for his enemies.

We should love truth. Far too few people really love truth. I know that is true for far too few people get to know truth and far too few people want it nearby at all times. In fact, I think I can safely say that most folks consider truth to be a burden, a chore to be borne, a responsibility to be shouldered. There are even people who will apologize to their peers because of their association with truth. But truth deserves no such relegation. Its value is incalculable, its worth inestimable. Who can put a price tag on discovery? Who can properly value the release from the grip of superstition, ignorance, prejudice that has taken place as a result of the ascertainment of truth? And who is it that could determine the worth of salvation? And are not all these the result of truth? It is no wonder the wise man enjoined, "Buy the truth and sell it not" (Prov. 23:23), for it is indeed a most precious commodity. How we ought to love it! We should love hearing it, learning it, discussing it, promoting it. Truth is the basis for our salvation (I Jno. 8:32), the power for our deliverance (Rom. 1:16), the means for our acceptance with God (II Pet. 1:3). Let us truly love it.

We should not love the wrong things (I Jno. 2:15). We would not inordinately love ourselves (II Tim. 3:2). We should be careful that we are not "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God" (II Tim. 3:4). Let us seek out and embrace the kind of love that suffers long, is kind; that envieth not and vaunteth not itself; the kind not easily provoked and that thinketh no evil (CF. I Cor. 13). Let us "Not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth" (I Jno. 3:18).

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WHAT CHILDREN ARE AT COLLEGE GENERALLY BEGAN AT HOME

(W. C. Hammontree reviews a speech entitled "Concern About Unconcern", presented by James R. Cope, President of Florida College, stressing the need for guidance and discipline to begin in the home.)

In an unscheduled speech during the 1981 Lecture Programs held on the campus of Florida College, January 26-29, President Cope responded strongly and emphatically to a number of problems, attitudes and rumblings that plague both the College and the parents. The audience of over one thousand visitors interrupted his remarks with applause on several occasions as he presented numerous thought-provoking, and often challenging, comments regarding the conditions that prevail in the church, the home and colleges today. Because of the changes taking place in the thinking of the students who are attending, and more importantly, in that of the parents who are sending, the College often finds itself under attack. President Cope said:

"We need not expect that the foundations of Florida College will be exempt from the beating rains, stormy winds, and rising floods of years to come. Just as this school has known its 'blood, sweat and tears' periods, so it needs be that to greater or lesser degrees the similar testing times will come. If the foundation stones laid 35 years ago are kept in place, none need fear that this institution will be standing a hundred years from now. We need to remember, however, that this school is run by men . . . poor, fallible though sincere, well-intentioned sons of Adam. Furthermore, that these men are the products of a variable, changing, and often fickle society, affected by changing mores and value concepts which, even among religious leaders, are ever in a constant state of flux, characterized by varying degrees of liberal and conservative thought.

I regret to say that there have been numerous schools begun on just such fundamental and conservative foundations, as has this one, which have long since left the faith of their founding fathers. College halls which once vibrated and resounded respect for God, His word, and His way, have long since echoed the destructive echoes of worldly, even atheistic, owls and bats."

President Cope spoke of the apostasy that had taken place in the church and pointed out that when this happened, faithful brethren rose to form new and faithful congregations. Just as this happened in the church, he said:

"If and when the Florida College you and I

have known, loved, and preserved, so departs from its original moorings that it is unworthy of patronage and support, that same day faithful brethren should start another institution to serve the peculiar moral and educational needs of Christian parents and children who at that time believe in the ideals which gave birth to this one.

If I told you that I am not concerned about the future of Florida College, I would speak a falsehood. But hear this, my brethren: I am much more concerned about what is happening to parents who send them, and to the young people who come here, than I am about the stability and perpetuity of this school which exists to serve the alleged needs of both Christian parents and their children."

Many who are associated with Florida College have, for the last several years, heard parents and college supporters express concern that occasionally some students are reported to be doing things while at Florida College that are improper. President Cope expressed his deep concern that such things can, and do happen, but warned that the attitudes of parents and others often foster such problems, and responded with:

"This school has lived 35 years because its patrons have believed this controlled environment, based upon biblical truth and enforceable moral regulations, is worth the price they must pay to have it for their children. All this time, most of these parents have had enough confidence in the administrators and teachers here to back them regardless of the restrictions and punishment of their own children when they have been severely disciplined... I confess to you that within the last ten to fifteen years I see a definite reassessment of moral values and attitudes which were not spawned here, but were brought to this campus. . . My brethren, God's people have always lived in the midst of the worldly ways of worldly thinking and godless people. Christians are said to be 'in' but 'not of' this world. Nevertheless, when Christian parents tolerate in their children immoral practices generally characteristic of the non-christian world, there is no way for such children suddenly to become lily-white simply because they are exposed to the controlled environment of this campus."

The audience responded with nods of approval and applause as President Cope put the blame and responsibility uncompromisingly upon that which he believes has created these conditions. He said:

"I bring no wholesale indictment against any parent or child in particular. Yet, in both homes and churches I visit away from

the campus, more and more I see a lessening of respect for the hoary head, less reverence where worship is taking place, and more scoffing at regulations imposed by both public and private school officials. I observe an increasingly sloven, 'don't care' attitude toward neat, clean dress habits and the type clothing worn in public. I observe scanty, sexually suggestive, and often shameless attire worn by both male and female, plus a disgustingly increasing fondling of the bodies of the opposite sex, often in the presence of the youth's own parents! I see a 'don't care' attitude toward what older and wiser heads suggest as proper behavior and all this coupled with a 'nobody's going to tell me what I am going to think, say or do' disposition. These are some of the things I continue to observe in families of men usually thought of, in many churches, as the leaders and feeders of the flock of God.

I suggest to you, my brethren, that all these conditions did not happen overnight. I further suggest that these attitudes have not been born on the campus of this and similar schools. They have developed elsewhere, yet somehow the most ardent boosters often expect faculty and administration to wash all these soiled and torn linens without rubbing somebody's feathers the wrong way."

Just as these problems are often brought to, and do occur on, the campus of Florida College, President Cope emphasized that when it becomes known, action is taken to stop it. He referred to some who thought that things had taken place on the campus and believed that the College did nothing about it, by saying that too often those who know of such things...

"... instead of coming to the officials who can do something about it, or going through student government channels designed for the correction of such matters, that they just talk to one another, stew in their own juice, often upset their parents by their reports, and, instead of helping the situation by reporting irregularities, allow the situation to degenerate. The same thing is true off campus. Even our patrons and supporters sometime talk to their neighbors, friends, and brethren about things happening thousands of miles from where they live but somehow never get around to writing a letter or making a telephone call to personnel in the college who can do something about a situation which may, admittedly, be bad. Even though I am head of the school, and even though we have people who are giving their lives in an effort to help the sons and daughters of other Christians across this land, all of us frequently learn things away from campus

that we do not learn on campus."

In a comparison of this college's problems to other experiences in everyday life, he said:

"I doubt if there is any parent who has grown children who has not also been the last to learn some things about his own children. Millions of marriages end in divorce every year because one companion knew nothing of the activities of the other til it was too late."

Perhaps most of us, as parents, would feel deeply hurt if we should learn that our children had been guilty of some serious infraction while away at school. It may even be somewhat natural to want to put the blame on others. It is obvious that serious soul searching and deep reflections were taking place as silence fell over the audience while President Cope stated forcefully:

"Florida College is not a reformatory. Parents who have no realistic control of their teenagers while they are at home should not be shocked when these same children get into trouble here. It is even worse, and ultimately detrimental to the child and destructive of the home, when parents sympathize with and defend their children who disregard school regulations. It is not uncommon for us to learn that young people who get caught in their use of narcotics or alcohol here have been getting by with the same activities while in high school and living at home all the while the fathers and mothers never dreamed that their dear darlings were wild degenerates when outside their parents' immediate presence. . . Increasingly, this type student comes to this type school only to learn after arrival that we mean what we say about our regulations. He is soon in trouble, is often suspended, and then it is known that in some cases both the child and his parents tend to carry a chip on their shoulders, become openly critical of school policies, and sometimes become hard, if not bitter, critics. Some parents don't want their sons and daughters enrolled in the 'do-your-own-thing' tax supported college, but these same parents sometimes become critical of this school's officials for demanding respect for the very rules which distinguish Florida College from universities with such tolerant environments."

Obviously, such conditions and attitudes do exist and almost every parent and supporter of the College has heard something at some time that prompted deep concern. It seems that President Cope not only unveiled the problem, but struck at its heart when he said of parent's discipline and training of their own children:

"They cannot wait til they (the children) are ready for junior high, senior high school, or

college, to start discipline. These same parents must learn that they must begin by loving and respecting each other as husbands and wives. We spend fortunes, and the first 20 years of our lives, learning to make a living, but precious little time learning to make a life together with the opposite sex. We spend years preparing for livelihood, occupations and professions and little or no time preparing our minds or those of our children, for love and tenderness, the patience and politeness, the thoughtfulness and unselfishness, the common sense and common decency, the mutual respect and the mutual responsibilities of marriage. Shall we never learn and shall we never teach our children that happiness is not discovered in sex alone? Shall husband and wife never learn that happiness is a state of mind created by two persons committed to God and to each other in the completing of each other's whole being and personality?

Florida College would be derelict in its mission if it failed to support the home and hold before its students the sanctity of marriage and family life.

The time is now and the place is here for you and me to resolve anew to give ourselves, in the time we have left, to the building of faith and faithfulness into our own hearts and lives as parents and teachers. With an eye upon eternity, a heart prompting to action, a hand guiding the steps of those committed to our trust, by God's grace and as His people we cannot fail."

In his conclusion he stressed the College's role, and while pointing out its place in the moral development of each student, he made certain none could, or would, identify the College as the church. He said:

"Florida College is not the church of Jesus Christ, locally or generally. As I said earlier, it is not a moral reformatory to repair parental failures. It is not a missionary society to evangelize the world as an agent either of individuals or churches. It is designed, and continues, purely as a private educational entity . . . a human service institution. It sells human improvement services without financial profit to any stockholders, though it is dependent upon others than the parents and the pupils it serves. Though the graduate or non-graduate . . . the finished product . . . may not always have the finesse that a parent, or even the faculty itself, may desire, it should always be remembered that the raw material enrolled in September has much to do with the finished or unfinished product which leaves this campus at the end of a semester, a full term, or with a diploma two years later.

The thing that has amazed me is not the number which we have failed to improve, but the great number that Christians working here daily and prayerfully have succeeded in salvaging for useful citizenry, for both general society and the kingdom of God. Those who shall continue to operate this school need the constructive suggestions of faithful friends, and they must have it to preserve what has thus far been wrought."

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Along with brother Ham-montree, we believe James R. Cope hit the nail right on the head. His words are courageous, sobering to students and parents alike and ought to be well considered by all, whether patrons of the school or not. At the end of the next full year of work at Florida College, James R. Cope will retire as President. He has served well and long and deserves the gratitude of a host of parents and former students. His successor as President has not yet been announced and friends of the school will watch and wait with keen interest. The second generation in the administration of any human enterprise, whether school or publishing business, is always crucial as to whether or not said enterprise remains faithful to its original aims and purposes. We think it not out of place to express here our best wishes to those who have to make such a serious choice along with the earnest hope that the College Board, Administrators and Faculty will act consistent with God's will in their decisions and actions. CWA)

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We continue with the seventh and final point of question eighteen, and the question concerns the practice of "close communion." Mr. Taylor replied:

"We teach close communion because the Scriptures so teach. A. Campbell said open communion is both unreasonable and unscriptural. So said J. W. McGarvey and all other Campbellites of recognized scholarship. First Corinthians 11:18-20 shows conclusively that if there are sects or divisions or heresies present at the Lord's table you can't eat the Lord's supper. It is no longer the Lord's table but the table of men or of demons. God's alternative is close communion or none at all."

When reference is made to "close communion" or "closed communion" we are speaking of the practice of the Baptist people in refusing to allow the members of other denominations to eat the Lord's supper with them even though they may be present and desire to do so. They are as inconsistent on this as they are on many other things. They teach that all believers are saved regardless of what denomination they are in. So they plan to spend eternity in heaven with them but will not commune with them while on earth.

The New Testament does not teach close communion in the Baptist sense of that term. Certainly the Christians in a congregation should be united. In the verses in First Corinthians 11, Paul rebukes the disciples for desecrating the Lord's supper by turning it into a common meal and not discerning the Lord's body and blood. It is a spiritual communion, and should be observed in a worthy manner. Nothing is said about someone approving or disapproving of anyone eating it. The examination is to be done by each individual for himself, and not by the church. "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup" (I Cor. 11:28). It doesn't say let the church examine the man and then perhaps forbid him eating of the bread and drinking of his cup. No, it doesn't say that! That's only Baptist doctrine.

He failed to offer any proof that Campbell believed in close communion, and he mis-represented McGarvey. In commenting on First Corinthians 11:28 and 31, McGarvey said:

"If we examined and corrected ourselves, we would escape the correction of God; but, as it is his judgments are visited upon us, so that we may not finally be condemned with the world (Ps. 94:12; Heb. 12:5-12). Verses 28 and 31 call for self-judgment, but there is no Biblical authority for the practice of those who take it upon themselves to judge as to the fitness of other

professing Christians to commune (comp. Rom 14:4). Moreover, these verses, in giving the true rule of practice, expose the departure of the Romish church, which calls for no self-examination, but makes confession and priestly absolution the preparation for communion." (*The Standard Bible Commentary* by McGarvey and Pendleton, page 119).

Please notice that McGarvey said there is "no Biblical authority" for the practice of those who judge the fitness of others to commune. Of course there isn't!

"19. Where in the New Testament do you find authority for these things (the seven points of question 18, EB)?"

Taylor's answer: "All Scripture references bearing on doctrine, polity or ordinances of the New Testament churches plainly teach that the once-delivered faith is the faith now taught and practiced by the Baptists. Given an open Bible and an open mind and a new heart and a Baptist will be the sure result."

I suppose that means that everyone who is not a Baptist has a closed Bible, closed mind, and an old heart. I have opened my Bible to every page many times, but I have not read anything about a Baptist, the Baptist Church, instructions for becoming a Baptist, or the command to be one. I think I have an open mind, so if anyone knows where I need to open my Bible to find such information, please let me know. So far, I have overlooked it.

Instead of Baptist doctrine and practice being the "once-delivered faith," I am ready to affirm that there is not one thing taught by the Baptist Church, peculiar to that denomination, that is in harmony with the scriptures. If one knew only the Bible, he or she would never dream of a Baptist Church or know of Baptist doctrine.

"20. Baptists are unscriptural in name, doctrine and practice; why be one?"

"Wrong again, neighbor. I am a Baptist because they are scriptural in origin, name, doctrine, faith and practice. The first New Testament preacher was a Baptist preacher. The material out of which Jesus Christ organized His church was prepared by this Baptist preacher and was therefore Baptist material. The church organized by Jesus Christ out of this material was a Baptist church. The only time all three of the persons of the God-head ever manifested their presence on earth was at a Baptist baptism (Matt. 3:13). No man could be one of the 12 except one who was baptized by the first Baptist preacher (Acts 1:21-22)."

We have gone over some of this before, but it is necessary that we answer every point made, and repetition is one of the laws of learning.

If the Baptist denomination is scriptural in origin, where is there a reference in the scriptures to its origin? If it is scriptural in name, where is it named in the scriptures? The same applies to all other characteristics.

John was not a Baptist preacher, nor was he a New Testament preacher. He lived and preached before the New Testament of Christ became effective (see Heb. 9:16-17). He did not prepare any Baptist material out of which Jesus organized a Baptist Church. He did not

administer anything close to modern Baptist baptism. He baptized sinners—those who confessed their sins (Mark 1:5)—and his baptism was for or unto the remission of sins (Mark 1:4). You mention baptizing sinners for the remission of sins today, and a Baptist preacher will have a running fit. No one opposes such practice as they do.

I deny that Jesus received Baptist (baptism), but while we are on that solemn scene, it is worthy of note that God acknowledged Jesus for the first time as the Son in whom He was well pleased after His baptism (Matt. 3:16-17). Baptists today want to be called sons of God before and without water baptism, and speak a lot more about being saved like the thief than they do following the example of Jesus Christ. The appearance of the three persons of the Godhead when Jesus was baptized has absolutely no significance for or relation to any denomination or denominational doctrine on earth today.

It is true that one must have accepted the message of John concerning the coming of Christ and His kingdom, and received John's baptism, in order to become an apostle of Christ. But what on earth does that have to do with the Baptist denomination which came into existence hundreds of years later? It is significant to note that one could not become a disciple of John without receiving his baptism, and those who rejected it are accused of rejecting the counsel of God (Luke 7:30). It is equally true that one cannot become a disciple of Christ without receiving His baptism, because His final instructions before leaving the earth included the statement, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). (To be continued.)

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I read and hear of serious problems that are caused by unfair and unscriptural elders. I do not deny or doubt that there are men who are called elders that are not worthy of honor. Paul was giving a warning which heaven approved when he told the Ephesian elders, "Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:30). If it was a danger and possibility then, it is such a danger in our generation.

The church could avoid many of the problems that unscriptural elders cause by being more careful in the selection of elders. Some lover of preeminence should not be allowed somehow to get himself appointed for this important work. Brethren often hesitate to offer any protest if a name is once put up for consideration for a bishop or overseer of the Lord's people.

I have known of this plan for selecting elders. After sermons on the qualifications, work, etc., three highly respected men who for some reason could not themselves qualify as pastors or shepherds were selected to receive lists of names from the brethren. The brethren were asked to list the names of the men whom they considered qualified, sign, and give the lists to either of the three men. The three would then go over the lists and get the names of those mentioned most often. Any who may have been on only one or two lists would not be put up for consideration. Those who were mentioned again and again would be written on the board for the whole congregation to consider. If there were scriptural reasons why one or more should not be appointed, these reasons would be written on paper, signed, and handed to one of the three to be examined by the whole assembly of brethren. If there were no legitimate objections for some, they would be appointed as elders.

There was evidently some system used by which the seven men were chosen to serve tables at Jerusalem, but the system is not bound on us today. The size of the congregation and other circumstances might make one plan more practical than another. The church at Jerusalem did somehow select seven men from among thousands (Acts 4:4; 5:14; 6:1-7). The apostles then ordained them.

The brethren should surely know not to select a lover of preeminence or an ungodly man for an elder. If qualified men are chosen, it then behooves every member of the church to honor and obey these overseers in matters of judgment. Only Christ the King can make laws. These laws have been given through our New Testament. Elders are not to enact laws. They are to plan for the things that will carry out the orders as given by the King. This plan for elders in every church

is of God and is to be respected by men (Acts 14:23; Tit. 1:5; Acts 20:17,28; Phil. 1:1).

If a factious man is trying to draw away disciples after him, good elders would be in his way (Tit. 1:9-11). This heretic would then do all he could to discredit the elders and get them out of his way (3 John 9,10). Diotrephes used malicious words. Others of similar disposition could be expected to do the same. We hear of those evil elders in some cases when the evil is in the accusers rather than in the accused. We are not to receive an accusation against an elder except before two or three witnesses (1 Tim. 5:20). If the church is going through a crisis because of a trouble maker, it needs its elders. Do not be a part of a faction that would destroy the leadership of God's people when they are in battle with error.

A parable came to my notice recently in a letter from a brother in Christ whom I shall not identify. It did me good, and it might help people in many places, so I am taking the liberty with the writer's permission to copy it here.

"And a certain young preacher asked his elders, saying, 'Good brethren, what good thing shall I do to keep my job here as preacher?'

"And the elders said unto him, 'Thou knowest the duties of a minister: preach the gospel to the lost' teach, admonish, and edify the saints; reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all long suffering and doctrine; avoid all worldly lusts, including covetousness, and avoid every appearance of evil; keep yourself unspotted from the world.'

"And he said, 'All these things have I done ever since I began laboring here with the congregation. What lack I yet?'

"Now when the elders heard these things, they said unto him, 'Yet lackest thou one thing. Go, dispose of that moonlighting business that you are pursuing on the side and which is absorbing so much of your time, your interest, and your efforts; and devote your full time to making full proof of thy ministry by doing the work of an evangelist—which is the job we hired you to do. Then thou shalt have greater favor among the membership. You cannot serve two masters; for you will cling to the one and neglect the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.'

"But when the young preacher heard this, he turned away very sorrowful; for he yearned mightily for great possessions, and he was making money hand-over-fist in the operation of his moonlighting business on the side.

"And when the elders saw that he turned away sorrowfully, they said, 'How hardly shall they who yearn and strive to get rich quickly find either the time or the desire to serve the Lord whole heartedly?'

There are no perfect elders, preachers, or churches. There are times when preachers are mistreated and not adequately supported. There are also times when preachers do things for "filthy lucre's sake" which they ought not to do. Many of the Lord's faithful servants earn much or all of their personal support and preach unselfishly. This is not the same as the case when a man accepts full time work with the church and then does much more for himself than for the church.

We are hearing and reading of so many conflicts between elders and preachers. These men are due to be very faithful servants who seek first the kingdom of God. Preachers are in error sometimes, and elders are at fault sometimes. Regardless of where the fault lies, it should be corrected. The cause of Christ is suffering in many communities. Let there be peace. Preachers like Diotrephes and elders that would be lords over God's heritage are both very serious problems (3 John 9,10; 1 Pet. 5:1-5). Each should be shunned by faithful churches.

MY SERVANTS THE PROPHETS

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LET US RISE UP AND BUILD Leadership & Spiritual Renewal, Example & Discipline, Nehemiah 8

"The word of God is powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword. . ." So it is, as we open our text to Nehemiah 8 and observe Nehemiah and Ezra working together to effect a spiritual rebirth of Israel.

Ezra stands with thirteen priests on a platform erected at the Water Gate to read the Law. As Ezra opens the Book to read, all the people stand. He now prays for the blessing of God, exalting Him as "the Great God." The people respond by answering "Amen, Amen", and "lifting up their hands and bowing low with their faces to the ground." These actions by the people: (1) standing when the Book is opened, (2) saying "Amen, Amen" (so be it Lord), (3) holding up their hands, and (4) bowing low to the ground, are simply reflections of the feelings in their hearts. They are outwardly demonstrating that they realize their need for Jehovah and His forgiveness. The lifting of the hands above the head with the palms turned upward represented the traditionally Jewish way of saying "I am empty handed. I have nothing. Everything that I need comes from you." But as we can see here, this is a ground-swell action of the people. This is the most basic of grass-roots movement. What eldership or preacher would not relish this attitude from the members of a local congregation? So what part does the leadership play in this action of spiritual renewal?

There were several factors that brought about this attitude which the people exhibited. First, the unyielding desire of Ezra to teach God's truth is doubtless one of them. Ezra 7:10 is probably one of the most powerful verses in all of God's word on teaching. "For EZRA set his heart to study the law of the Lord, and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel." Note the order: First, to study!

Without knowledge, no matter how well we have mastered the art of communication, we need to stay in our seats and not stand to teach. It is the midnight oil of study that fuels the fire of learning His word. Secondly, Ezra set his heart to practice what he taught. How many times have we made this point in these lessons: that the leaders must practice what they teach? Far too much emphasis has been placed on the visuals, the methods, and the aids, (which are important), but little if any has been placed on the life that the teacher must live. Some of the most creative and exciting teachers I know are "hot" one quarter and "cold" the next. No consistency of practice! Thirdly, after Ezra had learned and sought to practice, then and only then was he ready to communicate this knowledge to others. His example had to be a factor in the people's desire to hear him proclaim the word.

Another factor in the attitude of the people was the example of Nehemiah. We have spoken of his example in previous lessons. But, still another facet of Nehemiah doubtless brought these people to their senses: the ACTION of Nehemiah.

The Need For Discipline In The Face Of IMPURITY

Nehemiah assembled the people in Chapter 7 to discuss leadership. HANANI, his brother, and HANANIAH were placed in charge because they were "faithful men and feared God more than many." This is the proper delegation of responsibility. First faithful leaders then, security of the city, the gates, and finally the purity of the officials and priests. In verses 61-65, there appeared several who could not prove their genealogy so they were purged from the priesthood. V. 64, "these searched among their ancestral registration, but it could not be located; therefore they were considered unclean and excluded from the priesthood." What courage and spiritual toughness it took on the part of Nehemiah to exclude these men. The kind of courage that most leaders do not have today when it comes time to discipline the unfaithful, immoral and ungodly that are coddled and cuddled by so many local churches. In the first place, Nehemiah took time to investigate the lineage. Too often among ourselves we can't find leaders who will take time to visit a wayward member, to study with the weak, or to look up and encourage those missing the assembly. Yet, Nehemiah was on top of the situation by calling the assembly and purging the immoral from the rolls. It is not unusual for a member to miss the assemblies for a year or more and no elder, deacon, or preacher make even one personal visit to correct the situation. How many do we lose every year simply by neglect?

Notice the result of Nehemiah's purge. Verse 66, "the assembled together was 42,360 . . . and the heads of the households gave to the work . . . and governors gave to the treasury . . . and the rest of the people gave to the treasury." After the courageous purge, Israel gave to God's cause. Then as Chapter 8 begins, they assemble "AS ONE MAN at the square . . . and asked EZRA to BRING THE BOOK OF THE LAW." Realizing the impurity of Israel and seeing the purging of the wicked, Israel's attitude was one of giving and readiness to learn. Was this not the case in Acts 5?

Ananias and Sapphira are struck dead for their immoral materialism. Note the result: V. 11 "great fear came upon the whole church and all who heard of these things . . . the people held them in high esteem. And all the more believers in the Lord, multitudes of men and women were constantly added to their number." Isn't it time that we saw what the example of discipline and moral purity means to the church? As long as adulterous marriages, flagrant unfaithfulness, and gross materialism exist, the church will undergo no spiritual renewal and the respect of the world is lost. Can't you hear the discussion in the business meeting if Nehemiah had brought up these conditions of the priests for a vote? "Why, we can't do anything about these people because they've lived in Jerusalem as long as I can remember." Or, "It'll kill the church to exclude these people." Or, "Well, we just can't really be sure . . . after all, there may be some records we are missing." Brethren, we do not mean to sound harsh and unloving, for all of us know the admonition of Gal. 6:1; "... spirit of gentleness, looking to yourself." Yet, after all the gentleness and humility is duly considered, it finally becomes time to ACT!

Just as a child, after being disciplined, comes to his parents with tears on his soft cheeks, there is a priceless moment of love and compassion, and communication, that could never be purchased in any other way. SO IT IS WITH THE CHURCH. If there is no respect for the leaders because everyone knows they won't do anything, there will never be spiritual renewal. But when that action in love and tenderness is preceded by a powerful life of (1) study, (2) practice, and (3) teaching, it can turn people to their God with a magnum force previously unknown.

HONESTY

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"Honesty" signifies truthfulness, integrity, freedom from fraud; It implies a refusal to lie, steal or deceive in any way or be false to a trust.

The Bible has much to say about honesty and a good bit about lying as well. Jesus tells us that the devil is the father of lies: "... He was a murderer from the beginning, and standeth not in the truth because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof" (John 8:44). If you need proof that Satan is the father of lies, go back to Gen. 3:3,4. God told Adam and Eve if they ate of the tree in the midst of the garden they would die. The devil said, "Ye shall not surely die." Who lied? Not God! Paul wrote to Titus of "... God, who cannot lie..." (Tit. 1:2).

If man is to avoid hell he must refrain from lying. Hear John: "But for the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death" (Rev. 21:8).

Not only will lying lead to the loss of the soul but experience teaches that lying is hurtful even to the physical body. There are certain physical symptoms often associated with dishonesty, cheating or lying. It is not at all uncommon for one who lies to experience a dry mouth, sweaty hands, a change in blood pressure, pain in the stomach or even sleepless nights. Lying and cheating can wreck one's health.

There are various kinds of lies indicated in the scriptures. There is the simple falsehood (a bald-faced lie, as we would say) as told by Isaac in reference to Rebekah, his wife. He said she was his sister in order to avoid an attempt by some man in Gerar to kill him and take his wife. His deceitfulness was discovered by Abimelech, king of the Philistines, and he was rebuked for it (Gen. 26:6-11).

Another kind of lie is the half-truth, as more than once told by Abraham. He told the Egyptians that Sarai was his sister. Later, he deceived the people of Gerar in the same fashion. (See Gen. 12:10-20; 20:1-8). But for divine intervention Pharaoh and Abimelech would have taken Sarai as a wife. It is true that Sarai was Abraham's half-sister. But he had held back the fact that she was also his wife with the intent to deceive. This, in effect, was a lie.

The scriptures also give us an example of an implied lie. Satan addressed God with a question regarding Job, "Doth Job fear God for naught?" (Job. 1:9). Here, Satan says in effect that Job knew which side his bread was buttered on and that he only served God because God has blessed him. He also stated that if God took away what Job had that he would curse Him to His face (Job. 1:10,11). Satan was proven to be wrong in the test that followed but he had, nevertheless, implied a lie in the question asked.

You and I should always speak the truth, always be honest—at whatever cost. We should be honest, for in doing so, in this respect, we will be like Jesus. He is said to be "full of grace and truth" (Jno. 1:14). In avoiding dishonesty, we can avoid being like Satan, the father of lies (Jno. 8:44). We must avoid lying because lying is a sin, a violation of God's law, "Thou shalt not bear false witness" (Matt. 19:18). Another reason to avoid lying is because God hates, "A false witness that speaketh lies" (Prov. 6:19). Lying is inconsistent with the new man that we become in putting on Christ, "lie not one to another; seeing that ye have put off the old man with his doings, and have put on the new man, that is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Col. 3:9,10). A man confirms the fact that he is a fool when he deals dishonestly with others, "As the partridge that sitteth on eggs which she hath not laid, so is he that getteth riches, and not be right; in the midst of his days they shall leave him, and at his end he shall be a fool" (Jer. 17:10). Those who lie are outside the fellowship of God, "Without are the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the

fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and every one that loveth and maketh a lie" (Rev. 22:15). It is folly to lie.

The Word of God also points out that there are many ways in which to lie. One may lie by denying that he sins, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us . . . If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (I Jno. 1:8,10). We lie if we profess to serve God and at the same time give ourselves over to sin, "If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth" (I Jno. 1:6). If one professes to know God, that is to live in fellowship or relationship with Him, and yet does not keep His commandments, he is a liar, "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (I Jno. 2:4). One who claims talents or capacities that he does not truly possess is a liar, "As clouds and wind without rain, So is he that boasteth himself of gifts falsely" (Prov. 25:14). The man who claims to be a prophet of God when he is not is a liar, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I Jno. 4:1). The man who uses a false measurement or weight device is dishonest, in fact, he is a thief, "A false balance is an abomination to Jehovah; But a just weight is his delight" (Prov. 11:1). Paul indicates that some so-called scientists are liars, "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called:" (I Tim. 6:20 KJV). Yes, dishonesty manifests itself in many different ways.

But let us not close our study without a few more practical observations. Let us be careful that we not manifest dishonesty in preparing our tax returns. Many people, some even professing to be Christians, cheat the government of taxes that are due. God says, "Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; . . ." (Rom. 13:7). Be careful and exact in the way you punch your time-card and the way you fill out your expense account or you may wind up being a thief. Certainly, there is no place for one's "borrowing" a little glue, or a few bolts, or some paint, or some tools from the plant you work for. This is stealing—it's dishonesty. Cheating on examination tests, copying assignments from classmates or anything of like nature is dishonesty. "White" lies, or "polite" lies, are still lies. The misrepresentation of merchandise is dishonesty. If the prospective buyer asks if the "old klunker" uses oil, tell him it does if it does. "Knocking" a product to force the seller to cut the price is not honesty when the "Knocking" is not in harmony with fact. Solomon wrote, "It is bad, it is bad, saith the buyer; But when he is gone his way, then he boasteth" (Prov. 20:14). Did you get too much change at the grocery store? If you did, and you failed to return it, you acted dishonestly. Do you borrow and then fail to return that which you have borrowed? That is dishonesty too. Do you re-use a stamp that the canceling machine failed to cancel even though you know it has already carried one letter?

Careful, now—your integrity is on the line. Embellishing a "tale," told as fact, to make it a bit more interesting or amusing, when you know it really did not happen that way exactly is dishonesty. Making up excuses for failure to attend Bible study or worship or failure to carry out an assignment or failure to do anything you should have and could have done is dishonesty.

If one is to be right in the sight of God he must repent when he realizes that he has not been 100 percent honest. Genuine repentance requires correction or restitution. If you have circulated a false report—set the record straight. If you have cheated someone—pay him what you owe him. If you have taken that which belongs to another—return it. Zacchaeus gives us a good example to follow in this regard. He said, ". . . if I have wrongfully exacted aught of any man, I restore fourfold" (Lk. 19:8). This, obviously, was a rule that Zacchaeus had set for himself—the four-fold rule. Not that restitution is not required. Or even restitution with interest. That would be nothing but right. But "four-fold"? That would tend to help some folks to be honest—if they knew that they would have to give back four times as much as they actually owed! But the reason Zacchaeus had that kind of rule, in the first place, was because he was an honest man. He was not going to deliberately cheat anybody. If he realized he had—he wanted to go the second mile to be sure that everything was made right. And not just the second mile. He went the third and fourth mile too. That is HONESTY!

FREE AT LAST!

Wilson Adams
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"It was for freedom that Christ set us free..." Gal. 5:1
The term "freedom" has to be one of the most precious words ever introduced into the vocabulary of mankind. Freedom is that which is cherished by those who have it, and highly desired by those who do not. The events of the past few months, regarding the return of the fifty-two Americans held hostage in Iran, has been a reminder to each of the priceless value of freedom.

It's wonderful to enjoy physical freedom and to live in a country founded upon the very premise of freedom as so stated in Jefferson's great Declaration of Independence. What a blessing it is to be able to speak freely, live freely, and worship God freely. Yet, an even greater blessing than physical freedom is spiritual freedom in Christ. While it is wonderful to be a citizen in the "land of the free," it's an even greater privilege and honor to be a citizen in the heavenly kingdom of the Lord (Gal. 4:26). Physical freedom has its

limitations, but spiritual freedom knows no geographical boundaries, (Rom. 1:16). Yes, it's a terrible thing to be held hostage in physical captivity, but it is far worse to be a hostage in spiritual captivity under the bonds of Satan. And while we rejoice at the safe return of our fellow countrymen from physical slavery, how much more should we rejoice when men and women all over the globe are set free from spiritual bondage by the blood of Christ!

"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2).

The book of Galatians has been called "The Magna Charta of Christian Freedom." The theme of Paul's epistle is "Freedom in Christ." Ten times in six chapters he uses the words "free," "freedom," or "liberty." But to properly understand and appreciate the aim of the apostle in Galatians one must look to Acts 15 and become aware of a movement underway which tried to make Christianity co-exist with the Law of Moses. A movement which left unchecked would jeopardize the whole gospel system. The apostles attacked and denounced these Judaizing teachers in Jerusalem but the erroneous doctrine continued to spread. It was to combat this error that Paul penned the Galatian epistle. His argument would be that if one returned to the Law he would become a hostage to the Law. Contrariwise, if one accepted the gospel he would be set free, have liberty, and be no longer in bondage.

I. THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE GOSPEL, Chapters 1 & 2

A. Paul Proves Himself As An Apostle. These Judaizing proclaimers tried their best to discredit Paul's apostleship by pointing out that he was not of the original twelve. Paul answers the charge in 1:1. He goes on to relate his divine call to the apostolic office in 1:13-16. He was an apostle, he had witnessed the resurrection, and he had received a divine revelation from Jesus Christ.

B. Paul Proves Himself As An Apostle By His Preaching. He preached by revelation of Christ! Note 1:11-12:

"For I would have you know brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ." Paul says:

Gospel Preached

➤ Not According To Man!

Gospel Received

C. Paul Proves Himself As An Apostle By Preaching What The Other Apostles Preached. Fourteen years had elapsed between his conversion and the Jerusalem meeting. Upon conferring with the other apostles Paul discovered that his message was their message! The apostles then stood together, denounced the false doctrine, and did not yield to the Judaizers "for even an hour" (2:5).

II. THE SUPERIORITY OF THE GOSPEL, Chapters 3 & 4

Paul is almost beside himself as to how anyone could

turn from freedom in Christ and go back in bondage to the Law. "But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again (4:9)? "... I am perplexed about you," (4:20). Thus he begins to point out the superiority of the gospel over the Law:

Faith	SUPERIOR	Works, 3:2
Spirit	SUPERIOR	Flesh, 3:3
Justified by faith	SUPERIOR	Held by Law, 3:8-11
Blessed	SUPERIOR	Cursed, 3:9-10
Maturity	SUPERIOR	Tutored, 3:24-25
Sonship	SUPERIOR	Bondage, 3:26
Freedom	SUPERIOR	Hostage, 4:7

He further illustrates the advantage of the gospel by presenting a contrast between the false sonship of Ishmael and the true sonship of Isaac (4:21-31).

Ishmael (Hagar-servant)—born after ordinary course of nature.

Abraham

Isaac (Sarah-freewoman)—born through promise.

The apostle's contrast is then given in vs. 24-25. Hagar the servant of Abraham represents the Law from Sinai and all who follow the Law are as it were her children in that they, like Ishmael, are slaves and receive no inheritance. On the other hand, Sarah the wife of Abraham represents the gospel and all who accept the gospel are as it were her children in that they, like Isaac, are free and subject to an inheritance (4:7). The conclusion is then given in vs. 31:

"So then brethren, we are not children of a bondwoman, but of the freewoman."

For years God had promised blessings and freedom under the Messiah which they could not enjoy. His point being, "Why be an Ishmael when you could be an Isaac and thus be free?"

III. THE FREEDOM OF THE GOSPEL, Chapters 5&6

A. The Gospel Sets One Free From The Law (5:1). The Law held a person hostage (4:3) for under that system there was no forgiveness (Heb. 10:4). However, in Christ there is freedom through forgiveness (Heb. 10:9-10). Paul then lists the consequences of holding to the Law:

1. Christ is of no benefit, vs. 2
2. Under obligation to keep the "whole" Law, vs. 3
3. "You have fallen from grace," vs. 4 (Jno. 1:17)

B. The Gospel Sets One Free From Despair (5:5). Only in Christ can one's hope be realized (1 Jno. 3:3; Rom. 5:1-2).

C. The Gospel Sets One Free From Sin (5:24). A study of Romans 8:1-4 will show that it is the gospel

and not the Law which sets one free from the law of sin and death.

D. The Gospel Sets One Free From Bondage Service (5:13). The Jew too often served out of "have to" instead of "want to," thus his service was a bondage service. But now that we have been called to freedom, Paul says, we render service out of love. Hence the statements of 6:2 and 6:10, "bear one another's burdens," and "do good to all men."

Conclusion

"For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation" (6:15). It matters not to God whether one is circumcised or not for the Law has been taken away. What does matter is the "new creation." Paul stated in 2 Cor. 5:17, "if any man is in Christ, he is a new creation." How does one get "in Christ?" He answers that in this Galatian letter by saying, "for all of you who were baptized into Christ, have clothed yourself with Christ" (3:27).

In these days of celebration as we rejoice at the homecoming of our fellow countrymen freed from physical bondage, how much more should we rejoice when men and women around the world are set free from the slavery of sin by the blood of our blessed Savior. "Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Rom. 7:24-25). And finally remembering the words of our Lord Himself when He proclaimed,

"You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free."

BLOOD BROTHERS

William V. Beasley
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Having done a little reading and having, as a child, been an avid viewer of western movies, I learned a little about the concept of being "blood-brothers." The ceremony that made two unrelated individuals "brothers" differed from book to book, movie to movie, and, no doubt, from tribe to tribe, but all had the one essential idea of the combining of blood. Each man would cut a small place on his arm and then the two wounds were placed together causing the two bloods to flow as one blood—hence, "blood-brothers." From that time on the two men were "brothers" with all of the responsibilities of brotherhood. This to the American Indian was, evidently, a very serious and solemn ceremony, and was not to be taken lightly. Brotherhood was, to the American Indian, very real. Such an attitude is to be commended.

Those individuals who have obeyed the gospel of Jesus Christ are "blood-brothers." No, we did not cut ourselves with a knife (or even prick a finger with a pin) to let the blood of our bodies mingle and flow as one, but we are, none the less, "blood-brothers." We, if we have truly obeyed the saving gospel of our Lord, are

"blood-brothers" because of the blood of the Savior, shed on the cross on Golgotha (John 6:53-56; Acts 20:28; Col. 1:14, 20; I Pet. 1:19).

Since we are "blood-brothers"—brothers by the blood of Jesus Christ—we, too, need to seriously consider the responsibilities of brotherhood. Our responsibilities as "blood-brothers" in Christ would include, but not be limited to, loving one another (I John 4:7-8, 11, 20-21) fervently (I Pet. 1:22), being an example to our brethren (II Tim. 4:12), working for peace (I Thess. 5:13) and unity (I Cor. 1:10) and praying for one another (I Thess. 5:25; 2 Thess. 3:1).

On the negative side we have the responsibilities to NOT cause our "blood-brothers" to stumble (Rom. 14:13, 21; I Cor. 8:12). We also are not to murmur against our "blood-brother" (Jas. 5:9).

Toward those who serve as elders we have the responsibilities, as "blood-brothers," to **"know them that labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them exceedingly highly in love for their work's sake"** (I Thess. 5:12-13). We are, in fact, to count all our "blood-brothers" as **"better than" self** (Phil. 1:3).

Because of our relationship as "blood-brothers," brothers by the blood of Christ, we have the responsibility, when necessary, to **"admonish the disorderly, encourage the fainthearted, support the weak"** (I

Thess. 5:14). As "blood-brothers" we are to seek to restore the erring in "a spirit of gentleness" (Gal. 6:1) that we might "save a soul from death, and cover a multitude of sins" (Jas. 5:20). Our relationship as "blood-brothers" gives us the responsibility toward those who will not be restored, will not repent to "mark them . . . and turn away from them" (Rom. 16:17) and to "have no company with him (them), to the end that he (they) may be ashamed" (2 Thess. 3:14).

The shedding of blood caused the American Indian to take the responsibilities of being a "blood-brother" most seriously. How seriously do you, my beloved "blood-brother," take the responsibilities, gained by the shed blood of Jesus Christ, of being "blood-brother" to all the saints?

Set For The Defense

by Thomas G. O'Neal

The material in this book discusses the main issues related to the grace-unity movement. Brother O'Neal demonstrates that the supposed distinction between gospel and doctrine is not taught in the Scriptures. He also covers several other main tenets of the grace-unity movement.

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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

NEW CONGREGATIONS

CALERA, AL—The new church in Calera has been meeting only about three months. They are the only faithful group in town. If you are in the area, please make plans to stop and visit with these good brethren. Contact Jim Owens, Rt. 1, Box 295, Calera, AL 35040. Phone: (205) 668-0084.

SYCAMORE, IL—On February 1, 1981, a new congregation had it's beginning here. There were 22 in attendance on Sunday morning and 23 that night. At present they are renting the Oddfellows Hall, located on Sabin St. in Sycamore. Sycamore is five miles northeast of Dekalb and Northern Illinois University. Those traveling in that area or attending Northern will be welcome. For more information contact Dan Halstead (815) 895-4869, or Leroy Fogle (815) 758-4710.

FIELD REPORTS

STAN ADAMS, 2426 Tahita Lane, Alabaster, AL 35007. The Elliottsville congregation here is now four years old. In this time they have grown from 7 to about 80 in number. The group is located about 20 miles south of Birmingham, just before I-65 starts again. Much growth has been seen both spiritually and physically. There have been 24 baptisms, 40 restorations, and approximately 30 families to move into the area. While some have moved away, the congregation is a stable work and is presently undertaking a personal work program in order to more effectively reach the lost. This congregation was begun by Cecil Lane and the late Frank Smith preached for them for six months until his untimely death. My family and I have worked here for three and a half years, and it has been very rewarding. If in the area stop in and worship with us. We are only 2 miles off I-65. Phone (205) 663-1092.

RAY F. DIVELEY, 425 Dippold Ave., Baden, PA 15005. The year 1980 was another busy year for me. Besides the local work, I was privileged to preach for 11 congregations in 7 states. Also, I made

my seventh preaching trip to India, preached in Colombia, South America and visited the brethren in Mexico. The Baden church helped support three native preachers. One each in Mexico, India, and the Philippines. For 1981 we are putting weekly ads in the newspaper offering a Bible Correspondence Course. One way of getting FREE teaching articles is by writing letters to the editor, which I have been doing.

NORWAY

TERRELL BUNTING, 1048-A Oakhurst Dr., Charleston, WV 25314. I am making plans to go to Norway in May, 1981. I lived in Norway as a child during the years 1967 through 1970. I returned for a visit two years ago and every since I have wanted to return to help spread the gospel. At the present there is only one man preaching in Norway, Tom Bunting, who is my father. My parents live in Bergen (pop. 200,000) and I will be devoting all my efforts in helping them in the work. It is my plan after six months to try and find employment in Norway. This will enable me to live there without depending on the brethren from the states for financial support. I am considering making Norway my permanent home. I feel there is a need for individuals and families to live in Norway for as long a term as possible.

I am writing in request of your financial support for my labor there the first six months. I need \$600 a month plus some help on travel expenses. A one-time contribution would be greatly appreciated also. If you have any questions concerning my plans please contact me. At present I am staying with my brother Donald Bunting who preaches in Charleston, WV. For a reference contact Bro. Aude McKee who preaches for the West Knoxville church in Knoxville, TN.

PREACHERS NEEDED

Marysville, CA—We are a new congregation with about 20 mem-

bers. Attendance runs around 30. We are meeting in a home presently, but we are considering our own place to buy. We are able to provide some support. Please contact Lee Hendrix, 1863 Park Circle, Marysville, CA 95901. Phone: (916) 742-1532.

OKEECHOBEE, FL—The Westside church here is seeking a full-time preacher. We are a small congregation but strong and desirous to uphold the truth. If a man is interested in working with the church here in south Florida, please contact: Franklin Varson, Rt. 2, Box 175, Okeechobee, FL 33472. Phone: (813) 763-3462.

MONROE, LA—We are a small congregation with great opportunities. Some outside support would be needed. Contact: Wallace Price, 1103 Glenmar, Monroe, LA 71201. Phone: (318) 387-3984 after 6:30 P.M.

BLUE SPRINGS, MO—A new congregation in the Kansas City area is looking for a full-time preacher to work with them. We can supply \$300 per month in support. We have access to other support. We are interested in someone who can help us in personal work. Please write P. O. Box 1053, Blue Springs, MO 64015, or call (816) 625-4711 during the day or (816) 229-2232 at night.

CARY, NC—The church here seeks a full-time man. Please contact Paul Corley, 302 Abbey Ln., Cary, NC 27511. Phone: (919)467-0820.

BEREA, OH—The church at Berea, a suburb of Cleveland, desires a full-time evangelist to work with them. We are a congregation of about 40 members, situated in a good location with many opportunities (large population and a college town). Most of the support would have to come from elsewhere. Contact H. Neal, 26425 Cook Rd., Olmsted Falls, OH 44138. Phone: (216) 235-2797 after 6 p.m.

DOVER, OH—The Canal Dover church of Christ which has been in existence for the past two years, is looking for a full-time preacher beginning in the month of June. This is due to the resigning of Bro. Larry Chaffin from full-time preaching. The church can provide \$200 per month in support and names of other places that possibly could help. Interested persons should contact Clyde Heavilin at 115 Canal Road, Dover, OH 44622. Phone: (216) 364-3090.

GERMANY

RON MILLER, 5a Rhode Island, 7500 Karlsruhe, West Germany. On January 11, 1981 a new congregation began worshipping near Stuttgart, West Germany. So far we are made up of only two

families. However, we are hoping that since there are other American military and civilian personnel stationed in this area that we will find others who would like to worship with us. If you know of any who are here, or who will be moving here, please tell them about the church. The military posts in the Stuttgart area are: Kelly Barracks, Patch Barracks, Nelligen Barracks, Robinson Barracks, Panzer Kaserne, and Echterdingen Airfield. Cities within reasonable driving distance are: Ludwigsburg, Heilbronn, Karlsruhe, Tubingen, Goepingen, and Ulm. Both families here have broken away from the liberal minded congregations in Stuttgart and Karlsruhe. We are now ready to get down to the work that God would have us do in the way He wants it done. We desire your prayers. If you write to us from the states address your letters to: Ron Miller, 69thPSC, APO NY 09164.

JOHN EVERETT, HHC 7th ATC Box 3148, APO NY 09114. My wife and I are presently living in Germany. Due to the hardships that we have encountered while here, in finding sound brethren to worship with, etc., we would like to establish a directory of sound brethren in Germany and use this information to help others who will be coming to Germany. If you are reading this and already worship in Germany, please send us your name, address, telephone number, DEPROS, and any other helpful information such as where you meet, etc. If you are in the states and know of Christians in Germany, please write us and give their names and addresses so that we may contact them. Also if you know of any Christians who have fallen away or anyone who would be a good prospect please let us know. For those of you who may be transferring to Germany, please keep our address and write us as soon as you know your duty station so that we can write and give you the names and addresses of the Christians nearest you.

At the present we are located in Bayreuth, 26 miles from the Chechoslovakian border, about 1 1/2 hours from Nuernberg. There may be Christians around us, newly arrived that we don't know about. Just a short letter from you may help us win a soul. Please, no financial support, though we would be glad to help refer you to those who could use it. Phone: 0921-45324.

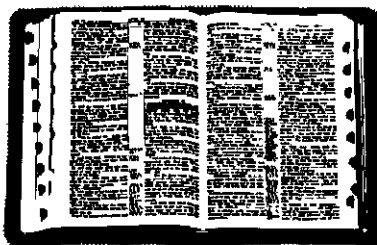
IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	385
RESTORATIONS	128

(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)

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 XXII

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THINK ON
THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 17244
Tampa, Florida 33612



CHANGE THE HEART AND CHANGE THE MAN!

Literally hundreds of millions of dollars are being spent each year in an effort to rehabilitate criminals of every kind. Various programs have been set in motion to try to change this blight on our society into a useful segment of responsible citizens. The trouble is that the programs are not working as they were intended to work. Most criminals return to prison within a short time after their release.

The moral corruption and open sexual perversion has swept across America like a prairie fire on a dry, windy day. Law-makers almost hopelessly struggle to enact legislation that will not be struck down by the high court of the land. The executive branch of government on all levels arrest these evil leaches on society, only to have them released by the courts. The judicial system is such that the long delays on bringing the offenders to justice, and the so-called "civil rights" of these criminals against society and the moral degenerates that are bringing down our nation, only encourage the growth of crime and civil disobedience.

What can be done about the continuing moral decline and the growing crime rate? Men are what they are because of the state of their heart. I am speaking of the seat of intellect, emotion and volition, not the physical blood pump of the body. Men are evil because their hearts are evil; they are good because they have good hearts. "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23). From the heart comes the purposes, actions and words that may be classified either good or evil. The standard of good and

evil is not determined by each individual, but by the word of God. Christ did not send his apostles into all the world with a carnal sword to turn men and women from darkness to light. He sent them with a message designed to change the heart of the hearers and that would change their lives. If any man be in Christ—and he must learn from the word of God how to get into Christ—he is no longer the old creature of sin, but he is a new creature. "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17). Of course, it is the heart (that inward part) that is made new, but this is that part of man that directs and brings into submission the outward body to become an instrument of obedience to God. This is what is meant by the statement in Romans 6: "Knowing this, that our **old man** is crucified with him, that the **body of sin might be destroyed**, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Rom. 6:6). But we must realize that the "old man" (the body of sin) was created by a heart that served Satan rather than God. This heart can only be changed by faith and repentance, which leads to obedience, which changes the life and relationship to God.

When we can change the heart of man, we can change his life. Otherwise no real change takes place. "Know ye not, that to whom ye **yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey**; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye **have obeyed from the heart** that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye **became the servants of righteousness**" (Rom. 6:16-18).

The heart or inward man must be made new before the man is considered a "new creature" in Christ. The gospel itself is an appeal to the heart of man designed to change the entire life for good. We are taught by Christ to "put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be **RENEWED IN THE SPIRIT OF YOUR MIND**; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is **CREATED IN RIGHTEOUSNESS AND TRUE HOLINESS**" (Eph. 4:22-24).

The heart is the control center of one's entire life, including his attitudes, behavior, language and goals. Why is it so difficult to change men from error to

truth? Why do criminals and moral degenerates usually continue in their evil ways regardless of punishment and pleas from family and friends? Why do so many who have professed to have been "born again" never really change their lives? The answer lies in the fact that the heart of man must be changed before his life is changed.

Jesus said that the heart was the place from which flowed the good and evil of man, by word and deed. "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for **out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things**" (Matt. 12:34, 35). "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: these are the things which defile a man; but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man" (Matt. 15:18-20).

There are several different states of the heart which produce different attitudes and conducts of life. Some are blinded in heart through ignorance, and are past feeling (Eph. 4:18, 19). One may have an evil heart of unbelief in departing from God (Heb. 3:12). One may have a hard and impenitent heart which will bring him wrath against the day of wrath (Rom. 2:5). Satan filled the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray Christ (John 13:2). Satan filled the hearts of Ananias and Sapphira to lie to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3). Simon's heart was not right in the sight of God because of his greed and the thought that he could purchase the gift of God (Acts 8:21). It is that honest and good heart that hears the word of God and brings fruit to the glory of God (Luke 8:15). It is with the heart that man believes the word unto righteousness (Rom. 10:10,17; Acts 8:37).

We need to fill the hearts of our children with the good things of the word of God, and they will act and be good. If they become evil, just mark it down that the influence of evil has filled their hearts. We can change the lust, greed, hate, drugs, drunkenness, fornication and adultery, lying, disobedience, iniquity and all other sins listed in the Book of God, if we change the heart to believe the truth of the gospel and repent. They will obey the gospel of Christ and become servants of Righteousness. That is the only way we will save this nation, our families, and our neighbors. Change the hearts and you can change the man.

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Editorial

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CLEANSING FROM SIN — CONDITIONAL OR UNCONDITIONAL?

Through the years, the major battleground with people of Calvinistic background has been over the question of whether the grace of God that brings salvation is bestowed conditionally or unconditionally. No Bible believer would dare challenge the premise that salvation is by grace. But if it is by grace *unconditionally*, then the result of that position is either universal salvation or else divine responsibility for the lost. From these conclusions there can be no escape.

Grace Appropriated by Human Obedience

The Bible teaches that *man must do something* in order to be saved. It is at this point that false teachers have taken exception and charged gospel preachers with holding to a system of justification by human merit. They have trouble understanding that human obedience to divine requirement does not nullify the grace of God; on the contrary, it expresses confidence in it. If human obedience is not required to receive the benefits of divine grace, then what do these passages mean?

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that *doeth* the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Mt. 7:21).

"And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and *do not* the things which I say" (Lk. 6:46)?

"By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for *obedience* to the faith among all nations, for his name" (Rom. 1:5).

"But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have *obeyed* from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Rom. 6:17-18).

"And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that *obey* him" (Heb. 5:9).

It has been common for teachers of error to insist on faith as a human response without coming to grips with the fact that faith is an exercise of the human mind based on evidence and producing trust in the object sustained by the evidence. Every passage which indicates that the unbeliever shall perish underlines the urgency of this human response. Furthermore, when it is accepted that faith is mandatory as a human response to receive the favor of God, the question then to be settled is whether or not that faith is dead or

living. Hebrews 11 gives a summary of ancient worthies who stood before God by faith. In each case, their faith was living and active prompting them to do what God commanded. James said "faith without works is dead, being alone" (Jas. 2:24-26). In debate with advocates of salvation by faith only (or at the point of faith), I have always readily accepted every passage they could produce which states that we are saved by faith, but I have asked in each case whether the saving faith of any passage is active or inactive. Is it dead or alive? If it is alive, then it is obedient and includes whatever further acts God requires as essential to salvation.

Cleansing for the Christian

While most brethren have understood this (some loud voices in recent years have expressed doubt about even this), some today are saying some things about the cleansing blood of Christ applied to the sins of Christians which are surprising to say the least. Appalling might be a more appropriate word! It is being pointed out by some that in 1 John 1:7 the statement "and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" has the force of continued action — that the blood *keeps on* cleansing from sin. I was not aware that anyone among brethren had questioned that. As John continued to show in 1 Jno. 2:1-2 "we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." Note the comprehensive nature of the sins under consideration — "our sins" and "the sins of the whole world." We have shown already that alien sinners are saved by the grace of God on certain conditions. Now, are our sins as Christians cleansed conditionally or unconditionally?

"If We Confess"

1 John 1:7 says "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Whom does he promise to forgive and cleanse? Why, those who "confess." Simon was told to "repent of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee" (Acts 8:22). It seems that some brethren are having trouble with this. They have borrowed the language of Baptist debaters who mock us and say we have a "yo-yo" religion, that we are "in and out of grace", "in the light and out of the light." All of a sudden some of the brethren are discomfited with these charges and have sought a means to alleviate their embarrassment. Calvinism is extremely vulnerable on the issue of apostacy. Their dodges to cover the "once in grace, always in grace" dogma ought never embarrass any gospel preacher.

In an attempt to escape this imagined dilemma some brethren have become respecters of sin and attempt to make exceptions for sins of "ignorance" and "weakness" which they avow are automatically covered by the grace of God WITH OR WITHOUT repentance and confession. They have followed the pattern of sectarian debaters who present hypothetical cases of men trapped in caves who can't get to the water to be baptized, or of those on the way to baptism who have the misfortune of having a limb fall from a

tree and kill them. It is a plea for sympathy with one aim in mind and that is to try and prove that saving faith does not have to be obedient faith.

I ask therefore what is the purpose of the hypothetical cases now being presented concerning a Christian whose life is suddenly snuffed out before he repents and confesses his sin to God? Is it to set aside the clear statement of the word of God that this continual cleansing action of the blood of Christ applies to those who "confess" their "sins"? There is a presumptuousness about this whole business which seeks to force divine justice into our own half-bushel of finite human concept "as to what would constitute justice for the Almighty. That is not our business. All we have a right to preach to alien sinners or to the Christian is that which is written. When we argue that God will forgive without repentance or confession because we think we see mitigating circumstances, then we have attempted to unseat the Judge and placed ourselves in his role. The extending or withholding of clemency is not within our control. We are assured that "the judgment of God is according to truth" (Horn. 2:2). Beyond that we dare not go.

The whole discussion tends to minimize sin. Is sin any less sin because it is perpetrated in ignorance, or out of weakness? Was it not in a moment of weakness that Eve was "beguiled" and "deceived"? Who is prepared to argue that she acted highhandedly? Adam was not deceived, but she was (1 Tim. 2:14). Was it not weakness which led Peter to deny his Lord in the court-yard? Yet Jesus had said to him "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Are not drunkenness and fornication often the result of weakness rather than highhanded intent? What of anger and wrath? Yet, all of these are listed as works of the flesh with the warning that "they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven" (Gal. 5:19-21). Have brethren nothing better to do than to dispute as to whether sin (of any kind) is "in" the light or "out" of the light?

Now, back to 1 Jno. 2:2. Jesus is said to be the propitiation for (1) our sins and (2) the sins of the whole world. The question I pose is very simple. If his suitable offering cleanses the sins of the whole world, does it do so conditionally or unconditionally? If this blood cleanses "our sins" does it do so conditionally or unconditionally? In both instances the word of God teaches that there are conditions to be met. If there is any promise of cleansing in either case without satisfying those conditions, then I have failed to discover it from studying the word of God. As a preacher of the gospel, I am content to stay in my place, not minimize sin and create false hope, nor make it appear that God would be unjust if he acted according to exactly what he said instead of my own imagined loop-holes at the judgment. I am content to declare plainly what he said that sinners might be warned of the need to obey the gospel and saints of the need to repent and confess their wrongs so that in both cases the cleansing action of the blood of Christ might accomplish the sublime work of pardon.

MAY A CHRISTIAN KILL FOR HIS GOVERNMENT?

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"All questions on morals and religion, all questions on the origin, relations, obligations, and destiny of man, can be satisfactorily decided only by an appeal to an infallible standard. I need not say that we all, I mean the civilized world, the great, the wise, the good of human kind, concede to the Bible this oracular authority; and, therefore, constitute it the ultimate reason and authority for each and every question of this sort. What, then, says the Bible on the subject of war?"

Thus did Alexander Campbell begin his "Address on War" at Wheeling, W. Virginia in 1848, and printed in the Congressional Record of November 22, 1937.

I appreciate the invitation from the editor of this paper, and the encouragement from many young men, to state what I believe concerning the Christian and carnal warfare. It is better to study this subject when the nation is at peace, so that all may give careful, dispassionate consideration to all that is involved before important decisions must be made should the nation become involved in war.

Let it be understood that I am not debating anyone, answering arguments, or stating the positions of those who hold the opposite view. It is my desire to state, simply and clearly, what I believe on the subject and why I believe it. There are faithful brethren and dear friends who do not agree with my position on this subject. I respect them, and so far as I am concerned they will remain my friends. After all, this is a question which must be decided by each individual, and the action of one does not necessarily affect another or cause someone else to violate his conscience.

We cannot answer this question or learn the truth by our own experiences or those of our relatives, subjective authority, situation ethics, emotions, past convictions, or hypothetical situations and arguments. I certainly do not profess to know all the answers, and I realize that there are situations and areas where it is not easy to determine the proper obligations and actions of a Christian.

I am a firm believer in capital punishment. I do not question the right of civil government to take the life of a murderer. I understand Romans 13 and related passages to so teach. So this is not a question of what the government may do, but rather what a Christian may or may not do. I see no inconsistency here, for we understand that there are differences between the government and the citizens, just as with the church and the Christian.

Some Basic Principles Established

The problem of the Christian and war cannot be viewed simply from the perspective of one's responsibility to his nation. We are now a global community in which we face the question of what violence does to total humanity. In viewing war from the standpoint of one's responsibility to his country, it is difficult to think of a "just war" in a nuclear age with a world community. The arguments for a "just war" in history appear to be quite irrelevant in an age of mechanized and nuclear warfare, and that's the situation we must now face. The Christian must also face the meaning of the Lord's statement, "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so I have also sent them into the world." Ours is a mission of announcing the good news of reconciliation to God, and through Christ to one another.

To affirm that one is a member of the kingdom of Christ means that loyalty to Christ and His kingdom transcends every other loyalty. This stance transcends nationalism, and calls us to identify first of all with our fellow disciples, of whatever nation, as we serve Christ together. This is not a position that can be expected of the world nor asked of the government as such. The Christian respects the government, and must encourage it to stay in its place and let the church do the same. The church enriches society by the many things it brings to it, but the church in its respect for government does not subordinate itself to any particular government. Its allegiance is to its own Lord.

The Christian in a government position serves with a recognition that he can be there only as a witness to the higher values to which he has been called in Jesus Christ; he can never serve as in a position of ultimate power by which he seeks to achieve goals for humanity. For the Christian, the desire to "rule" is wrong; his stance is one of serving.

The Old and The New

Under the law of Moses the kingdom of God and civil government were one and the same. There was no separation between what we might call church and state as we now have under the reign of Christ. God's people back there were sometimes called upon to engage in carnal warfare. Throughout the history of Israel, whenever God sanctioned a war, it was either to chasten His people and bring them back to Him, or to defend and spread His material kingdom of Israel. In either case the aim was the establishment of His spiritual kingdom, the church. To keep the lineage and a religion through which Jesus should come, it was necessary to defend the people of God. But now, Christ will not allow the defense of His kingdom by means of carnal warfare (John 18:36). The conclusion may be stated as follows: 1. The only purpose for which God's people have ever been permitted to fight was in the defense and spread of His kingdom. 2. As already established, Christians are forbidden to engage in carnal warfare in defense of Christ's kingdom. 3. Therefore, Christians are forbidden to engage in carnal warfare for any purpose.

Even during Old Testament times, the prophets spoke of the difference in that system and the spiritual kingdom to come, the kingdom of Christ. Isaiah talked about the establishment of the Lord's house (Isaiah 2), which we understand to be the kingdom or church of Christ (1 Tim. 3:15), into which "all nations" would flow. By "all nations" he **meant men of all nations**, and not nations as such (Matt. 28:18-20). We must keep this in mind as we study Isaiah 2:2, 3, which was fulfilled with the proclamation of the gospel beginning on Pentecost (Acts 2). Remembering that "nations" can mean only individuals of the nations entering the kingdom of Christ, we read: "And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isa. 2:4). If this be the true meaning of the prophecy, then it follows with all the force of a demonstration that as men of all nations enter the kingdom of Christ they cease to use the literal sword and "learn war" no more. In Isaiah 11:9 the prophet said, "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." If the "holy mountain" refers to the kingdom of Christ, then it is plain that those in it shall not hurt or destroy, or engage in carnal warfare. As long as nations are largely composed of sinners, we may expect carnal warfare to continue, but as men enter the kingdom which has been established in these last days, they become totally unfit to wield carnal weapons. The spirit of Christ takes all the carnal fight out of a man (Rom. 8:6, 9).

In his "Address on War," Campbell spoke of the old and new in these words: "But what is most important here and opposite to the occasion is that these wars waged by God's people in their typical character were waged under and in pursuance of a special divine commission. They were, therefore, right. For a divine precept authorizing anything to be done makes it right absolutely and forever. The Judge of all the earth can do only that, or command that to be done, which is right. Let those, then, who now plead a special divine warrant or right for carrying on war by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, produce a warrant from the present Monarch of the universe. What the God of Abraham did by Abraham, by Jacob, or by any of his sons, as the moral Governor of the world, before He gave up the scepter and the crown to His Son, Jesus Christ, is of no binding authority now."

Our King has taught the citizens of His kingdom to turn the other cheek when smitten or assaulted. When Peter and John wanted to call down fire from heaven upon their enemies, Jesus said, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them" (Luke 9:55, 56). Paul says, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into cap-

tivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; and having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled" (2 Cor. 10:3-6). As Christians, we are to "revenge all disobedience," not with carnal weapons, but we are commanded to "take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:17). That is the only sword the Christian may use against his enemies.

Instead of Christians joining up with civil governments in executing vengeance on evildoers by bearing the carnal sword, they are requested to simply pay their taxes and obey civil powers. I urge the reader to read Romans 13:1-7. Just before those verses, the apostle said, "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:17-21). Is Paul saying that the Christian should feed his enemy and then shoot him? Is he to give him a drink and then draw the sword on him? Is he to "heap coals of fire" on his head by firing at him? Is killing the enemy overcoming evil with good? Is it difficult to answer these questions?

Remember that Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence" (John 18:36). If the Christian is not allowed to defend the kingdom of Christ with the sword of carnal warfare, how could he defend a sinful kingdom or government of the world with the use of carnal means?

"But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good unto them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matt. 5:44). In commenting on this verse many years ago, brother Guy N. Woods said: "The spirit of this passage and the spirit of war are hopelessly irreconcilable. No man, whether saint or sinner, imbued with the spirit of these words could go forth to war. It may be objected that the word 'enemy' in this passage means a personal enemy. Be it so. A personal enemy then we must not hate. But if we cannot, with the approval of Christ, hate a personal enemy, then surely we can hate no one. More, if our Lord requires us to love our enemies, we must also love those who are not our enemies. But if a Christian must love his enemy, he must do nothing inconsistent with that love. Can he then while loving him and praying for him, take deliberate aim and shoot him dead on the battle-field? It is impossible. A man can no more shoot another whom he loves and for whom he is praying than he could take the life of his own mother, or the off-spring of his own flesh. The feeling of love must be wholly extinguished and prayers turned to cursing before one can be capable of such a deed. But such a state of mind must never be characteristic of the Christian. He must therefore never go to war."

Whom Can The Christian Kill?

From what we have learned in this study, and the exercise of our common sense, we must face the question: Whom can the Christian kill? If I should have to make this decision, I would follow the process of elimination. I cannot kill my enemies. I have neither the cause nor desire to kill my friends. I certainly don't want to kill those whom I love. Then who is there left for me to kill?

May the Christian Become Totally Subservient to the Government?

Since it is obvious to all that a Christian, acting as an individual, cannot kill anyone with the Lord's approval, the ONLY WAY one can justify a Christian killing in war is to prove that when commanded to so act by the government the Christian is no longer responsible for his actions, but rather can place all blame, guilt and consequences upon the government. Campbell addressed himself to this also, and I now quote from him because he expressed it well:

"But the great question is: Can an individual, not a public functionary, morally do that in obedience to his government which he cannot do in his own case? Suppose a master of an apprenticed youth, or the master of a number of hired or even bond servants, should fall out with one of his neighbors about one of the lines of his plantation, because, as he imagined, his neighbor had trespassed upon his freehold in clearing or cultivating his lands. His neighbor refuses to retire within the precincts insisted on by the complainant; in consequence of which the master calls together his servants and proceeds to avenge himself, or, as he alleges, to defend his property. As the controversy waxes hot, he commands his servants not only to burn and destroy the improvements made on the disputed territory but to fire upon his neighbor, his sons, and servants. They obey orders, and kill several of them. They are, however, finally taken into custody and brought to trial. An attorney for the servants pleads that those servants were bound to obey their master, and quotes these words from the Good Book: 'Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh.' But, on the other side, it is shown that the 'all things' enjoined are only 'all things lawful.' For this obedience is to be rendered 'as to Christ'; and, again, 'as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.' No judge or jury could do otherwise than condemn as guilty of murder servants thus acting. Now, as we all, in our political relations to the Government of our country, occupy positions at least inferior to that which a bond servant holds toward his master, we cannot of right as Christian men obey the powers that be in anything not in itself justifiable by the written law of the great King, Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. Indeed, we may advance in all safety one step further, if it were necessary, and affirm that a Christian man can never of right be compelled to do that for the state, in defense of state rights, which he cannot of right do for himself in defense of his personal rights. No Christian man is commanded to love or serve his neighbor, his king, or sovereign more than he loves or serves himself. If this is conceded,

unless a Christian man can go to war for himself, he cannot for the state.

