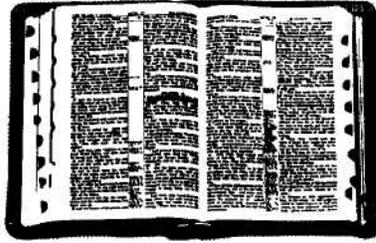


SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

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



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

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THINK ON THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

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DOCTRINE AND DISCIPLINE

Doctrine, disciple and discipline are related terms. Doctrine means "something taught; teachings ... something taught as the principles or creed of a religion, political party, etc.; tenet or tenets; belief, dogma." Disciple means "to teach, to learn, comprehend, ... a pupil, a follower, or adherent of any teacher or school of religion ..." Discipline means "A branch of knowledge or learning ... training that develops self-control, character, or orderliness and efficiency ... the result of such training; self-control; orderly conduct... acceptance of or submission to authority or control... a system of rules or methods ... treatment that corrects or punishes." (Webster's New World Dictionary).

Simply stated, Doctrine is teaching something; disciple is the learner or follower of the teacher: he receives the doctrine; and discipline is training or developing in the doctrine, which requires instruction and correcting. The doctrine is the gospel of Christ: that which Jesus and his apostles taught. Those who hear and obey the gospel of Christ are disciples or followers. The disciples who are reproved, corrected and instructed in righteousness are disciplined in the Lord. The sum of this is stated in Matthew 28: 18-20: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen." Here

we have doctrine, disciples and discipline: teaching, making followers, and instruction (discipline).

We have many people in the church today who despise both doctrine and discipline. It is increasingly difficult to get an audience of people to listen to sound doctrine for more than 20 or 30 minutes on Lord's day morning. Usually a much smaller number is in attendance at the evening services. A watered down version of Bible teaching that is calculated to tickle the ears of hearers rather than convict and convert has taken the place of sound gospel preaching. Some of these preachers lay awake at night dreaming up new ideas, catch phrases and programs designed to win large crowds of mostly young people and enthusiastic followers, who are uneducated in the truth of the gospel. Scriptural discipline would clear up this dilemma in many congregations.

When the time comes to administer corrective discipline, there are some who angrily defend the sinful disciple with excuses and untrue charges against the elders and the church. They do not want to discipline anyone. The American Civil Liberties Union is dedicated to liberating criminals and avoiding the just and legal penalties of the most vicious and senseless crimes against humanity. Most of these criminals forfeit their civil rights to be free to prey again and again upon society by their crimes. The attitude exists in the church to defend all sorts of spiritual crime against Christ and his church.

We know that Jesus Christ came to seek and to save the lost. Sinners are the object of the love of God that gave Christ to die for sin (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8, 9). One who had sinned after obeying the gospel of Christ was told to "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee" (Acts 8:22, 23). His sin was grievous: He was "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." The one who repents of sins and turns again to the Lord is being disciplined. That is exactly what rebuke and reproof is intended to do. That is discipline.

God's word teaches the church to discipline disobedient disciples even to the point to "withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (2 Thess. 3:6).

And also To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Cor. 5:5). That is what the New Testament plainly teaches. How can one be a faithful disciple of the great Teacher and ignore or reject this significant doctrine? A skillfully devised attack upon corrective discipline by misusing and misapplying scriptures should be exposed. The best of them will not eliminate one single passage from the verbally inspired body of truth from heaven. God has spoken! His words shall not pass away! Any one who preaches another gospel besides the one preached by the apostles is preaching a perverted gospel and is accursed, because there is but one gospel (Gal. 1:6-8).

Suppose the elders and brethren should simply pass by and cover up cases of needed corrective or punitive discipline (withdrawing ourselves from such), in order to appease the weak defenders of impenitent sinners, what would be the results? It would not be a stronger church, because Paul said "... a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (1 Cor. 5:6). The fact is that the sinner would continue in his sin and be lost, other weak disciples would drift away because there is no deterrent to them, and the church would be weaker and less able to support the gospel in its purity in a wicked world. Nobody would gain in this situation.

But suppose the elders and brethren insisted that sin be dealt with just as Jesus Christ directed in the gospel, and put the disobedient disciple away from the faithful, what would be the result? The sinner would most likely repent and return to the Lord. At least, he would know faithful brethren do not approve of his sinful life. That is what the Lord wants, and that is what we should strive for. That is the purpose of such discipline. In addition the church would be stronger and in better position to defend and support the gospel. The elders and brethren would be faithful to the Lord, and the preachers would be encouraged to proclaim the unadulterated gospel, the power of God to save. By practicing corrective discipline the church has every thing to gain and nothing to lose, but by ignoring scriptural discipline the church and the sinner have every thing to lose and nothing to gain. Brethren, think on these things!

Searching The Scriptures

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Guest

Editorial

Wilson Adams

891 Autumn Valley Lane
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Whatever happened to uncluttered and simple lives? It seems like only yesterday life was slower and more relaxed in our *Little House on the Prairie*. Welcome to the brink of the twenty-first century! Pa Ingalls wouldn't believe his eyes. Walnut Grove has changed a lot since they added the Pizza Hut, the 7-Eleven, multi-lane interchanges, automatic teller machines, personal computers and Big Macs. Life will never again be like it once was.

We enjoy the benefits and conveniences of modern living to be sure, but we also suffer the inevitable consequences of fast-paced lifestyles and haggard schedules. Help for the hurried home is a priority need for modern families. And who doesn't need it? We are always in a rush, always on the move, always out of breath, always exhausted and overly stressed. Ours is a love affair with haste and hurry. We live for the immediate and sacrifice the permanent. And our families suffer.

SLOW DOWN! Life is too short to rush through like a mad-man on a fast-laned freeway. Have some fun with your family. Relax. Learn to love your kids — I said: **LEARN TO LOVE YOUR KIDS!**

One thing that impresses me about Jesus was that He was always busy. In fact, there never was anyone any busier than He. But one never gets the feeling when studying the life of Christ that He ever hurried, that He ever had to play "catch up ball," or that He was ever taken by surprise. He maximized His time, managed it well and left Himself adequate amounts for prayer, meditation and private teachings. And he never got so busy that He didn't have time for the little ones ...

"Then some children were brought to Him so that He might lay His hands on them and pray; and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, 'Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these'" (Matt. 19:13-14).

Moms and Dads — we have got to do a better job raisin' our kids! Materialism, crowded schedules, working mothers, power hungry yuppie fathers are all factors that are killing our kids. Look around ... **WE'RE LOSING OUR CHILDREN!** That has got to be the major issue before us.

May I speak frankly with you fathers? Do you feel adequate as a father? I readily confess that I don't.

Sometimes I feel so inadequate, so insufficient, so filled with failure. But one thing I am sure of and that is the need to communicate daily my love to my children. *Love demands communication and communication demands expression.* You pick up that child in your arms and tell him that your greatest claim to fame in all the world is that you're his daddy. And if you do that, he'll forgive your stupid blunders, he'll overlook your imperfections and see past your mistakes because you have communicated your love through expression. Dads, are you communicating love to your kids? Are you expressing it **DAILY?**

Another area where we fathers (and mother, too) blow it is that we expect too much out of our kids too soon. We demand perfection and practice the fine art of constant fault-finding. I came across the following piece not long ago and it touched my heart as I hope it will yours. I do not know who wrote it. But it tells a story that many of us fathers are too familiar with. Read it carefully and I think you may find someone in it you know. ...

Listen Son!

"Listen, son; I am saying this to you as you lie asleep, one little paw crumpled under your cheek and the blond curls sticking on your damp forehead. I have stolen into your room alone. Just a few minutes ago, as I sat reading my newspaper, a hot stifling wave of remorse swept over me. I could not resist. Guiltily I came to your bedside.

