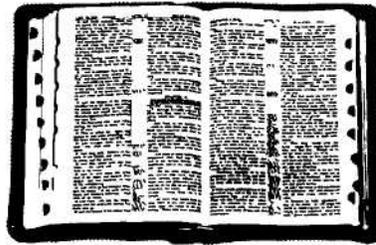


SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

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



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

"DEVOTED TO THE SEARCH FOR DIVINE TRUTH"

VOLUME XXX

OCTOBER, 1989

NUMBER 10

THINK ON THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 1631
Lutz, FL 33549



"THEY HAVE REJECTED ME"

The history of Israel is the history of a people in constant rejection of their God. Generation after generation the children of Israel rejected God's word, God's blessings, and God's promises. We are amazed to see that the people of God under the prophets never learned from their mistakes. The same is true today. People never seem to learn the lesson of obeying God by witnessing the failures and heartaches of former generations.

When Samuel became an old man and his sons did not rule honestly and righteously in Israel, the people came to Samuel and said: "Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the Lord. And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them" (1 Sam. 8: 5-7).

It is a serious charge to be accused of rejecting God, but that charge was made by the Lord Himself. We can be sure the same charge is made against us when we commit an act like that of Israel. There are three clear acts of rejection God outlined in the Old Testament.

1. **They rejected God's government.** Before this time God had judged Israel by judges selected by Himself. Samuel had been the spokesman for God and had guided the people in God's way. Now that the sons of Samuel were taking his place and were not leading the

people in the right way, they were demanding a change in the system of government. A different **kind** of government was not what was needed; they needed to put righteous men in the place of the wicked ones. Often today, because elders do not "rule well" or because they are not qualified for the work, churches want to change the government of the local church instead of getting qualified men in the place of unqualified men. Any change of government is the same act of Israel in demanding a king and thus "rejecting" God.

2. **They rejected God's word.** A rejection of God's form of government nearly always leads to a rejection of His word regarding other matters. The substitute rulers will make new laws and regulations and to suit them-selves rather than to conform to the law of the Lord. The first king given to Israel in their rejecting God's government was Saul. Samuel told him when he was made king to "hearken thou unto the voice of the word of the Lord" (1 Sam. 15: 1). He was sent to destroy "utterly" all the Amalekites and slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass" (1 Sam. 15: 3). Saul's work was clearly outlined for him. There could be no mistake about what God had ordered him to do. But what did God's word mean to this man who was occupying a position in rule that the people, not God wanted? Saul went about his work and "utterly destroyed all the people." BUT—here is the big word —" But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them..." (1 Sam. 15: 9). Saul took matters into his own hands. He made himself the judge of what should be destroyed and what should be saved. He decided what was "good."

When he returned and met Samuel he assured him that "I have performed the commandment of the Lord" (1 Sam. 15: 13). Many think that if they do some little thing that the Lord tells them to do, they have "obeyed the commandment of the Lord." But Samuel informed Saul that he had not obeyed the Lord (vs. 19). Instead he had done evil in the sight of the Lord. Samuel said to Saul: "Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king" (vs. 23). Let us learn this lesson from Saul.

3. They rejected God's promises. God has promised to bless Israel if they would keep his commandments, but because they did not believe his promises, they failed to obey him. Many are doing the same thing today.

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VOLUME 30 OCTOBER, 1989 NUMBER 10

*Published Monthly at
BROOKS, KENTUCKY*

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

CONNIE W. ADAMS, Editor

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

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Editorial

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A RETURN VISIT TO NORWAY

"How can one find adequate language to convey in writing the delights of this northern land of forests, lakes, mountains, valleys and fjords. And how many delights are there to be discovered when we return. Painters have painted its beauties, poets have sung its praises, and writers have written about its glories. Yet each of them individually and all of them collectively cannot convey the true portrait of this splendid land." (TERRY PLANT, *Viking Journey To Happiness*, p. 123)

With mixed emotions we spent two weeks on vacation in Norway in August. It was the first trip for Bobby. But for me it was a return to familiar scenes which stirred many memories. It had been thirty-two years since that September day in 1957 when our ship rounded a bend in the fjord and there sprawled out in the valley and up the sides of seven mountains, lay Bergen, one of the most beautiful cities in all the world. With us were William and Pearl Kickliter (business people who came to stay only two months but to help us make a start), and Mary Russell who remained with us for eight months and rendered valuable service. I was twenty-seven years old, lacking two weeks and my wife, Bobbie (known to her parents and Fulton, Kentucky friends as Barbara Rose) was six months pregnant when we arrived. Wilson, our first-born son arrived on December 29, 1957.

We went to Norway to make a start in the work of the gospel. We found Norway under a state religion-Lutheranism. We met a friendly people who were kind to us in many ways. But we found them to be more worshippers of nature than of nature's God. The work was slow and hard and still is. We began from square one. We had no song books, tracts, literature of any kind in the language. We had to learn a new language, find a place to live, a place to meet for public services and do what we could to let people know why we had come. Through the providence of God doors were opened and we were able to make a small beginning. In two years we had baptized 6. When we left, two other preachers had come to work and we left them in the field. Mason and Louise Harris came in the summer of 1958 and in the summer of 1959, Bill and Mary Lou Pierce came. The Harrises stayed five years in all and the Pierces stayed seven years. Others were converted in Bergen and the Pierces moved down to Stavanger and began the work there. Others who worked there included Joe Pruett and family, James C. Jones and family, Tommy Thornhill and family and the

Bob Tuten family.

In 1968, Tom and Shirley Bunting and three sons moved to Norway. They stayed two years the first time. Then in 1980 they returned to Bergen and are still there with a total now of over 11 years in the work. They are much at home in Norway. They have three sons who preach the gospel and two of them are now at work in Norway, Terrell in Bergen and Don in Stavanger. Terrell and Karen have two children and Don and Cami have three. Both of these men learned Norwegian as children and speak the language fluently. We heard both of them preach in Norwegian, and then translate for themselves into English for those present who could not understand Norwegian.

Through the years the work has been difficult at best. There have been some tragic disappointments. After the Thornhills came home, the Norwegian members left to carry on the work proved to be unreliable and the well-located meeting place, which the church owned, was lost by default of payments. Valuable teaching materials which took years of work and much expense, were lost. All furnishings were lost, chairs, tables, classroom equipment, Bibles and song books. This left the church in a bad light in the community. When Tom and Shirley Bunting came back in 1980, it was like starting all over again. It has taken much work and unbelievable patience to do what has been done. Some of the earlier converts are now dead. Some moved out of the country for work elsewhere. Sadly, some have fallen away.

The Work in Bergen Now

So far as I know, Tom and Shirley Bunting plan to stay in Norway. Their work has been long and hard and above all, faithful to the Lord. Their convictions are strong. They are resolute in purpose. When personal support fell below the needed level, Shirley found a job teaching school, which she continues to do. After losing \$800 a month, Tom has found it necessary to do the same for them to survive and continue the work he is doing there. He would rather have all his time free for the work but is willing to spend and be spent for the cause of Christ. They are good, deserving people and have every right to be fully supported for their work. Not many are willing to do what they are doing. Are there not some who can help them?