I deny that a Christian loses responsibility and accountability just because the civil government commands him to do something. What if a lady who is a Christian lives under a government which commands that she commit fornication in order to produce children for the state? That has happened! Could she excuse herself and become immoral just because the government requested it of her? I think not. Then could she kill because the government commanded if You see, my friends, when there is a conflict between the Lord and the law of the land, the Christian should know whom to obey. When faced with a similar situation, it didn't take Peter and the apostles long to decide what they should do. They said, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

Christian Against Christian

Christianity is an international religion. There are Christians in all nations. Should a Christian go to war, it is certainly possible that he could kill another Christian, and that is in conflict with such principles as those found in John 17:11, Rom. 12:10; Heb. 13:1 and James 5:9. If not a Christian, he is fighting against people who are often as innocent as he is. On this point, Campbell said:

"But to the common mind, as it seems to me, the most convincing argument against a Christian becoming a soldier may be drawn from the fact that he fights against an innocent person—I say an innocent person, so far as the cause of war is contemplated. The men that fight are not the men that make the war. The soldiers on either side have no enmity against the soldiers on the other side, because with them they have no quarrel. Had they met in any other field, in their citizen dress, other than in battle array, they would, most probably have not only inquired after the welfare of each other, but would have tendered to each other their assistance if called for. But a red coat or a blue coat, a tri-colored or a two-colored cockade, is their only introduction to each other, and the signal that they must kill or be killed! If they think at all, they must feel that there is no personal alienation, or wrong, or variance between them. But they are paid so much for the job; and they go to work, as the day laborer to earn his shilling. Need I ask, how could a Christian man thus volunteer his service, or hire himself out for so paltry a sum, or for any sum, to kill to order his brother man who never offended him in word or deed? What infatuation! What consummate folly and wickedness! Well did Napoleon say, 'War is the trade of barbarians'; and his conqueror, Wellington, 'Men of nice scruples about religion have no business in the army or navy'."

I repeat for emphasis: A Christian cannot leave the answer to this question on killing to another, not even to the government. Governments are not always run on a moral and spiritual basis. They have their own selfish interests, ambitions and alliances. Thus, governments cannot make moral decisions—and this question does indeed involve a moral decision—for a Christian. If a government can make such a decision

for a Christian, any government can do it. Then Christians would be forced to the position that it would be morally right to kill other Christians, or do any other deed, if the government made such a decision for them. No government or majority can make right and moral for the Christian that which is not right. If they could, might and majority make right; a proposition which every Christian rejects. We as persons must give an account for the deeds done in our bodies, and thus we must not allow these deeds which are destructive of Christian principles. The government does not render an account to God for us (Rom. 14:12).

Yes, I know that someone wants to know what I would do if a man broke into my home, attacked my wife, and threatened to kill us. I'm not sure. Suppose I killed him? Does that authorize me to train for, meditate upon, and go out and kill a man or thousands who have not broken into my home nor harmed my wife and me in any way? I don't think so.

"Whenever Christians come to see war in the light in which Christ and the New Testament treat it, the result will be a decision on their part to suffer, if need be, even martyrdom itself before they will obey any government on this earth commanding them to engage in it. That they will ever come to so view it is more than I can hope for as long as we are in the flesh. Still this should not deter us from working to render the conviction as nearly universal as possible. It may suit the religious demagogue to defend war, and urge that Christians can innocently take part in it; but this is no task for the Christian. His mission is one of peace, not of war; and he should never admit that the emergency can, by possibility, arise when he will abandon it for one of boundless passion and bloodshed. Let all Christians work to give this sentiment currency" (Moses E. Lard, 1867).

How To Serve Best

The best citizen any government has is a genuine Christian. He gives no trouble to the powers that be. He is loving, kind and peaceful. He pays his taxes. He goes about doing good to all men. He is meek and quiet. He is moral. He establishes a good home, the bulwark of the nation. He seeks to unite all people in Christ and his kingdom.

There Is A Way For Everyone

No doubt that some hypocrites have taken advantage of the blessing, but so far, our nation has permitted those who are opposed to combat duty, as Christians, to sign up for some type of service which is of a non-combat nature; in this way permitting such Christians to both serve their country as good citizens and at the same time respect their own conscience in reference to carnal warfare. It is my conviction that a Christian can do in time of war whatever he may do in time of peace. The Bible reads the same in war as in peace. Christians should be honest as to their own convictions and with reference to the government under which they live. And if there be a conflict between civil authorities and the law of Christ, then may we remember, "we ought to obey God rather than men."

Using the SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

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The subject assigned is one of undying interest to God's people. Days of national and international distress generally bring it to a more visible place of general concern and discussion, but it is always viewed as a topic worthy of study.

With an unpredictable world situation hovering about us, the subject is, regrettably, timely. A compulsory draft will likely be faced by another generation of young Americans in the not-too-distant future. What decision should a Christian make in such an event? Or in the absence of the draft, does he have the right to volunteer for military service? In either case, must he serve in a non-combatant position in time of war? Or if the taking of human life is always wrong in such a context, would he be aiding and abetting such by serving in a supportive role?

My personal conviction is that a Christian may be employed in the military service of his country. I believe that he may serve in a combatant position or in a supportive one. I'm convinced that there is a restriction to this liberty: i.e. that the government be fighting a war of defense, either of its own borders and/or interests, or in behalf of an ally. I cannot condone aggression and intrusion, either on the part of individuals or governments.

In my published debate with T. N. Thrasher on this subject, I set forth three general arguments:

A Christian May Serve In Civil Government

First: seeing that God authorizes civil governments to be punitive agents, and He authorizes Christians to serve as civil governments (or in them), therefore Christians are authorized to be punitive agents of the government.

If this line of reasoning is valid from a scriptural standpoint, then I consider my position established. It would authorize one to serve his community as a law officer. It would sanction one's serving in capacity of a judge or juror, or executioner. It would authorize him serving his nation as a soldier to bring retribution against international intruders of our peace. One may quibble over the term "punitive agent." But I see no essential difference, so far as our concern goes, in the various offices mentioned above. All fall into that category that Paul described as "the power", "the ordinance of God", and "not a terror to good works, but to the evil"(Rom. 13:2,3).

I think that no one will deny that civil governments, according to this passage, may maintain a retributive power. Even Pilate was told by the Lord that he indeed had power from above to crucify or to release (John

19:10, 11). Pilate's besetting sin was not in the use of his power, but in its misuse. Peter explained that civil officers "are sent . . . for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well" (1 Peter 2:14).

May Christians serve in the civil government? Cornelius was not a Christian when we first meet him, but he was a god fearing man whose sincerity and moral purity were monuments before God (Acts 10:1, 2). He was also a soldier, sworn to protect the Roman Empire even to the taking of life. He was told what he "oughtest to do" to be saved (Acts 10:6; 11:14), but one has to do a lot of unnecessary inferring to reach the conclusion that he severed his military connections. Same with the Philippian jailer (Acts 16), the Ethiopian Treasurer (Acts 8), and Erastus, the treasurer of Corinth (Rom. 16: 23).

A Minister of God

Second: a man cannot become, by virtue of the same act or office, both a minister of God for good and a sinner. But the authorized punitive agent is a minister of God for good. Therefore this office, and the duties of it do not make him a sinner.

Certainly, the first proposition is obvious. All truth is from God. Thus truth cannot oppose truth anymore than God can oppose Himself. Yet Rom. 13:4 declares that "the power" is "the minister of God to thee for good" and "he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil."

The Constitution of the United States is in harmony with this inspired statement. The Preamble states that two of the fundamental reasons for the existence of civil government are: 1) Insuring domestic tranquility; and 2) Providing for the common defense. As Alexander Hamilton put it, ". . . the passions of men will not conform to the dictates of reason and justice without constraint."

If all lived by godly principles, it would be wonderful. But unfortunately, there are many who have no compunctions against breaking into homes and businesses, (as well as the borders of one's land) killing, stealing, raping, destroying. Paul teaches that civil government exists for the discouragement and punishment of all such, and is the minister of God's vengeance in so serving.

Moral Laws

Third: Moral laws are eternal and universal. God had authorized and even commanded civil governments to act as His punitive agents. Therefore no moral law is transgressed when civil government acts as God's punitive agent. There is a presupposition. Assuming God never authorizes or commands the violation of moral laws (which would make Him the author of sin and confusion), the conclusion follows.

Positive laws of God have not been constant through time. The sabbath law was restricted to the Mosaic dispensation, baptism to the Christian age. But moral laws are rooted in the eternal and universal attributes of God Himself.

Yet, King Saul sinned when he failed to utterly destroy Amalek (1 Sam. 15). Samuel, one of the most godly men to grace sacred history, completed the job

as he "hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal."

Did Samuel violate a moral law by doing this? No. Someone may counter with the argument that he broke the sixth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill." But the problem is in the interpretation, not the command. The verse has no application to the subject we're discussing. For one thing, the Hebrew word for "kill" here refers to murder (comp. Matt. 19:18). All taking of life is not murder. This is obvious when we consider that the law of God in this same context said several times that the murderer "shall surely be put to death." It is plainly declared in Num. 35:27 that if "the revenger of blood kill the slayer; he shall not be guilty of blood."

Well then, did Samuel break a positive law? No. He obeyed a positive law in the slaying in Agag.

It seems that the only question left to answer is: does one violate a positive law today if he takes human life in such circumstances as our study entails?

The Law of Love

It is often said in objection to our position that one cannot love his enemy and take his life (Matt. 5:43-48). Yet the same chapter says, "Resist not evil" (v. 39). Would one apply this to a Hitler who would murder millions of innocent, peaceful citizens and take over the world? Should such a one be resisted by peace-loving nations? Should a lawless gunman be resisted in our society? What about a rebellious child? Would this passage dictate against disciplinary measures which would amount to resistance of evil. If a Christian should be in favor of resistance to any of these, would it mean he doesn't have love for his enemies?

Don't overlook the fact that God is set forth as the standard of love (v. 45, 48). Yet God's love does not overrule His justice. This scripture refers to our activities as individuals and not to the proper sphere of civil government in matters of defense and law enforcement.

The Law of Vengeance

If it often pointed out that Christians are not to avenge themselves: "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Rom. 12:19). We certainly agree. But when a policeman in pursuit of his civil duty, kills a man, or a soldier does the same, he is not taking personal vengeance. He is exercising God's vengeance (Rom. 13:1-4).

Christian Against Christian

Sometimes it is argued that if Christians of one nation can serve in combat, then Christians of an opposing nation can likewise serve. Therefore, if those two nations go to war against each other, Christians will be pitted against Christians.

The argument is an emotional one rather than a logical one. I doubt that those who so argue would agree that it is worse to kill a brother than an alien.


As I have already explained, I don't believe that every war is justified, and I would have no part in a war of aggression against a peace-loving people. If I did become involved in such, a brother against whose

borders I became a threat would have every right to shoot me, just as my brother across town would have the right if I broke into his home and threatened the safety of his family. And I don't believe his action would demonstrate a lack of love.

Conclusion

Briefly, I have written a few of my thoughts and convictions on this vital subject. Hopefully, readers will be reasonable in their evaluations and charitable in their disagreements if they have such.

If you feel compelled to write regarding those disagreements, I will read and consider your rebuttals. If I am led to change any position I've advanced, I'll let you know. I do not promise to reply to all such letters, or enter into correspondence with a number of brethren. Please understand that other duties would prohibit such.



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HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM: A REPLY

Leslie E. Sloan
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The reader's attention is called to the January 1981, issue of STS, in which brother Marshall Patton (a very dear and respected friend of mine) answers some questions on this subject. I have too much love, respect and appreciation for Marshall Patton for anyone to get the idea that this little piece is anything but objective. I would do nothing to hurt my friend. In fact, I discussed this review with him before I even attempted it. However, there are some things in the article, and some things in general taught by the advocates of Holy Spirit baptism applying to Cornelius which I would like to question for the consideration of the readers. You should go back, therefore, and read brother Patton's material again.

He makes a valid point, I believe, with reference to the prophecy of Joel, in that the Holy Spirit Himself was not the thing which was poured out, but that the Holy Spirit was indicated as the source from which the power came. I am also in agreement with the conclusion brother Patton draws in the complete fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel in the apostles of Christ, and subsequent manifestations of the Holy Spirit as a result of imposition by the apostles.

Brother Patton points out "While the two cases of Holy Spirit baptism (Acts 2 and Acts 10) are similar, they are not identical." I question the conclusion here that these two cases can be the same thing and not be identical? Similarity does not prove that both cases are the same. In the overall picture, there are more differences in these two cases than there are similarities, and brother Patton points out some of these in the same paragraph. Then brother Patton says, "Nevertheless, it was indeed a 'like gift' (Acts 11:17) or equal in that the experience constituted Holy Spirit baptism." The reader surmises that brother Patton automatically assumes without proving that the "like gift" of Acts 11:17 is Holy Spirit baptism. Yet I find no evidence to support the idea. If you go back to Acts 10:44-46, and examine the actual case of the Holy Spirit experience at the house of Cornelius, you will find that what Cornelius received was the "gift of tongues." This constituted the "like gift" received by the apostles (Acts 2) in that it was by the same manner of reception, and administration, and identical to "this same gift" received by the apostles on Pentecost. But the demonstration was not the baptism; it just accompanied or heralded the baptism in it's divine purpose of guiding the apostles into all truth (John 16:13). Cornelius received no promise of Holy Spirit baptism—only the apostles of Christ received this. Since the apostles ONLY received a promise of Holy Spirit baptism, we must conclude that divine purpose relative to Holy Spirit baptism was served by the apostles. Jesus made it emphatic that no one other

than His apostles could receive Holy Spirit baptism (John 14:16-17). I don't believe this passage has been carefully considered by the Cornelius advocates. We must accept the position that Cornelius was in some sense "not of the world" or the position that he did not receive Holy Spirit baptism. For again, Jesus makes it emphatic that the world "cannot receive" this baptism (John 14:16-17). We need to consider also the term "world" in this passage in contrast to the apostles, to whom the Lord made the promise in this passage. Brother Patton points out in the last paragraph of his article that the Holy Spirit's purpose was served in the apostles, and references it with John 16:13.

It cannot be objectively conceived that Peter's statement in Acts 11:16-17 applies to Cornelius in the sense that it encompasses Holy Spirit baptism. If it encompasses Cornelius in this regard, how are we going to protect ourselves against the claims of Holy Spirit baptism by men today? Peter quotes the Lord in Acts 1:5 here, and this promise does not include Cornelius. Then, the question arises (as it did in brother Patton's article—See question No. 2 with his answer) why the words of Christ spoken in Acts 1:5 were called to remembrance by the apostle Peter. Brother Patton said, "Because of the similarity of the events." I think this misses the point entirely, and is an oversimplification of the matter.

I would like to present another point of view for the consideration of our readers. Up until the time of Peter's visit to the house of Cornelius (Acts 10), the gospel had been confined to the nation of Israel, limited to the Jews, but Peter recounts his experience at Caesarea to prove to those in Jerusalem that the time had come to carry the gospel to the whole creation (Acts 10:34-35; 11:17-18). He tells his Jewish brethren that the Spirit fell on Cornelius and his house "as" (in the same manner) it had fallen on the apostles at the beginning. That God had given the Gentiles the "like gift" (The ability to speak in tongues Acts 11:17 cf Acts 2:4; 10:44-46) was a further illustration of God's acceptance of all nations as subjects of the gospel of Christ. Then, Peter told these apostles and brethren, of which all the former, and surely many of the latter, had been personal companions of the Lord, and remembered His instructions to them prior to His ascension, that when he witnessed the Holy Spirit descending on Cornelius, he remembered the promise of the Lord that they (apostles) would be baptized in the Holy Spirit. This surely could not be considered evidence that Cornelius was baptized in the Holy Spirit—that the same thing happened to Cornelius that had happened to the apostles. But, rather, you remember that when Jesus promised to baptize His apostles in the Holy Spirit, He also told them they would be His witnesses in Judea, Jerusalem, Samaria and THE UTTERMOST PART OF THE EARTH (Acts 1:5, 8). Jesus had already made this promise to His apostles (Luke 24:46-49) in connection with their endowment of "power from on high." This was the "Spirit of truth" spoken of in John 14:16-17. This was conspicuous by it's absence in Cornelius' case. Thus it was

clearly indicated to Peter that the very purpose for their (apostles) receiving Holy Spirit baptism was not beginning to be completely carried out. Thus the reception of the Holy Spirit by Cornelius (Gentiles) reminded Peter of THE VERY PURPOSE OF HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM on the apostles consistent with the Lord's promise of the same to them. The fact that Peter "remembered" these things is certainly not evidence that Cornelius received Holy Spirit baptism.

In closing, we should be consistent in our arguments. We forcefully show our Pentecostal neighbors that Holy Spirit baptism was only promised to the apostles. What does the argument do to Cornelius? We deny to them the privilege of saying "gift of the Holy Spirit" is baptism of the Holy Spirit. Should we not abide within the confines of our own rule? We trust that these few remarks will provoke all of us to greater study of divine revelation.

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A REVIEW

Elsewhere in this issue appears a "Review" by Brother L. E. Sloan of a former article in this column. We are, as he says, "dear personal friends" and our feelings toward each other are mutual.

The issue simply has to do with whether or not the experience at the household of Cornelius (Acts 10) was Holy Spirit baptism. The issue is not whether the experience (Acts 10) was the Holy Spirit baptism promised to the apostles. We both understand that it was not (See my former article).

The Scriptures neither call this experience "Holy Spirit baptism" nor the "gift of tongues." The Scriptures do reveal that the experience constituted a "like gift" (Acts 11:17). The Holy Spirit bestowed many gifts in different forms, e.g., promises, blessings, spiritual gifts, and Holy Spirit baptism (Acts 2:33; Gal. 3:14; Matt. 7:11; Lk. 11:13; 1 Cor. 12:4f; Acts 1:5; 2:17).

Brother Sloan and I agree that there were similarities in the experiences. He questions "the conclusion that these two cases can be the same thing and not be identical." Would he question the conclusion that two different cases of the impartation of spiritual gifts would be the same thing ("spiritual gifts") even though the gifts were not identical? The fact that two things are the same categorically does not demand the conclusion that they are identical.

I do not have as much trouble explaining to our "Pentecostal neighbors" or others two Holy Spirit baptisms with different power for different purposes as I would have in explaining that "gifts of the Spirit" were received directly and not through the laying on of the apostles hands (Acts 8:18). Brother Sloan's position on Acts 10 parallels exactly the position of our Pentecostal neighbors, namely, the reception of spiritual gifts directly and not through the laying on of the apostles hands.

The argument based upon the expression "whom the world cannot receive" (John 14:17) and the experience of Cornelius (Acts 10:44; 11:15) misses the mark so far as the meaning of "whom the world cannot receive" is concerned. The word "receive" is from the Greek "Lambano" which, according to W. E. Vine "denotes either to take or to receive." Again, it is defined: "1. to take, i.e. 1. to take with the hand, lay hold of. ... 2. to take in order to carry away: without the notion of violence, i.e. to remove, take away, Matt. 8:17; with the notion of violence, to seize, to take away forcibly: Matt.

5:40; Rev. 3:11" (*Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon*, p. 370).

The context of John 14:17 shows that Jesus was speaking with a view to His going away. He promised them "another Comforter" which the world could not "lay hold of" or "seize or "take away forcibly" as it had done in crucifying Him. Jesus promised that this Comforter would "abide with you for ever." The very reasons given by Jesus in the same verse as to why the world could not "receive" or "take" this Comforter harmonize with this view. Such view or meaning of "receive" has nothing on earth to do with the experience of Cornelius.

Again I conclude that the experience in Acts 10 was Holy Spirit baptism because of the meaning of the word "baptize" and its effect upon their spirits, the similarities already discussed, especially the manner of reception, the outward manifestations, and the associations made by Peter.

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REDEMPTION (3)

Completion of God's Remedial Plan

We have previously traced the course of redemption through the Patriarchal Age and the Mosaic Age. Hopefully, we have given appropriate attention to the purpose and promise of God as such unfolds within the Old Testament and have kept in focus the typical representation. Our present challenge is to consider certain aspects of completion or the perfection of the plan of redemption.

"That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him" (Eph. 1:10). "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:" "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:3, 7). The "fullness of times" saw the advent of Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah. With his birth the sequence of events anticipated more than 4000 years began to unfold. His baptism (Mt. 3) launches his earthly ministry of some three years. The selection of twelve disciples and the special preparation of these by way of teaching, example, and 'impressing their peculiar relationship to the kingdom is climaxed by His promise, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Mt. 16:19; 18:18).

What were the keys here mentioned? To determine what they were and when they began to be used will be to determine when the kingdom came into existence. The keys were the conditions of divine pardon embraced in, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mk. 16:16); "repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38); "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shall be saved" (Acts 16:31). Peter acted upon his delegated authority on Pentecost and as a result of his and the other apostles preaching, 3000 were added to the church upon obedience to these terms of pardon.

Redemption

The eternal purpose of God was to unite Jew and Gentile in the fullness of time in one body, by the cross (Eph. 2:11-18). At least one facet of this purpose is outstanding on the day of Pentecost and in fact does not

materialize for sometime thereafter. Admittedly, all the ingredients with respect to the law of pardon are from that point evident and available but the transition circumstances have not yet produced general application. The prophet had promised, "It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth" (Isa. 49:6). Jesus had commissioned, "all the world" and "every creature". It would seem that the full import of this was slowly grasped as the Jew alone was object of apostolic preaching for a while and this is accepted as divine order, "Jew first and also the Greek" (Rom. 1:16). Cornelius and his household are the first Gentiles to hear and believe the gospel. Here, practically and in fact, is marked the completion of God's plan of redemption.

The character and identity of Cornelius is a beautiful thing, admired among all, saint and sinner (Acts 10). He is presented as devout, charitable, a soldier, a worshipper of God. All this, but he is not a Christian, not a child of God. "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:26-27). Cornelius had to be converted to Jesus Christ.

The account divides itself into three parts. First, there is the bringing of Cornelius and the preacher, Peter in this instance, together. The miraculous is in evidence as we hear an angel speak to Cornelius in commendation of his worthiness and in declaring his prayers heard. However, we note the angel as a messenger of God does not directly intervene in affecting God's purpose, redemption. The angel simply told him how the desires of his heart might be fulfilled. Send to Joppa for Simon, "he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do" (Acts 10:5-6; 11:13-14). God's will is made known only through his word, for Cornelius as well as for you or me. The gospel must be heard, preached to be heard, it is "the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16) and "faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17).

Secondly, there is the preparing of Peter (Acts 10:9-16). Perhaps steeped in traditional barriers, to some degree possessed of a limited concept of the commission, Peter was at that moment not ready for the task God had for him. In fact, not until the vision at mid-day upon the housetop in Joppa did Peter fully understand these matters. There he learned that the cleansing power of the blood of Christ would, as had been purposed from the beginning, bring the Gentile into favor with God just like the Jew. He departed with the devout soldier and the two household servants sent by Cornelius along with certain Jewish brethren for Caesarea.

Arriving at the house of Cornelius he found an expectant and receptive audience waiting for him (Acts 10:17-28). Peter preached the gospel to that audience, prefacing his declaration by impressing that "God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34-35). When

he had summarized God's eternal purpose, climaxing his sermon in declaring the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, he closes with a simple statement of requirements in so far as Cornelius and his house are concerned. "Whosoever believeth in him shall receive the remission of sins" (Acts 10:29-43).

At this point a third miracle occurs. "The Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word" (Acts 10:44). Upon whom? Those that heard the word. For their salvation? No. Why then? What was the purpose? To convince the Jews that the Gentile as represented in Cornelius, could receive the grace of God upon the same terms and conditions as the Jew (cf. 10:45). The result of this miraculous falling of the Holy Ghost was a convicting and convincing of the Jews that "God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18).

The conclusion of this account pinpoints the obedience of Cornelius and his household. Take note again of the concluding and concise statement of Peter (v. 43), "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." The logical and conclusive act in the obedience of Cornelius toward the remission of sins is expressed in verses 47 and 48. "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord". Salvation from sin in the only way the Spirit has ever revealed. Cornelius, a religious man, yet lost in sin, was saved by the blood of Christ in obedience to the gospel. No man living can hide behind his morality expecting and having it save him. No man lives without sin.

In Cornelius we see the completion of God's remedial system along with a number of other profitable lessons. In him there is the classic example of the gospel in application and the continuing stress upon the unalterable and eternal principle: obey God and be BLESSED; disobey and be CURSED.

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Assembled together before the great wooden podium, the multitude stood. Ezra opened the Book and lead the people in prayer. This brings us to the first aspect of spiritual renewal, the INTELLECT. In Chapter 8:1-8, the challenge of Ezra is that of communicating information: V. 8, "they read from the Book. . . . so that they understood the reading." This was the propagation of the Word. The Lord said, "you shall know the truth and the truth will make you free." Spiritual renewal involves wanting to know the will of the Lord to the degree that the people come together as one person; standing from early morning until mid-day to learn God's statutes. What a contrast this is from the prevailing attitude which says today that "if you can't say it in 30 minutes, it ought not be said." These people were not sitting in padded pews and they were not in air-conditioned buildings. They were standing in the street and they were "attentive to the Book of the Law." Ezra appealed to the right authority when he opened the "Book of the Law."

This example says that there must be a zest for learning both on the part of the audience and the teacher. Ezra's dedication (Ezra 7:10), was discussed in our last study, so we know his zeal as well as enthusiasm to add to that of the people. The result is that information will be communicated and received. Brethren, in many areas and places our knowledge is woefully failing. The Old Testament remains a vast unknown source to the majority of Christians. Recently, while away from home and teaching a typical auditorium class of adults, not one person in the assembly had even one idea what happened to the nation of Israel, who, when, or how, nor what happened to the nation of Judah, who, when or how. And, not one person knew the order of world kingdoms that God used in the Old Testament. As another example, one dear sister that taught a ladies' class at a particular congregation, told the class that they ought not to study the Old Testament at church because it was "nailed to the cross:" that are the assemblies we ought to study only the New Testament, and that if they wanted to they could read it at home. These two separate examples

only serve to further demonstrate an all too common weakness in the church, which proclaims that we must have knowledge to effect spiritual renewal. The burden must fall equally upon the shoulders of the teachers and the learners. As teachers we must have something to say. The reason that many demand the sermon to be over in 30 minutes, or that the class finish the entire Book of Revelation in 13 lessons, is that oftentimes all the lessons are a boring rehash of what everybody else has heard over and over. This represents a failure to study on the part of the teacher. Ezra has said first, I must know it, then practice it, and finally teach it. Our classes can't be a dusted off, warmed over, run through of the same old left-overs time after time. One Bible student gave in response to the question, "What do you think makes brother so-and-so such a good teacher?", "I learn something new ever time I go to class." The teacher was putting out the information. Therefore, the student said, "I can't wait to get to class!" This double responsibility will enhance the first step in effecting spiritual renewal.

Secondly, after the intellect has been stimulated with divine knowledge, then 8:9-12 demonstrates the next step in renewal, the effect on the Emotions. Verse 9, "... for all the people were weeping when they heard the Words of the Law." It moved them emotionally when they realized their condition and conduct as compared to what the Law had set forth as a standard. The knowledge they had received had hit home hard when they heard about their failures. The response of Ezra was to encourage them not to mourn and weep; they had turned from their failures; and that now was not the time to continually dwell on them; that now it was time for joy and thanksgiving because they could be set aside.

We are so afraid of the emotionalism of Pentecostalism, or of the Charismatic Movement, that we have sought to carve the heart out of Christianity and deny the emotions altogether. We want our sermons to be conversations in monotone. We ask that our preaching be done with detachment and void of intensity. Recently, following a meeting two non-members were overheard discussing the lesson which was delivered in a detached, conversational monotone. One visitor asked the other: "Did you hear him say you had to be baptized to be saved."

"Sure," the second replied, "but he didn't mean it. You could tell by the way he said it." Another visitor said, "they are afraid they would look like Pentecostals if they raised their voices." Brethren, there must be some emotion in what we say and how we say it, because if it makes an impact on the mind, it will move the heart. It must be our goal as teachers, elders and preachers to move people to obey. "Chalk talks" are fine, but we must seek to touch the heart of the person in the pew. They need to feel the pain of sin and the joy of forgiveness. Paul said in 2 Cor. 5:9, "Knowing the fear of the Lord we persuade men." This means to take the Word into the mind and reach the heart of man because of the consequences. Brethren, if we want others to "bleed", we that teach need to

"hemorrhage." Spiritual renewal touches the **heart**.

Finally, in Chapter 8:13-18, spiritual renewal affects the will. On the second day they had come back for more. They were still seeking to "gain insight to the Word of the Lord." Now they were to find out what they needed to do. Obedience is the key now. First, the Word goes into the MIND, then it touches the HEART, and the last step is that it manifests itself in the WILL, and/or in **simple obedience**. They found out that they had not lived in the booths or observed the feast of the Tabernacle. This feast of booths was a memorial of the time of the Exodus and of living in the wilderness. This they had neglected to do, so when they found out what they needed to do, because of their attitude they are ready to observe this feast as God would have it.

You can see by this example that we "know to do" a lot of things that we do not do. This is true because, while it is head accepted, it is heart rejected. Once the head and the heart accepts, the obedience is swift. This then is called submission. It brings man "full circle" to the foot of the throne, except when the process began man was on the throne, and when it is completed, Jesus is on the throne. In Acts 2, when they were cut "to the heart", obedience was but a question away.

The result of this renewal is seen in the unity of those whose minds were opened, whose hearts were pricked, and whose will reacted in obedience. So often the local congregation is a hotbed of gossip, criticism and cliques. Paul, speaking of this factious attitude in Corinth, asked: "Are you not carnal?" He goes on to say that, "I cannot speak to you as spiritual men but as fleshly." There can be no basics for unity aside from spirituality. When spiritual renewal has taken place then and only then can a people be ONE in Christ. The bone-deep desire to learn, practice and teach is the KEY to spirituality. Until people attend Bible study because they eagerly expect to learn something new, until they express sorrow and joy, until this new attitude influences a change in behavior, spirituality is a dream with no chance of fulfillment.

EXPOSITION: TEXT and CONTEXT

Weldon E. Warnock

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Akron, Ohio 44301



THE BEATITUDES—NO. 1

The Beatitudes are a part of the memorable Sermon on the Mount. They must be viewed in light of the fact that Jesus was preaching the gospel of the kingdom. Prior to the Sermon on the Mount Matthew states: "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the

kingdom.." (4:23). When Jesus closed his sermon "the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (7:28-29).

Hence, Jesus was preaching the gospel or teaching New Testament doctrine in his presentation of the Beatitudes. They point toward the Christian dispensation that began on Pentecost and characterize the citizens that would compose Jesus' kingdom. Let us now consider each one of them specifically.

Blessed Are the Poor in Spirit

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven" (Matt. 5:3). Luke's account states: "Blessed be ye poor" (Lk. 6:20). The "poor" describes not what a man HAS, but rather describes what a man IS. There is no merit in being poor, physically, nor is there dishonor in being rich. Both can be dangerous, however. The wise man said: "Give me neither poverty nor riches . . . lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal and take the name of my God in Vain" (Prov. 30:8-9).

There were two Greek Words used to show degrees of poorness. One word was *ptochos*. It meant destitution; total poverty, as a beggar. The other word was *penes*. It meant the bare necessities without any luxuries. Jesus chose the word *ptochos* in our text under study. He was saying: "Blessed are those who are spiritually destitute, utterly helpless, for they shall gain access into my kingdom."

Man must feel his total dependence on God rather than himself. He must come to the place where he can say, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 12:23). This is what Paul meant when he wrote: "If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, Let him become a fool, that he may be wise" (1 Cor. 3:18).

Those who are not willing to bow in humble submission to the will of God will never enjoy the blessings of citizenship in the kingdom of heaven. Entrance into the kingdom (by process of the new birth, Jn. 3:3,5) cannot be gained by arrogance and self-righteousness, but by a feeling of complete deprivation and insufficiency. May we realize that we need the Lord Jesus Christ!

Blessed Are They That Mourn

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted" (Matt. 5:4). This is not a consolatory text for the loss of loved ones. Neither is it a text for the "mourner's bench" or "altar." Alien sinners going to the "mourner's bench" to "pray through" is not taught in the Bible. But rather the text has reference to the mourning of those over their lost condition because of sin. This is the man with the broken heart. He is moved to bitter sorrow because of the realization of sin. He is dissatisfied with life the way it is. This initiates change.

Jesus said that those in grief and sorrow would be comforted. The comfort came when the glad news of the gospel was announced and received. This was the

fulfillment of Isaiah's Prophecy: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek: he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn" (Isa. 61:1-2). Jesus quoted his prophecy in Lk. 4:18 and applied it to His ministry. The "comfort" of Isaiah and the "comfort" of the second beatitude are the same thing, both referring to the gospel.

In contrast to those who have godly sorrow that brings about comfort, Jesus said: "Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep" (Lk. 6:25). These are the persons who do not realize their souls' needs, because they are indifferent toward sin and labor under the delusion that they have no need of Christ. They are delighted in the things of the earth, running after pleasures and riches, but Jesus said they shall mourn and weep, but too late!

(To be continued)

ATTENTION: YOUNG PEOPLE!

A LETTER FROM A PRISONER SO YOU'RE DOING DRUGS?

(EDITOR'S Note: This letter comes from one of 15 converts in the Westville Correctional Center in northern Indiana where Arthur W. Adams of Portage, Indiana has been doing successful work through classes and a correspondence course. Please read it carefully and then make sure every teenager you know reads it. Our prayers and best wishes are with this young man and the others who have recently obeyed the gospel.)

Dear Friend and Brother,

I am writing you as a concerned friend and Christian brother. I don't know a lot about you and you don't know me. But take what I am about to say as a voice of experience. I would hate to have what happened to me happen to you.

I am 25 years old and I've already spent about 8 years in prison. I have been in and out of institutions most of my life. You name it, I've done it except for rape and murder. Even though I've come close to committing both.

Have you ever been in jail or prison or even a mental hospital? If you haven't, take a tour of one, ask an ex-con, find out what it's like. You may end up there one day.

I hear you've been involved in narcotics? So have I. I've used drugs since I was 11 years old— from marijuana to heroin, all inclusive. I've drunk every kind of alcohol invented. Do you know what it is like to go through withdrawal from drugs or alcohol? It is the

worst experience a man can go through, next to going to prison.

Do you know what the penalty for dealing or using and possession of drugs is? It carries about 15 years to life imprisonment. Is it worth 15 years or so of your life for a few cheap thrills?

Being in prison is a horrible thing to happen to anyone. First you are processed in and placed in a cell alone or with another man. You stay there 7 to 10 days. You are then placed on a job. You are told when to work, when to quit, when to eat, when you are through, when to get up, when to go to bed. You live a life of orders.

Your first test of survival inside is when several inmates confront you. You either fight or back away. When you turn away, you are then forced to submit to homosexual acts. You are then a queen. Believe me, I've seen it happen to many young kids in prison. The code is "only the strong survive", the weak ones are in big trouble.

I heard you said you claimed to be a Christian. If you are, you would not do what you are doing. You may think it is "cool" to do what you are doing, but it isn't. You are a pawn in someone's game to make money. Someone who would sell drugs to innocent kids is sick.

Sure I've done it, but I paid a stiff price because of it. If I were free now, I would see that anyone I caught selling drugs at all would be thoroughly prosecuted for it.

I am presently serving a 10 year sentence in prison in Indiana and I wish I could change my circumstances, but I can't. I've got to live with it.

But even though I am in prison, I am a free man because Jesus has given me a freedom I've never known. He has given me a guarantee of eternal life if I remain faithful. He has forgiven me every wrong I've ever committed and the chance if I sin in the future to be forgiven then.

As someone who is deeply concerned for your future, your life and your soul, give up what you are doing and return unto God. Your path right now only leads to Hell and eternal torment.

I don't want you to do what I've done and end up where I am. You have a long life ahead of you. Do something about it, give yourself a chance before you don't have one.

If I had the chances you've got now I would take advantage of them. I can't, but you can. Stop now before it is too late. You will only end up on the short end of the stick.

For your sake, I hope you will make the right decision. I would hate for you to end up in prison and experience the tortures of confinement. I love you, my brother, and I will be praying for you.

In Christian love, Ken

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Editor's Meeting Schedule

June 1-7—Houston, Mississippi
June 8-14—Bruce, Mississippi
July 6-12—Warner Robins, Georgia
July 20-26—Buckhorn, Mississippi
August 9-14—Dade City, Florida
August 23-28—Kansas City, MO (Nashua)
September 7-13—Wellsburg, WV
September 20-25—Bowling Green, KY (Eastside)
October 5-11—Martinez, Georgia
October 19-25—Akron, Ohio (S.E.)
November 1-6—Paden City, WV
November 16-22—Lake City, Florida

It would be a pleasure to greet any of our readers during these meetings.

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

JAMES R. COPE, Temple Terrace, FL 33617. When I read in your January issue about Ken Green's account of the woman from Philadelphia who requested help from the church but could furnish no identification references, I was reminded of a similar incident of several years past.

Upon arriving at the Brandon, FL meeting house early Sunday morning, the brother who opened and closed the building told me of a man awaiting me inside. His was a hard-luck, out-of-gas-and-food story. When he was unable to furnish preaching and elder acquaintances in the city which was allegedly his home, I asked, "Since you are unable to recall the name of neither preacher or elders, maybe you can furnish me information regarding the organist. Do you recall her name?" He replied, "You know for the life of me, I can't remember that woman's name either." Whereupon I suggested, "I believe your folks are about a mile south of here on this same road!"

PREACHERS NEEDED

HOLLY HILL, FL—The Flomich Ave. church meeting at 1234 Flomich Ave. in Holly Hill (Daytona Beach area) is in need of a preacher. Whoever comes will need to raise a good deal of support since the church is small. If interested contact: Thomas Thornhill at (904) 672-2872 or (904) 253-1821. Or contact Charles Lindsey at (904) 749-2040 after 6 p.m.

SAVANNAH, GA—Preacher needed to work with the church here. We are fully supporting with an attendance of 44 to 54. If interested contact Cliff Nance at 4 Cottingham Dr., Savannah, GA 31406. Or church of Christ 11808 Middleground Rd., Savannah, GA 31406.

NEWPORT NEWS, VA—The church here seeks a full-time preacher. Local support is available to the extent of \$250 per month plus insurance. Contact Bob Mallard at (804) 464-9495 or write to 1925 Sunrise Dr., Virginia Beach, VA 23455.

SOUTH AMERICA & MEXICO

FERNANDO VENEGAS, Casilla #122 C.C., 5500 Mendoza, Argentina. This is to report that in January I received an invitation to preach in a meeting at the church in Pdte, Derqui. We made the trip from Mendoza to Buenos Aires by train taking 17 hours. The congregation was well prepared for the meeting. Many visitors were present. During the meeting two precious souls obeyed the gospel. Thank you for your love and confidence with us. May God bless you richly.

EFRAIN F. PEREZ, Casilla 1317, Valparaiso, Chile. We continue to rejoice that there were three more baptized into Christ at the Quilpue congregation. The work here at Quilpue is going very well. The attendance is about 18 each meeting day. We have two more families who are taking classes with us. On the dates of February 9-16 we took a trip to Chilean, Los Alamos, and Valdivia to visit those taking the Bible Correspondence Course. One family in Chilean is very close to obeying the gospel. Also in March we conducted a preacher training program here at Quillota church. We have nine students. Like last year we will have classes each Friday for four hours in the evening. The work at Vina del Mar continues well with 14 members. There are presently five home studies conducted there. At the present we are planning for three gospel meetings this year and are busy distributing the Bible Correspondence Course. Please pray for us.

ENRIQUE M. CISNEROS, Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico—February 8-13 the church in Hermosillo, Sonora had a gospel meeting with Bro. Mack Kercheville from El Paso, TX. This series was successful and we rejoiced that two souls were baptized into Christ.

JIM GABBARD, 176 B Street, Brawley, CA 92227. I am now in my fourth year with the good church at 2nd and B Streets and the time

has been wonderful. The church is blessed with four good men who serve as overseers. The church is made up of people with solid morals who know the value of the human soul. In addition to my support the church also helps contribute to the support of eight other preachers in California, the Northwest, and Mexico. We recently completed a meeting with Bro. Hoyt Houchen preaching the gospel in a very fine way We invite all readers of this great publication to come and worship with us if ever in the Imperial Valley.

DUELL HARBISON, Jr., Rt. 6, Box 75A, Cullman, AL 35055. I am a faithful young man with a wife and two children who would like to preach. I need to grow in knowledge and experience and would like to work with an older preacher in a two preacher arrangement. At present I attend the Fourth St. church here in Cullman. For a reference contact Bro. Quentin McCay at (205) 739-4483 Bro. Mc-Cay preaches for the Fourth St. congregation. If interested please write to me at the above address or call (205) 739-4361.

GREEN—PRATT DEBATE REVIEWED

ROBERT F. HENDRIX, 2215 Linde St. NW, Huntsville, AL 35810. The Green—Pratt debate conducted March 2-5 in Huntsville, AL is now history. Ken Green of the Jordan Park church did a remarkable job of upholding the truth on the subjects of

Music, Religious Titles, and Footwashing. I moderated for Bro. Green and A. C. Grider was the timekeeper. Attendance was estimated at between 2,000 and 3,000. The crowd was composed of a majority of Mr. Pratts people and we were grateful for such an opportunity to set forth the truth to so many who had not heard it before. Ken taught the truth thoroughly on all four issues, dealing with the need to "rightly divide the word" and "how to establish Bible authority." It was in evidence that these people were ignorant of the Bible and how to study it. There was no evidence of Bibles among them at any time during the debate, and one of their people states that they were not encouraged to read their Bibles, as Mr. Pratt was to interpret the scripture for them. We are grateful to God that the truth was presented in such an able manner by Ken, and that so many heard the truth. As Ken Green stated, "The victory goes neither to Mr. Pratt nor myself—but to every person present, who with an open heart and Bible measures what was said and puts his life in harmony with what God's word teaches on these subjects "

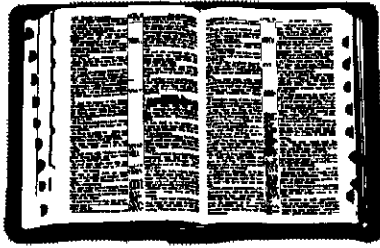
IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

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RESTORATIONS	10 ³

"Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)

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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THINK ON
THESE THINGS

W. E. Phillips
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WILL THIS GREAT NATION FALL?

The decline and fall of the Roman Empire has been the subject of books, papers, magazine articles and lectures. The internal conditions that brought about the fall of this great empire have been compared to the situations that presently exist in America. These problems are not always reversible. However, if the people of this great nation are made aware of the consequences of the present course, and if they respond in such number and with such force as to bring about a change in the morals and attitudes of the people, this nation can be strong again. Be not deceived, this nation is not as powerful and invincible as some public officials would have us believe.

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord ..." (Psa. 33:12). Every reader of the history of Israel in the Old Testament is acquainted with the fall of this nation when she left God, and the restoration to power and strength again when her people repented and returned to God and His will. This principle is true of any nation because a nation is made of people, and God deals with people.

America has abounded in an almost infinite flow of natural resources and has had an unique prosperity for its entire existence of over two centuries. Of course, not every individual or every family has enjoyed this abundance through the years. Neither has every generation known the times of plenty that have generally characterized this nation. The fact is, however, that the United States has been the richest nation on earth in resources and power. Now something has happened. We no longer enjoy this distinct

position of wealth and power. What is wrong? Who caused it? How did it happen? These are questions with which we must come to grips.

At this writing it has been three weeks since the American hostages were released from Iran. That one incident of a small nation forcefully taking the American Embassy and holding 52 Americans for 444 days while taunting and cursing this nation through the whole ordeal. Finally some form of ransom was demanded that they be released. Different terms have been used about how the release of the hostages was accomplished and what the sum of money paid was called, but the bottom line is that the United States was humiliated before the whole world. My reference at this point to the hostage issue is only to show the standing of this nation in the world at present as compared to what it once was. My question now is: does this national problem have anything to do with our relationship to God and respect for His word? Is there enough "salt" and "light" in this nation to save it? (Matt. 5:13-16).

The political, economic, social and moral change we now see has been developing for a long time. The real cause, like the swell of a giant tidal wave, could be observed by a discerning eye for many years. Many among the populace and a few in high places have cried the warning of approaching disaster, but no one would listen. The seriousness of the situation is now realized by the majority and its potential danger acknowledged by the authorities, but their approach to a solution is all wrong. The experts are bringing forth formulas for improving the whole society and re-establishing a national place in the world, but none are touching the real cause of the problem. In fairness to the present administration, the speeches, slogans and promises indicate a return to acknowledging the existence and power of God, and the necessity for a more moral and spiritual atmosphere in which to live as a nation.

The word of God says, "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov. 14:34). Whatever historians may record about the decay and the possible fall of the United States as we know it, one thing is certain: the real reason for the state of affairs today and the possible fall of this once great nation is exactly the same as in every other

nation or empire that is no more. We will notice the reasons briefly.

Some of the outstanding reasons for the fall of the Roman Empire have been written in the histories covering that period in time. They are: 1) Abolishing God from all functions of government, from teaching children, and trying to stifle the free practice of religious beliefs. The substitute of idols for the one true God. 2) Freedom of sexual indulgences in all forms, including homosexual and lesbian practice by people on all levels of society, prostitution and free, easy divorce and remarriage. 3) Excessive interest and participation in sports of all kinds. Entertainment with sexual and violent emphasis takes priority over everything that contributes to wholesome living. 4) High and rising taxes that vanish in many greedy and criminal agencies that exist for that purpose. There are more, but space does not permit them to be discussed.

It is **barbaric ungodliness**, in all its ugliness on every level of society. I mean that in the full sense of the word. By "barbaric" I mean that characteristic of "an unmannerly person;... a savage, cruel person; brute" (Webster). "Ungodly" simply means "not godly or religious; impious. 2. sinful; wicked" (Webster). The original word for "ungodly" is **asebeia**. W. E. Vine says in a note following the definition of the noun form: "**anomia** is disregard for, or defiance of God's laws; **asebeia** is the same attitude toward God's person."

The most simple description of America's trouble that no legislative body, executive power, or court decision can change is that every level of society and every part of the nation is filled with that insensitive, coarse, brutish attitude that holds disregard and defiance for the Person of God and His laws. No nation can survive long with this attitude and philosophy.

Before you reply to me that America is about the most religious nation on earth, let me say that is not true. The heathen nations of the world have their gods, and they are very religious. Of course, they are very far from the true God, but their religious influence often keeps them on their accepted civil course. America has less than 42% of the people affiliated with some religious organization, and that counts ALL that are classified as religious. That means over half of the people in the United States are classified as non-religious, in the sense of not belonging to some religious group. If we consider how many of these religious people in the United States are ignorant of the true God and His word, we have a very small percent. And if we consider how many who are Christians are unfaithful or have left the truth for the doctrines of men, we have a very few who really serve God in spirit and truth.

But we are told that the United States is the most religious nation on the face of the earth. It has been called a "Christian Nation." Why have not the non-religious, godless nations of communism fallen? Why do the heathen and idol worshipping nations of the world survive?

We are not talking of the mere existence of a people under some kind of dictator. The United States may

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remain under such a condition and yet be a fallen nation. Hitler's Germany was a nation of people, but who would claim that it was a nation of free people with high standards for individual rights and the pursuit of happiness? These communist countries are people under the philosophical yoke of oppression that says the state is of more value than the individual. The people are, in effect, in prison. The heathen countries are also slaves to their superstitions so that they die of famine, disease, and war at a very early age.

If something is not changed, this is what America is coming to be. It is not too late to do something, but we will have to be "doers of the word, and not hearers only" (James 1:22). The influence of a faithful Christian and the strength of a sound, spiritual church will be the beginning place for a revival of the qualities that made this nation great from its beginning. Pray for all that are in authority; "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty, for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:2-4).

Editorial

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DANGERS WE FACE

Students of the New Testament are well aware that the early church had dangers and problems to face. Divine revelation addressed these forthrightly and in so doing provided not only the solution for their immediate problems but gave all the information needed to meet and overcome whatever contingencies the people of God might face through all time to come. "The faith once for all delivered to the saints" is all-sufficient and requires no appendages to satisfy modern needs (June 3).

Throughout the history of the Lord's people one major issue has scarcely been settled before another set of problems arises. For the last three decades the issues of church supported human enterprises, sponsoring churches and church financed recreation activities have been studied, debated and lines have been drawn and solidified. The division is now deep and wide. Attitudes and practices are poles apart. The estrangement is especially sad to those of us who remember when it was not this way. A younger generation has grown up since the division which has never known the time and circumstances before this tragedy unfolded.

Churches which withstood the spirit of digression and those which have been formed in the aftermath of it are not immune to dangers. It is a sad fact that all too many have limited soundness in the faith to opposition to what has generally come to be known as "liberalism." The word "sound" in the New Testament has to do with what is wholesome, healthy, balanced and sane. The Devil is not a one-issue enemy. He directs his attacks at the most vulnerable places in our armor. As I travel among brethren and observe the passing scene, there are several dangers which are apparent and which must be addressed soon or else much ground will be lost. Consider these dangers:

(1) There is a growing softness toward error. It is easy for churches which have gone through severe trials and heavy controversies to preserve purity of faith and practice to develop battle fatigue. Periods of peace and prosperity are certainly desirable. It is encouraging to see congregations with better buildings and larger budgets for scriptural work. But it is all too easy to settle into complacency, insist on not rocking the boat, cater to our own heroes, elevate our own educated elite, and manifest all the attitudes of denominational status. Many have lost their militancy in opposition to denominational error as well as error

among brethren. Brethren who have worked hard to equip themselves to meet advocates of error in public debate are perhaps the most scorned of all preachers. Brethren have sometimes unwittingly encouraged softness by saying "We don't need a strong pulpit man, just a good personal worker." Since when has it every been to the advantage of churches to have anything but strength in the pulpit? There is nothing wrong with preachers teaching from house to house, but the fact remains that God's assembled people need strong and able preaching on the fundamentals of the gospel and personal godliness; preaching which stirs the hearts of people to serve with diligence. Some of the preaching today is little more than warmed over sales motivational speeches, generously sprinkled with poetry and cute, catchy phrases. Some of it is a display of human wisdom pitched on such an intellectual plane that it missed many of the common people. Brethren, we need to "preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:2).

(2) There is a problem of stampeding worldliness. This is evident among the people at large and increasingly apparent among elders, deacons, preachers and their families. What else could we expect from church members when those who take public places of responsibility have been seduced by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life? The vices of the unregenerate world have become the practices of would-be saints. Swearing, drinking, gambling, smoking, fornicating "saints" are found in all too many places. And in far too many instances, preachers and elders are not in a position to say anything about it that anyone would take seriously. If the Lord were to come today, I wonder how many who wear his name would be found without spot or wrinkle.

(3) We face a serious danger from unqualified elders and deacons. While every qualification given by the Lord is important and none should be minimized, some brethren have spent so much time arguing about whether "children" includes one or more, that they have ignored other qualifications such as "apt to teach", able to "stop the mouths of gainsayers", "not soon angry", "not covetous" and on we could go. The most common yard stick has been to select a man with children who are all members of the church and who are successful in the business world. Over the last few years we have met and talked with men who serve as elders who have not the faintest notion what it means to shepherd a flock. The teaching program of many congregations is a joke, and not a very funny one. What of the divine mandate to "feed the flock of God"? Do elders know what is being taught and whether or not those who teach under their oversight are really qualified to teach? If all elders had been alert to their duties then some of the errors advocated from the pulpits would have been halted. Much of the friction and bickering that goes on in some congregations would cease if elders would perform their God-given duty and stop the mouths of gainsayers. Brethren, we must do a better job in instructing people on this subject. We need to plant the desire early in young men to

so direct their lives that one day they may be able to wisely oversee the flock of God.

(4) The danger of fragmenting into a multiplicity of wrangling sects is very real. If division arises because truth has been insistently preached, then so be it. We are not in favor of having peace at any price. But neither are we in favor of elevating every matter of private conviction into an issue of major proportion and establishing a human creed before which all men must bow. I would not deny any faithful brother the right to state his conviction on any subject so long as he does not begin to insert his opinion between the lines of scripture and insist that all be able to do the same reading between the lines as he. Some of the mail we receive, some of the conversations and questions which are heard at various places to say nothing of many of the battles which rage through some of the papers at times make me wonder if some don't stay awake nights trying to think up something new or novel to dispute about. Everyone who has heard me preach very much or read what I have written over the last three decades knows good and well where I stand with regard to the church and human organizations and the attendant issues which have surfaced in the wake of that confrontation. But frankly, I would not turn around for the difference between liberalism and crankism. They are opposite ends of the same basic problem. Liberalism exalts human wisdom by ignoring what God authorized. Crankism exalts human wisdom by reading into the word of God more than he said. It equates human opinion with the divine oracles. Liberalism ignores what is written on the line. Crankism insists on reading between the lines. Both are wrong. Both are presumptuous. Both are haughty and arrogant. Both are divisive. Liberalism has crystallized into a respectable denominational movement (respectable in the eyes of the world, that is). Crankism opens the door to a thousand warring sects each contending for its own special tenet. There are many excellent preachers and many very fine congregations and I do not write this to discourage them. But unless dangers and problems are recognized and identified, they can never be resolved. This fourth danger is very real and is becoming more wide-spread with each passing day.

The cure for all of this is a simple adherence to the "faith once for all delivered to the saints." Let us preach and practice only that for which we have a "thus saith the Lord." Everyone has private opinions and scruples. But we must recognize the difference between divine and human wisdom. My private judgment is not scripture and neither is yours. What God says we must believe. What he commands we must do. We have the right to get everything out of his word which he put into it but we also have the responsibility to stop right there!

UNMASKING MORMONISM (NO. 1)

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The Mormon Myth

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, known as the Mormons, has in recent years developed into a major world-wide organization, and has been converting people to their sect in record numbers. Their Madison Avenue image is that of a clean cut, morally superior, industrious, and joyful people who center their lives upon the family. This image, however, is only a mask. Like the whitewashed appearance of the Pharisees (Matt. 23:27), the Mormon Church has created this facade to attract the naive. Whether in the television spots of the Mormon mother hugging her children, the Reader's Digest insert which sensationalizes their "Mr. Clean" doctrine, or the Donnie and Marie smiles of their young missionaries, the public is shown a mask. Seldom do we see the ungodliness and irreverent beliefs behind the mask. We should be reminded that Jesus warned, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravaging wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits" (Matt. 7:15-16). Inasmuch as we have the responsibility to "try the spirits whether they are of God" (1 Jn. 4:1), we will examine the facts behind the Mormon mask. There is no question that the Mormon people are good people and good neighbors. But they are religiously mistaken and have been deceived and used by the Mormon Church to perpetuate the myths of their faith. Newsweek reports in their September 1, 1980 issue that "Mormons today are known for their fierce devotion to monogamy, the family and free enterprise. But underneath their Reader's Digest image, the Mormons espouse a radical, anthropomorphic conception of God that sets them far apart from other religions." Brigham Young University historian, Marvin Hill, is quoted as saying, "The leadership is trying to present the church as a seamless society and all their energies are organized to perpetuate that myth." In this first article, we will look at the basic claims of the righteousness, morality, and joyful family life of the Mormons, remembering the words of Jesus, "Ye shall know them by their fruits."

Mormons are not the happiest people on earth, as they claim. Mental depression is a great problem among Mormons. The wife and mother is pressured to have as many children as she can, to be a loving mother, a submissive wife, and to still have time to work many hours each week for her church. When she fails to live up to the Mormon image of "super mom" she often suffers from depression. The single woman is greatly pressured to marry, since Mormons view womanhood as producing offspring on this earth and in eternity. The Utah Bureau of Health Statistics

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reported that the suicide rate for females nearly doubled from 1960 to 1970, and the rate of suicide for single women nearly tripled. During 1970 to 1979, Utah's suicide mortality rate was higher than the national rate in every year but one. An AP story, appearing in the Ogden Standard-Examiner November 3, 1980 reported that depression among teen-agers is "particularly acute in Utah" and that "statistics show a 60 percent increase in teen suicides in the last 14 years with an 80 percent hike among adolescent girls in that period." And Utah Holiday's June, 1980 issue said that the national suicide rate has increased 15 percent over the last 10 years while Utah's rate has increased 27 percent. If Mormonism makes happier people, we should see less depression and suicide in Utah than in other communities.

Mormons are not the strict-moral led people they claim to be. In a Mormon tract entitled "What of the Mormons?" we read, "There is no principle on which The Latter-day Saints lay greater emphasis than the sacredness of the marriage covenant. Adultery is next to murder in gravity in Mormon theology. Strict morality is taught, and the Church has used its means and facilities to teach its youth the necessity for moral cleanliness and the blessings of happy marriage." Behind this mask, we find the exact opposite. Need we remind our Mormon friends that their early leaders were polygamous adulterers? Or should we even mention the fact that Mormonism still teaches that faithful men will be given more wives in the next life? Their facilities (church buildings) are used for singles parties and disco dances, among other things. Are we to believe that these lascivious dances teach moral cleanliness to their youth? Mormons will claim that Utah's rate of illegitimacy is lower than the national average. But that is explained by the fact that most pregnant girls in Utah marry before giving birth. The Utah Bureau of Health Statistics reveals that 70 percent of all teenage first births in Utah are premarital conceptions. In other words, of every 10 teenagers who have their first baby, only 3 were married when they conceived. Are we to conclude that Mormon teens are of higher morals than other teens? While they may be no worse, Mormon children are certainly not morally superior to other children.

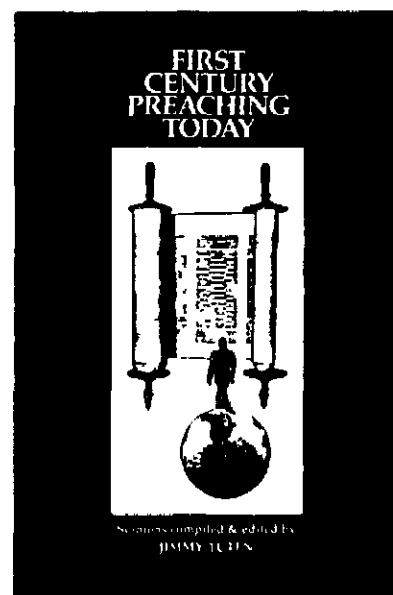
Concerning family life, Mormons have no better marriages than others in this country. Utah's divorce rate is equal to the national average. Mormon parents are not "super parents" and the lack of discipline of their children is evident in many cases. In 1979 the superintendent of Salt Lake City schools appealed to the religious leaders to help discipline the students. He stated that the teachers could not handle them, and that his appeal to their parents had not helped. Are we to believe that Mormon family life is superior to that of other families?

The "Mr. Clean" concept of Mormons is also a mask. Even faithful Mormons use profanities in common speech. And if the Mormon church is successful in keeping their people from the use of alcohol and drugs, the Utah Bureau of Health Statistics does not know it. They report that alcoholism is the fourth leading cause

of death in Utah. This Bureau estimates that Utah contains 60,000 alcoholics and problem drinkers. In a 1980 study of teenagers between the ages of 12 and 18, 13.2 percent admitted using marijuana within the past 30 days, and 20.7 percent had consumed alcoholic beverage in the same period.

The point of this article is not to state that Mormons are worse sinners than others in the world. We applaud their appeal for strict morals and a family-oriented life. But their appeal is only a mask, and does not describe their lives, in reality. Simply stated, if Mormonism is designed to make people happier, more godly and morally supreme, then Mormonism is not working! The fruits of their doctrine show a paper-thin mask and an hypocritical image. In our next article, we will examine the Mormon views of the Bible and of God.

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EXPOSITION: TEXT and CONTEXT

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THE BEATITUDES—No. 2

We continue our study of the Beatitudes. In this brief article we will deal with the third and fourth beatitudes in the order in which they appear in Matthew's account.

Blessed Are the Meek

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (Mt. 5:5). We sometimes think of a meek person as timid, shy or fearful. But this cannot be the meaning Jesus had in mind. Jesus said of himself: "I am meek and lowly in heart" (Mt. 11:29). Was Jesus timid? Certainly not! "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth" (Num. 12:3). Who is ready to say that Moses was a weakling?

The Greek word for "meek" is *praus*. It describes a condition of the mind and heart. "It is that temper of spirit in which we accept His (God, WEW) dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing or resisting" (*Wuest Word Studies*). Lenski wrote: "The word refers to an inward virtue exercised toward persons. When they are wronged or abused they show no resentment and do not threaten or avenge themselves" (*Commentary on Matthew*).

Hence, meekness is an equanimity of spirit, a temperament that properly reflects itself toward God and man under all circumstances. It is the opposite of bitterness, vehemence and violence.

The "inheritance of the earth" is a proverbial expression, suggesting bountiful blessings. It was used by the Jews to denote any great blessing. It originally meant the land of Canaan, but later came to mean the sum of all blessings. The expression is found, or similar ones, several times in Psalms 37. It has nothing to do with a future inheritance of this mundane earth. This earth will be burned up (2 Pet. 3:10).

Jesus used the saying to mean that the meek would be those in his kingdom who receive God's blessings here, and the heavenly Canaan hereafter.

Blessed Are They Who Hunger / Thirst

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Mt. 5:6). Paraphrased, this beatitude reads: "Blessed are they who desire to be right with God for they shall obtain it." Righteousness is a state of justification because of the forgiveness of sins.

Sinners can only be righteous by God's forgiveness

that is affected through the gospel. Paul wrote: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. . . For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith" (Rom. 1:16-17). The "righteousness of God" in the text is not the character of God but the righteousness imparted to man by forgiveness.

Paul further said: "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested. . . Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe" (Rom. 3:21-22). Righteousness is without the law because to be right with God by law requires perfect obedience to the law. But man transgressed law and thereby became a sinner. (All men are lawbreakers and, therefore, sinners, Rom. 3:9-20, 23). He must depend on God's forgiveness for righteousness. This is made possible through obedience to the gospel of Christ. This does not mean we are without law, but it means we need God's forgiveness when we violate law.

Hungering and thirsting after righteousness shows that the gospel is not coercive but persuasive in character. God does not force people to come to Him. Man must want to come, and when he comes, he is filled. He receives the full measure of the promise.

—to be continued

The Rader-Polk Debate

on "Limited Benevolence"

This is a written debate between Donnie Rader of Louisville, Kentucky and John T. Polk, II of Cornersville, Tennessee. There are 12 articles contained in the debate with extensive use of charts. This is a book which you will want to study in your home and keep as a reference book. The book is well bound in plastic comb binding, so that all the material may be easily referenced.

Proposition 1: "Resolved the Scriptures teach that in benevolence, Churches of Christ may relieve only saints from their treasures."

Affirm: Donnie Rader

Deny: John T. Polk

Proposition 2: "Resolved the Scriptures teach that the local congregation as directed and overseen by its elders (Phil. 1:1), is obligated in benevolence to saints and non-saints."

Affirm: John T. Polk II

Deny: Donnie V. Rader

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I AM A PREACHER'S KID

—Name withheld by request

I guess you know all about preachers' kids, don't you? They are the ones who are always so bad, and the ones who always get the precious members' kids in so much trouble. And, yes, they are often the ones who cause embarrassment to their parents and often hinder the cause of Christ, which their fathers have worked so hard to build up. While all of these things about preachers' kids are often true, let me tell you a little about what it means to be a preacher's kid. We hear an awful lot about the hardships of being in a preacher's family and how hard it is on the children, but we seldom hear about those families who are proud they are doing the work they are doing. Let me try to show you a different picture.

Many, who are children of preachers, somehow get the idea that they must live up to the "legend" that brethren have created for and about them. It is admitted readily that the pressures of being a preacher's kid are great at times, but I believe that the good things far outweigh the bad. I am glad that I am privileged to be a preacher's kid and I am thankful to God for this blessing. I am also upset, tremendously, by those who make being in a preacher's family seem like a "curse" from Satan.

I am a preacher's kid. I started off in this making problems for my parents. I made my father late for college when I was born in 1952. He gave up a promising job as a chemist after eight years in order to go to college and prepare himself to preach "full-time." It was no easy decision for him and my mother to "pull up and go," with two children and another on the way. But, it was a decision they made together and one which they have neither one regretted. I could relate a number of stories about the sacrifices they made, but paper would not hold them all. I will, however, relate a few instances.

You can really appreciate a man who does not complain about his state, however bad it is for him. I remember that my father, while in college, had only one suit (well-worn) and two white shirts, which he saved for Sunday. The reason he did not have more was because of the plentiful provisions he and Mom had made for their kids, at their expense. It seems, when it came to a choice of whom to buy something for, it was always one of us kids. Mom and Dad were not selfish. Dad preached on Sundays, often driving 100 miles, and getting paid with the change from the collection, or maybe poultry. However, he never complained about this and often turned this into a joke. He never became wealthy from preaching. He would play music on Saturday night in order to have grocery money for his family. He and Mom had it hard, but, you know, we kids never felt much of that hardship. It seems we always had enough, although we often wondered how in the world they did it.

We moved a lot. I enjoyed it immensely, but my brothers and sister hated it at times. We moved from one place because of physical danger to Dad and to us. I will admit that we kids often felt sorry for ourselves because we had to leave friends behind. But, one thing our young hard heads never considered was that Mom and Dad had friends also that they were leaving. We were unthinking when we complained and put them through the guilt of hurting their children. Looking back, we are all glad we moved around as we did because of the many permanent friendships we made, which would never have come if we had not moved. The Lord was first at all times around our house. This we were taught from the beginning.

We had a happy home. It seemed as if Mom and Dad never forgot what it was like to be young. We laughed together, wept together, and worked together. As we grew older, we began to be more demanding. We also started noticing the worried looks on our parent's faces. This was during a time when brethren thought a preacher was a subject of benevolence and that he should be willing to live on the poverty level, in order for him to be recognized as devoted. We children got jobs selling cards and papers and earned our own spending money in this manner. One precious memory was our "family night." This night was one in which everyone stayed home and enjoyed one another's company. We talked, laughed, played, and loved together. We had a glorious home relationship, but often felt as if we were suffering because we weren't like the other kids (whose homes were split and who were allowed to roam free).

Dad was always there when he was needed. He was gone on a few meetings each year, but he never let his family suffer by his absence. He heeded the advice given to him by one of his teachers that "if you lose your own, no matter how many others you convert, you have lost the world."

We enjoyed the company of other preachers and their families throughout the years. We have had the opportunity to become close friends with some of the finest people God ever put on this earth. The glorious opportunities afforded us of talking and visiting with men who cared about God's Word and who lived it is a blessing, often unique to preachers' families.

Words could never express the joy to be had from being a preacher's kid. I have many friends (also preachers' kids) who will agree with me that if it had not been for the strength made dominate in their lives, because our fathers were preachers, most of us would have probably not been as faithful to Christ as we now are. When you watch and listen to your parents shedding tears over the conduct of some brethren, when you overhear prayers offered in private for the well-being of those who are enemies of truth, until they can come back to God, and when you hear parents expressing their love and hopes for you, when you see Christianity in action, then is when you can really appreciate what true Christianity is all about. This is what helps mold you into wanting to be a Christian.

I can remember my father, sternly telling me my

wrong-doings and punishing me for it, and telling me to always face my problems head-on, no matter how hard it seems. I remember him lovingly embracing me and shedding tears with me when I had lost one of the closest friends I had ever had. These attributes are not the traits of the average man. These things come from an abiding love for things which are right and through growth spiritually, by devoting oneself to learning God's Word. These attributes come by experience with many different kinds of people.

I have heard much, of late, about mothers and fathers telling their children not to become preachers, or preachers' wives, because of all the hardships. I think this is a sorry day for the church when people have descended to this attitude. If you only knew the glorious blessings you are missing!

Those of you reading this, who are preachers' kids: Think you have it tough? Instead of feeling sorry for yourself and seeing how much you can "get into to ruin your folks," why don't you get down on your knees and thank God for the blessed opportunity you have been afforded. And while you are at it, why don't you thank your mother and father for all they have done for you. Count your blessings.

Being the child of a preacher is a blessing to be cherished. It is past time for us to realize it. It is not a curse, brethren! I will grant that many a preacher has made an unholy mess out of things in his personal life, but I maintain that this is the abuse. I have tried to relate to how good and pleasant things can be, if all work together. I was no angel, and I caused my share of heartache to my godly parents, but I know for a fact that I am as strong as I am today because of their lasting, godly influence on my life. For those things which I have done which have been wrong, I am sincerely sorry.