These are the things I was thinking, son. I have been cross to you. I scolded you as you were dressing for school because you gave your face merely a dab with the towel. I took you to task for not cleaning your shoes. I called out angrily when I found you had thrown some of your things on the floor.

At breakfast I found fault, too. You spilled things. You gulped down your food. You put your elbows on the table. You spread butter too thick on your bread. And as you started off to play and I made for the office, you turned and waved a little hand and called, "Good-bye, Daddy," and I frowned and said in reply, "Hold your shoulders back!"

Then it all began all over again in the afternoon. As I came up the hill I spied you, down on your hands and knees playing marbles. There were holes in your trousers knees. I humiliated you before your friends by making you march ahead of me into the house. Clothes are expensive and if you had to buy them you would be more careful. What wise logic from your father!

Do you remember, later, when I was reading how you came in softly, timidly with a sort of hurt, haunted look in your eyes? When I glanced up over the paper, impatient at the interruption, you hesitated at the door. "What is it you want?" I snapped.

You said nothing, but ran across the room and in one tempestuous plunge threw your arms around my neck and kissed me again and again, and your small arms tightened with affection that God had set blooming in your heart and which even neglect could not wither. And then you were gone. Patterin' up the stairs.

Well son, it was shortly afterwards that my paper slipped from my hands and a terrible, sickening fear came over me. Suddenly I saw myself as I really was and

in my horrible selfishness I felt sick at my heart.

What had habit been doing to me? The habit of complaining, finding fault and reprimanding — all of these were my rewards to you for being a boy. It was not that I did not love you; it was just that I expected so much of youth. I was measuring you by the yardstick of my own years.

And there was so much that was good, and fine and true in your character. You did not deserve my treatment of you, son. The little heart in you was as big as the dawn itself over the wide hills. All of this was shown by your spontaneous impulse to rush in and kiss me goodnight. Nothing else matters tonight, son. I have come to your beside in the darkness, and I have knelt there, choking with emotion and so ashamed.

It is a feeble atonement, for I know you would not understand these things if I told them to you in your waking hours, yet I must say what I am saying. I must burn sacrificial fires alone here at your bedside and make full confession.

And I have prayed for God to strengthen me in my new resolve. Tomorrow I will be a real daddy! I will chum with you and suffer when you suffer and laugh when you laugh. I will bit my tongue when impatient words come. I will keep saying as if it were a ritual: He is just a boy — a little boy.

I am afraid I have visualized you as a man. Yet, I see you now, son, crumpled and weary in your bed. I see that you are still a baby. Yesterday you were in your mother's arms; your head on her shoulder. I have asked too much, too much.

Dear boy! Dear little son! A penitent kneels at your infant shrine here in the moonlight. I kiss the little fingers and the damp forehead; and if it were not for waking you up, I would snatch you up and crush you to my breast. I love you son, I really do love you. ..."

* * * *

God help me to slow down; to take a renewed look at my priorities; to not expect too much too soon; to not be a constant fault-finder and impatient perfectionist and most of all, GOD HELP ME TO LOVE MY KIDS!

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(2 Cor. 5:9)

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LETTING UP ON THE ACCELERATION

We all must continually evaluate ourselves to see if our faith is as it ought to be (2 Cor. 13:5). We should constantly ask "Is my faith sound" (Tit. 1:13)? Faith is like the human body — it has a bill of health. It can be healthy and strong or it can be sick and weak.

I think I see a problem (to say the least it is a danger) of some of the older Christians loosing some of their conviction. Rest assured, that this could happen to anyone (Heb. 3:12). It could develop to the point that we loose all our faith. The problem I see is not true of all or even most of those who have slightly passed the middle-age bracket. While we are addressing the older members of the church in this article, let this alarm serve as a warning to the younger to strive to avoid the same pitfalls.

It is sad anytime one's faith is not what it ought to be. When I see a younger person whose faith is not strong, I am saddened, yet, I think that there is hope for some growth. It is sadder when I see an older person whose faith is weak and has never been strong at all. It is sad because it is getting a little late for him to grow to the point that he could have. It is even sadder when I see an older person whose faith was once strong, but now has weakened and mellowed with time. He now tolerates things that he didn't before.

The real danger is when we don't see it happening to us. Let us not forget that apostasy is gradual. It doesn't come overnight. It could happen to us before we ever realize we have moved at all. The Hebrew writer urged that we "give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip" (Heb. 2:1). The KJV footnote suggest that "let them slip" could be translated "run out as leaking vessels." We could loose our faith drop by drop. It is very possible that many of the ones being addressed will read and think that it doesn't apply to them.

The problem we are describing is when those older in the faith begin to let up on the acceleration of their faith.

Some Reminders About Faith

1. What faith is. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). "Substance" suggest that which stands under and supports our hope. "Evidence" suggest the assurance of Divine reality. Thus, faith gives us our standing ground. The problem we are discussing is when that ground begins to break and soften beneath us and it is no longer firm.

2. **The source of faith.** Our faith is gained by feeding upon the word of God. Paul said, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing the word of God" (Rom. 10:17) The same writer begins his great essay on being "sound in the faith" (the book of Titus) by telling us that the source of sound faith is the sound doctrine that was revealed to and preached by the apostles (Tit. 1:1-4). Faith must be founded upon that which is written in the revelation of God (2 Cor. 4:13).

3. **There are varying degrees of faith.** The Bible speaks of *great* faith (Matt. 8:10), *little* faith (Matt. 6:30; 8:26), *weak* faith (Rom. 4:19), *dead* faith (Jas. 2:20, 26) and *working* faith (Gal. 5:6). Even the devils and the children of the devil believe (Jas. 2:19; John 8:31, 44). This simply shows that I could have faith and still not necessarily be what I ought to be. In connection with the problem we have described, one could easily say that he still has his faith, but it could be a weaker and smaller faith.

Faith Must Grow

When we obey the gospel we are then babes in Christ and our faith is weak. The rest of our lives is a process of growing and maturing in the faith.

1. **Growth is a continual process.** We do not grow for a little while and then stop at a state of maturity. No matter how long you have been a Christian or how strong your faith may be, God expects you to continue to grow. Peter said that we are to grow *as* newborn babes (1 Pet. 2:1). It is not just babes that need to grow, but we must continually grow as babes do. Paul thanked God for the Thessalonians because "your faith groweth exceedingly" (2Thess. 1:3).

2. **Faith doesn't stand still—it is always moving.** Your faith is either increasing or decreasing. You cannot reach a point and stop growing and expect your faith to remain the same. The Hebrews were rebuked for letting their faith fall back. They needed to be taught *again* the very things they had known before (Heb. 5:11-14). When they stopped growing, their faith decreased. It is like driving your car uphill. If you let up on the acceleration, you will finally start rolling back down the hill.

Causes

1. **A general resisting of change.** When people are young they realize that their situations are not permanent, therefore, there will be many changes. Not only does he accept that fact, but he works toward improvement. He works toward the day he will be married, have children, have a better job, be able to buy a house of his own and drive a much nicer car. He expects his whole life to be changing. So, it is no problem for him to see that his faith must be growing and increasing as well.

When he gets older he begins to get comfortable with the way things are. With some who are older, *any* type of change is hard. The older they get, the less they like the idea of change. So, their faith receives the same kind of treatment. Some of the Israelites had become so accustomed to Egypt that the idea of the journey in the wilderness wasn't so welcomed. Some thought it might have been better to have remained in Egypt.