The cost of living in Norway is extremely high. Gasoline is over \$4 a gallon. Food and housing costs are high. There is a new Burger King in Bergen where you can treat yourself to a hamburger, fries and soft drink - all for \$9! Last year Tom paid 36% of his income in taxes to the government there. They have bought a modest two bedroom apartment.

Terrell and Karen plan to spend their lives in Norway. They are well adjusted to life and work there. At the present, Terrell has adequate support. That can suddenly change, as anyone dependent on support from several places well knows. They have also bought a small but adequate apartment.

On Sunday morning in Bergen, there were 15 present, including two American tourists. The Norwegian members, except for one man who is presently unemployed, are young people who are students and thus

have very little income. One young man, who was baptized in Pasadena, Texas by Chuck Durham, plans to prepare himself for preaching the gospel. We were much impressed with him. The contribution is enough to provide their own meeting place, conduct a telephone message each day, and pay for a weekly notice in the newspaper about their meeting time. They get 60-100 calls each week for their phone messages and while we were there, picked up a new student for the Bible correspondence course. On Sunday morning a middle-aged man and wife attended for the second time (they came the week before). This is from the correspondence course. The Buntings have gone all over Norway to find people who have taken the Bible course. On Sunday night, it was my privilege to speak to the small church.

The Work in Stavanger

In Stavanger where Don and Cami Bunting work, there are a few American members who are there because of the oil strikes in the North Sea. At one time there were 50-60 in attendance. Now, there are about 15 in all. There are two Norwegian members. The contributions of the members at Stavanger have been such that they have been able to support a preacher there. But the brethren there have to be careful to make an effort to slant the work toward reaching the Norwegian people and not just keep house for Americans temporarily in Norway who find it easy to insulate themselves from the native people. Don and Cami and their three boys have well adapted themselves to life in Norway. It was a pleasure to speak on Sunday morning and to spend several hours with some of the brethren discussing the work.

It is difficult for those of us who live in areas where there are a number of congregations in easy reach and within them many members with numerous talents to use, to fully appreciate how lonely and frustrating it can be at times for those who live in the outreaches of the world. Yet, we heard no complaining nor did we see any evidence of feeling sorry for themselves. They have burned bridges behind them, made choices such as few are willing to make, and quietly and humbly go about their work from day to day, trusting the Lord to give the harvest. There is a new generation in Norway now. Many of the old religious indifferences persist, coupled with many of the attendant evils of affluence. Morals leave much to be desired. Crime is becoming more prevalent. The state church has stifled the spirit of many of the people. It impedes the work of the gospel in many ways. While the government guarantees religious freedom, the dissenter laws are such that before one can leave the state church and associate himself as a member of any other religious connection, he must notify the Lutheran priest, who in turn exerts pressure to prevent such a change.

Like the church at Philadelphia, the small churches in Bergen and Stavanger have "a little strength" and who knows but what there is set before them an open door. It is not easy for an American preacher to gain entry into Norway to live now. But the Buntings are there. Bjorn Rigsdal is there. There are a few others whose names would not be known to brethren here, who

are faithful. These brethren deserve our prayers and support.

And in this land is the peace of dreams Peace cool and welcome as the summer rain Over the lofty hills, or as icy streams Threading the green valleys or the gentle plain Peace all enfolding as the sky and sand Enfolding the beauty of this splendid land. But far more beautiful than the glaciers, the majestic mountains, the picturesque villages, the cascading waterfalls, or the penetrating fjords where every turn opens vistas with a thousand marvels to the eye, or the brilliant colors of the summer flowers — far more beautiful than all of this which the hand of God has wrought, is the faith, courage and devotion which has flowered in the hearts of these few noble Christians who are sounding out the word of the Lord in the land of the midnight sun.

Do you want to do something that will lift the spirits of these good people? Why not write a letter of encouragement to the Buntings and ask them how you might contact one of the Norwegian Christians to speak a word of cheer? Will you do it? If so, here are some addresses:

Tom Bunting
Adolf Bergsvei, 52D
5030 Landaas
Norway

Terrell Bunting
Bronndalen 89
5070 Loddefjord
Norway

Don Bunting Sivblom
37 Stavanger, Norway

SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO H.E. PHILLIPS

The September 7, 1989 edition of **GUARDIAN OF TRUTH** is a collection of articles in tribute to the life and work of H.E. Phillips former editor of this paper, and presently our front page writer. It is well deserved. Since many of our readers have been familiar with brother Phillips and his work for many years, we wanted you to know about this. It would be a nice item to keep. Single copies of **GUARDIAN OF TRUTH** are .70. Write to: **GUARDIAN OF TRUTH, P.O. BOX 9670, Bowling Green, KY 42101.**

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ANTIOCH — THE POWER OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

Learning is an intriguing process by which the mind is informed. There are many ways to learn, to acquire knowledge and develop skill, but the most proficient tool of learning is, and has always been, demonstration. Let's illustrate.

Other than micro-wave popcorn and the wheel the greatest invention of modern times has to be the computer. As words and phrases dance on the screen to the tune of the keyboard this incredible machine organizes, rearranges and spits out the finished product with amazing rapidity. Yet, learning how to operate this technological marvel, well... that took some doing. (You see, I'm one of those guys who has trouble comprehending the directions on how to put stuff together that comes in cereal boxes!) My computer came with three notebooks of information that I needed to learn in order to gain the knowledge to operate it correctly. Do you know what all of that did for me? Nothing. I learned through demonstration.

That's exactly the way God seeks to impact knowledge to you and me. Look at Romans 5: 8, "**But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.**" God didn't drop leaflets from the sky telling about his love but, rather, He demonstrated it in the person of Jesus Christ (John 3: 16). There is no substitute for demonstration when it comes to learning (Phil. 4: 9).

The same principle holds true when it comes to the New Testament church. It's one thing for God to say, "This is what I want the church to be..." and another to say, "Here is a group of saints doing what I have in mind, follow them!" This is exactly the scene when we survey the church at Antioch. Antioch affords us the opportunity of looking at a New Testament congregation at work on the inside. We see what they did, how they functioned and thereby gain a glimpse of how God is glorified when a church performs according to divine specifications.

Commitment to Greater Service

After reading Acts 11: 19-30 and 13: 1-3 one can only imagine the thrill of being a member at Antioch. These Christians were alive to the call of God. Baptisms, studies in the Word, folks bringing other folks to the Lord were not the exception but the rule. I have a feeling that the Antioch disciples didn't drag in late and then hustle out the door as soon as services were over. Here were people that looked forward to the times when they

could be together. Periods of worship were not exercises in boredom but, rather, were times of refreshment in which souls were renewed and spiritual passion restored. (I doubt they sang, "To the Work" with the enthusiasm of sorghum molasses. What do you think?) Nothing is more exciting and magnetic than a congregation on the cutting edge of its collective potential. And that's exactly where Antioch was! They had gifted teachers, enthusiasm, conversions, a great program of work and a deep level of spiritual commitment. And then God interrupts...