Let me offer some suggestions as I close this article. I believe that I can state, without reservation, that being the child of a preacher can be the greatest lot in life for a young person. But only when preachers care as much about their own as they do about others. Only when preachers realize that they are to practice what they preach, only when preachers' wives support their husbands in the work being done for truth and quit nagging and complaining about the negative and only when children appreciate the work that they and their parents are doing. It is a special honor to be a "preacher's kid." Do not waste that honor by trying to live up to the seamy picture some brethren have painted and come to expect of you.

In closing, I quote a verse my father has often quoted and which has become a favorite of mine. "CHOOSE YE THIS DAY WHOM YE SHALL SERVE, BUT AS FOR ME AND MY HOUSE, WE SHALL SERVE THE LORD" (Josh. 24:15).

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REDEMPTION (4) For Even Me

A study of the grand central theme of the Bible, Redemption, would be incomplete without personal application. We have chosen the title to pay compliment to this and devote this entire concluding lesson. We often express the fullness of our hearts with the song "I'm Redeemed." The chorus goes, "I have been redeemed—Glory, glory, Christ is mine." One is able to sing these sentiments with any sense of appreciation contingent only upon having obeyed His will. The Gnostic philosophy, rampant in New Testament times advocated that salvation is intellectual, knowledge is salvation within itself. Colossians is the divine answer to this fallacy. Here salvation is redemption and forgiveness of sin. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:14). The availability of such redemption and forgiveness is to every man, "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Col. 1:27-28). Paul's aim, here noted, warn every man, teach every man, present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. "Perfect" has to do with attaining of full purpose, namely redemption. Thus, present every man redeemed.

Analysis of Col. 1:15-23 results in a beautiful picture of Jesus Christ and His part in the scheme of redemption. His preeminence is shown in the relationship he sustains. His relationship to God is depicted in verse 15, "the image of the invisible God." This comports with "who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. 1:1-4). Jesus is presented as the perfect manifestation of God the Father.

The word "image" is challenging when we allow it to remind us of creation. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let him have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them"

(Genesis 1:26-27). Man was made that he might be the image of God. God's intent was interrupted by sin, thus man never achieved his destiny. Jesus shows what God is and what man was meant to be. In Christ is manhood as God designed it. Jesus is nothing less than the personal characteristics, the distinguishing marks of God. To see God one has but to look at Jesus Christ as he is presented in the purity of righteousness within the New Testament. Man attains to what God intended when he becomes the image of Christ, presenting himself in the purity of righteousness. "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, By the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet. 1:22-23).

In His relationship to creation, Christ is "firstborn" (Col. 1:15). "Firstborn" not in the sense of time but honor. Such was commonly a title of honor as with Israel, "firstborn of God" (Ex. 4:22), denoting favored, chosen, highly honored. Such is used as a title of Messiah, "I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth" (Psa. 89:27). Thus, the highest honor creation holds belongs to the Son of God. God the Father has given him that place of honor, completely unique. The passage continues, all things were created by him and for him (Col. 1:16), visible and invisible. He, Christ, is the word force in creation. Not only is he the agent in creation but he is also the goal and the end of creation, "created unto him." The creation was to be his and was to glorify him (v. 17). In Him all things consist, that is, cohere, hold together. The idea is, the one who is the beginning and goal of creation is the one who is between, holding it together.

In his relationship to the church, Christ is the head of the body (Col. 1:18). The church as the body of Christ over which He is head is the organism through which He acts. Jesus Christ is the guiding, directing, dominating spirit of the church. Every act and word must be governed by him. As man can neglect and abuse his body by prostituting its purity, so the church. "He is the beginning" in the sense of time, the originating power. He is the source of its life, the director of her continuing activities. "Firstborn from the dead" punctuates the center and heart in the consummation of God's plan for redemption. Jesus Christ is a living presence and not a dead hero or a past founder. The result is that he has the supremacy in all. Resurrection demonstrated His conquest of every enemy and that triumph gives Him right to be Lord of all.

In his relation to sin and sinner (Col. 1:20). The very object of his coming was reconciliation, redemption. The chasm between man and God needed to be bridged. The initiative was with God, man needed to be reconciled, the need was with man. The medium of reconciliation is the blood of Christ. "Spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all" (Rom. 8:32). "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Rom. 5:9). In the death of Jesus, God is saying: I love you like that; I love you enough to see my son

suffer and die for you; enough to bear the cross on my heart if only it will win you. The cross is proof there is no length to which God will not go to win the human heart. If the cross will not stir to love and wonder-then my friend, what?

The scope of reconciliation is "all things". All things that need redemption, sinners. Those alienated by sin, through the blood of His cross, can be reconciled and restored to holiness (v. 22). The gospel is the message of reconciliation, the message of salvation, the basis of hope for every man who will submit to its requirements (v. 23). Every soul thus redeemed is in the church, the body of Christ (v.24). Redeemed, yes, even me. Even you. In Christ, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:7), when found and accepted by the obedience of faith. God be thanked.

27 DAYS ON PALAWAN; 138 BAPTIZED

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During the last two weeks of February and the first two weeks of March, 1981, I was involved in an extensive preaching and teaching tour on the island of Palawan in the Philippines. I was accompanied by brother John McCort, who preaches for the church in Greencastle, Indiana. The effort was financed by two churches, the Mulvane church of Christ, in Mulvane, Kansas, where I labor; and the church in Greencastle.

The island of Palawan is sometimes called "the last frontier" in the Philippines. It is the western most island in the Philippine group; it is bordered to the east by the Sulu Sea, and to the west by the South China Sea. Palawan is directly east of Viet Nam, about 800 miles. Life on the island is very primitive. There is no electricity except in three of the major cities; just a few miles of paved roads on the island, and many other signs of primitive culture and lack of development. All of that is changing, though, due to the discovery of oil off the coast of the island. Rapid industrialization and development is expected on Palawan over the next ten years.

The Lord's church was planted on the island about 20 years ago, in the city of Narra. From there the gospel spread south, and then north, due largely to the efforts of brother Alfredo Agbisit. Over the past eight years, there has been rapid growth on Palawan. At present, there are a little over twenty congregations on the island. In some of the remote villages, the church of Christ is the only established religion.

Our trip to the Philippines was limited to this one area, the island of Palawan. We arrived on the island Feb. 17 and stayed there until Mar. 16. Most of the time, we stayed with the brethren in their primitive huts; our accommodations were drastically different

from what we are adjusted to in this country, but their hospitality was more than generous. We were taken back into remote areas in the Philippine "jungle" where American preachers had not ventured before.

Results indicate that this approach was effective; 138 SOULS WERE BAPTIZED DURING THIS 27 DAY TRIP! In addition, lectureships for church members were conducted and training sessions were given for gospel preachers. It was as successful as we had prayed for, reminiscent of Acts 11:21, "... And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number that believed turned unto the Lord."

The work on Palawan went through **FOUR PHASES**. First, the **Salagon phase**: we stayed in the village of Salagon in the home of brother Teddy Beltran. We conducted lectureships and gospel meetings in Salagon and went out to some of the little villages in the area. We spent twelve days in Salagon. Next, the **Brooke's Point phase**: we stayed in the home of brother Platon Mabunga, who preaches for the Seaside church of Christ. We conducted a two day lectureship on the work of the local church, and we went out to Lada and Caramay. Third, the **Narra phase**: we stayed in Narra five days. A lectureship on Christian living was given at the Narra church building, and we went out to Tagda-o, Aramaywan, Plaridel and San-doval. Fourth, the **Puerto Princessa City phase**: we conducted a lectureship on Religious Error and had a meeting with the Palawan preachers.

Except for the routine difficulties, we remained in good health throughout the journey. We arrived back home on the 18th of March, thankful to God for His protection and for the opportunity on Palawan.

Economics

We only visited the island of Palawan on this trip, so I cannot give a report about the economic situation in the Manila area or on Luzon. I can tell what we saw on Palawan.

We didn't see any rich preachers! We saw some preachers who existed on a "hand-to-mouth" basis; we spent two weeks with a faithful preacher whose jeepney literally falls apart as he drives over the rough roads of Palawan; others have sick children without funds to seek medical attention; and some have recently lost all their support. But we didn't see any rich preachers.

How much support should Filipino preachers get? This has been the subject of controversy in recent months, and the figure of \$150 per month has been suggested. We saw evidence that in some cases \$150 per month isn't enough. Many of the preachers on Palawan need to travel around to visit various places, so the cost of transportation must be allowed for. We checked prices of basic commodities in the market places, and some of them were about the same as price levels here. We saw daily inflation, and exorbitant educational expenses for preachers with children in high school. Then, when we came back through Manila on our return trip, we contacted the U.S. Embassy. We discussed the economic situation on Palawan with a Mr. Stone, assistant to the Labor Attache. We gave

him this situation: A man with a wife and three children (one in high school), who must travel through southern Palawan to meet preaching appointments. Would a total of \$200 be too much support for this man? "Certainly not," he said. We gave him the figures which have been used to prove that the \$150 level is adequate, and this was his response: "These figures look about right, but you have to remember something. In the Philippines, the rule is **EVERYBODY SUPPLEMENTS HIS INCOME!**" So a jeepney driver who makes (net, after expenses) \$100 per month, probably does some farming to make another \$50 and his wife probably works to bring in another \$60. Also, he explained that living expenses varied considerably from place to place; so what might be a fair salary on Luzon could be inadequate on Palawan. Given these facts, it looks like each man's individual circumstance, work and location must be taken into account in setting the support level.

Our Approach

In the past, when American preachers have gone to the Philippines, several different places have been visited within a few weeks. Perhaps a three or four day stay in one area would be the average. I'm certainly not going to say that this isn't a good approach. Much good has been accomplished by men who have used this approach. Our approach was different, and the results seem to suggest that it has value.

We spent all of our time in one area, on one island. We arrived on the island of Palawan on Feb. 17 and we stayed there until our Mar. 16 departure day. This approach has some definite advantages:

First, it is very cost-effective. Less money is spent traveling from island to island. Second, it gives more time to spend teaching and preaching. Third, it gives you a better opportunity to get acquainted with the brethren and learn about the preachers, the conditions and the problems in a given area.

One more point concerning our approach. Where possible, we lived with the brethren. Of the 27 days we spent on Palawan, only five were spent in a hotel. The rest of the time we stayed with the brethren in their primitive huts; we ate with them and slept in some pretty uncivilized conditions. This gave us a real understanding of their way of life, and they really appreciated our "getting down to their level" if only for a few weeks. (We also saved a lot of money in hotel bills.)

Conclusion

I hope this information will be of some value to those involved in or interested in the Lord's cause in the Philippines, Palawan in particular. There are obstacles there, but much good is being done through the hands of faithful men.

Please Renew Promptly!

MY SERVANTS THE PROPHETS

Rodney Miller

15 W. Parr St.
Orlando, FL 32804



LET US RISE UP AND BUILD Leadership — Nehemiah's Serious Commitment To Teaching, Nehemiah 8.

Once the walls were rebuilt and the temple restored, Nehemiah saw the need to move from the tangibles to the intangibles. While his feat of rebuilding the walls was one of staggering proportions, he knew the job was not yet finished. He saw beyond the needs founded on stone, mortar and muscle. He saw the needs of the heart and soul. Therefore, here lies the power of Nehemiah as a teacher and a leader for God's people. The real test of his leadership was in his ability to shift from the tangible work of rebuilding the walls to the renewing of the minds and hearts of the people spiritually. The proof of the difficulty of this shift in emphasis is clearly seen in our world today. How many times have God's people done the impossible to meet their physical needs, such as building a meeting house. They scraped, saved, gave, and worked beyond belief, to be able to construct a meeting house. People would give of their time night after night in back-breaking work of painting, hanging dry wall or laying blocks. Brethren have borrowed money at the bank and given it to the work, and made monthly payments to the bank, so that we might have a house in which the church could assemble. All of this is wonderful and as it should be. Still, there is another step necessary to the work in God's kingdom.

The next step is Nehemiah's commitment to spiritual renewal. How many times have we, after this great sacrifice to build a building (equivalent to building the walls), then simply sat down, congratulated ourselves, and forgotten about the spiritual work necessary to teach, study, and work to fill that building with souls who want to confess His name. After the physical work, Nehemiah demonstrated his all-out commitment to teaching. In Chapter 8 Ezra stood on a wooden platform before the Water Gate (v. 3) "from early morning until midday, in the presence of men and women, those who could understand and ALL THE PEOPLE were attentive to the Book of the Law. Then in Verse 8, 'they read from the Book, from the LAW OF GOD, translating to give the sense so that they understood the reading.'"

Nehemiah was seriously committed to teaching God's Word. You see, teaching doesn't take place until learning is accomplished. Nehemiah knew that Israel had to learn God's will if they were to survive in the city of Jerusalem. He knew and understood the need of

teaching in order to complete the task of restoration. It was not enough just to build a building or restore the walls! It was not until there was spiritual rebirth or renewal that Israel could truly be the children of God. We must be the children of God. We must see the need today for spiritual renewal in the church. Of course we must be doctrinally sound. However, one could be doctrinally sound and still miss the heart of my Lord. Therefore, the leaders today must be committed to teaching God's truth so that the people might understand. As observations are made, we can't help but wonder. Do we just give lip service as our form of "commitment" to teaching? Are we really serious about teaching? There are evidences that seem to point to the fact that maybe we are only "going through the motions."

Are We Serious?

Leaders, are we serious about teaching? The Scriptures let us know we must be serious. Matt. 28:18-20: "Go make disciples (teach them to become) and baptizing them . . . teaching them to observe all things.

Notice the emphasis placed on teaching in the Great Commission. First, we must teach to make disciples. The Book of Acts is an historical account of how the New Testament church went about to do this teaching. It tells us what the divinely directed message was: the resurrection. It tells who the appointed messengers were: the believers. And it also tells us how the message is to be presented. For example, in Acts 17:30, 31 Paul shows the outline that ought to be used in teaching others: (1) You need to repent. (2) Why? Because of a universal judgment. (3) Prove it! Because God resurrected His Son. Therefore, when the New Testament instructs us to teach the unbeliever, it furnishes the what, the who, and the HOW!

But notice again in this great commission passage that once the unbeliever is baptized we are not finished teaching. We are to start again, "teaching them to observe all things." This emphasis on teaching by the Lord is not a new development that on the spur of the moment He decided to introduce. This teaching mission of His kingdom is seen over and over again in the Old Testament kingdom prophecies. For example, Micah 4:2 talks about going up to the mountain of the Lord. . . that He may TEACH us about His ways. Also, in Isaiah 11:9 the prophecy is made that the "earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord AS THE WATERS COVER THE SEA." These are just two of many Old Testament scriptures which speak of the function of teaching in the New Testament. Then, because we find the Lord placing this stamp of divine direction upon them, we know of their importance.

We all know how important teaching really is in the church. We all know that evangelism is reaching the lost and making disciples. We all know that edification is the maturation of the saints. The teaching of ALL things was commanded after the disciples were baptized. So the real question is if we all KNOW IT, WHY AREN'T WE DOING IT? How can we as preachers, elders, and Bible class teachers live with ourselves?

How can we look in the mirror and know that in so many cases we are failing on this point with no attempt to improve?

What About Where I Worship?

Do we think that church is a game that we play by changing the rules over and over again to suit our conveniences? A recent survey in **CHRISTIAN BIBLE TEACHER** quotes from a bulletin on teaching, published by Sweet Publication, which shows that "AS FEW AS FIVE PERCENT OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST make any SERIOUS EFFORT AT ONGOING TRAINING."

Stop with me for a moment and reflect on this statement. First of all, both publications mentioned are published by our "institutional" brethren, and the statistics compiled are from institutional churches. However, what is significant concerning this is one pertinent fact. These institutional brethren in many cases have exceeded us in zeal and dedication to teaching. While we feel there are basic principles that need correction, few can question the dedication and fervor with which they have applied themselves to the task. As a matter of fact, it has been the case too often that it was this zeal to teach the lost that gave birth to the "end justifies the means." Yet, if they see "only FIVE PERCENT growth in "ongoing teacher training", where do we appear?

Where are we in the area of personal evangelism? What about this area of making disciples in the first place? As a preacher or member, do you dare ask all present in the Lord's Day morning assembly to raise their hands if they have not been a member of the church for more than a year? How many new souls are we baptizing per year? As one brother said, "New souls? We can't even reach our own children." Can we look in the mirror and say to ourselves, • "YES, I AM serious about teaching the lost?" If we were really serious about it, as serious as the Lord is, we would have seen the harvest long before now. Instead, we have chosen to blame the times and the society. But who really believes that things are worse today than in the cesspools of Ephesus and Corinth? It is time to quit blaming the sinner because he doesn't want to be saved. It is time to blame ourselves because we stopped wanting to find him.

Secondly, in the realm of teaching the disciples to observe all things, are we really serious? "Well, we once had a teacher training session on Friday night and Saturday. Nobody came or showed much interest, so we haven't done it again." EXACTLY! However, most congregations have never even had one single teacher training study. Many congregations have absolutely no plan at all as to what ought to be taught, who is to teach it, how it ought to be taught, and what results they want when it is taught. How many congregations have seen entire generations of teenagers bolt for the door the minute they have the freedom to break away from parental supervision? The church cannot replace the teaching in the home, but it can equip the home to do the job it ought to do. Our Bible classes can and should be a refreshing and up-lifting experience in-

stead of an exercise in boredom! We can both live our own lives and teach in such a way as to prepare our young minds for living in a crooked and perverse world.

"Oh, we think teaching is important," is a feeble cry often heard. Let us see how important it is. We, generally speaking, spend our money on what we consider most important. When the air-conditioning system in the auditorium breaks down, we will somehow turn up with \$5,000 or \$6,000 to get a new system put in. When the lawnmower breaks down, we will spend several hundred dollars to get the grass cut. Some brethren even spend money to have a gospel meeting twice a year. But, how much money, during the history of the church, has been spent on teacher training? Why don't we get out the old check books and add it all up? How much money has been spent on equipment and material necessary to teach? How many congregations have a room set aside as a library or research center so the teachers can use the materials they need to prepare a class? How many classrooms are dull, drab, and filled in the corners with mops, brooms, or old mimeographed outlines of sermons that were left behind by some preacher in the past? Often times the teenage girls or new converts are put into the 3-year old class to "baby sit, because these little ones are too young to learn anything yet any way." As leaders of the flock, men find themselves as Spiritual Educators, and yet they may not have the foggiest idea of what it takes to be a good first thru third grade Bible teacher!

Are we really serious? Needless to say, we can't know the heart of another, but the fruit we bear is a dead give-away that in too many places we are just playing church and making up the rules as we go. With this kind of attitude there will never be a true spiritual renewal.

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THREE MISUNDERSTOOD MEN

Some things seem to come in threes. Three in the Godhead; three on the mountain of transfiguration and some have been led to believe three wise men visited the infant Jesus. I want to discuss three well known preachers who say they were misunderstood. There is a striking analogy between certain men of the second and third apostasies. They have one thing in common and that is they claim they were misunderstood. The real question is were these men really misunderstood or did they acquiesce to error and then become too obdurate to admit it? You will have to be the judge.

Man number one is that great preacher of a by-gone era, Alexander Campbell. According to history. Jacob Creath Jr., the so-called "Iron Duke" of the restoration, was Campbell's friend and colleague. It was in April of 1828 that these two met on a road between Wellsburg and Bethany, West Virginia. Campbell was hauling logs and Creath was riding his famous white horse. They became close friends and later went on a preaching tour which led them as far south as Nashville, Tennessee. It was but natural that they would discuss the work and organization of the church. Campbell had denounced both the Missionary and Bible Societies in his paper, *The Christian Baptist*. Creath was firmly convinced by both the writings and conversations of Campbell that he would oppose any kind of society within the confines of the church.

However, he was in for the surprise of his life. In 1849 when the American Christian Missionary Society got off the ground, Campbell threw his support behind the society. What really happened? Did Creath and others really misunderstand Campbell and the position he espoused or did he change? These are important questions which possibly only eternity will settle. When Creath and others asked Campbell why he had changed, he denied that he had changed but argued that he had only opposed the abuse of the societies. However, he failed to convince the "Iron Duke" and others that he had never changed. It was the conviction of Creath and others that Campbell had surrounded himself with young, liberal preachers such as Isaac Errett, F. S. Burnett, Robert Richardson and W. K. Pendleton. They felt these men had a tremendous influence on Campbell in his latter years. Campbell died in 1866 and Robert Richardson was busy writing his memoirs. Some have said that if that book had been written twenty years earlier that it would

have been much different! Men change but God remains the same. The liberal brethren who wrote the memoirs of Campbell snubbed Creath and hardly mentioned his name in the book. Creath was hurt by this and wrote a letter to Richardson in 1871 asking for an explanation. Richardson ignored his letter and Creath died January 9, 1886 exactly twenty years after the death of Campbell. They both await the resurrection and the Lord who will settle the question as to whether Campbell was really misunderstood.

Now let us drop down the stream of time about one hundred years. I moved to Ft. Smith, Arkansas in the early fifties. About that time, Foy E. Wallace, Jr. used his potent pen to editorialize a fine little paper called *Torch*. Foy said, "It would fit the pocket or purse". I helped Foy get subscriptions for his paper because I thought I understood what he stood for and believed he was teaching the truth. He wrote me a note of appreciation. As a lad, I had heard him defeat Dr. Webber in a debate in Oklahoma City. I listened to him preach and like Creath, I felt he took a firm stand against the Orphan Homes, sponsoring churches, and colleges dipping their hands into the church treasuries. As a matter of fact, as a young preacher, I learned much of what I now preach from the lips and life of Foy E. Wallace. For example, my conviction on the stand of brother Wallace was based on articles such as this one which appeared in the *Gospel Advocate* in May 14, 1931, which reads: "For one church to help another church bear its own burdens, therefore, has scriptural precedent. But for one church to solicit funds from other churches for general distribution in other fields or places thus becoming the treasury of other churches, is quite a different question. Such procedure makes a sort of society out of the elders of a local church, and for there is no scriptural precedent or example."

As gospel preachers by the dozens read such articles, they came to the conclusion that Foy E. Wallace was opposed to these innovations. Well, we were in for the surprise of our lives. In his latter years, brother Wallace came out strong denying that he ever opposed these innovations. He, like Campbell, said, "he only opposed the ABUSE of them". You can imagine the dismay on the part of many of us when we read this report. Now for the big question—Were we as young preachers so crass that we did not understand what this man was saying? Or as many felt about Campbell, did he surround himself with men and circumstances which caused a change? It is not my purpose to speak disparagingly of these men. Again, we await the judgment to settle this big question.

Man number three takes me back to the hills of Oklahoma. As a boy, I listened to Guy N. Woods as he preached in my home town of Tuttle, Oklahoma. I always considered Guy as a good preacher. He was not dynamic, like Foy, but a good solid preacher. Brother Woods did not come out as forcefully against the orphan asylums and sponsoring churches as brother Wallace but he did speak his peace. As a matter of fact, he spoke so firmly that I thought he would oppose these innovations if they ever raised their ugly heads

in the church. Here again, I was in for the surprise of my life. For example, he made his famous (or should I say infamous) speech at Abilene Christian College in 1946 when he said, "The ship of Zion has floundered more than once on the sandbar of institutionalism. The tendency to organize is a characteristic of the age. On the theory that the end justifies the means, brethren have not scrupled to form organizations in the church to do the work the church itself was designed to do. All such organizations usurp the work of the church, and are unnecessary and sinful."

Now, kind friend, if you had read the above as a young, fair-minded preacher, what conclusion would you have drawn? Well, scads of them believed brother Woods would oppose any innovations in the church. Again, we were in for the surprise of our lives. When the chips were down and the church was baptized with encroachments, brother Woods threw his support behind them. When asked about his former position, he opined that he intended to oppose only the abuse of the institutions and that he was misunderstood.

Kind neighbor, isn't it strange that here are three men who all claim the same thing? Did their colleagues really misunderstand them? Was their writing on these subjects so euphemistic that the average person could not understand? I cannot believe these men were nebulous when they wrote on these vital subjects. The big question is were these men really misunderstood? Judgment day will the real story!

"A Second Putting Away" — A Review

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In the January, 1981, edition of *SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES*, pp. 15, 16, bro. J. T. Smith wrote, "A Second Putting Away." He dealt with the subject of divorce and remarriage, as it applies to those who were divorced for a reason other than fornication, and one partner remarries. Specifically he dealt with the question, "Do the Scriptures authorize the other partner to NOW 'put away' the other and be in a position to remarry without committing sin? I agree with much of what bro. Smith said. I feel, however, that he did not go far enough. Let me say at the outset that I do not claim to be an expert on the subject of divorce and remarriage. I do believe that the Bible is written in such a way that it can be understood by all. Therefore, if we can all rid ourselves of preconceived opinions and emotions, and approach this subject of divorce and remarriage in a common-sense manner, we will all be able to understand it too. The purpose, then, of this article is to respond to his concluding question, 'What do you say?' (It would be good for the reader to go back and re-read bro. Smith's article before continuing.)

Before we begin, let us lay some very simple ground-

work. First, that the only marriage or divorce that God will sanction is one that is legal and scriptural in His sight. Therefore the only persons God recognizes as being candidates for marriage are those who, 1. Fulfill the legal requirements of the civil government, AND 2. Fulfill the scriptural requirements, namely, one who has never married, one whose mate has died, or one who was the "innocent party" in an adulterated marriage and "put away" the mate for that cause. On the other hand, the only persons God recognizes as being candidates for divorce are those who, 1. Fulfill the legal requirements of the civil government, AND 2. Fulfill the scriptural requirements, namely, being a member of an adulterated marriage.

Now let us look at this subject of a "second putting away". As the case was stated in the above mentioned article, husband #1 and wife #1 were married, "bound in the sight of God." This means, I take it, that they had fulfilled both the legal and scriptural requirements of that union in God's sight. "They decide they are incompatible. . . by mutual consent or by one being the aggressor in the matter, a 'putting away' resulting in a civil declaration of the same as the situation ends in a divorce."

We want to note here that a "putting away" did NOT take place in God's sight. The reason being that they did not fulfill the scriptural requirement as set forth in Mt. 5:32, and 19:9. They only fulfilled the legal requirements of the "putting away". They are now neither married legally nor divorced scripturally. For civil government to recognize them as married they would have to fulfill the legal requirements of marriage. For God to recognize them as divorced they would have to fulfill the scriptural requirements as stated above.

Bro. Smith's Article now shows that wife #1 marries husband #2. The condition of this last relationship is expressed correctly, they are committing adultery. Why? Because she has not been divorced from her husband, both legally and scripturally. If she had been, there would be no relationship left to adulterate or corrupt.

He goes on to remark, "Now comes the difficult part. Do the Scriptures authorize husband #1 to NOW 'put away' his wife for adultery and be in a position to remarry without committing sin? He further states that many would 'immediately' answer 'Yes'. On the other hand, we would have to note, many would immediately answer 'No'. Neither group is correct in immediately giving an unqualified answer.

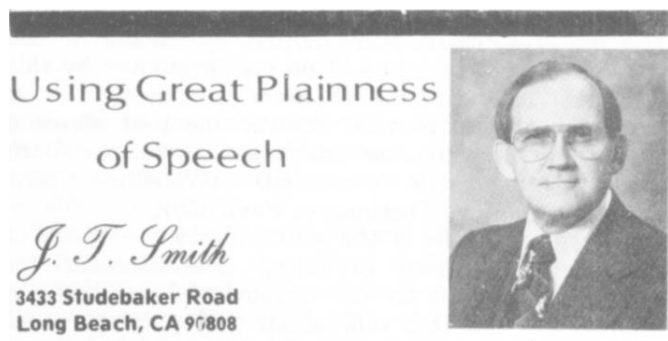
If husband #1 was "innocent" in the case of the divorce in the civil courts (In other words, he was NOT the aggressor, did NOT want the divorce, or, as can so often happen, his spouse ran to Reno for a "quicke" divorce and beat him to it) and he can see NO cause on his part for the divorce, would not his wife's "remarriage" constitute adultery? If not, why not? the "putting away" of his wife for adultery is not a "second" putting away, but rather a God-recognized "putting away".

If, as bro. Smith states, both parties desire the divorce, are mutually pushing and working towards it,

then 1 Cor. 7:10-11, is the correct scripture to be applied.

The argument concerning the husband being a "ruthless, drunkard" stands here because he "caused" the divorce, and "caused" his wife to commit adultery, and therefore became an "accessory to the crime". In no way could he now "put her away" and re-marry, claiming to be the "innocent party".

The Bible does not teach a "second putting away". It does, however, teach one God-recognized "putting away" and when the requirements of it are fulfilled it may be done and the "innocent" party may marry again without committing sin.



DANIEL P. MAY'S REVIEW OF "A SECOND PUTTING AWAY"

Found elsewhere in this issue of *Searching the Scriptures* is an article by brother Daniel P. May reviewing an article of mine in the January issue of *Searching The Scriptures* on a "Second Putting Away." I am in perfect agreement with the majority of what brother May says. However, as is the case much of the time, he, along with others, wants to depend on human reasoning rather than the Scriptures for their conclusions. Please read his article and compare what he has said with my reply.

It seems to me that the only difference we have is whether or not God recognizes "a putting away" that is not for fornication. I believe brother May's mistake is with the fact that even though God does recognize the "putting away" where no fornication is involved, He does not authorize remarriage as a result of it. However, according to the last paragraph of brother May's article, he says that the "second putting away" is not a second putting away at all. Instead, brother May wants the last one to be right because the one now doing the putting away did not want the first "putting away" which he says God did not recognize.

I believe many are missing the point of what the Bible says because they want to interject motives (the husband or wife not wanting the divorce and begging the other not to go through with the divorce). However, I find nothing like that in the Scriptures. To me this seems comparable to the case of the man on his way to be baptized and a tree limb falls on him and kills him. Whatever the judge of all the earth wants to do about the situation is left up to Him. That is His business, not mine. All I can do is tell the person who

asks about this situation what Jesus said in His Word. Jesus said that one must be baptized before he can be saved. I can guess what the Lord may do because of the man's attitude and his desire to obey the truth. But when all is said and done, all I can do is tell the person what the Lord said in His Word about salvation and when one receives it.

The same thing is true with the divorce and remarriage situation. For it is not as if God has left us with neither "chart nor compass" on this subject, for His Word is very clear.

Luke 16:18

"Whosoever putteth away his wife and marrieth another, committeth adultery:..."

Let's stop just here and make a few observations. Jesus said the husband "put her away" thus Jesus recognized the "putting away." Did the wife want or not want to be "put away"? I do not know, for Jesus did not say. However, now that we can all agree, according to what Jesus said, that the husband is committing adultery, why didn't He tell us that the wife may now put the adulterous husband away, and that she could remarry without committing sin? Instead, note what He did say.

". . . and whosoever marrieth her which is put away from her husband committeth adultery."

My friends, if you are going to have a situation where God does not recognize the first "putting away" but only after the remarriage recognizes the "putting away," then you will have to find another passage that authorizes such. And I do not know of such a passage. Otherwise, just stay with what the Scriptures say, and when you do that, you will say with the Lord. "Whosoever marrieth her which is put away from her husband (even though Jesus said he had remarried and was committing adultery) committeth adultery" — Period! And trying to change what Jesus said about it because of someone's motives does not change at all what Jesus actually said.

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IS THE RETURN OF CHRIST IMMINENT?

Matthew 24 (Part 1)

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As we all know, we live in a time when the majority of the religious world is caught up in the whirlwind of Premillennialism. One particular aspect of this teaching is currently getting a tremendous amount of attention and that is that the return of Christ is imminent. Many of the more publicized preachers in the world have adopted this idea and have made it an integral part of their teaching. Men like Morris Cerullo, Billy Graham, Hal Lindsay, and many others have had a vast influence upon the thinking of the masses. The cry is that the return of Christ is just around the corner, that it is imminent, and for proof these men point to what they call the "signs of the times". Their primary source for this teaching is the 24th chapter of the gospel according to Matthew. Here, we are told, are the signs of the times. Here, we are told, is the proof that the return of our Lord is imminent.

Matthew 24 is in many respects a most difficult passage to understand, but it contains a few statements that will make the matter much clearer when properly understood. In order to grasp the meaning of this passage, we need to notice the circumstances surrounding the teaching of Jesus in this chapter. Verses 1 / 2 supplies that for us. That passage says, "And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to show him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." Notice now, that the statement Jesus made in verse 2 was in reference to the temple, and that statement prompted the questions of the apostles recorded in verse 3. Understanding verse 3 is essential if we are to understand the remainder of the chapter. Verse 3 reads as follows, "And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

By reading the parallel passages in Mark 13:4 and Luke 21:7, we can see that the apostles wanted to know essentially two things. They wanted to know when the things spoken of by Jesus in verse 2 would take place and they wanted to know what signs would tell them that it was coming. Obviously in the minds of the apostles the destruction of the temple of God would be such a tremendous occurrence that it would be at the end of the world, that it would be part of the cessation

of all things as they presently existed. Considering the emphasis placed upon the temple in Judaism their reaction is quite understandable. In the remainder of the chapter, however, Jesus shows that the destruction of the temple and the end of the world are not one and the same. Jesus answers their questions by speaking first of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, telling when it would occur and the signs that would accompany it. Secondly, Jesus spoke of the end of the world, His return, and He makes it clear that no one knows when that will happen and that no signs will be given as a warning. That leads us to the next of the verses essential to our understanding of this chapter, that is verse 34.

Verse 34 has been called by various writers the "time text" and that is a fitting name for it clearly identifies when the events recorded in the first part of chapter 24 were to occur. Jesus said in verse 34, "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." What did Jesus mean by the word "generation"? According to Vine's *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* He meant, "-----the whole multitude of men living at the same time." By using the adjective, "this", to modify generation, Jesus showed that He meant the generation living when He spoke those words. The events of Matthew 24:5-34 were to occur before the present generation, the one living when Jesus spoke those words, passed away. Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed in 70 A.D. and the first part of Matthew 24 was fulfilled with that destruction.

Verse 35 of Matthew 24 acts as an assurance that the things that Jesus said concerning the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem, as well as the signs that would accompany it, were a certainty. They would come to pass.

Let's turn our attention now to verse 36, another of the essential verses to our understanding this chapter. This verse marks a change in the subject matter and Jesus begins on the second part of His response to the apostles. Jesus has spoken concerning the destruction of the temple, He has told the apostles when it would happen and what the signs would be leading up to it. Now the attention of our Lord is turned to something else. Verse 36 says, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." The terms "that day and hour" are used numerous times in the New Testament to refer to the return of the Lord in final judgment. Consider Matt. 7:22 where we read, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" The reference here is obviously to the return of Jesus and final judgment. Consider John 5:28-29 which says, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." These are just two of many such usages in the New Testament. Others are Matt. 11:22, 1 Thess. 5:2, 2 Thess. 1:10, 2 Tim. 1:18, and 2 Tim. 4:8.

It is interesting and important to note that these passages we have mentioned deal with the second coming and refer to it as "that day", or "the day", or "the hour". It is always singular, it is always the word day or hour, just as it is used in verses 36-51 of Matthew 24. It is not the word days, plural, as used in Matt. 24:5-34. It is obvious that Jesus has turned His attention from the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple with the signs accompanying it, to His return in final judgment.

Perhaps it would be good to look at a few more points of contrast between the first section of chapter 24, the part that deals with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple (v. 5-34), and the second section that deals with the return of our Lord in final judgment (v. 36-51). In the first section we find that definite signs were to precede the event, the time is identifiable. On the other hand the second section tells us "but of that day and hour knoweth no man," the time of it's occurrence is unidentifiable. In the first section, the time preceding the destruction of Jerusalem would be filled with unusual events such as wars, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes. In the second section the return of our Lord would be heralded by no unusual events, times would be normal with people marrying, eating and drinking just as they always do. Also in the first section there would be time for flight when the signs

were recognized. In the second section there would be no time for flight. These are just a few of the many contrasts between the two events discussed in Matthew 24.

In the next article we will discuss the specific signs spoken about by Jesus in the first section of Matthew 24.

Attention—Nashville Area Readers

Issues That Divide Us

New Shackle Island Rd.
Church of Christ
Hendersonville, Tennessee

**August 3-7
7:30 P.M.**

Speaker: Connie W. Adams

This meeting has been planned to provide a study of the issues over which brethren have divided in the last 30 years. We hope brethren from throughout middle Tennessee will support this effort.

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

SOUTHSIDE LECTURESHIP

MT. PLEASANT, TX—The church located at 815 S. Jefferson in Mt. Pleasant is planning a lectureship June 14-18 on the theme of "Jesus, Savior." Homer Hailey, Leon Goff, Harry Pickup, Jr., and James L. Sloan will be the speakers. Monday through Thursday there will be three lessons in the mornings. The evening service begins at 7:30 each night. R. J. Stevens will direct the song service.

Reconciliation

T. ALAN BENEDICT, 7054 Winnetka Ave., Canoga Park, CA 91306. It is with gratitude and praise to God that we share with you the following. On Sunday, March 28, 1981 there was a joint meeting of the Winnetka Ave. church of Canoga Park and the Valley Circle congregation of Woodland Hills. The meeting was conducted at the Winnetka Ave. building. Because of excellent attitudes on the part of both congregations and confession of wrong doing with forgiveness requested from God and one another, a planned reconciliation became a reality. Both congregations realized the problem had been too long a plague on the Lord's work in this area, and all expressed great joy when the burden was lifted. When in the San Fernando Valley, worship with the three congregations that are standing for the Lord: Winnetka Ave., Valley Circle, and Lassen St.

New Congregations

WICHITA, KS—A new work has begun in Wichita. This congregation is made up mostly of young married Christians with attendance in the mid-forties. At the present we are renting the IOOF hall located in south Wichita at Hydraulic and Wassail. Anyone wishing to make contact with this new congregation can call Gene Valdois at 524-3849, or Walt Schreiner at 945-9260. Or

write to 2726 Crawford, Wichita, KS 67217. The times of services are 9:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on Sundays and 7:00 p.m. on Wednesdays. If you know of anyone in this area please contact us that we might meet and encourage them.

HOUSTON, TX—A new congregation began meeting January 27, 1980 in the Spring Branch area west of Houston. We are meeting at the Creative Care Children's School at 9709 Long Point. We welcome brethren traveling through Houston or moving to this area to meet with us. Our services are at 10 / 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. on Sundays and 7:30 on Wednesdays. For directions or information call (713) 492-0566 or 465-1383. I have served as preacher for this group since its beginning. Kent Ellis, 1346 Park Meadow Dr., Katy, TX 77450.

Preachers Needed

OCEAN SPRINGS, MS—The church here is in need of a full-time preacher. The congregation is one year old; having started with 12 members and now averaging 30 in attendance. We have a fine meeting place and are able to support a man \$200 per week. We are interested in a preacher who is interested in working. Conservative works are few in southern Mississippi but we aim to change that. Contact Leo Hastings, Hwy 90 E. Ocean Springs, MS 39564.

WESLACO, TX—The church here is in need of a gospel preacher. If interested contact Bob Dodd at 310 S. Texas, Weslaco, TX 78596. Or phone (512) 968-9525 or (512) 565-1874.

TOM MOODY, P.O. Box 2, Jacksonville, AL 36265. Since January Bro. Murphy Priestly has been working with us helping with some

of our needs in preaching and teaching while gaining experience as a gospel preacher. He is being supported by the 77th St. church in Birmingham, AL where he was a member prior to coming to Jacksonville. Murphy is scheduled to be with us through August. At that time he would like to begin several more months on a training basis with another congregation. He has been glad to receive instruction and has also been a hard worker, preaching frequently, teaching a regular class, doing door to door work, and setting up and teaching in home studies. If you are looking for a young man to help develop as a preacher who can also be of help to you, contact Murphy Priestly, Rt. 4, Box 115, Trailer 9, Jacksonville, AL 36265. Phone (205) 435-3836.

The church at Jacksonville will be needing a full-time preacher when I move later this summer. The church is small, the work difficult; but Jacksonville is a growing community and I am convinced much good can be done here. Full support is available. We have recently moved into a new building which provides plenty of room for growth. If interested write us at P.O. Box 2, Jacksonville, AL 36265. Or call (205) 435-9479 or (205) 820-9548.

CLARENCE F. HOUGHLAND, 2115 10th Ave., Safford, AZ 85546 I am writing to let you know of the work here in eastern Arizona. This work began in 1978 and is the only sound church within an 80 mile radius. Having begun in my home we are now meeting in a rented school cafeteria for Sunday services. We do not have a preacher. If interested in working with the church here in Safford please contact us. Attendance averages 8 to 10. There is much work to do and we encourage anyone visiting this area or planning to move here, to worship with us at 1100 10th Ave., Safford, AZ 85546. Or contact me at (602) 428-5396.

JIMMY TUTEN, 7911 Country Dr., Mobile, AL 36609. For several years three faithful members of the church living in Lucedale, MS have been driving 25 miles one way to Mobile for services. Others from across the state line have visited with us from time to time. Three weeks ago two sisters from this same area identified with us. As a result plans are underway to begin a faithful church in Lucedale. We have decided to first start a Thursday night class in that area until there is sufficient evidence of strength to begin permanently meeting on Sundays. Since our last report there have been several responses to the invitation. Fruit continues to come from personal work in Mobile. At present I am in need of some extra support.

FERNANDO VENEGAS, Casilla #122 C.C., 5500 Mendoza, Argentina, South America. I am certainly happy to be able to let you know of our activities for the cause of Christ in this place. The work here continues to prosper. On February 24 Bro. Carlos Capelli arrived here for two weeks to preach. During our gospel meeting with Carlos we were greatly edified and a number of visitors attended each night. We rejoiced to see two men obey the gospel during this effort. I continue to have Bible studies in different homes. Recently we had Bro. Nestor Sanchez from Chile to speak for us on two occasions. We request your prayers.

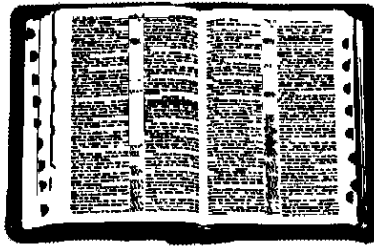
IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

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(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)

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 Thessaionica 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 XXII

JULY, 1981

NUMBER 7

THINK ON
THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 17244
Tampa, Florida 33612



PRAYING AND SINGING TO JESUS (NO. 1)

In the February, 1981 issue of *Searching The Scriptures*, my friend and brother, Hoyt H. Houchen, penned an article bearing the same title as this one. I do not agree with his position on the subject of praying to Jesus and utilize this space to respond to the errors in his article. I want it clearly understood that I am not casting reflection upon brother Houchen; he is a good and honorable man and I love and respect him. I just do not believe that the Bible teaches that we may pray to Jesus.

At first I thought to respond to his article paragraph by paragraph, but I decided instead to present what I believe to be the truth on the subject and let the reader determine for himself what the Bible teaches.

To me this is not a matter of opinion; it is a matter of faith. I do not recall ever hearing anyone among us publicly pray to Jesus, but if this is a scriptural matter, why do we not hear some believing brother pray to Jesus in the public assembly? I am not naive; I have not been everywhere and I know many things go on that I have not seen nor heard. It may be a common practice in a few places.

Just one thing about the article by brother Houchen before I proceed further. In paragraph two he tries to show the fallacy of opposing praying to Jesus by comparing it to the opposition to Baptist arguments on their doctrine of salvation by faith only. He says, "Well meaning brethren, who attempt to sustain their contention that it is wrong to pray or sing to Jesus, refer to several passages in the New Testament which teach that we are to pray to the Father through the

Son. Their conclusion is that we cannot address our prayers or songs to Jesus."

That is the same argument that the Christian Church uses with the instrument of music in worship. They charge us with citing a number of passages in the New Testament that teach that we are to sing in worship and then say that we conclude that we are not to use the instrument in worship to God. Friends, the arguments are exactly the same in form and fact.

Brother Houchen says that the position opposing praying to Jesus is like the Baptists "who in their attempt to prove that salvation is by faith only, list the many passages that teach that we are saved by faith." Their conclusion, he says, is that salvation is by faith only. "So, while none of us deny that we are taught to address God in prayer or song, the issue is: are we also authorized to pray and sing to Jesus?" I agree with brother Houchen's statement of the issue: The issue is: are we also authorized to pray... to Jesus?

The Nature and Relationship of Deity

I want it to be understood from the first that I believe with all my heart that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; that means that I believe Christ is as DIVINE as the Father or the Holy Spirit. I believe Jesus Christ is God in every sense of the word.

I further believe with all my heart that Christ is to be worshipped as God, just as we worship the Father as God. With me the issue is not, Is Jesus Christ deity; nor is Christ to be worshipped. The issue is, Does the New Testament authorize us to pray to Jesus in this dispensation?

The Godhead

The Godhead or Godhood is that sum of attributes that characterize deity. There are three persons in the Godhead: God the Father (Gal. 1:1), God the Son (Heb. 1:8), and God the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3,4). The evidence of this is so overwhelming in the word of God that to the readers of this paper it is unnecessary for me to argue the point.

The word "Godhead" is used three times in the New Testament:

1. **Theios**, The Godhead, that which is Divine (Acts 17:29).

2. **Theiotes**, Divinity; characteristics of deity (Rom. 1:20).
3. **Theotes**, Deity (Col. 2:9).

Relationship Of Deity

There are four facts regarding the Godhead to which I now call attention:

1. **Perfect Unity**. There is perfect unity in the persons of deity. At no time has any person of the Godhead ever been out of harmony with the other persons of the Godhead about any matter. They are ONE in nature, purpose and work (John 17:21,22; 1 Cor. 8:6; John 10:30; 14:10,11; 16:15).

2. **Distinct Function**. Each person of the Godhead has a distinct function in the entire scheme of redemption. They have separate work that complements the work of each other in all that is revealed to us from creation to the last day when the resurrection and judgment take place. To assign to one person a work that another is said to have done or will do is to misunderstand the revealed function of the three persons of deity. For example, Christ was made flesh that he might die for the sins of the world. Neither the Father nor the Holy Spirit died for the sins of the world. The second person of the Godhead did what the other two persons did not do.

3. **All Persons Active**. In the eternal purpose of God, which is the entire scheme of redemption, all three persons of the Godhead are active. There is not one thing deity has done for man, or is doing, or will do for mankind that each person of the Godhead is not involved in some way, because of the UNITY of purpose of the three persons of deity.

4. **Different Rank In Relationship**. The persons of the Godhead do not hold the same rank in relationship to each other. They have perfect UNITY; each person has A DISTINCT FUNCTION in the scheme of redemption; each person is ACTIVE in all that deity has to do with mankind. But none of this means that each of these persons holds the same relationship to the others. To understand this is to understand that we have divinely ordained responsibilities to each of them in ways that distinguish between them. We can understand how **humanity** is ONE, and yet there are different persons in humanity with different relationships to each other. That is the way the Godhead is. In humanity the man is the head of the woman (1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:23). As the man is the head of the woman, so Christ is the head of man, and God is the head of Christ (1 Cor. 11:3). Christ said the Father was greater than he, and greater than all (John 14:28; 10:29).

It is important that we understand the relationship of the Father and the Son. Both are Divine, but the Son is always subject to the Father in all things. Jesus said he received from the Father **words** (John 14:10; 3:34; 8:26; 16:13-15), doctrine (John 7:16,17), will (John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38), and **commandment** (John 10:18; 12:49,50; 15:10). He said he always spoke these words, doctrine, will and commandments of His Father.

The Father will judge the world in righteousness (Acts 17:30,31), but He will do it by Jesus Christ (John 5:22,27,30), and the Son will judge by the word he has

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spoken by the Holy Spirit (John 12:48; Rev. 20:11-13).

Are both Praying and Singing to Jesus Authorized?

"Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms" (James 5:13).

Ephesians 5:18-21 tells us exactly what the difference is between singing to Jesus and praying to Jesus. "... Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, **SINGING and MAKING MELODY IN YOUR HEART TO THE LORD ...**" Here is the Bible authority to SING and make melody **TO THE LORD**. But read the rest of the sentence: "Giving **THANKS ALWAYS FOR ALL THINGS UNTO GOD AND THE FATHER...**" Is that plain enough? "... **IN THE NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST**. Here is the Bible authority to pray in thanksgiving **ALWAYS for ALL THINGS UNTO GOD AND THE FATHER**, the first person in the Godhead; **IN THE NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST**, the second person in the Godhead.

It is scriptural to SING praise and adoration to Jesus Christ, but it is unscriptural to PRAY to Jesus instead of the Father because the word of God does not teach it.

Colossians 3:16,17: "Let the WORD OF CHRIST dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, **SINGING WITH GRACE IN YOUR HEARTS TO THE LORD.**" We can scripturally sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs—and these are the only songs we are authorized to sing in worship—with grace in our hearts TO THE LORD JESUS CHRIST! But this is SINGING and not PRAYING. Now read the rest of the passage: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, **DO ALL IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS, GIVING THANKS TO GOD AND THE FATHER BY HIM.**" I find no difficulty at all understanding the difference between singing and praying in these scriptures.

One of the main pillars upon which this idea of praying to Jesus rests is that songs we sing—the good old popular and well known songs—are prayers to Jesus. This is not true! There is a difference between praying and singing.

It is true that there are a few songs that teach error, and we cannot scripturally sing them. The songs we sing, all of them, are written by uninspired men, and many of them by denominational people. In years past the words of a number of songs had to be changed because they taught the premillennial doctrine which at one time nearly destroyed many churches. I do not remember faithful brethren suggesting that we hold to Premillennialism because we had sung some songs that taught it. We just changed the words of the songs so we could scripturally sing them.

Because we find some songs that teach us to "have a little talk with Jesus" or "take it to the Lord (Jesus) in prayer" or "tell it to Jesus alone" and other such songs, should we turn to praying to Jesus to conform to the songs we want to keep, or should we do as we did in the past and change the words of such songs to conform to the doctrine of Christ? We have also had to change the words of some songs because they taught Calvinism. Why should we hesitate to change those that teach praying to Jesus?

I affirm that songs of praise, exaltation and adoration to Jesus, to the Father or to the Holy Spirit are scriptural. But I affirm that praying to Jesus or to the Holy Spirit is unscriptural and wrong.

All Three Persons of Deity Involved in Prayer

Brother Houchen said, "But when they refuse to sing or pray to Jesus they only address one third of the deity, God the Father. They can sing or pray to one part of deity but they cannot sing or pray to another part, God the Son." (S.T.S. p. 335).

Now why is it not as wrong to leave out the remaining third person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit, and to pray to him? Does brother Houchen advocate praying to the Holy Spirit? If not, why not? He is also God as the Father is God. All I have read or

heard from those advocating praying to Jesus is that we who oppose are separating out one person of the Godhead, to whom we pray, and ignoring the other two. Whether two or one of the Godhead is ignored, the principle is the same.

But if we should pray to the Son because he is God as the Father is God, why should we not do all that we do in worship and service to each one of the persons of deity alike? Why not make God the Father high priest through whom we can come to the Saviour Jesus Christ? Or be reconciled unto Jesus Christ by the blood of the Holy Spirit? In the light of Divine truth this is ridiculous, but I use it to illustrate the truth that, although all persons of the Godhead are involved in the redemption of mankind, they do not all have the same function and do not have the same relationship to each other or to humanity.

What About The Lord's Supper?

On each Lord's day I assemble with the saints to eat the unleavened bread and drink the fruit of the vine. When I do this I do NOT remember the "broken body" or the "shed blood" of the Father or the Holy Spirit; ONLY JESUS CHRIST! I could not do otherwise and be scripturally right. Jesus suffered and died on the cross. It was HIS body that took the stripes for my sins. It was HIS blood that was shed on the cross for the remission of my sins. Jesus said, "Do this in remembrance of me" (1 Cor. 11:24) and if I did otherwise I would not obey either the Father, the Son or the Holy Spirit. I remember only ONE PERSON in the Godhead when I eat the bread and drink the cup of the Lord! Do I sin in remembering only "one third" of deity on each Lord's day when I "break bread" in remembrance of Jesus Christ? I trow not!

It is not because I do not respect all three persons of deity. I do so because the word of God, through His Son Jesus Christ, by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven which gave utterance to the apostles in spiritual words (Acts 1:3; 2:3,4; 1 Cor. 2:13), told me exactly what to do and why in partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine.

The Father sent the Son into the world to "taste death for every man" and the Holy Spirit gave the words by which the apostles revealed the will of the Father and that will is given through Jesus Christ. All three persons are involved in the redemption of man. It was the eternal purpose of the Father, executed by Christ, and revealed by the Holy Spirit. But the fact is that this expression of worship is directed ONLY to the Son. We remember HIS broken body and HIS shed blood. Think on these things!

Keep this article and read it again before you read the second part to appear next month in *Searching The Scriptures*.

Please Renew Promptly!

SEARCHING the SCRIPTURES

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AN OPEN LETTER TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS Dear

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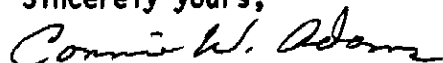
The time has come to put some facts before you and ask for your understanding, In 1973 when I began editing the paper It consisted of 16 pages with an annual subscription rate of \$5. The paper has been enlarged to 24 pages with a current annual rate of \$7.

During the past eight years our monthly printing costs have trifled and the mailing cost on a second-class permit is now four times what it was in 1973. All renewal notices are sent by first-class mail. In 1973 a first-class stamp was 10c. It is now 18c. During this period, office help and necessary supplies have continued to Increase in cost.

The current subscription rate has only applied to new subscriptions since that rate became effective two and a half years ago. When I became editor, I told our beloved brother, H. E. Phillips, that I would honor the agreement he had made to the effect that as long as people renewed on time they would continue to receive the paper at the price under which they began, just as long as it was economically possible. I did not make that agreement with the subscribers—that was before my management of the paper. I am glad we have been able to honor this for the past eight years. But it means that a number of readers who have been with us ten years or longer are still getting the paper at \$3, \$4, or \$5 a year even though the paper is eight pages larger than when they began and Inflation has run wild since then. Neither brother Phillips nor anyone else could have foreseen the run-away Inflation of today. WE CANNOT CONTINUE THIS PRACTICE IF WE ARE TO SURVIVE.

Beginning in September we bill all renewals at the current rate for either clubs or singles. Anyone still receiving the paper for \$3 a year has been with us a long time. Some of these may now be retired and on greatly reduced income. Out of respect for that and in gratitude for having stayed with us through all these years, if any subscriber honestly wants to continue receiving the paper but just cannot afford the increase, if you will write us a note to that effect, we will see that you continue to receive the paper as you always have. We do not wish to work a hardship on any of these. But regarding others, we must face the realities of fiscal responsibility. We are convinced that the paper fills a need and hope you share that feeling. Good men, some with us from the beginning in 1960, have continued to supply excellent material for the reader and all of these have worked with no pay except the satisfaction of helping people search the Scriptures. We stand for the same truths for which the paper has stood throughout its history. Please give us your understanding and help us to continue this work.

Sincerely yours,

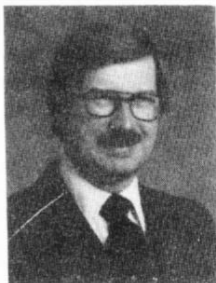


Connie W. Adams

SET FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE GOSPEL

T. G. O'Neal

P.O. Box 723
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ORIGIN OF OPPOSITION TO INSTITUTIONALISM

Quite often today as gospel preachers oppose churches of Christ making contributions to benevolent organizations and to "sponsoring churches" some of our brethren who have a liberal attitude toward the word of God will charge that such opposition did not begin until just recently.

I have in my possession a little booklet, *Cooperation in the Field of Benevolence and Evangelism*, by Guy N. Woods, which contains a sermon he preached in Indianapolis, Indiana, at the Garfield Heights church on May 18, 1957, in which are some quotations to which I want to call your attention. On page 1 he says, "Up until a few years ago there was no opposition in the brotherhood, except in a few isolated places, to cooperative evangelism and benevolence as is practiced by most of the churches of Christ today. I can remember when there was not a preacher in the South known to me who opposed the orphan homes as they today exist." On page 2 he says, "The first opposition that was registered to cooperative evangelism in our day was that which followed the efforts of the Broadway congregation in Lubbock, Texas, to keep Brother Otis Gatewood in Germany. Until that time, nothing was said in opposition thereto;..." This was in about 1948.

From reading these quotations one would get the impression, if he didn't know better, that everybody was supporting these benevolent institutions from the church treasury for many years. This is not the case. Men living today can remember when the very first contribution was made by a church of Christ to a modern day benevolent institution called an "orphan home."

To show you that churches of Christ have not always contributed to what is commonly called orphan homes, let us look at the record and be convinced by the facts. By comparing the charters of all the benevolent organizations among us today the following facts, which are undeniable, are seen. In the year 1940 there were only seven so-called orphan homes in operation among those claiming to belong to the church of Christ. Coming ten years later to the year 1950, there were only three more established, bringing the total to ten in 1950. From the year 1950 until 1960 there were seventeen more homes established, thus bringing the total of so-called orphan homes to twenty-seven in 1960. If you will note carefully, you will see that there

were more benevolent organizations started from 1950 to 1960 than there were started from 1900 to 1950.

Now, because of this fact, there was not as much opposition to these benevolent institution several years ago as there is now. There was opposition to them even from their beginning. Anyone who says otherwise is either uninformed concerning the history of the church of Jesus Christ in this century or does not care how the truth is handled. The opposition grew as the benevolent societies grew. "The opposition grew in proportion to the practice" of building more and more human benevolent societies. Does anyone marvel as to why there is more opposition now, than there was several years ago? The reason should be self evident as there are more so-called orphan homes now than there were several years ago.

But I am prepared to prove with documented evidence that there were "cries long and loud" against these so-called orphan homes years ago! That's right, people who would have you believe that opposition only began against these so-called orphan homes a few short years ago are in error. Opposition began years ago.

The oldest so-called orphan home among those claiming to be the churches of Christ was started in the state of Tennessee in the year 1909. In a quarterly report in the year 1911 there were only 3 1/4% of the Tennessee churches that had made a contribution to such. Looks like somebody was opposed to the thing in 1911.

In 1931 brother A. N. Trice wrote an article in the *Gospel Advocate* entitled, "Law and Expediency" in defense of churches of Christ contributing to these benevolent institutions. Throughout this article, he spoke of those that "object".

He said, "Cries long and loud have been made against... homes, orphanages, etc., as being institutions "unknown to the New Testament," and against "an enterprise" that is "bigger than the work of a local congregation." Somebody must have been doing some effective opposition to churches of Christ contributing to those "homes" and "orphanages" for this brother to write in such strong language as this. Does this quotation sound like opposition to churches contributing to benevolent organization just started a few years ago? Somebody even back then objected and opposed such a practice upon the part of New Testament churches.

In this same article, Brother Trice said, in 1931, "Another dogma held by some is that no church may give from its treasury to the support of any school, Bible school, orphan school or other institution of learning, nor for helping any one to obtain an education." Brethren also opposed churches of Christ contributing to schools and colleges. The opposition was "long and loud" in 1931 to such!

Trice says, "Sometimes the claim is made that no two or more churches may cooperate in any given work, or that "the word of God does not authorize any congregation to "start an enterprise" that is bigger than the work of a local congregation." "Special objection is also urged against the planning by

the churches of a city or community for holding a series of gospel meetings and against the selection of a preacher to do the preaching." In this quotation someone is charged with believing "that no two or more churches may cooperate in any given work ..." I doubt that anyone opposed churches cooperating; but rather opposed unscriptural church cooperation. But these statements by Trice in the *Gospel Advocate* are in many cases direct quotations. If no one were opposed, how could they be quoted as being opposed to these things? The very fact that some one is quoted proves that some one was opposed to this very practice back in 1931.

Brother Trice says, "Finally, Scripture authority has been demanded for... supporting schools from the treasury of the church; for activities other than through the treasury of the local congregation; for maintaining an orphanage or home for the aged;... It is not sufficient to cry, "Unscriptural," while failing to point out the Scriptures violated." Some one has been charged with asking for the Scriptures for churches to contribute to human benevolent societies; and I take it they were in opposition to such. When I and others ask for the same Scripture that was asked for back in 1931, we are charged with being opposed; and I am sure that those who asked for the Scripture back in 1931 were considered to be opposed to the practices of that day.

When we take the time to look at these quotations from the pen of brother A. N. Trice in the *Gospel Advocate* of March 19, 1931, we can plainly see that these quotations are from one who opposed church contributions to these so-called orphan homes; it shows that opposition was "long and loud"; and that someone was asking for the book, chapter, and verse for it. These quotations from the *Gospel Advocate* of 1931 should forever silence those who say that opposition only began to churches contributing to so-called orphan homes a few years ago.

Opposition to the "Herald of Truth" began almost the same year the "Herald of Truth" began, 1951. Nobody opposed the "Herald of Truth" before it began; opposition has been strong to it ever since it began and to date no person has cited the Bible authority for it either.

Men sometimes find their preaching and their practice are not the same. Their preaching will be in harmony with the word of God while their practice will not be. Often their practice will be in harmony with the New Testament and their preaching will not be. Through the years several brethren have preached what the New Testament teaches on this matter, but they have not practiced it. Some have become so involved in their own wisdom that they have changed their preaching to fit their practice, even when their practice was not in harmony with the word of God. Others have seen that their preaching was right, but that their practice was wrong, and they have changed their practice to fit their preaching. When one sees his preaching is right and his practice is wrong, he should change his practice to fit his preaching, not his

preaching to fit his practice.

Peter preached the truth on circumcision in Acts 10, but practiced something else in Gal. 2. When Paul rebuked him to his face, Peter changed his practice to fit his preaching, which was right. This is what every preacher and every faithful Christian will do when it is pointed out to them that their preaching is correct but their practice is incorrect.

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THE BEATITUDES—No. 3

In this final article on the Beatitudes, we will consider the fifth, sixth and seventh beatitudes in their respective order.

Blessed Are the Merciful

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (Mt. 5:7). Jesus attached great importance to "mercy." Twice he quoted Hosea that God desires mercy and not sacrifice (Mt. 9:13; 12:27). He condemned the Pharisees for their lack of mercy (Mt. 23:27).

Many of the Jews were bereft of mercy. They disapproved of Jesus eating with the publicans and sinners (Mt. 9:11) and murmured against Jesus' disciples for doing the same (Lk. 5:30). The Roman world was merciless, especially toward slaves and children. Slaves were treated as chattel property or living tools to be used. A master could, and sometimes did, kill his slave for the slightest provocation. Unwanted children were abandoned in the streets, thrown out like refuse.

In this kind of backdrop Jesus taught mercy. To be merciful is to have the same kind of love, feeling and pity toward all men as God manifests. "To be merciful is to have the same attitude to men as God has, to think of men as God thinks of men, to feel for men as God feels for them, to act towards men as God acts towards them" (Wm. Barclay). Mercy is the opposite of self-centeredness, and antithesis of selfishness. It is concern and self-identification for our fellowman with whom we have daily contact.

Jesus said the merciful shall obtain mercy. Here is a principle laid down by Jesus. Before we can have mercy, we must be merciful. James said: "For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy (Jas. 2:13). Let us show mercy that we may receive God's rich mercy (Eph. 2:4) by which we are saved (Tit. 3:5) and through which we have hope (1 Pet. 1:3).

Blessed Are the Pure in Heart

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Mt. 5:8). The word, "pure," is a translation of *katharos* which means "free from the admixture or adhesion of anything that soils, adulterates, corrupts." Lenski says it has the idea of "singleness of mind, the

honesty which has no hidden motive, no selfish interest, and is true and open in all things" (St. Matthew's Gospel).

The word, "heart," is a translation of *kardia*. Here, it is the "inner man, the understanding, the faculty and seat of intelligence." Hence, Jesus in the text is saying: "Blessed are those whose understanding is clear, whose spiritual vision is single, whose motive is honest, for they shall see God."

Man comes to Jesus by perception and discernment of God's revealed Word, the Bible. Jesus said: "And they shall all be taught of God. Every man that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (Jn. 6:45). Those who know and love the truth, and whose minds are not distorted by the doctrines of men, are the "pure in heart."

The expression, "for they shall see God," means "a spiritual relationship with God in the kingdom." This is made clear in John 3:3: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Seeing the kingdom" in verse 3 is the same as "entering the kingdom" in Jn. 3:5. Therefore, a relationship is the implication of "seeing God." May we keep our hearts pure!

Blessed Are the Peacemakers

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" (Mt. 5:9). Jesus was not talking about arbitration in a dispute between people or a settler of disagreements among men. Rather, Jesus was speaking about peace preachers who preach the gospel of peace and show the world the way back to God.

Man caused enmity between himself and God by sin. "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works" (Co. 1:21). The need was a restoration of friendship that had been broken. Here is the function of the peacemaker. He preaches the gospel of peace and thereby reconciles (makes friends again) the alien to God.

Paul wrote of Jesus: "For he is our peace... And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh" (Eph. 2:14-17). Those who propagate the peace that Jesus brought and preached are peacemakers—makers of peace between God and man.

Listen further to the apostle Paul: "And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" The gospel of peace is what Peter said is the "word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ" (he is Lord of all:) That word, I say, ye, know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached" (Acts 10:36-37). Peter's statement was an allusion to the Great Commission, and those who proclaim it are, indeed, *peacemakers*. In working as

peacemakers, we are honored by being called the "children of God."

Truly, as Foy E. Wallace said, "The beatitudes are the synopsis of the gospel of the kingdom and the epitome of the doctrine of Christ." What wonderful blessings they proclaim!



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UNMASKING MORMONISM (No. 2)

by **Steve Goff**
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Mormon views on the Bible and God

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS), known as the Mormons, project an image of a strict moralized, family oriented, clean cut and happy people. However, as we showed in the previous article, this image is only a mask of hypocrisy. Behind the mask, we see a society with problems in drug abuse, alcoholism, mental depression, suicide, fornication, lasciviousness, divorce and unruly children, as in other societies of America. While Mormons are good people, Mormonism paints a deceptive picture of its followers in an attempt to attract others to its number. In this second article, we will examine the Mormon views of the Bible and of God, again penetrating the mask and exposing their true beliefs. We do this to fulfill our obligation to "try the spirits whether they are of God" (1 Jn. 4:1) and to "earnestly contend for the faith" (Jude 3). Inasmuch as the Bible is our complete and perfect standard (2 Tim. 3:16-17) and as Jesus said of false prophets, "Ye shall know them by their fruits" (Matt. 7:16), we will compare the fruits of Mormon doctrine with the Bible.

Mormons And The Bible

When a Mormon is asked if the Bible is God's Word, he will quickly answer in the affirmative. In a LDS tract, "What the Mormons think of Christ" on page 2, we read, "Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believe the Bible. Indeed, so literally and completely do their beliefs and practices conform to the teachings of the Bible that it is not uncommon to hear informed persons say: 'If all men believed the Bible, all would be Mormons.' Bible doctrine is Mormon doctrine, and Mormon doctrine is Bible doctrine. They are one and the same." But behind this mask is the reality that Mormons do not follow Bible teaching. The Book of Mormon affirms that the Bible has been corrupted and has caused an exceeding great many to stumble (1 Nephi 13:26-29). Are we to believe that Mormons "literally and completely" follow the teachings of a corrupted book which leads men astray? I have never been in a religious discussion with a Mormon where he did not, in the course of the conversation, begin to criticize the Bible and accuse it of containing contradictions. Mormon doctrine is NOT Bible doctrine; they are NOT one and the same.

In another LDS tract, "What of the Mormons?" on page 12, we read of their three additional books of scripture (*The Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price*), "The teachings

found in them do not conflict with the teachings of the Bible." One must then wonder why these books are needed. If they teach a different gospel, they stand condemned (Gal. 1:9). If they just echo Bible doctrine, why are they necessary? The truth is that Mormonism rejects much of the Bible, and in fact only accepts those teachings which conform to their preconceived ideas. The Bible claims to be the complete and final word of God to man (Heb. 1:1-2; Jude 3; Gal. 1:6-9), the perfect law of liberty (Jas. 1:25), uncorruptible and imperishable (Mk. 13:31; 1 Pet. 1:22-25). Mormon doctrine rejects this, teaching that the Bible is inaccurate, incomplete, and was corrupted by men. If Mormonism were correct, Jesus would have lied when He said His words would never pass away. Mormons deny the verbal inspiration of the Bible. On page 10 of the LDS tract, "What of the Mormons?" we read, "The Bible is the word of God, written by men. It is basic in Mormon teaching. But the Latter-day Saints recognize that errors have crept into this sacred work because of the manner in which the book has come to us." The Bible claims, however, to be more than merely God's Word written by man (or in man's wisdom). 1 Corinthians 2:13 says, "Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual words." To deny the verbal inspiration of the Bible is to call Paul a liar. Mormons are taught to have a subjective faith, based upon their feelings rather than the written word. Moroni 10:4-5, of the Book of Mormon, teaches its reader to ask God for a confirmation that the book is true. One young "elder" recently told me that his confirmation came in the form of a burning feeling in his heart. The Bible teaches that "faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). One's faith should be based on scripture, not heartburn. Having a subjective faith, few Mormons will admit that they could possibly be mistaken. Closed minded, and like the Jews of Paul's day, they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. Seeking to establish their own righteousness, they have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God (Rom. 10:1-3).