2. **Focusing on the immediate life rather than the real objective.** Moses instructed the Israelites to

make the knowledge of God and service unto him the very foundation of life. (Deut. 6:6-9). God placed man on earth to serve and worship him (Ecc. 12:13). It is sad indeed when one reaches the very years that ought to be the most useful in the kingdom, that he or she sets back to merely enjoy life with ease and get involved in other activities besides the work of the Lord. It is in the older years that one should have the maturity of knowledge, wisdom and respect. All of that coupled with retirement should provide the best opportunities of their life.

3. **Living in the glow of yesterday, rather than in the challenge of tomorrow.** Again, when one is young he is reaching and pushing for greater things (more money, a better house, a better career and a greater faith). The young ever sees the challenge before him. However, as one reaches the senior citizen years the challenge is not as great. He has now attained to a level of stability. He is retired. The job of raising the kids is over. He finds himself looking back over what he has done, rather than what he can do. The tendency is to view faith and service to God the same way. He takes pride in all the great things he has accomplished in the service to God in years past. He has fought the battles and he thinks they are over. Some view the institutional battle as *the* battle of the church. So, they think, we've fought it — we won — let's relax — there's nothing else to do.

After the death of Moses God told Joshua that there was no time to relax, but that the people need to pull together and press on. It's not over yet (Josh. 1:6-11)!

4. **Letting up in Bible study and search for answers.** When he was a babe, he studied constantly. He searched diligently for answers to difficult passages and questions that others would raise. He wanted to know the answers. Now, in his older years he let's up just a little in serious Bible study. He is not quite as eager as he once was to find those answers. Let us not forget that we all must continually grow in knowledge (2 Pet. 1:5; 3:18).

(To be continued)

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Some months ago I was asked to present a lesson on Reincarnation. My first thoughts were "why here in America?" If I were going to India, China or anywhere in the East, I could see the need. I had not the faintest idea how successfully Eastern religions had invaded Western thinking. The result of a little research was a matter of great astonishment to me. I soon learned that the saying, "East is East and West is West and Never the Twain Shall Meet," is long out of date. Eastern religions are a definite part of Western thinking.

How Widespread?

Just how widespread and popular is the teaching of reincarnation? According to a 1982 Gallop poll, 23 percent of Americans or about one in four accept reincarnation as fact. More alarming is the fact that among young Americans 30 and under, 30 percent believe this doctrine. About 17 percent of those who claim to attend church regularly believe in reincarnation. Statistics reveal that 21 percent of the "Protestant" population and 25 percent of the Catholic population accept reincarnation.

In view of these alarming figures, it seems to me that our work is cut out for us. We can not afford to try to brush this aside as too ridiculous to bother with it. While we try to laugh it off, thousands are daily being made converts to this and other phases of Eastern religions.

Why the Sudden Popularity?

Since World War II, there has been a growing interest in Eastern religions in this country. The so-called "sacred writings" of Buddhism, and Hinduism have been translated and distributed widely in paperback form here in America. In many instances they are placed in motel rooms as well as other public places. So the textbooks of Eastern religions are in the hands of the reading public. They are there in many forms other than those official books. Many of the best sellers are promoters of various forms of Eastern religion.

We have had several generations of glorification of materialism, with the resultant failure to find any real satisfaction from such. This along with the religious, social, and secular revolts against authority have laid the groundwork for acceptance of anything that strips away authority from the proper source, and places it within the individual himself. These movements which deify man and make a god of self, are finding ready acceptance in the Western world.

When men turn from the truth, they invariably turn

to fables (2 Tim. 4:4). Our society is obsessed with occultism and anything that is supposed to be hidden knowledge. The psychics, modern self-proclaimed prophets, Graphologists, Numerologists, etc. never had a more fertile field in which to do their deceptive work. No person in the past 25 years has done so much to spread the doctrine of reincarnation, as has Shirley Mac Lain. Two books written by her, **Out On A Limb**, and **Dancing In The Light**, have enjoyed enormous popularity. These books along with her television appearances and seminars have caused multitudes to come to believe reincarnation is a proven fact.

Reincarnation Defined

"Reincarnation" comes from the Latin *re*, which means again and *incarnere*, which comes from two other Latin words, *in* and *caro*- "in flesh." Hence, it literally means a coming again in the flesh. We keep recycling from one life to another. Whatever, and whenever the "soul" originates according to reincarnationist, it evolves generally from the lower to a higher state. However, one of the most down played features of the doctrine is that according to Hindu version of reincarnation one just may devolve and return here as a rock, mineral, tree, or cockroach. Now, that thought doesn't meet with too much appeal to Western audiences, and therefore this possibility is just not mentioned. Therefore, in the Western cultures, the advocates of reincarnation follow the general line of "Biological Evolution." They contend that the soul evolves through many, perhaps thousands of lives until it finally arrives at a union with Divine Essence. In other words, we keep coming back until we finally get it right. There will be no failures. Hell, in the Bible is just a hypothetical threat, it doesn't exist.²

Everyone will eventually, by living many lives, work off his "karmic" debt.

What is Karma?

"Karma" literally means "doing, deeds, action, work." Through the process of time the term had come to mean both the action and the fruit of the action. Simply stated, Karma is an impersonal force in the universe that causes one to build up credits and debits through his behavior. We therefore determine the quality and status in the next reincarnation by our actions in this incarnation. If we do bad this time, then the next time around we suffer for it. If we do excellent in this life, then we will be elevated in the next. So Karma, that impersonal judge sees to it that perfect God, overseeing creation, by some impersonal process that operates with the precision of a computer, never making a mistake. Reincarnationists often declare that this is exactly what the Bible teaches, "you reap what you sow." But, no, this is not to be confused with the Bible teaching. In Christ, we reap benefits far beyond what we deserve, Lk. 17:10. Forgiveness of sins is not a matter of our deserving, even though we receive it conditionally.

What is Nirva?

Just what this term embraces, the reincarnationists themselves are not in agreement. And yet this is what it is all about. With some it means reaching "external extinction", while with others it means attaining one-

ness **with** the universe. Still others define it as finally paying off your karmic debt to be liberated from this world purgatory, so as to reach the ultimate and go into non-existence. Some hope, I'd say. The Edgar Cayce model describes it as reaching "God conscientiousness." (More on Edgar Cayce later).

In our next installment, we will consider how reincarnationist misuse the Bible in an effort to bolster their position. We shall call attention to the fact that one cannot believe both the Bible and the doctrine of reincarnation. Those who embrace a false concept such as the one **under** review must face up to some inevitable consequences of the same. Some of these we will notice in the concluding article.

Footnotes

¹ Geisley and Amano, *The Reincarnation Sensation*, (Tyndall House Publishers, Inc., 1986), p. 7, 8.

²Ibid, p. 123.

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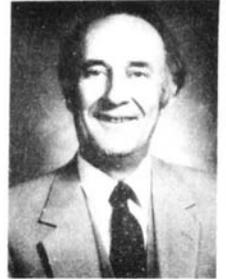
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DISFELLOWSHEPING BRETHREN

QUESTION: Is it scriptural to disfellowship a brother or sister for leaving a local church of the Lord to join any denominational church or go back into the world?

ANSWER: Paul wrote, "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (2 Thess. 3:6). When a brother or sister refuses to live right, he or she needs to be disfellowshipped. Of course, there are situations where good judgment, it seems to me, requires only a public statement by the elders to the church that so and so is no longer a member of this congregation, and give the reason(s) why.

Sometimes members quit the Lord and move out of town. Nobody knows there they are. (Parenthetically, if we had established a closer relationship with them, and had shown more interest in such brethren, some of them might have been influenced to live faithful wherever they were. Too many times, weeks, yea, months go by before any inquiry is made about their whereabouts. Then, a year later or longer, a congregation decides to withdraw. There is no longer any relationship with any member, or we don't even know where they are now living. To call such action Bible discipline is a sham!) From what is a church to withdraw? How can there be a disfellowshipping when there can be no fellowship?