Focus in on Acts 13: 2. Luke records that, "**while they were ministering to the Lord and fasting...**" In the midst of growth and multiplication, teaching and instruction, praying and preaching, "**the Holy Spirit said...**" This was a day of direct divine inspiration. The Spirit gave specific instructions, "**Set apart for Me Barnabus and Saul for the work to which I have called them.**" Herein is contained two vital principles much needed among churches today: (1) the WHO: **The principle of utilizing everyone's talent for the greatest good.** And, (2) the WHY: **The principle of using wisdom in starting new congregations.** Let's look at the latter first.

Starting New Churches — Knowing When

In Acts 1: 8 our Lord lays out His blueprint for the spread of the Gospel, "... **you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.**" By Acts 13 the story of the resurrected Savior had been told throughout Jerusalem and into the hills of both Judea and Samaria. But the rest of the Roman world lay unconquered for Christ. From the beginning God had a global vision for the Gospel (Isaiah 2: 2), and now the Antioch church would be His instrument in bringing that to reality. It would be from Antioch that Paul and Barnabus would go out to tell the Story and thereby establish new communities of believers. It would be to Antioch that they would return. Antioch served as God's gateway to the rest of the world.

But note the order. First, the Lord worked to build up the Antioch body itself. It was only when the local church had shown that it was committed to growth, was maximizing its opportunities and carrying out its responsibilities that the Spirit of God led these saints to look beyond their doorstep to the harvest in distant lands.

God did not move into the remotest parts of the earth until the Antioch church was where it needed to be! Question. What if this church was dependent upon the work of Paul and Barnabus and God took them away? No doubt, such would have left these first generation Christians discouraged and demoralized. But God did not do that. He waited until Antioch had a broad base of leadership, the church was well established, had financial means and had shown spiritual maturity... and then He moved.

The point is simple: **You don't begin new congregations by making cripples out of established ones!** How many times have you seen it happen? Brethren have split, splintered and swarmed in order to start a new church (sometimes involving those who are to-

tally unprepared to assume the reins of leadership and motivation) and in so doing leave the congregation they left in disarray. And now what do you have? Rather than one church reaching its potential, being self-supporting, carrying on a vibrant teaching program with qualified instructors and generating enthusiasm in the community; now you have two churches both of which are struggling. That is the very opposite of what we see in the pattern of Antioch. Here were brethren sensitive to the will and wisdom of God. We must be, too.

Seeing the Vision of Greatest Service

Note verse 2, "I have called them..." God was specific in whom He wanted. Herein lies another major principle to be utilized in the local church: God does not want everyone doing the same work! God did not want everyone running off to the remotest parts of the world. God wanted Paul and Barnabus to go; He wanted Simeon, Lucius and Manaen to stay home.

Not everyone needs to go to China, India and central Africa. How do I know that? Because the Lord took two and left three! Your vision of greater service may be in your own back yard, in the place where you work, among your neighbors and friends. God wants you and me to operate in the place that we are the most effective. That's exactly why He wanted three men to stay at home.

Sometimes we think that in order to best serve Him we must do the big things, the great, the noticeable. The truth is that He is glorified to as great a degree when we learn the secret of serving in the closet of obscurity. "Be ye faithful in a few things," said the Master, "and I will reward you with many things."

God never intended everyone to do the same thing. Not everyone needs to be a preacher. How many men have tried to preach without the ability only to grow discouraged and sometimes bitter? Many. Someone should have pointed out the Antioch principle that says, "Yes, you have talent but you need to maximize it in the area where you are most effective." That may mean staying with a secular job, teaching friends and through the years developing your potential in a local church. That may be the greatest area of effectivity for you. If so, God is just as glorified in your work at home as he is in the man who launches out for the mission field. Paul and Barnabus left to preach in distant places. Simeon, Lucius and Manaen stayed behind. It was God's plan. It still is today.

SINCERE WORDS

"The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth (Ecc. 12:10)."

Dick Blackford

P.O.Box 83
Tuckerman, Arkansas 72473



EPAPHRODITUS (I)

MY BROTHER

Epaphroditus was the one chosen to carry the offering from Philippi in Macedonia (northern Greece) all the way to Paul who was imprisoned in Rome. This was an 800 mile journey and would have taken about 6 weeks in the first century. Having ministered to Paul at Rome, Epaphroditus was handed the manuscript of the Philippian letter and he served as a courier to carry it back to the mountains of Macedonia - again taking 6 weeks to go 800 miles. Most of us wouldn't do that for just anybody.

His Name

The name Epaphroditus is interesting. Whereas a lot of New Testament names have caught on and have become names we give our children today (Matthew, Mark, Stephen, Mary, etc.), Epaphroditus never caught on!

It was a common name in the Greek speaking world of the New Testament. It was a pagan name related to the Greek goddess of sensual pleasure, Aphrodite (the Romans called her Venus). This name meant that either he or his family had been devoted to the worship of Aphrodite (from which we get our word **aphrodisiac**, a drug or other agent that supposedly increases sensual desire).

It is interesting that the church did not suggest or require that he change his name, considering the significance men often attach to names. But they were not so interested in the name he possessed as in the faith he practiced. It is good to know that the church was not filled with cranks who wanted to major in minors, always marching to the anthem of the marginal and raising the flag of the inconsequential. Though there may be names of cities and places today that have had false religious significance in the past, we are not held accountable for their former significance.

"My Brother" (Phil. 2: 25)

The possessive pronoun "my" goes with each of the three word designation—my brother, my fellow-worker, my fellow-soldier. It is easy to skip over these and yet they are replete with instruction for they describe his personal commitment to Christ. His first designation deals with his relationship in the family of God — my brother. This phrase is likely to trip off the tongue so quickly and easily that we lose its significance because we are famous for calling one another brother (or sister). Yet, it is biblical. In fact, 133 times in the New Testament Paul calls someone "brother" in the Lord.

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The Greek word **adelphos** gives us the name of Philadelphia (city of brotherly love). But literally, in its root it means someone who came from the same womb, someone who shares the very roots of life with someone else. When Paul used the word **brother**, he was willing to say that he and Ephroditus shared the very roots of spiritual life together. There was no closer possible association or word of warmth and affection that could describe their relationship.

What About Us?