God or Gods?

The first Article of Faith of the Mormon Church states, "We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost." To the unsuspecting ear, that sounds great. But WHAT do they believe about God? Mormons believe that God is an exalted man, with a body of flesh and bones, who was born and lived a physical existence in a previous world, but progressed to the position of being a God over His own world, the earth. Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, said, "God himself, who sits enthroned in yonder heavens, is a man like unto one of yourselves" (*Times and Seasons*, Vol. 5, pp. 613-614). Smith also said, "the Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's" (Doctrine and Covenants 130:22). Brigham Young, Smith's successor, said, "He (God) is our Father — the Father of our spirits, and was once a man in mortal flesh as we are, and is now an

exalted being" (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 7, p. 333). This doctrine is directly contradictory to the Bible, which teaches that God is a Spirit (Jn. 4:24), and that a spirit does not have flesh and bones (Lk. 24:39). But Mormon theology does not stop there. Mormons believe in a spiritual progression in which men can become Gods; or as it is often stated, "as man is, God once was; as God is, man may become." Young said, "The Lord created you and me for the purpose of becoming Gods like himself" (Journ. of Disc. Vol. 3, p. 93). The "one" God is not the only God who exists, they teach, but is only the "one" God over this world. Young said, "How many Gods there are, I do not know" (Journ. of Disc. Vol. 7, p. 333). Well, the Bible knows! God said, "I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God" (Isa. 44:6), and "I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me" (Isa. 43:10). The Mormon doctrine of polytheism is nothing short of idolatry. They demote the true and living God from His eternal and omnipotent nature into a mere man who pleased his God and therefore reaped a reward, becoming a God himself. Like the Jews of old, Mormons "thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself" (Psa. 50:21). And like the Gentiles described in Romans 1:21-25, the Mormons have "changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man," and have "worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator." Latter-day Saints have created a god in the image of man.

Mormon views of the Bible and of God are foreign to what the Bible teaches. While their image projects a Bible-believing, God-fearing people, they in fact reject the nature and inspiration of the Bible, and worship a god of their own imagination. In the next article, we will examine two other doctrines fundamental to Mormon theology: the Priesthood and the restored church of Jesus Christ.

Using the SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

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What To Do When A Church Problem Arises

So long as time continues there shall be problems in the church. One has but to read casually through the book of Acts and the epistles to ascertain that we today have no monopoly on problems. The early church suffered problems of outside persecution (Acts 3:4) and problems of inward corruption and covetousness (Acts 5). It suffered when false doctrines challenged the truth of the gospel and some were led astray (Acts 15).

Many problems existed in the church at Corinth. The Galatian churches were in danger of apostasy as were the recipients of the letter to the Hebrews. Problems were mounting in Thessalonica because of some misunderstanding on the second coming of Christ. The Lord's letters to the seven churches of Asia (Rev. 2,3) reveal many problems within the fellowship of those saints.

Some years ago while I was engaged in a meeting in South Texas, an elder and I were discussing some church problems. There was present at this "after church" get-together a young Mexican man who had only recently become a Christian. The elder seemingly realized quite suddenly that our conversation could be a discouragement to him. So he addressed the young brother and said, "You must be aware that some churches do have problems."

I shall not forget his answer: "Si," he smiled, "I've been reading about them in the New Testament."

How should we conduct ourselves when a problem arises? There are some things in this regard that need to be constantly emphasized.

Do the Scriptural And Right Thing

The scriptural and right thing is not often the easy thing. I'm confident that it was not easy for Peter to confront Ananias and Sapphira and accuse them of lying. But his source was not just reliable, but infallible. It was a lot easier for the disciples to murmur and gossip concerning the neglect of the Grecian widows (Acts 6) than to correct the situation in a scriptural way. It was a lot of trouble for Paul and Barnabas to make a trip to Jerusalem and contend for what was right (Acts 15).

Most members of the church are aware of what they are supposed to do if a brother trespasses against them (Matt. 18:15-17). First, one must "go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone." That's the scriptural and right thing. The easy thing is to tell everybody but him.

If someone tells a tale on another, the easy thing is to just let it slide. Even if we do not participate in the muckraking, can't we at least choose not to get involved? But consider an apostolic example: "For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you" (1 Cor. 1:11). Please note that Paul not only informed the party of whom such was reported, but he told them who made the report. There was none of this: "Well, I just can't tell you who said it. They made me promise" sort of thing.

About the best way I know to shut the mouths of some people is to let them know in no uncertain terms if they tell something on someone that you will tell it. You will tell it to the one it's being told on and you'll tell who you got it from! Never promise anyone you will keep something that should not have been told in the first place. Tell them rather, "If you want it kept, you keep it. Tell me and I'll tell it! But I'll do it in the scriptural and right way."

"Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people..." (Lev. 19:16).

"The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly" (Prov. 18:8). The "tale" may not necessarily be true, but it nevertheless gives one a sickening feeling when slanderous things are reported.

"And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busy-bodies, speaking things which they ought not" (1 Tim. 5:13) or "In fact they become worse than lazy, and degenerate into gossips and busy-bodies with dangerous tongues" (Phillips). Wonder what Paul would have said about the telephone? Isn't it amazing how busy some bodies can be with gossip and tales.

Resolve now, if you have not already done so, to do the scriptural and right thing when problems arise.

Judge Righteous Judgment

"Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment (John 7:24). This is an unequivocal and absolute command.

But what is involved in judging righteous judgment? Let us suppose you are called upon to judge in a matter in which some accusations have been made against a brother (Matt. 18:16,18; 1 Cor. 6:1-5). What scriptural principles should guide you? Let us note five:

(1) **Don't jump to conclusions.** Get all the facts possible. Even in our human courts this is emphasized to a large extent, but not nearly enough. No germane fact relative to a case should be refused entry on the ground of a technicality. If evidence has been gleaned or introduced in an illegal manner, let those responsible for such be penalized, but let the evidence stand. Even so, in other matters we should reach our conclusions after all pertinent facts are considered. Never condemn someone if you have not heard and considered what he has to say for himself. "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is a folly and shame unto him" (Prov. 18:13).

(2) **Consider the witnesses.** First, consider the number of witnesses. It is always possible for one person to get it in for another and make accusations. In such a case we just have one person's word against another's. What is the righteous course? The Old and New Testaments both stress that an accusation is not to be received but in the face of two or three witnesses (Deut. 19:15; Num. 35:30; Matt. 18:16; 2 Cor. 13:1; 1 Tim. 5:19). Jesus even taught that if He were the only witness of His claims, He should forthwith be rejected (John 5:31).

The credibility of witnesses must also be considered. If one has a reputation for truthfulness, we would naturally place more confidence in his testimony than in the words of one who is known to fabricate or fantasize. One of the great evidences of the resurrection of Christ is the credibility of the witnesses. They were not without fault. But they have been found to be truthful on every matter that can be crosschecked and examined by other sources.

(3) **Put personal likes and dislikes aside.** When divisive doctrinal issues arise in a congregation, many will simply stay or leave with their friends. When other

problems erupt, people tend to line up with their friends. The cardinal question: What is the truth? is oft-times relegated to a secondary position, or not even thought of at all. This is not righteous judgment.

(4) **Don't receive a rumor.** "Oh, it must be true," people exclaim. "Otherwise, it would not have been told!" Where there is smoke, there is fire, we're told. But always keep in mind the possibility that the fire just may be on the end of someone's long tongue (James 3:6). I heard of one sister of whom it was said, "Her tongue's so long she could sit in the parlor and lick the skillet in the kitchen!"

An untrue accusation was received against Joseph and he was cast into prison (Gen. 39:7-20). I've often wondered why Potiphar did not have him killed. The main reason, Of course, was that God's providence was at work. But perhaps J. W. McGarvey spoke accurately when he said in his sermon on Joseph: "I think it depended upon the fact that Potiphar knew his wife well and knew Joseph well, and had about as much confidence in Joseph's denial as in her accusation."

David suffered from unfounded rumors and false charges (Psalms 7, 35). As in the cases of most of us, there was enough sin in his past to make it terrible enough. He didn't need the circulation of untrue slanders.

Even the Lord, who was totally without sin, was falsely accused. Let us be sure that we receive not an unproved rumor. Judge righteous judgment.

(5) **Separate the material from the immaterial.** Someone says, "He must be guilty. He has an ulcer!" Oh, are you going to conclude that everyone with an ulcer is guilty of some great wickedness? Move over Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar!

An article has been widely circulated concerning Ken Taylor, author of the Living Bible, a paraphrase of the scriptures. It is observed in this article that Taylor suffered chronic laryngitis for several months after the completion of his work and it is alleged that the symptoms were psychosomatic, having been triggered by his awareness that he was perverting the scriptures.

I'm no friend of the Living Bible paraphrase, but really folks! Isn't that that a little careless? Who could possible know such a thing? That is not righteous judgment.

Keep Faith In The Lord

There will always be problems. But resolve right now that when those problems arise, you'll keep your faith in Christ.

Jesus spoke of the problem of false prophets who would arise in the days preceding the destruction of Jerusalem. **"And because iniquity shall abound,"** He continued, "the love of many shall wax cold. But **he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved**" (Matt. 24:11-13). The original problem of false prophets would be multiplied by the additional problem of others allowing their faith, zeal, and love to grow cold because of the sad effects of such lawlessness.

God has a purpose even in the rise of church problems: **"For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you"** (1 Cor. 11:19). Such is just part of the culling process.

When a problem arises, be sure to do the scriptural and right thing; be sure to judge righteous judgment; and last but not least, be sure to keep faith in the Lord, not in man.

A CHRISTIAN'S REVIEW OF "CAMPBELLITE QUESTIONS AND BAPTIST ANSWERS" No. 12

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Little Rock, Arkansas 72215



As we continue this study, we quote further from Mr. Taylor's answer to question number 20:

"The only churches that have stood from the promise in Matthew 16:18 to this good hour have been Baptist churches. As Ypeij and Dermout, who were not Baptists, well said: 'Baptists may be considered as the only Christian community which has stood since the apostles, and, as a Christian society, has preserved pure the doctrine of the Gospel through the ages.' I am a Baptist because the New Testament is a Baptist book written by Baptists, for Baptists and to make Baptists; and put in the hands of an open-minded inquirer it will make a Baptist out of him. I am a Baptists because the great commission is a Baptist document. It puts the emphasis or accent where none but Baptists put it, namely, on making men disciples or Christians before baptism. Then it commands all Christians to be baptized as Christ Himself was, namely, by a Baptist preacher. And finally, in contradistinction to modern Unionists and Fundamentalists, it commands all those who love the Lord to obey Him in all things—the non-essentials as well as the essentials."

His first statement is not in harmony with Baptist doctrine. When Jesus said "I will build my church" (Matt. 16:18) of course the language indicates that it was then future. But most Baptists teach that the church had already been built, and they usually point to Matthew 10—the call of the apostles—as the time and place.

His quote from Ypeij and Dermout is not convincing. When many religious historians referred to "Baptists" they had reference only to those who baptized by immersion, and not necessarily to a sect or denomination by that name. Many Baptist historians have spoken on the origin of the Baptist denomination. May we quote a few:

"It was during the reign of James, that the first regularly organized English Baptist church, of which

we possess any detailed account, was formed in Amsterdam in 1607, by John Smyth, formerly a clergyman of the Church of England." (*Story of the Baptists in All Ages*, Richard B. Cook, page 88.)

"John Smyth founded a church upon the Baptist model, believers' baptism and a regenerate church membership; and, organically speaking, this was the 'beginning' of the present denomination of Baptists, though begun with an unscriptural form of baptism. The principle, however, was right, and the form was corrected in 1640-41." (*English Baptist Reformation*, George A. Lofton, page 254.)

"The history of the Baptist Church cannot be carried, by a scientific method, farther back than the year 1611 when the first Anabaptist church, consisting of Englishmen, was founded in Amsterdam, by John Smyth, the Se-Baptist. This was not, strictly speaking, a Baptist Church, but it was the direct progenitor of churches in England that a few years later became Baptist, and therefore, their history begins there. A history of Baptist churches going farther back than the early years of the 17th century would, therefore, be in the highest degree unscientific. The very attempt to write such a history now would be a confession of crass ignorance, either of the facts as known, or the methods of historical research and the principles of historical criticism, or both." (H. C. Vedder, *Short History of the Baptists*.)

"To affirm that a man is a Baptist proves nothing more than that he rejects infant baptism and holds to believers baptism, by immersion." (David Benedict, *History of All Denominations*, p. 198.)

"The first regularly organized Baptist church of which we possess any account, is dated from 1607, and was formed in London by a Mr. Smyth, who has been a clergyman in the church of England." (David Benedict, *History of the Baptists*, page 304.)

"The attempt to show that any religious body has come down from the Apostles an unchanged people is of itself an assumption of infallibility, and contradicts the facts of history." (Thomas Armitage, *History of the Baptists*, Preface, page 3.)

His statement that the New Testament is a Baptist book, written by, for and to Baptists, is absurd! And we must conclude from his statement that the only open-minded people on earth who have held the New Testament in their hands were or became Baptists. What a claim!

The Catholic Church makes the same claim on the origin of the Bible as Taylor makes for Baptists. I have a book published by the Knights of Columbus entitled "The Bible is a Catholic Book." On page 4 they say, "The plain truth which every sincere person must eventually face is the fact that you can accept the Bible only upon the word of the Catholic Church. The Bible truly is a Catholic book, and it would not be in our possession today but for the Catholic Church." On page 11 they say, "We believe the Bible because God is its author and the Catholic Church is its publisher."

The Baptists and Catholics offer the same proof for

their claims—nothing! One claim is as true as the other, but both are false. The Bible was written by inspiration of the Holy Spirit through men who never heard of or thought about the Baptist and Catholic denominations.

Next, he tells us that the great commission is a Baptist document because it puts the emphasis where only Baptists put it, "making disciples or Christians before baptism." I thought he had been contending that the teaching of Christ made Baptists, but now he says Christians. He is wrong in his understanding of the Lord's commission.

He assumes that "disciple" always means Christian, but that is not true. A disciple may be a learner; one who is being taught. In John 6:66 we read that "many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." So they became apostates, but most Baptist people teach that such is not possible.

Mark records Jesus as saying, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15, 16). Is that a Baptist commission or Baptist doctrine?

Where does the commission or any other statement in the New Testament command Christians to be baptized? When that commission was put into effect on Pentecost (see Luke 24:46-49), lost, sinful believers were told to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Were they Christians before baptism? If so, they were Christians before repentance.

We agree that the commission commands those who love the Lord to obey him in all things, but we deny that there are any "non-essentials." This reflects a typical attitude of Baptists and many other people. They seem to think that God has given us a number of commands and then left us free to classify them as essential and non-essential and accept what we like and reject the rest. What kind of God do they believe in? Almighty God never gave to anybody, at any time, or any place, for any purpose a NON-ESSENTIAL command—one that could be rejected with impunity or defied with His acceptance.

Baptists engage in a lot of inconsistent double-talk on loving the Lord, baptism, and keeping his commandments. For example, consider this statement: "Baptism is not essential to salvation, for our churches utterly repudiate the dogma of 'baptismal regeneration'; but it is essential to obedience, since Christ has commanded it. It is also essential to a public confession of Christ before the world, and to membership in the church which is his body. And no true lover of his Lord will refuse these acts of obedience and tokens of affection." (The Standard Manual for Baptist Churches, Edward T. Hiscox, pages 20, 21.)

If that statement says anything, it says that obedience to Christ, a public confession, membership in his body, and being a true lover of the Lord are NOT essential to salvation. They are all expressed in baptism, but they say baptism is not essential to

salvation! They want baptism, but they don't want it. They can't have it both ways.

We quote again:

"I am a Baptist because Baptist churches are the only ones that come up to the following tests of the New Testament churches, namely, they were founded by the Lord Jesus Himself; have had an unbroken perpetuity and a wilderness history; Christ the only Law-giver, Head and Lord; doctrinal conformity to the New Testament model; missionary activities; and have been the sect everywhere spoken against for 1,900 years."

I deny every statement in that paragraph! Christ did not build the Baptist Church; it does not have a history back to the Lord; He is not its head, law-giver or Lord; it does not teach His truth; it has not existed for 1900 years. Baptists teach many false doctrines—hereditary total depravity, salvation by faith only, direct operation of the Holy Spirit, impossibility of apostasy, Premillennialism, mechanical instruments of music—to name a few. They are wrong in origin, organization, plan of salvation, work and worship.

He closes with the following:

"With 'meekness and fear,' and yet with cordial good will and sincere regard for all with whom we differ, we have given an answer to the questions asked as to the once delivered faith. If God should use it to bring one honest inquirer to the unity of faith and the fitly joining of such an one to a body of Christ or for establishing in the faith of some who are already in such a body, we shall be greatly rejoiced; for as John said: 'I have no greater joy than to see God's children walking in the truth'."

This is quite impressive, but we do not believe that his answers are according to "the faith once delivered," or will bring the honest inquirer to the body of Christ. His statements will cause people to reject the plain teaching of the Lord, deny the necessity of obeying His commands, and end up in the Baptist denomination which is not the body of Christ. (To be concluded next time.)

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IS THE RETURN OF CHRIST IMMINENT?

Matthew 24 (Part 2)

Greg Litmer
334 Muntz St.
Hillsboro, OH 45133

Since so much is being made today of the "signs of the times" that are presented in the first section of Matthew 24 (v. 5-34), and how they supposedly apply to our day and time, we need to look at them and notice their fulfillment. Let us begin with verse 5 and notice that there would be many false teachers who would claim to be the Christ. If we look at Acts 8:9 & 10 we can find one such case. That passage reads, "But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city use sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one. To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God." This is one example of the occurrence of just such an event as Matthew 24:5 said would take place. The Hebrew historian, Josephus, tells us that many individuals made a claim like that near the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. (*Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XX, Chap. 5; Chap. 8)

Verse 6 tells us, "And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars ...". Not only does history tell us that there were numerous revolts in the Roman Empire in the time prior to 70 A.D., there were wars among the Jews themselves. (*Wars*, Book IV, Chap. 3)

In verse 7 we read of famines, pestilence, and earthquakes. Acts 11:28 tells us of one such event with the words, "And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be a great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar." In his book, *Wars*, Josephus also tells us of many famines that took place during this period of time. History tells us that during the reign of Nero, (54 - 68 A.D.) numerous and great earthquakes took place.

Verses 9-13 tells us that persecution would be the lot of the church. The book of Acts is filled with accounts of such. Acts 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 14, 16, 17, 19, give us divinely inspired accounts of just the type of things that our Lord spoke of in Matthew 24. The statement of verse 13, "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.", refers not to final judgment, "but to the deliverance of the faithful from the terrible desolation to come upon Jerusalem." (*A Brief Exposition of Matthew 24*, Wayne Chappell)

Still another of the signs is presented in verse 14 where we read, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." The Apostle Paul tells of the fulfillment of this prophecy in a book

written approximately 61 or 62 A.D. In Co. 1:23 Paul writes, "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister." This occurred before the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 A.D. Those who would deny it must deny the words of Paul.

As we move into the remainder of this section of Matthew 24 we find what it was to be like when the event occurred and the time immediately after it. Verse 15 speaks of the Abomination of Desolation which is a reference to Daniel 9. The parallel passage in Luke 21:10-21 is a little easier to understand. That passage says, "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto." The Abomination of Desolation refers to the Roman Armies, with their standards and idolatrous symbols, standing in the holy place of the temple. As we continue on and look at verses 16 - 20 of Matthew 24 we find that when the disciples saw the armies of Rome surrounding the city they should flee. If they were on the housetops they were not even to come down to retrieve their goods. If they were in the fields they were not to return for their possessions. For those with nursing children it would be a difficult time for their flight would be made that much harder. If it occurred in the winter time the harshness of the weather would be a hardship and if it occurred on the Sabbath day the gates of the city would be closed making flight from the city most difficult.

Let us stop for a moment and consider these last few verses. If this were referring to the final judgment what difference would it make if there were nursing children or if it were winter time? What difference would it make if it happened on the Sabbath? What good would it do for people to flee to the mountains if this referred to the second coming and final judgment? The answer to these questions is, "none at all." Isn't it obvious that this is not referring to the return of our Lord in final judgment?

Consider now verse 21. There we read, "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." Josephus tells us what happened in the city of Jerusalem when the siege was taking place. It was truly a period of great tribulation. There was no food, disease ran rampant, parents killed and ate their own children. The Jews were slaughtered in such numbers that their blood ran in the streets. There was great tribulation.

As we look at verse 22 we find that the days "should be shortened", and this refers to the number of days and not the length of the days themselves. The siege was a relatively short one considering the size of the city. It lasted for 134 days (*The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*) and at one point

it was actually suspended for a time as Vespasian was recalled to Rome, His son, Titus, eventually finished the conquest.

Verses 23 - 26 repeats and embellishes upon what Jesus said in verse 5.

Verses 27 - 28 need careful consideration. They read as follows, "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together." Our Lord Jesus came is judgment upon Jerusalem through the Roman armies. The Romans were the "eagles" and Jerusalem was the "carcass". In this way the destruction of Jerusalem is pictured by the image of a group of hungry birds devouring a carcass. Truly a terrible picture and one that would be swift, "as the lightning cometh out of the east."

As we consider verses 29 and 30 we must keep in mind a few things. Number one is that verse 29 tells us that these events will happen "immediately after the tribulation of those days...". Secondly, verse 34 necessarily includes verses also applied to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. Verse 29 is figurative language and is similar to language used in the Old Testament with reference to the fall of nations and rulers. When Ezekiel described the fall of Egypt in Ezekiel 32:7-8 he said, "And when I shall put thee out, I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light. All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee, and set darkness upon thy land, saith the Lord God." The similarities in the language used is obvious and as it was used to describe the fall of Egypt, so is it used to describe the fall of Jerusalem and Judaism. The power of the judgment of Jesus, executed through the Romans, shows clearly His exalted position.

In verse 31 the word "angels" is used in its literal sense, meaning simply messengers. With the organized resistance of Judaism removed, the progress of the gospel would be made that much easier.

This section of Matthew 24 closes with the parable of the fig tree and with the exhortation to the apostles to read the signs and know that the end, the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, was near.

These truly were signs, things that would precede an actual event and would serve as a warning to the disciples of Christ. But as we have seen, they have been fulfilled and do not apply to the second coming. "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only."

Primary Sources

1. *A Brief Exposition of Matthew 24*, Wayne Chappell
2. *God's Prophetic Word*, Foy E. Wallace, Jr.
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5. *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*

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CONVICTION OR CLOSE-MINDEDNESS?

David Holder
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If there is one thing the world needs, and especially the church needs, it is people who have conviction. There is, however, a vast difference between having convictions and being close-minded. Many people claim to have deep convictions about certain things when in reality they are close-minded. The dictionary definition of conviction is, "The state of being convinced or persuaded; a fixed or strong belief" (*American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*). A conviction about a particular matter will lead a person to a continuous search for truth. When the truth is found either the person will change his conviction because he was wrong, or his conviction will be strengthened because it was in harmony with truth. Conversely, a person with a closed mind will not search for truth. His mind is set. He will not entertain the thought that he might be wrong or that there was something he overlooked. This is not conviction—this is close-mindedness.

An example will help to illustrate the distinction between conviction and close-mindedness. There are many people in the religious world who sincerely believe that the use of instrumental music in worship is acceptable to God. If these people have conviction about this matter, they will "prove all things" by the word of God. Their search will lead them to (1) reject instrumental music in worship as unauthorized, or (2) be strengthened in their conviction that this practice is acceptable to God. A person, on the other hand, who is close-minded about instrumental music in worship will not even deal with the fact that he might be wrong. He will not study the matter or attempt to prove his practice by a correct use of scripture. This person will continue to use instrumental music, but he does not have true convictions about it—he has a closed mind.

Members of the Lord's church will be quick to identify the delineation between conviction and close-mindedness in the above example. What is sad is that too many Christians do not identify the problem in their own thinking. These people get something into their minds that they believe is right and good or is wrong and sinful, then they close their minds to the truth. They will never entertain the notion that they might be wrong. What is even worse is that some brethren close their minds in matters of expediency, attempt to bind their judgment on others, and deceive themselves into thinking that they are people of deep convictions. When Stephen made his brilliant defense of the gospel in Acts 7, Luke records that the response of the people was that they "stopped their ears" (7:57). These people did not even want to hear the truth. Their

minds were set and they wanted to hear nothing that might threaten their beliefs. They did not, however, have conviction. They had minds, and as a result ears, that were closed to the truth. Some brethren today have "stopped their ears" to the truth. They say they have conviction, but actually they are only close-minded.

Christians today need to learn the difference between conviction and close-mindedness. A person with conviction will never cease studying to prove himself by the word of God. The close-minded person will not search for truth. Why should he? His mind is already made up as to what he will find. May we always be people of deep convictions. Let us never be people with closed minds.

GOOD INTENTIONS

Bill Fairchild, Jr.
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Deciding to do something is profitless without action. Resolution to do anything is without benefit unless we do it. Someone once wrote that "the road to hell is paved with good intentions." There is certainly a great deal of truth to be found in that statement.

Most of us at one time or another have made a determination to perform some act, do some deed, and never get around to doing it. Oh, our intention was to do it, but we did not carry it through. An intention "signifies a course of action that one proposes to follow." It is "a plan of action; a design; an aim that guides action." The word "intention" comes from a Latin word meaning "to stretch out."

We find that in more instances than many of us would care to admit, there have been good intentions, but we just have not "stretched out" far enough to grasp them. The writer of Hebrews in chapter 4 describes the quickening power and the penetrating effects that God's word can produce. "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). God knows our every action, thought and word. He knows why we do what we do. This passage acknowledges the existence of intentions and it tells us what we really are as God sees us.

We may have perfectly good intentions of doing some things we know to be right; things we know need to be done. The problem lies in our lack of motivation to carry out those intentions. No doubt, there are several factors which can and often do hinder us from fulfilling these aims, but we should not allow them to come between us and the accomplishing of those intentions.

When a man and a woman enter into the marriage relationship, they intend to make their marriage a

good marriage and one that will last. But with the passing of time, the honeymoon ends and these intentions have a way of fading out. The husband intends to tell his wife today how much he loves her, but somehow forgets. The wife plans on getting her husband just a little something to show her love or to fix him that favorite meal he likes, but other things come up and she just doesn't have the time. In both cases, the intentions were there, and were good. The only problem, they weren't carried out.

Many individuals aware of the truth concerning their lost condition, their need for Jesus Christ and their personal responsibility to obey the gospel, fully intend to do what they know to be right, but in most cases, just never get around to it. They are almost Christians, but not quite. How sad that they must stand before God on the day of judgment, knowing they had opportunity, knowing they could have done what was right; intending one day to do it, but running out of time! Paul writes in 2 Cor. 6:2, "... behold, now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation." If you're not a child of God and you know what you must do, what are you waiting for?

There are those within the church, who at one time were faithful to their Savior, but who have, with the passing of time, allowed themselves to become entangled in the world. They know where they are and what they need to do, they intend to come back to the Lord one day because they have said so. Question: If they know—why not come back even now? Some simply run out of time or become so hardened to the truth and so attached to the ways of the world, that truth no longer has any effect upon them. Hebrews 3:12,13 reads, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." There will be many souls who had good intentions of straightening out their lives, but who didn't stretch themselves out enough to fulfill them.

Many Christians, if not most, could be doing a whole lot more in the Lord's work and in many cases have intended to become more active, but they just haven't gotten around to it yet. How many times have we intended to go by and see some weak and erring brother or sister? How many times have we intended to call or go by and visit with one of our number that is

sick, or in a rest home? How many times have we intended to just sit down and talk with a loved one or a friend about their need of Jesus? How many times have we intended after hearing a soul-stirring sermon to act positively and make any needed changes? How many times have we intended to begin studying the word of God more and to become more active in His service? ... But just haven't gotten around to it. I think we all get the message. The question now arises, "What are we going to do about it?"

The reaction of some will be, "I'm going to do better next week"; others will say "I'm going to do better now." Most will actually purpose to do better. All the resolution in the world won't help us if we don't act. Our Lord said, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (Jno. 9:4). We need, right now, to be doing the Lord's will in each of our lives. Let's make our good intentions realities.

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NEW CONGREGATION

FORT ERIE, ONTARIO, CANADA — As early as June of this year, a faithful church will begin meeting in Fort Erie, Ontario. This is just over the Peace Bridge from Buffalo, NY, a gateway into Ontario. Brian V. Sullivan, after concluding close to eight years of

work at Bancroft, Ontario will be relocating to work with the brethren at Fort Erie. At present, due to the continued groundwork effort of brethren from Jordan, especially that of Bill Hall and Roy Diestelkamp, there are some 5 Christians there. With the arrival of brother Sullivan that will increase the number to seven. In addition, there will be one other adult and eleven children who will

be assembling together. Others may come as the preparatory work continues. If you are planning a trip to Ontario where fuel cost are less than the U.S. and where your dollar is at a premium, why not plan on dropping in to worship with us. Exact meeting location has not been established at this writing, but if you would write to either Brian Sullivan or Barry Burns, in care of Box 566, Fort Erie, Ontario L2A 9Z9, we will forward the information. A later news release will give notification of the exact times of services and location.

HARRY PERSAUD, 5 Elm Ct. South Orange, NJ 07079 — After four and a half years of work at West End in Louisville, KY, I am moving the first of August to help form a new congregation in the Voxhall, NJ area. This is located about 20 miles from East Orange. Three families will provide the nucleus of this work, two of them coming from the congregation at East Orange where I was in a gospel meeting in May. The church at East Orange is supportive of this work, I have a special interest in the work in this area since I worshipped for four years with the church at Fairlawn, NJ just after obeying the gospel in New York City. At the present I am in need of \$1,200 a month additional support plus about \$1,200 for moving expenses. Those interested in this work may inquire of Paul M. Caldwell, Sr. who preaches at 18 Ridgewood Ave., East Orange, NJ 07017. Phone (201) 743-1778 or 675-3585. Or you may call me at (201) 761-0871.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: I have known Harry Persaud for the last 6 years and have had occasion to observe his work closely. The Expressway church has helped in his support at West End and has much confidence in him and his work. Brother Persaud is Guyanese by nationality and was of the Hindu religion before obeying the gospel. The work in New Jersey is hard but is making much progress. It has been my privilege to conduct a number of meetings in that state over the last 30 years. I know of no man better suited to help the cause in that area than Harry Persaud. It is my prayer that faithful brethren will rally to support this good man in this needy field. CWA)

CHARLES N. RIEBER, JR., Chapel Hill, NC — A new church has been formed in Chapel Hill and they have asked me to preach for them. My plans are to move to NC in early June. At the present time the church is small and will not be able to provide support. I am anticipating that I will need about \$1,200 a month. The church has about ten members. Until recently it has met in a home at 415 Overland Dr., Chapel Hill, NC 27514. The phone number is (919) 967-5224. It is presently meeting in the meeting room of an apartment complex. Plans are to locate between Chapel Hill and Durham. Duke University is at Durham and the University of North Carolina is at Chapel Hill. This will be the only conservative work in either of these two towns. I am convinced that there is a definite need and that the brethren are willing to work. The fields are "white unto harvest." Can you help me in the work? The following men are acquainted with me and my work: Joe Fitch (713) 846-5936, Roger Hendricks (512) 364-4609, and Harland Huntoon (512) 654-0086.

RICHARD C. SIMS, Rt. 4, Box 37-B, Ruston, LA 71270. In January I began working with the Hwy. 80 church in Ruston. At present the work is going well and I have all of my support. However, one of the churches helping me has asked that I try and find someone or congregation to replace a portion of what they are now providing. They are now sending \$550 monthly toward my support. If another church could take over \$200 or \$300 a month of this amount it would relieve the burden they are under and insure adequate support for me and my family. I would appreciate hearing from anyone in a position to help us. Phone: (318) 255-7024.

ROBERT BOTTORFF, P.O. Box 87 Pirtleville, AZ 85626. In February of 1981 moved to the Douglas AZ area to work with the Westside church. The church here is small with six members and not self-supporting. With a wife and two children I will need \$1,000 a month outside support. I would like to hear from anyone who would be interested in helping in this great work.

MIKE REIDELBACH, Vanduser, MO 63784. At the present time the church here is not self-supporting being able only to contribute \$90 per week toward my support. If you could be of help please contact me at the above address. References are the elders of the MacDill Ave. church in Tampa, FL as well as James Needham who preaches for the Palm River church in Tampa.

BENTON R. GRAVES, Rt. 1, Box 169, Ridgeway, VA 24148. I seldom write a report to the papers but I thought it was time to let

the people know that there is a faithful congregation of God's people in Ridgeway, VA. Ridgeway is just off Hwy. 220 the main route between Roanoke, VA and Greensboro, NC. The church here is one of the older congregations in this area that took a stand against institutionalism. I have labored with this good church for almost twelve years. We are at peace but certainly not dead. We are self-supporting. Attendance averages about 110. We have two or three meetings a year and mail out 2,700 bulletins each month in the community. At present we help support four other men in other areas. If you should be passing through the area please stop and visit with us. Phone (703) 956-3835.

JAMES A. BRUCE, 108 Birdie Hills Rd., St. Peters, MO 63376. It seems that we are getting off to a good start here at St. Peters this year. So far we have had eleven responses. For the first time we are now self-supporting. This year I have had meetings with the faithful brethren at South Haven, MS, and with the fine brethren at Warrenton, MO. During these meetings there were three baptisms. When in the area, come and worship with us at 108 Birdie Hills Rd. in St. Peters. For directions call: 278-2666 or 272-8002.

RAY CORNS, Gibsonburg, OH 43431. I conducted a meeting for the Corning, OH church April 26 — May 3rd. It was a good meeting with many non-Christians present. Bro. Jeffrey Shaner is the part-time preacher. Corning is located in the southeastern edge of Perry County and adjacent to Perry County is Morgan County. Morgan County has two churches that we know were established in 1833 -East Branch and Wolf Creek. East Branch no longer exists but Wolf Creek has some sixty-five members and two elders, Harman Thomas and Donald Sands, Bro. Sands lives in a house that James A. Garfield stayed in while preaching at Wolf Creek.

HARBINGERS FOR SALE

JERRY PARKS, 4437 South Sixth St., Louisville, KY 40214. I am trying to find a buyer for a set of Millennial Harbingers. It is a new set including the index volume. The set is complete and the price is \$300. I can be reached at the above address or phone (502) 368-9173.

PREACHERS NEEDED

DUNEDIN, FL — The brethren in Dunedin, FL are presently seeking a full-time evangelist. Dunedin is a medium sized community generally considered a part of the Tampa — St. Petersburg area. The work is small, but we have a nice building and can accommodate growth. The climate appears to be ready for growth. The brethren are presently providing \$110.00 weekly wages, and additional support would have to be obtained elsewhere. Contact Jack Thomas at (813) 988-1222.

MINERAL SPRINGS, NC — The church here is looking for a full-time preacher. We are located about 10 miles from Monroe, NC on Hwy. 75. We have about 40 in attendance and about 30 members. We are not completely self-supporting and are located in a rural community that has need for much personal work. Contact Michael A. Helms at P.O. Box 263, Mineral Springs, NC 28108. Or phone: (704) 843-3715.

WORK IN ARGENTINA

CARLOS A. CAPELLI, Casilla #83, Jose' C. Paz, Buenos Aires, Argentina. It is autumn here and I give you my greetings! I was in Mendoza in February and March helping Bro. Fernando Venegas in the Lord's work there. We are happy to report that there were 2 baptized there making a total of 6 Christians. At Jose' C. Paz we are happy to report that one precious soul was added to our spiritual family. We continue to do well and have peace and unity. The potential for soul winning in Buenos Aires and the surrounding areas overwhelms me. Argentina is ripe for the gospel. No one knows that better than the preachers working in this great country of 30 million souls. The fields are white, the workers few, but the outlook for the work in Argentina is changing for the better.

INFORMATION ABOUT LYNCHBURG, VA

WILSON ADAMS, 317 Trinkle Ave. N.E., Roanoke, VA 24012. For the past two years a faithful family from Lynchburg has been traveling to Roanoke twice a week to worship with us (a distance of 50 miles one way). Due to rising gasoline costs they can no longer come on Wednesdays. It was thought wise to begin a class in Lynchburg in their home on Thursday evenings and to try and make contact with others in the area with the possibility of starting

a work there later on. Lynchburg has a population of 75,000, is predominately Baptist (Jerry Falwell makes his home there), and is a very morally conservative city. It would seem to me that with the right start a good work could be done there. Do you know of anyone (friends, relatives, associates) who live in the Lynchburg area? Or do you know of a young man who would like to preach and who would be willing to move there and help devote his time to getting a work started? If so, please contact Bro. Larry Powell at 1203 Eastridge Cir., Lynchburg, VA 24502. Or phone (804) 237-3445.

FLORIDA COLLEGE SUMMER COURSES IN KENTUCKY

The Dean's office of Florida College has announced two Bible related courses for which credit will be given.

Danville, Kentucky — Restoration History will be taught by Steve Wolfgang July 20-24 on the campus of Centre College in Danville. The course will consist of 2-3 hours of instruction each morning with afternoons spent in visiting a number of locations in central Kentucky of significance to the Restoration Movement. Steve Wolfgang is eminently qualified in this field. He has completed his coursework for his PhD degree in history from Vanderbilt University and is currently at work on his dissertation, "A Social History of Churches of Christ, 1900-1940."

Bowling Green, Kentucky — Scheme of Redemption will be taught by Homer Hailey on the campus of Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green July 27-31. Homer Hailey is well known and loved as a careful student of the Bible. He taught a course in this subject for many years at Florida College where he was Vice-President of the college, teacher and head of the Bible department. Now retired from full-time college work, Hailey resides in Tucson, Arizona, does ex-

tensive gospel meeting work and has just completed a book dealing with the subject of his class at Western. Further information about these courses may be obtained by writing to: Registrar's Office, Florida College, Temple Terrace, FL 33617. Each of these courses may be taken for one semester hour of college credit or as an audit.

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(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)

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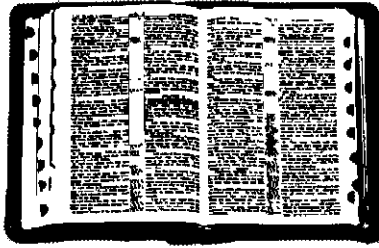
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SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES



"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 XXII

AUGUST, 1981

NUMBER 8

THINK ON
THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips
P.O. Box 17244
Tampa, Florida 33612



PRAYING AND SINGING TO JESUS (2)

This is part two of a reply to an article by the same title as this one by brother Hoyt H. Houchen, which appeared in the February, 1981 issue of *Searching The Scriptures*. For a better understanding of this article I suggest that you read again part one which appeared in the last issue of this paper.

I consider brother Houchen an honorable man whom I love and respect. I am not making any personal attack upon him, and I trust all will understand this. I simply do not agree with his article on the matter of praying to Jesus in this present age. He believes Christians should pray and sing to Jesus as well as to the Father in Heaven. I do not believe that Christians may scripturally pray to Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ Indispensable To Prayer

I do not understand why one would want to pray to Jesus instead of the Father because not one word uttered to the Father is acceptable without Christ. He is in every prayer of any kind that is uttered to the Father. It is by virtue of his blood that we have opened unto us "a new and living way" that we may have boldness to enter into the holiest (Heb. 10:19, 20).

But now tell us, if we pray directly to Jesus, what part does the Father have in that prayer? and what part does the Holy Spirit have? Who is the mediator? the high priest and advocate through whom we go in prayer to Jesus Christ? This will not be an easy

question to answer while holding the "praying to Jesus" view.

The Blood of Jesus Christ

A blood sacrifice is required by God in order to be able to come unto Him. Every prayer uttered to the Father must recognize Christ and the work he did and continues to do to make prayer possible.

The Father recognizes Christ as God (Heb. 1:8). God sent His Son into the world "that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9). The blood of Christ accomplished all that God intended. By the blood of Christ we are justified (Rom. 5:9); redeemed: received the remission of sins (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; Rev. 5:9); obtained peace (Col. 1:20; Eph. 2:13, 14); sanctified (Heb. 10:10, 12, 13; 13:12); cleansed from sin (1 John 1:7); purchased us (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 1:19); reconciled us unto God (Rom. 5:10; Col. 1:21, 22; 2 Cor. 5:18, 19). All this is essential before we can pray unto God. To deny it is to deny the power of the blood of Christ. Christ died that he might offer his blood as high priest for our sins (Heb. 9:7, 12, 14), and appear in heaven in the presence of God for us (Heb. 9:24, 25).

Christ As High Priest

The function of an high priest: "For every high priest taken from among men is ordained FOR MEN in THINGS PERTAINING TO GOD, that he may offer gifts and sacrifices for sins" (Heb. 5:1).

God appointed the high priest, not man (Heb. 5:4-6). The priesthood being changed, "there is made of necessity a change also of the law" and Christ will continue as high priest because he "hath an unchangeable priesthood" (Heb. 7:12, 24). As high priest Christ makes intercession to God for us (Heb. 7:25). He has gone into heaven, "now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb. 9:24).

With all this information before us regarding the necessity and function of an high priest, being "ordained FOR MEN in things pertaining to God," how can we pray to Jesus who IS the high priest? If there

must be a high priest (Jesus Christ) between men and the Father in heaven, why would there not be a necessity for an high priest between men and the Son Jesus Christ in heaven? Those advocating praying to Jesus have an impossible problem, seeing that in the priesthood of Christ He is a priest for ever, and has an unchangeable priesthood.

Christ As Mediator

A mediator is one who stands between two parties who are alienated and reconciles them. He must be able to relate to both parties. "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:18).

Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon says of **mediator**: "one who intervenes between two, either in order to make or restore peace and friendship, or to form a compact, or for ratifying a covenant; a medium of communication, arbitrator. . . i.e. every mediator, whoever acts as mediator, does not belong to one party but to two or more, Gal. iii.20." (p. 401).

The law of Moses was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator, that is, by Moses. "Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one" (Gal. 3:19, 20).

We know that a mediator presupposes at least two parties. He acts not as one of the parties, but between them to communicate or arbitrate the difficulty between them, God speaks to man through His Son Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:1, 2). Jesus says the words he speaks are from the Father (John 14:10). He further says that "whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak. (John 12:49, 50).

Now if God speaks today **ONLY** through His Son Jesus Christ, and by no other means, why should we think that we can speak to the Father without the mediator He selected?

Revelation is God **speaking** to man; prayer is man speaking to God. Prayer and revelation have a strong resemblance in their involvement of Christ between the Father and man. In both directions there must be a mediator, and Christ is that mediator, selected by God.

The matter of prayer and a mediator is very explicit in the New Testament. 1 Timothy 2:1-4 exhorts that supplication, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men. Verse 5: "For there is one God. . ." The **ONE GOD** of 1 Timothy 2:5 is the same **GOD** of Galatians 3:20.

"For there is **ONE GOD**, and **ONE MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD AND MEN**, the man **CHRIST JESUS**." As God speaks to men **THROUGH** this **MEDIATOR**, men have no recourse but to speak to the **ONE GOD THROUGH** this mediator, **CHRIST JESUS**, whom God has chosen.

The one and only mediator between God and men is the **MAN** Christ Jesus; "who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (vs.6). Christ is the

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only person of the Godhead to become man; he was God in the flesh (John 1:14). The only man ever to be deity was Jesus Christ. As both man and God he is the **ONLY** perfect mediator between God and men. No other person either of deity or humanity can fill the place of mediator between God and men.

Christ As Advocate

"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1). Here again we have Jesus Christ filling a role between the Father and men who have sinned. In this case he is advocate.

W. E. Vine's *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* says of *advocate*: ". . . It was used in a court of justice to denote a legal assistant, counsel for the defence, and advocate; then, generally, one who pleads another's cause, an intercessor, advocate, as in 1 John 2:1, of the Lord Jesus." (p. 208).

PROOF TEXTS EXAMINED

I would like to pay my respects to the proof texts offered as authority for praying to Jesus by brother Houchen. There are others I have read, but I do not believe they constitute prayers in the sense we use them under the New Testament dispensation today. It is necessary to understand what we mean by the term "prayer."

Young's Analytical Concordance lists eleven different words or combination of words in the New Testament that are translated "prayer" or "pray." The combination of all these terms may be defined as "the expressions of the heart addressed to a Supreme Being." Statements made to Christ while he was upon earth, or conversations between Christ and others after ascending to the Father, do not constitute prayers of the nature we are discussing. If so, we have a body of evidence from apostles, Jews, Gentiles, good men, evil men, demons, etc., which are recorded as having conversations with Christ. I know of no one who would classify all these as "prayers" to Jesus.

1. *John 20:28*: Thomas addressed Christ, "My Lord and my God." If this is an example of praying to Jesus, why is not the statement of Judas Iscariot a prayer? When he came with the mob to arrest him, he said to Jesus, "Hail, master" (Matt. 26:49). I do not believe either statements addressed to Christ were prayers. One was a statement of recognition and the other a statement of betrayal.

Peter told Christ to depart from him. Was that a prayer? "When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke 5:8). There were many, many statements like these by the apostles and others when Jesus was present and talked with them. That is not prayer. These were two-way conversations between Christ and those who talked with him.

2. *Acts 7:59*: This records the "prayer" of Stephen as he was being stoned to death by the Jews. He said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." There are special miraculous circumstances surrounding this scene that make it an unusual setting for the statement made by Stephen. If I were in the same situation as Stephen was and saw what he saw, I suppose I would speak to Jesus just as he did. But in the absence of this miraculous setting at any subsequent time, we have no evidence that this was ever repeated in history, especially in Biblical history.

Brother Houchen quotes from Albert Barnes on *Acts 7:59*: "And this shows that it **is right** to worship the Lord Jesus, and pray to him. For if Stephen was *inspired*, it settles the question. The example of an inspired man in such circumstances is a safe and correct example..."

First, inspiration did not govern the CONDUCT of the man. Peter was inspired, but Paul rebuked him to

the face because "he walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel" and "he was to be blamed" (Gal. 2:11, 14). Inspired men were only infallible when they spoke for the Lord.

Second, where is the evidence that Stephen was inspired? "Being full of the Holy Ghost" (*Acts 6:5*) does not mean that he was inspired. We are to be "filled with the Spirit" (*Eph. 5:18*), but that does not mean that we are to be inspired.

Third, Stephen's "circumstances" were very unlike any since that time. This unusual setting cannot establish an example of praying to Jesus today.

The worship to Jesus is not the real question. The issue is PRAYING to Jesus without mediator, high priest or advocate. The Lord's supper is worship, but that does not mean that we worship the Father and the Holy Spirit by remembering them when we eat and drink the bread and the fruit of the vine on the Lord's day.

3. *Matthew 28:9*: "And they came and took hold of his feet, and worshipped him." "Praying and singing are acts of worship; therefore, we are authorized to pray and sing to Jesus." This is brother Houchen's argument. I cannot see the logic that taking hold of the feet of Jesus and worshipping him has anything to do with praying and singing to Jesus as "acts of worship." Are we to understand from "worshipping" Jesus that "praying and singing to Jesus" are always implied? This passage does not establish praying to Jesus by any stretch of the imagination.

In *Matthew 15:25* the woman of Canaan came "and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me." Now since she worshipped him, she must have sung and prayed to Jesus. I don't believe it!

4. *2 Corinthians 12:8*: This verse has Christ in the 3rd person, not the person addressed. Paul had related to the Corinthians several things, among which was his "thorn in the flesh." He had besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from him. Since this was a matter of history, how much time elapsed between his request to the Lord, and Paul's statement that he would glory in his infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon him we do not know. Paul's "prayer" to the "Lord" was answered directly in WORDS. If this is an example of praying to Jesus, it is also an example of Jesus replying directly to us in his own WORDS. That which proves too much, proves nothing!

Both Stephen and Paul "saw" Christ before they spoke to him. I think we had better wait until we "see him personally" before we begin to address him in prayer.

5. *Revelation 5:9, 11, 12*: This refers to singing praise to the Lamb in the heavenly scene by the four beasts and four and twenty elders and the angels. The New Testament teaches that we may sing and make melody in our hearts to the Lord, but it does not authorize

praying to Jesus. The Book of Revelation is a book of symbols and often statements and actions are depicted that are not literal and real actions that we should do today. This passage does not prove praying to Jesus.

6. *Revelation 22:20*: "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." These are the words of the Holy Spirit, not the words of a man praying. This is hardly an example for us to pray to Jesus today.

7. *John 14:14*: This is said to be a command from Jesus to sing and pray to him. But verses 13 and 14 say to "ASK IN MY NAME." If the expression, "I will do it" means the prayer is to be addressed to Jesus, then explain verse 26 of the same chapter: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom THE FATHER WILL SEND IN MY NAME. . ." and *John 15:26*: "But when the Comforter is come, whom I WILL SEND UNTO YOU FROM THE FATHER..."

In *John 16:15* Jesus said: "All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you." He told of his leaving and their sorrow, and his return and their joy which no man could take from them. In verse 23 he said: "And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." I understand that the context of this statement concerns his going away and returning to them. But before they had "asked nothing in my name." Now they were to "ask the father in my name" and He would give it to them.

8. *Acts 2:21*: "Calling upon the name of the Lord" is here used to prove praying and singing to Jesus. This verse is from *Joel 2:32* and is found in *Romans 10:13-21*; *Acts 9:14*; *22:16*. The last passage could not mean prayer because Saul had been praying for three days. The expression means obedience to the gospel. So also do *1 Corinthians 1:2* and *2 Timothy 2:22*. I am surprised that these verses were used to prove praying to Jesus.

9. *Ephesians 5:19* and *Colossians 3:16*: These verses refer to singing to the Lord, but they offer no proof that we may pray to Jesus Christ. To the contrary, both passages teach that we are to pray to the Father by or in the name of Christ.

I pray to our Father in heaven, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that brethren will not press this issue to the dividing of brethren. Praying to Jesus needs far more study than is evidenced by those who are advocating the practice. The nature of deity and the nature of prayer require a sacrifice of blood for remission of sins, an high priest, a mediator and Jesus Christ is all of that. There is no question in anyone's mind that we all can pray to the Father in the name of Christ. But all these things are lacking when we try to pray to Jesus because there is no one to be mediator in the light of *1 Timothy 2:5, 6*. Think on these things!

The Rader-Polk Debate

on
"Limited Benevolence"

This is a written debate between Donnie Rader of Louisville, Kentucky and John T. Polk, II of Cornersville, Tennessee. There are 12 articles contained in the debate with extensive use of charts. This is a book which you will want to study in your home and keep as a reference book. The book is well bound in plastic comb binding, so that all the material may be easily referenced.

Proposition 1: "Resolved the Scriptures teach that in benevolence, Churches of Christ may relieve only saints from their treasures."

Affirm: Donnie Rader

Deny: John T. Polk

Proposition 2: "Resolved the Scriptures teach that the local congregation as directed and overseen by its elders (*Phil. 1:1*), is obligated in benevolence to saints and non-saints."

Affirm: John T. Polk II

Deny: Donnie V. Rader

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Editorial

Connie W. Adams

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"WHERE DOES THE BIBLE SAY NOT TO?"

Is the silence of God permissive or prohibitive? When the word of God says nothing regarding a practice, are we authorized to act? Or does his silence mean that he does not want us to act? Are we to assume that God expressly stated all he wanted us to know so that we might do all he wanted done?

The Question Viewed Historically

It is my conviction from what I have read of the Reformation Movement that it foundered over this very issue. When Martin Luther revolted against the abuses of Roman Catholicism, the question arose as to just exactly what practices were to be retained in church organization, worship and doctrine. He took the position that whatever was not expressly forbidden was permitted in doctrine and practice. This was the basis for the continuation of infant baptism and church membership plus a host of other practices which Lutheranism holds in common with Catholicism.

The Swiss reformer, Ulrich Zwingli, while more concerned with politics and moral reform than Luther, yet enunciated an entirely different premise on which to build. He argued that we may retain in divine service only what is authorized. It is reported that when the two reformers met to discuss their respective views that Luther commented "you have a different spirit than we do." Indeed, these two views are poles apart. While we would not endorse all that Zwingli taught or permitted (for he was not faithful to his own preaching), we do believe that he was correct in his view of the basis of authority for religious practices.

In the nobly inspired efforts to restore pure, apostolic Christianity, these two opposite views were to play a great part. The plea to "speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where the Bible is silent" was powerful and struck the structure of denominationalism like a thunderbolt. The slogan gave popular expression to the injunction of Peter, "if any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11). Infant baptism, relating experiences as evidence of pardon, the clergy system, synods, councils, presbyteries, and a host of other cherished practices fell before this two-edged sword.

The cry for greater organization than a local church through which to evangelize, edify or relieve the needy was to strain this principle to the breaking point with

many. Some insisted they still believed it was valid but placed an entirely different meaning on it. When the missionary society fever reached a national level and opposition was mounted, the promoters asked "where does the Bible say not to?" When instrumental music began to spread and the opposition asked where the oracles of God authorized it, they were confronted with what came to be regarded as the question to end all questions: "Where does the Bible say not to?" Choirs, fairs, ice cream socials, rummage sales, ad infinitum, all came to be defended by the one question "where does the Bible say not to?"

The Current Scene

The survivors of the wars over missionary societies, instrumental music and other relics of denominationalism have once more run aground over the issue of what constitutes scriptural authority. Sponsoring churches, church supported camps, schools, relief societies, kitchens, fellowship halls, "family life centers" (complete with gymnasiums), diet clubs, puppet shows, ad naseum, all are defended with the question "where does the Bible say not to?"

Which Approach Is Right?

Is the silence of God permissive or prohibitive? It does not take a Solomon to understand what the word of God teaches along this line. Even in the Old Testament God warned "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you" (Deut. 4:2). They were not to read between the lines (the silence of God) but to be content with what was stated on the line. John wrote "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God" (2 Jno. 9). Paul said that we are not to think above or beyond "that which is written" (1 Cor. 4:6). "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle" (2 Thes. 2:15).

Divine authority is expressed in one of three ways: (1) direct statement or command; (2) approved apostolic example; and (3) necessary conclusion. These three means of expressing what God appoints may be given in either general or specific terms. When God has left something general we dare not demand a specific. When he has specified we dare not generalize. In recent years a number of well known brethren have ruled out approved apostolic examples and necessary conclusions as valid means by which divine authority is expressed. The limiting of the Lord's Supper to the first day of the week (Acts 20:7) rests upon recognition of an approved apostolic example. The frequency of its observance on that day rests upon a necessary conclusion from the language of the passage. We do not bind a method of "going" to preach the gospel since the Lord gave the command in general terms. He said "go" without any specification as to how to go. He authorized us to "teach" without restricting us to one specific method of imparting instruction. He specified the elements to be used in the Lord's Supper, and by

example, the day on which it is to be done. He specified what is to be taught (the gospel) after we "go." He specified the act of baptism (burial) but not where the water is pooled (river, pond, lake, baptistery). He specified "singing" in praise. He specified what is to be sung (psalms, hymns and spiritual songs). He specified where the melody is to be made (in the heart).

He was specific as to the organization through which the work of the church is done. That is the local church with its bishops and deacons (Acts 14:23; Phil. 1:1). He taught by both direct statement and example that Christians are to assemble to accommodate a number of scriptural objectives, but did not specify the place where such gathering occurs. Aids and expedients must be just that—aids and expedients. They must not introduce a different act from that authorized. They simply assist in carrying out what God authorized.

The silence of God is not permissive—it is **prohibitive**. Consider the matter of the priesthood of Christ. Heb. 8:4 says "For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest." Why could Jesus not be a priest on earth? God had specified the tribe of Levi from which all priests, according to the law, were to come. "For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evidence that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood" (Heb. 7:13-14). Why could he not be a priest according to the law? Because the silence of God did not permit it. The silence of God prohibited it. The statement "of which tribe (Judah) Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood" forever settled the matter. Since God was silent concerning priests from the tribe of Judah, and since he had authorized only those of the tribe of Levi, it could then be argued that the silence of God prohibited priests of the tribe of Judah. An exception was not even made for the Son of God.

My friends, the question all of us should raise touching any practice under study is "What saith the scriptures?" We must assume that God knew what he wanted us to do and that he has expressed his will in understandable terms. Once we begin to trade on the silence of God in the scriptures we have opened a gate through which human wisdom may ultimately supplant the wisdom of the Almighty to our own everlasting ruin.

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GALATIANS 6:10 IN CONTEXT

or

Paul's Efforts To Persuade The Galatians

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Much has been written and spoken on this passage. The efforts of some brethren to wrest this passage will soon equal (if not already), similar efforts to distort Jas. 1:27. By the time some among us get through inserting everything into these two verses which the Holy Spirit saw fit to leave out, the verses are almost as long as the letters themselves! These frantic and unscholarly attempts to get the church into Gal. 6:10 and church-supported human institutions into Jas. 1:27 are reminiscent of efforts put forth by digressive brethren in the past to get Missionary Societies into the great commission, and instrumental music into passages authorizing us to sing. The sad thing is that some among us now are too young to remember the former efforts, or haven't taken the time to learn about them.

But, faithful and able men have also written and spoken effectively about these and other passages of Scripture in their proper context. This humble effort is not just to show v. 10 in its relation to other verses in Galatians 6, but the entire sixth chapter in its relation to the rest of the book. Though some of Paul's efforts to persuade the Galatian brethren may overlap, or be repeated more than once, I will attempt to list them by chapters for simplicity's sake.

Chapter One

Paul's first effort to persuade the Galatians was on the authenticity of his apostleship (v. 1). He emphasizes this again in the second chapter (vv. 1-9). This fact alone should have offset all the efforts of false teachers to "bewitch" the Galatians, but then there have always been those who were not satisfied with apostolic authority, and who will perish "in the gainsaying of Core(Korah)" (Jude 11).

Next, Paul expresses amazement ("I marvel", v. 6), to get the attention of these deluded brethren. Jesus "marveled" at the faith of one (Mt. 8:10), and the unbelief of others (Mk. 6:6). When those who know the word of the Lord become utterly amazed at our conduct, it is time to examine ourselves to see if we are still "in the faith" (2 Cor. 13:5).

Further, Paul tries to dissuade the Galatians from following their present course by emphasizing the danger of following men (1:7; 2:4, 5; 3:1; 4:17; 5:7-10, 12 and 6:12, 13). This sobering fact is followed by reminding them that the wrath of God ("let him be accursed", vv. 8, 9), will be executed upon those who teach or follow "another gospel", which is not really another gospel but rather a perversion of the true.

Chapter 2

Besides his apostleship which we have already included in Chapter 1, Paul resorts to describing an incident wherein Peter was not faithful to his apostleship, thereby condemning the very thing being practiced by the Galatians (2:11-21). Breaking this passage down, Paul shows that we are not justified by the law (v. 16), that we condemn ourselves by an effort to "build again the things which I destroyed," and that we "frustrate the grace of God" by trying to find righteousness in the law of Moses (v. 21).

Chapter 3

Paul continues his effort to persuade the Galatians by reminding them that they had benefited by receiving the Spirit (v. 2), and also because others had received the same Spirit "by the hearing of faith" (vv. 2-5). He also tries to prevent their journey into apostasy by showing them that any suffering which they had done for the gospel's sake would now be in vain (v. 4). In v. 10, Paul tries to impress the Galatian brethren further by calling their attention to the inconsistency of trying to follow the works of the law without accepting the curse of the law.

Then, the apostle endeavors to point out the identity of the true children of Abraham (vv. 8, 9; 14-29). If the fleshly Jew is to benefit from the promises made to Abraham, proper acceptance of the Gentiles as children of Abraham must be believed and practiced. By excluding the Gentiles, the Jews were excluding themselves from the inheritance promised to Abraham's seed.

Next, Paul attempts what is probably his most difficult task—that of persuading the Jews that God gave the law only as a temporary measure (vv. 19-25). The Jew, and those Gentiles influenced by them, would hardly accept the fact that they stood to gain more by the termination of the law, than they would by its continuance.

Chapter Four

Now, Paul begins contrasting the qualities of bondage and freedom to bring the Galatians to their senses. They are shown that it is better to be a son than a servant (vv. 1-7); to be children of the freewoman rather than children of the bondmaid (v. 22); to enjoy the freedom found in the "Jerusalem which is above", instead of being enslaved by the bondage "from the mount Sinai"; to be among those "born of the Spirit" instead of being "born after the flesh" (v. 29).

Paul also resorts to a personal matter which should arrest the attention of these Galatian brethren in particular. He reminds them of his labors among them, their love for him, and the possibility that all his efforts may be in vain (vv. 13-16, 19, 20). Surely, these sobering reminders ought to cause them to turn around, and come back to Christ.

Chapter Five

The subject of bondage and freedom is pursued into the fifth chapter, and we find some new arguments introduced as well. One cannot just accept a favorite practice or two from the law, and omit the rest (v. 3).

And, neither can we attempt to be justified by the law without falling from grace and making Christ "of no effect" (vv. 4-6).

Paul now concludes Chapter Five by trying to persuade these Galatian brethren that the only way to overcome the "lust of the flesh" (v. 16), is to "walk in the Spirit" (vv. 16-26). Those who practice the "works of the flesh" forfeit their inheritance in God's kingdom (v. 21), but if we escape the consequences of sin being "led of the Spirit" (v. 18), then we have also escaped from bondage under the law.

Chapter 6

Since others have very capably explored the contents of this chapter, and the proper place of v. 10 in its context, I will spare the reader on this point. However, in keeping with my original purpose, I wish to point out what I see as an harmonious relationship between Chapter Six as a whole, and Paul's previous efforts to convince the Galatians of their folly.

For instance, when Paul exhorts us to "bear . . . one another's burdens" (v. 2), he emphasizes that by so doing we "fulfill the law of Christ." Paul's entire effort in this letter has been to show the supremacy of the law of Christ over the law of Moses. He has used (by my count), some twenty different approaches to establish his case. In Chapter Six, Paul shows that by pursuing these various individual works (or not pursuing them, vv. 7-9), we fulfill the law of Christ. It would be impossible for Jew or Gentile to show the fulfillment of Christ's law in their lives by appealing to the works of the law (of Moses).

Not only do brethren wrest verse 10 from its context in Chapter 6 by trying to get church (collective) action out of it, but they compound their error by practically nullifying Paul's monumental effort to persuade the Galatian brethren that they should turn again to the law of Christ.

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CONCLUSION

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As we approach the end of this review, I wish to make some final observations, admonitions and appeals to the Baptists who read this both now and in years to come.

"Now It Is Different"

Many good Baptist people don't realize that they are in an institution which admits that it does not teach and practice that which was true in the days of the inspired apostles and early church when it was as the Lord ordered it. From page 22 of "The Standard Manual for Baptist Churches" by Edward T. Hiscox, D.D., I quote:

"It is most likely that in the Apostolic age when there was but 'one Lord, one faith, and one baptism,' and no differing denominations existed, the baptism of a convert by that very act constituted him a member of the church, and at once endowed him with all the rights and privileges of full membership. In that sense, 'baptism was the door into the church.' Now, it is different; and while the churches are desirous of receiving members, they are wary and cautious that they do not receive unworthy persons. The churches therefore have candidates come before them, make their statement, give their 'experience,' and then their reception is decided by a vote of the members. And while they cannot become members without baptism, yet it is the vote of the body which admits them into its fellowship on receiving baptism."

Yes, there was in the apostolic age "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism" and there was also "one body" which was the church (Eph. 1:22, 23; 4:4, 5). That being true, they are correct in concluding that "no differing denominations existed." But the Baptist Church is a denomination and admits it. It does not claim to be the one body, including all the saved of the earth today (Acts 2:47).

It is true that in the beginning baptism made one a member of the church and was "the door into the church." Baptism was into Christ (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27), and to be in Christ was to be in his body which was the church. Having admitted that which was true in the days of the apostles, they then say "Now, it is different." Who made it different? Answer: Baptists and others who are unwilling to believe and follow the teaching of the scriptures! They admit that the baptism which they practice, which is designed only to put one into the Baptist denomination—preceded by an "experience" and "vote of the members"—is different

from that which was practiced under the guidance of inspired men. My Baptist friend, how can you remain in a denomination which admits that it has changed the doctrine and practice taught in the will of Christ?

Pertinent Paragraphs on Campbell, Baptism, Etc.

"No intelligent Christian can object to the end which Mr. Campbell proposed to accomplish. The union of all true Christians on the Apostolic foundation, is an object most devoutly to be wished. All good men pray for it." (J. B. Jeter, *Campbellism Examined*, page 22).

"If either Thomas Campbell or his son, or both acting in concert, organized a church of the right kind of material, and on the right faith and foundation, then they acted in harmony with the word of God, and no man has the least right to open his mouth in opposition; for a church thus constituted would be none other than a church of Christ." (J. H. Milburn, *Origin of Campbellism*, page 10.) (Both Jeter and Milburn were Baptists.)

"One cannot follow Christ, or obey him without going down into the water of baptism. And the statement is here ventured that no service of a believer is acceptable to Christ until this first public declarative act is performed." (Dr. J. E. Cobb, *New Manual for Baptist Churches*, 1941, page 39.)

Referring to being baptized on account of the remission of sins, J. W. Wilmarth said: "This interpretation was doubtless suggested, and is now defended, on purely dogmatic grounds. It is feared that if we give to EIS its natural and obvious meaning, undue importance will be ascribed to baptism, the atonement will be undervalued, and the work of the Holy Spirit disparaged. Especially it is asserted that here is the vital issue between Baptists and Campbellites. We are gravely told that if we render EIS in Acts 2:38 IN ORDER TO, we give up the battle, and must forthwith become Campbellites; whereas if we translate it ON ACCOUNT OF, or IN TOKEN OF, it will yet be possible for us to remain Baptists."

"Such methods of interpretation are unworthy of Christian scholars . . . And as to Campbellism, that specter which haunts many good men and terrifies them into a good deal of bad interpretation, shall we gain any thing by maintaining a false translation and allowing the Campbellites to be champions of the true, with the world's scholarship on their side, as against us? . . . The truth will suffer nothing by giving EIS its true signification. When the Campbellites translate IN ORDER TO in Acts 2:38, they translate correctly. Is a translation false because the Campbellites endorse it?" (*Baptist Quarterly*, July 1877, pages 304-305).

"If you knew that you were going to the judgment tomorrow, and your salvation depended upon your being baptized as Christ was, and as he has commanded you to be, you would be at a moment's loss; you would, this day, be 'buried with him by baptism'; you would be 'planted in the likeness of his death'; and yet you will not obey. Are you not, then, rebels against Christ, and consequently exposed to his wrath? Do not fail to do it—do not refuse to do it—and still hope to be saved, for you have no right to hope for salvation. Your

flagrant and inexcusable neglect of divine law declares you the enemy of Christ . . . 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.'" (J. R. Graves, **Relations of Baptism and Salvation**, 1881, pages 54-56).

On Church Succession

Many Baptists feel that they must trace an unbroken line of Baptist churches back to the Lord and the apostles in order to prove that they are right. In contrast, we of the churches of Christ have been more interested in identity than succession. The Word of God is the seed of the kingdom (Luke 8:11). When planted in the hearts of honest men and women, it will always produce exactly what the Lord intended—Christians and churches of Christ. We then have to simply live and worship as He directs, and by so doing we can be right regardless of what people may or may not have done in the past.

On this point, consider the following quotations from prominent Baptist historians:

"If every church of Christ were today to become apostate, it would be possible and right for any true believers to organize tomorrow another church on the apostolic model of faith and practice, and that church would have the only apostolic succession worth having—a succession of faith in the Lord Christ and obedience to him." (Henry C. Vedder)

"Pure doctrine, as it is found uncorrupted in the word of God, is the only unbroken line of succession which can be traced in Christianity. God never confided his truth to the personal succession of any body of men; man was not to be trusted with the custody of the precious charge, but the King of the truth has always kept the keys of the truth in his own hand. The true church of Christ has ever been that which has stood upon his person and work," (Thomas Armitage)

More on Names

Since much of this review has concerned the name or names for the church and the individual followers of Christ, I desire to make some final observations designed to get my Baptist friends to see the truth about the name they wear.

Paul was accused of being "a ring leader of the sect of the Nazarenes" (Acts 24:5). It was prophesied that Jesus would be called a Nazarene (Matt. 2:23). He said on one occasion "I am Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts 22:8). He had to live in Nazareth to be called a Nazarene (Matt. 2:23). There is a denomination today called the Nazarene Church. They had misapplied the word. The fact that Jesus had to live in Nazareth in order to be called a Nazarene, and the fact that members of the Nazarene Church never did live in Nazareth does not seem to make any difference at all with them.

The Baptists make the same mistake. The son born of Zacharias and Elizabeth was named John (Luke 1:13). He was the first to administer baptism, and he baptized many people; therefore, he was called John the Baptist. When properly translated, it would be John the Immerser. In that true sense, one can no more be a Baptist today without baptizing people than one can be a Nazarene without living in Nazareth.