When there is, or can be, social communication or association, even though the brother or sister has quit attending the services, the church must withdraw and keep no company with such individuals until there is repentance. This is true, even to those who have joined themselves to some denominational church (Cf. 1 Cor. 5:9-13; 2 Thess. 3:6,14,15; Rom. 16:17-18; Tit. 3:10).

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THE STATUS OF DIVORCED PERSONS

Leon Mauldin
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The Bible teaches that there are three classes of people who are eligible for marriage. One class would be those who have never been married. God's will from the beginning was, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh" (Matt. 19:4, 5). A second category would be those whose spouses have died. Paul said, "For the woman that hath a husband is bound by law to the husband while he liveth; but if the husband die, she is discharged from the law of the husband. So then if, while the husband liveth, she be joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if the husband die, she is free from the law, so that she is no adulteress, though she be joined to another man" (Romans 7:3, 4). The third category is those who have put away their spouses for fornication. Jesus said, "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery" (Matthew 19:9). These, and only these are eligible to marry. No other persons have the scriptural right to marry.

Just here we need to notice the binding nature of marriage. Sometimes people reason that divorce is not wrong, so long as one does not remarry. My friend, if one divorces his mate for any cause other than fornication, he has sinned whether he ever remarries or not. One is not cleaving to his spouse, he has put asunder what God joined together, one puts his divorced mate in the position of likely committing adultery (Matt. 5:32), one is not loving his spouse (Eph. 5:23-25), 1 Corinthians 7:3-4 regarding rendering due benevolence is violated, and one has disobeyed the charge the Lord gives unto the married that they not leave their spouse (1 Cor. 7:10-12). Now when one puts himself in that position, or when one is put away, what is his status?

In the first place, if one has put away his spouse for any cause other than fornication, he is not in a position to choose to marry. If one is the "put-away" party in a divorce, he is not scripturally qualified to select another companion. For these persons, another marriage with any one (with the exception of being reconciled to one's spouse, 1 Cor. 7:11), is simply not an option that they have!

But how do divorced (unscripturally) persons stand in regard to such activities as dating? Actually, an understanding of who is scripturally eligible to marry helps us to see who is eligible to date. Now it is obvious that those whom we saw are scripturally free to marry are also free

to date. But what of those who are not eligible to marry. The Bible's answer is that such are to "remain unmarried?" Of course this means that one cannot contract another marriage. But we are raising a practical question in asking, "Is one who is ineligible to marry in a position to date?" What if one reasons, "I know I can't remarry, but we're just friends." Or, "I don't ever plan to marry again, but I need companionship, and I just take her out to have some one to talk to?"

Actually, those who reason in this manner are usually just deceiving themselves. Have you ever noticed that we usually end up marrying someone whom we have dated? The dangers ought to be apparent. One who dates a person who is ineligible for marriage is truly "playing with fire." The chances are good that he will end up in an unscriptural marriage.

But what if they do not ever marry? Does the dating of divorced persons meet with God's approval? We again insist that when we see from the Scriptures who is eligible to marry, we have defined for us who is eligible to date. Persons eligible to marry are free to be together, talk, court and plan (of course with all activities conforming to God's standard of morals and purity, etc.) because they are in a position to follow through on the fruition of courtship; their relationship may culminate in marriage if they so choose. On the other hand, when we see defined from Scripture those who are not eligible to marry, we have also at the same time learned who is not eligible to date. If one is not free to marry, he is not eligible to date!

Sometimes one who is himself free to marry will be attached to one who is ineligible. Before long, the two may agree to go on outings of various kinds together. A man needs to recognize that when he is with a woman who has divorced her spouse for any cause other than fornication, or one who has been divorced, he is with another man's wife. The woman (who is free to marry) who accepts the invitation to go somewhere or do something with a divorced man (i.e. dating), needs to recognize that she is with someone else's husband.

This truth can be seen clearly enough if we are considering a married couple, two who are living in the marriage relationship and are not divorced. While one may have friends of the opposite gender, married Christians recognize that they are not in a position to date those friends (and of course do not want to). But why would that be wrong? Because they are married, they are not eligible to date. A Christian husband does not, for example, reason, "My wife cannot go with me to the Gospel Meeting tonight, so I will go by a friend's (female) house, and take her with me, for companionship, of course." The very same principle is involved when a divorced person is dating, and going on outings, etc. The one who accompanies him is with someone else's spouse. Therefore, an unscripturally divorced person may not date for the same reason that a married person may not date. Neither is free to do so; both are ineligible to do so!

While one hopefully has many friends, a spouse who seeks to please God recognizes that there are bounds which he must not cross. A Christian spouse does not take a friend of the opposite sex for an all-day trip to

Birmingham, and arrive back home late in the evening. The issue is not one of whether he may have friends, but one of that conduct in which he may properly (before God) engage. One who is himself free to marry cannot (with God's approval) put himself in the above type of situations with divorced persons, because **they are not free.**

If the idea persists, "I still don't see anything wrong with divorced persons dating," we would ask, "Is it possible for it to **become wrong** at any point short of an adulterous marriage, and if so, at what point?" Is it right if the relationship is "casual", but wrong if it is "serious"? If so, how serious does it have to become — would it be steady dating, or engagement, before it became wrong? I believe the relationship becomes wrong when it starts, just as the same relationship would be wrong for married persons.

It would perhaps be appropriate here to also give attention to the "singles" seminars, rallies, classes, etc. While nothing is intrinsically wrong with special studies for singles, we object to the church's providing opportunities for persons to find companions, with no regard as to whether or not they are eligible for marriage. Just this past week I received a brochure for a "Single Adult Rally" to be held in September in Atlanta. Topics listed included, "Laying Bricks or Throwing Stones", "Singles, Sex and Sanity", "Single Parenting—Building a Christian Foundation", "Single Again — Success or Survival", "Building Success as a Single Woman", and "The Body Beautiful." To be fair, the topics are not necessarily wrong in themselves. But one wonders just what would be taught in that setting on those subjects. But consider also what is not listed. Keep in mind that this "rally" will include those who are "single-again" without distinction as to why one is single again (i.e., regardless of whether or not one has a scriptural divorce). Yet the listing of topics does not include, "A Discussion of Matthew 19:9", or "What the Bible Teaches Regarding Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage", or "It Is Not Lawful For Thee To Have Her." To the extent that such programs for singles involve a compromise of truth regarding God's marriage law we stand opposed to them. To the extent that they provide opportunities for "companionship" and dating for those who are not scripturally free to marry, they are in violation of the Word of God.

If you are free to marry, you still have to make some choices regarding whom you will date. Restrict your dating to those who are eligible to marry. Don't date anybody that is not a proper subject for marriage. We would encourage you to be a faithful Christian and marry a faithful Christian. If you are divorced (unscripturally) you need to recognize your standing: If you are not free to marry, you are not free to date!

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WHEN TO BE SILENT

Solomon advises us that there is "a time to keep silence; and a time to speak" (Eccl. 3:7).

The words we speak are of tremendous importance. They shall have momentous consequences in time and eternity. Our Lord tells us that they reflect the health of our souls. It is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks (Matt. 12:34). Men shall give account for every idle word (verse 35). This does not condemn innocent humor or small talk. The idle words are portrayed in the context. The Pharisees who said, "This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons" (verse 24), were guilty of such idle talk.

"For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned" (verse 37), concluded the Lord.

How very crucial then are the words we speak!

James speaks of the tongue as a fire: "See how great a forest a little fire kindles!" (5:5, 6). "Where there is smoke, there is fire," we are told. But sometimes the fire is on the end of someone's long tongue!