When you refer to brother _____ does it conjure up this meaning or has it become a mere formality or tradition? Is it a habit that is commonplace? Brethren, we are members of the same family. We share the very roots of life. This was a radical thing. It meant Paul and Epaphroditus had crossed national, racial, language, cultural, and religious barriers to call one another "brother." Paul being a Jew, Epaphroditus being a Greek, was enough to separate them right there. **Racially**, here was a Jew and Gentile. **Religiously**, one was a Pharisee who literally would not have wanted a Gentile's shadow to fall upon him and who was prohibited as a kosher Jew from going into the house of an unclean Gentile. **Linguistically**, here was a Hebrew of Hebrew whose principle language was Hebrew, and the other whose main language was koine Greek. Their differences were enormous. Here were two men with all the major differences that could separate two men. When you add the fact that Epaphroditus was from a pagan city and bore the name of a pagan goddess, only the power of God could so transform them that Paul could call him "my brother." That is exactly what happened when they obeyed the gospel! It is the power of God (Rom. 1: 16). We need to understand that nothing of this kind was going on anywhere else in the first century Roman world.

The Significance Of The Term "Brother"

We use the word "brother" in many ways — physical brother, fraternity brother, lodge brother, union brother. But there is nowhere that the word has the significance as it does in the family of God, the church — if we mean it when we call someone brother. It dives right down into that remarkable passage in Mark 3: 24-35 where Jesus' mother and brethren came seeking him because, literally, they thought he had lost his mind. When he was told that his mother and brethren were there, he gestured to the crowd and said "those that are doing the will of God are my brother and sister, and mother."

This indicates there are no closer ties **in life** than those that bind us together in the family of the faithful. This is what Paul meant when he called Epaphroditus "my brother." Think about that the next time you use the word "brother."

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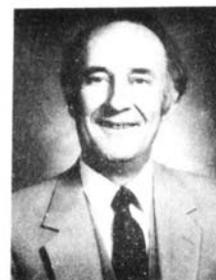
WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

Send all questions to:

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REBAPTISM

QUESTION: Were those that were baptized under John's baptism required to be baptized again after the day of Pentecost?

ANSWER: The Bible does not specifically answer this question. There is no indication that any of those who were baptized under John's baptism before the cross were re-baptized.

Acts 2: 41 seems to suggest that there was a company of believers who comprised the church before the 3000 were baptized. This company or number was the apostles and, perhaps, those of the 120 mentioned in Acts 1: 15. God would have set them into the church. Just as Adam and Eve began by a special creation, and all living persons subsequently came into existence by the law of procreation, in like-manner the church began on Pentecost by a special, spiritual creation, and all those following enter it by spiritual procreation.

The passage states in Acts 2: 41: "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." You will notice that those baptized were "added unto them" — the "them" being the church. The "them" were baptized, but not on Pentecost. Rather, they had been baptized under John's baptism (Mk. 1: 4-5; Lk. 7: 29-30; Jn. 4: 1-2).

It is granted that the words "unto them" are in italics, meaning they are supplied by the translators, but they are implied, it seems. Thayer says of the word **prostithemi** (added in v. 41), "to add, i. e. join to, gather with any company, the number of one's followers or companions" (p. 549). Arndt and Gingrich state, "of persons who are added to a group already existing, or who are attached to an individual to whom they henceforth belong" (p. 726). The NIV translates Acts 2: 41: "Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day."

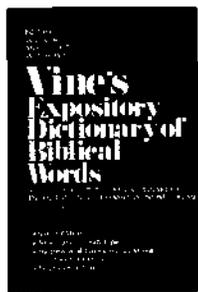
On the other hand, some contend that all those baptized before the cross had to be re-baptized in the name of Christ. Gareth Reese (Christian Church) wrote: "The words 'unto them' are not in the Greek. Our translators have understood this verse to say that the 3000 who were converted on the day of Pentecost were added unto the number already following Christ (the Twelve and the 120). What the Greek tells us is that the 3000 were joined together into a community, a society. It does

not say they were added to the church, for there was no church until this beginning was made" (**Acts, p. 66**).

I disagree with Reese for several reasons. (1) Thayer's and Arndt & Gingrich's definition of "add." (2) Several translators thought "unto them" or "number" should be included in the translation, such as KJV, ASV, NIV, NEB, Weymouth and Williams. (3) There is no record of Apollos, who knew only the baptism of John, being re-baptized. Aquila and Priscilla took Apollos and taught him the way of God more perfectly (Acts 18: 26), but no mention of baptism. It is possible that "the way of God more perfectly" included baptism, but we would have to assume it. Apparently, Apollos had been baptized under John's baptism when it was valid (before the cross), hence, he just needed to be corrected in some of his teaching. However, those 12 disciples at Ephesus (Acts 19: 1-5) who had been baptized under John's baptism had to be re-baptized in the name of Christ because they were baptized unto John's baptism after it had been superseded by the baptism of the Great Commission. (4) According to the divine record, those baptized on Pentecost were not the apostles, but only those who heard the preaching of Peter and the apostles.

My feeling toward this question is about like R. L. Whiteside who said, "But I never give much thought to questions that affect neither our faith nor our practice. If anyone wishes to argue that all of John's disciples were re-baptized, he has an open field. None of John's disciples are now living! so what good can come of arguing the matter. As John's baptism is not now in force, and all the people that either accepted or rejected John's baptism are now dead, I cannot see that we would be any worse off if we could not answer any of these questions — But, of course, we all like to know as much as we can about the Bible" (**Reflections, p. 240**).

Whether John's disciples were or were not re-baptized, Jesus tells us to be baptized "in (into) the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 28: 19). This is a relationship into which we are baptized and it is also for salvation (Mk. 16: 16) and the remission of sins (Acts 2: 38).



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**WHERE DO YOU STAND ON
DIVORCE — A RESPONSE**

**Dudley Ross Spears
2061 Old Scottsville Road
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It is never easy to differ with good friends, and excellent students of the word, but the article from Ken Green in this journal (August 1989, pages 10-11) calls for a response. I appreciate brother Green very much, but after reading his thoughts on divorce I am left with a huge question mark. Thankfully, the editor added his comments to the effect that the question of divorce is not one that defies understanding, for no such conclusion would have been drawn from the bare statements of brother Green. Please give some thought to a response to brother Green's views.

His opening paragraph quotes the late Sir Winston Churchill that much has been based on very little with so many unsettling consequences - and Ken applied this to the multitude of published statements on the sensitive question of divorce. He is right that the Lord has not revealed nearly as much as brethren have written on the issue, but the differences are not produced by what has been revealed. From his remarks, I was fearfully and reluctantly led toward a view that the divorce question is so hazy and unclear that it is beyond the realm of possibility to ever fully know the truth on it. It is really difficult to think that Ken Green, or any other faithful man, would believe that, but whether he does or not, his words led me to think that he does not have a clear and full grasp of what Jesus Christ requires on the topic of divorce. If Ken is right it would seem that the blame for the confusion that exists is the Lord's failure to provide us the right answers.