If the Nazarene Church and the many kinds of Baptist Churches would stop and inquire as to why Jesus was called a Nazarene, and why John was called the Baptist, they would surely see and understand the truth.

May we never forget that the Bible says: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12) That name, dear friend, is not the name of Paul, or Peter, or Martin Luther, or Alexander Campbell, or John the Baptist. It is the name of Christ (verse 10), the stone which was "disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious" (1 Peter 2:4).

In Conclusion

As I close this review, may I make this final appeal to all who read this, and especially my Baptist friends. As I said in the beginning of this study, I have many friends and relatives in the Baptist denomination. I verily believe that the false doctrines taught by Baptist creed and preachers have caused some of my loved ones to be lost. That concerns me very much, and moves me to make an effort to teach all others who will hear me. I believe that the Baptist denominations are wrong and unscriptural in origin, name, doctrine and practice. I do not believe that one can enter the Baptist fellowship by obeying the gospel of Christ, nor live acceptably before God by living according to the doctrines and commandments of the Baptist belief. I tell you this because I love the souls of men and women. May it not be said of you, as Paul had to say about some in Galatia, that I have "become your enemy, because I tell you the truth" (Gal. 4:16).

I realize that we are human beings with deep emotions and often prejudices, and it is difficult for us to give honest and dispassionate consideration to rebuke, correction, or anything with which we disagree. But I hope and pray that every Baptist who reads this will reflect soberly upon what has been said. Read the material again and check every reference in your Bible. Remember that truth is the only thing that will save us and make us free before God (John 8:31, 32), and that "each of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:12).

Any responsible and accountable individual living in this age and under the will of Christ can be saved by: (1) hearing the gospel (Mark 12:29; Rom. 10:15); (2) believing the gospel and in Jesus Christ (John 8:24; Heb. 11:6); (3) repenting of past sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30); (4) confessing Christ before men (Matt. 10:32; Acts 8:37); and (5) being baptized (immersed in water) for the remission of sins and into Christ (Acts 2:38; Gal. 3:27). When one thus obeys the gospel commands, he or she is then, and because of that, added by the Lord to the church, the body of saved people (Acts 2:47). Then as a child of God, a Christian, one should worship Him in spirit and truth (John 8:24) and "live soberly, righteously and Godly in this present world" (Titus 2:12). Only in this way may one have the assurance of the fullness of spiritual and temporal blessings in "the life that now is" and eternal life in

"that which is to come" (I Tim. 4:8) in the land that is fairer than day, or, as the old song says, "a land where we'll never grow old."

As you respect and obey God's will, in and through the Lord Jesus Christ, may He bless you richly and keep you safely both now and forever more. Amen.

THE SECRET THINGS

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Moses told the children of Israel: "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law" (Deut. 29:29). These words suggest something which I believe our generation needs very much to remember, just as Israel did. There must have been some tendency on the part of Israel to draw conclusions based upon God's silence, rather than on that which He had revealed, thus the warning that the secret things belong to God.

God still has secret things. There is no conflict with this idea and the completeness of His revelation to us. Peter wrote that "his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3). This was the very thing that Jesus promised His apostles when He said: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13). Even in the midst of the spiritual gifts which were given to many of the first century Christians for their growth and maturity while the written record was incomplete, Paul was writing that those gifts would cease when revelation was finished. "Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away" (1 Cor. 13:8-10). "Perfect" is from the Greek word "teleios" which means that which has "reached its end, finished, complete, perfect" (Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words). Now, about that statement about God still having secrets, things which He did not reveal to us: "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (Mark 13:32). So, in spite of revealing "all things that pertain to life and godliness", there are some things not revealed. It is foolish indeed to draw conclusions based upon those things which God has not revealed.

To know God's will we are absolutely dependent upon His revelation. Paul wrote: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath

prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. 2:9-11). Man is incapable of knowing the mind of God except through that which God has revealed. So, why then do we try at times to build our arguments upon things which God did not say?

Can we understand God's revealed will? Well, of course we can (1 Cor. 14:20; Eph. 3:3-4; 5:17). Paul told Timothy to "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). We obviously must use our ability to think and reason to learn God's will, and to apply it to our own lives. But we must resist every thought that we know things that God did not reveal. Isaiah wrote warning Israel: "Who hath directed the spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?" (Isa. 40:13-14). God did not ask my advice about any thing that He did, so how can I presume to know that which He did not reveal.

The importance of sticking closely to God's revealed will is emphasized in an incident involving David. David had become concerned that he lived in a house of cedar, but the ark of God was kept in a tabernacle (2 Samuel 7:1-2). Nathan, God's prophet, apparently assumed that it would be all right for David to build God a house (7:3), but that night God spoke to Nathan and corrected him. First, God said that from the time He had brought Israel up out of Egypt He had not lived in a house. But the second point made by God is the one I want us to notice. God said: "In all the places wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people Israel, saying, Why build ye not me an house of cedar?" (2 Samuel 7:7). What was God saying? Apparently He was saying, "Did I ask you to build me a house?" The fact that God had not commanded it meant that David should not build it. God did say that later David's son would build Him a house, but not David.

It is dangerous ground to walk on when we presume upon something which God has not said. Many today have drawn some dangerous conclusions, based upon human wisdom, regarding the right of the guilty party to divorce and remarry. How can I or any other man flatly declare what is acceptable to God unless He has declared it? And yet this is being done constantly. When Jesus says: "And whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery" (Matt. 5:32; and similarly in Matt. 19:9), how can we presume to instruct God in those things not revealed. How can we presume that the put away person can remarry without displeasing God? It is a foolish action, because it fails to leave the secret things to God.


Even Jesus could not act upon the silence of God. Concerning His being our High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, and not Aaron or Levi we read: "For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood" (Heb. 7:13-14). Why couldn't Jesus be a priest while He was upon the earth? Because until His death the Old covenant was still in effect (Heb. 9:15-17), and under that covenant "Moses spake nothing" about anyone of Judah being a priest.

Brethren, God's revealed will is sufficient for "all things that pertain to life and godliness". If we cannot find within that which God has clearly revealed that which we want to believe and teach, then we had better change our beliefs and teachings. The secret things still belong to God, and the revealed word belongs to us.

SET FOR THE
DEFENSE OF
THE GOSPEL

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YOUTH CHOIRS

Gospel preachers through the years have read to people the passages in the Book that authorized the kind of music God wants His people to render unto Him. Eph. 5:19 has been read many, many times. This verse says, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;" Another verse that has been read or quoted is Col. 3:16 which reads, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." These are but two of the several passages that could be given from the will of the Lord authorizing the music that is to be rendered unto His name.

As people begin to drift away from the respect for the Divine authority of God's word that they should have, one need not be surprised at anything that is introduced into the service of God. Candles, counting of beads, praying to Mary, the mourners bench, salvation by faith only are but a few of the practices not taught in the will of God.

I am of the conviction that many of my brethren do not really know why we do not use instrumental music in the worship unto God. It may be that they have never really stopped to examine the Bible and to see

for themselves what the New Testament teaches along this line. They know that we do not use it today. Many of them have never seen an instrument in the house when brethren meet to worship. It may be that even some preachers among churches of Christ could not give a good reason as to why the instrument is absent. In fact, it is altogether possible that even some preachers among churches of Christ will even engage in vain worship directed unto the Lord with denominational churches as they play upon such instruments. I do know of a preacher that attended the services of a denominational church and when I asked him if he sang with the instrument in that service he would not answer. All he would tell me was that he didn't do anything contrary to the word of God. If one thinks that instrumental music is authorized in the word of God, to sing with such would not, in his mind, be doing anything contrary to God's word. If the preacher did not sing with the instrument, I know of no reason why he would not want to just say that he didn't sing with the instrument unless it would be that he did not want to offend some member of a denominational church.

I am certain that if the elders of many churches of Christ were to announce to the congregation next Lord's Day that they had re-studied the word of God, that they had come to the conclusion that there was not anything wrong with having instrumental music in worship, there would be many that would not know any more than the elders and would not lift their voice in opposition to what the elders planned to do.

But the song service among churches of Christ can become unscriptural in more ways than by having instrumental music in the service. Gospel preachers have pointed out through the years that the word of God taught that the church was to sing. They used, and correctly so, such passages as Col. 3:16 and Eph. 5:19 to show that the church when she assembled was to sing. Further, gospel preachers have showed that it was an addition to the word of God for the church to have choruses and choirs to sing for the church. And they have condemned in no uncertain terms the denominational churches for having their choruses and choirs with their robes. Many churches of Christ have digressed so far as to become guilty of the very thing that the denominations have been condemned for having in the past.

One of the biggest churches in the state of Texas, the South Fifth and Highland church of Christ in Abilene, Texas, the church that is responsible for much of the division that exists in the church of Christ today, has a "youth chorus" which sings "for the church." One might not need to go all the way to Texas to find such. Could one look right around here and find a church of Christ that has a "choir?" (1) I have seen a choir practicing. (2) I have seen in the bulletin of a church that they have a "youth chorus" and that they have presented a program presented over the radio by a church choir. (3) The program was introduced and concluded by saying that it was the "church of Christ choir."

Now all of this is too much evidence to deny that some have a choir.

We can see the ground work that has been laid in the past for choirs. For years several of the colleges operated by the brethren have sent their chorus into different communities to present programs to the church of Christ and these choruses have used the meeting houses of the brethren. Nearly every orphan home in the brotherhood has started themselves a chorus and these choruses have traveled and put on programs, using the meeting houses of the brethren. Now with this ground work being done in the years past, why would one not think of each church having her own choir?

Someone might say, "Well, they do not present programs to the Sunday morning worship service, and they do not appear in robes, so therefore it is all right." No person to my knowledge has made this charge yet. I predict that the time will come when this charge can be made. However, I raise this question, What would be wrong with such if they did? If it is right for a church of Christ to have a choir, what would be wrong with it putting on robes and presenting a program on Sunday morning?

Remember brethren, the ground work is now being laid for this very thing. The choir will present programs for a while. Some person will suggest that we invite the choir over to present a program on Wednesday night or Thursday night at which time we usually have our mid-week Bible Study. This will get to be the accepted thing. Then watch it! The choir will start presenting programs before the services of a gospel meeting on a certain night, and then the first thing one knows it will be performing on Sunday night for one or two numbers. As time continues, the choir will sing all the songs on Sunday night, every now and then. Then the time will come that it will be done all the time on Sunday night. With its foot this far in the door, people will have lost all respect for Bible authority and someone will suggest that it sing on Sunday morning and thus the church of Christ will have a full fledged choir and then they will buy the robes for them to wear when they sing. It was slow, it was gradual; but remember brethren, that is the very way that digression and apostasy works.

Liberal brethren do not want the masses in churches of Christ to see the trail they are trying to lead them down. First the movement says church support of benevolent societies. Then they cry for the sponsoring church type of congregational cooperation. Those on the bandwagon shout for church support of colleges, then comes the youth camps, with ball diamonds, swimming pools, and what have you. Choirs follow and who knows what will be next? At this rapid rate the instrument can not be far off, and it may be nearer than any of us would think. In fact, some churches of Christ already have the instrument in their buildings for very special programs. You had better watch my brethren, the liberals have a train coming and you will either purchase your ticket and get on or be run over by the train. The choice is yours. Which will it be?

All of this brings rest to some. Those who are members of man made churches, will no longer be condemned for having a choir. You have been joined by some of my liberal brethren. The day will come when the choirs of churches of Christ and choirs of some of the denominational bodies will sing together in some kind of program on Easter or Christmas. The members of the denominational churches know this is so. Brethren, if you doubt it, just wait. You will see it.

UNMASKING MORMONISM (No. 3)

Steve Goff
1744 W. 1375 N.
Layton, Utah 84041

THE PRIESTHOOD AND THE LORD'S CHURCH

In our two previous articles of this series, we have shown that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) projects an image of a Bible following, morally strict people who live happy, family-oriented lives. We exposed this image as a mask of hypocrisy, a facade to deceive and attract people to their organization. Mormons in Utah are not happier than people of other communities, and statistics of the social problems in Utah prove that Mormonism does not make morally superior people. Their religion is founded upon a rejection of the all-sufficiency of the Bible, as well as an irreverent and humanistic view of God. Jesus said of false prophets, "Ye shall know them by their fruits" (Matt. 7:16). The fruits of Mormonism expose an organization which is man-made, and which follows a doctrine of man. In this article, we will examine two areas of Mormon doctrine which are fundamental to their theology.

THE PRIESTHOOD

Mormonism was established with the teaching that God revived the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthoods on earth, through Joseph Smith, the founder of the Mormon Church. Latter-day Saints "lay hands" on young boys, making them priests after Aaron (deacons). And young men can be made priests after Melchizedek (elders). A study of the Hebrew letter shows how far this is from the truth of God. Concerning the Aaronic priesthood, the Law of Moses required all priests to be born of the tribe of Levi (Heb. 7:11-14). Jesus, born of the tribe of Judah, could not have been an Aaronic priest. Certainly a 12 year old Gentile boy cannot hold the Levitical priesthood. Furthermore, Hebrews 7:11-12 teaches that the priesthood was changed with the abrogation of the Law of Moses. Since we know the Law of Moses is no longer in effect (Heb. 8:6-7), there can be no question that the Levitical priesthood has been forever abolished.

The Hebrew writer affirms that Jesus is the only

high priest after Melchizedek. This is not an earthly priesthood (Heb. 8:4). Jesus' priesthood is joined to the fact that He is the author of eternal salvation (Heb. 5:9-10). And whereas the old Levitical priesthood had many priests, all imperfect, who offered sacrifices for sins continually, Jesus was made a priest forever, was given an unchangeable priesthood, and offered one sacrifice (Himself) for all sins in all ages (Heb. 7:20-28). The Mormon Church belittles our great high priest by teaching that any man can hold the same position. Again, we see that the Mormon Church is not the organization which is pictured as the Bible believing, fundamentalist religion. Behind its mask is a sect which teaches for doctrine the commandments of men.

THE RESTORED CHURCH

The Mormon Church claims to be the restored church of Jesus Christ. However, very little of their theology is the same as Christ's gospel. Concerning the establishment of the Lord's church, Jesus said, "I will build my church" (Matt. 16:18). But the Book of Mormon teaches that the church of Christ existed a century before the birth of Jesus (Mosiah 18:17). The Book of Mormon has people living 73 years before Christ, who were called Christians. The Bible teaches that "disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (Acts 11:26), around 44AD. The organization of the Mormon Church is completely foreign to the New Testament pattern. Latter-day Saints are led by a President, his two counselors, and twelve living apostles. Mormons look to their President as a prophet of God and the final authority in religious matters. This displays a lack of regard for the authority of God's inerrant and perfect law of liberty, the New Testament. These apostles never witnessed Christ's earthly ministry, a requisite of apostleship (Acts 1:21-23), and therefore are false apostles. Mormons are divided into regional Stakes and local Wards. Each Stake is overseen by a Stake President and two counselors, and each Ward is directed by one Bishop and two counselors, all chosen by the headquarters of the Mormon Church. This man-made form of organization has no scriptural basis. It is in direct contradiction to the autonomous and independent congregational organization authorized by the New Testament. The truth is that Mormonism has not restored anything. They have created another man-made religion.

The work of the Mormon Church appears at first to be mainly evangelistic. And the zeal of their missionaries cannot be denied. But beyond this mask, we find a multi-billion dollar business organization, with ownership in many major corporations in this country. Where is the scripture which authorizes the New Testament church to engage in secular business? The Mormon Church is also a social organization that provides recreation for their members and for the community. Their local Ward buildings are designed to function as a gymnasium, a theater, a restaurant and dance hall, as well as a place for worship. The work Mormons are commanded to do in researching genealogies and being baptized on behalf of the dead

was never the work of the New Testament church of Jesus Christ. Timothy was instructed to warn the Ephesians against giving heed to endless genealogies (1 Tim. 1:4). And the proxy baptisms of Mormonism are based on a misunderstanding of 1 Corinthians 15:29. Like the Roman Catholics, Mormons deny the fixed condition of the dead, believing that one who has died can still be saved by an act of one who is living. But the Bible teaches the fixed state of all dead (2 Cor. 10:5 and Lk. 16:26). And Romans 2:6 teaches that God, at Judgment Day, "will render to every man according to his deeds." The idea that one can be baptized in the place of someone else is not only unscriptural, but is also ridiculous.

These doctrines of the Mormon Church show that Mormonism is a religion which is based on ideas and teachings of men, rather than of God's Word. A more exhaustive study would reveal many other false doctrines in Mormon teaching, and much more could be written on the subjects discussed in this series of articles. But that which we have dealt with is enough to unmask Mormonism. The "Mr. Clean" image of their people is tainted with the ungodly and irreverent doctrines of the Mormon Church. The worthy zeal of many Mormons is spent in vain, being a zeal without knowledge. Behind the mask, an idolatrous and hypocritical religion shines forth, denying the truth of the inspired Word of God, and preying upon the emotionally depressed and the naive. My sincere prayer is that these fine people might see the error which they follow, and turn to God, obeying the true gospel of Jesus Christ; for Jesus said, "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (Matt. 15:13).

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FOREWORD

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GENTLENESS: ITS NATURE

Jesus Christ was gentle. His manner was mild, his conduct characterized by benignity and goodness. When Jesus came upon the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, his treatment of her was considerate and fitting. When he encountered the horrors and despicable events of the last hours he spent on the earth, he was still kind, gentle, respectful. And while there never was in him a disposition of compromise or toleration of ungodliness or iniquity, still, even during occasions of heated controversy and duress, his gentleness and amiable inclinations show through in his character. He was indeed a gentle man.

There is a great need for gentleness in our world. It is not an easy habit to form, but it contributes greatly to any situation and flavors admirably every circumstance. A wise man will always have it. It is a characteristic born of a clear understanding of what is good, and a burning desire to steward carefully that over which God has given us charge. Its absence will result in coarse and brusque treatments, a lack of proper consideration of others, improper management of difficult situations, and promotes a general state of ill will in almost all relationships.

Gentleness in persons brings peace, unity, harmony to all their dealings. It is productive of a loving relationship between the parents and between the parents and their children. It promotes a state of kind-heartedness among siblings in a family. Gentleness is a great asset to a friendship, for it is ever patient, forgiving, fair. And the person who spreads gentleness at the bank teller's cage, the grocery checker's stand, the dry cleaner's desk does a great turn for people everywhere, distributing a mood that can be extended by others as it was generated in them. There never is a time or situation where gentleness is out of order.

Gentleness produces great good. Its fruit is seen in every area where its seeds are sown. It enhances relationships, promotes good will, advances kindness, and amplifies the love and goodness of God. Gentleness in a mother causes her to express great and abiding love. In a father it turns raw strength into controlled consideration. In a boss it will bring patience and in the hired help dedication. The teacher will learn by it and the student will teach it. And the sinner who sees it in the life of the Saviour is constrained to follow after him.

Gentleness is an attitude founded on love for good. It is a disposition not acquired by the pompous, the proud, the arrogant. The rowdy person will consider it to be a form of weakness and the person impressed with his own profundity will likely consider it shallow. The pious Pharisee who flaunts and displays his own righteousness will have little gentleness, for it will not allow him his self-satisfaction. But he who loves good, that one who desires that everyone, including his enemies, be blessed, will be gentle, considerate, compassionate, merciful. His love for God and his love for good will cause him to seek the best interests of all concerned.

Sometimes I find it necessary to stop for a few minutes and make an introspective examination. It is not always easy, but every time I honestly do it I am able to see almost immediate improvement in my life. One of the areas where I almost always find a deficiency is in gentleness. It needs to be made a habit, but it is an extremely hard habit to form. Self-sufficiency rises up against it; so does pride; so does self-righteousness. But I must press on. I must work at this great trait. It will do me good. It will not only make me a better person, but it will cause good in others. Gentleness glorifies God in our lives.

Gentleness is kin to humility; it is kin to meekness. It is kin to mercy; it is kin to grace. But most of all, it is kin to love, for love causes it and love results from it.

THE FATHER

Don Martin

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As a rule, when the parable recorded in Luke 15:11-32 is preached on the sermon deals with the younger son of the parable—the one whom we call the prodigal son. On a few occasions, the elder brother or older son is considered. In this article we shall briefly and inferentially consider the father of the parable. In the matter of typology, we realize that the younger son represents sinners (contextually, the erring child of God), and the elder son stands for the scribes and Pharisees. But how about the father of the parable—for whom does he stand? I submit, kind reader, that the father represents our heavenly Father. Just as we correctly deduce many lessons from the typology of the two sons we can also enjoy many truths from the representation of the father:

ALL IS WELL BETWEEN GOD AND HIS PEOPLE. In the father/son relationship of the parable there is an understood closeness and intimacy. There is emotion in the language, "A certain man had two sons," and "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I

have is thine," vss. 11, 31. The heavenly Father loves his children just as we physical fathers love our children, cf. Matt. 7:7-11. One forthcoming primary lesson which I believe is taught is the security of God's people. Just as we as physical parents would not arbitrarily and unjustly reject our children, neither will God reject his people. Observe that the younger son left his father's care and protection (vss. 12, 13). Alas, herein lies the spiritual problem: God's people forsake him (2 Chron. 15:2; cf. 1 Sam. 12:22, Josh. 1:5, John 10:27-29).

GOD DESIRES TO SHOWER HIS LOVE AND BLESSINGS UPON HIS PEOPLE. The father of the parable desired to bless his sons as is indicated in his statements (vss. 22, 23, 31). The God of heaven also desires to bless his people and all men. God has made provision for us "in Christ" that we can enjoy all spiritual endowments and salvation (Eph. 1:3; 2 Tim. 2:10). In Christ, we are complete or made full (Col. 2:10, ASV). God wants to bless us in this life and in the life to come (Pet. 3:12; Mk. 10:30; 2 Pet. 1:11). Of course, these rich blessings are conditional, as we have already intimated (2 Pet. 1:5-10; 2 Pet. 3:9).

THE FATHER GRANTED THE REQUEST OF HIS SON. The language, "And he divided unto them his living" (vs. 12), abounds with pathos and sorrow. It was a sorrowful occasion, no doubt, because the father, in his wisdom, certainly knew such was not the best for his immature, reckless young son. Yet, he granted the request. Friend, when we become obsessed with doing what we want to do regardless of our Father's will He will, if you please, grant our request though it is to our detriment (cf. 1 Sam. 8:5, 7, 19-22; Rom. 1:26, 28; Num. 22:12, 15-35; 2 Thes. 2:10-12).

THE FATHER DID NOT OVERPOWER OR DESTROY THE FREEDOM OF HIS SON'S CHOICE (vss. 12-19). Some are dangerously mistaken about how God works. Reflective of such misunderstanding is the language and rationale: "If God did not want me to marry this man (or woman), he would prevent the marriage," and "If God does not want me the way I am, he would change me." Beloved, our heavenly Father does not destroy our freedom of choice!

GOD HOLDS MAN RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS DECISIONS AND CONSEQUENT CONDUCT. The younger son, as we have seen, was obviously determined to have his way (vs. 12). In fact, the language of verse seventeen is illustrative of such a state of obsession, "And when he came to himself. ..." Some have reasoned that since some are so clearly engulfed in sin surely God will not hold them responsible. Not so! The rebellious, obstinate son was, from beginning to end, amenable and accountable.

GOD DOES NOT FORCE MAN TO REPENT. Just as the father did not interfere with his son's freedom of choice, it is very pronounced that he did not seek to force or coerce him to repent. The son had to make up his own mind (vss. 17-21). Friend, the direct operation of the Holy Spirit (one of the foundation tenets of Calvinism) is irreconcilably opposed to this repre-

sentation of God. God desires the repentance of all men but man must come to God—God does not overpower man with some irresistible external force or coercion (2 Cor. 5:11, 14-21).

THE FATHER EAGERLY RECEIVED HIS SON BACK (vss. 20-24, 32). My eyes become misty and a lump forms in my throat every time I read or deal with the return of the younger son and his father's warm reception. How moving and touching! Consider the eagerness and willingness of the father, "But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him," (vs. 20). Yes, indeed, there are many rich, opportune lessons from the representation of the father. Many of these lessons fly in the face of the teachings of denominationalism. To be sure, the wonderfulness and love of our heavenly Father is clearly accented.

A WORD WITH YOU: PHUSIS (NATURE)

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We discuss here one meaning of the above word as it is presented in the New Testament as a teaching, controlling part of man. When used thus it indicates inborn human decency.

Three Scriptures

In Romans 2:14-15 Paul speaks of a code of conduct which Gentiles had and (commendably) followed. They did "by nature the things of the law". This is the natural goodness, the finer instincts, which God built into all human beings.

In Romans 1:26-27 the writer discusses some people who "refused" (Verse 28) to follow the **native propriety**. We quote: "For this cause God gave them up unto vile passions; for their women changed the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another, men with men working unseemliness, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was due."

The same inspired stenographer of God in 1 Cor. 11:14-15(a) asks a question which demands "Yes" as its answer: "Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him, but if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her?"

Definitions

Dr. Samuel G. Green defined the word PHUSIS in other passages as indicating **natural disposition, instinct, propensity, native qualities**, and the like. But, in 1 Cor. 11:14 he says that it means, "long-established custom". We fail to see why. How could he tell? Why single out only the one statement? What makes the meaning change only there?

But authorities such as Vine, Berry, and the Zondervan Analytical give no such arbitrary exception. They hold to "nature" throughout.

In defining PHUSIS Dr. J. H. Thayer cites that very verse. He concludes the "a" part of his definitions with these comments:

nature i.e. **natural sense**, native conviction or knowledge, as opposed to what is learned by instruction and accomplished by training, or prescribed by law: HE PHUSIS, "the nature -W," (i.e. the native sense of propriety) DIDASKEI TI, "teaches something - W", 1 Cor. 11:14; PHUSEI POIEIN TA TOU NOMOU, "to do by nature the things of the law - W", — guided by their natural sense of what is right and proper, Romans 2:14.

Natural

Romans 1:26 shows that before God "gave them up" the idolaters were not controlled by "passions of dishonor" (Margin of ASV and meaning of the Greek words). Their "females" (literal meaning) changed what was "natural". This word, PHUSIKOS, was a derived form of our subject word, PHUSIS. The longer word, an adjective, meant "instinctive" according to Dr. Strong, and "inborn" per Thayer. The Creator installed in men and women certain restraints and proprieties that they never should have stifled or rejected.

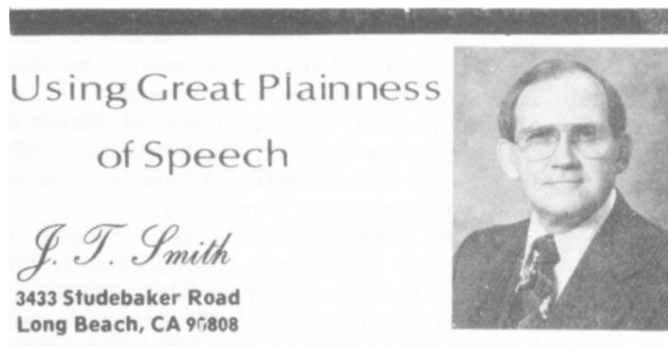
Use

The approved instinctive use of the female is contrasted with the perverted one which is not natural. The letters of the word for "use" (noun) resemble CHRESIS (pronounced "khray-sis"). The King James and American Standard Versions, approved by Berry, Hickie, and Green, translate it as "use". The New American Standard Bible renders it as "function". Aland says that it means "function (of sexual intercourse)". Thayer calls it, "the sexual use of a woman. Ro. 1:26 sq." And Strong states that it indicates: "employment, i.e. (specially) sexual intercourse (as an occupation of the body): — use."

A Man's Hair

Some are claiming that the "dishonor" in 1 Cor. 11:14 means, merely, that a man appears strange if his appearance is not in style (nature). But there the word for "dishonor" in 1 Cor. 11:14 means, merely, that a man appears strange if his appearance is not in style (nature). But there the word for "dishonor" is the very one used in Romans 1:26. From this we can be sure that the good Lord strongly disapproves of a man wearing a pony-tail, or long hair hanging down his back.

We should come to respect instinctive decency more. Our Master speaks highly of it in Romans 2:14. He disapproves of people violating it as described in Romans 1:26-27. And He endorses what it teaches in 1 Cor. 11:14-15.



ELDERS — ONCE QUALIFIED, ALWAYS QUALIFIED?

All of us understand that God has given a number of qualifications for those who would desire the office of an elder (1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1). Among those qualifications given are instructions regarding the prospective elder's children. He is to be a man "having his children in subjection with all gravity" (1 Timothy 3:4) [I believe all will agree that this qualification would be applicable while his children are still at home]; and "having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly" (Titus 1:6).

I realize that the word "faithful" is believed by some to refer to their being "faithful to their parents." I do not agree with this conclusion because I do not know of a time in the New Testament when the word "faithful" or "believing" (American Standard Version) is used, unless there is something in the context that so establishes it as such, that it does not mean "faithful to God." I do not believe there is anything in the context of the above cited passages that so warrants.

Now the problem. Oft-times when men are appointed to the eldership, while their children are still at home and are Christians (and as far as anyone can determine are faithful to the Lord) the man having the other qualifications is appointed to the office of an elder. However, after the children are grown and out on their own, they become unfaithful to the Lord, and may even be accused of being riotous and unruly. The question then arises from a number of sources, sometimes from the man himself, is this man still qualified? Which brings me to my point of this article.

If the man's name should now (after his children are grown and unfaithful) be placed before the congregation, would he be considered qualified? If not, why should he still be considered qualified after his appointment under the same circumstances?

If there is something I have missed in the above argument, would someone please reply and show where I have missed the point. Remember, we are not talking about his "ruling them" since they are no longer under his roof and may even have families of their own. But since they are still his children and are unfaithful, would not he be lacking this qualification?

THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

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

LECTURESHIPS

AKRON, OH—The Thayer St. Lectures have been set for September 14-17. We invite each of you to arrange your schedule so that you can be with us during this series of lectures. Subjects and speakers are as follows:

Shadows of Christ in the Old Testament—Ken Williams

Communication—Don Bassett

In The World, Not Of The World—Dale Smelser

Influences—Dale Smelser

Places of the Bible: Babylon—Lewis Willis

Places of the Bible: Antioch—Bill Cunningham

Places of the Bible: Jerusalem—Wayne Walker

Singing (by the assembly)—Robert Welch

Choices—Richard Greeson

As in the past, we are urging our members to open their homes to out of town guests. If you plan to be with us overnight for what we expect to be an outstanding program, please notify us in advance so that we can make arrangements.

LUFKIN, TX—There will be a lectureship in Lufkin, TX the dates of August 20-22. The schedule is as follows:

The Last Days—Promise and Peril—R. J. Stevens

Thursday A.M.—**The Last Days**

Friday A.M.—**Days of Promise**

Saturday P.M.—**Days of Peril**

The Atonement and the Abundant Life—Dee Bowman

Thursday P.M.—**As To Salvation**

Friday P.M.—**As To Hearing**

Saturday P.M.—**As To Prosperity**

The Last Day—Rodney Miller

Thursday P.M.—**The Rapture**

Friday P.M.—**The Tribulation**

Saturday A.M.—**The Second Coming**

Morning lectures will be at 11:00 A.M. and the evening lectures will be at 7:30 and 8:30 P.M. The lectureship will take place at the Lufkin Civic Center. For travel information and housing accommodation contact Melvin Harrison at Rt. 5, Box 2180, Lufkin, TX 75901. Phone (713) 875-2485. For additional information call Timberland Drive church of Christ at (713) 634-7110. Or write P.O. Box 724, Lufkin, TX 75901.

NEW CONGREGATION

KAHOKA, MO—A new congregation was begun in Kahoka on March 29, 1981. On that day there were two baptized. Presently, we are renting the American Legion Building and we are the only faithful group in town. For more information please contact James Powell at P.O. Box 253, Kahoka, MO 63445. Or call (816) 727-2663.

W. P. RISENER, 618 Curtis St., Blackfoot, ID 83221. Brethren, there is a faithful church meeting in Blackfoot, ID at 370 N. Shillings Ave., with services on Sunday at 10:00 and 11:00 A.M. and 6:30 P.M. Brother Frank Thompson of Wendell, ID greatly assisted this church in coming out from under the influences of liberalism and standing for the truth. If you are in the area visit with us and we urgently request your prayers.

PREACHERS NEEDED

DONIPHAN, MO—The Southside church of Christ which has been in existence for the past three years is looking for a full-time preacher. We are a small congregation with attendance around 30, but we are strong and desirous of defending the truth. We are in the middle of a hot-bed of liberalism. We can provide \$500 per month support. We also have in this congregation four excellent song leaders and four excellent

Bible teachers. Contact: Rex Holland, P.O. Box 220, Doniphan, MO 63935.

WISCONSIN RAPIDS, WI—The church that meets in Wisconsin Rapids, WI is actively seeking a gospel preacher willing to come and work with us in spreading the Word in central Wisconsin. The congregation, which numbers 35 members, will be able to only partially support a man in this effort. Wisconsin Rapids is located on the Wisconsin River approximately 90 miles north of Madison, WI. For more information write Matt Hennecke, 3632 Simonis St., Stevens Point, WI 54481, (715) 345-0552. Or Garth Frost, Rt. 1, Rudolph, WI 54475, (715) 435-3347.

PURCELL, OK—The church that meets at 407 Jackson St., in Purcell is looking for a preacher starting September 1. Partial support will be needed. If interested contact: Charles Waldo, Rt. 1, Box 80A, Purcell, OK 73080, (405) 527-3538. Or Everett Shackleford, Rt. 1, Box 546, Noble, OK 73068, (405) 872-3592.

JOHNSON CITY, TN—The Brookmead church in Johnson City is looking for a preacher to begin here July 1, 1982. We number about 100 and are fully self supporting. Anyone interested can contact Olie Williamson, P.O. Box 29, Greenville, TN or phone (615) 638-6172.

SALISBURY, NC—The church meeting at Stokes—ferry and Earnhart Streets in Salisbury, NC is looking for a preacher. Please contact James H. Hand, Rt. 5, Box 347, Salisbury, NC 28144.

BAY CITY, MI—This congregation, which is two years old, is in need of a full-time preacher. The church here numbers 11 adults with an average attendance of 20-25. Most of the people are young in the faith, yet they are full of potential. The congregation was started over differences that existed regarding institutionalism. They felt like they could no longer worship where they were and so a new congregation was formed determined to "contend for the faith." If you are interested in helping the work here please contact Glen Erickson, 5861 Eleven Mile Road, Freeland, MI 48623. Others who know about the work here are: Art Adams, 2797 Russell St., Portage, IN 46368 and Ben Puterbaugh, 208 N.E. 13th, Casey, IL 62420.

BARRY PENNINGTON, 25903 Hardin Store Rd., Pinehurst, TX 77362. The church here set records during the month of May. We conducted a gospel meeting with Jack Kirby of Las Cruces, NM. He did an excellent job and we baptized two young people. Within the past few weeks two additional families have identified with us. On Sunday, May 25, we set a new attendance record when 76 were present. Our contribution was over \$500. Please pray for the work to continue to prosper. At the present we are having two classes in the homes of members on Tuesday and Thursday nights. We are studying Acts on Tuesday nights and 2 Corinthians on Thursday nights.

JIM GABBARD, Second and B Streets, Brawley, CA 92227. I am well into my fourth year with the very fine church here in Brawley but by reason of the great distance from my children and grandchildren in KY I would like to move back within 500 to 600 miles of Bowling Green. The church here has done a marvelous work. We are now helping substantially with the support of eight preachers in addition to my support. The four fine elders and the entire church are working in harmony. I can bring a substantial part of my support

and could thus work with a church not able to fully support a man. Two references are Hoyt Houchen, 1297 Boston St., Aurora, CO 80010, and A. C. Grider, 2137 Penhall Dr., Huntsville, AL 35811. **E. PAUL PRICE**, 411 Pierce, Purcell, OK 73080. For four years I have lived and preached in Purcell, OK. During this time I have been aware of the need for a faithful church in Norman. Some two years ago I preached in a tent meeting there with an average attendance of 30 to 40 each night. The University of Oklahoma is at Norman. I will complete my work here at Purcell by the latter part of August. It has been a good work with several baptized. Attendance last week at Purcell was 48 for Sunday morning. Can you help me in the work at Norman? Please let me hear from you as soon as possible. Phone (405) 527-6615.

ALEX OGDEN, Rt. 2, Box 525, Rockwood, TN 37854. We would like to inform the readers of STS about the congregation in Rockwood. The Post Oak church has been meeting on Post Oak Rd. in Rockwood for 23 years. We are a small group of about 30 members. Up until this time the congregation has not had a full-time preacher. On May 1st I began working with them and we are looking forward to much spreading of truth in this area. Rockwood is located about 45 miles west of Knoxville just off I-40. We welcome any who should be traveling through the area. Please tell others about us. Directions: Take the Rockwood-Harriman exit and go south on Hwy. 27 to the first red light in Rockwood. Turn left at the light and at the second stop sign turn right. The building will be on the left approximately 1/2 mile. Services are on Sunday at 10:00 and 11:00 A.M. and 7:00 P.M. Wednesday Bible Study is at 7:30 p.m. For more information call me at (615) 354-4099 or (615) 354-4435.

HERB BRASWELL, Rt. 2, Box 358-D, Cedar Bluff, VA 24609. We are helping in the support of my son Reid Braswell who is preaching in Bogota, Columbia, South America. Reid is in need of additional

support as he is only receiving \$375 per month. Brethren, if you could help in any way contact Reid Braswell, P.O. Box 2489, Bogota, D.E., Columbia, South America. For a reference contact Royce Chandler, 3915 Franklin Rd., Nashville, TN 37204. At present my wife and I are looking to move. If we could be of service to you please contact me at the above address.

RALPH WALKER, 714 Beach St., Cleveland, MS 38732. After enjoying five years of fellowship in Cleveland, MS with the saints that meet here, my family will be moving to Concord, NC the middle part of August. With much sadness we take leave of the birth-place of both our daughters as well as some others who have matured along with us. We leave the church wholly unified and harmonious. The work of the kingdom in Cleveland has a bright future with over 65% of the people being under 30 years of age. The work is almost totally-self-supporting with 35-40 regular members. Cleveland has been a beautiful place for us to live. We anticipate good things in NC as we plan to take our place beside those Christians who are already laboring there in Concord and throughout the state. Pray for us.

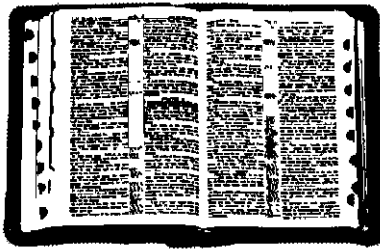
AN ENCOURAGING MEETING
FROM THE PLAINFIELD CHURCH BULLETIN, Johnie Edwards reports—It was good to work again in a gospel meeting with the church in Pekin, IN. Bill Beasley is doing a good work there. During the meeting there were 13 baptisms and 1 restoration.

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH	
BAPTISMS	296
RESTORATIONS	107
(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)	



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 XXII

SEPTEMBER, 1981

NUMBER 9

**ATHEISTS
WHO LOST THEIR "FAITH"**

James L. Sloan
508 Club Oak Dr.
Fort Worth, TX 76114



Some of the world's most brilliant and able literary men have been quite critical and outspoken in their condemnation of the notion of God and eternal life. Unfortunately, their testimonies have usually been heard in their young, brash, productive years when they were very full of themselves and when the day of their death seemed far removed. It might profit us to have the opportunity to learn from them in their declining days as they looked back and evaluated their lives from a high peak and broad perspective.

SAMUEL LANGHORNE CLEMENS, better known by his pen name, Mark Twain (1835-1910). "A myriad of men are born; they labor and sweat and struggle for bread; they squabble and scold and fight; they scramble for little mean advantages over each other. Age creeps upon them and infirmities follow; shame and humiliations bring down their prides and then-vanities. Those they love are taken from them, and the joy of life is turned to aching grief. The burden of pain, care, and misery grows heavier year by year. At length ambition is dead, pride is dead, vanity is dead; longing for release is in their place. It comes at last—the only unpoisoned gift earth ever had for them—and they vanish from a world where they were of no consequence; where they achieved nothing, where they were a mistake and a failure and a foolishness; where they left no sign that they have existed—a world that will lament them a day and forget them forever" (*Autobiography*, Vol. II, p. 37).

BERTRAND RUSSELL (1872-1970). "Why should you suppose I think it foolish to wish to see the people

one is fond of? What else is there to make life tolerable? We stand on the shore of an ocean, crying to the night and the emptiness; sometimes a voice answers out of the darkness. But it is a voice of one drowning; and in a moment the silence returns" (*Autobiography* p. 287). ROBERT G. INGERSOLL (1833-1899). "Death is a narrow vale between the cold and barren peaks of two eternities. We cry aloud and the only answer is the wailing echo of our cry" (oration given at the grave of his brother).

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW (1856-1950). "The science to which I pinned my faith is bankrupt. ... Its counsels which should have established the millennium have led directly to the suicide of Europe. I believed them once ... In their name I helped to destroy the faith of millions of worshippers in the temples of a thousand creeds. And now they look at me and witness the great tragedy of an atheist who has lost his faith" (*Too True To Be Good*).

W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM (1874-1965). "When I look back on my life ... it seems to be strangely lacking in reality ... it may be that my heart, having found rest nowhere, had some deep ancestral craving for God and immortality which my reason would have no truck with" (*The Chicago Daily News*, January 26, 1964).

These have been testimonies of atheists as they faced the bleak abyss of death and looked back on a life so lauded by others but now so strangely meaningless to themselves. Let us share just one more personal testimony. It was written by a man of immense intellect, great ambition (though not selfish), and genuine literary achievement. He was also a man who underwent great personal sufferings and gross miscarriages of justice. He said in his old age: "For I am already on the point of being sacrificed; the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing (2 Tim. 4:6-8). This is the testimony of a believer!"

FORGIVENESS VS. PERMISSION

William V. Beasley
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Pekin, IN 47165

The school principal, a member of a large, liberal (digressive) church of Christ, was discussing one facet of his philosophy as a school principal when he said, **"It is often easier to get forgiveness than it is to get permission."** When an extraordinary situation arose he would do what he thought was best and then, if the superintendent or others in authority objected, he (the principal) could apologize and seek their forgiveness. Frankly, with the complex and oft times conflicting rules handed down by bureaucrats at all levels of government such a philosophy was probably very efficient. Such is not being recommended, but the workability of such is recognized.

The thing that bothers me is the emergence of this philosophy ("It is often easier to get forgiveness than it is to get permission.") in matters religious. Brethren search in vain for authority from the New Testament (permission) to build and maintain humanly devised institutions to do the work of the church. When permission is withheld (no command, approved apostolic example or necessary inference) they go on declaring that it is a "good work," and that the Lord must surely be happy with their efforts—if not, He forgives so easily.

Saints search the New Testament for "permission" to make the local congregation a social center (dinners in the basement, TV rooms, ping-pong tables, gymnasiums, etc.), fail to find a hint of permission, ignore New Testament condemnation of such (1 Cor. 11:22), but go onward, ever onward confident that God will forgive IF they have done ought that was wrong. After all, forgiveness is easier to get than permission.

Others, closer to home, reason in much the same fashion. Knowing that it is wrong (sinful) to forsake "our own assembling together" (Heb. 10:25) they take jobs that "necessitate" their missing worship services. The job is not for necessities (food and clothing, see Matt. 6:25-33), but for the good life, for spending money, to get some of the extras that society offers. "Surely," they reason, "the Lord will forgive me since I had to work."

Permission to (un)dress as the world is not forthcoming (1 Tim. 2:9; Rom. 12:2) but skirts and dresses with suggestive, provocative slits up the side are in style, and forgiveness is so easy to obtain so

.... When I first encountered the philosophy, "It is often easier to get forgiveness than it is to get permission," I was shocked since God's children are to serve their "masters according to the flesh ... heartily as unto the Lord" (see Col. 3:22-24). My shock turned to sadness and sorrow when I realized that the cheapening of forgiveness to make it a replacement for authority (permission) in secular matters was (is) in keeping with their service "unto the Lord" (Col. 3:23).

Searching The Scriptures

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Editorial

Connie W. Adams

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WHERE DID HE TELL US HOW TO DO IT?

Not long ago in a talk with a preacher in another state, the subject of church supported benevolence arose. He had come to hear me preach one night in a meeting although he preached for a congregation involved in practices which I could not endorse. Our conversation afterward was pleasant though it was evident we were not in accord on many things. Like writers and debaters of 25 years ago who advocated financial support from churches to private relief organizations, he wanted to know just where the Bible tells us "how to do it"?

We have been told that James 1:27 says to "visit the fatherless and widows" and that the passage does not say how it is to be done. It was strange a quarter of a century ago, and still is, that this argument should be made when none of the brethren who oppose church support of such organizations have ever argued over the "how." The issue was, and is, the question of "Who" and not "How." For example, in James 1:27, the one charged with the care of the fatherless and widows is the same one who is to "bridle his tongue" (verse 26) and who is to "keep himself unspotted from the world" so that "this man's religion" will not be in vain. The context here indicates that the "who" of this passage is an individual. The church as a body is not even under discussion. As to what method of administration the individual shall choose in visiting the fatherless and widows, the passage says nothing.

1 Tim. 5:16 deals with relief of widows indeed. "If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed." The "who" of this passage is clearly indicated. The "man or woman" who has widows is to relieve them so the church will not be charged in order that it (the church) may relieve "widows indeed." Here the church enters the picture. If the church is to relieve "widows indeed", it is understood by all that some method will have to be employed. There will have to be a place of care, supervision, provision and the necessary amount to accomplish all of this. But the point is that the church is charged to administer this relief. The only unit God ever ordained through which the church can do anything is the local congregation with its own elders and deacons (Acts 14:23; Phil. 1:1; 1 Pet. 5:1-3). This means that the elders will oversee the methods used and the expenditure of the Lord's money.

This is not done when a congregation supports a benevolent organization. The board of directors decides on the place of care, personnel and provisions. They oversee the matter. The board is not the "how" but another "who" than the church under its elders. Brethren need to learn to distinguish between organization and method. When the church relieves those for whom it is responsible, it must employ method. But when the church contributes to an organization, then that organization itself is not a method or "how" but another entity which still must determine the method to be used.

The question resolves itself to this: which organization did God appoint for the work? Did he ordain the church under the oversight of elders, or did he ordain another governing unit (a board of directors chartered by the state)? Which "who" (organization) must employ the "how" (method)?

There are various methods which might be used in relieving those who are the charge of the church. They might be supported in their own house, or one secured for that purpose. They might have to have qualified attendants to administer medicine or other care. But the selection of the care and administration of the matter must be under the oversight of the elders of the church. If elders cannot oversee it, then what makes it the work of the church? The relief for the poor saints in Judea was sent "to the elders", not to some Judean relief society (Acts 11:27-30).

The charge that some of us are seeking to bind methods is a straw man. It was a false argument 25 years ago. It has not improved with age. But we do insist that the church as purposed in divine wisdom, is adequate under its own elders to do everything God authorized the church to do. God did not bind "how" the relief is to be administered, but he certainly did bind the "who."

Recent Deaths

A. H. STAGGS—This beloved gospel preacher worked for many years in southern Indiana and Kentucky. He preached at one time for the Gardiner Lane congregation in Louisville. About 6 weeks ago he passed away while living in Florida. While his health had been failing for sometime, he was helping a small congregation until a few days before his death. Funeral services were conducted in Sellersburg, Indiana by Frank Ingram with burial in Nashville, Tennessee. We express our sympathy to the remaining members of the family.

SHIRLEY STAUFFER—After a long battle with cancer, Shirley Stauffer, wife of gospel preacher L. A. Stauffer of Kirkwood, Missouri, fell asleep in the Lord on Sunday, July 12. Her radiant spirit, courage and confidence left an example for her husband, children and all who knew her. She was an excellent teacher and through her work in camps operated by Florida College she influenced the lives of countless young people who feel the loss keenly. Many congregations and individuals have been blessed through the faithful service of the Stauffers and share with L.A. and the

children the sense of loss. May the God of all comfort sustain them as they now ponder their many precious memories.

GREAT FAITH

Irven Lee

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Hartselle, AL 35640



There was a woman of Canaan who came to Jesus to plead for the recovery of her daughter. Her behavior on that occasion was such that our Lord was led to say: "O woman, great is thy faith" (Matt. 15:22-28). Does he find great faith when He looks into our hearts? If so, how great is it?

Is it great enough to continue through all the attacks and ridicule that come from this unbelieving and ungodly world? The crime rate is increasing rapidly, the divorce rate is alarming, fornication and drunkenness are accepted as ways of life. Each person finds a desire within himself to conform to the ways of the crowd rather than to be cut off from the crowd.

Is your faith strong enough to fight back? We have been asked to contend for the faith. We are to be able to give an answer to those who ask a reason for the hope that is in us (Jude 3; 1 Pet. 3:15). The faithful child of God is able to teach or speak so as to lead others to believe (2 Tim. 2:2; Rom. 10:17). This sin sick world is in great need of more people who have great faith. We have no room to think that it might be too great. There is no record of any one's having a faith that is too great. How could that be?

Is your faith great enough to cause you to confidently and boldly apply the principles of the word of God to your own life? The same measure of faith that would cause us to contend boldly and earnestly for the faith that was once delivered to the saints should surely cause us to obey every command and heed every warning delivered to us by holy men who were guided by the Holy Spirit. If we can so heartily recommend it to others we should be willing to practice what we preach.

It is inconsistent and hard to explain, but there have been men who were very effective teachers of truth who became immoral while preaching the truth. They say and do not. It might shock many of us if we know how many have appeared to be children of light by the things they said but are actually children of darkness in their behavior. Why do some fornicators preach the gospel? It would seem that any such person would give up one or the other. Our Lord was dealing with public teachers who sat in Moses' seat when He gave so many sharp rebukes in that last week of His life (Matt. 23). They loved the praise of men and other such things more than they loved the Lord Himself. In fact, the

leaders among the enemies of Jesus were priests, scribes, and rulers in the synagogues. Could similar things be true in our day? Enough teachers of the gospel are caught in ungodliness to let us know that this is a real problem.

Is your faith great enough to cause you to hunger and thirst after truth? Those who gladly receive the word by obeying it and teaching it would surely be eager to learn. Do you know of teachers who go to classes unprepared to teach? Do you know men who stand to preach who are poorly prepared? Can we think of enough excuses for our ignorance? A lack of Bible knowledge is very evident in many places. These teachers who lack knowledge evidently lack the power of discernment to recognize error when it is taught. There is great danger of apostasy when the teachers and leaders do not have their feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. It is time to be filled with alarm because there is not much evidence of Bible knowledge today, even among likable people who take much responsibility in church work.

A rush of worldly concerns consume the time rather than Bible study. Television, games, and other forms of recreation compete for our time after the day's work is done. In what percentage of the church families is Bible study a point of special emphasis in the day's activities? This lack of knowledge may show up in careless behavior and speech. It may dull the edge of boldness and firmness in the teacher. Faith comes by hearing the word of God so where there is little knowledge and study there is little faith.

The man of great faith is not ashamed of the testimony of the Lord. He is eager to understand it and to live in harmony with it. Great faith is alive and active. A man may say he has faith, but he may fail to demonstrate it by his activities.

The man who loves the truth will find great joy in its promises and see the wisdom in its precepts. Many who are called Christians may find almost all their pleasure in something this world offers. America seems to have gotten beside itself in excitement over athletic events, boating, fishing, and even over the offerings of Hollywood. A day only has twenty four hours, and a week has only seven days. When can we find time for the most important things? The church itself is made up of many people who are caught up in the whirl of things that interest the unbelievers. The beauty of holiness, the hope of glory, and the power of the gospel may hardly be noticed by these busy people who know of things that interest them more. Where are our priorities?

Christ has advice we need, precious promises to encourage us, and many needed warnings, but there is little offered to the man of little faith. Knowledge and faith come by the same time consuming effort. The great joy and consolation that came to Paul in prison are not available to people whose thoughts and deeds center in material or worldly things. Do we realize the peace He offers? Have we no understanding of the joy that comes to the more devout? We cannot do everything, so we should select things of eternal value to fill more of our time. How great is your faith?

"THERE OUGHT
TO BE A LAW"

Ernest A. Finley

416 20th Ave. N.
Texas City, TX 77590



How many times have you heard some fellow say, in exasperation with some situation that has developed or something unbecoming that someone else has done, **"There ought to be a law!"**? Did you ever stop to think about this statement a bit? Just about every time this statement is made, if one will do a bit of searching he will find out that there already is a law relating to the very evil that has proved so disturbing. In fact, if you check it out, you will find that God, Himself, has given a law or made a statement that deals with the problem. Let's take a look at a few examples.

Have you ever seen a person who was characterized by such slovenliness, who was so slipshod in his work, in fact, who was just simply so downright lazy that you were more than a little tempted to say, "There ought to be a law against a feller bein' that lazy!"? The fact is, there is more than a little said in God's Word about the sluggard or his disposition. The statements are quite pointed. Solomon wrote: "How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as a robber, And thy want as an armed man" (Prov. 6:9-11). **Paul gave some rather strong language directed against those who will not work:** "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, If any will not work, neither let him eat" (2 Thess. 3:10). We have a lot of **"dead-beats", leeches, and "spongers"** in our society who live off the productivity of the industrious segment of society. I think it would be good to apply the rule that was given by Paul to the Thessalonians. A little hunger might cure a lot of laziness. So—in this particular area, if you feel that there ought to be a law dealing with the problem, there already is.

More than once I have run into such a gross display of immodesty or undress that I have found myself saying, "There ought to be a law against such indecent exposure!" But, come to think of it, there already is. Folks just do not pay any attention to it. Or at least most folks don't. But here it is, plain and clear, right on the pages of Holy Writ: "In like manner, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefastness and sobriety; not with braided hair, and gold or pearls or costly raiment: but (which becometh **women professing godliness**) through good works" (1 Tim. 2:9, 10). **There it is. God saw the need for such a law and gave it to us. Let's respect it!**

Did you ever see a sister just about take complete

control of a class, a mixed class, and do more teaching from her seat than the man who was standing on the floor trying to teach the class? Did you ever, out of sympathy for the teacher and the class, think, "There ought to be a law against a woman's dominating the class in that fashion."? Well, you won't have to bother passing such a law. It is already in the Book. Paul called for a disposition of reserve and restraint on the part of a woman. "Let a woman learn in quietness with all subjection. But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness" (1 Tim. 2:11, 12). That should be sufficient for one who is satisfied with the Lord's word in the matter.

Were you ever tempted to say, "There ought to be a law," when you see some fellow with disgustingly long hair walking down the street or riding by on his motorcycle? The Holy Spirit saw fit to deal with this problem too. He guided the pen of Paul to reveal these words: "Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a dishonor to him? (1 Cor. 11:14). Many people do not see the shame of it, but if they had read their Book and believed it, they would. Or, perhaps, I should say they see the dishonor and shame of it, but they ignore it in order to go along with the crowd. It is still a shame!

Have you ever groaned within when you are watching TV and you see a young gang of "rebels" throwing rocks and bottles at the police? Surely, there ought to be a law against such conduct! To make such an observation is almost ludicrous. Certainly, there is such a law. Peter dealt with the matter of civil government and the respect that should be shown toward those who represent it: "Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether to the king, as supreme; or unto governors sent by him for vengeance on evil-doers and for praise to them that do well . . . Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king" (1 Pet. 2:13, 14, 17). The beloved brother Paul also wrote concerning civil government and our attitude toward it: "Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God. Therefore he that resisteth the power, withstandeth the ordinance of God: and they that withstand shall receive to themselves judgment. . . Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor" (Rom. 13:1, 2, 7). Agents of civil government, when fulfilling their divinely appointed role, are "ministers of God" (Rom. 13:4, 6). We must respect them and be in subjection to them.

I have seen rebellious children do just about everything but spit on their parents and I am sure that this has happened also. "There ought to be a law," we may say. There is, in both the Old and New Covenants. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise), that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth" (Eph. 6:1-3). See also Ex. 20:12 and Deut. 5:16. God saw that there was a need for such a law and He gave it. Let us

teach our children to respect it. They will be the better and the happier for it.

I am sure that the Lord does not call upon me to hold in respect those who will not shoulder their responsibility as parents. A mother and father who will abandon their children to someone else to raise, are not worthy of the name "mother" and "father." There have been many instances in which children have literally starved to death physically simply because of the inhumanity of their parents. But there are many more children who are starving to death spiritually. "There ought to be a law," someone says. Well, there is. Paul wrote, "But if any provideth not for his own, and specially his own household, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Tim. 5:8).

Rending asunder the body of Christ is a terrible thing. Fomenting strife and division and contention is a great hindrance to the progress of the cause of Christ. The way some folks behave in the church, the attitudes they manifest toward their brethren,—*"There ought to be a law."* Well, friend, there is. When Paul found division and strife among the brethren, he wrote, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned: and turn away from them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Christ, but their own belly; and by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent" (Rom. 16:17, 18). There is a sense in which one can never destroy the kingdom of Christ. It shall stand forever. But one may destroy its well-being. In local instances, one may cause it to sicken and die. But woe to him who is responsible for the evil that is wrought. Paul stated succinctly, "If any man destroyeth the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, and such are ye" (1 Cor. 3:17).

Many young people, and older ones too, will go to bed with just about anybody who asks or consents. Marriage is out of date for some. Just "shackin' up" is preferred. The situation is bad and getting worse. Many who marry seem to regard marriage as a sort of "trial-and-error" proposition. Try them a while and if you do not find them to your liking ship them out and order another one. Many hearts are broken. Many lives are ruined. "There ought to be a law," one may say. There is. "Let marriage be had in honor among all, and let the bed be undefiled: for fornicators and adulterers God will judge" (Heb. 13:4). Fornication is listed by Paul among the "works of the flesh." He further tells us, "that they who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19-21).

In fact, we may think "There ought to be a law" against the wide prevalence of evil and wickedness that is manifest in our society and the world today. But God took care of that thousands of years ago through the prophet Enoch, the father of Methuselah, "... Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, Behold, the Lord came when ten thousands of his holy ones, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their works of ungodliness which they have ungodly wrought, and of all the hard

things which ungodly sinners have spoken against him" (Jude 14, 15). God did not see fit to record much that Enoch said, but what He did record has plenty of impact. We are not left in doubt in regard to where Enoch stood on the matter of ungodliness. I am glad that God let us have this much insight into the mind of a man who was so upright in character that "God took him" (Gen. 5:24). Enoch did not "pull any punches." Neither can we if we are going to please Him.

When you feel moved to say, "There ought to be a law," take a look into God's Word. You will find that where a law was needed, God has already taken care of the problem.

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EVIDENCES OF DIGRESSION

From time to time I have often pointed out evidence that some churches of Christ are departing from the teaching of the New Testament. Many of these lessons have fallen upon deaf ears because as Jesus said of some in Mt. 13:15, "... this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."

Some will say, "Well, the only difference between you and other brethren is just over the orphan home question." This shows that somebody does not know what is going on.

A church in Nashville, Tennessee, hired a full-time coach, different kinds of recreation are engaged in, and all of this provided by the church. A church in Memphis, Tennessee built a lodge out in the forest, spending thousands and thousands of dollars for such items as cabins, a fishing lake, a swimming pool, and other such things. These two facts by themselves should prove to one that there is more involved in the controversy within the churches of Christ than just what is called the "orphan home" question.

But this is not the basic trouble within the church of the Lord. An Old Testament example will show the very attitude and what the Lord said of it. You will recall that when the children of Israel were in Rephidim that they murmured against Moses and said, "Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?" Moses took the matter to the Lord in these words, "What shall I do unto this people? They are almost ready to stone me." The Lord said unto Moses as recorded in Exodus 17:5-6, "Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and the rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go. Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel."

Upon another occasion when Israel was in need of water, this time they were in Kadesh, as recorded in Numbers, chapter 20. Israel again came and complained unto Moses and Aaron about their having no water. They came "unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation" and the Lord spoke to Moses,

saying, "Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink" (Num. 20:8).

But what did Moses do upon this occasion? He gathered the congregation together before the rock and said unto them "Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also."

Notice the charge that God made unto Moses and Aaron, "**Because ye believed me not**, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them" (Num. 20:12). God charged them with unbelief. The problem in the church today in unbelief.

The Broad Street church in Cookeville, Tennessee once planned a "1600 seat auditorium, with a matching educational space including a day school, off-street parking, and finally a nursing home." The plans for the first unit "call for 325 seat chapel to be used as temporary auditorium, fellowship hall which can double as a gym and three class rooms designed for use in a Christian day school. ... Part of parking area near fellowship hall will be designed for recreation area." Now what is this church of Christ in Cookeville, Tennessee going to do that the Bible authorizes which requires a gym and a day school?

From the bulletin of the Broadway church of Christ in Lubbock, Texas October 20, 1963 is the announcement of one of the elders elected as the "Chairman of the Elders" and another elder is elevated to the "Vice-Chairman of the Elders." In what passage in the word of the Lord do you read about Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Elders?

In a **North Atlantic Christian** magazine in 1963, I read, "A Nation-Wide Youth Rally will be held in New York City August 18-24 sponsored by the Washington Heights church of Christ. Some 800 young people are expected to attend this Rally to meet and discuss the various problems of youth in the 20th century. The Rally will be under the direction of Howard U. Johnson, minister of the Washington Heights congregation. Various prominent figures have been invited to attend the opening of the Rally, including Dr. Martin Luther King. In order to accommodate the large numbers, the facilities of a nearby Baptist Church have been secured for the meetings; the leadership of this Baptist Church has been in touch with the Washington Heights Church through contacts made through the Herald of Truth radio program."

Brethren, do you think it is just the orphan home question that is the difference between members in the church of Christ. Here is a church of Christ, in contact with a Baptist church, and the way they got in contact with each other was through the Herald of Truth. Fur-

thermore, they had a denominational preacher to come speak to the church of Christ, and that speaker was none other than "Dr. Martin Luther King".

The church of the Lord has digressed into apostasy further than anybody would have ever thought. It is out of a love for your souls that I am trying to get you to wake up and not let institutional preachers sell you a bill of goods all wrapped up under the pretense of "faithfulness to the Lord" when the inside of the package plainly reveals it is digression, sectarianism, apostasy in complete dress.

We are calling brethren to come back to the Bible and for "a thus saith the Lord" for the old time kind of gospel preaching, with book, chapter, and verse for all that we do. Preachers among us at one time were men of power, men of persuasion, and men of conviction; but these same men today have lost all the power, the conviction, and ability they ever had to preach the simple Gospel of Jesus Christ. They will boldly affirm that they believe in debating and will even boast of having had debates, yet when one challenges them for a debate, they run from the polemic platform.

If it be said that no apostle ever signed a formal proposition or that Jesus Christ never did such, do we understand that when propositions have been signed that this was wrong? My friends, I tell you what no apostle of Jesus Christ nor Jesus Christ would have ever done; they would not have let anyone challenge them week in and week out, month in and month out, year in and year out, and not come face to face with him and expose his false doctrine with all of the power and conviction of the word of God. It is enough to make every faithful child of God sick to hear men affirm that they are great defenders of the faith, when all of them put together do not evidence the convictions of any of the apostles.

If I were to tell you that Tom O'Neal was the best quail hunter in this part of the country, you might be willing to put some confidence in my word for a while; but the time would come, having heard so much about what I was supposed to be able to do, that you would like to see it demonstrated. If when you called upon me to evidence my ability, I said one time that I decided not to show it, another time I said I had a cold, another time I didn't have a gun, and another time I was completely out of shells, you would know that I couldn't hit the broad side of a barn.

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WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SAVED (1)

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Many sermons have been preached on the subject of What must I do to be saved? Comparatively few, however, to my knowledge, have been preached on what it means to be saved. Yet it is reasonable to assume that one will appreciate salvation to the extent that he or she understands what is involved in the transaction. It is with the hope of assisting in a better understanding of what is involved in being saved from sin that this series of articles is written.

Salvation Is From Heaven

It must be recognized first of all, that salvation is from heaven. Paul ascribed salvation to God, "Who saved us, and called us with a heavenly calling" (2 Tim. 1:9). But he also ascribed salvation to Christ, when he said, "Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. 1:15).

Salvation—The Purpose of Christ's Mission

From the beginning of his personal ministry, Jesus recognized that the purpose of his mission to earth was to save men from their sins. It was on that basis that he justified himself in his conduct in associating with sinners—some of them sinners of the deepest dye. So when his enemies, who were ever on the alert for something in his life whereby they could discredit him, murmured and professed a righteous indignation because he had gone to dine in the house of Zachaeus, the publican, Jesus' reply was, "For the Son of man is come to seek and save that which was lost" (Luke 19:11). On another occasion he said, "For I came not to judge the world, but to save the world" (John 12:47).

When the apostles went out preaching under the great commission, they preached Christ as the Saviour of the world. In a discourse before the Jews, Peter said, "Him did God exalt at his right hand to be a Prince and Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins" (Acts 5:31). The apostle John said of Jesus, "And we have beheld, and bear witness that the Father hath sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (1 John 4:14).

Salvation Defined

As with all subjects, it is well to have, at the beginning, a definition of the terms used. Like other words of the English language, the word salvation takes on various forms, depending on the grammatical use. There is the word, save, which is the verb form, and used in the present, past, and future tenses—save,

saved, and shall be saved. Then it occurs in the active and passive voices—save and be saved. This word, save, may be broadly defined as, To deliver from peril or danger. The passive form, be saved, suggest the idea of escape from danger. The noun form, salvation, may thus be understood as the process of saving, or the state enjoyed by one who has been saved.

The word, saved, is sometimes used in the Bible with reference to deliverance from, or escape from enemies. The writer of Exodus tells us how that God parted the waters of the Red Sea, allowing the children of Israel to pass through, which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned (Ex. 14:21-29). The result is stated in the words, "Thus Jehovah saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians" (Ex. 14:30).

The word, saved, is also sometimes used in the Bible in the sense of deliverance or escape from a wicked environment. Peter tells us that "the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is eight souls were saved by water, which also after a true likeness doth now save you even baptism..." (1 Peter 3:20, 21).

This passage of scripture has given denominational preachers no little trouble in their efforts to explain away its obvious meaning. They tell us that it cannot be a figure of salvation by baptism, which requires getting into the water; whereas Noah was saved by staying out of the water. This passage, however, does not say that Noah was saved from water. They miss the point there. It says that he was saved by water. But how were Noah and his family saved by water, when that same water destroyed all the rest of humanity? The answer, of course, lies in that from which they were saved.

Look at the background. The sixth chapter of Genesis tells us that man had become so wicked that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. If the few righteous people that remained were to be saved from such as ungodly environment, it could be accomplished only by the complete destruction of all the wicked. To that end the flood was sent, and the waters of the flood that destroyed the wicked, bore up the ark and its passengers, and carried them to a new and cleansed world.

It is in that sense that we are saved by baptism, and therefore "a true likeness" of Noah's salvation by water. As the waters of the flood carried Noah and his family to a new and purified world, so also baptism is the dividing line where we leave the old world of sin and enter Christ. Paul said, "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ, have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27). It is in Christ that we find forgiveness of sins (Eph. 1:7). In Christ we are a new creature where old things are passed away, all things are become new (2 Cor. 5:17).

From the above definition and examples of salvation, it follows that salvation from sin is the deliverance or escape from the guilt of sin and its just penalty. Paul reminded the Thessalonians that they had been "delivered from the wrath that is to come" (1

Thess. 1:10). Peter told those to whom he wrote that they had "escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust" (2 Peter 1:4).

The Dark Background

Just as one who has recovered from a serious illness can appreciate his return to health, only as he understands the gravity of the disease from which he recovered, so also we can appreciate salvation, only as we view it against the dark background of sin with its immediate consequences and its ultimate punishment. Sin carries with it consequences both here and hereafter.

1. Sin separates man from God. Isaiah said, "Behold, Jehovah's hand is not shortened that it can not save; neither is 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 so that he will not hear" (Isa. 59:1, 2). Paul described those who are without God as being also without hope (Eph. 2:12).

2. Sin makes man an enemy of God. To the Colossians Paul wrote, "And you being in time past alienated and enemies in your mind in your evil works" (Col. 1:21). We are accustomed to saying that man, with God on his side, is able to face any crisis in life. Conversely, it is a fearful thought for one to realize that God is his enemy, even though he has the whole world on his side.

3. The continued practice of sin makes one a bond-servant or a slave of sin. Jesus said, "Whosoever committeth sin is a bondservant of sin" (John 8:34). It is a simple law of nature that persistent practice of any vice will crystallize into a habit, or pattern of life. The one who persistently steals will eventually become a compulsive thief, stealing even things for which he has no use. The man who persistently lies, will eventually become a compulsive liar, seemingly unable to tell the truth. Through the prophet Jeremiah, God said, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin? or the leopard his spots? So neither can my people do good that are accustomed to do evil" (Jer. 13:23).