James continues to describe the tongue as a beast that cannot be completely tamed. Oh, don't turn that wild thing loose on me! What havoc this poisonous viper does render!

Is it any wonder that David vowed to restrain his mouth with a muzzle while the wicked were before him" (Psalm 39:1)?

There is a time to be silent. "Even a fool is counted wise when he holds his peace; when he shuts his lips, he is considered perceptive" (Prov. 17:18). Even when silence is not perceived as wisdom, it has been said that it is better to be silent and be thought a fool than to speak and remove all doubt.

My Dad used to tell me to not argue with fools, for bystanders would not be able to tell who the fool was. I've violated that principle too many times.

A man met a friend whom he had not seen for a long while. "How is your wife?" he inquired.

"I thought you knew. She went to heaven," came the reply.

"Oh," he countered. "I'm sorry."

That didn't sound right, so after an awkward silence he said, "I mean I'm glad."

That was certainly no improvement and in desperation he tried again: "What I guess I really mean," he blurted, "is that I'm surprised!"

Often its better to be silent.

Let's consider some of the times we should keep silence.

1. **We should be silent when angry.** "He who is quick-tempered acts foolishly" (Prov. 14:17). "Therefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God" (James 1:19, 20).

Some pride themselves on having a short fuse. They boast about "straightening so and so out"; "giving him a piece of their mind"; or "telling her off." If they were wise, they would be silent until they cooled off. Then if something must be said, they would speak prudently as a Christian ought to.

2. **We should be silent when we do not know all the facts.** "He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him" (Prov. 18:13). "The first one to plead his cause seems right, until his neighbor comes and examines him" (Prov. 18:17).

Our judicial system is supposedly based on the concept of hearing all the evidence before a verdict is rendered. It often doesn't work that way because of loopholes and technicalities, but such is as it should be.

One prospective juror was asked if he believed in capital punishment.

"Generally, no," he replied. "But in this case, yes,"

At the bottom of most gossip, whispering, and backbiting, is someone who does not have all the facts. One lady is reported to have said, "I didn't know if it was true or not, I just repeated it to be on the safe side."

3. **We should be silent when it is none of our business.** "The heart knows its own bitterness, and a stranger does not share its joy" (Prov. 14:10).

How often would the Lord say to us as He did to Peter, "What is that to you?" (John 21:22).

It may be that a matter is our business. Perhaps it is a problem within the church of which one is a part. If so, let him speak. But let him speak in the right way and to those who may help correct the situation.

The disciples in Jerusalem who were murmuring over the neglect of their widows (Acts 6:1) did not accomplish anything. I wonder how long the murmuring and grumbling went on before someone approached the apostles with the issue and it was corrected.

If someone is living in sin, such should be your business. But go and talk with him in the proper spirit (Gal. 6:1) If one is not willing to do this, he should be silent about it.

4. **We should be silent when our words would destroy a friendship.** "A perverse man sows strife, and a whisperer separates the best of friends" (Prov. 16:18).

One can easily think of exceptions when one ought to speak even if a friendship is at stake. But this passage is referring to words that ought never be spoken.

Most everybody says things, even about friends, that they would not want to get back to those friends. A good rule to follow: don't say such things. They will usually get back.

Another good rule is this: If you are advised of something that someone has said about you, don't take it too seriously. "Also do not take to heart everything people say, lest you hear your servant cursing you. For many

times, also, your own heart has known that even you have cursed others" (Eccl. 7:21, 22).

Doesn't it make you feel good when someone has said something good about you and you are told about it? The "Golden Rule" would suggest then that we should so speak of others that if anything "gets back," it will be something good.

5. **We should be silent when our words would destroy a reputation.** "An ungodly man digs up evil, and it is on his lips like a burning fire" (Prov. 16:27).

Again, there are obvious times that we would be obligated to speak even if we ruined someone's reputation. But most of the time we should be silent.

Even if we know a matter to be true, this does not mean we should repeat it. We should ask: Is it kind? And then, is it necessary? And perhaps will it help?

6. **We should be silent when we have said it many times before.** "... the contentions of a wife are a continual dripping" (Prov. 19:13).

A constant drip, drip, drip, is impossible to get used to. You will grow accustomed to living next to a R R track, but a leaky roof, or faucet, is a constant irritation.

So it is with someone who nags. We can understand why Solomon would speak of a nagging wife. But many husbands are equally guilty of nagging. And many parents nag their children constantly.

Perhaps it is time to stop and ask: Is this getting the job done? Is it productive or counterproductive?

Nagging just makes the situation worse. It's better to be silent.

7. **We should be silent when it is time to listen.** "A wise son heeds his father's instruction, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke" (Prov. 13:1).

We are to be swift to hear and slow to speak (Jas. 1:19). It has never occurred to some folks that God may have had a reason in giving us two ears and just one mouth. Furthermore, He gave a mouth that closes and ears that don't.

We can never be good counselors if we are not willing to be silent and listen. We cannot teach the gospel if we are unwilling to listen. Sometimes we may feel we have answered a religious argument when, in fact, we have not understood the argument because we failed to listen.

In meetings all over the country, I see young folks in the audience generally on the back row, who don't know that when it is a time to listen, it is a time to be silent. Surely we are doing our children a disservice if we do not teach them this from a very early age.

8. **We should be silent when it is time to work.** "In all labor there is profit, but idle chatter leads only to poverty" (Proverbs 14:23). There are many who talk a good game. They talk the Bible and religion. They talk up the need for good classes and more personal work.

But don't count on them when it comes to getting the job done. They are all talk and no work.

Jesus said, "I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work" (John 9:4).

There is a time when we need to quit talking and start working.

Indeed, there are many times when we need to keep

silent. Next time we shall consider some times when we ought to speak.

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"CUT OFF OCCASION"

"But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion." (2 Cor. 11:12).

The life and teachings of the apostle Paul are in harmony with the above principle. He was willing to forego personal privilege if it would help a weak brother (1 Cor. 8:13). He did not always exercise his power to "live of the gospel" when he thought that course was best for the gospel (1 Cor. 9:12). In the collection and distribution of funds for needy saints, he was "Avoiding this, that no man should blame us ..." (2 Cor. 8:20).

In spite of all this, and no matter how hard we try, we may not always succeed in keeping others from making accusations or doing wrong. Paul followed the advice of James and the elders at Jerusalem in order to "cut off occasion" from the Jews, but the effort was unsuccessful (Acts 21:20ff).

Yet, even when others are determined to pursue a contrary course, we should be more determined not to give them occasion, or excuse. Let them find their own excuse, and bear their own guilt.

If the foregoing principle is good in matters of personal liberty or judgment, how much more in matters which are legislated, and where there is no room for expediency?

Singing

The singing of "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs" in worship to God is not a matter of personal liberty, for such is enjoined upon the saints not only as an act of worship, but as an act of edification (Col. 3:16).

When this singing is not the best thing that it could be, and even becomes downright deplorable, we start looking for occasion to improve it. One may suggest new books, another may suggest a new leader, or someone else may suggest a choir or the addition of some mechanical instrument.

In my forty-four years in the church, I have watched the gradual deterioration of singing in churches of Christ. When I began to preach, singing schools were common among the congregations. I have tried to encourage brethren to cultivate their singing, and a few congregations still place emphasis on this part of the worship, but many are negligent and careless. One brother who devoted much of his life to conducting singing schools finally ceased his efforts because brethren either quit scheduling such schools, or wouldn't attend them.

DON'T FORGET TO PRAY!

Brethren, in order to take away occasion from those who would try to improve upon God's arrangement for music in the church, let us give singing the attention it deserves.