Brother Green pictures the question of divorce as one of "black ball first, and study the issue later." I know of no man among faithful brethren who has ever even hinted that such be done. Because we do not agree on various aspects of what constitutes a marriage, a divorce, a scriptural second marriage, is in no way to blame for the lack of clarity on the issue of divorce. Yet, that is what kept standing out more clearly the longer I read the article. The same things said of divorce could be said of just about any Bible topic. Take baptism for the remission of sins. Must the water be running in a stream, should the candidate be immersed face forward or backward, just how much must the candidate understand at the moment of immersion, and a million other questions follow in the wake of plain and fundamental teaching on the subject. This should not cause us, however, to minimize the importance of standing solidly for immersion for the remission of sins, and against any humanly devised opinion on the issue.

Why are there so many divergent views? Why do good and honorable men among faithful brethren differ, often

very radically, on divorce and the consequences? Why cannot we come to some solid ground of agreement on the issue of divorce? Brother Green posits that we cannot because we cannot find the answers. Reluctantly, I note that this has been a sectarian appeal for all my conscious life. It might be good to test that position.

1. Can we understand what a marriage is? If we take all of the Lord's revealed teaching and stop we can. Does anyone disagree? A marriage is the joining together of two eligible individuals into a relationship called "one flesh." This is God's divine ordinance that is to last as long as the two live. We may get no closer to the precise point at which the marriage exists as we do the precise point when sins are remitted from one who is being immersed in water, but surely we can recognize a scriptural marriage from an adulterous relationship.

2. Can we understand what a divorce is? We can if we take the teaching revealed in the New Testament and stop. Jesus spoke of divorce as "putting away." The dissolution of a marriage is a divorce and rather than ferret out the precise point at which the marriage exists no more, we surely can recognize when a divorce has taken place. Just because there is a difference of views among us over what takes place after the divorce should not keep us from recognizing the plain fact of what a divorce is. And, we ought to be able to see the difference in a scriptural divorce and one that is not scriptural.

3. Can we understand what adultery is? If we take divinely revealed principles and stop we should have very little problem. Adultery is the corruption of a marriage relationship. It happens, according to the Savior, when either of the parties in a marriage are sexually unfaithful to the other. Does brother Green agree that we can understand clearly what marriage is, what divorce is, and what adultery is and recognize them when they all three exist? If so, and if we will limit our thoughts to what is revealed clearly, we will avoid the problems he sees.

It is true that great and good men have admitted the difficulties in the marriage and divorce problem. They have certainly reached different conclusions. I think it is sad, however, for brother Green to affirm that there is not a man on earth with whom he fully agrees on this issue. And once more, reluctantly, I note this is another sectarian appeal most have heard when trying to convert someone from a human denomination. Several years ago, I heard brother Connie Adams, editor of this journal, make a statement with which everyone of us ought to fully agree. He affirmed that there are three categories of people who have a divine right to marry — (1) Two single people, (2) Two people where one or both of them have been the innocent party in a divorce involving fornication, and (3) Two people whose mates have passed on to their reward. He concluded that beyond that he knew of no divine right granted to anyone for a second marriage. I don't know if Ken agrees with that fully, but I can truthfully state that I do.

Brother Green includes the variety of different views on the marriage and divorce issue with differences on a Christian participating in governmental affairs involving war and law enforcement. The so-called "war ques-

tion" ought to be studied carefully, but to put it in the same class as marriage, divorce, and adultery is not possible. The war question, or participation in civil government is not even handled in the same manner divorce is in Scripture. Paul specified adultery as grounds of congregational excommunication. God expressed His divine hatred of divorce (Malachi 2: 16). Nothing even remotely like that is ever applied to governmental participation by God's people. Someone might call a soldier or a policeman a murderer, but it is pure assumption that a law enforcement official is committing the sin of killing in taking a life in the line of duty. Is it an assumption that one is guilty of adultery who marries someone who has been divorced for fornication, or for that matter, for any other reason? Surely not.

Brother Green has made a serious mistake, as I see it, in regard to Romans 14: 10. After posing question after question that he feels defy answers he concludes that each one of us should be content to believe whatever we want to believe about divorce. Stand where you are fully persuaded is right and if someone takes a different stance, do not judge one another. This is a tragic use of Romans 14. You see, we cannot take verse 10 which prohibits judging and ignore verse 3. If brother Green's use of Romans 14 is right, there can be no wrong position to take on anything over which good men of spiritual wisdom and unblemished reputations differ. Verse 3 of the same chapter affirms that whatever differences are involved in the chapter both sides are right, as far as the Almighty is concerned. Furthermore, we cannot take verse 10 and not take verse 5 which gives those who differ the right to believe as they will.

Finally, brother Green's article evoked the response from me that there are several hard nosed radical preachers and elders among us who believe it is necessary to first disfellowship all who dare to differ with them on the divorce question, then study the issue. He left me thinking that there are some of these same people who will assassinate the character of any brother who may differ in any degree on this question. He reflects on these people as lacking humility, charity, and concern. If brother Green or anyone else cares to identify such culprits they will do us all a favor. Personally, I know of no such individuals.

Brother Green is right — some will disagree with him. Romans 14: 10 has no more to do with a study of marriage and divorce than it does dealing with "the pious unimmersed." Will there be severe and adverse consequences of his article? Only time will tell. Those who are prone to justify any kind of union between two people, whether adulterous or not, will find great comfort in what Ken has written and for that I am sad. At a time when there are nearly as many divorces as there are marriages, does it not seem more appropriate to take a concrete stand on what the New Testament clearly teaches and leave off the speculations that only generate more and more sinful situations? If brother Green understands that the Lord did reveal something on the topic, even though what brethren have written far outweighs it, I urge him, and all others, to take a stand on that solid foundation of divine teaching and leave unanswered questions alone.

WRITTEN FOR OUR INSTRUCTION

Frank Himmel

1575 14th Ave W.
Palmetto, Florida 33561



AHAZ' ALTAR

Ahaz was one of Judah's worst kings. He served idols to the extent of offering his son as a sacrifice to them. During his reign, Israel and Syria formed an alliance and attacked Judah. God promised to deliver them (Is. 7), but Ahaz was not interested in what God had to say. He had a plan of his own. Ahaz bought the help of Tiglath-Pileser of Assyria with Judah's treasures and freedom.

The Assyrians easily defeated Syria. When Ahaz went up to Damascus to meet Tiglath-Pileser and celebrate the victory, he saw and coveted an altar there. The story of Ahaz' altar (2 Kn. 16: 10-16) is the story of how innovations come into the Lord's church. Notice these details.

Ahaz' altar was borrowed from religious neighbors. I do not know whether it was Syrian or Assyrian. Whatever its source, Ahaz liked it and wanted one. Sadly, he was not the last to adopt appealing practices from others. Paul warned the Colossians against taking from popular philosophy, heathen religions, or Judaism. In the centuries that followed, many churches patterned their organization after Rome. Heathen festivals and ceremonies were "Christianized" to attract more people. Today the borrowing continues. Following the lead of denominationalism, many churches now sponsor ball teams, recreational outings, specialized ministries, and general benevolence. Some have adopted their looser moral standards as well. Such things may swell our numbers, but they will bring God's condemnation as well.