4. Sin defiles man. On one occasion the scribes and Pharisees found fault with the disciples of Jesus because they ate with unwashed hands—a matter which the Pharisees were very scrupulous about doing. After pointing out to them that they elevated the traditions of men above the word of God, Jesus then turned to his disciples and said, "Perceive ye not that whatsoever from without goeth into the man, it cannot defile him That which proceedeth out of the man, that defileth the man. For them within, out of the heart of man evil thoughts proceed, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, covetings, wickednesses, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, railing, pride, foolishness: all these things proceed from within and defile the man" (Mark 7:18-23).

5. Sin has eternal consequences. "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). This is not just the death of the body. That comes to sinner and saint alike. The writer of Revelation describes it as the second death in the

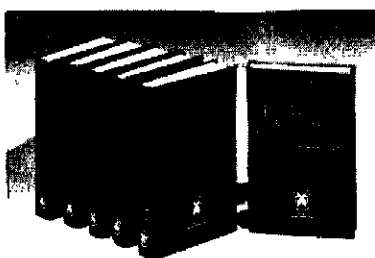
lake of fire (Rev. 21:8). Jesus called it hell where the fire is not quenched (Mark 9:48).

Good News

The word gospel, means good news. The good news of the gospel is that the sinner can be saved. It means that though separated from God by sin, he can be brought back to God. It means that though an enemy of God through sin, he can be reconciled to God. It means that though he has become a bondservant of sin, he can be made free from that service. It means that though he has been defiled by sin, he can be cleansed from its filth. Surely such news should be cause for rejoicing. And it has been. When Philip met the Ethiopian eunuch on the Jerusalem to Gaza road, the eunuch was much perplexed as to the meaning of the prophecy he was reading. When they parted, the eunuch went on his way rejoicing in the salvation he had found in Christ (Acts 8:39). When an earthquake shook the prison house in Philippi, the jailor was about to kill himself. But before the night ended he and his house rejoiced in the salvation he found through the preaching of Paul (Acts 16:34).

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THREE VIEWS OF ONE TEXT

The service had ended and the preacher, as was his custom, moved to the foyer to greet the people. A visitor upon leaving paused a moment and inquired, "Preacher, why do you folks observe the Lord's Supper only on Sunday?" The preacher would likely have given one of three views for its observance. This would depend on where the church of Christ was located and the preacher's view on Acts 20:7. View number one is that of the restoration movement. These grand old soldiers of the cross held to the view that Acts 20:7, of itself, was sufficient authority for the observance of the supper on Sunday only. View number two came into existence in the late forties and early fifties. It had its birth soon after the sponsoring church. It consisted of the basic idea that Acts 20:7, of itself, was not sufficient authority for a weekly observance of the Lord's Supper. The thrust of the argument was that this passage needed either a command to back it up or other scriptures to sustain the basic idea. Its purpose was to neutralize and perhaps counteract arguments against the sponsoring churches and the support of orphan homes in the brotherhood. The third view is that Acts 20:7, of itself, is not binding in any respect. That it permits one to observe the supper on Sunday but would not eliminate its observance on any other day. This view came into existence in the late sixties and early seventies as a result of view number two and to give certain brethren more leverage in regard to innovations within the confines of the church. These are the three basic views, and now as they say on a certain television program "Will the real Acts 20:7 please stand up?" Is it view number one, view number two or view number three?

It is, indeed unfortunate that a uniform answer cannot be given with reference to this great text. Certainly, the Bible does not teach all three. It might be well in the beginning to give the text, "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them." With no desire to cause consternation among brethren, I will discuss the three views.

View number one was espoused by men of the restoration movement. They held to the idea that Acts 20:7 of itself gave ample authority for the observance of the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week exclusively. They were not oblique to all passages on the supper but knew that only one mentioned the TIME

element. When they read such passages as Phil. 4:9, this enhanced their conviction that apostolic examples were binding. Paul said, "Those things which you have both learned, and received, and heard and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you." It was their deep conviction that when Paul had given the instruction to DO the things they had SEEN in him that **approved apostolic examples were definitely binding**. They felt the Bible was explicit with reference to approved examples and ones which were not approved. They were fully cognizant that some examples were "bad" and not intended for emulation. For years the church of Christ had practiced the observance of the Lord's supper every Sunday, based on Acts 20:7. However, in the late forties and early fifties, new clouds appeared on the horizon. The clouds had embedded in them what was called the sponsoring church and orphan asylums which brings us to view number two.

With the coming of the sponsoring churches, a new look was taken at Acts 20:7. In 1958 a book called *We Be Brethren* was published and edited by J. D. Thomas, professor of Bible, at Abilene Christian College. In this book, brother Thomas gives his expertise on our text. So that our readers may employ a degree of equanimity, I give a direct quote from the book on page 93. He hits the key note when he says, "Traditionally, we in the restoration movement have accepted the teaching of the examples of the Christians at Troas in the Acts 20:7 context as establishing definitely and unmistakable a pattern-authority to the effect that the Lord's Supper was to be partaken of every first day of the week, and on that day exclusively!" Thomas goes on to say, "When brethren, however, began to question the practices that we had been following with reference to cooperation and orphan homes, and to claim there was a Biblical pattern limiting how cooperation could scripturally be accomplished, this caused the question of the teaching on examples to be placed under the 'microscope' for careful investigation and as we indicated earlier, some of our very good brethren came to the conclusion that examples do not teach binding matters at all."

Please note that Thomas, in the above, acquiesces to several vital things. (1) He admits that the men of the restoration used Acts 20:7 exclusively as pattern authority for the observance of the supper. (2) He admits that until the coming of the sponsoring churches and orphan homes, the practice was never questioned. (3) He admits that it was put under the "microscope" when they were challenged with reference to the sponsoring churches and orphan homes. This proves beyond any doubt that these "good brethren" he speaks of would have never used the "microscope" if it had not been for their pet projects which were unknown in apostolic times. One does not have to be astute to see the reason Acts 20:7 was put under the microscope. It was the fact that the innovations in the church had been challenged. These brethren had the mental acumen to see their dilemma. If Acts 20:7, as an approved example, gave ample authority for the ex-

clusive observance of the Supper on Sunday; then 2 Cor. 11:8 and Phil. 4:15, 16 gave ample authority to exclusively send directly to the evangelist and down goes the sponsoring church! The same would be true of the orphan homes based on 1 Cor. 16:1,2; Acts 11:29,30 which authorizes sending directly to a church in the field of benevolence. Brother Thomas knew very well these examples either stand or fall together. However, he still had a problem. The Lord's Supper on the first day of the week must be salvaged out of this complicated web. Brethren at this point were not ready to throw the Lord's Supper out the window. So the problem was to get rid of direct support to the evangelist and also direct support to a needy church in benevolence and yet save the Lord's Supper on Sunday. This was an impossible task but not for J. D. Thomas. He was the man of the hour. With the art of a modern Houdini and the audacity of a Goliath, he addressed himself to the task. To be as pragmatic as possible, I now give you another quote from his book. Page 96, says, "The full authority for the Biblical pattern of the TIME (emp. mine) of the Lord's Supper is based upon four contexts: Hebrews 10:25; 1 Corinthians 16:1,2; 1 Corinthians 11:20-26 and Acts 20:7." Please note he said the "Biblical pattern for the TIME of the Supper" was based on three texts besides Acts 20:7. How in the name of common reasoning could a text have anything to do with the TIME of the supper when they do not mention the TIME at all? The three passages mention assembling, the Lord's supper and giving on the first day of the week but not one mentions the Lord's Supper on the FIRST day of the week. This is the real issue. It seems brother Thomas, operated under the delusion that any passage mentioning assembling, worship, the Lord's Supper or giving would be directly related to the TIME element. Such is faulty reasoning. I recall a Baptist preacher used this kind of logic with reference to foot-washing as an act of worship. Like Thomas he compacted such passages as Jno. 13:5 and 1 Tim. 5:10 to vindicate his position on worship. He argued that Jesus had washed the disciple's feet and the widow had washed the saint's feet and since they were all in the church, it is an act of worship in the church. The scriptures used by the Baptist lacked one thing and that was the act of worship! Brother Thomas' scriptures for the Lord's supper on Sunday lack one thing and that was the TIME element which in this case was the first day of the week.

Kind friend, you may search your Bible from cover to cover and you will find only one text which mentions the Lord's supper and TIME and that is Acts 20:7. Finding scriptures on assembling, giving, etc. does not solve the problem of TIME. Finding scriptures on foot-washing and hospitality does not solve the problem of worship! In the field of polemics some of the old time debaters called this sort of subterfuge "chasing rabbits." The reason for this title was that the real issue was sometimes smothered and even forgotten in favor of side issues.

The third and last view was a take-off from Thomas' book. In 1974 the **Firm Foundation** published a book

by one Milo Richard Hadwin, entitled *The Role of New Testament Examples As Related To Biblical Authority*. A rather long title but one which expresses brother Hadwin's views on our text. He sums up his arguments on page 47 when he says, "This study has concluded that examples have no inherent authority to require imitation. This implies that the mere fact that disciples at Troas came together to break bread upon the first day of the week, does not require Christians today to do the same. To do the same would be permissible, at least but not required."

You will notice Milo Hadwin said the Lord's Supper on Sunday is permissible but not required. I completely disagree with this young man but I glory in his spunk. He threw caution to the wind, defied his professor and expressed his views. He wrote this book as a thesis for his master's degree. Frankly, I feel Milo Hadwin is more consistent than J. D. Thomas. Hadwin threw apostolic examples out the window and never did bat an eye. Thomas, on the other hand, tried to cling tenaciously to Acts 20:7 in order to save the Supper but tossed the examples of church cooperation out the window. At least Hadwin was consistent. This is one of the reasons he attacked Thomas' position relative to Bible examples. He saw the inconsistency and capitalized on them.

Thomas, in feeling the impact of Hadwin's book has come out with a sequel called *Heaven's Window*, in which he tries in vain to patch up his original work, *We Be Brethren*. In this book he tries to refute what Hadwin said by coming back to a more conservative position. Where will all of this stop? Well, to a sincere child of God it has already stopped. He has forgotten this foolish rhetoric and has made his way back to the Bible.

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"For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?" (Romans 11:34). There have been great minds in the world but none comparable to the mind of Christ. The accumulated wisdom and intelligence of mankind compares to the mind of Christ as a grain of sand compares to the sandy wastes of the deserts of this world. Even Solomon in all his glory could not compare to Christ in this respect.

One of the most frightening things that can cross our minds is the fact that the mind of Christ is so vast and deep that there is nothing that can escape its apprehension and perception. Even our own lives are open and bare to His knowledge. Christ knows the innermost workings of the thinking, planning, motivation, and intentions of all men. He knows the quality of our faith, our profession and our obedience.

This staggering feature of the mind of Christ is demonstrated vividly in John 2:23-25. "Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in him, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men. And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man." As if lying right on top of this event, one immediately knows that He has every right to know what is in us for He participated in our origin (John 1:3-4; Col. 1:16).

Jesus was in Jerusalem at the time of the passover, an important feast day for the Jewish people. He produced many miracles early in His earthly life. Many of them are not recorded and the apostle John takes special note of this (John 20:30, 31). Miracles, or signs as John calls them, were not designed to create faith—they served to confirm that which is to be believed. It is by the miracles that they saw and we read about that faith in Christ is possible. Miracles strengthen our faith and our faith is to be in Christ.

Those who are converted to miracles or so-called miracles need then to have them perpetuated in order that they may continue to believe. Take the modern so-called "faith healing cult." Their vain and ungodly efforts to duplicate or counterfeit some of the miracles of Christ speaks loudly of their superficial faith. Their unreasonable and tenacious clinging to such fakery is plain evidence that they do not believe in Christ—they believe in their version of "miracles."

Those who saw the miracles of Jesus differ from those of today who claim to believe miracles still are being performed only in that they saw actual miracles from Christ. Those of today have never seen a real miracle. These people "believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did," says John. But Jesus

did not commit himself to them. The reason why He would not commit Himself to them is said to be the fact that He knew all men.

This may seem strange to some people—especially those who preach that men are saved by the mere act of believing, before and without any further act of obedience, but Jesus did not accept the faith of those in Jerusalem as genuine. There is really a play-on-words here. The same word is used of both the people and the Lord. They "believed" (EPISTEUSAN) and He "committed Himself" (EPISTEUEN). Godet explains it that Christ had no faith in their faith. They believed Him, but He did not believe them. Godet says, "He discerns the insufficient nature of their faith." (*Commentary on St. John's Gospel*, B. Godet, Vol. II, p. 40).

Why did the Lord reject their belief in Him? He knew them. The word for "knew" here in the text is the ordinary word for becoming aware of certain facts. But the insight Christ has into the hearts of all men is not that which came about by natural means. In the next chapter His insight into the motives of men is illustrated in his conversation with Nicodemus. The same is true in chapter 4:29 with the Samaritan woman, as well as with His disciples (16:30), Judas (6:70; 13:11) and Thomas (20:27). Jesus did not need to even question mankind to know what men thought. In fact, He seldom asked questions, and I know of only a few instances that indicate that He truly wanted information. It is of interest also to notice that the definite article is present before the word man in vs. 25, indicating man generally. Chapter three begins with the statement that "there was a man", indicating the specific person of Nicodemus. By this we can infer that Jesus knows man from generic to specific, from inside out, top to bottom, in every aspect of human existence. The fact that the article is there also may mean "the man from time to time with whom He had to deal." (B. F. Westcott).

One of the great proofs of the Deity of Christ is His supernatural knowledge of man. Only God can know the heart of man. God said to Jeremiah, "I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings" (Jer. 17:10). The same is said in Jer. 20:12. Let us consider together just a few of the things we know He knows about man. Although He does not need that anyone testify to Him of man, we need to know all we can of what He knows about us.

1. He knows the nature of man. Jesus said of Nathanael, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile" (John 1:47). This was not merely a benevolent appraisal of the man—this was the expression of one who could know the very nature of Nathanael. It was enough to convince Nathanael, for he exclaimed, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel" (vs. 49). But for a practical lesson we ought to think of ourselves. Our Lord knows our nature. He knows who we are and how we are put together and how we tick. Question: Are we trying to deceive Him by covering up our sins? Read Galatians 6:7,8.

2. He knows the fickleness of man. He rejected the faith of those in Jerusalem. They believed in Him because they saw the signs. He knew that those who were struck by the great phenomena He did would soon tire of the miraculous and drift away from Him. Those who ate the fishes and loaves deserted Him almost before the scraps were gathered up (John 6:66). Even among His own disciples He said, "But there are some of you that believe not" (vs. 64). No one could think that His disciples would do anything but stand and affirm their faith in Him, but He knew better. He knew from the very beginning who would betray Him. But He still knows the fickleness of man. He knows of those of us in the world today who run hot for a while and then cool off rapidly. He knows of our hypocrisies and sham. He will as surely reject our empty profession of faith in Him now as He did those then.

3. He knows the mind of man. When we stop to consider, there is really very little that we know about our own thought process. We know very little about our own intellect, our emotions, our will. We know we have such things, but how much of the ingredients and workings of them can we really know? One evidence of our ignorance of our own mind is the often repeated expression of a "heartfelt religion." Denominationalists use this to explain their sensations they experience in their version of salvation. But Christ knows everything about our minds. He knows the source of every influence on us, every thought and action and the birth of them. He likewise knows our feelings and their sources, our emotions and their effects on our actions. He knows these things when we cannot or will not even perceive them ourselves. Perhaps if we could know what the Lord knows about our minds we would not be confused and bewildered on so many things in life.

4. He knows the capacities of man. He holds man responsible for what he is able to do. Paul said as much when encouraging the Corinthians to a liberal donation for the relief of the needy saints in Jerusalem (2 Cor. 8:12). The parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30) teaches us that our opportunities, commensurate with our abilities lay responsibility on us for which we are individually accountable. It is fearful to think that the Lord really knows our capacities in giving of our money to further His cause and then knows what we are actually doing. He knows our capacity to grow in grace and knowledge. He knows our capacity to live the Christian life and our capacity to serve Him in all things, but also knows how far short of our capacity many of us are coming.

The question of real importance from all this is, Does Christ have faith in our faith? If He refused to commit Himself to those in whom He could see a superficial faith, will He do us some special favor and overlook our superficiality? Christ will have faith in any faith that obeys from the heart (Rom. 6:17). He has faith in faith only when that faith is active in working His works. (Gal. 5:6). He has faith in the faith of those whose lives are truly changed by the power of the word of God. "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing,

because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, *which effectually worketh also in you that believe*" (1 Thess. 2:13, my emphasis, DRS).

So when Jesus said, "I know my sheep," we know a little of how deep and thorough that knowledge is. If we belong to His sheepfold, we must know Him also. We cannot know ourselves as well as Christ knows us, but we can know Him who does know all about us. It is now time to examine our faith. Are we converted to Christ and does He commit Himself to our profession of faith. God help us all to have the faith He will accept.

THE COVETOUS SPIRIT OF AHAB

by
Charles Boshart
1229 Janeway Circle
Moore, Okla. 73160

Naboth the Jezreelite "had a vineyard" "hard by the palace of Ahab king of Samaria" (1 Kings 21:1) that Ahab desired,—deeply desired. He coveted Naboth's vineyard, actually, and that in transgression of the command, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house... nor anything that is thy neighbor's" (Exodus 20:17). This transgression led him further into sin (read 1 Kings 21) that would have been a disgrace to either subject or king and is a good example of the highest, socio-economically, sinking to the lowest, morally and spiritually.

The covetous spirit of Ahab teaches us that: I. A covetous spirit is unsatisfied with the most abundant possessions.

Ahab lived in the luxurious wealth of a king. He was "king of Samaria" (1 Kings 4:11). He lived in an "ivory house," and "built" a number "of cities" (1 Kings 22:39). He wore the robes of royalty and, no doubt, enjoyed the daintiest delicacies Samaria could serve for its monarch. But when Ahab surveyed all his wealth, all his luxurious surroundings, all the trappings of opulence in which he was submerged, it was not enough. He had to have Naboth's vineyard.

Part of the tragedy of covetousness is that its prisoner is never satisfied. In another connection, Ecclesiastes 1:8 says that "the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing." This is true of covetousness,—as true as if Ecclesiastes had been specifically dealing with it. Covetousness will gobble up a thousand possessions and then demand more.

And this suggests, further, that part of the cause of covetousness is to be obsessed beyond perspective. Covetousness does not allow us to see things in their proper relation to each other. The object of one's covetousness is, in general, the object of his consuming preoccupation. Ahab could not think of his fine home, his palace, the doubtlessly, well-groomed grounds and

well-cared-for gardens framing them like a beautiful picture, the large amounts of land he controlled. He could only think of a vineyard he did not have. Ample provisions never gratify the demon covetousness.

II. A covetous spirit gives way to petty childish distress when it cannot have what it wants.

1 Kings 21:4 says, "And Ahab came unto his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him; for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread."

Covetousness makes such demands on its captives that we are here presented with the spectacle of the king of Israel surrounded with regal luxury and monarchical finery fretting and blubbering because he does not own one vineyard! And if he can't have that vineyard, he will just fix Naboth. He will return to his bedroom, lie down, refuse to eat, refuse to talk, and be "sad" (v.5).

This is not the manly and courageous leadership Israel would need and look for in her king. It is not the nobility in action that should be reflected by the nobility of position. It is downright childish. But it is covetousness at work.

Christians should beware. Covetousness prevents maturity, hinders nobility, thwarts manliness, and reduces one to puerile silliness.

III. A covetous spirit is, often, unqualifiedly unscrupulous as to how its wishes are gratified.

In its obsessive drive to obtain the objects of its desire, covetousness will shamelessly use the most disreputable of agents. And in Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, covetousness had its agent.

Jezebel was a Phoenician, not a Jew, and was the daughter of Ethbaal, an idol worshipper. Jezebel brought with her into the house and life of Ahab her idol-worshipping habits and introduced Baal worship in Israel maintaining those who led in this idolatry. 1 Kings 18:19 states that "the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the Asherah, four hundred" "ate at Jezebel's table."

But she had an irreversible antipathy to Jehovah and was an inveterate enemy of his prophets. 1 Kings 18:4 refers to the time when Jezebel cut off the prophets of Jehovah. And 1 Kings 18:13 refers to the fact that "Jezebel slew the prophets of Jehovah." This was an extermination effort but "a hundred prophets" were "hid" "in a cave" (1 Kings 8:4) escaping murder at her hands.

When her beloved prophets of Baal suffered the miserable disgrace of defeat at Mount Carmel at the hands of Elijah and the true God, Jehovah, and were subsequently slain at the brook Kishon (see 1 Kings 13:40), Jezebel sent a message to Elijah saying, "So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time" (1 Kings 19:2).

Jezebel was a self-willed, ambitious, unfeeling murderess, ideally suited for the purposes of covetousness. For covetousness will often sanction deeds it does not

have the courage to do or to prevent. 1 Kings 21:7 says, "And Jezebel his wife said unto him, Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? Arise, and eat bread, and let thy heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite." And so she did through perjury and murder as recounted in 1 Kings 21.

Reader, can you believe that Ahab did not know something abominable, wicked, and heartless—something he was too cowardly to do—was about to be perpetrated? Can you believe Ahab could not have known had he wanted to? Ahab's covetousness held him back in willful ignorance while Jezebel, in brazen depravity, reached for the covetous ends of Ahab's heart. Ahab may have been too chicken-hearted to do what Jezebel did but his covetousness accepted the gift of her immoral atrocity, no questions asked.

Covetousness will desire and accept, no matter how its obsessions are gratified. No wonder it is forbidden to God's children.

IV. A covetous spirit will grasp its prize eagerly not caring how it has been acquired nor what problems it may bring.

1 Kings 21:15, 16 says, "And it came to pass when Jezebel heard that Naboth was stoned, and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give thee for money; for Naboth is not alive, but dead. And it came to pass when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it."

Observe that Ahab quickly went to "take possession of" Naboth's vineyard. Without, apparently, a single pang of regret wasted on the cruel fate of the righteous and harmless Naboth, without a single thought to Naboth's posterity, Ahab headed to Jezreel to immediately enjoy the possession of a new property. Does not covetousness cause a hardened state of mind?

His enjoyment, however, was destined to be quickly diluted. For while Ahab was surveying his new vineyard, the acquisition of which by whatever means was the only thing that could scratch his covetous itch, there confronted him, like an apparition from the other world, like "a ghost from a past he would like to banish," God's prophet, Elijah the Tishbite. He could not have the vineyard without the consequences of the manner in which it was acquired. He heard Elijah say, "Thus saith Jehovah, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession . . . thus saith Jehovah, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine" (1 Kings 21:19, 20). In subsequent verses, Ahab is told not only that he will suffer evil but that his family will be wiped out. Ahab thus learns that any acquisition secured by sin means peace is lost. For hovering over his head and festering in the back of his mind from that time on would be the sentence Elijah produced and he would be waiting for it to fall like Damacles' sword. And he would know peace no more. His covetousness had driven him to acquire

without regard to means and consequences.

V. The covetous spirit is blind to its true friends and its real foes.

When Ahab met Elijah in Naboth's vineyard, he said, "Hast thou found me mine enemy? (1 Kings 21:20)."

Ahab's covetousness had perverted for him all relations of all things. He did not really know that Jezebel was his enemy and Elijah his friend. He did not really care what was right and what was wrong. His driving compulsive covetousness for Naboth's vineyard blurred moral distinctions, disguised God's prophet as an enemy of legitimate interests and dressed up Jezebel as a friend of innocent acquirement.

Covetousness and sin now make man think that the Bible is his enemy. Is the sign across the road that says, "Danger—Road Out," an enemy? Neither is the Bible which says, "Put to death therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and **covetousness which is idolatry**; for which things' sake cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience..." (Colossians 3:5, 6). And "So then am I become your enemy by telling you the truth?" (Galatians 4:16).

The man who thinks that God's prophet is his enemy and who thinks that his finding him out is a calamity and a loss may be sure that an occasion of discovery of far more lasting effects is awaiting him someday. There is nothing more tragic, nothing more pathetic, than a human spirit confined with forgotten lies and dead transgressions. For there is always a foreboding uneasiness that there will be a just resurrection of deeds as well as a real resurrection of bodies. Ecclesiastes 12:14 says, "For God will bring every work into judgment, with every hidden thing whether it be good, or whether it be evil." And 2 Corinthians 5:10 states, "For we must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done whether it be good or bad."

Think what it will be in the day of judgment for a man to be followed after by the incriminating company of his own sins. Each fault he tried to forget and all the badness he tried to buy will be there to point not only a finger of accusation to indict but also a finger of direction of punishment.

VI. The covetous spirit may be brought to mourning for its sins.

1 Kings 21:27 states that "when Ahab heard these words" (i.e., the evil the Lord was going to bring on him) "that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and wept softly." In acknowledgement of this God said, "Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? . . ." (1 Kings 21:29).

Not even covetousness, callusing as it is, was sufficient to shield Ahab when the force of Divine condemnation came crashing down on his conscience. Without offering any of those responsibility-denying rationales, Ahab immediately caved in to the truthful charges Elijah made and the terrible consequences

Elijah announced. The King, in spite of his recent sins, and in spite of the further deteriorations of his character, was still reached by God's message of truth in plain, simple, and straightforward terms.

Most of God's people today could be saved from the corruption that is in the world by lust if all teachers of the truth would do as Elijah did—straightforwardly point out sin and show its consequences. A preacher or teacher who will not do this and will, moreover, compromise God's truth and righteousness and lower its standards so as to be like the world about us does not deserve to be in the same heaven with Elijah at all.

This tragic account in the life of King Ahab shows how sin infected his life and took that of another. Sin is seldom a solitary tragedy. It is almost never an exclusively individual phenomenon. And this is part of its curse. Covetousness, as do most forms of sin, corrupts its possessor and damages his associates, often beyond repair. The ugliness of sin in general, and of covetousness in particular, is our spiritual instruction from this king's bad example,—from the covetous spirit of Ahab.

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RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF GOD

In view of the fact that we are commanded to "rightly divide the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15), I believe that if a proper division of Scriptures was made by all those who are endeavoring to serve God, we would eliminate much of the religious confusion in the world today. For example, if we could just get people to accept the fact that Jesus lived and died under the Law of Moses (as well as all of his disciples who lived during that period of time) we would not have to continually try to get people to see that there is a distinction in what the "thief on the cross" had to do to be saved (in view of the fact that he was in the very bodily presence of Christ who could therefore say unto the thief, "this day shalt thou be with me in paradise") and what those of us who live today must do. For as we have already shown, Jesus (and the thief) both lived under the Law of Moses.

As we study and make a proper division of the Scriptures, we can readily see when the New Testament came into force. "For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth" (Hebrews 9:16-17).

If a person is to be converted to Christ today, he must learn those things Jesus taught his disciples after his death, burial and resurrection. In Mark 16:15-16 Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Also in Luke 24:47 Jesus said before He ascended into heaven, "... Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead on the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

Understanding that this distinction in "laws" must be made if we are to become New Testament Christians, we will deal with this subject in our next article.

THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

News Items to: Wilson Adams, 317Trinkle Ave., N.E., Roanoke, VA24012

REPORT FROM NORWAY

TOM BUNTING, Bergen, Norway—One year's work in Bergen, Norway has been completed and we now look ahead to the upcoming one. The past year's work has been hard and difficult. We have not been able to accomplish as much as we would have liked, yet progress is being made. The time has passed by quickly and it does not seem like we have been here one year. During the year we have had encouragements and discouragements. It has been a year of learning and readjusting. Improvement has been made with the language but we still have a long way to go in this regard.

Concerning the efforts and work during this past year includes about 30 people taking the correspondence course. Of these, eight have completed it and a few still continue. Unfortunately all of these live in other parts of Norway rather than in our area. I have written 45 single spaced pages answering questions the students have raised in connection with the course. We have had many people in our home and we have visited in several homes. We have been able to arrange two home Bible studies which have lasted several weeks, one of which still continues. This class is with a young couple who seem to be very interested but since they have no Bible background it will take some time to teach them. There have been 16 large teaching ads in newspapers away from Bergen and 3 such articles in the Bergen paper. There have also been 23 small ads in the Bergen paper. We have printed one correspondence course and twelve different tracts in Norwegian. I have four other tracts and another correspondence course written, but they need translating before having them printed. Due to translation and printing being so expensive we have to do things as finances permit. Hopefully by the end of the summer or early fall we will have these ready. It makes it very difficult when all our material has to be translated and printed new, for there are no publishing firms here in Norway.

For the distribution of materials and tracts we have built a portable tract display which we set up in different areas of Bergen. Each time we wish to set it up permission must be gained from local authorities. We set the stand up on the sidewalk and passing people may stop and take whatever material they are interested in. Usually there is a large headline or question at the top of the stand which deals with the tracts found in the display. So far it has proven to be an excellent way to distribute material.

We have Bible study and worship services in our home, but few have attended. At first an elderly lady attended regularly for a few months but has not attended since January. In February an American family moved here and attended with us the few weeks they were here on government business. Other Norwegians have visited but not returned. We have had one interesting contact with a man who lives 1 1/2 hours north of Bergen. I have had several conversations with him by letter and we went to see him last month. He claims he is a member of the true church and from our visit it would seem he has a good understanding of the scriptures. Since our visit he has talked with me and asked that I send him copies of all the tracts and correspondence courses I have and he is going to try to interest others in his community. In addition to this we are so happy to have our middle son, Terrell, come and join us in the work here. He will be here for at least one year to help us in our efforts. Just this one addition has been such an encouragement to us. Norway needs workers. I wish you could see how little work is being done in this country. This land has only one preacher trying to reach the many scattered people from the far north to the far south. There needs to be many, many more. One man can not be sent to one city in the country and then sit back and say "we have preached the word in Norway." Yes the work is difficult but I feel confident that souls will be converted through the gospel, but it is going to take time. There is a trend of dissatisfaction among the young concerning the traditional religion—Lutheranism. Finding those who are

searching for the truth is the problem. Yes, NORWAY NEEDS WORKERS! Another family would give us a nucleus in the assembly. Is there anyone that is interested in accepting the challenge?

Shirley, Terrell and I send our greetings to all our brethren and friends in the States. We want to express our sincere appreciation to all for the support both financially and verbally during the past year. Please continue to keep the work in Norway in your prayers.

PREACHERS NEEDED

WESTLAND, MI—The church that meets at 35900 Palmer Road, Westland, MI (suburban Detroit), is seeking a full time gospel preacher. The congregation numbers approximately 70-80 and are fully self-supporting. Anyone interested in working with us kindly contact Frank Wiser, 2132 Sheldon Rd., Canton, MI 48187 (313-981-3034), or Jack Nunn, 16902 Whitby, Livonia, MI 48154 (313-464-0288).

New Congregation

LAFAYETTE, TN—There is now a sound congregation in Lafayette known as the Scottsville Rd., church of Christ. If anyone wishes to know more about this congregation, contact Sam Snow at Rt. 3, Box 102-B Lafayette, TN 37083. Or Bobby Patterson at Star Rt., Lafayette, TN 37083.

PETER McPHERSON, 1265 5th Ave. S. Lethbridge, Alberta T1J 0V6. In September I am moving to preach to Airdrie, Alberta (near Calgary). About a year ago some half dozen families began the work there (they lived in that area). They felt that a New Testament church should be planted in this new and growing community (Calgary's population is over 600,000 and increasing at a rate of 2,500 per month). This zealous group began this new work with the hopes of getting a personal-work type preacher to locate there and set about to help increase their number. I have accepted that challenge. I have been preaching for 15 years and believe I do my best work in a new work where we can start from scratch. I want to devote my time and talents to working in home studies, door to door calling, and personal evangelism. Please consider my family and me in your budget regarding monthly support. We will need to raise \$1,000 per month above what the church here can help with. For references please contact: Marvin Nerland (403) 328-0855, Roy Diestlekamp (416) 562-5519, or Connie Adams (502) 957-2257.

P. J. CASEBOLT, 313 S. 4th Ave., Paden City, WV 26159. My meeting schedule for the fall of '81 is: Marttown Rd., Parkersburg, WV (Sept. 14-20); New Cumberland, WV (Oct. 5-11); Fly, OH (Nov. 2-8); Middlebourne, WV (Nov. 16-22); Punta Corda, FL (Dec. 6-20). I plan to leave the work at Cedar Ave. in Moundsville the last of November. While in the Florida area, I will be glad to consider other meetings, singing schools, or working with some congregation during the winter months.

TOM MALMBERG, North Fort Myers, FL—Just a note to let you know that the work here is alive and well. We have baptized two this year and several families have left the institutional brethren to come and worship with us. The contribution has grown to the point that we are now helping support Bro. Ron Drumm in Naples, FL and Bro. Robert Bottorff in Pirtleville, AZ. We rejoice that recently we appointed brethren Vernon Ford and Glindle Johnson as elders. We thank God for the desire and faithfulness of these men. At present we are looking forward to our fall meeting with Bro. J. T. Smith from North Miami. Attendance this summer has reached the 120-130 plateau. During the winter we have seen as many as 177 in the building. If you are coming our way please visit with us.

BILL PIERCE, 759 E. North Ave., Spencer, IN 47460. After almost two years with the Moultrie Rd., congregation, I will move to Spencer, IN July 1. The church here in Thomasville is almost three years old and has made rapid progress. We have a debt free building and are almost self-supporting. There were 27 responses over the last

two years. Two of our men, Carlton Bassett (now working with the church in Monticello, FL) and Walter Marria (we started a black congregation and Walter preaches for them and is doing a good work but is still needing about \$200 monthly support) are preaching full time and three of our other young men are preaching once a month for a small congregation near here. Our average attendance is about 35-40 and contribution \$350-\$400. Bro. Curtis Pope will follow me in the work here.

PREACHER NEEDED

WINDSOR, MISSOURI—The church here would like to secure the services of a full time gospel preacher as soon as possible. At the present time, all of his support would have to come from elsewhere. If interested, write William H. Sewell, Jr., 2001 E. 6th St., Sedalia, MO 65301 or call 816-826-0799, or 816-647-3728 (Dale Boalan).

JEFF KINGRY, P.O. Box 26, Milton, VT 05468. Due to increasing financial demands, and insufficient support, I am reduced to

parting with some books from my library.

TRUTH MAGAZINE: Vol. 1-23'	\$500
GOSPEL GUARDIAN: Vol. 1-27	\$400
THE PRECEPTOR: Vol. 1-26	\$400
TORCH: Vol. 3-12	\$ 80
PULPIT COMMENTARY 22 volumes	\$250
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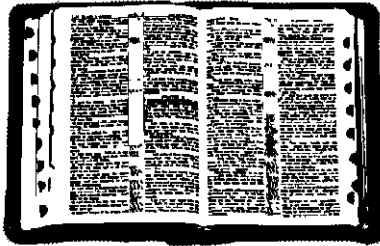
IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	238
RESTORATIONS	122

(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)

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 XXII

OCTOBER, 1981

NUMBER 10

ANSWERS for our hope

Send Bible questions to:

Marshall E. Patton
10511 Moonlight Way
Valley Station, KY 40272



BACK TO HUNTSVILLE

Early this year I made known to the church in Valley Station, Ky. that my plans would involve a change in the work there later in the year (July). The following excerpt from *Valley Tidings*, June 1981 issue, sets forth the facts pertinent to this move:

"We are returning to Huntsville, Alabama and to the Weatherly Heights church where I formerly worked for eleven years. Brother Guy McDaniel now serves as the faithful evangelist here. Using this as "home-base" I look forward to being somewhat free of the restrictions and limitations of full time local work and more free to do the work of an evangelist in a wide field—hold more regular meetings, weekend meetings, and series on special topics, etc. On Sundays when I am home and with support from the Weatherly Heights church I shall be helping the recently formed church in Scottsboro, Alabama. Our goal is to help them secure property, _preach for them until they can secure a full time evangelist, and to help get a sound church on its feet in this city. We solicit your prayers in our behalf in this new field of labor."

Plans relative to this move have now been realized. Currently I am enjoying preaching on Sundays for the Eastside church in Scottsboro. This work offers good potential and is encouraging.

I expect to be present hereafter with this column on a regular basis.

Satan—Did He Fall From Heaven?

QUESTION: Does the Bible teach that Satan was once in heaven and because of sin was cast down to earth? In answering this question, please deal with the following scriptures: Isa. 14:12, Lk. 10:18; Rev. 12:7-9.—M.B.

ANSWER: No, the Bible does not teach that Satan was cast from heaven to earth because of sin on his part. If so, I do not know of any Scripture that so teaches. The references cited do not so teach and efforts to so use these verses involve a mishandling of the word of God.

Isa. 14:12 is a "proverb" (a wise saying—in this instance a prophecy) spoken against the king of Babylon (Nebuchadnezzar) because of his arrogance and pride. Verse four of this chapter says so! Verse twelve is obviously within the context of verse four and is part of the "proverb." The word "Lucifer" signifies the morning star—a bringer of light—which, if applied to Satan, involves incongruity in the highest degree.

Luke 10:18 is in response to the report of the Seventy concerning their victory over demons (agents of Satan). Jesus said, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." The lexicographer, A. T. Robertson, comments: "As a flash of lightning out of heaven quick and startling, so the victory of the Seventy over the demons, the agents of Satan, forecast his downfall and Jesus in vision pictured it as a flash of lightning" (*Word Pictures In The New Testament*, p. 148).

Many authorities agree that "heaven" must refer to the lightning and not to Satan. If so, then Jesus, in a vision, saw Satan go down in defeat (in a flash—as lightning from heaven) as his agents were overpowered by the Seventy.

Some, however, see "heaven" as relating to Satan symbolically (Cf. N. A. S. V.; *Meyer's Commentary On The New Testament*, Vol. II, pp. 386, 387). Such use is often found in prophetic or visionary language. If so, then Jesus saw Satan thrown down (in a flash) from his seat or position of power, symbolized by the word

"heaven."

In either instance we have no proof of a literal casting down of Satan from heaven.

Rev. 12:7-9 is in that book in the New Testament by which the truth under consideration is "signified" unto us (Rev. 1:1). The message is prophetic or visionary and, therefore, involves symbolic language. The war which took place between Michael and his angels and the dragon (the devil, v. 9) and his angels was not a literal war in heaven, but a spiritual struggle in which the devil (symbolized by the dragon) suffered defeat. After all, do literal wars take place in heaven? The results of this conflict, shown in the context (vs. 10ff), reveal the fulfillment of that which God had purposed, planned, promised and prophesied—salvation, the establishment of the kingdom, the reign and authority of Christ, as well as the defeat of Satan. This struggle began with the fall of man and reached its climax in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. All men may now receive salvation through Christ, and Satan who formerly "accused them before our God day and night" can no longer make such accusation.

Concerning the origin of Satan, much of that taught today is pure speculation. Many of those things we would like to know are among the unrevealed things which belong unto God (Deut. 29:29). While there are some reasonable inferences that follow from things revealed, one cannot speak with certainty of the subject. We need most of all to face up to the reality of his existence and to the need of being delivered from his "power of darkness" and being "translated into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Col. 1:13). We need to realize that ultimate victory comes to those who are "faithful unto death" (Rev. 2:10).

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Editorial

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IS THE SALT LOSING HIS SAVOUR?

"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men" (Mt. 5:13). With these words our Lord impressed the need for the saving influences of the righteous. The uses of salt are varied. Salt preserves. Salt seasons. Salt destroys. Each of these uses is beneficial. But when the salt has lost its savour, it is powerless to render good results.

There are other references to the influence which God's people are expected to have on a sin-cursed and benighted world. In the same context above, our Lord likened the citizens of his kingdom to light but warned of obscuring that light under a bushel. Paul said "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life...." (Phil. 2:15-16).

The good done by even one candle is amazing. A few weeks ago we took a tour through Mammoth Cave. Deep in the bowels of the earth, the plug was pulled and we were in total darkness. Nothing was visible, not even a hand in front of your face. Then a match was struck. Just one match. What a difference it made. This is the answer when a Christian despairs of doing good because "I am just one. What good can I do?"

Jesus said "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, til the whole was leavened" (Mt. 13:33). Leaven works quietly, but it does work.

But what happens for the good of this world when there is no more leaven to work, no more light to shine and no salt to season and save? Jesus said that salt which had lost his savour was good for nothing but to be cast out. Sodom did not have enough righteous salt to make it worth saving. Only righteous Lot and two of his daughters escaped. God brought out what little salt was left.

A Distinct People

The very process of conversion separates us from the world of sin. We are "delivered. . . from the power of darkness" (Col. 1:13) and called upon to "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11). The church is a sanctified, cleansed and washed body to be presented "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without

blemish" (Eph. 5:26—27). Those who make up the church are told to "love not the world, neither the things that are in the world" (1 Jno. 2:15—17). We are charged to "come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you" (2 Cor. 6:17).

While in the world we are "strangers and pilgrims" and are to "abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (1 Pet. 2:11). We cannot save the world by plunging headlong into its unrighteous course. The manners and morals of this world are foreign to the people of God. There can be no sober, righteous and godly living without first learning to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts (Titus 2:11—12). The very presence of a righteous life stands as a rebuke to the licentious course of this world. This is the reason the wicked are so intolerant of the godly. Jesus came into a world of gross wickedness but did not stain himself with its vices. "He did no sin" and thereby "left us an example" (1 Pet. 2:21-22). He was tempted in all points, as we are "yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). He was saving salt, brightening light and spreading leaven. What if that salt had lost his savour? What if that light had been hidden under a bushel? What if that leaven had not worked? What hope would we have?

Shameful Evidences

While searching for signs of good among those washed in the blood of the lamb, we would be foolish to close our eyes to shameful evidences, which become apparent with each passing day, that some of the salt is losing its savour. In traveling among brethren throughout the nation we see many encouraging things. But the joy of all that is tempered with the alarming rate at which so many who once walked in robes of righteousness are now swallowed up in the course of this world.

(1) The pursuit of **Mammon** has become the overpowering purpose of all too many. The lust for material goods, for the life of ease, for the delicacies of affluence—these have become thy gods, Oh Israel! No time is left for public worship. Fathers and mothers are not home enough to even attempt to train their children to serve the Lord. Young people are growing up more influenced by drug and sex oriented friends and by the blare of television and hedonistic music than they are by the word of the Lord. Many of those who reluctantly attend worship gatherings with their parents, sit at the back, act bored or overtly misbehave, and maintain an attitude of open disdain for what is done there. Some of these have seen such an inconsistency between public profession and private life in their own parents that they simply bide their time until nobody can "make" them come any more.

(2) The goddess of **pleasure** has called and her admirers have fallen before her feet. Athletic contests have become far more stimulating to the carnal mind than spiritual activities. Television has done much to strip away our sense of outrage against sin and has diluted our ability to blush. Movies full of profanity, sex and gore have become common fare with many

young people (and some not so young). Over the past few years we have been in congregations where there were problems of drugs, unwed mothers, alcohol, homo-sexuality and other forms of ungodly conduct. If we cannot even influence our own children better than this, then how much salt is left?

(3) **Marriage failures** have reached epidemic stage. We are appalled to learn in every part of the country of families of Christians splitting up. We are even more distressed to learn every week of such developments among preachers and elders and their wives. At one place you learn of an elder involved with a secretary at work, or one of the sisters in the congregation. A preacher's wife runs out on her husband and children. A preacher gets involved with a sister he started out to counsel. Infatuation evolves into determination to put away his wife, shame his children and himself and leave the church which trusted him in shambles. "Thou therefore that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? . . . Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery" (Rom. 2:21—22)? This outrageous conduct is not limited to any one part of the country. It is seen from one coast to the other and from border to border. The children of one preacher sent word to me asking if I would write to their father and rebuke him for his adulterous marriage. This spiritual cancer is being aided and abetted by those who have advocated permissive views regarding divorce and remarriage. The wife of one preacher is now married to a man who was put away for the cause of fornication and withdrawn from over it. Yet, there are those who contend that even the put away fornicator has a right to remarry. In society at large in this country we are now to the place that 50% of all marriages contracted end in divorce.

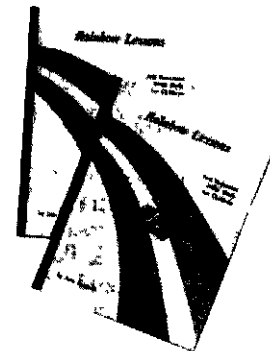
It is high time for elders, preachers and their families to practice what they preach. We are going to have to set the standard high and live by it. We should set our own standards just as high as the Lord ordained in his word. Rather than bringing God's standard down to man, we should aspire to rise to his standard. The concept of one man for one woman for life must be preserved. It must be branded on the minds and consciences of our children. Children have a right to see from a father what it means to love his wife even as himself, and from a mother what it means to reverence the husband. Otherwise, our example paves the way for their future failure. Without distraction we must seek first the kingdom and school our children on that same determination. Congregations must purge out the unrighteous leaven of fornicators. Preachers and elders and others who are often called on for help in marital difficulties, are going to have to exercise the good sense to have their wife present, or one of the older sisters or another of the brethren to "provide things honest" in the sight of all. Husbands and wives must learn not to "defraud" their companions thus adding to the temptation to stray.

Improper conduct on the part of those who would teach others weakens their efforts. There is a moral power that shines through when those who teach the

word of God have molded their own lives to the very pattern of sound words they would bind on others.

Brethren, perhaps we are looking in the wrong place in trying to explain our failures in both personal and public evangelism. Could it just be that we are rapidly becoming a people (not just a few isolated instances) who "say and do not"? Are we trying to teach others while not instructing ourselves? Are we binding heavy burdens to lay on other shoulders while unwilling to lend a little finger to lift our own? Could it be that we cannot see clearly how to remove moles because of the beams in our own eyes? Can we expect to be taken seriously when calling for purity in terms of the nature, organization, work, and worship of the church, when we have allowed the world and its evil standards to seduce us? Will churches ever rise any higher in purity and practice than the examples set by those who teach and lead? The world needs to hear the gospel in order to be saved by it. But the world has a right to expect that those who bring it are living examples of what they seek to instill in others. Brethren, are we losing our savour and therefore becoming good for nothing?

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WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SAVED (2)

Morris W. R. Bailey

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In an article under the above heading, it was pointed out that to be saved from sin, means to be delivered from its guilt and to escape its just punishment. In this article I propose to discuss

What God Has Done To Save Us.

A fact that should never be lost sight of is that in all of God's dealings with man, there has been, and is, the divine side and the human side. God does for man, and has done for man, what man cannot do for himself. This is true in nature as well as in grace.

I recall hearing a preaching brother tell of visiting in a home where the wife was a Christian; but her husband was an atheist. He did not believe God existed. When they sat down to the meal that the wife had prepared, she suggested to her husband that he ask the preacher to give thanks for the food. He indignantly refused, saying that he had worked for that food and had no one but himself to thank for it.

There was something, however, that he overlooked. Granted that he had worked to produce that food, he ignored the fact that God had provided the soil, the sunshine, and the rain, without which there could have been no food. For those things he had been dependent on God even while refusing to acknowledge his existence.

In the plan of salvation there is God's part, and man's part. God has done for man what man could not do for himself. God has provided what man could not provide. Some of the terms that represent God's overtures, we shall now discuss.

Propitiation.

The first of these terms that I want us to notice is the word, propitiation. This word occurs three times in the New Testament in the following scriptures.

"But now apart from the law, a righteousness of God hath been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ unto all them that believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to show his righteousness because of the passing over of sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God; for the showing I say, of his righteousness at this present season: that he might himself be just, and

the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus" (Rom. 3:21-26).

"And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world" (1 John 2:2).

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10).

It will be noticed that in the above scriptures, the word propitiation is used with reference to Christ. The writers tell us that he is the propitiation for our sins. This can be appreciated only as we understand what is involved in propitiation.

It may be defined, generally, as a sacrifice that is offered with a view to making atonement (the Old Testament counterpart) for sin; of satisfying the demands of justice; or appeasing the wrath of an offended god. In the latter sense it was used by the heathen. While pagan religions are usually a corruption of the true religion of Jehovah God, they sometimes retain some of its essential features. This was seen when a heathen mother would one time throw her babe into the jaws of a crocodile. Supposing that she had offended one of the many gods that she worshipped, this was her way of making propitiation for her sin.

As used in the New Testament, the word, propitiation, has reference to satisfying the demands of God's justice. In the scripture from Romans the third chapter, given above, Paul said that the purpose of God's setting forth Christ as a propitiation, was to show his righteousness, because of the passing over of sins done aforetime (vs 25). He then added in the following verse, "That he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus."

To appreciate the force of Paul's language in these scriptures, it is necessary that we remember that when laws are violated, justice calls for punishment of the offender. This is seen in nature, where the laws are rigid, and exact some punishment when they are broken. If any one doubts it, let him try flouting the law of gravity.

The principle of punishment of lawbreakers has been recognized since the beginning of man's history, and has been practiced even by heathen nations. A story that comes down to us from antiquity tells of a king who lived some five hundred years before Christ. His laws were rigid, and lawbreakers were summarily punished. One of his laws required that anyone found guilty of adultery was to be punished by having both eyes put out. When his own son was found to be guilty, the king was placed in a dilemma. He knew that to fail to enforce his law would be a mockery of the whole judicial system. To enforce the law would leave his son blind for the rest of his life. So out of compassion for his son, and at the same time to uphold the law, the king offered to have one of his own eyes put out and only one of his son's. In that way the law was upheld, and the punishment for the crime was exacted; yet the king was able to show a measure of compassion in that his son was spared from total blindness. It may thus be said that in part, at least, the king made

propitiation for his son's crime, by sharing the penalty with him.

Man had sinned by violating God's law. That fact is made clear in the first three chapters of Romans where both Jew and Gentiles are charged with sin before God. "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). Justice demanded that the price be paid by the sinner. But that would require that the entire human race perish; for all have sinned (Rom 3:23). God would not be just if he did not punish sin.

God did punish sin. One of the cardinal facts of the gospel preached by Paul is that "Christ died for our sins" (1 Cor. 15:4). Again he wrote, "Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21). Thus God himself paid the penalty for man's sin by sending his only begotten Son as a sin offering. In allowing Christ to die for man, God's justice was vindicated, and he is the justifier of him who accepts the benefits of that sacrifice through faith.

Reconciliation.

A second word that is frequently used with reference to God's part in the plan of salvation, is the word, reconciliation. To the Colossians Paul wrote,

"For it was the good pleasure of the Father that in him should all the fullness dwell; and through him to reconcile all things unto himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross; through him, I say, whether things upon the earth, or things in heaven. And you, being in time past alienated and enemies in your mind in your evil works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and without blemish and unreprouvable before him" (Col. 1:19-22).

Thus does Paul tell us that whereas man had been alienated, and an enemy of God by reason of sin, God has reconciled us to himself through the death of his Son.

The word, reconciliation, is a compound word, composed of the prefix re, which means again; and the word, conciliation, which means to make friends. So the word reconciliation means to make friends again, or a restoration of friendship. It suggests that a friendship that once existed has been destroyed. One could not become a friend again with another, unless they had at some time previously been friends.

The fact that a reconciliation was brought about between God and man implies that an enmity had existed. That enmity was the result of man's sin (Col. 1:21) Sin is rebellion against God.

To bring about a reconciliation between estranged parties it is necessary that there be a mediator. This mediator God himself provided in the person of his Son. Paul said, "For there is one God, one mediator between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5).

Redemption.

A third term that designates God's part in saving man is the word, redemption. To the Ephesians Paul wrote, "In whom we have our redemption through his

blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:7). To the Galatians Paul wrote, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us" (Gal. 3:13).

The word, redeem, means to buy back. It is often used to describe business transactions. Sometimes when a man defaults on paying his taxes, his property will be seized. But there is usually a provision made whereby he can recover the property by paying what is owing against it. Thus, in effect he buys it back. What he has to pay is the redemption price.

So when the Bible speaks of our being redeemed, it means that we have been bought back. It was pointed out in the previous article that continued practice of sin makes one a bondservant of sin. We are, in effect, captives of Satan. Paul speaks of some "recovering themselves out of the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him unto his will" (2 Tim. 2:26).

Redemption from our bondage to sin requires a redeemer. Christ is that redeemer (Titus 2:4). It requires a redemption price be paid. That price was Christ's blood. Peter said, "Knowing that ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver and gold from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers: but with precious blood as of a lamb without spot and without blemish, even the blood of Christ" (1 Peter 1:18,19).

These terms, propitiation, reconciliation, and redemption thus represent God's part in the plan of salvation. They represent what God has done for man that man could not do for himself. In an article to follow I shall discuss some terms that are used in connection with man's part in the plan of salvation, and which will give us further insight into what it means to be saved.

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First, if I can, let me state in just as plain language as I can what I believe about the matter. I believe that a church can pay a preacher in order that he might go anywhere and start a church of Christ; I believe that a church can pay a preacher in order that he might preach for a church already established but is too weak to pay for the preaching; I believe that a plurality of churches can pay a preacher to preach in a place, either to establish a church or to preach to a church that has already been established, but is too weak to pay a preacher.

I have preached the gospel of Christ and while doing so was being paid by a plurality of churches. In each instance, each church sent the wages they paid directly to me. This is entirely Scriptural because this is what the Bible teaches (2 Cor. 11:7-9; Phil. 1:3-5; 4:15-20).

In the New Testament one can read in Acts 11:19-26 of the church in Jerusalem sending Barnabas out to preach the gospel and he went as far north as Antioch. In fact, verse 26 shows that Barnabas preached unto the church in Antioch. I understand by the expression, ". . . they sent forth Barnabas. . ." to mean that the Jerusalem church supported him in this preaching. We learn from Acts 15 that there were churches between Jerusalem and Antioch, and I am willing to say that Barnabas preached and taught the word of God to some of these along the way to Antioch.

I learn that the Philippian church paid Paul when he went into the city of Thessalonica for the very first time (Phil 1:3-5; 2:25; 4:15-20). She also sent time and again unto Paul.

In 2 Corinthians 11:7-9, I learn of the churches in the province of Macedonia sending unto the Apostle Paul to enable him to preach the gospel in the city of Corinth and to the Corinthian church when it was small. Paul says that while the churches of Macedonia sent to him that he did the Corinthian church service. Here we have a plurality of churches sending wages unto the gospel preacher so that he might live and preach the gospel to those whom he had opportunity to reach.

In each of these instances, a careful examination of

the New Testament reveals that each church had a direct relationship with the preacher. No New Testament church ever sent a contribution to some kind of a missionary society in order that the society might in turn forward the wages on to the preacher. Neither did any New Testament church become a missionary society through which churches sent and she in turn forwarded the wages on to the gospel preacher. It was centuries after the close of the New Testament when men became dissatisfied with the Lord's plan that either of these two plans was invented.

It was not even dangerous for a church or for a plurality of churches to send to a preacher in New Testament times. It has been feared that if each church sent directly to the preacher that he might get more than he should have. In New Testament times "wages" were sent to the gospel preacher (2 Cor. 11:8). God did not intend that a preacher should receive money from many churches and in turn hire and send out more preachers, any more than he intended that churches should receive money from many churches and in turn hire and send out more preachers.

The Lord's plan will always get the job done, save souls, cause the gospel to be preached, and please God, when it is respected and followed.

In 1910 there was an effort to get many churches to send their contributions to one church and let that one church hire and send out a preacher or preachers. This was what the church in Henderson, Tennessee was proposing to do. This was opposed by David Lipscomb and J. C. McQuiddy. Of the Henderson church undertaking the work of receiving contributions from several churches, J. C. McQuiddy wrote in the *Gospel Advocate*, 1910, pages 392 and 393, "The work proposed is nothing less than a missionary society in embryo. The board of elders in Henderson is the board to control the funds contributed by not only the Henderson church, but by all the churches of West Tennessee. This is a combination larger than the organized church of the New Testament which is the only organized body ordained by Jehovah for doing mission work".

In his book, **The Life and Times of David Lipscomb**, on page 271, Earl West said, "The practice in Texas was for the churches holding annual or state meetings, giving reports of the past year's work of the various congregations, and then, putting the work under one local church for the coming year. The plan was that all of the churches in the state would work under the eldership of one church to preach the gospel. Lipscomb frankly rejected this. . . The matter of the many churches working through the eldership of one church was wrong in Lipscomb's conception because it made out of the elders of a local church a missionary society in embryo".

Brother Foy E. Wallace, Jr., said in the *Gospel Advocate*, May 14, 1931 page 580, ". . . if the elders of one congregation solicit the funds of other congregations for general distribution, then the elders of one congregation usurp the functions of the

congregations whose funds they receive and disburse..

For one church to help another bear its own burdens, therefore, has Scriptural precedent. But for one church to solicit funds from other churches for general distribution in other fields or places, thus becoming a treasury of other churches, is quite a different question. Such procedure makes a sort of SOCIETY out of the elders of a local church, and for such there is no Scriptural precedent or example".

Commenting on Phil. 4:15 and 16 Brother Guy N. Woods said in the *Teacher's Annual Lesson Commentary on Bible Lessons*, published by the Gospel Advocate Company in 1946, Page 341, "Here, too, we see the simple manner in which the church in Philippi joined with Paul in the work of preaching the gospel. There was no "missionary society" in evidence, and none was needed; the brethren simply raised the money and sent it directly to Paul. This is the way it should be done today".

Brother H. Leo Boles said in the *Gospel Advocate*, November 10, 1932, on page 1213, "The missionary received help from the church that sent him out, from those in the field where he labored, and from other churches; but in all of this work there was no common fund for churches, no "central church" with a treasurer to receive the funds from other churches, no general treasury to take care of the funds, no call from any church to other churches to help them do the work which fell in their province to do".

Brother F. D. Srygley said in the *Gospel Advocate*, in 1892 on page 386, "The *Advocate* called the *Standard's* attention to the fact that in New Testament times churches sent money direct to the missionaries instead of sending it to a missionary society to be, by the society, paid out to the missionaries". On page 449, brother Srygley said, "In mission work each church, in New Testament times, sent its contribution direct to those who were doing the work".

Brother M. C. Kurfees said in the *Gospel Advocate* in 1894 on page 160, "The churches themselves, as such, were the divine organizations for mission work, and were in direct communication with those whom they supported. Hence, it is simply an incontrovertible fact that in working through the church apart from all other inventions and organizations, that dealing directly with missionaries in the field, we are following the expression of divine wisdom, and are, therefore, infallibly safe".

I believe that a church can send to a preacher wherever he may be to preach for another church or to establish a church. I have read such from the New Testament and also given you quotations from some brethren from the pages of history that they also believed what I believe now. Such none will deny as being Scriptural.

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Restoration Footnotes

Carl Kimbrough

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A GRANDMOTHER'S WISDOM

Paul paid tribute to all righteous grandmothers when he memorialized Lois, Timothy's grandmother, in telling of her "unfeigned faith" (2 Tim. 1:5). Through her good influence, and that of his mother Eunice, Timothy from childhood knew the Holy Scriptures that made him "wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3:14-15). Any child with a grandmother like Lois is blessed beyond measure.

H. E. Phillips, the highly respected gospel preacher and former editor of *Searching the Scriptures*, is one of those fortunate to be surrounded in early life by devout parents and grandparents. His paternal grandparents lived with his family, and from this close association an extra-special bond developed between young Elwood and his grandmother.

Her gentle and loving wisdom that guided him to an understanding of the gospel plan of salvation is a story with a lesson for today. From the earliest traces of memory he recalls being taught the Bible at home by his parents and being carried by them regularly to Bible school and worship. But even so, questions arose in his mind when at twelve his thoughts turned, quite naturally under the circumstances, to his being baptized.

Hearing Foy E. Wallace Jr. in what was probably his first meeting at the Twelfth Street Church in Bowling Green, Kentucky, sparked in Elwood a strong desire to preach. He wanted to do what he was seeing Wallace and others doing in the service of Christ, but he knew that some other things must take place first. He then decided that he wanted to be baptized but thought he had better talk to somebody about it. So he asked his grandmother if she thought he was old enough. He relates the following account of her prudent handling of his question.

"She said, I don't believe that it's important how old you are, but what you know." And so I asked her what I needed to know, and she questioned me and we talked for a while, while she was cooking (this occurred in the kitchen, I recall). And she suggested that before I decided to be baptized that I ought to read the book of Matthew, and so I did. I read it myself. I don't know how long it took me, but it didn't take long; probably within a week.

"It may have been at that point I was more eager to be baptized than anything else, because I think I was

influenced greatly by that I was seeing and the preaching, and I knew it was right. I knew my parents would be happy and my grandparents, but I don't think I was doing it as much for somebody else as I was to be able to be what I was seeing in other people.

"When I went back to my grandmother and told her I had read Matthew, she asked me what it said, here and there through the book, and what I had to do. I remembered the last part of it, especially what it said about baptism and I asked her about it. She said: 'Well now that's fine; you know quite a bit. Now maybe if you go read Mark, maybe you'll know a little more.'

"So I read the book of Mark and asked my mother a lot of questions about it, as she was sewing. I remember talking to my father a time or two about it and he would give me some questions, but mainly I talked to my grandmother.

"When I finished Mark the same thing happened. She talked to me a little while, and said, 'Maybe if you read Luke.' This went on through John, and then she, said, 'Now if you'll read the book of Acts, I'll know that you'll know.' I read Acts and I saw why people were being baptized. I began to understand, even as a boy at twelve, what some of these things meant.

"I look back now and see the wisdom of my grandmother in not telling me, 'You're too young to be baptized,' or to say, 'When you're a little bit older,' or, 'You don't know enough,' or something. She rather gave me a reason to bit by bit read until I had 'graduated,' insofar as her knowledge of the Bible went." (Taken from a Taped Interview with H.E. Phillips.)

Many years ago, T.B. Larimore, recalling the influence of his own poor mountaineer grandmother, wrote: ". . . parents and grandparents have more to do with shaping the destiny of their posterity, for time and for eternity, than any other mortals on earth, of course; and they are ruthlessly robbing their posterity, for whose very existence they are voluntarily responsible, of sacred rights that they can never restore, when they live ungodly lives." (Life and Letters of T. B. Larimore, Vol. 2, pp. 360-361.)

Elwood's grandmother may not have said it as eloquently, but she understood fully what Larimore meant, as her righteous life testifies through her descendants.

The value of a righteous grandmother, like the worthy woman of Proverbs 31, must also be considered as "far above rubies."

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DESTINED TO DIVIDE?

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We preach what the Scriptures teach on unity. The Scriptures require unity of professed followers of Christ (John 17:20-23; I Cor. 1:10). "We" means brethren, members of the body of Christ. However, we divide and fragment faster than we establish new local churches of Christ. Why? Are we destined to divide? Some Christians can remember at least a dozen major divisions among those who all claim to be the body of Christ. Others have witnessed an even larger number of minor squabbles that have rent local churches in twain. We are not destined to divide—we seem simply bent in that direction. Can we recover?

Division is sometimes the only answer for those determined to be right with God. No unity in error can please God. Christians must separate themselves from error. Paul applied a combination of the prophecies of Isa. 52:11 and Ezek. 20:34 to a situation in the church at Corinth. "Wherefore come ye out from among them and be ye separate. . . and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you" (2 Cor. 6:17). The Corinthians had come out of the world, they had expelled the evil fornicator from their midst and were admonished to remain pure. Faithful Christians who find themselves in a situation where those who should be excommunicated are given full fellowship and where error is taught unchecked, should get out of such a situation. Where institutional or digressive error is taught and where immoral conduct is condoned, and where no chance to correct the situation exists, there is no possibility for faithful Christians to remain. But in leaving, they are not guilty of division, if they have done all within their power to correct the error.

A separation from error is not always an immediate necessity. Error can be tolerated in only one way. Where opposition to error is allowed, the error can be tolerated—and corrected. The Corinthian congregation tolerated error in their midst, but they also admitted Paul's instruction to them and the result was that they changed. When those who are guilty of error refuse to allow opposition to their error to be heard, unity will be destroyed. A tyrannical error creates a situation where people are destined to divide.

Sometimes division has a divine purpose for the faithful. "For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you" (I Cor. 11:18-19). Paul uses the word "heresies" in this verse. These are the things that try the patience and the faith of the saints. The word refers to a disposition that leads to division, more than to a doctrine or idea that is taught. "**H**eresis signifies the temper of mind which produces **schismata** (division,

DRS), the disposition to think and act to please oneself rather than for the edification of the many" (Cambridge Greek New Testament). It tries the faith and patience of the saints to endure the heretical ideas and maneuvers of a schismatic group within the church. Factionists rarely see their own heretical disposition at work. They "draw away disciples" piously proclaiming that they were either forced to do so for the sake of righteousness or to "save the church." What the factionist does not see (ever) are his own pet ideas and foolish notions being pushed to the extent that brother divides from brother. God never approves of such, rather He approves those who endure it and stand.

Divisions should be avoided at all acceptable costs. To split a good congregation over personality conflicts, personal likes and dislikes, preacher preferences, etc. is manifestly sinful. One way to avoid such stupidity is to review the various reasons churches have suffered such terror in the recent past. When we look carefully into the real causes of division, perhaps we will be able to recognize the tendencies and trends that will lead to division and evade them in the future. Someone said, "Twenty years from now, our children will ask each other why the church divided, and will be ashamed to give the real answer." Let us look at a few of these divisions and the areas in which they have occurred.

The Problem of the Preacher

The problem of the located preacher is largely the problem of hiring one or firing one. A congregation may get ready for a preacher to leave before he does. They ask him to move on. He does not want to just now. He gets highly incensed and hurt, his feelings are crushed and he seeks sympathy. He gravitates to his closest friends. They have a meeting at one of their homes. Then a meeting is called with the elders or the church (in the case of no elders) and the question of why is raised. At first the questions and answers are quite reserved and sensible, but then the motives of some are questioned, the conversation heats up, thoughtless words are uttered and before things can be cooled down, a split occurs. The preacher goes out with his friends to start what he commonly calls, "a new work." He has to have support for this "mission field" so he pleads with congregations that know him for help and without investigation, they provide "support for the mission field" to him.

Many a preacher has been done wrong in such cases. Many preachers have done wrong also. Many of the problems of a preacher are self-inflicted wounds. Even in the event the preacher is done wrong, a split church is too high a price to pay to undo that wrong. A wise man once said, "It is always much better to leave brethren in peace when they all want you to stay, than to try to stay when most of them want you to leave." It is hard to uproot the family, sever close ties, and move, but it is better than a church split.

The Preachers and Other Preachers

Many divisions are the direct result of two preachers falling out with each other. Sometimes it is the result

of a camp of preachers against another camp of preachers. There seems to be a growing amount of rivalry, jealousy and competition among preachers that breeds this hideous situation. The real reason why preachers should have problems with other preachers lies in what is preached—not how it is presented. But preachers can choose up sides and post lookouts, send out spies, and observe what another camp of preachers is doing. When the "shibboleth" is not precisely enunciated, the sniping begins. There usually follows a lot of gossip, whispering and backbiting—yes, among preachers who preach against such ungodliness.

Let's take a case or two in point. They are not really fictional but they are hypothetical. One preacher asks about another preacher, "Have you seen the fancy suits brother A has?" "Man, yes," replies another, "You know I would not wear something like that in the closet, much less in the pulpit." "I know what you mean," responds the first preacher, "you know he's just asking for trouble with the women." This immediately sticks in the memory banks of the second preacher and when the next conversation takes place, it goes like this. "You know, I have heard that brother A has been accused of being too familiar with certain of the good sisters; have you heard anything like that?" he asks. "No," another answers, "but it wouldn't surprise me any, seeing how he struts around and dresses like a proud peacock." Now, at this point other reasons are suggested and it winds up with the overly dressed preacher being a ladies' man and a proud peacock. After it goes through several such conversations about (not to) this overly dressed preacher, his friends defend him, his enemies condemn him, those who do not know avoid him and the rest join in with his enemies. Division is under way.

Case number two goes like this. "Have you heard that old brother B takes the Fuqua position of marriage and divorce?" "No," comes the astonished reply, "I thought he was sound on that—what makes you ask?" The first man then says, "Oh, I don't know really, I just heard that since his brother had recently divorced and remarried, that he probably would justify it, and besides, I have never read anything from him or heard him say anything that would really come down hard on these unscriptural marital relationships, have you?" The second character in this case admits, "Well, now that you mention it, not really—and you know he held a meeting recently over at Podunk where brother C preaches and there is no doubt that he is a Fuqua man. I guess he does take the Fuqua position." It goes on and on and on. It leads to division among preachers.

Elders and the Congregation

Divisions have come in churches over elders. The problem arises in the form of strife among the elders themselves, sometimes. Like the preachers problems, the elders can be infected with jealousy and envy of each other. Peter commanded elders not to "lord it over the flock of God" (I Pet. 5:2-3). When one elder begins to run things and the others simply become his lackeys people are destined to divide. There should be complete harmony among elders in a local church and

the word of God should be recognized as the one and only rule. As long as this attitude prevails no division will come.

Often, elders become the targets of factious members who have no intention of respecting the elders guidance. They just totally ignore Hebrews 13:17. They can detect any weakness or flaw in the life of an elder. They begin telling others how unqualified the elders are. They forget that the men were amply qualified when installed. They now begin their nefarious work of "ousting the eldership." They generally proclaim loud and long that they are engaged in an enterprise designed for the "good of the congregation." Like the fighter-bomber pilot in Vietnam said of a village he had just leveled, "We had to destroy it to save it," the factionist leads a rebellion against the elders to save the congregation. This is not to say some elders do not need to be asked to step out of the work, but it is to say that the factionist wrongly goes about it.