The Home

Churches are rapidly taking over the duties and privileges of the home. The home is a divine institution, and was fulfilling its mission long before the church was established. There is a difference between the work and mission of the church, and that of the home. Christ knew it, and any Bible student ought to know it.

Congregations have taken over hospitality, recreation, entertainment, and a lot of other functions which belong to the home. "Family Life Centers" and "Fellowship Halls" are the order of the day for many churches. It may be that we have given these social gospel advocates an occasion to peddle their wares.

We need to "use hospitality one to another" (1 Pet. 4:9), and not just once or twice a year when the visiting preacher comes. Even these remote occasions are being characterized by less and less hospitality.

We need to open up our homes to one another, to the elderly, the middle-aged, and to the young. We need more get-togethers, social functions which are properly home-related. Parents need to accept their God-given duties and privileges instead of looking for occasion to pass such off on society or the church.

Then maybe, just maybe, within a generation or two we can capitalize on the distinct advantages of individual and collective duties, and not only fit the home and the church for their respective roles, but reap the rewards of this divine arrangement.

At the least, we can "cut off occasion" from those who seem determined to supplant the home entirely, and weaken the spiritual mission of the church.

"Do Good"

While this next suggestion belongs in the realm of the home, or personal activity, it still needs to be emphasized by itself.

The practice of "doing good" is not confined to benevolence. We need to seek out opportunities to do good both toward those who are of "the household of faith" and those who are not (Gal. 6:10). Our reaping in this area will be in direct proportion to our sowing.

The Bible teaches that "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). One reason that this is true is because such giving often gets the giver personally involved.

One area of responsibility and opportunity has been virtually taken over by our "Bus Ministry" and its attendant ramifications of reward motivation and other appeals to the flesh.

We need to personally invite people to meetings (both saints and non-saints), offer to provide transportation, talk with them about the scriptures "by the way" (Lk. 24:32), take food to them or invite them into your home or to a restaurant for a meal. Look diligently for other ways to get personally involved in doing good to others, and thereby blessing yourself.

Like Paul, we may not stop some people from doing and saying things which they ought not, but they will

have to look elsewhere for excuses if we "cut off occasion from them which desire occasion."

An added reward is that we will stand justified before God, while those who seek such occasions will not.

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IN THE SHADOW OF THE TEMPLE

Emotionalism in Religion — Part 1

We are living in an emotional time. The well worn bumper sticker says "If it feels good do it." Eleven years ago Debbie Boone sang, "How can it be wrong, if it feels so right?" All of this is to say that we are a people that are governed by our emotions more than we are by our intellect all too often. The murder of six million Jews felt so right to many people. Joseph Stalin murdered 22 million human beings and it obviously felt right to him. Even our doctors of theology are now telling us that truth is relative so there is no absolute standard.

Society has taken different positions on emotions over the passing of time. American Gothic was significant of an era when one did not express any emotion. In the home the father was a marble statue and the mother could not smile because her corset was too tight. But if a past generation has been on one extreme our generation has been on the other. We have come to live by the vicissitudes of our feelings. Reason is now dominated by our feelings; rather than our feelings dominated by our reason. We are missing one basic premise that is causing homes to be destroyed, churches to slip and multitudes to go into religious error. That premise is, **EMOTIONS MUST ALWAYS BE ACCOUNTABLE TO THE FACULTIES OF THE HUMAN WILL AND REASON.**

When our emotions tell us one thing it is almost impossible for the mind to accept a fact no matter how plain or obvious it might be. When feelings of inferiority cause a person to feel worthless and hopeless it is almost impossible to make that person believe that God loves him. No matter how many passages one might read if they have deep seated inferiority feelings the objective truth will mean little to them. Why? They FEEL unworthy of God's love. Emotions are like a strong river. They have the potential of overflowing their banks and it is our responsibility to keep them within their boundaries.

The desire for emotions in religion is not new. Paul speaking about a very emotional middle eastern people said in 1 Cor. 1:22. "The Jew sought for a SIGN..." What the Greek world wanted was wisdom for the intellectual side of man but what the Jew wanted was an EXPERI-

ENCE. Think of the experiences that the Jew had been a party to in his history. The parting of the Red Sea had to be a great emotional experience. Think what it must have been like to have been paralyzed with fear as the army of Pharaoh came pressing down on the people while they were hemmed in by the Red Sea. Then to see Moses' rod become the Rod of God and the sea opened and they walked through while Pharaoh drowned. That was an emotional experience! What about the giving of the Law at Mt. Sinai? What about the day the sun stood still for Joshua? These and hundreds more created a history of bone chilling, spine tingling, and hair raising experiences for the nation of Israel. As the Hebrew writer talks about the giving of the Law in Heb. 12:21 you see emotional words like "full of fear and trembling." The Jew was looking for an emotional high in his religion.

How then are we to respond to the nature of our emotional society on one hand and the natural inclination of man to want an emotional religion on the other hand? To answer this question we must ask another question. How reliable are our emotions anyway? How good are we at deciphering the truth by our senses in the first place?

John tells us in 1 John 4:1-4, "believe not every spirit, but try the spirits." Why? Because he tells us that there are many false spirits that are not from God. This is directly parallel to what Paul told the Corinthians in 2 Cor 11:13, about "false apostles who are deceitful workers." He said that there is no wonder that these false apostles deceive everyone so well because the devil himself is disguised as an angel of light. The real hardball issue of truth is that we do not do very well discerning truth from error. And when we only use part of our being, the emotional part, we do very poorly and Satan takes advantage of that everyday.

Look at one man who had a very emotional experience and did not do very well discerning the truth and it cost him a lifetime of grief. Gen. 37:33-35 finds the jealous brothers of Joseph selling their younger brother into slavery. They take his coat and dip it in blood and show it to their father and let him draw his own emotional conclusion. "My son is dead." "Surely Joseph has been torn to pieces ... so Jacob tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and mourned for many days." His grief was so bad that he refused to be comforted. "I will go down to sheol in mourning for my son."

The question we want to ask is this, "should Jacob have trusted his emotions?" For years he lived in grief feeling that his son was dead. He wept over a lie. Those feelings were not based on fact. Because Satan is so good at deceiving us and because we are so easily deceived it does not behoove us to be content to follow what we are feeling. For the sake of our soul in eternity we need to build what we believe on objective, verifiable scripture that we can see and know it comes from the mind of God.

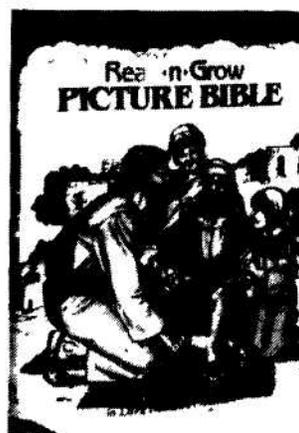
Notice the importance that the apostle Peter places on verifiable scripture from God as opposed to what he had witnessed first hand on the Mount of Transfiguration. In 2 Peter 1:16-18, Peter talks about an experience that no Pentecostal could match. He saw the Son of God trans-

figured into His glory right before his very eyes. It was such a life changing experience that he blurted out, "let us build three tabernacles..." What an experience! To be one of only three people in the history of mankind to see something like this certainly will mark you for life. But when Peter was making a defense that what he was writing to them was true he said, "We have not followed cunningly devised fables, but ..." He did not hang the truth of his message on the experience of what he saw, but rather on the "more sure word of prophecy that took place when the prophets spoke as they were carried along by the power of the spirit. To most people what could be better evidence that what he had experienced? Peter argued in this text that what the prophets said was in fact better evidence than what he had seen and heard! If that experience which was a very emotional experience was not good enough for Peter how could we be satisfied with so much less in the weight of the experience itself?