Ahaz' altar was the result, at least in part, of dissatisfaction with God's simple arrangements. The Damascus altar had considerable "workmanship," literally, "doings." God's altar may have been plain in comparison. It was more functional than aesthetic. Ahaz liked the new one better.

God's arrangements for His church are also simple. No great acts of heroism are required to enter. Instead, men and women moved by faith put away sin and are baptized into Christ. There is little in God-directed worship that appeals to the senses: no pomp, no ceremony, no entertainment. God offers no positions of prestige. Each church governs its own affairs, planning and doing its own work. Through these plain provisions, God is honored, saints are edified, and the gospel is proclaimed throughout the world. What could be better? Yet dissatisfaction abounds, resulting in departure

from God's plan.

Ahaz' altar required weak religious leaders. Ahaz sent the pattern of the altar back home to Urijah the priest. If Urijah were the kind of man he should have been, he would have vehemently opposed the idea of a new altar. But not only did he fail to oppose it, he is the one that built it! And he worked so hard on the project that he had it finished by the time Ahaz returned from Damascus!

God has ordered preachers to guard the gospel (1 Tim. 6: 20). Elders are to be on guard for all the flock (Acts 20: 28). Innovations creep in when the watchmen go to sleep. The truth is, those appointed to keep error out are often the very ones who bring it in.

Ahaz' innovation was given preeminence over God's order. That preeminence is seen in three ways. One is that Ahaz ordered that all offerings — animal, grain, and drink — now be burned on a new altar. Another is that he called the new one "the great altar." Notice also the position he gave it. Urijah had set up the new altar in front of the much larger bronze altar (the Lord's altar). Ahaz did not like that, and moved God's altar off to the side, leaving only his in front of the temple.

Is not this still the case? The bulletins I see from churches with "new altars" have scant space set aside for teaching, and what is there often reflects little study. Yet whole pages are devoted to social and recreational matters. We receive far more letters advertising seminars, workshops, dinners, camps, and concerts, than gospel meetings. If these are good barometers, the innovations have taken precedence.

Yet, *Ahaz maintained a token attachment to God's way.* He did not completely remove God's altar, but said, "The bronze altar shall be for me to inquire by." That, of course, was a misuse of the altar. But the point is that he wanted to maintain at least a token connection to God's order.

Modern tokens include the name "Church of Christ." Change what you will inside, but do not put an unscriptural name on the sign. Or a slogan, like "We speak where the Bible speaks." Or the heritage of the restoration movement. Our tokens may be certain doctrines that are special to us, regardless of how inconsistently we apply them. We remain opposed to titles, such as reverend or father, though doctor is increasingly acceptable. Many boast congregational independence while they are tied to all sorts of inter-church organizations. Ahaz was neither bold enough to sever all ties with God nor honest enough to admit how far adrift he was. He is not alone.

In time, Ahaz did totally abandon God. He literally closed the doors of the temple (2 Chr. 28: 22-25). God prefers that to perverted service (Mai 1: 10). Doubtless He would rejoice if some modern buildings were padlocked. Of course, what God really wants is for us to discard human wisdom and homemade religion and obey His word. Will you do that?

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Phil. 4:13).

BREAD OF LIFE

"I am the bread of life. . . so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." Jno. 6:35, 57.

Herschel E. Patton
7637 Fleming Hills Dr. S.W.
Huntsville, Ala. 35802



STUDIES IN TITUS CHAPTER 2 SOUND DOCTRINE INVOLVES PROPER CONDUCT (v. 1-6)

In these verses, Paul points to duties of people of various ages and stations in life that Titus must teach. These duties are identified with sound doctrine (v. 1). All precepts and duties for Christians are based on truth. Every truth one learns imposes responsibility, for each truth has its corresponding duty, and every duty the Christian has is based on the word of truth. Many learn and know truth, but this knowledge does not alter their conduct. This is the case because they fail to recognize the duty that knowledge imposes. On the other hand, some impose duties upon themselves, and others, when there is not truth (sound reason) behind them.

Aged Men

The duties of aged men are first addressed (v. 2). The word "aged" refers to older men in the church, not necessarily "elders" who are officers in a local church, though these would be included.

These are to be sober (temperate). People usually associate these words with abstinence from strong drink, but while this is embraced, the word here seems to go further and suggests a way of life. It suggests a man who has lived long enough to have experienced and observed that the cost of self-indulgence is extremely high and no part of true riches, so lives a life of self-restraint, avoiding excess in anything.

To be "grave" is to be dignified, serious, worthy of respect. This does not mean that such an one goes around with a long face, never smiling or reflecting joy and happiness, but one who reflects the fact he is living in the glorious light of eternity and will soon be leaving this earthly life for the joys of heaven. He is concerned, not with carnal indulgences, but with those things that are spiritual and eternal.

Being "sober-minded" is to be prudent, thoughtful, and self-controlled. Over many years of minding the things of the Spirit rather than the things of the flesh, older man should be able to govern every instinct and passion so that each is in its proper place.

Three things are mentioned in which elderly men are to be sound (strong-healthy). The first one is "faith." Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11: 6). Abraham "being not weak in faith... staggered not at the promise of God" (Rom. 4: 18-21). Faith comes by hearing the word of God (Rom. 10: 17). Being sound in

faith is simply a matter of knowing what the Bible teaches, putting one's confidence in what it says, and acting accordingly.

The second thing in which one is to be sound is "love." Strength here means love is the guiding principle in one's life. It leads to properly dealing with God and one another. (See 1 Cor. 13; 1 Jno. 5: 3; Matt. 22: 36-40).

Thirdly, the elderly men are told to be strong (sound) in "patience," or steadfastness. (See Rom. 5: 1-5; Jas. 1: 2-4). Years should temper a man so that he can bear more and more and be able to conquer life's problems without fainting.

Aged women are next addressed (v. 3). Titus is told to teach them "that they be in behavior as becometh holiness" (reverent in demeanor- ASV). They are "not to be false accusers" (slanderers), an action designed to defame or injure the reputation of another, nor to be "given (enslaved) to much wine," showing a lack of ability to overcome fleshly desires.

Older women should be apt and anxious to teach good things. This is a positive duty of elderly Christian women, though often ignored or neglected. The experience of age should ever be used to instruct and guide for it is, indeed, a tragedy for the younger to be deprived of this. There is a great need for grandmothers of faith, like Timothy had (2 Tim. 1: 5), in the church for they are natural instructors of the young of both sexes.