The Bible gives the pattern of how to deal with elders who make mistakes. "Against an elder receive not an accusation, except at the mouth of two or three witnesses. Them that sin, reprove in the sight of all, that the rest also may be in fear" (I Tim. 5:20). It is sad that the procedure is almost totally ignored. When elders sin, and indeed they all do, the text does not require their removal. It requires a public censure. When they correct the matter, it is resolved and the work goes on. When brethren begin finding fault with elders, they will meet secretly to plan their strategy of getting rid of the elders, go about the membership destroying confidence in the elders, then all of the sudden, announce publicly that "we no longer recognize these men as our elders." If that is Bible, I have read the wrong book that is called "the Bible." This procedure definitely leads to division.

The Elders and the Preachers

The working relationship between elders and preachers should be the most harmonious one there is. However, when a preacher moves into a new work at the invitation of the elders, he is often turned against the elders by those who are the elders most severe critics. Most of the time it starts at the "social get-togethers." The topic is introduced that the elders have really not done their duty in the past. It is suggested that the hopes of the future of the congregation lay in the ability of the new preacher to straighten out the situation. The preacher may be unduly influenced and become party to the same behind-the-back accusations against elders. He becomes entangled in plots to remove the elders. He suddenly has a revelation—the elders are not really qualified. He forgets the fine judgment they displayed when they hired him—now they must be removed. The next step in the scenario goes like this. The elders learn that the preacher is joining hands with a factional group and they ask him to stop. He defends what he has done and they ask him to leave. He then informs them that they cannot fire him—yes, they could hire him, for they then had the qualifications and good judgment, but now that they

want him to move along, they are neither qualified nor have good judgment. The preacher seeks to override their decision, seeks some help and division is under way. They are destined to divide. He now announces another "new work," solicits support for evangelization work and on and on.

There is a way out of this. No one is destined to divide unless they want division. Those who do not want division or schism can avoid it. Elders and preachers must be much more considerate of each other. Congregations must respect the elders for their work's sake, and when they sin or make a stupid blunder, tell them about it—do it publicly. When the preacher and the elders do not see eye-to-eye, let them sit together prayerfully and discuss the matter and let them all be truly humble. When preachers talk about other preachers let them avoid gossip and whisperings. Elders, preachers and members of the church should have more respect for the word of God, themselves, and the cause of Christ than to allow such things to divide a congregation.

There needs to be more understanding of the appreciation for real "fellowship" in the work of the church. Paul used the words "brother, fellow-worker and fellow-soldier" of Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25). What has happened to our esprit de Corps, our camaraderie? We are all trying to do the same thing, working for a common Master and interested in a common destiny. Let us realize this fully. The Germans have two expressions that are appropriate. One is, "Eine hand waescht die andere." That says, "one hand washes the other." That is true. We are "hands" of the Lord and are to aid and help one another. The other German expression is, "Eisen und Blut." That was Bismark's philosophy that problems were settled only by bloody conflicts. Two bloody world wars prove that this was the German solution. But it is not the right solution. We ought never to adopt such a sorry philosophy in the church. When problems arise, let us as hands, cleanse one another, rather than rip and tear.

More trust, patience, consideration and understanding are needed. This will bring on more genuine comradeship among all preachers, elders and Christians. Without these things we are doomed and destined to repeat the same stupid and reprehensible divisions we have experienced in the recent past. Senseless divisions should never have occurred. The hand that lends itself to rend the fellowship of a local church over some personal opinion or preference is the hand that should be cut off and cast into Hell. Are we destined to divide or will it be possible for us to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace? Will our children be ashamed to tell others why their fathers were divided?

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"Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment? . . . Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Matt. 6:25, 34).

If I were trying to characterize our age, as some other periods of time have been designated the Stone Age, Iron Age, Dark Ages, Renaissance, Industrial Age, Space Age, etc., I think I would call this the Age of Anxiety. The whole paragraph that we have quoted from in the Sermon on the Mount is a wonderful treatise on worry and anxiety. In one way, our anxiety today is more complex than that which filled the multitudes to whom Jesus spoke. He could bid them not be anxious about food and clothing because hunger and nakedness were real threats to their lives. Today we get the food, eat it, and then worry about digestion, ulcers, obesity, chemical additives and preservatives, and other related matters. We buy the clothes and become anxious about whether they really fit us or do anything for our figures, or whether they are the latest styles, and we are always scared to death we will meet someone wearing a suit or dress just like ours.

However, Jesus' admonition is a general one too: Do not be anxious about your life. That covers the whole area of human existence. Do not be anxious about tomorrow: that covers the future, everything that could conceivably happen to us. We must spend our time in this article zeroing in on some specific causes of anxiety.

HEALTH: The thrust of "How are you?" and "How do you do?" seems to be an interest in the other person's health. One of our strongest impulses is to let other people know when we are in pain. Poor health with its pain and suffering is one of our greatest fears. Being a Christian does not immunize us to pain and suffering and the mental strain which it produces. So, what good is there then in being a Christian if you are still bound to suffer and eventually die like other men? The Christian's perspective is that we can suffer pain and mental anguish and not be overcome by the suffering because we know that in the experience of suffering our basic character is being fashioned, and because we know that the God who loves us and knows our needs is with us in the suffering, and that the agony of body and soul will contribute to the formation

of a stronger and nobler character, a greater person. Otherwise, we enter a vicious circle where the mental anguish over the loss of health becomes a contributing cause of further health problems. The anxiety may even become the sickness. To the Christian, the future will not be rendered meaningless by the loss of health but may be even more meaningful when in the experience of loss we learn what life is all about. "We cannot take it with us" is true of physical health but not of character and a right relationship with God.

POSITION: We seem to be too concerned about our standing in society. If we occupy a low position on the scale we resent it and strive to overcome such, anxiously pulling ourselves up the ladder. If we occupy a high position we are afraid we will lose it, so we see every eager and ambitious fellow on the way up as a threat to us. To man, the social creature, his standing among his fellows is his life. Yet, Jesus says, "Do not be anxious for your life". What does life hold for the man who loses his place among men, or who fails to gain favorable recognition? What if the people whose approval means more to us than all else in life refuse to be impressed by us?

No normal and sane person is completely unmoved by what others think of him. But the key to the whole matter is the question, "Which others?". And a companion key is the question, "Do we do what we do in order to gain approval by others, or because it would be contrary to our very being to do otherwise. To truly live a man must be willing to jeopardize his standing among his fellows in order that he may clarify his position with God. He must be willing to forfeit his future, his career, everything with men to be true to God. Like the Hebrew children facing the prospect of the fiery furnace, the Christian says, "I do not know whether God will rescue me or not, but whether He does or not, whether I live or die, I will be true to Him". There is nothing in the spirit of Christ that courts the favor of men, or conforms to what men expect in order to gain their approval or support (Cf. Gal. 1:10; 4:16; 1 Peter 4:4; 2:12).

SECURITY: Our anxiety today is not primarily for what we do not have, but rather the fear of losing what we have. We feel economically insecure because of the high rate of inflation now and the high cost of fuel now but our greatest anxiety is over what it might be tomorrow! We are worried over our present relationship with Soviet Russia but our real problem is that from the present we try to predict a bleaker future. The trend of pornography, infidelity, homosexuality, etc. finds us bodily in 1981, but our worry calendar has us living in 2000. Does Jesus offer us an acceptable solution in our passage? His answer is, "Behold the birds of the heaven", and "Consider the lilies of the field" (vv. 26-30). Do Jesus' simple words have any relevance to our situation today, or are they mere idle poetry, the idealistic babblings of a dreamer who supposed that the life of man is as uncluttered and uninvolved as the simple life of a bird or a flower blooming in the fields. I insist there is a greatly needed relevance here. If God feeds the birds, through their

own industriousness, He will surely care for His children, the apex of all living beings. The birds do not have the capacity to fret over tomorrow—they live each day to the fullest. The lily is not toiling and spinning like man, but it has a beauty and fragrance for today that is not robbed by the prospect of facing tomorrow. All of this touches upon the life of man. Today is the day of our salvation. Today is the day that God has given to us, to rejoice and be glad in it. Tomorrow there may be less prosperity, more war, and less righteousness in the world. Will anxiety over that prospect make it easier for us when it comes? No! It will only rob us of the joys of today's blessings. Tomorrow we shall grow old and fade as do the lilies of the field, but living today in the service of Heaven's King fills a reservoir of memories of worthwhile experiences for our declining days and eternity. If we can only savor each day's joys and take each day's sorrows up into the whole experience of life, then today's sunshine will not be spoiled by tomorrow's clouds.

This is not an "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow you die!" philosophy—a carnal and fatalistic approach to life. Rather, it implies that our capacity for receiving, enjoying, and accepting has to be exercised, and the only way we can be prepared for what will come tomorrow is to fully receive what today has to offer. If we close our hearts to the good things of today, out of dread of tomorrow's evil, how shall we receive it if the morrow brings more good instead of evil? And if we fill up our hearts with tomorrow's evil today, how shall we absorb the evil when it does come? Jesus said it this way: "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day are the troubles of the day" (v. 34).

DEATH: Underlying all our anxieties is the ultimate fear—that of death. **What is going to become of me?** That is the question. This is a much deeper question than: Will I be hungry and cold next winter? Will I get the job I have been wanting? Will the world I have learned to live in survive the current crises?

This question has to do with the very essence of life itself. It is the deeper implication of what Jesus meant by the words: "Do not be anxious about your life... Is not life more than food?". Life is indeed more than the food that we consume, but what is to become of the life of men? I am convinced that the marked increase in anxiety in our society is in direct proportion to the decrease in a belief in life after death. If all the striving of the human spirit is mocked by the reality of death, then to what avail is the feverish activity of the human mind searching after the secrets of the universe? If human existence has no lasting and indestructible meaning, to what avail is the heroic spirit, the saintly life, the unselfish man rising above his natural inclinations to devote himself to the conversion of the lost, the care of the sick, or the service of one's fellowman. Are our lives like momentary flashes of light in the sky on a summer's evening, seeming to come out of nowhere, generated by the touch of natural elements, and fading into nothing?

It is not enough to say that man gains a sort of immortality of the race, that if a man has children he yet lives in his children, for his children also must die, and it becomes a matter of putting off final extinction one generation at a time, but with man knowing that in the end he will be the loser. The writer of Ecclesiastes pursues this theme time and time again, and I remember that he ponders: "... for who shall bring him back to see what shall be after him?"

It is not enough to say that certain individuals of outstanding accomplishment gain a sort of immortality in the esteem and memory of generations who follow. It is an immortality that can only benefit those who are alive upon the earth. If the individual does not know that he lives, what good is it to him that he lives? Such a rationale is a hollow cop-out by those who desperately try to find some meaning to life and death apart from an individual's eternal consciousness.

There must be something more. Jesus brought life and immortality to light in the Gospel. He taught that in man's proper alignment of himself with the Kingdom of God he participates in a blessed hope, the promise of eternal life. This eternal life is essentially a quality of life, a spiritual life of fellowship with God, not merely a quantitative reference to duration. Man may in a sense "have eternal life", and at the same time have the ability to forfeit that relationship. The "blessed assurance" is in the truth that if man will abide faithful, then God will faithfully guide him through the valley of the shadow of death.

Man's anxiety, in the final analysis, is anxiety which he feels when he stands at the door of the house of Death, and asks himself, "Is this the end of the line for me? After I pass through this door, am I to be no more?" Jesus answers man's anxiety as He says, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die" (John 11:25, 26).

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by

Franklin T. Puckett

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THE SECOND SERVING OF THE PASSOVER

**Keith Ward
Rt 2 Box 135
Trenton, Florida. 32693**

In 1975, I was preaching in snow country and was asked, "Is it right for us to take the Lord's Supper in our homes when we are snowed in?" After some study, I concluded that taking the Lord's Supper is a church activity to be done when disciples are "gathered together" (Acts 20:7) and "when ye assemble yourselves together" (1 Cor 11:20). Thus, I answered, "No." If a family was the church, it would be right, but as they are members of a church, they are to partake when assembled with the church. I still find no scriptural authority for individuals or groups to partake away from an assembling of the church. Just as sickness excuses one from partaking because he cannot assemble, so does severe weather.

The same principle soon led me to conclude that the Sunday evening serving had no authority. In one, we have the members scattered because of weather; in the other, because of time. In neither case was the member present when the church "Gathered together to break bread." I had no help in reaching my conclusions and was somewhat amazed to find that some well-known men held "my view," and that a small controversy raged about it.

Throughout the four years I held this position, I kept an attitude that it was in the realm of personal conviction. It is not any man's right to police the Lord's Table, to say who and when others may partake. I refused to have part in the second serving. I did not preach on the subject, but explained my views privately and rarely.

In the public discussions of the matter, many of the arguments on both sides lacked reason and scripture. It makes no more difference that the second serving did not begin until the forties than that the use of individual cups did not begin until the turn of the century, or that preachers did not "Go" by mechanical power until the 1800's. The germane question is, "Is it authorized?" Neither hypothetical or real situations about two churches in one building nor accusations about dividing churches, neither quibbles about 100% attendance nor problems with possible abuse constitute authority. The Bible is our authority.

Last May, Brent Hunter preached a meeting at Center Hill only three weeks after I arrived. A member asked about Sunday night communion and Brent referred to the second offering of the Passover under the Law of Moses. Immediately, I saw the force of the argument, but only changed after further study and meditation. I wish someone had made such a scriptural and clear argument three years ago. Perhaps I am slow-witted, but I could never see much force in the law of materiality proving the number of worship services

on Sunday is insignificant. If it is material that the Lord's Supper be taken as a body, then it must be done when that body is together. The number of other meetings of the body would be immaterial; what would be material is which one was designated as the one "When we were gathered together to break bread". If Rotary meets as a body to eat at noon and conducts business at 12:30, a latecomer or absentee cannot eat the common meal apart from the purposed time. Even if he comes in and eats leftovers (the same food) at three, he would not be eating WITH them. And if some or all stay around and watch him eat, they would not be gathered TOGETHER to eat. It is for the sake of others who are unsettled on this question that I submit the following.

The Authority of the Old Testament

Things written aforetime were written for our learning and for our admonition (Rom. 15:4, 1 Cor. 10:11). Though we correctly state that the O.T. is not a law to us, we ought never interpret that to mean it does not teach us how to behave. The scripture which Paul told Timothy was "profitable for teaching, . . . for instruction which is in righteousness that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely" was a combination of the N.T. he had learned and of the sacred writings he had known from childhood. Every point made in Hebrews is proven by O.T. scripture; nothing is asserted on the basis of apostolic authority. Recognizing these facts, we know the O.T. can and ought to be used to establish principles of conduct and faith.

The Validity of the Comparison

A little meditation reveals many common points between the Lord's Supper and the Passover. First, Christ is our passover (:1 Cor 5:7). Second, Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper on the Passover. More to our point, the Passover was a feast to be kept when Israel was congregated in Jerusalem at a specified time, just like the Lord's Supper is to be taken when the church is together on the first day of the week (Deut. 16:1-8, 16). Although the Passover was an annual feast and the Lord's Supper is weekly, the principle that the people are to assemble to partake applies. Yet, when certain men were unable to assemble to partake of the Passover at the appointed day of the year, God made another day for them (Num 9:6-14). Those who were unclean or on a journey assembled at a later day than the rest of Israel. The parallel teaches us that as those who could not attend an annual feast assembled at a later date to partake, so may those who cannot attend in the morning assemble in the evening to partake of the Lord's Supper. It is still the God-appointed day. If we allow the O.T. to teach us anything, the second serving of the Passover will teach us that a thing commanded to be done in an assembling of the people of God may properly be done later by those who could not attend. But they may only do it at the specified time. God designated the alternate day for the Passover. So also with the Lord's Supper, we cannot serve it Tuesday for those who

cannot come Sunday. We may, however, serve it at a later hour on the authorized day. The late-partakers in Israel were not allowed to straggle along a few today, a few more tomorrow, but were themselves to assemble at a set time. This preserved the solemnity and holiness of the feast. So also, the Lord's Supper is offered at the second assembling on the Lord's day.

Others have ably dealt with most aspects of this question. I especially recommend Marshall Patton's articles in *Searching the Scriptures*. I hope this simple point will help others see the truth. Whatever, I plead that no man or group arrogate the right to refuse the Lord's Supper to any on the first day of the week.

Using Great Plainness of Speech

J. T. Smith

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BECOMING NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANS

As we noted in our last article, if we are to become "New Testament Christians," we must follow the instructions of those who proclaimed its teaching after the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. As we observed from the last article, Christ's instructions were very specific as he commissioned his apostles to "go preach the gospel."

Also as we learned in the last article, a testament is of force after men are dead. Thus Christ's Testament (what we commonly refer to as the New Testament) was that which He was telling His apostles to proclaim. What did they teach as they went forth, guided by the Holy Spirit, proclaiming His Word?

We find the very first gospel sermon, in its completeness, being preached on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ in Acts chapter 2 when Peter and the rest of the apostles taught the people, saying, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made this same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:36-38). Notice how specifically Jesus' instructions were carried out. He told these men to go, preach the gospel, and to tell those who believed it (of course being understood that they confessed that they believed that Jesus was the Christ) to repent and be baptized that they might be

saved (Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47). Thus according to the above passages, the people on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus heard the Word, believed the word and confessed that they believed it, repented of their sins, and were baptized for the remission of sins.

According to Acts 2:41, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." What were they? Disciples, later called "Christians" (Acts 11:26)—New Testament Christians.

RAHAB

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Craig, CO 81626

Great prominence is given to one woman in God's Word. So few passages are used to do this that we list them all: Joshua 2; also in Joshua 6:17, 22-25; Matthew 1:5; Hebrews 11:31; and James 2:25.

Example

Rahab made the honor roll. What she did by faith is mentioned in Hebrews 11. There many others with faith are referred to. But specific deeds are told of only ten persons, eight men and two women. One of these was Rahab.

Then, in James 2, God had His writer to use two examples of justification by works. The man selected was Abraham. We could wonder why the woman chosen was Rahab. Receiving the spies and sending them out might not seem to be very much. But reading Joshua 2 and meditating upon it will increase our understanding and respect. She harbored and helped mortal enemies of her government.

How many individuals really rise above their environment and upbringing? How many women, all alone, have the courage and ambition to stand for what is right when it means working against their own neighbors? How many prostitutes forsake their associates and give up their income to lead a decent life against such odds? Few men, and fewer women, lay their necks on the line. Prisca did (Rom. 16:4), but she had her husband with her. Rahab ventured by herself. That is harder and more note-worthy.

Faith

It was "by faith" that our heroine so calmly carried out her life-risking plan. Where did she get that faith? Others heard the word of God, many directly as did Abraham. "Faith comes by hearing—the word—" (Rom. 10:17). Rahab read no verse of scripture. She heard the preaching of no prophet.

But she got "the word". The message of how Jehovah had miraculously delivered His people and later fought for them had reached her city. Joshua

2:11 records her telling of their fright. Rahab believed this report, which was God's word. She determined to serve the Lord. She resolved and acted. Is this not what God is showing us that we must do, also? To please Him we must imitate the faith of this great woman.

Works

We know what would have happened if Rahab had said, "God can see my faith. I do not need to do anything." In James 2:25 the Lord tells us that she was justified by works. In the next verse He states that faith without works is dead.

Joshua 2 shows that this woman was intelligent and resourceful. She hid the men properly. She threw the searchers off expertly. Then she revealed her faith in Jehovah and bargained, trusting His men. As Noah, another honor roll member, had done earlier she arranged for the saving of her family.

Rahab managed the escape of the spies by the same clever method used centuries later to deliver an apostle of her illustrious Descendant (Acts 9:25). Her advice, which the spies followed after leaving, was remarkable accurate psychologically. Tactically it was effective. Rahab was not content with such thinking as, "Do something even if it is wrong." She acted correctly upon careful reasoning. Here is a pattern for us in following the instruction, "In mind be adults."

Harlot

Adam Clarke claimed that Rahab was merely an innkeeper. But very nearly all other scholars state that our translations are correct. The word in Hebrew and the one in Greek mean a prostitute. She had been a harlot.

But why did God's writers continue to call her that? This bothers us. If a woman ancestor of ours had once worked at the occupation we would not now speak of her as, "Kate, the prostitute". God has a purpose in this. We must conclude that she had given up that way of life before the spies arrived. She said, "We have heard", and described how frightened she had been. James writes that she was "justified". So, in Joshua, as well as in Hebrews and in James, God is saying to us, "the former harlot". He keeps repeating that this type of woman can be converted (Matt. 21:31), can reform and serve Him faithfully, and can even make the honor roll. To the Corinthians (1 Cor., 6:9-10) He gave a black, "impossible" list and then stated, "And such were some of you: but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God."

Ancestor

Matthew (in 1:5) mentions Rahab without the "shady" designation. She was in the line of ancestry, the family tree of Jesus, the Son of God and the Son of Man. Two women (she and Ruth) were foreigners who overcame racial barriers to attain to that distinction. Surprisingly, one man, Boaz, was the son of the one and the husband of the other.

Rahab is one of the witnesses who, Hebrews 12:1 states, surround us. We can benefit from studying her brave deeds and letting her be an inspiration to us.

SEPARATED FROM CHRIST

Ronald Drumm
Naples, Florida

Being pressured on every side to follow Satan and a world of sin shouldn't we be interested in fellowship with God and unity with Christ that will result in something much better than what we now have? Of course we should! So let's consider a group of people that at one time were "separated from Christ" and thus had no hope and were "without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:12).

From a close examination of Ephesians 2:11-22 we find the Gentiles were such a people. Surely it would be safe to say they were "sons of disobedience" walking "according to the course of this world, according to the prince (i.e. Satan, RLD) of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2). In fact Romans chapter one depicts quite plainly their position before God (verses 18-32).

At this point one might ask, "What were the Gentiles to do?" or "How could they become united with God in Christ?" Ephesians 2:17, 18 reads, "And He came and preached peace to you who were far away (i.e. Gentiles, RLD), and peace to those who were near (i.e. Jews, RLD); for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father." Very simply then they had access in one Spirit to the Father by the preaching of peace which came through Jesus Christ.

When the Gentiles believed and obeyed this preaching of peace (See Romans 1:9, 16), they became reconciled with the Jews in one body to God through the cross for by it the enmity (i.e. sin, RLD) had been put to death (Ephesians 2:14-16).

Now here is the interesting result of their reconciliation to God: "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but are fellow-citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:19-22).

How could anyone deny what these passages of Scripture teach? They emphatically announce fellowship with God and unity with Christ in one Spirit to all who heed the preaching of peace.

Let us denounce Satan and his followers, no longer living in the lusts of the flesh or indulging in the desires of the flesh and mind (Ephesians 2:2, 3) but rather hear and obey the unfathomable riches of Christ. For they have been written down by the

apostles and are now being presented by the church to all mankind (Ephesians 3:1-10).

In conclusion read Paul's summation in Ephesians 3:11, 12, "This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him."

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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, VA24012

NEW CONGREGATION

YUMA, AZ—On July 8th we began a new work at this place. At present our attendance is about thirty. We are presently meeting in the recreation hall of a trailer park. Our temporary address is: 2255 Burr Street, Yuma, AZ 85365. Anyone wishing to contact this new congregation may either write to the above address or call Chuck McDade at (602) 782-4202, or H.I. Spencer at (602) 783-3286. Our services are 10 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. on Sundays and 7:30 p.m. on Wednesdays.

PREACHERS NEEDED

SHEBOYGAN FALLS, WI—Mature, full-time preacher needed for a challenging work. Middle-aged preferred. Contact church of Christ, Sheboygan Falls, WI 53085, or write to Mabreyt Tayse, Rt. 1, Bridgewood Rd., Sheboygan Falls, WI 53085.

MOREHEAD CITY, NC—The church of Christ in Morehead City on the coast of North Carolina is seeking a full-time preacher. We are a small, sound, faithful congregation with an average attendance of 30. Partial support will be needed. Area desperately needs full-time preacher. If interested call (919) 326-2568. Or write to Ronnie D. Garner, Rt. 5, Box 413, Newport, NC 28570.

PERRY, FL—The Spring Warrior church of Christ in Perry, FL is looking for a full-time evangelist. We are a rural community five miles south of Perry. Our average attendance is 110. We are seeking a man who is willing to do personal work. We are self-supporting. Please contact the elders at Rt. 3, Box 338, Perry, FL 32347. Or call (904) 584-6443, 584-7255, or 584-5159.

CALERA, AL—The church in Calera, AL is presently looking for a man to come and work with them in the work there. The congregation is young (9 months), but has a good group of people who are willing to work. It is located in a small rural town in Shelby County. They have their own building which will seat about 100. They are small in number but rich in faith. Their attendance is about 12 for each service. They will be able to provide some support, but not much at present. Most support would have to come from outside. If you are interested in working with a fine group of Christians, please contact James Owens by calling (205) 668-0084 or by writing Bro. Owens at Rt. 1, Box 295, Calera, AL 35040. If you would like additional information you may contact Stan Adams, 2426 Tahiti Lane, Alabaster, AL 35007, or Pete McKee in Prattville, AL.

ALLIANCE, OH—The Homeworth Rd. church of Christ which meets 3 miles east of Alliance, OH is searching for a full-time

preacher to begin in October. Bro. Phil Duren, who has been driving a distance to preach for the congregation the past three years, is leaving to join a new work near his home at Greentown, OH. The church can provide approximately \$200 per month in support and names of other congregations that possibly could help. Interested persons should call either James Anderson (216) 821-9422, or Ervil Poland (216) 823-8700. Or write to the Homeworth Rd. church of Christ, 822 Homeworth Rd., Alliance, OH 44601.

FOREIGN NEWS

CARLOS A. CAPELLI, Casila #83, Jose C. Paz, Buenos Aires, Argentina—The Lord has continued to richly bless the efforts here. Five precious souls have recently obeyed the gospel here at Jose C. Paz. Two have recently been restored. We now have 22 members. Also there were souls added in other places. Three were baptized at the southside church in Derqui where Bro. Timoteo Guaymas preaches. One was added at the church in Mendoza where Bro. Fernando Venegas preaches. It is with great joy that I announce a new congregation beginning in San Miguel, Bs Aires which is about 20 kilometers from J.C. Paz. The church met for the first time on Sunday July 5th. We continue to enroll new students in the Bible Correspondence Course. We now have 40 registered. We visit them personally when they answer the last lesson. On a personal note, our daughter Jimena had her tonsillectomy surgery on July 16th. She is now doing better. Thank you for your prayers. Celeste and I will take space here to express our deep appreciation to all brethren who have encouraged us in our work. God bless you all.

PEDRO RAMIREZ, Agua Prieta, Sonora-Mexico. We are happy to report that two were restored here. During July I preached four times in Mexico City while we were there taking our son to the doctor. We must return for further treatment for our boy in January, 1982. Pray for us and him. Our boy cannot talk well yet, but is making progress. You can contact me through a U.S. address of Pedro Ramirez, P.O. Box 21, Douglas, AZ 85607.

ENRIQUE CISNEROS, Apartado Postal #1306, Hermosillo, Sonora-Mexico. The first week of July we had a gospel meeting with Bro. Santos Gomez of Tecate B.C. Mexico. We had one baptized. We were well edified and many non-Christians attended.

----- 0 -----
RICHARD TERRY, P.O. Box 277 EG, Melbourne, FL 32935. Bro. Stephen Walker of Palm Bay, FL and myself are working on a new book called "On The Move With Personal Evangelism." We would like to solicit the assistance of our brothers who have had success with their personal work techniques, which we would like to include in this new publication. We have some ambitious goals, but the first

step in reaching those goals is the compilation of sundry materials that we can draw from in putting this new book together. We would appreciate any assistance that our brethren can provide. Send all material to Richard Terry at the above address. If reproduction of this material is necessary, please let us know of your expense in Xeroxing it and we will reimburse you for the same.

C. DAVID BOBBINS, R.R. #5, Box 188, North Vernon, IN 47265. The Westlaco, TX church has invited me to move and preach for them and my wife and I would like to move there as soon as possible. The church there has an adequate meeting house, paid for, and is able to provide about \$1,600 per month support. I will need about \$400 a month additional support and help with moving expenses. I will try and be there by November 1st. The work in the Rio Grande Valley will be a real challenge. I am 51 years of age with 25 years of preaching experience. References are the elders of the 10th St. church of Christ, Columbus, IN 47201. My address is above.

ODESSA, TX LECTURESHIP

This is to announce the sixth annual Crescent Park Lectureship in Odessa, TX. The dates will be November 1-5 and will feature such subjects as "Parables of Jesus," "Apostles: The Lord's Men," "Evidences of God," "God: The Trinity," "Attributes of God," "God's Plan For The Fallen Race," "God's Final Judgment," and others. Grover Stevens, Marshall Patton, Hoyt Houchen, Robert Goodman, Robert Gabhart, Mark Kercheville, Tom Baker, Jimmy Stevens, and Jesse Kelly will speak during the week.

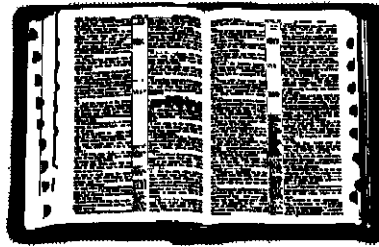
IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	235
RESTORATIONS	96

(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)

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 XXII

NOVEMBER, 1981

NUMBER 11

Using the SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

Ken Green

2212 Jordan Lane, S.W.
Huntsville, Alabama 35805



ON BEING HUMAN

From the Denver Post Oct. 15, 1980, came this Associated Press Article regarding the \$50,000 bribe which was accepted by Michael Myers. Audio and video tapes were made of meetings in which secret agents posed as aides to a bogus Arab sheik who was willing to pay the former congressman for favors. Myers was convicted of bribery and conspiracy and was expelled from Congress. The attitude of many of his constituents amazes me.

"He did take the money, but that doesn't bother me," said bartender Rich Francolino. "... if someone offered you \$50,000, it would be awful hard to refuse too. I can't blame Ozzie (Myers) for being human."

Doesn't that take the cake? These days, every form of sin, crime, and ungodliness is flippantly excused with the line, "That's just being human!" When folks let their tempers fly away and they tear up things, relationships, and feelings, who can blame them? They're just being human. But God's word still exhorts us to: "Be ye angry and sin not. . ." (Eph. 4:26). It is natural to be angry at times, and even needful. But that is no excuse for sin.

People fulfill their fleshly lusts with no regard for God, others, or even themselves beyond immediate gratifications. But we are reminded, "They're just being human." But our God says, ". . . abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul. . ." (1 Peter 2:11).

The past few decades have produced a generation of covenant breakers. It is no longer the norm for a man's word to be his bond. Even within the church we find more and more examples of undependability. While it is human to err, and sometimes, to forget, Christians should strive to keep their word. Jesus said, "Let your communication be, Yea, yea; nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil..." (Matt. 5:37).

What the bartender called "being human," the Lord calls "walking after the flesh" (Romans 8:1-9). While most of our fellowmen may not blame us for such, let's be reminded that "...he that judgeth me is the Lord" (1 Cor. 4:4).

AND THEY WERE RIGHT

Eternity magazine (Jan. 1981) quoted the opening sentence in the *New York Times* story: "Atlantic City— In a campaign to stop a huge increase in crime that has followed the legalization of casino gambling here, 112 persons were indicted today on burglary, theft, and narcotics charges." *Eternity* commented: "Before casino gambling was opened in 1978, opponents, including all the churches and many civic groups, argued that legalization would create a huge increase in crime, especially burglary, theft and narcotics."

They were right.

Gambling interests are continuing to capitalize on the attitude that legalized gambling can provide funds which will relieve the growing tax burden. Yet, the liabilities of such vices always exceed the benefits.

Thomas Dewey said: "It is fundamentally immoral to encourage the belief by the people as a whole in gambling as a source of revenue. . . The entire history of legalized gambling in this country and abroad shows that it has brought nothing but poverty, crime and corruption, demoralization of moral and ethical standards, and ultimately a lower living standard and misery for all the people."

Our Lord said, a corrupt tree can bring forth nothing but corrupt fruit (Matt. 7:17,18).

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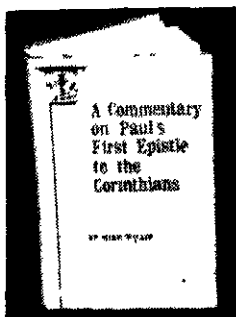
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Editorial

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PREMILLENNIALISM IN THE PHILIPPINES

In the late fall of 1980, Robert Boyd of Louisville, Kentucky and another American premillennial preacher visited Mindanao in the Philippines and succeeded in convincing a few preachers of their doctrine. With funding from premillennial churches in the United States, they now have radio programs on six stations, all in Mindanao, with the bulk of their effort zeroed in on Davao City, the large and principal city on the east coast of that large island. With the exception of one program in Davao City on which a native Filipino preaches their doctrine, the other programs are taped segments of "Words of Life", on which Robert Boyd preaches and which is now heard in several parts of this country and in some foreign lands.

There is evidence that this speculative false doctrine is having effect on some young, untaught preachers and some congregations made up of babes in Christ which congregations lack adequate leadership and regular teaching. One congregation in Davao City which had a building of its own, has defected to this error. Juanito P. Balbin, a preacher whom I have known now for over 10 years, lives in Davao City. He is an able preacher and a first rate debater. In 1971 when I first visited the Philippines, the late and lamented Romulo B. Agduma told me that brother Balbin was then the ablest young debater in Mindanao. A few years ago brother Balbin lost all his support. But he never did quit preaching. Sustaining his growing family the best he could, he continued to preach as time and opportunity afforded. A sister in Louisville, Kentucky has supplied him with enough funds for him to preach on the same radio station the native premillennial preacher is on, in fact, immediately after this man, Gesulga. He has been exposing the error of this system.

As a result of this, a debate was set between Balbin and Gesulga which was scheduled for October 24. Two propositions were arranged and the plans called for 10 hours of debate on that one day. Robert Boyd promised to return to the Philippines for some lectures and to assist Gesulga in the debate. It is strange that the premillennial brethren in the Louisville area have become so sweet-spirited that they would not touch a debate there with a ten foot pole. But this man can go 10,000 miles to encourage a native Filipino preacher to do what he himself would not condescend to attempt.

When some of us learned of this development, and

read the appeals for teaching materials to help counteract this invading system of error, it was thought that it would be helpful to the cause and especially a moral boost to brother Balbin if one of us could go and not only help him before and during the debate but also stay long enough to do some additional teaching in that area to help equip brethren to resist this error. Ben Shropshire, Dudley Ross Spears and the writer all considered going but could not handle the scheduling problems on such short notice with other commitments already made.

J.T. Smith of Miami, Florida agreed to go provided the brethren there desired his presence. They were most anxious for him to come and by the time you read this his trip should have been completed. J.T. Smith and the writer made a trip together to the Philippines in 1971 during which time J.T. debated the Filipino, Lacuata, on church benevolence and the sponsoring church. That debate did much good and the effects of it are still being felt in that country. It was put in print and widely circulated over that country resulting in a number of preachers leaving liberalism and embracing the truth. Because of his good work in this regard and other favorable impressions he created during our month-long stay, he is highly respected among those brethren. He planned to moderate in the debate for brother Balbin, has prepared a series of charts which will be made available to those attending the debate, and was to present a series of lectures on Premillennialism the week before the debate and then again the week after. As soon as we can we will carry his report of the trip and its results.

Readers of this paper will recall that last year we carried an exchange in this paper concerning a report issued by two brethren who were critical of the work in those islands and many of the men being supported to preach there. While the report was principally aimed at curtailing excessive support and stopping support of unworthy men, the effects have been much more extensive. In fact, there has been a serious curtailment of support for men throughout the Philippines, a number of whom are tried and true. With their means of support cut off, they have had to spend the bulk of their time doing whatever they could to provide for their families. A number of these men had been able to establish several congregations and divided their time visiting each of them as often as possible to ground these babes in the truth, hold training classes to help develop leaders and generally prepare them to stand alone. But now, many of these congregations are left without adequate teaching and are prime targets for premillennial wolves and other false teachers to make havoc of these flocks. It is indeed a critical time in several places in the Philippines and especially in Mindanao where the brunt of this battle must be fought.

We are certainly not in favor of American churches supporting any unworthy man anywhere. We are also fully convinced that everywhere congregations are planted in any country that they should be taught to be self-sufficient as soon as possible. Many good men in the Philippines have embraced the truth at great

personal sacrifice. Some gave up much greater financial support in order to preach the gospel. Their work has been successful beyond imagination in many instances. I have a growing file of letters from older men who have been tested for years and who have done outstanding work for the Lord who now have been cut off by supporting churches and in some cases with direct reference being made to the critical report which we printed and reviewed last year in this paper. This is not being written in order to stir an old controversy but to simply report on some of the results. Much time, money and effort have been spent by American brethren and native people to build the cause in the island nation. We urge brethren here who have been supporting men there to think before dumping all those men in the same basket and assuming that they are all unworthy. Have you considered what is to become of congregations consisting of babes in Christ who have been established and nourished by the very men you have been supporting? Is that not why you supported them?

For my part, I do not believe that developing churches in that nation should be abandoned to false teachers who come with their smooth words and fair speeches to impose the yoke of sectarian bondage on unsuspecting babes. It is urgent now that faithful men have the necessary help to resist this threat and to help stabilize these churches. By all means, investigate men supported. Gather the best information you can. Weigh it objectively. Require regular and full reports. But don't judge all men by the ungodly conduct of the few. Brother Smith is to be commended for being willing to go and help at a critical time and so is the North Miami Ave. church for standing behind him and encouraging him in this effort. We anxiously await his report.

THE HOUCHEN—PHILLIPS EXCHANGE

With this issue we bring to a close for the present the discussion of the issue of "praying to Jesus" in so far as this paper is concerned. We have had letters and articles from a number of brethren about this matter and think it necessary to state our intention regarding it. Both H.E. Phillips and Hoyt Houchen are mature, experienced preachers and writers. Both have been on the battle line for truth and right for all of their adult lives. They are personal friends. Both are friends of the editor. It is my judgment that they have brought before our readers the strongest effort on their respective views of the subject under discussion that can be found. Both views have been adequately and fairly represented. To extend the matter and enlarge the number of articles touching this subject would tend to blow it out of proportion and neither the editor, nor brethren Phillips and Houchen believe this to be in the best interest of the cause. Each has researched his material carefully, presented it forcefully, been considerate and brotherly with respect to the other and we believe that is enough to air the different views. I have consulted with both these brethren and they concur in

this judgment. We are not averse to controversy. There are divine principles by which honest and earnest men should be governed even in controversy and we believe these have been observed in this case. We thank both brethren for their contribution to the study and thought of us all. We ask you to read carefully and thoughtfully the final articles by these brethren carried elsewhere in this issue.

AND NOW—A "CHURCH OF CHRIST" STILL

"WILLIAMSTOWN SCHOOL PLANS TO USE JERUSALEM ARTICHOKES AS BUS FUEL"

**William B. Murrell
8 Brown Ave.
Parkersburg, WV 26101**

The above title was the heading for an article in the Parkersburg News, Sept. 9, 1981. The article went on to say that the Williamstown church of Christ was going to build a building and a still to make alcohol to fuel its buses. They have received a \$26,270.00 grant from the U. S. Department of Energy for this purpose.

II John 9, says, "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son." In the past forty years I have seen some of my brethren do so much that is beyond the teaching of Christ that I thought I was beyond the point of being surprised at anything they would do, But I was shocked at hearing this on the news and later reading it in the paper. Just how far can a congregation go without ceasing to be "of Christ"? I can't answer this for even in "Ole dead Sardis" there were a few names who had not defiled their garments (See Rev. 3:4).

I consider the act described above not only to be unscriptural but also unconstitutional. It seems to me that it is a violation of the first amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America. Besides this, our nation was founded on the basis of separation of church and State.

The late Bro. J. D. Tant used to close most of his articles to religious papers with the words, "Brethren, we are drifting." Brethren, many have now drifted, run through the rapids, and are on the brink of the falls and are about ready to have our candlestick completely removed.

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A REPLY TO H. E. PHILLIPS

Hoyt H. Houchen
1838 S. Fairplay St.
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In the February, 1981 issue of *Searching The Scriptures* is an article penned by me and entitled, "Praying And Singing To Jesus". My article affirms that the scriptures authorize us to pray and sing to Jesus, as well as God the Father. H.E. Phillips believes that it is wrong to pray to Jesus, so he has written two articles in reply to mine—one appearing in the July issue of *Searching The Scriptures* and the other in the August issue. I am grateful for the opportunity to respond to his two articles. Brother Phillips and I have been good friends for a number of years and our pleasant associations of the past are recalled with pleasure.

I am willing for my first article to stand upon its own merit; for I set forth what I firmly believe the scriptures teach. Rather than examine my arguments one by one, brother Phillips has chosen to state what he believes. Really, I am surprised at some things he does believe and the position that he takes.

A Clarification

First, I wish to make it very clear that I do not in any way approve of the disgusting repetitious "dear Jesus" phrases which are uttered by Pentecostal groups and others, who are carried away by the charismatic movement. My article simply declares that the scriptures authorize us to pray and sing to Jesus. Whatever abuses may result from what is right is another matter.

And, it is true that generally brethren address their prayers to God the Father. Under most circumstances, I do the same. I do believe that we are praying to Jesus when we sing such songs as "Jesus Keep Me Near The Cross". So, even though we address our prayers to God the Father most of the time, to deny that it is scriptural to address prayers to Jesus is an entirely different thing.

No Parallel

At the outset of my article I observed that well-meaning brethren, who in their efforts to prove from the scriptures that we must pray to the Father ONLY, cite the several passages which mention praying to God the Father but they ignore scriptures which have reference to praying to Jesus. They conclude that we must address our prayers to the Father ONLY. This is the method used by the Baptists when they attempt to prove faith ONLY. They list all of the passages which teach faith, but they fail to recognize the other con-

ditions of salvation. The two approaches are parallel. But brother Phillips thinks I made the same argument as that made by members of the Christian Church; because when we have listed all of the verses in the New Testament which mention singing in worship, they charge us with concluding that we cannot use instrumental music in worship. They would be correct if there were also examples of instrumental music in worship, but there are none. We do have examples of prayers addressed to Jesus, so he does not have a parallel between what I said and the argument made by members of the Christian Church. There are examples of prayers to Jesus, but there are no examples of instrumental music. That is the difference, brother Phillips. So, my argument and that made by members of the Christian Church are far from being "exactly the same in form and fact", as he says.

The Nature of Christ

We worship Christ because He is God. But while brother Phillips agrees that Jesus is GOD, and should be worshipped, he denies that we can pray to Him. Hear him: "I affirm that songs of praise, exultation and adoration to Jesus, to the Father or to the Holy Spirit are scriptural. But I affirm that praying to Jesus or to the Holy Spirit is unscriptural and wrong."

We agree that there are three separate persons in the Godhead—God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. They are not only coexistent, but they are CO-EQUAL. To understand this fact is basic to this discussion. When Jesus descended to earth and became incarnate (Jno.1:14), He was not divested of any divinity or nature, thus He did not cease to be GOD. He was the eternal LOGOS (Jno. 1:1) and continued to be God. He assumed a different role, becoming a servant and being made like man (Phil.2:6,7); but His nature was the same. God the Father and Christ the Son are different in role, but the same in nature. This being the case, He is worthy of the same honor as the Father. "He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father that sent him" (Jno.5:22,23).

Prayer to Jesus

From the time that the wise men worshipped Him who was laid in His humble manger at Bethlehem, men have worshipped at His feet. Many sought blessings from His bountiful hand while He walked upon this earth. Never did Jesus refuse homage upon the basis that He was the improper object, nor did He forbid petitions being made to Him. Men, and even an angel, did refuse such honor (Acts 10:25,26: 14:14,15; Rev. 19:10). But Jesus is GOD, and men not only petitioned Him while He was upon this earth, but also after He went into heaven and became our mediator, high priest and advocate.

That worship of Jesus sometimes included petition, as well as adoration and exultation, is obvious. A leper came to Jesus and "worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean" (Matt. 8:2). Jairus "worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she

shall live" (Matt.9:18). ". . .the mother of the sons of Zebedee, with her sons, worshipping him, and asking a certain thing of him" (Matt.20:20). The woman of Canaan "came and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me" (Matt.15:25). The father of the poor lunatic came "kneeling to him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son" (Matt.17:14,15). Jesus was not only petitioned upon earth, but also after He ascended to heaven as was clearly pointed out in my first article (Acts 7:59; 2 Cor. 12:8,9; Rev. 5:9; 22:20). But brother Phillips contends that he can praise, exalt and adore Jesus, but it is unscriptural and wrong to pray to Him. By his conceding our right to worship, as far as I am concerned, he cannot logically deny our right to petition Him.

An Old View Revived

The homoousios (Geek word, "of the same substance), was generally believed by early Christians. The idea that Jesus and the Father are of the same nature, and therefore should be equally honored, was commonly believed until the fourth century A. D. when a dispute arose about it. Arius began to teach that Christ is subordinate to the Father. Athanasius championed the cause of truth by opposing the view of Arius. The Nicene council met in 325 A. D. to settle the dispute. It merely confirmed what the scriptures already taught upon this question. But false doctrines do not remain dormant. In the sixteenth century A. D., Faustus and Laelius (nephew and uncle) formulated and promoted the view that Jesus was not equal with God, and therefore that He should be worshipped next to the Father. Upon this basis the defenders of Arianism and Socinianism deny the right to pray to Jesus. While brother Phillips does not hold to all the specific points of these doctrines, and I am not accusing him of such; nevertheless, his conclusion is the same—we are not to pray to Jesus. We had thought this question had been settled centuries ago.

The Position of Jesus

Jesus is said to have all authority in heaven and on earth (Matt.28:18); He is king and judge (I Cor. 15:25,26; 2 Tim. 4:1), He is the searcher of hearts (Jno. 2:25 Rev. 2:23), He is the author of our salvation (Heb. 2:10); He is our high priest (Heb.4:15); He is our mediator (I Tim. 2:5) and He is our advocate (I Jno. 2:1). Please notice all that is attributed to Him: omnipresence (Matt. 28:20), omnipotence (Matt. 28:18), omniscience (Col. 2:3), eternity (Jno. 1:1; 8:58; Jno. 17:5), an equal share in honor with the Father (Jno.5:22,23), absolute oneness with the Father (Jno. 10:30) and a like claim upon the trust (Jno.14:1), the father (Jno.15:27) and the hope (I Cor.15:22) of humanity. He shared in the creation of all things (Jno. 1:3). He is the preserver of the world (Col.1:17). He is Lord of lords and King of kings (Rev.19:16), the brightness of the Father's glory and the very image of the Father's substance (Heb.1:3).

More could be given as to the position of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Jesus is our king. Are we to suppose that citizens of the heavenly kingdom have no right to petition their king? Jesus is the head of the

family, the church. Are the members of this great family not allowed to address their head? Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18). He sits and rules at the right hand of God above all rule, authority, power, and dominion and is above every name that is named (Eph.1:21); but brother Phillips says it is unscriptural and wrong to pray to Him. Frankly, I am embarrassed that this should even be a matter of dispute among brethren.

What Prayer Involves

Prayer consists of several elements: (a) praise and adoration, (b) thanksgiving, (c) confession of sins and (d) petition. ALL of these elements are involved in prayer, and if one of them is permitted (praise) then that is PRAYER—the same as if one other (petition) is uttered. Brother Phillips does not seem to recognize this. Webster defines the word "pray": (1) to make entreaty or supplication (2) to address God with adoration, confession, supplication, or thanksgiving (Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary, p. 667). Charles Hodge states this clearly. "As prayer, in the Scriptural sense of the term, includes all converse with God either in the form of praise, thanksgiving, confession or petition; all the ascriptions of glory to Him as well as all direct supplications addressed to Him, come under this head" (Systematic Theology, Vol.3, p. 700-01). But the dictionaries and theologians do not have to define prayer for us. When Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "Hallowed be thy name," that was praise and exaltation. So, praise and exaltation to Jesus is an element of prayer. I had stated that those who object to songs or prayers specifically addressed to Jesus can sing or pray to one part of deity, but they cannot pray to another part. Brother Phillips wants to know why it is not wrong to sing and pray to the Holy Spirit, and he wishes to know if I advocate praying to the Holy Spirit. This poses no difficulty. It so happens that brother Phillips is doing what all of us do when we praise the Holy Spirit. Praise is a part of prayer, so in that sense he prays to the Holy Spirit when he praises and adores Him. He is doing the same when he praises, exalts and adores the Father and the Son in song. He is actually doing what he thinks he cannot do.

A False Distinction

Brother Phillips believes there is a distinction between singing and praying. Hear him in his first article: "One of the main pillars upon which this idea of praying to Jesus rests is that songs we sing—the good old popular and well known songs—are prayers to Jesus. This is not true! There is a difference between praying and singing." There we have it. We all agree that there are separate items of worship revealed in the New Testament: prayer, singing, the Lord's Supper, etc. He does not seem to recognize, however, that singing can be praying. Some songs are prayer songs. For instance, "Tarry With Me O My Saviour" is a prayer song. According to him, we can address Jesus WITH A TUNE, because singing is not prayer. However, we cannot address Jesus WITHOUT A TUNE, because that would be praying to Jesus and he

says that it is unscriptural and wrong to pray to Jesus. We would all agree that some prayers are not songs, and some songs are not prayers; but that a prayer cannot be sung is absurd. One problem, though, is solved for brother Phillips. He can have that "little talk with Jesus" or he can "tell it to Jesus alone" if he sings to Jesus because he does not believe that singing is ever praying. According to his position, he is not praying; he is only singing. He can praise and adore Jesus if he SINGS. It is disappointing that brother Phillips would involve himself in that kind of argumentation.

He attempts to show a difference between singing and praying by referring to Eph.5:19 and Col.3:16,17. He thinks Paul makes a distinction between singing to the Lord (Jesus) in the first clause and praying to God the Father in the last clause (Eph.5:20). But this is unwarrantable; for to begin with, it is his assumption that this is the distinction that Paul makes. I do not believe that he correctly construes the verse. The Greek term *kurios*, translated "Lord" in the first clause does not always refer to Jesus. It may designate either God the Father or Jesus, depending at times upon the context. For specific examples, the reader is referred to Arndt and Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, under *kurios*, p. 460. Furthermore, the distinction that brother Phillips makes in this verse is not made by any critical commentary that I have checked. While commentators vary in some particulars, none of them make the distinction in this verse that he does. And what is more, if this verse were the proof for the definite distinction between singing and praying that brother Phillips makes, then it would contradict any other scripture which teaches that singing and praying is ONE act, simultaneous.

Now let us consider a scripture which is the devastating blow to his contention.

Acts 16:25

"But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns unto God, and the prisoners were listening to them..." "Praying" is a present participle and "singing" is an imperfect verb. Lenski says that "the present participle and the imperfect verb express simultaneous action: their singing was praying". (Interpretation of the Acts of the Apostles, p. 672). This is the only interpretation that this grammatical construction will allow. Praying, they were singing. It was ONE act. A. T. Robertson comments: "Present middle participle and imperfect active indicative: Praying they were singing (simultaneously, blending together petition and praise)" (Word Pictures in the N. T., Vol. 3, p. 259-60). Others express the same thing (Alford, Hackett, Ellicott etc.) There is no way for brother Phillips to get around the force of this verse. It is irrefutable and it completely demolishes his argument that there is a distinction between singing and praying. He is wrong.

Incidentally, some of us are made to wonder about his comment on Jas. 5:13: "Is any among you afflicted! let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms". In his effort to prove his distinction between praying and singing in this verse, we are made to wonder if he

thinks it would be proper for us to pray when we are merry and sing when we are afflicted (i. e. funerals, etc.).

The Lord's Supper

I do not agree with his illustration of the Lord's Supper—that it is an act of worship directed to a single person exclusively. He only assumes it. The Lord's Supper commemorates the death of Jesus, but that its observance is directed only to Jesus is gratuitous. When we partake of the Lord's Supper we acknowledge God's love (Rom.5:8), His grace (Heb.2:9) and His mercy (Tit.3:4-6). The Christian gratefully acknowledges all of these (Col.3:17). The Lord's Supper is one of the "all things" we do in the name of Jesus, giving thanks to God. Brother Phillips is wrong again.

Explanations of Examples Examined

Brother Phillips attempts to explain away the examples of prayers to Jesus in my first article, contending that they serve as no proof for us to pray to Jesus today.

His explanation of Stephen's prayer (Acts 7:59) is shocking indeed. "Lord Jesus receive my spirit". Hear brother Phillips: "There are special miraculous circumstances surrounding this scene that make it an unusual setting for the statement made by Stephen. If I were in the same situation as Stephen was and saw what he saw, I suppose I would speak to Jesus just as he did. But in the absence of this miraculous setting at any subsequent time, we have no evidence that this was ever repeated in history, especially in Biblical history". So, he tries to dismiss this example upon the basis of its "special miraculous circumstances". If this be true, I submit to you that almost every single case of conversion in the book of Acts would be invalid because, with few exceptions, they were surrounded by "special miraculous circumstances". I am really surprised that he would come up with this. What a loophole this would provide for those who would like to escape the force of Acts 2:38! Those conditions are surrounded by "miraculous circumstances. And, whether or not Stephen was inspired, does not alter the fact that it was a prayer to Jesus. He was a godly saint, a Christian, and he prayed to Jesus. He prayed to Jesus who is our high priest and mediator, one who in heaven occupied the same position that He does now. I might also add that his petition was not accompanied by a tune, but yet it was a prayer—he prayed to Jesus.

He refers to Matt. 15:25 where the woman of Canaan came "and worshipped him, saying, Lord help me". Brother Phillips adds, "Now since she worshipped him, she must have sung and prayed to Jesus. I don't believe it". No one said she did sing to Jesus, brother Phillips. She prayed to Jesus and she was not singing. She did what you say is wrong for us to do. Does brother Phillips think he is not **praying** to God the Father when he addresses Him, "Dear Father, help me"?

Then he comments on 2 Cor. 12:8 where Paul besought the Lord (Jesus) three times to remove his thorn in the flesh. Now hear his explanation. "If this is

an example of praying to Jesus, it is also an example of Jesus replying directly to us in His own WORDS." I am shocked by this effort to explain this example away. Because Jesus answered Paul directly with His own WORDS does not alter the fact that Paul prayed to Jesus. This fact is what bothers brother Phillips and he cannot justifiably deny it. Paul prayed to Jesus which is an example of prayer to Jesus. According to brother Phillips, no one can pray to Jesus because He is our high priest and mediator. But Paul did and others did, and these are valid examples. As to 2 Cor. 12:8, let us not forget that revelation was not completed, nor was it in the cases of conversion; but whatever miraculous circumstances circumscribed them, they still nevertheless serve as examples. Brother Phillips should know better than to offer this kind of explanation.

Revelation 5:9,11,12 is symbolical, but it does not contradict the fact that Jesus is an object of prayer. If He were not, there would certainly have been no prayer addressed to Him, even in a symbolical setting. That which is unscriptural and wrong would not appear in any setting, symbolical or otherwise.

As to his comments on Jno.14:14, for lack of space, I simply refer the reader back to my original article and the comments upon its grammatical construction.

Brother Phillips thinks the one making the statement in Rev.22:20, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" was made by the Holy Spirit, and not the words of a man praying. Again, this is only his assumption. I have many commentaries in my library on the book of Revelation, and there is not one that I have examined that takes the position that he does. Nearly all say it was John (a few say it could be the seven churches) and these include such books as those by Barnes, Lenski, Beckworth, Homer Hailey, Hendriksen, Hinds, McGuiggan, Summers and Earle. These are but a few, and none agree with brother Phillips. The context shows clearly that it was John who made the statement, and it is a prayer.

More Examples

In Acts 1:24, when the apostles were assembled to select one to take the place of Judas, "they prayed, and said, Thou Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show of these two the one whom thou hast chosen. That this is a prayer to Jesus is made most clear from the fact that the selection of the twelve apostles was the prerogative of Christ. The apostles were selected by Jesus and they were known as the apostles of Jesus Christ, and not God the Father. Also, Jesus does know the hearts of all men (Rev.2:23). This is strong evidence that the prayer was addressed to Jesus. This is attested to by such scholars as Barnes, Lenski, Hackett, Alford and Bengel. They agree that the apostles invoked Jesus as Lord.

Paul addressed the church at Corinth, "with all that call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place" (I Cor. 1:2). It is plain here that prayer is referred to, and the prayer is to Christ. Saints invoke Him. Albert Barnes comments: "The expression 'to

call upon the name', to invoke the name, implies worship and prayer; and proves, (1) That the Lord Jesus is an object of worship and (2) That one characteristic of the early Christians, by which they were known and distinguished, was their calling upon the name of the Lord Jesus, or their worship to him. That it implies worship, see note on Acts 7:59; and that the early Christians called on Christ by prayer, and were distinguished by that. . ." (I Corinthians, p. 3). J. W. Shepherd, who edited the commentary on Romans by David Lipscomb, comments on this verse: "To call upon is to invoke his aid. To call upon the name of Jesus Christ is to invoke his aid as the Christ, the Messiah predicted by the prophets, and is our almighty and sovereign possessor and ruler" (I Corinthians, p. 21). Language could not be plainer that prayer to Jesus is taught, and I have not found a commentary which states otherwise. Jamieson, Fausset and Brown observe on this verse that, "the worship due to God is here attributed to Jesus" (Critical and Explanatory Commentary, Vol.2, p. 263). Socinians render the phrase passively "all that are called by the name of Jesus Christ". But "the verb followed by an accusative case, usually, if not constantly, is used, in its active signification, to call upon, to invoke" (Richard Watson, Theological Institutes, Vol. 1, p. 601). So, not only is the position of brother Phillips, that it is wrong to pray to Jesus, contrary to the scriptures; but scholarship testifies against it.

Paul prayed conjointly with the Father in behalf of the Thessalonians. "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father. . .comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word" (2 Thess.2:16,17). "Both are the one object of prayer, are to the apostle divine; for Divinity alone is the living object of adoration" (John Eadie, Commentary on the Greek Text of Thessalonians, p. 298). The honor of the Son is not less than that of the Father. The reader may also refer to Leon Morris (Tyndale series, Thessalonians, p. 139).

I Tim. 1:12 is another example of prayer to Jesus. "I thank him that enabled me, even Christ Jesus our Lord, for that he counted me faithful. . ." Paul expresses his gratitude to Christ, and thanksgiving is an element of prayer, as we have shown.

Early martyrs died with prayers to Jesus on their lips, and from the time of Stephen their voices span the chasm of the centuries.

Conclusion

Someone has taken the time to count sixty-one songs which we would consider "prayer songs" in the "Sacred Selections" song book. They are addressed directly to Jesus, the doubtful one not counted. These are considered the "classics" which brethren have sung for years. They are dear to us, not only because we love to sing them, but they express the truth which we believe is taught in the word of God. God forbid that a few brethren would "put the scissors" to "My Jesus As Thou Wilt", "I Need Thee Every Hour", "Jesus Keep Me Near The Cross", "Tarry With Me O

My Saviour" and many more. We rue the day when the attempt is made to remove such songs from our worship.

I have examined the two main arguments which brother Phillips makes in his two articles: (1) That there is a distinction between singing and praying (article 1) and (2) that we cannot pray to Jesus because He is our high priest, mediator and advocate (article 2). That Jesus has made it possible for us to pray to the Father is one thing, but to deny that we can address Him in prayer is an entirely different matter. I pray to Jesus because He is GOD, and with Thomas, I address Him as my Lord and my God.

My reply is written with love and kindness. My attack is upon the position of brother Phillips, and not upon him personally. I have no animosity in my heart toward him whatsoever. I simply disagree with him. I do agree, however, that this issue should not be pressed to the dividing of brethren. By mutual agreement, this will be my last reply in this exchange. May we ever desire the truth, and may we always manifest a spirit of love and kindness toward one another is my prayer.

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A REPLY TO HOYT HOUCHEN

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In this issue of *Searching The Scriptures* brother Hoyt Houchen has A Reply To H. E. Phillips regarding the issue of "Praying And Singing To Jesus." I would suggest that the reader get the February, 1981 issue of this paper and read brother Houchen's first article on this subject, and then my articles of reply in the July and August issues. By reading these first you will have a better understanding of the two articles in this issue.

Brother Houchen and I are brethren and good friends of long standing. Our discussion of this issue is not to be construed as personal attacks upon each other. I love and respect him. I think he is wrong on the subject of praying to Jesus, and he obviously thinks I am wrong. I shall press the point as long as I am convinced that I have the truth of God.

In this article I shall try to respond to him, section by section. Both time and space prohibit a close review of his article as I would like to do. I received his article several days later than I should, due to no fault of brother Houchen, but to the slow U.S. mail.

A CLARIFICATION

Brother Houchen does not approve of the Pentecostal type praying to Jesus. Well, as far as I am concerned it is not the "abuse of how it is done," but the fact that it is done. He also says that generally brethren address their prayers to God the Father, and "Under most circumstances, I do the same." We wonder why the partiality is shown between the Father and the Son Jesus Christ in the matter of prayer.

NO PARALLEL

My response was made to what brother Houchen said in his first article, not to what he says in this last one. In the first he said nothing about passages that authorize praying to Jesus when a comparison was made to Baptist doctrine. But he knows that the Christian Church attempts to prove instrumental music in worship by citing verses from both the Old and New Testaments. There is a parallel, even though brother Houchen does not see it.

THE NATURE OF CHRIST

It is superfluous for me to go over my material on the Deity of Christ. I spent about half of the first article on the divine nature of Christ. I understand by his context that by "CO-EQUAL" he means the nature of the Father and the Son, not their relationship to each other.

PRAYER TO JESUS

Until we can arrive at some accepted definition of "prayer" as it is used in the New Testament, we will never come to an understanding of the truth.

Prayer is worship, but all worship is not prayer. Do not assume that prayer is included every time the Holy Spirit used the word "worship." Adoration and exaltation do not always imply prayer, and prayer is not always adoration and exaltation. Hence, when we find Jesus being adored or exalted, do not jump to the conclusion that it necessarily implies prayer. It doesn't!

All of the references cited in this section of people coming to Jesus with requests while he was in the flesh do not prove authority to pray to Jesus now. Read under the sub-head: "Proof Texts Examined" in the August issue.

AN OLD VIEW REVIVED

I resent the implication of his little historical essay about Arius, Athanasius, Faustus and Laelius. Even though he says that I do not hold to "all the specific points of these doctrines. . .", I am charged with what he says are the consequences of "Arianism and Socinianism" to "deny the right to pray to Jesus." Does he really believe that the doctrine of Arianism and Socinianism had to do with the denial of the right to pray to Jesus? I vehemently deny any convictions or conclusions to anything akin to Arianism. Read my articles in the July and August issues. The truth of the matter is, the "Old View" went farther back than Arius. The Pharisees and Sadducees did not admit Christ to be the Son of God. They charged him with blasphemy because he said he was the Son of God.

THE POSITION OF JESUS

Read my July and August articles for my belief in the position of Christ in the whole scheme of redemption.

Lest someone should think there is some point in the argument that the citizens of the kingdom have a right to petition their King, thus we have the right to pray to Jesus, I want to suggest a question or two which will present some problems with his arguments.

He says, "Christ is our King." So he is! But is Christ the ONLY King? Does this heavenly kingdom have ANOTHER King? If not, why does brother Houchen admit: "And, it is true that generally brethren address their prayers to God the Father. Under most circumstances, I do the same." If citizens have the right to petition their King (Christ), why not petition him all the time? unless, of course, he is a subordinate King who may be petitioned some of the time, but most of the time another is petitioned and the King is left out?

The same is true of the figure of Christ being the head of the family, the church. If members of this great family are to address the head, Christ should be addressed as "Father" because the New Testament teaches that the husband and father is the head of the wife and children. If we address "Our Father, which art in heaven," and then address Christ who is the "Son of God" now in heaven at the right hand of the

Father, we either have TWO heads of the family, or we are addressing one who is not the head of the family. Which is it? Brother Houchen, are you being driven to Polytheism?

These are not my problems. These are problems of those who strain at figures of relationship to establish a point that can not be established any other way. I believe that Christ is the King of the kingdom and the head of the church. The Bible plainly says so. But these relationships do not call for all human activity to exist between deity and humanity in the figures.

But if these activities are justified in the figures of Christ's relationship to us, please explain why the King (Christ) should not reply directly to the citizens who petition him? What head of a family would continually hear his family call unto him and never reply to them?

WHAT PRAYER INVOLVES

Brother Houchen attempts to define prayer to support his proposition of praying to Jesus today. I do not believe he understands the difference between "prayer," "worship," "praise," and "adoration." He makes these words equal so that when one prays, he is praising; when he worships, he is praying; when he sings, he is praying; when he prays, he is singing, and so on and on. He says of me, "Praise is a part of prayer, so in that sense he prays to the Holy Spirit when he praises and adores Him. He is doing the same when he praises, exalts and adores the Father and the Son in song. He is actually doing what he thinks he cannot do."

Brother Houchen, I know the difference between SINGING and PRAYING. The two actions are as different as "repenting" and being "baptized."

A FALSE DISTINCTION

Brother Houchen seems astonished that I believe there is a distinction between singing and praying. It never dawned upon me that I would have to try to teach a gospel preacher the difference between "singing" and "praying."

He says, "Some songs are prayer songs." Yes, I know that some songs are "prayer songs." Some are "patriotic songs," some are "love songs," and some are "battle (war) songs," but such distinctions do not make them scriptural. Songs that do not teach the truth are not spiritual songs that can be sung in worship. To argue that "singing can be praying" is like arguing that "singing can be dancing." I can produce definitions of the word "sing" that include dancing. Brother Houchen, will you accept the position that singing can be dancing, and that it is scriptural to sing (and dance) to the Lord?

He says he has one problem solved for me: "He can have a 'little talk with Jesus' or he can 'tell it to Jesus alone' if he sings to Jesus because he does not believe that singing is ever praying. According to his position, he is not praying; he only singing." Now, Hoyt, you know very well that you are not stating my position as it appeared in my July article. You are stating the very opposite to what I said. (p. 447) Please do not charge

me with the consequences of your own logic.

I hope brother Houchen remembers his exegesis of Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16,17 a little later in this reply to him. Please remember that he is making the point that we cannot be sure about whether the Greek term kurios, which is translated "Lord," refers to Jesus or the Father. I agree that the word for Lord must be determined by the context as to whom it may refer. Both Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16,17 show by the context that the term refers to Jesus Christ.

ACTS 16:25

Now we come to the "devastating blow" to my contention. The passage is Acts 16:25! He gave us a little Greek grammar lesson and some comments from Len-ski, A. T. Robertson and some other commentators of reputation, and then he concludes: "There is no way for brother Phillips to get around the force of this verse. It is irrefutable and it completely demolishes his argument that there is a distinction between singing and prayer. He is wrong."

Please notice what brother Houchen is trying to prove me wrong about: "...completely demolishes his argument that there is a distinction between singing and prayer." That is what this argument is all about, and don't forget it! Well, I do not think that even Acts 16:25 will prove that there is NO DISTINCTION BETWEEN SINGING AND PRAYER. Watch his "devastating blow" disintegrate before his eyes. He wonders why I cited James 5:13 in my previous articles. I did so to show that the scriptures made a distinction between singing and praying.

I will not rest my case upon what fallible men say, no matter how great their reputation. Every scholar he quotes will teach some error which he will not accept. What I am saying is that the scholarly men we read, we do so with discernment because we know they are usually influenced by denominational error.

Len-ski is one scholar he quotes. In the same chapter of Acts, 16:31-33, he uses Greek grammar to prove that salvation is at once, a gift from God, and as soon as the jailor believed and accepted the Lord, he was saved. Len-ski says of verse 33: "The jailor and his family were baptized in the ordinary way by an application of water in the name of the Triune God. The quantity of water present is wholly immaterial." I know brother Houchen does not accept his own scholar on this exegesis of Acts 16:31-33. I cite this to simply show that neither of us really accept as final proof any word of uninspired man.

I will make three observations of Acts 16:25 in this present study. First, I checked 14 translations (I have several more) and all of them translated the verse using both words (prayed, and sang praises) as actions by Paul and Silas.

The best Greek scholars in the world combined their knowledge of the original Greek language and the English language and came up with the best "carry-across" from the original meaning to the exact meaning in the English. Their scholarship was on the line and I trust them to be more accurate with their

translation than a scholar who comments on a verse with a doctrinal beam in his eye.

Second, whatever Paul and Silas were doing upon this occasion, it was done to GOD. If they, "praying, hymned praises," they did so to God, not to Christ. I realize, however, brother Houchen is trying to prove that there is no distinction between singing and prayer.

Third, other passages in the New Testament that clearly distinguish between praying and singing leave no doubt for either commentators or translators. When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray (Luke 11:1-4), he did not give them a music lesson; he taught them to pray. We can well establish the clear distinction between praying and singing.

THE LORD'S SUPPER

He does not agree with my illustration of the Lord's Supper, and waves it off as if I had said nothing. The truth is, brother Houchen you cannot answer it, and I think you did the best thing in leaving it alone. My point in the illustration of the Lord's Supper was to show that when we do what the New Testament teaches us to do in partaking of the Lord's Supper, we can ONLY remember the "broken body" and the "shed blood" of Christ (Matt. 26:26,28; I Cor. 10:16; 11:24,25). Read my July article, page 447.