One of the greatest dangers in the world of religion is that of emotional subjectivism. One person says, "the Lord told me this..." and another says "the Lord told me that..." And we don't know who to believe because they both conflict. Too many believe because of what they perceive as private inside information. If private inside information is our standard in religion then whose feelings do we trust? Whose feelings and experiences are dependable? Whose emotions are leading us correctly? This attitude toward religious authority had caused a world of religion anarchy? This is the message that needs to be preached to the Pentecostal world.

In our next article we will deal with the question of "Why is this emotionalism so much a part of the Pentecostal religion?"

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Recent surveys show that the number of teenagers using cocaine and similar drugs is declining. That is the good news. Here is the bad news. "Alcohol remains the drug of choice among today's high school students, and its popularity continues unabated" (Time Magazine, 15 Feb. 1988, p. 94). Many parents are asking, "Why can't we keep our children from drinking?" The Time article—"When Parents Just Say No" — says "the job of protecting teenagers would be far easier if no-booze attitudes were established early on, and if they were bolstered in the schools. But the primary responsibility will always lie with parents." Ah, we the parents! That is where the root of the problem is. Not every time, but very often.

How are parents the problem? 1. Parents who drink are hypocrites when they tell their children not to drink. There is no moral authority and no fitting example in such a stance. It will not do to argue that drinking alcohol is an "adult privilege." That argument obscures the fact that ALCOHOL IS A DRUG. Is it a moral privilege to drug the mind? If it is an adult privilege and a moral right for an adult to drug the mind with alcohol, why not with cocaine or any other drug? Is it a moral privilege to do one but not the other — and that one, the right of adulthood? Parents can deceive themselves with such double talk and nonsense, but young people are too perceptive to find any moral force in such an approach.

2. Parents are the problem when they pretend they can "teach their children how to drink responsibly." How does a person drug his mind "responsibly" and "safely" for the fun of it? Such an act is neither responsible nor safe — ever. "I know parents who think nothing of buying a keg and having a party with the kids in the backyard," says a high school principal. Fathers who "share a beer" with their sons had just as well share a joint of marijuana or a snort of cocaine with them.

There is no morally defensible way to "supervise" drugging the mind for social and recreational purposes. Is man with his mental and moral faculties a mere animal to be toyed with and experimented with in such a fashion?

3. Permissive parents are afraid to say, "No," even when they disapprove. They are looking for a compromise and are skirting the real duties of a parent. True love requires that we draw firm lines between right and wrong, that we take the time to give instruction and explanation as well as rules, and that we follow up with balanced discipline when necessary. Such duties can be hard and painful, but we brought these children into the world and they have a God-given right to parental

guidance. We drew firm lines, explained why, and exercised discipline to teach them to stay out of the traffic when playing. We can and must go through the same process to teach them not to drug their minds with alcohol. When parents just say, "No," to some things, they show how much they love their children. Down deep, the children know it. They also know when that degree of love is missing.

Parents, especially fathers, are responsible to raise their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). To teach our children the dangers of alcohol and other drugs, let us begin by explaining that God created us all. All that we have and are — body, mind, and soul — belong to God for His service. God is the origin of all love, wisdom, and blessings. We embrace Him as our ultimate guide in life. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction" (Prov. 1:7). Our children need to see that God is the source of all that is good, right, safe, and helpful in life.

Next, we need to patiently teach our children what God said to warn against using alcohol, intoxicants, or drugs as a social and recreational drink. "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Prov. 20:1). Let's read to our children God's description of both the attraction and the folly of drinking (Prov. 23:29-35). Show them the progressive nature of the danger: from "**banquetings**" (social drinking or "drinking parties," N.A.S.), to "**revellings**" (intoxicated dancing, singing, shouting, etc.), to "**excess of wine**" (the drunken debauchery of alcoholics) — all mentioned in 1 Peter 4:3. Our children need to learn that God in His love has a good reason for warning us against intoxication: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8).

One of the greatest ways we can help our children is by being faithful Christians. If we have not obeyed the gospel, we need to start by believing the gospel enough to repent of our sins, to confess Christ as God's Son, and to be immersed in water for the remission of our sins through his blood (Matt. 26:28; Acts 2:38). Then we need to be steadfast in worshiping God as members of His church — we need to grow every day in His service (Acts 2:42; 2 Pet. 3:18). As our children share in Bible classes and worship services, they will develop the faith to better understand why we just say, "No," to alcohol.

A GIFT FOR ALL SEASONS

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES makes a fine gift at any season of the year. If you have been personally helped by reading it, then think of your children who have left home for college, military service, or marriage and jobs away from home. You would do them a favor to start them on wholesome reading material from faithful servants of God. How about it? Would that be worth \$9 a year to you?

Write Us: P.O. Box 69

Brooks, KY 40109

CHILDBEARING

**Dan Walters
Rt. 3, Box 379
Fletcher, NC 28732**

God in the beginning told our first parents to "Be fruitful and multiply in the earth" (Gen. 1:22). Children were recognized in the Bible history as blessings from God (Gen. 4:1; Ps. 127:3), and the inability to bear children was looked upon as a most unfortunate circumstance (11 Sam. 6:23; 1 Sam. 1:4-8), and was at times a punishment from God (Lev. 20:20). In the New Testament younger widows are told to marry and to bear children (1 Tim. 5:14). The Apostle Paul even teaches that women "shall be saved in child-bearing" (1 Tim. 2:15), not meaning that a woman must be able to bear a child in order to be saved, but that bearing children and rearing them is the most important work appointed to her by the Lord.

Most members of the Lord's church know that abortion is sinful, and they would not consider that alternative to child-bearing. But using artificial means of birth control to prevent having any children at all seems to have gained acceptance among us. It was not so in earlier days. Brother David Lipscomb wrote in his **Commentary on First Corinthians**: The habit of women preaching originated in the same hotbed with easy divorce, free love, birth control, repugnance to child-bearing and child rearing." (Comments on 1 Cor. 14:34).

I know of no Scriptural principle which would forbid the use of contraceptives for the sake of the mother's health of in order to prevent a family from having more children than they can support or care for. Roman Catholic doctrine, of course, forbids any use of them. But we must beware of going to the opposite extreme. One of the purposes of marriage, though not the sole one, is to bring children into the world. What right have healthy, young Christians to enjoy all other benefits of marriage and yet to refuse to accept the responsibility of bearing and rearing children? What motive, other than selfish-

ness, would compel normal, young married couples to make such a decision?

We might think that since the world is already well-populated it is now unnecessary to bring more children into the world. But there are Scriptural reasons why faithful Christians should desire children. One reason is that we will have the opportunity of molding their characters by bringing them up according to the teachings of Christ (Eph. 6:4; 11 Tim. 1:5; 3:15). We can usually have more influence over our own children than over any other human beings. If we help them to become strong Christians, we thus strengthen the church. Another reason why Christians should want children is in order that the men might someday become qualified to serve as elders in God's church (Titus 1:6). Yet another reason, perhaps not so important from a spiritual standpoint, is that one must have children in order to have grandchildren, and the Bible says that "Children's children are the crown of old men" (Pr. 17:6), and we might add that they are the crown of old women as well. A decision not to have children may be regretted most in old age.

There is such a thing as natural law in spite of Roman Catholic abuse of this principle (Rom. 1:26, 27; 2:14; 1 Cor. 11:14; Rom 1:31). When we deliberately choose to live our lives contrary to the course of nature, there is a penalty to be paid. At the very least, this involves a frustration and a dissatisfaction with life even when the real cause is unknown to the sufferer. To attempt to defeat or bypass nature's laws is to show contempt for God's grand design. And that design was drawn up with our own happiness in mind.