Younger Women

Some of the things the older women are to teach the younger are now listed (v. 4-5). To be sober-minded is to have a well-balanced mind, or able to think straight. Loving one's husband and children is something that can be taught and learned. Of course, this should come naturally, but such is not always the case, especially when feelings and emotions are relied upon instead of divine teaching and training. "Discreet" is the same as "sober-minded." (KJ & ASV) "Chaste" refers to purity in heart and life. "Keepers at home" (KJV) "Workers at home" (ASV) "Homemakers" (NKJ) refer to being workers at home or guardians of the house-active in household duties. Younger women should be taught that in thinking of a career, there is none greater than that of homemaking. There is no task, responsibility, privilege or reward greater than this. To be "good" (KJV) "kind" (ASV) is to demonstrate a gracious, benign disposition toward servants, husband, children and all. Teaching the younger women to "be obedient to their own husbands" (KJV) "in subjection to" (ASV) is something God has always required (Gen. 3: 16; 1 Cor. 11: 3). This does not mean women are men's slaves, but that God has assigned unto man the responsibility of leadership (headship), providing, and protecting, requiring that they continually sacrifice love of self and desires for wife and family, being gentle, kind, and patient in dealing with them. If the conduct of Christians does not harmonize with sound doctrine, this word of truth will be blasphemed (spoken against).

Young Men

The young men "likewise" (like the young women, and older) must be taught the importance of being "sober-minded" (sensible-ASV).

Be A Proper Example (v. 7-8)

What Paul told Titus to teach others, he must demonstrate (be an example-pattern) in his own life. Nothing is more repulsive to God and man than hypocrisy on the part of a preacher. Such will result in the loss of both the preacher and hearers.

The doctrine taught by Titus, according to this text, must be characterized by certain things. First, there is the matter of "uncorruptness." It must be pure, unmixed with the philosophies of men. It must be only that divinely revealed, established as truth by searching the Scriptures (Acts 17: 11). False doctrine saves neither the preacher nor the hearer, but rather damns (2 Thes. 2: 10-12).

Secondly, the preacher of sound doctrine must preach it with "gravity" (reverent, dignified, and serious), and thirdly, his speech must be "sound"—"Teaching which does not deviate from the truth"—Thayer. This kind of teaching cannot be justly condemned or censured. It is in contrast to the doctrines and commandments of men, born of carnal desires, corruptions, and perversions. "He that is of the contrary part" (v. 8) is actually put to shame in his unjust censure and opposition to the preacher of sound doctrine who is also pure in life, sincere, and upright in attitude. Every successful evangelist (saves self and them that hear) must be an example of soundness in his speech, life, and attitude. The same principle is true of every Christian in his relationship with the world (1 Pet. 2: 11-12).

Teach Servants To Serve As Christians (v. 9-10)

Rather than attack and try to abolish slavery as an institution, New Testament writers relied upon the spirit of the gospel and the principles it set forth (dignity and worth of every human soul; all in Christ are brethren, and alike servants of the one heavenly Father) to moderate the harshness and inhumanity of the system and eventually destroy it.

In harmony with this, these verses instruct servants, as with all Christians in every walk of life (1 Cor. 7: 20-24; 1 Pet. 2: 18) to be exemplary in conduct. As hard as it may be for a slave, who has tasted of the freedom and oneness in Christ, to accept his situation, he must be taught the importance of being in submission to his master and honestly and sincerely seek to please him as best he can. He is told not to be "answering again" — KJV, "gainsaying" — ASV, "argumentative" — NASV, "answering back" — NKJ (v. 9). He is to serve without answering back, arguing, or speaking against. Such action would be opposed to the cheerful, willing, submissive service that the gospel demands.

"Not purloining" — KJV, ASV; "pilfering" — NASV, NKJ. (v. 10) means taking what has been entrusted to one and using it for himself. Some define the word as "thieving." Certainly, this is not in harmony with the gospel, but in direct opposition. The gospel demands that a Christian "show all good fidelity (honesty). So, if a slave, or anyone else, shows, demonstrates, or is an example of true Christianity, the enjoined and forbidden things above will be demonstrated. Otherwise, the doctrine of God our saviour would not be adorned.

The Grace Of God Brings Salvation And Instructs (v. 11-14)

The preceding verses emphasized conduct that adorns the doctrine of God our saviour in all things. Such conduct is possible because of the grace of God. The grace that brings salvation has appeared (been manifested) to all men, not to just a select few, but to all, regardless of race or sex, who will accept it. It involves God's scheme of redemption that was manifested with the coming of Christ, His personal ministry, selection of apostles, death, burial, resurrection for our justification, and the preaching of inspired apostles and prophets, evangelists, and dedicated saints. The gospel, God's power to save (Rom. 1: 16), is the preaching of these facts that produce faith (Rom. 10: 17), resulting in people's obedience (Rom. 6: 17). If God had not sent His son to die for us and arranged for the revelation and teaching of His truth, man would be without hope. Our salvation, therefore, is by the grace of God. Please read the following passages which confirm this is what the grace of God is that brings salvation. (Col. 1: 6; Acts 11: 23; 13: 43; 1 Pet. 5: 12; Heb. 12: 15).

The grace of God that brings salvation also "teaches" (v. 12). It teaches us that there are some things we must deny (renounce or forsake). One such thing is "ungodliness." Thayer says this is "a want of reverence toward God." Even professed Christians, besides people of the world, often do not show proper respect for God and His word. A second thing to be denied is "worldly lusts." This is desiring things of the flesh or world which are forbidden. (1 Jno. 2: 15-17; Jas. 4: 4).

The grace of God also teaches us a positive manner of life. We are to live "soberly," which means a self-controlled life. "Godly" is showing proper respect and submission to God. "Righteously" involves rightly dealing with our fellowman. These are things we are to deny and do, or be, in this "present world" — The here and now. Verse 12 answers the question, What is my duty here on this earth?

Verse 13 points to the reward at the end of life's day for those who have been saved by the grace of God. This will be bestowed at the appearing of the great God and our saviour Jesus Christ. The "blessed hope" of the Christian is called "our hope of glory" in Col. 1: 27. Peter wrote of "the glory that shall be revealed (1 Pet. 5: 1). See 2 Tim. 4: 6-8; 2 Pet. 1: 5-11).

Christ's motive in making the supreme sacrifice for our salvation was that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and make us a special people of his own; a people who would be zealous in doing his works (v. 14). See Eph. 2: 10; Phil. 2: 12-13.

Paul's command to Titus to "speak, exhort, rebuke with all authority, letting no man despise thee" (v. 15) shows how important these things are to his own salvation and those who heard him.

"Pray without ceasing" (1 Thes. 5:17).

A BURNING FIRE

(Jer. 20:9)

Jim Deason

Rt. 1, Box 153
Culleoka, Tennessee 38451



JESUS, THE GOOD SHEPHERD

As one who loves to sing it often seems as though each song is my favorite. But perhaps none touches the heart with such a poignant message as does the hymn, "Does Jesus Care." Written in 1901 by J. Lincoln Hall and Prank E. Graeff, the message is timeless. "Does Jesus care when my heart is pained too deeply for mirth or song, As the burdens press, and the cares distress, and the way grows weary and long? Does Jesus care when my way is dark with a nameless dread and fear? As the daylight fades into deep night shades, does He care enough to be near? Does Jesus care when I've said "good-bye" to the dearest on earth to me, and my sad heart aches till it nearly breaks, is it aught to Him? Does He see? O yes, He cares, I know He cares, His heart is touched with my grief; when the days are weary, the long night dreary, I know my Savior cares."

