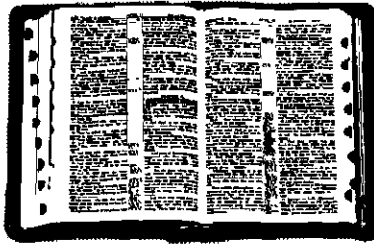


SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

"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

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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 stauolatry (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 "CAMPBELLITE 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."

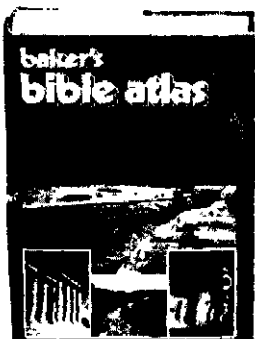
"And because you are sons and daughters, God has sent forth the spirit of the Child of God into our hearts, crying 'My loving parent!!'"

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, "sacrilegious, 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
P.O. Box 35
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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 require 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
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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
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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

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(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)