PAT ROBERTSON

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THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

Send all News Items to: Connie W. Adams, P.O. Box 69, Brooks, KY 40109

SCOTT VIFQUIAN, Route 6, Ford Drive, Mt. Washington, KY 40047 — For the past several years I have had the pleasure of working with some of God's people in the Bluegrass State, preaching the gospel on a "full-time" basis. I started out working with the church in Danville, KY for a year. I am indebted to Royce Chandler and Kelly Ellis for helping ground me in the faith as a young preacher.

After a year in Danville, I worked with the Goochtown church in

Lincoln County near Waynesburg, KY. After a short stay there I moved to Versailles, KY to work with the Camden Ave. church for seven years. From Versailles I moved to Mt. Washington, KY in Bullitt County to work with that church. I am thankful for the four years I have worked with them. Recently, I accepted an offer to work with the church in Campbellsville, KY. Lord willing, I plan to move there sometime this summer. I anticipate a good work with them.

ROBERT H. WEST, 1050 Remington Drive, Sunnyvale, CA 94087 — On June 1st, after seven and a half years here in Sunnyvale, I will be moving across town to work with the little group in Milpitas, CA, which is sandwiched between the northeast part of San Jose and the city of Fremont. From its beginning many years ago, the Milpitas group has identified with institutional brethren. In the last few years, however, the elders have refused to support the many brotherhood projects and opposed the social gospel. Some of the more liberal element there departed. The elders initiated contact with non-institutional churches and brethren in the area, recognizing that there had come to be very little difference in our convictions and practices. In September of last year, brother Homer Hailey held a meeting for them, at which time the elders made it clear publicly that they wished to be involved only in preaching truth and working as a congregation after the New Testament pattern. Brother Clyde Wilson, an elder of Santa Clara congregation, preached for them for a few months. Presently, brother Rick Amick, from Santa Clara is preaching there on Sunday mornings. Other area preachers and elders, including myself have preached and taught classes there from time to time. Carroll O. Smith and G. Dudley Stout are the capable elders. They have an adequate building with several class rooms in an excellent location. Milpitas is a rapidly-growing area in "Silicon Valley" and opportunities for increase abound. Some members from various congregations who live in the area have already placed membership there and others are planning to go there to help. My support has been assured by Sunnydale and other area churches. F. David Moyer is now working with the Sunnydale congregation.

If you know of brethren or other folks in south Fremont, north San Jose or Milpitas whom we could contact, please let us know. The building address is 450 Wool Drive, Milpitas, CA 95035. Phone: (408) 262-4646.

ERNEST ROBERTS, c/o Central Post Office — General Delivery, Roseau, Dominica, W. Indies — We have just completed our fourth year in Dominica. We have preached in several villages and the Capital city. There are now two conservative congregations and a third one has just begun. When brother Ed Garraway moves to the Castle Bruce-Good Hope area on the east coast of the island in June, the new work will receive a boost.

Since January I have been working with the church at St. Joseph apart from my work with the church at Goodwill in the Capital city. The St. Joseph brethren left the liberal church last year after reading the **Dominican Exhorter** and after I had some discussions with their preacher. The Exhorter is a small bi-weekly paper published by Gary Henry and Steve Gwinn in the U.S. and sent to us for mailing to both liberal and conservative brethren in Dominica. Gary Henry preached our Gospel Meeting the second week of May. Mike Vickery of Ocean Springs, MS came with Gary.

PREACHER AVAILABLE

JERRY SAYRE, Rt 7 Box 100, Seymour, IN 47274 — I am 43 years old. I have been preaching for 23 years. I am married and have two children, one still at home. I have been at Seymour for six years and feel it is time to move on. I am available to move at anytime.

PREACHERS NEEDED

BRADENTON, FLORIDA — The West Bradenton Church of Christ, 1619 10th Avenue West, Bradenton, FL 33505 is looking for a faithful gospel preacher.

NEW BREMEN, OHIO — The church in New Bremen, Ohio is in need of a preacher. We are a small congregation with just 24 in attendance. We are located in an area where a church has never existed before. We have been in existence for six years and have made some good progress in the area. We need a man that can bring the majority of his support. We can provide \$300 - \$400 per month. Those interested may contact Walt Hazelwood at (419) 629-2171 or write to him at P.O. Box 54, New Bremen, OH 45869.

COOKEVILLE, TENNESSEE — The church meeting at Jere Whitson Street is seeking a full-time, mature and experienced evangelist. We are a group of 80 or more with members of all ages. Full support is available including a three bedroom brick home. Cookeville is rated as the least expensive place to live by the U.S. Chamber of

Commerce and one of the ten best small cities for retirees in the U.S. by Rand McNally. Contact Wayne Stewart, Route 4, Box 280, Cookeville, TN 38501. Phone: (615) 528-2738.

FORT BRAGG, CALIFORNIA — The congregation of 20 members in Mendocino County on the north coast of California, seeks a sound preacher who has partial support. Interested parties may obtain more information by writing to Church of Christ, P. O. Box 2, Fort Bragg, CA 95437.

ROUND LAKE BEACH, ILLINOIS — The Hainesville Rd. Church of Christ (located approximately 45 miles north of Chicago) will be needing a full-time preacher as of August of this year. This is a self-supporting congregation of 80-90 members. At the present there is no eldership. Those interested may write to: Church of Christ, 1109 Hainesville Rd., Round Lake Beach, IL 60073. Call: Dick Anderson (312) 662-8621, Don Neave (312) 367-7113, Arne Paulsen (312) 356-7657 or Dale Sindt (312) 223-5102.

PORTLAND, MAINE — After two years I am returning to our home in Harrington, MB June 1st. Bruce Hudson is leaving Milbridge at the end of the school year. I will resume work with the church there. I came to Portland when the preacher for the only conservative church in this section defected to the institutional church in So. Portland, taking the majority of the church with him. We now have 8 members, with a few visitors who attend regularly.

Portland is the most strategic spot in the state. One fourth of the one million population of the state live in commuting distance of Portland. There is a sound church 1 1/4 hours to the north and another the same distance to the south. We need a man to move here to work with the small group. Support will have to come from outside, although we may be able to help raise it. Write to the church at P.O. Box 822, Portland, ME 04104 or call (207) 799-0720. — R. C. Smart, Sr., 18 Claries Rd., Elizabeth, ME 04107.

RADIO PROGRAM

Readers on the West Coast will be interested to know that **Tommy L. McClure** of Antioch, CA has a radio program called BIBLE TRUTH. He can be heard on KPLA Radio (770 on AM dial) on Sundays at 9:30 a.m. This is a 50,000 watt clear channel station.

PROJECT HELP

In the next few months PROJECT HELP will be conducting seminars in various cities throughout the U.S. PROJECT HELP is a company formed to help preachers learn how to better handle their finances. There is NO COST to anyone. The Seminar is not designed to sell anything nor to obligate you in any way. THE SEMINAR IS FREE.

Subjects to be discussed will be: (1) Our duty to material things according to the Scriptures, (2) Building a budget that works and buying habits, (3) Social security and the preacher, (4) Preparing for your family's future, should you die unexpectedly, (5) Retirement and (6) Record keeping and income tax.

During the seminar the preacher will learn how to legally reduce his taxable income. If he desires to become exempt from Social Security, he will be advised of the requirements, benefits and deficits of such action and will be assisted in doing so if he so chooses. Also, the present and future status of the church in the eyes of the IRS will be discussed. Preachers will be told of the current laws affecting the church's tax status and will be assisted in filing, when necessary, for tax exempt status.

If you do not see a city near you, contact PROJECT HELP, Route 1 Box 293A, Houston, MS 38851 or call (601) 456-4624.

SEMINARS: Atlanta (June 7), Memphis (June 30) and Dallas (July 19).

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS 196
RESTORATIONS 35

(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)