EXPLANATIONS OF EXAMPLES EXAMINED

Brother Houchen comes again to Stephen's "prayer" as he was dying. He said nothing new that deserves a reply. Stephen SAW Jesus in heaven; Paul SAW Jesus near Damascus. Both talked to Christ and He talked to them personally. If this is an example of praying to Jesus, it is also an example of SEEING Christ when we talk to him and expecting him to audibly address us personally when we talk to him. That which proves too much, proves nothing.

In the third paragraph of this section he said the woman of Canaan worshipped Jesus but did not sing. The reason I used this illustration was because he argued that she worshipped Jesus, and worship includes prayer; and to pray to him was the same as singing. That was the point of his "devastating blow" from Acts 16:25. Go back and read it, Now he said: "No one said she did sing to Jesus, brother Phillips." She prayed to Jesus and she was not singing. The legs of the lame are unequal.

AS to 2 Corinthians 12:8 brother Houchen has already committed himself to the fact the we cannot determine whether kurios refers to the Father or to Christ. Since this is true, I could just as accurately say that Paul besought the Lord God, the Father, to remove the thorn from his flesh. Read again my articles on this subject.

He parades a list of men who have written commentaries and announces my demise because none of them agree with me. Brother Houchen, I have never sought to agree with men, living or dead. I have labored to be in harmony with divine truth, and the rest I discard.

MORE EXAMPLES

The reference to Act. 1:24 is the record of an apostle being chosen by Christ in fulfillment of prophecy. One could no more draw authority for a general practice from Acts 1:24 than the specific appearance of Christ to Saul as he journeyed to Damascus should become general authority for Christ to personally appear to men who are to be saved.

The reference to 1 Corinthians 1:2 has no reference to praying to Jesus. It has to do with obeying the Lord—doing his will (Rom. 10:13). This is the fulfillment of Joel 2:32 and refers to all that is authorized for the remission of sins (Acts 22:16).

I can make a better case for praying to "father Abraham" than is here made for praying to Jesus. When a certain rich man died and lifted up his eyes in torments, he saw a certain beggar named Lazarus, who had died and was carried to the bosom of Abraham; he cried and said, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me . . ." (Luke 16:24). Then in verse 27 we read: "Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house ..." Shall we take this plain example of prayer to Abraham and exhort brethren to pray to him? No, certainly not! This is no more an example of prayer today than are those passages cited by brother Houchen.

He asserts that "early martyrs died with prayers to Jesus on their lips. . ." I just cannot accept his personal statement on this assumption. We are looking for Bible proof.

CONCLUSION

In the July issue, page 447, I stated that one of the main reasons for this position of praying to Jesus was to save some of the songs we have cherished through the years, written by denominational men and women. Brother Houchen now makes the emotional appeal for the preservation of several "old favorites." This is pretty good evidence that saving the songs plays a major part in trying to find authority to pray to Jesus.

I do not think brother Houchen effectively replied to my articles. First, he did not address himself to the point I made in the context I gave on the deity of Jesus. Second, he totally ignored some, and scarcely mentioned other arguments I made. In the July article I had a bit to say about the nature and relationship of deity. He virtually ignored this. His examination of Ephesians 5:18-21 and Colossians 3:16,17 is very disappointing. To my section: "All Three Persons of Deity Involved In Prayer," he said nothing about it. He garbled his attempt to say something about the Lord's Supper; he missed my point altogether.

The first half of my article in August was given to the indispensable place of Christ in our prayers to the Father. He hardly mentioned this portion of my article. I think I know why.

I have written in love and have tried to be kind and respectful. I consider brother Houchen a brother and a friend. I believe he is very wrong on this issue of praying to Jesus. But whatever either of us may say,

the final judgment will be made by the word of God. We all must answer to God by Christ and his word in that great day. What we believe and practice will determine our eternal destiny.

I pray that brethren will study this issue and strive to know and practice the truth. We should not press a matter like this to the point of division while we are trying to learn what the word of God teaches. This will be all I will say on the subject for awhile. A booklet will probably appear from my pen at some later date.

Restoration Footnotes

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ANY PLACE WILL DO

The pioneer preachers of the Restoration movement were not finicky about where they preached. Any place people could be gathered would do. School houses were often available and frequently used. But when J. A. Clark went to Harrison County, Texas, a few years before the Civil War, the school houses were all closed to him because he opposed denominationalism.

A wealthy planter named Edwards learned of the preacher's plight and offered the use of a building on his plantation. The structure originally had served as a school, but having been abandoned for such use, it now sheltered farm animals. When told the use being made of the building, Clark said, "Well, Mr. Edwards, my Savior was born in a stable, and I am not ashamed to preach in one." (F. D. Srgyley, *Biographies and Sermons*, pp. 83-84.)

The place was cleared of all appearances of a stable and cleaned up, as best it could be in short order and Clark held a gospel meeting there. Several persons learned the truth and were baptized, among whom were the planter's wife and young son.

Thousands were converted under similar circumstances in the last century and many churches had their beginning in such humble surroundings. The pioneer preachers like Clark were primarily men of the message; the place and condition of its delivery were relatively unimportant. These men, like the ancient Sidonians of whom the Lord spoke, may rise up in judgment against some today who will hardly preach any place, unless they are guaranteed a comfortable salary and a congenial setting.

"Shall we be carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease, while others fight to win the prize and sail through bloody seas?"

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SAVED (3)

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We continue our study of what it means to be saved, believing that we can appreciate salvation from sin to the extent that we understand what is involved in the transaction.

Having discussed in a previous article things that God has done for man that man could not do for himself—propitiation for sin (Rom. 3:25); reconciliation to himself (Col. 1:21); and redemption (Eph. 1:7)—I shall now discuss man's part in the plan of salvation, and the various terms used by inspired writers that help us to appreciate to a greater extent what is involved in being saved.

Salvation

Prior to his ascension to heaven, to take his seat at the right hand of God, Jesus gave to his apostles what is known as the great commission. Mark recorded it in the following words, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned" (Mark 16:15,16).

Here we have the word, saved, used to designate the result of believing and being baptized. It was pointed out in an earlier article that in its general sense, to be saved means to be delivered from impending danger, as we might say of one who has recovered from a critical illness, or who was rescued from a burning building, or from drowning, that his or her life was saved.

In giving the great commission with conditions of salvation, Jesus was not, however, speaking of being saved from physical death. He was speaking of salvation from the guilt of sin and its punishment. Paul, in reminding the Thessalonians of their salvation, said that they had been "delivered from the wrath that is to come" (1 Thess. 1:10). Peter told those to whom he wrote that they had "escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust" (2 Peter 1:4).

Remission of Sins.

In the second chapter of Acts is recorded the first sermon preached under the great commission. In that sermon, Peter, speaking under the influence of the Holy Spirit, preached about Christ,—how he died, rose again, and ascended to heaven, where he will reign until his enemies are made the footstool of his feet (Acts 2:22-35).

The result of Peter's sermon, and his appeal to them to recognize Jesus as their Lord and Christ,

was that his audience was pricked in their hearts and cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do? And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins..." (Acts 2:37,38).

Here we have the expression, remission of sins. What Jesus called salvation in the great commission, Peter, his inspired spokesman, called remission of sins in the first sermon preached under that commission. While the words, save, and remission do not have the same etymological meaning, they do have reference to the same transaction, each giving us some aspect of what occurs when one obeys the gospel.

The word, remit, means to send away. When we remit money we send it away, presumably for goods received, or services rendered. Thus the expression, remission of sins, means that sins are sent away. One of the aspects of the new and better covenant foretold by the prophet Jeremiah was that, "their sins will I remember no more" (Jer. 31:34. Heb. 8:12). Just as the sins of the Israelites were symbolically sent away into the wilderness with the scapegoat (Lev. 16:21, 22), so also when one is saved from sin, those sins are remitted—sent away into the wilderness of God's forget-fullness, never to return.

Forgiveness of Sins

Still another expression that helps us to understand what it means to be saved, is found in the words of Paul in Eph. 1:7. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our sins, according to the riches of his grace." Thus we are told that in being saved our sins are forgiven.

What does it mean to be forgiven? One of the definitions given by the dictionary is, "To cease to blame, or feel resentment against some one." If you have ever forgiven someone of a wrong done to you, you don't need the dictionary to tell you what it means to forgive.

But there is a point that we need to recognize about forgiveness. It takes place in the mind of the one who does the forgiving. It is not some feeling of elation that takes place in the person forgiven, although he may rejoice when he knows he is forgiven. That is a basic mistake of those who rely on their feelings as evidence that their sins have been forgiven. They will pat themselves over the heart, and say, I know I am forgiven because I feel it here. That is no evidence at all. The only way that one can know he has been forgiven of a wrong is for the forgiving party to communicate the fact of forgiveness to the forgiven party.

Let me illustrate. Someone does you some wrong that hurts you deeply. But he comes to you and acknowledges the wrong and asks for your forgiveness. Now, where did that forgiveness take place? Was it some better-felt-than-told sensation that he experienced? No, it took place in your mind, didn't it? And what was it that took place in your mind? Was it not a change of mind,—a difference in your feeling toward that person? Where you had previously harbored feelings of malice, and perhaps even revenge, all

those feelings dissolved when you forgave, and you now feel kindly toward him.

And just so, when God forgives us of our sins, all his former feelings of disapproval and anger and grief are dissolved, and in their place are feelings of approval and favor.

Made Free From Sin

Another aspect of salvation is suggested by Paul in Romans 6:17,18. "But thanks be to God, that whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered; and being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness."

Thus Paul tells us that in being saved, we are made free from sin. It will be recalled that it was pointed out in an earlier article under this heading that sin enslaves. Jesus said, "Whosoever committeth sin is a bondservant of sin" (John 8:34). The natural desire of anyone who is in bondage is to gain freedom. Prisoners break out of jail to be free. Prisoners of war have often spent months digging tunnels and have risked their lives in a bid for freedom. Salvation is freedom from the bondservice that holds every sinner a prisoner. It is true freedom. Jesus said, "If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36).

Justified

To the Romans Paul wrote, "For he that hath died is justified from sin" (Rom. 6:7). Again, "Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1). Thus to be saved means to be justified from sin.

To be justified, according to the dictionary, means to be declared guiltless; to be absolved of wrong. It is a legal term, and means that when one has been acquitted of a crime with which he was charged, he was justified. To be justified from sin, is therefore to be pronounced guiltless, with no sin charged against him.

Washed—Cleansed

When Ananias was sent to Saul of Tarsus in the city of Damascus, following Christ's appearance to him on the Damascus road, he said to Saul, "And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins. . ." (Acts 22:16). Peter said of certain ones, "But he that lacketh these things is blind. . .having forgotten the cleansing from his old sins" (2 Peter 1:9). Thus, in being saved we are washed, or cleansed from our sins.

There are two possible ways whereby a garment can be clean. One way would be for it never to become soiled. The other, having become soiled, is washed, and thus becomes as clean as if it had never been soiled. (Cleaner, if you listen to some of the commercials of the soap manufacturers.)

Likewise, there are two conceivable ways that man can be clean from the defilement of sin. One would be to live a life of complete freedom from the practice of sin. But since that has proved to be impossible for man, his only hope is to be washed and made clean. That washing is accomplished by the blood of Christ which cleanseth us from all sin (1 John 1:7). When thus washed man is as clean as if he had never committed

sin.

Made Righteous.

To the Romans Paul wrote, "For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous" (Rom. 5:19). Thus, in being saved, we are made righteous.

Righteousness is defined by W. E. Vine as, The character or quality of being right or just. Paul defined righteousness in Romans 4:6-8 where he said, "Even as David also pronounceth blessing upon the man unto whom God reckoneth righteousness apart from works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not reckon sin." Thus Paul used the words of David to teach that the righteous man is the man whose sins are forgiven.

There are two conceivable ways of being counted righteous in the sight of God. One would be through our own works of righteousness. But since our righteousness is in the sight of God as filthy rags (Isa. 64:6), such righteousness would be impossible for man to attain. His only hope is thus through an imputed righteousness. This is a righteousness that is revealed in the gospel (Romans 1:17). It is imputed to all that believe in Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:21,22, 4:22-24). Being of faith it is thus bestowed by God's grace, and thus leaves man with no right to boast (Rom. 4:16, Eph. 2:8,9).

Well, can the Christian who has experienced salvation, sing "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now am found; was blind but now I see."

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WHEN TWO WORLDS COLLIDE

It is indeed amazing to see the reaction of great men when there is a collision between their SCHOLARSHIP and THEOLOGY. Like the Catholic Priest I talked with years ago in Ft. Smith, Arkansas, they usually stick with their theology. I asked this priest if he should find a contradiction between the Catholic church and the Bible which would he take? He paused about three seconds and replied, "I would have to stick with the church." This is about par for course. It is appalling to see the reaction of great scholars like A.T. Robertson when a collision takes place between SCHOLARSHIP and THEOLOGY. I respect A. T. Robertson as a scholar and love to use his expertise as an aid in study of the Bible; however, Robertson was a staunch Baptist and this put him on a direct course of conflict with certain passages on baptism. Certainly, there must be a great struggle within a man when he comments on such passages. This can be readily detected in their writings. In commenting on Acts 2:38 which says, "Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, he says, "One will decide the use here according as he believes that baptism is essential to the remission of sins or not. My view is decidedly against the idea that Peter, Paul or anyone in the New Testament taught baptism as essential to the remission of sins."

You will notice the hesitancy and somewhat reluctance in his comments. He uses such expressions as "one will have to decide" and "My view is" then he goes on to say "So I understand." Kind friend, these are not the words of A. T. Robertson when he is SURE of a text! The problem is two worlds have collided and he is caught in the middle. It bleeds my heart to see such a great scholar caught in this predicament. When Ananias told Saul to "arise and be baptized and wash away his sins" (Acts 22:16), please note his comment, "It is possible, as in Acts 2:38, to take these words as teaching baptismal remission or salvation by means of baptism, but to do so in my opinion is a complete subversion of Paul's vivid and picturesque language." He admits much more here than he did earlier. It seems that Acts 2:38 was still haunting him so he admits that in both cases REMISSION COULD BE BY BAPTISM. BUT he says, "It is my opinion" that this is not the meaning. Robertson's opinion was really

his THEOLOGY.

Many Baptists do not know this but Robertson actually said, "It was possible for baptism to be essential to salvation." He goes on to say that it is his opinion that such isn't the case, but this was preceded by the possibility. Of course, Robertson's opinion is no better than mine or yours. He knew very well what the GREEK meant but there was that collision between his two worlds. A. T. Robertson doesn't use the words such as "it is my opinion", "I understand" one will have to decide" or "my view is" when he is SURE what the text means. He comes in LOUD and CLEAR. Kind friend, isn't it sad that great men can become so enamored by their THEOLOGY that it will prevent a firm stand for the old Jerusalem gospel? Well, sometimes WORLDS do collide and we must make a choice! Ref. (Word Pictures of the New Testament PP 36 and 391).

"WOE"

Don Martin
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The word "woe," in the Greek New Testament, is made up of two diphthongs (a combination of two vowels in a single syllable)—ouai. It is defined: "Interjection of grief or of denunciation," *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon*, pg. 461. "Interjection denoting pain or displeasure," *A Greek-English Lexicon Of The New Testament*, Arndt and Gingrich, pg. 595. Hence, the word, as it occurs in the verses we shall observe, has to do with denunciation. "Woe" is a solemn denunciation of punishment; it implies that great calamities of the most awful and severe nature are impending over the guilty. "Woe," then, strongly suggests and expresses the wrath and displeasure of God.

WOE UNTO CHORAZIN AND BETHSAIDA.

Chorazin and Bethsaida were small towns on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee near Capernaum (not much is known of Chorazin). Bethsaida was the town of Philip, Andrew, and Peter, (Jn. 1:44). These were cities in which Jesus had been present and had performed miracles. "Woe unto thee Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida!" Jesus pronounces, "for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes," (Matt. 11:21). Chorazin and Bethsaida had more opportunity to believe in Jesus than Tyre and Sidon. Therefore, the consequences of their rejection of Jesus shall be "greater," (vs. 22).

How about America! Americans enjoy the greatest

religious freedoms and opportunities of, I suppose, anybody on earth. Notwithstanding, America has done more to demoralize and spiritually abase the people ("heathen") of other nations than any country or people! If Jesus issued a scathing denunciation upon Chorazin and Bethsaida for their wasted opportunities and advantages, how about America?

WOE UNTO THEM THAT CAUSE OFFENCE. "Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!" (Matt. 18:7). "Offend" means to spiritually hinder or cause to sin, *Expository Dictionary Of New Testament Words*, Vol. 3, pg. 129. One who causes one of God's children to sin or fall away, upon him the heaviest condemnations of God are pronounced (see vss. 2-6).

We need to, therefore, concernedly examine the ways we influence others (teaching and example) and make sure we are not leading others astray (cf. I Cor. 8, 10, Rom. 14).

WOE UNTO YOU, YE BLIND GUIDES. It was in the "chapter of denunciation" that Jesus enunciated, "Woe, unto you, ye blind guides" (Matt. 23:16). Jesus is addressing the spiritual leaders of the Jews, the scribes and Pharisees (vs. 15). Similarly, He addressed the lawyers, "Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge. . ." (Lk. 11:52). We have many blind guides today who are misleading people. They are like those of whom Paul wrote, "Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm" (I Tim. 1:7). Thus, to spiritually mislead people is to incur the severest wrath of God (cf. Jas. 3:1).

WOE UNTO THE RICH. "But woe unto you that are rich!" Jesus exclaims, "for ye have received your consolation" (Lk. 6:24). The word "but" indicates to us that Jesus is presenting a contrast. In verse twenty-three he instructs those persecuted for the Son of man's sake to rejoice. In verse twenty-five Jesus describes the satisfied and those free of seriousness who are engaging in frivolity. Hence, when Jesus pronounced this woe on the rich he is referring to those who trust in their riches and experience the love of money (cf. I Tim. 6:17, 6-11). In our affluent age we have not a few who are looking to their riches (also too many members of the church). This is what Jesus meant when he said, ". . . How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God" (Lk. 18:24, cf. 25).

WOE UNTO THOSE WHO LOVE THE UPPERMOST SEATS. Inevitably, when you have people, you are going to have competitiveness and self-elevation. To such a condition Jesus addressed himself: "Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets" (Lk. 11:43). Jesus, therefore, expresses his disdain and strong displeasure for the spirit of ascendancy.

There are other occurrences of "woe" that make for profitable study and application. For example, those

who falsely swear are denounced and men about whom all speak well are the objects of God's severe wrath (Matt. 23:16; Lk. 6:26). Let us decidedly shun all sinful situations which encounter God's wrath and endeavor to obey his every command that we may incur his pleasure and approval and experience his rich blessings.

Using Great Plainness of Speech

J. T. Smith
14250 N. Miami Ave.
Miami, FL 33168



In our last article, we encouraged people to "Ask Your Preacher" about Scriptural authority (book, chapter, and verse) for things that are being taught in the religious world.

Were there different denominations in the days when the New Testament was written? What denomination was Paul, Peter, John, and the rest of the apostles members of? I read in Mr. Edward T. Hiscox's *Standard Manual for Baptist Churches* on page 22, "It is most likely that in the apostolic age when there was but 'one Lord, one faith and one baptism' and **no differing denominations existed**, the baptism of a convert by that very act constituted him a member of the church, and at once endowed him with all the rights and privileges of full membership. In that sense, 'baptism was the door into the church'. **Now it is different.**" (Bold letters mine for emphasis JTS). I still believe everything that is in the above paragraph **except the last statement. I do not** believe it is different. I still believe in the one Lord, one faith, and one baptism. I also still believe something else that is said in the above quotations from the Scriptures in Ephesians 4:3-4. There is not only "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism," but there is also "one body" and that the "one body" is the church (Ephesians 1:22-23). God has not changed His Word, **man has**.

There are a number of warnings in the Bible about man changing God's Word. It began in the Old Testament when God said, "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you" (Deuteronomy 4:2). Also in the New Testament we read, "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son" (II John 1:9).

It is obvious from Mr. Hiscox's statement that he and others have not heeded God's warning **but have changed His Word. WOE UNTO THEM!**

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

NEW CONGREGATIONS

ORANGE CITY, FL—A new congregation has been started in Orange City. Ron McRay is preaching for this new work. The church meets at 105 Dogwood Avenue in Orange City. Interested parties may contact Tom Lester at (904) 775-7845 for further information. Also contact us by mail at P.O. Box 1052, Orange City, FL 32763. If you know anyone living in the towns of Orange City, Lake Helen, Deltona, Enterprise, or DeBary who is interested in the Lord's church please contact us with their names so we may get in touch with them.

BOWLING GREEN, FL—In August, 1980 three families started a new congregation in Bowling Green, FL and Vernon Love began working with them part time. In March, 1981 he was able to obtain the necessary support and is now working full time. This is the first time the Lord's church has ever been in Bowling Green. We are meeting at 514 N. Oak St. (Hwy. 17 N.): phone (813) 533-5718. If in the area, worship with us.

MARKED TREE, AR—A new congregation began in Marked Tree last April by several members in the area. They are meeting at 13 Elm St., Marked Tree, AR 72365. For further information you may call 358-2542, or 358-2715.

GREENWOOD, SC—We have started a new sound congregation of the Lord's church in Greenwood, SC located at 1018 East 72 Bypass. We started in November, 1980 with only five faithful Christians. We have had four restored and one baptism. We have around 16 in attendance. Everett Ward, formerly of Weston, WV, is doing the preaching. Greenwood is located in the western part of South Carolina and is growing very fast. If anyone knows of members moving near Greenwood, please contact Bro. Ward at 904 Coleman Dr., Greenwood, SC 29646. Or phone (803) 223-8232.

NEW LOCATION

ELIZABETHTOWN, KY—The College View church of Christ is now meeting at its new location at 611-A College St. and is directly across from the Community College here in Elizabethtown. For further information call Terry Green at 737-5736 or Benny Dukes at 765-5019.

IRVEN LEE—For the last few years I have spent my full time preaching work in gospel meetings, going into several states each year. The work has brought many blessings to me and to my wife, who has traveled with me. Beginning October 18, 1981, I am to settle down again to do local work near Athens, AL with the Jennings Chapel church. I have known this community for about forty years, and I expect to have a very pleasant association with the people there. I hope to have time to do more writing, and I shall plan to be in about six meetings a year. My new address, effective November 1st, will be Rt.2, Box 362-A, Toney, AL 35773. We will be on the Athens, AL telephone exchange.

STEVE GOFF—After three years at Kaysville, UT, I began preaching for the Matthew St. church in Bay City, TX at the first of October. Our new address is P.O. Box 1522, Bay City, TX 77414.

OSBY WEAVER—After over a year with the brethren in Las Vegas, NV, I began work on October 1st with the church at West Columbia, TX.

DON R. HASTINGS, 111 S. 19th Ct., Dade City, FL 33525. Connie W. Adams preached in a meeting for us in August. He preached faithfully and fervently from the Bible. While he was with us he

asked that I write a field report to inform others of the successful work that is going on here. He said that such a report would be an encouragement to others, particularly to those laboring in difficult places. I very reluctantly agreed to do so for fear that some would misjudge my motives for writing such a report. I know that God has given the increase and that it is the power of His word that convicts, and converts the sinner. We are only fallible messengers of the gospel.

In a little over four years that I have worked with the Lord's church in Dade City, more than eighty souls have put on Christ in baptism. It has been a thrilling experience to hear and see so many confess their faith in Christ! God's word will produce fruit if people will only take the time to understand it. Most of those who have been converted were taught in home Bible studies. These studies were set up by the brethren here. If the Lord's church is to grow, her members MUST seek opportunities to teach others. Many of the Christians meeting in Dade City have asked friends, relatives, neighbors, fellow—employees, etc. If they would study the Bible with them. In a surprising number of cases the answer was "yes."

In most of the home studies, the "Visualized Bible Study Series" by Jule Miller was used. This series of film strips is easy to use and is effective. People enjoy watching, and hearing, God's plan of redemption unfolded. They are encouraged to ask questions, and usually do, while the film is being shown. If I am going with a member to visit someone who has not already agreed to see the film strips, I make the first visit a social one. It is important for people to get to know me, and for me to get to know them. I've heard it said, "A person does not care how much you know until they know how much you care." As we are coming to an end of the visit, I ask them if they would like to view the "Visualized Bible Study Series" and assure them that they will not be pressured into anything. If their answer is "yes" then a definite time for coming back is set up.

After the film strip is shown, I hand them a booklet which has the pictures shown in the film strip and the words on the record. They are encouraged to answer the questions in the back of the booklet. I tear out the answer sheet in the booklet and grade their answers myself. Generally, one film strip is shown each week for five weeks. This gives them a week to read the booklet and answer the questions. By the time one has seen the five film strips, read the booklets, and answered the questions, he or she has a fairly good knowledge of the Bible.

The Dade City church continues to have a very promising future. We are located about 30 minutes north of Tampa just off Hwy. 301 in the heart of Dade City. We extend a cordial and warm welcome to any who may visit with us.

MICK ROGACS, P.O. Box 204, Republic, MO 65738. As a gospel preacher and former Catholic it is my desire to offer my preaching abilities to brethren who would like to hold gospel meetings specifically on the subject of Catholicism. Sermon topics covered are: Why I Left The Catholic Church? Catholic Tradition; Bible Authority verses Catholic Authority; Development of Catholic Apostasy; Infallibility; Purgatory; Apostolic Succession; and others. These lessons were specifically designed for the instruction of the Catholic prospect in recognizing Catholic error and the truth of the scriptures. They are also of value to Christians who wish to learn more about Catholic error and its consequences. For information contact me at the above address, or call (417) 883-1338.

PREACHERS NEEDED

LOGANSPOUT, LA—The Stanley church of Christ in Logansport, LA is looking for a full time gospel preacher to work with us. The house and full support are available. Anyone interested can call Jerry Gannon or Gene Arbuckle at (318) 697-5119.

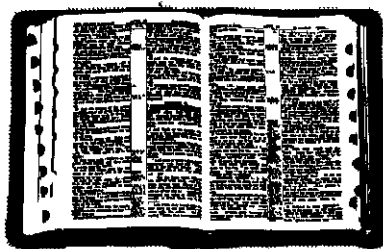
ROANOKE, VA—The church which meets at 1015 Georgia Avenue in Roanoke will be in need of a full time preacher after the first of the year. Wilson Adams has labored here for over three years but will be Having us soon. Attendance runs around 50 with a contribution of \$350 to \$400 per week. Some outside support would have to be obtained. Roanoke is a good size city with a metropolitan population of 250,000 and is located in the beautiful Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. If interested you may contact Lewis Sturm at (703) 362-5225, or Larry Powell at (804) 237-3445.

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH	
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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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Insight

Dee Bowman

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OVERCOMING DISCOURAGEMENT

Zeal is such a vital part of any project that its importance can hardly be over-estimated. It provides the impetus for activity, the fuel for completion. Its absence will almost certainly insure the failure of the project, its presence will cause respect even if the project it energizes is a faulty one (Cf. Rom. 10:1-2).

The most effective deterrent to this wonderful stimulus is discouragement. Discouragement saps zeal, promotes dissociation from the project and is often the primary cause of failure. Even the concept of the word illustrates the point. "Dis," an English prefix carrying the force of "away"; "courage," the confidence or moral energy needed to accomplish a thing; thus, to do away with the zeal or energy to accomplish a thing. A person discouraged is an empty shell, a wretched soul completely discomfited by his own sense of failure. A person devoid of his courage constantly diminishes his own self-image, becomes a burden to society and is a prime candidate for a number of emotional disorders.

The devil makes good use of discouragement. He very often makes little effort to cause overt sin, he merely causes discouragement instead. In doing so he alters plans, thwarts purposes, impedes progress by robbing people of the zeal which enables these goals and purposes to become realities. Discouragement is a most effective tool. It comes about with little effort on the devil's part and will stay long past the time it ought even when we have fought it off as best as we

can. A person cannot entertain enthusiasm and discouragement at the same time; they mitigate against one another. To hold to one is to diminish the other; they have effects which are opposed to one another.

The effects of discouragement are many, but to my mind one of the most damaging is its weakening of our sense of aim. A person's aim is absolutely vital to his well-being and particularly to his sense of spiritual well-being. Without aim there is no special place to go. Without aim there is no need for the concentration of energies. Without aim there is no cause for unity, no call for togetherness. Our hope is connected to aim. Our achievements are connected to aim. Our sense of self-esteem is connected to aim. Discouragement dulls our enthusiasm for accomplishment, retards our desire to fulfill. It dispirits our aim.

Discouragement is involved in many of the sins of lethargy. It is the cause of some, the effect of others. Indifference, for instance, may be either the cause of discouragement or the effect of it. First, discouragement promotes dullness and inactivity thereby causing indifference. But indifference is very often the result or effect of discouragement because of its ability to dull our sense of dedication. Other problems in this special category of sins which are caused by or result from discouragement include disinterest, lack of attendance, sporadic involvement, and a host of others. It is easy to see why the devil makes such wide use of discouragement, seeing that it accomplishes so much with so little effort on his part.

The decision to do a thing is always antecedent to the realization of that thing. Discouragement inhibits the decision-making mechanism. Because a person is disheartened, he is doubtful. He begins to question even his own abilities to function, he has mental reservations about his aim, and he is likely more mentally occupied with the possibility of failure than success. He is tentative in his approach to the entire affair. The obstacles which line the way of any worth while project become insuperable and very often are magnified completely out of proportion. The self-confidence needed to accomplish the goal now takes a back seat to the discomfiting feelings of doubt and the

disheartening visions of failure. The result is "don't try!" It's the easy way out.

There is no easy solution for discouragement because even the residue left after its expulsion is sufficient to cause continued problems. But I suggest several things which will help us to overcome this most subtle deterrent to our faithfulness:

1. Faith—There is nothing which will counteract discouragement like trusting in God and remembering his immutability. Faith emboldens us. It causes us to be strong. It removes distrust, doubt, removes despair and depression. We have faith from a constant contact with God's word (Rom. 10:17) and we derive strength to overcome thereby (Cf. Phil. 4:13).
2. Self—control—Discouragement seeks control over us. We must not submit to it (Rom. 6:17). We must not allow it free course in our minds. Every person becomes discouraged at times, even the most successful. But we must limit those times to a minimum by remaining in complete control of ourselves.
3. Spiritual thinking—Discouragement is a mental process, not a physical malady. If we are to overcome it, we must occupy our minds with things that enable and edify and not allow doubt and distrust to discolor and distort our thinking. There is sufficient material in God's Word which is intended to edify, encourage, embolden (Cf. Col. 3:1-3; Phil. 4:8).
4. Intense activity—The quickest way to win over discouragement is to get out of yourself and go do something for somebody. Discouragement is very often brought on by feeling sorry for yourself. Quit thinking "poor me" and see what you can do to make someone happy! When you do you will quit feeling sorry for yourself and when you quit feeling sorry for yourself, chances are the discouragement will disappear. It is very difficult to feel sorry for yourself when your mind is occupied with helping others.

All of us have times of discouragement, times when we doubt, times when negativism rules in our minds. We all have times when we distrust our own abilities and lose confidence in our wisdom to handle the affairs of life. But with proper thinking and involvement in good things we can keep these times out of our lives most of the time. And when they do come we will recognize them for what they are and know full well that we can handle them. A Christian is a sojourner, a pilgrim. This world is not his home. And the land to which we journey is so great and its inhabitants so noble as to render almost insignificant any trouble or difficulty we might encounter as we press toward it. "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far greater and eternal weight of glory," said Paul (II Cor. 4:17-18). So, "let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9). Let us press on!

Searching The Scriptures

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The Gospel Preacher

By Ben Franklin — Vol. I and II

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Editorial

Connie W. Adams

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Brooks, Kentucky 40109



EDITORIAL STEW

Winter is upon us and it is time once again for that mixture of items which we think need saying but which require short space. Some of our readers have commented that they wish we would present a column along these lines more often. We remind them that "stew" is good at certain times of the year but when served too often develops a sameness which loses appeal.

IN JOURNEYINGS OFTEN

The year 1981 found us, as usual, in frequent travels to preach the gospel in 18 meetings in various parts of the nation and in Ontario, Canada besides. In these meetings a number responded to the gospel call. With few exceptions the meetings were characterized by good attendance and interest and with a good number present who were not Christians. From various sources we continue to read that the day of the gospel meeting is over, and that attending such meetings is but an exercise in boredom. I guess we are just not going to the same places some of these folks are talking about. There are a few places we know of where the brethren might do well to consider reducing the number of meetings so that the folks will be hungry for one when it comes. No congregation should have a meeting just as a matter of routine.

We have worked with many fine gospel preachers, young, middle-aged and older, who are devoted to the Lord and who are going competently about their work. At a number of places we have been impressed with some young families and, in some cases, college aged youth who are really serious about serving the Lord.

PURELY PERSONAL

We encountered a temporary set-back in our work plans in October after suffering a detached retina in the left eye which required surgery, the cancellation of one meeting and being forbidden to drive a car or wear a contact lens on the troubled eye for several weeks. I was permitted to hold two meetings in November but had to have my wife drive me everywhere and also had to work with half vision. I am thankful that all has gone well thus far, that I still have sight and that things should hopefully be back to normal by the time you receive this paper. I have now had a detached retina in both eyes, cataract removed from one, have all sorts of lens and glasses, but with the help of the

Lord am still able to see and attend to most of my work. My wife says she is thankful that I don't have three eyes. You have heard of the fellow with one eye and half sense? Well, let other editors have whatever fun they can get out of that!

OUT OF THE MOUTH OF BABES

During one meeting last summer a little girl got pretty restless and decided the sermon was much too long. Finally she spoke out loud and asked her mother, "Why didn't he just write us a letter?"

DISMISS US, BROTHER, PLEASE DISMISS US

Somehow we are failing in efforts to train brethren for taking part in public worship. Some seem to have no understanding of what is needed in giving thanks at the Lord's Table, and some have no concept at all of what it means to dismiss an audience in prayer. Frequently, brethren will pray for the sick, the president, the preacher, the elders, will quote scripture to the Lord, and pray for the forgiveness of sins (when it has only been a few minutes since that same petition was raised). All of this after the audience has been standing through the invitation, closing announcements and remarks and after the same requests have been made known only shortly before. A dismissal ought to be that—a dismissal. "Let all things be done decently and in order."

CROSSROADS AGAIN

The evidence continues to mount that the Crossroads Philosophy" of the now infamous Gainesville, Florida church is cultish in design and practice. The book, *THE MASTER PLAN* by a denominationalist named Coleman, is the basis of the whole concept which includes the monopolizing of time, "soul talks", and "prayer partners." There are now about 60 congregations in this country ordered after the "Crossroads philosophy." The liberal camp is in a battle royal over it and many of them are able to see what even a few conservative brethren, including the editor of *VANGUARD*, either cannot or will not see. Some of us have been criticized for speaking against Crossroads when we have never been there. Well, I have never been drunk, but I know what is wrong with it. I have never been to Hell either, but I know enough about it to warn people against it. I can read, and fairly well understand what I read and there is enough information available about Crossroads that it is not necessary to go spend a week with them getting their guided tour in order to speak out against this evil. It is terribly naive to say that the best thing Crossroads has going for them is "total commitment." "Total commitment" to what? Is Crossroads involved in teaching or practicing error as a congregation? For starters, would someone like to take their "prayer-partner" practice and see if he can find a forty-second cousin to it in the New Testament? We urge brethren not to allow a burning desire to strike a dramatic chord for brotherhood unity to cloud judgment.

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AT EXPRESSWAY

The work at Expressway in Louisville continues in a good way. Jerry Parks is the able preacher. His efforts have borne much good fruit in the past year. Our work is peaceful and enjoyable. Art Ogden preached in a spring meeting and Weldon Warnock in the fall. Both meetings were well attended and did much to stimulate the church to greater service. In 1982 we look forward to a spring meeting with Dee Bowman and in the fall to having Roy E. Cogdill with us again. In June, J. Wiley Adams will be with us in a weekend series on "The Family." By the time you receive this paper, we will be into our winter classes for December, January and February. The editor will teach classes during these three months on "DANGERS WE FACE", "PRESSURES ON MODERN MARRIAGES", and "EZRA AND NEHEMIAH—The Restoration of the Remnant." Two years ago we began a different approach in our adult Bible classes which has produced much greater interest and more diligent study. Each quarter we offer 5 elective classes on both Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights. We allow our high school students to take part in this choice. We have no class meeting in the auditorium. We continue to offer the same courses (with the same teachers) until everyone has had each of these classes. Then new books or subjects are chosen. For instance, this past quarter, there was an option for all who would go into one of these classes on Parables, Minor Prophets, Jeremiah, Titus, Old Testament Survey, Prayer, Faith, Judgment and Opinion, The Christian and His Attitudes, Proverbs. In January we begin a new slate of classes for both Sunday morning and Wednesday night. After visiting many places year in and year out, we are convinced that Expressway has as good an arrangement for Bible classes as can be found anywhere. We would welcome students who attend the University of Louisville or any of the other colleges in the area. There are also a number of other faithful churches in the greater Louisville area which

are doing good work.

KILLED WHILE LEAVING SERVICES

Brother Harry Perkins, who served for many years as an elder at Preston Highway church in Louisville, Kentucky, was involved in an automobile accident right in front of the Preston Highway building while leaving after services on Sunday night, October 25. His wife was injured as was another sister who was riding with them. L. E. Sloan conducted services on Wednesday, October 28. Not only was brother Perkins well known by local brethren but was known and loved by many gospel preachers who have preached either locally or in meetings in this area over the years. Our sympathy to sister Perkins and the family.

NEW SUBSCRIPTION PAPERS

STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES is now being published by RON DALY on a bi-monthly basis. The paper is 8 1/2 X 11 and will run from 16 to 20 pages. Annual subscription price is \$8. Brother Daly is one of our very fine black preachers, possessed of great ability both in writing and preaching. The first issue of this paper was excellent. Send all subscriptions to: Ron Daly, P.O. Box 1647, Pine Bluff, AR 71613.

THE EXPOSITORY REVIEW begins in January as a monthly edited by Robert L. McDonald and published by R. L. Craig. Brother McDonald is an experienced and able preacher and writer. He presently works with a fine congregation in Odessa, Texas. The printing work of Bob Craig is always first class. Annual subscription rate is \$6 a year. Subs may be sent to: The Expository Review, P.O. Box 2375, Harker Heights, TX 76541. A prospectus has been issued and you may have one by writing to the address given above.

We offer our best wishes to these new papers and editors as they sail out on the often stormy and financially uncertain seas of religious journalism.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Those who receive and benefit from this paper are indebted, along with the editor, to the efficient and untiring efforts of Barbara C. Adams, beloved wife of the editor. She keeps the mailing list current, runs it each month by a cut-off date on to what is called a dick-strip so the printer can then slice and stick each individual address as a label, handles daily posting chores, attends to all monthly billing, handles nearly all of the business related correspondence and countless other things absolutely essential to the operation of this paper. In addition to that, she keeps the homes fires burning and makes it possible for the editor to keep up with his often hectic schedule of preaching and teaching. When she accompanies me for a meeting that means she has to work many hours in advance and then has to play "catch up" when returning home. To keep from having too little to do, she helps her mother daily (when she is at home) in attending to her father who has been a bedfast invalid since 1965. Now for several weeks she must be my chauffeur and at least

for the November issue of the paper, had to be the proofreader. Her chores are many, her burden often heavy. Somehow she manages to get it all done with grace and dignity while maintaining her sanity and her sense of humor. If I am careful, I can get this in the December paper without her knowing it until the paper arrives from the printer. Otherwise she would protest any such notice for she has never sought the limelight. I just thought our readers ought to know a little about who makes this editor tick, and who really makes it possible for you to receive your paper each month. "Honor to whom honor." "Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all."

WE ARE GRATEFUL

Without the continuing confidence and support of our readers we would be out of business. We do not take you for granted. Thanks to all those who have accepted without complaint the necessary increase for those who were receiving the paper on the reduced rates about which we had to write several months ago. And again, many thanks to those brethren who unselfishly give of their time and talents to provide the material for this paper. We wish for all a spiritually prosperous 1982. Keep searching the Scriptures.

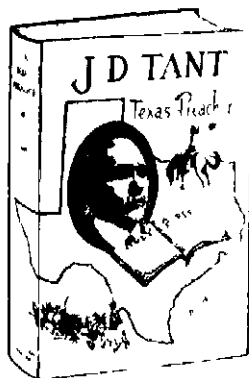
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DOES THE END JUSTIFY THE MEANS?

QUESTION: Is Paul's statement "Let us do evil, that good may come" (Rom. 3:8), the same philosophy as "The end justifies the means"? It seems obvious to me that Paul is condemning the latter. In what ways do you see violations today that would justify the same condemnation?—I.P.

ANSWER: I believe that our querist has a proper conception of Rom. 3:8 and perhaps his list of violations would be as good as mine. However, the request merits careful attention and such study should be profitable to all.

Let it be understood that Paul's statement, "Let us do evil, that good may come," is not approved, but rather condemned! The context shows this clearly. Some had "slanderosly reported" that Paul was teaching such. He said their "damnation is just." Paul taught that "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Rom. 5:20). From this, no doubt, some concluded that the more they sinned, the better it would be; that such would make for a greater show of God's righteousness. Paul condemns this again, saying, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Rom. 6:1,2). He concludes with emphasis in verse six saying, "that henceforth we should not serve sin."

Evil must never be engaged in, no matter how much "good" (in the eyes of men) may result therefrom. King Saul, together with the people, brought back from his battle with the Amalekites "the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God" (1 Sam. 15:15). This he did in violation of the command to "utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass" (1 Sam. 15:3). Even though sacrifice was a precious thing in the sight of God, it became evil when one had to violate another command of God in order to do it. It is never right to pit one command of God against another. Hence, Samuel said unto Saul, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king" (1 Sam. 15:22,23).

During the personal ministry of Jesus, some Jews "did evil, that good may come" by saying, "Corban" (Mk. 7:11). The word "Corban" was a Hebrew word denoting a gift or dedication to the temple or God. When so dedicated the property or gift could not be appropriated to another use. God also commanded them to "Honour thy father and thy mother" (Mk. 7:10). They excused themselves from the latter by saying "Corban." Thus, they violated one command in order to keep another, namely, support the temple. While supporting the temple was good, it became evil when they violated a command of God in order to do it.

Some today fail to help their parents or a neighbor in time of need upon the grounds of what they give to the church. Some expect the church to care for their parents, offering the excuse that they give "what they are able" to the church. Such violates Paul's instructions, "If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed" (1 Tim. 5:16). Again, Paul said, "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (1 Tim. 5:8). All should remember that we have an obligation to our "own" over, above, and beyond our obligation to the church—it is in addition to our obligation to the church.

Some brethren "do evil, that good may come" by not following the Lord's instructions about resolving personal differences as set forth in Matt. 18:15-17. Instead, they malign, backbite, and often work up a party spirit against a brother or sister in an effort to correct what they think is a personal injury to them. Even if the injury be real and in need of correction, making it public and working up a party spirit of opposition to the guilty is a violation of the procedure set forth by our Lord.

The Missionary Society came into being because of a desire to do good by evangelizing. However, God's pattern of church organization and the principle of the all-sufficiency of the church had to be violated in order to do this "good." All the "good" in the world will not justify violating God's pattern for his church and its work.

Likewise, some are guilty today for the same reason in their efforts to do the benevolent work of the church through organizations of men.

The sponsoring church arrangement is another example of such evil. Here, the work of many churches is accomplished through one church and under the direction of one eldership—all of which violates the limitation God imposes upon the oversight of elders, namely, "the flock of God which is among you" (1 Pet. 5:2; All the "good" done otherwise will not justify the violation of God's divine limitation.

Even our very attitude of heart may be in violation of heaven's will as we go about exposing evil and condemning sin. If so, we are guilty!

We must be careful lest we "do evil, that good may come." Paul said that the "damnation" of those guilty of such "is just."

Restoration Footnotes

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A HEALTHY CRICK IN THE NECK

A crick is "a painful spasmodic affliction of the muscles, as of the neck and back." Physically speaking, this is not a desirable ailment to have, but in a figurative sense, a crick in the neck may be a good sign, especially if it exists for the right reason.

Columnist George Will, addressing university graduates in California in 1977, recommended that they learn to live with a crick in the neck. He was referring to a symbolic catch in the neck muscles brought on by looking backward. "That might not be a heroic posture," he conceded, "but it is prudent."

Those ignorant of the past are condemned to repeat it, the sages tell us. It was in keeping with this sentiment that Will, quoting a teacher of his, said, "The world has suffered much from the bright ideas of clever people who are so uninformed about the past that they do not know that they are addressing old, wrong questions in old, wrong ways."

He went on to explain: "Commencement would be a melancholy ceremony if those graduating had devoted four years to looking ahead nervously to the next four decades of necessitous employment in the workaday world. Rather, education should be primarily an inoculation against the disease of our time, which is disdain for times past."

Will spoke largely in a political and economic context, but what he said in principle makes sensible application to the churches of Christ. Reading the brittle, age-burned pages of old Restoration journals, such as the *Gospel Advocate* of 50-100 years ago, is almost "instant replay" of questions, problems, and attitudes of brethren today. Only the names and Victorian peculiarities are appreciably different.

If New Testament Christians in the middle years of the 20th century had been informed on the real issues and consequences of the organ-missionary society controversy, the institutional-social gospel delusions of the 1950s and 1960s would not have set so many once faithful congregations on the road to denominationalism. All too often the Restoration movement has been romanticized and the men who led it "canonized," while the great principles of divine truth to which the movement and the men were largely dedicated have been ignored or re-interpreted in the light of a biased historical revision.

All Christians, particularly young men who will

greatly influence the churches in the decades ahead, need to develop a healthy crick in the neck from looking backward to the roots and development of the Restoration movement. This does not mean that we should live in the past, hold to human traditions, or ferret doctrinal idiosyncrasies to espouse. Nor that we should fear new ideas and methods (duly measured by the Divine Standard). But lessons may be learned from the experiences of brethren in past generations that may be learned in no other way. We can be instructed by their teaching, find encouragement in their virtues, and take warning from their frailties.

The principles involved in restoring "the ancient order of things" are as needed today as they were in the early years of the 19th century. But restored Christianity cannot survive by occasional doses of nostalgic sentimentalism regarding these principles, nor can they remain a vital force in the salvation of souls by default of their enemies. The Restoration plea must be clearly understood and aggressively advocated if New Testament Christianity is to survive and prosper into the 21st century. This is hardly possible apart from a knowledge of the events that gave birth to the plea and of the rugged road it has traveled during the past and present centuries.

As George Will said, looking backward may not be a heroic posture, but it is prudent. A healthy crick in the neck from looking backward into the history of the churches of Christ during the 19th and 20th centuries is an ailment we can ill afford to have cured.

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THE KOSCLUSKO CONFESSION AND PERJORATIVE NAMES

In the deep South there is a little college called Magnolia Bible College which is located at Kosciusko, Mississippi. Several of these small colleges have cropped up during the post war years. This one is operated by what we call the "liberal" or "institutional" brethren. Its president is Cecil May, Jr. and he editorializes a Bible question department in the college paper. Brother May makes a confession in the May, 1981 issue of the paper which I did not believe would ever be made by these brethren. He admitted he was an "ANTI!" He further stated that the term "anti" was a "perjorative name" (whatever that is). I searched through three dictionaries and could not find it. However, mine are getting a little old and might not list a sixteen cylinder word like that. I assume the perjorative name would be about the same as a 'prejudicial name.'

I see in this confession several things. One is a softening attitude towards the ones of us who have opposed these innovations throughout the years. Possibly one reason for this is that these brethren have been locked in such a bitter struggle with what they call the "classical liberals," they, therefore have become less austere towards us. Much of what he says in this brief article is true. The terms "liberal" "conservative" and even "anti" are all relative and must have some sort of comparison. I wrote an article several years ago in which I admitted that to some I was "liberal" and to others "conservative." The word "anti" is a prefix used in forming adjectives and nouns derived from them. Since it means "against" it is never complete alone. To avoid misrepresentation, I will give the article in its entirety: "QUESTION: What is the anti-church? Do you feel it is a part of the body of Christ in spite of doctrinal differences? RESPONSE: 'Anti' means against. In the Bible and 'anti-Christ' is someone who is against Christ because he denies that Jesus is the Christ (I John 2:22) or that he came in the flesh (I John 4:3). The term 'anti-church' is not exactly like that. It is a derogatory term used to describe a congregation or a person who is 'against' something which the one who so describes it is 'for.' So to the 'Disciples of Christ' or 'Christian Churches' we are 'antis' because we are against instrumental music. Those who oppose churches contributing to orphan's

homes, and cooperative efforts where one congregation sponsors a work to which several congregations contribute, and eating in church buildings, are sometimes called 'antis' by some of us, because we believe those things are scriptural and right. Those who opposed Sunday morning Bible classes at the building or multiple cups are referred to as 'anti' even by those that we call 'anti.' On the other hand, those whom we call 'anti' call us 'liberal,' because we do contribute to orphan's homes and sometimes eat in church buildings. It would be better by far to leave off perjorative names. When we need to refer to one another, it would be better to say something like, 'Those who oppose orphan's homes,' or 'Those who believe in sponsoring church arrangements.' That has the advantage of being both understandable and acceptable to the ones referred to; yet it still says what needs to be said. Whenever the gospel is preached and obeyed, the obedient hearer is saved and added to the church (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:47). It is my understanding that those who oppose orphans' homes, etc., are in the Body of Christ, are brethren, brethren in error. It is a sin not to have a heart of compassion for the homeless. It is sin to fail to provide, 'as we have opportunity,' for those in need. (James 1:27; Gal 6:10). It is not necessarily a sin, however, to believe, even erroneously, that doing so in a particular way is wrong. It becomes sin when (1) the duty is left undone, or (2) the belief that some particular way is wrong is bound on others to the extent of breaking fellowship or causing division.

One of the sins of the Pharisees was to attempt to bind traditions and regulations which God had not bound. Jesus and his disciples refused to be bound by such tradition (Matt. 15:1-9). For a person or a congregation to limit their own actions in accordance with their own conscience is acceptable and right. For them to insist that others do so to the extent of creating a faction and causing division is sin."

The thing which amused me about this article is that he rebuked his brethren for using the term "anti" and said to the people of the First Christian Church he was an "anti". This is what we have tried to tell these "liberals" all along! That all people are "anti" to some things and "liberal" to some, and "conservative" to others. At last we seem to be getting through. Brother May did cry a few crocodile tears over some who have no "compassion" for the homeless. He knows better than this. I have never found one of my brethren who did not have a heart as big as Texas for the homeless. They just oppose institutionalism; not the homeless. One might as well say we must have a "heart of compassion for the lost by preaching through a missionary society." Then charge any who do not believe in the V.C.M.S., as people who have no compassion on the lost! This is psychological rhetoric and should never be used on the polemic platform. Brother May, makes the usual mistake of using James 1:27, and Gal. 6:10 to vindicate his position of taking money out of the church treasury. I must challenge him both

privately and publicly to prove this. I insist that both passages are speaking to the individual and not the church. Another thing, he says some bind a pattern in benevolence and evangelism. Yes indeed, and I wonder if brother May will defend what he writes in public debate. If so, since we are both from the state of Mississippi this can be arranged. I believe there is a pattern for both benevolence and evangelism in the New Testament and am willing to sign a proposition to that effect. I wonder if brother May will defend what he said in his article? We shall see.

SET FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE GOSPEL

T. G. O'Neal

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Bessemer, Alabama 35021



THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

The gospel is a teaching process appealing unto the mind of man. Christ said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, and they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (Jno. 6:44-45). Christ said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. . ." (Mk. 16:15). All of this is the way that the Lord designed to save man from sin.

The gospel is the power of God unto salvation. Man could not save himself (I Cor. 1:21), so Christ came, went back to heaven, sent the Holy Spirit to guide the Apostles into all truth that the gospel might be revealed unto man lost in sin. Paul said, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek (Rom. 1:16;). This is God's power unto salvation. Since man could not save himself, then any way or scheme devised by man will not save his soul. It will take God's power to save.

(1) Men have taught that while a preacher is preaching if one will just place their hand on the radio and give their heart to the Lord, God will save them.

(2) Others have taught that if you are a sinner and want to be saved, all that is necessary to be saved is coming to a mourner's bench and morn and cry over one's sins and call upon the Lord to save.

(3) Still others have taught that if man would be saved that he must come forward and pray the prayer of faith.

(4) Some have taught that believing only in Christ would save.

(5) Many have taught that there is nothing to do to

be saved, that God will save man by his own grace in his own good pleasure and time.

(6) Some have taught salvation by a system of works.

Since all of these plans invented by man will not save him, man needs to turn to the Lord Jesus Christ and listen to His will set forth in the gospel. If man will not obey the will of Christ declared in the gospel of Christ, there is no hope of salvation that anyone can extend to him.

The gospel of Christ is a certified gospel. Men are living in a day of specialization and certification. If the farmer buys seed, he wants those seed to be "certified seed". There is a seal on the bag of seed that declares that this is "certified seed". The seed of the kingdom which is the gospel of Christ is a certified seed. When one hears, believes and obeys the gospel of Christ, he is hearing, believing and obeying a certified gospel. There is no page in the gospel of Christ that has not been certified. Paul said, "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:11-12).

The gospel of Christ which is certified will germinate in the heart of the sinner willing to believe the gospel. It will purify the heart of man, Peter said, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Peter 1:18-23).

Peter said, "Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us: And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith" (Acts 15: 7-9).

The gospel of Christ is also said to be the medium through which Christ calls men unto him. Many have often asked, "Preacher, were you called of God to preach?" to which I always answer in the affirmative. That is, I have been called to serve the Lord in exactly the same way that every other child of God has been called.

However, when one begins to talk with the masses of people about being called of God, nearly everyone has a different story to tell. One was in the field plowing and the Lord, so they say, wrote G. P. in the sky. They just knew the Lord was calling them, telling them to go preach. While I do not mean to be unkind, those

claiming such would have done better to have stayed in the field and plowed. The reason I say this is, I have never heard men who claim they were called of God in this way that would tell what the word of God tells one to do in order to be saved. What a tragedy it is for those wanting to know what to do to be saved, to be told by one who thinks he has been called of God, something different to what men in the first century were told to do in order to be saved.

God has but one means of calling men unto him. Paul said, "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 2:13-14). God calls men **by the gospel**.

The gospel appeals unto the intellect of man and since God calls men through the gospel, it follows that the medium that God uses to call men is a logical, rational, and understandable medium. God speaks unto men today through the written word, which is the gospel. Paul said that the Lord called the Thessalonians by the gospel. Since God called them by the gospel, he calls everybody else by the gospel.

The New Testament records that the process of hearing the word of God and becoming a child of God is sometimes called a birth. John says, "There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. Nicodemus, answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen and ye receive not our witness" (John 3:1-11).

The Corinthians were begotten by the gospel. Paul said, "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel (1 Cor. 4:15). We can learn the sense in which Paul was a father to the Corinthians. He said, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase (1 Cor. 3:6). Paul was the one who went to Corinth and preached the gospel of Christ, which is the seed of the kingdom. The Corinthians heard the gospel, receiving it into

their hearts. Since this gospel which they believed was certified seed, it germinated in their hearts and began to grow. As it grew in their hearts, they believed stronger the word of God, turned from their sins and were born again into the family of God. Paul was, to the Corinthians, a father in the Lord, because he had deposited the seed of the kingdom, which is the word of God, into their hearts by preaching unto them the word of God, the gospel of Christ which is certified.

Using Great Plainness of Speech

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BAPTISM IS ESSENTIAL TO SALVATION

As you read the Acts of the Apostles, one thing that is very clear is the fact that in every case of conversion, people did not rejoice until after they had been baptized. There must be a reason for that.

You may say, "Well, what is the reason"? The reason is that baptism is "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38), and is therefore essential to salvation.

You may say, "But the majority of the religious world teaches that baptism is not essential to salvation, and surely the majority cannot be wrong." I ask the question, what is our standard of authority regarding religious subjects, the majority or The Bible? It is my understanding from the Scriptures that we will be judged by the Word of God in the day of judgment, not what the majority believes and teaches. In John 12:48 Jesus said, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." Thus it is not the word of the majority that I am going to be judged by in the last day, but The Word of God. Now in view of this, let's examine what the Bible says on this subject.

Mark 16:16

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. . ." Notice that in this passage that both belief and baptism come before salvation.

Acts 2:38

"Repent and be baptized.. for the remission of sins. . ." Again, from this passage we learn that repentance and baptism both come before the remission of sins.

Acts 22:16

"Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins. . ." Now in view of the fact that the Bible says in Mark 16:16 that baptism

comes before salvation; Acts 2:38 says baptism comes before remission of sins, and Acts 22:16 says baptism comes before the washing away of sins, what would one have to rejoice about before baptism, the majority of the religious world notwithstanding?

JUST ONE MORE DAY

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Just for a few moments, let me give you a sobering thought on which to reflect. Perhaps, you had rather not think about this particular matter, but it might do you good if you do.

Let us suppose you had just one more day to live and you knew you had only one more day—how would you live?

First, how would you react? With panic or calm? With fear or courage? You might be surprised, yourself, at how you would react.

Suppose a Sunday were to be your last day. Would you spend the day in pursuit of worldly pleasure? Or would you assemble with God's people and engage in worship of the God that gave you life? Suppose Wednesday were to be your last day, would you attend midweek Bible study and worship? Do you suppose your mind might turn to the words, ". . .not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh" (Heb. 10:25)?

If you had only one more day to live, would you spend that day with doubts in your mind regarding the question of whether there is to be a judgment or not? Whether there is a heaven or hell or not? I do not think so. John wrote, "And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne: and books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works" (Rev. 20:12). Jesus said of the separation of men in the day of judgment, "and these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life" (Matt. 25:46).

If you have sacrificed a liberal portion of your material means in support of the service of God and in relief of those about you in distress, and you realized you have only one day to live, would you spend that day regretting the fact that you sacrificed so much in His service? I am sure you would not. You would

rather be thankful for the fact that you thought seriously enough about heaven that you laid up treasure there. Our Lord said, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also" (Matt. 6:19-21).

Would you spend the day feuding with an enemy if you had only one day left? Would you harbor hatred and bitterness and malice? Would you think, "I've got to get in just one more 'lick' at that guy."? Or would you be more concerned with resolving your problem or conflict? Jesus charged, "If therefore thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Matt. 5:23,24). Would it not be a good time (any time is a good time) to think about the words of Paul, "Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto the wrath of God: for it is written, Vengeance belongeth unto me: I will recompense, saith the Lord. But if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head. Be not overcome of evil but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:19-21).

Only one day left! What would be the tone of your voice? Should your words be harsh, biting and caustic? Or, would you not decide that it is time to speak softer and gentler words? "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and railing, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you" (Eph. 4:31,32). Solomon, the man of great wisdom, wrote of the "virtuous woman" or the "worthy woman", ". . . in her tongue is the law of kindness" (Prov. 31:26).

What would be your attitude toward your husband or wife? Might you not say, "I love you, honey." just a little more often? Do you suppose you might think of some other ways to show your love? "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it" (Eph. 5:25). How much did Christ love the church? Enough to die for it! Wives are to love their husbands too. "that they may train the young women to love their husbands, to love their children" (Tit. 2:4).

Surely, you would not spend that "one more day" thinking about material things. I doubt that you would catch yourself thinking, "I've just got to make one more 'buck' before I die." No, I suspect you would spend a lot more of that last day thinking about spiritual and heavenly things. There is wisdom in this. "Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth" (Col. 3:2). I do not think you would spend that last day complaining about what you did not "get" materially. It would be very easy to conclude, and rightly so, "You know, I really had 'enough', after all." Paul's perspective about material things is well expressed in the following

words, "But godliness with contentment is great gain: for we brought nothing into the world, for neither can we carry anything out: but having food and covering we shall be therewith content" (I Tim. 6:6-8).

If there is something you have not been doing that you know you should have been doing—do you not suppose that you just might try mighty hard to do it that one day remaining? It is bad not to do as well as you know. "To him therefore that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (Jas. 4:17).

Would you occupy yourself trying to justify yourself in the eyes of men? No, there is something that would concern you more and that is being justified in the sight of God. Take a look at the words of Paul, "For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? or am I striving to please men? if I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ" (Gal. 1:10). When the rulers of the Jews charged the apostles "not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. . . Peter and John answered and said unto them. Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye: for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard" (Acts 4:18-20). God's favor is much more important than the favor of men.

Only one day left! How would you dress? Would you make a sensual display of your body in apparel immodestly designed? Would you take pleasure in your capacity to turn the eyes of lustful men your way? No, I think not. Not if you remember the words of Paul, "In like manner, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefastness and sobriety; not with braided hair, and gold or pearls or costly raiment; but (which becometh women professing godliness) through good works" (I Tim. 2:9-10).

How shall I live my last day? In obscene words? In smuttiness and vulgarity? In words calculated to kindle lust or lead others to sin? Certainly, this is not the way it should be. "Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for edifying as the need may be, that it may give grace to them that hear" (Eph. 4:29). "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one" (Col. 4:6).

Would you reason, "I've got to get drunk just one more time."? No, not if you believe God's Word and want to avoid the consequences of sin. Paul wrote of "the works of the flesh," an extended list, which included "drunkenness," and said, "of which I forewarn you, that they who practise such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19-21). You would not do these things of you want to go to heaven.

If you are a Christian, and you had only one day left on earth, would you spend that day in regret of the fact that you became a Christian and tried to live to the glory of God? No way! Paul, who lived a life of faithfulness, basked in the warmth of the assurance, "there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day;" (2 Tim. 4:8).

Seriously, friend, what if you had "JUST ONE MORE DAY?"

AN IDEAL CHURCH

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The Lord said: "Upon this rock I will build my church." This is the church that was established according to God's eternal purpose. It is an illustration of His many-sided wisdom. The church as the body of Christ grows as more people please God and are added as lively stones in this spiritual house (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 3:8-11; I Cor., 12:12-27; Eph. 2:20-22; I Peter 2:4-10). Men can never plan or build a church that could be anything but a contrast. The price for the Lord's church was fully adequate, the plan was of God, and the perfect Savior is the head. The plan for the church that is described in detail in the New Testament is the ideal church.

This article is a look at the human element in the church. This study is of the ideal local church. All the members are sinners saved by grace. If one could not worship except at some place where no member ever errs and where every member understands every passage of scripture fully, that one could never worship in an assembly. If he did find that perfect church it might not be that perfect after he became part of it. The Lord has room in His church for babes who desire the sincere milk of the word that they may grow thereby. Many have found fault and left who could have learned of more weaknesses if they had made careful and honest study of weaknesses of those they see when they look in the mirror.

What is an ideal church? What is an ideal? Your dictionary may tell you that one definition would indicate that it exists in imagination only. A definition more in our reach is that it is conforming to a standard of perfection. The standard given by the Lord is the perfect law of liberty. The Lord does not set any standard for his people short of perfection itself. He does not say seldom lie, nor does He ask that we steal very little.

We can illustrate the perfection of His standard or goal for His church by noticing His standard of unity. "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (I Cor. 1:10). Could there be a higher standard of unity? Has any congregation fully reached this goal?

Ideals are to be pressed toward. If it is a goal set by the Lord we should press toward it with fear, trembling, and diligence. (Phil. 2:12; II Peter 1:10; Phil. 3:13,14). There are congregations with many members

who are very eager to follow the steps of Jesus who is our perfect example. No standard short of perfection is worthy of the children of God. Their ideal is to be like their Lord. "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7). So mercy helps, and can be expected by those who press with zeal toward the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. The Lord would like for His people in any community to be "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:27).

A church that conforms to the standard of perfection in spiritual matters is an ideal church. Since the teaching of Christ is that we lay up treasures in heaven the church must be interested in pleasing God rather than men (Gal. 1:10; Matt. 6:19-21). Men who love the praise of men more than the praise of God cannot qualify as members of a glorious church. It is a sad day when buildings are built, sermons are delivered, and decisions are made in an effort to impress the public rather than to please God. Some ways by which a worldly attitude may manifest itself is by soft preaching, extravagant buildings, and unholy conduct of members. Some so called churches are little more than country clubs. They have show places for buildings, and preachers who stand for nothing. An ideal church hungers for the whole counsel of God and seeks to apply it fully in the lives of the members. So then the will of God is far above the will of the people.

A chain cannot be stronger than its weakest link. A church can be stronger than its weakest member since the strong bear the infirmities of the weak, but one ungodly member might be a spot or wrinkle or a blemish. Let each and every member strive diligently to avoid being a spot on the Lord's holy church.

"Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life" (Phil. 2:14-16). If church members are like their worldly neighbors they do not make up a glorious church. If, instead of being conformed to this world, they are transformed by the wholesome influence of the word they will be as lights in a dark world. They will walk circumspectly and speak boldly as they ought to speak. If Paul were alive and should write to such a church he might say "I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Thess. 5:23).

Christians were taught to be examples and patterns so that those of the contrary part might be ashamed, having no evil thing to say (I Tim. 4:12; Titus 2:7; I Peter 2:11,12; 3:10-17). If one has no plans to be as salt of the earth, he should not pretend to be a member of the church. The Christian is bought with the price so he is a servant of Christ. He cannot please the world and Christ (James 4:4). He cannot serve God and mammon (Matt. 6:24). True conversion includes repentance, and this will lead one to make a clear cut decision to

walk the narrow way of truth and holiness that leads to life.

FORMING A BIBLICAL POSITION

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When we talk about "my position" on a particular subject or "Bro. so-and-so's position," I trust that what we actually mean is what we believe to be the Biblical doctrine of that subject. It is obvious that everybody's "position" cannot be the Biblical position because there are usually contradictions between various views. A pertinent question then that needs to be addressed is how to formulate a true position on any given subject. Most people, I think, are interested in holding the Biblical position. But many have not arrived at this view because they have gone about forming their views from the wrong standpoint. The purpose of this article is to offer suggestions for forming a true Biblical position on any particular subject. To do this it is important to examine some false bases and then the correct basis for forming a true position. **WRONG BASES FOR FORMING A BIBLICAL POSITION:**

1. Emotions. It is dangerous to formulate a position entirely from an emotional standpoint. Do not misunderstand, it is important to have emotions—to feel very deeply even about religious matters. The point is that emotions alone are not a sure foundation. Emotions fluctuate depending upon changing circumstances. Emotions are unreliable when searching for truth. This is a mistake that many people make concerning salvation. They "feel" saved and yet have not completely obeyed God's will for salvation.

2. Personal experience. This is a corollary to basing a view on emotions. Some people form their views around what has personally happened to them. These people begin with their own personal experiences and fit their beliefs to their own lives. This often results in justifying things that are in fact wrong or explaining things away that do not "fit" their experiences. Obviously this is a false basis for forming a true position because the beginning point is wrong.

3. What has always been done. This is the "old paths philosophy" which says whatever has always been done is surely what is right. Granted, truth does not change. But it just might be that what has always been done has been wrong all along. This is the smokescreen used by many brethren to justify their practices. But it must be realized that what has always been done does not necessarily constitute truth.

4. Hypothetical situations. Many people dream up hypothetical situations and formulate their positions around these. This is the basis for the old "died on the way to the baptistery" argument. Some will say that baptism is not essential for salvation based upon a hypothetical circumstance. This "method" has also

been used widely in arguments pertaining to divorce and remarriage. All sorts of complicated situations are concocted in attempts to justify divorce and/or remarriage on grounds other than immorality. One is on shaky ground when the best he can do is to offer a hypothetical situation to substantiate his position.

5. Opposite extremes. In an attempt to refute false positions, some people go so far to the opposite extreme that they arrive at another false position. This is not to say that all truth is in the middle of the road. It is simply to point out another way in which false positions are formed. For example, in attempts to counter Calvinistic misconceptions concerning the grace of God, some are leaning toward the position of discounting God's grace altogether. Neither position is right. False concepts need to be countered with truth, not necessarily with the opposite extreme. **THE RIGHT BASIS FOR FORMING A BIBLICAL POSITION:**

The key to the matter under consideration is simple. One needs to "search the scriptures daily to see whether these things are so" (Acts 17:11). The key to the matter is intelligent, unprejudiced Bible study. I offer three simple suggestions for proper Bible study:

1. Study the context. Always look at verses and passages in light of their immediate and remote contexts. This will guard against misconceptions and misinterpretations. This is the one rule of Bible study that so many overlook.

2. Study words. The Bible is a book of words. If one is ever going to correctly interpret the Bible, then one must study the words that have been revealed. When we understand what the words actually mean, we can more certainly arrive at the Biblical position.

3. Study related passages. Jesus said that we should live by "every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). On any particular subject, we need to study all of the pertinent verses. All truth on one subject is not necessarily revealed in one verse or passage. A true position is one that takes into account everything the Bible says about the matter.

Avoiding fallacious methods for forming a position will clear the way for unprejudiced Bible study, correct exegesis, and holding the true Biblical position on any given subject.

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