Yes, Jesus cares. And this is communicated so beautifully to us in John 10: 1-29 as Jesus pictures Himself as the Good Shepherd. As I write I allow my imagination to picture the beautiful grass covered hills of Canaan with quiet, gently moving streams. There on the mountainside is a flock of sheep carefully being nurtured and protected from nature's elements. From the many hours spent together the shepherd knows all his sheep down to the last frail lamb. And they know his strong but gentle voice. Willing to spend and be spent the shepherd will risk his life to protect the flock from predators and on dark and stormy nights he gathers them safely within the sheepfold. Those torn by the rock's jagged edge he mends and those lost he risks all to find. From this tender care a flock prospers.

Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd" (John 10: 11, 14). Thus all of the peace and security that the sheep could find in their shepherd we likewise should be able to find in Jesus Christ. Let's let our minds dwell on the specific aspects of this figure of speech for a few moments....

1) A GOOD SHEPHERD NOURISHES HIS SHEEP. He would make them to "lie down in green pastures" (Psa. 23: 2) and "feed them in good... rich pasture on the mountains" (Ezek. 34: 14). Likewise, Jesus feeds His sheep. He said, "I am the bread of life... This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die" (John 6: 48, 50). A disciple finds spiritual nourishment as he studies and imitates the life of his Lord and grows as he continues in the Lord's commands. Such nourish-

ment is necessary to become spiritually strong (2 Pet. 2: 1-2; Heb. 5: 12-14).

2) A SHEPHERD PROTECTS HIS SHEEP. On one occasion while David was tending his father's sheep he had to protect them from both a lion and a bear (1 Sam. 17: 34-36). Flocks left alone become "food for all the beasts of the field for lack of a shepherd" (Ezek. 34: 8). "He who is a hireling, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, beholds the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep, and flees, and the wolf snatches them, and scatters them. He flees because he is a hireling, and is not concerned about the sheep" (John 10: 12-13). Jesus promised, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep... I lay down my life for the sheep" (John 10: 11, 15).

Perhaps there is no greater assurance of protection to the disciple of Christ than is found in this figure of speech. Hear the Lord as He continues, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of my hand" (John 10: 27-28). The advocates of the "once saved, always saved" doctrine find no proof text here for the Lord's promise of protection abides only with those who "follow" Him. But in refuting denominational dogmas let us not miss the Lord's beautiful declaration of security for those who are His own. Jesus here promises that there is no power on earth or from the pits of Hell that can take you away from the Lord and His blessings against your will. In Christ, the good shepherd, the obedient believer can find true security.

3) THE GOOD SHEPHERD KNOWS HIS SHEEP AND THEY KNOW HIM. My experience with sheep is very limited in that I have never personally known a shepherd. However, a friend here in Middle Tennessee is a dairyman with probably fifty or sixty cows. Black and white Holsteins all look alike to me but he knows all of his cows individually. He's named them all. And it is neat to me how that he can call his cows one at a time to be milked and, knowing his voice, they each push through the crowd to get to their appointed stall for the business at hand.

Jesus declared that the same is true with the good shepherd and his sheep. Speaking of the good shepherd He said, To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name, and leads them out. When he puts forth all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. And a stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers" (John 10: 3-5).

The lesson here for us is that Jesus knows those who belong to Him. Whether or not we are able to make such judgment is immaterial and beside the point, Jesus knows and will be the judge (2 Cor. 5: 10). But my greatest fear here is that there may be some who think they are in the sheepfold who don't know the shepherd. It's one thing for a person to go through a form of worship and something entirely different to see beyond the form to Him whom we worship. Of what benefit is it to know the proper worship, work, and organization of the church if as individuals we have not the mind of Christ?

There are many other lessons to be learned from the

good shepherd. He cares for the special needs of his flock. He leads them. And he seeks those who are lost. When all are considered we see a beautiful portrait of our Lord, the GOOD SHEPHERD. Jesus the loving shepherd cares. He cares for you.

**SIMPLICITY
IN
CHRIST**

P. J. Casebolt

Rt. 1 Box 210
Middlebourne, WV 26149



TEARS AND TRUTH

Some seem to be under the delusion that tears and truth cannot blend together; that you cannot tell people the truth and shed tears at the same time.

After Jesus delivered one of the most scathing rebukes of his ministry, he wept over Jerusalem (Mt. 23). Did Jesus not love those whom he rebuked? "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent (Rev. 3: 19). Often, those who were the subjects of the truth which Jesus spoke, also became the subjects of his tears.

Jeremiah had the unpleasant mission of rebuking God's people for their idolatry, and pronouncing their punishment of 70 years in Babylonian captivity. Yet, he told the truth through tears (Jer. 9: 1; 13: 17). This fact, along with the Book of Lamentations, earns him the title of "The Weeping Prophet."

David wept while his son was alive, but when the child died, he dried his tears and ate bread (2 Sam. 12: 21). His friends couldn't reconcile his actions. People today may shed or conceal their tears, or may display their emotions in public or private. The truth of a matter may not always be determined by the absence or the presence of tears.

Phaltiel had to give up his wife, and "went with her along weeping behind," but he still had to let her go (2 Sam. 3: 15, 16). Esau "wept bitterly," but that did not alter the truth that he had sold his birthright (Heb. 12: 17).

The apostle Paul could say, while weeping, that some were "the enemies of the cross of Christ" (Phil. 3: 18). The fact that we love people, and condemn their sin, does not preclude tears or truth. On the other hand, we may tell people (or God), that we love them, but may do so only "in word... in tongue," and not "in deed and in truth" (Jno. 14: 15; 1 Jno. 3: 18).

If we love the truth and the church enough to tell people that the church does not glorify God through human institutions in evangelism, edification, or benevolence, we are liable to be accused of being hardened haters of widows and orphans, or that we don't believe

in preaching the gospel.

Others can tell the truth about edification and evangelism, but still think that in matters of benevolence you cannot shed tears for orphans and widows while opposing church contributions to human institutions in benevolence. Yet others can oppose human institutions under a board of directors, but not those under elders, or **vice versa**.

The truth of the matter is, that neither the presence nor absence of tears has anything to do with what is right or wrong, or whether or not you love orphans and widows, or whether or not you believe in education or preaching the gospel.

Tears may be shed before we tell people the truth, while we are speaking the truth, or after the truth has been spoken. But truth is still truth. Some avoid speaking the truth, thinking that they can avoid the shedding of tears, either their own or someone else's. Avoiding the truth, or the postponing of it, does not alter the truth itself.

Some of the most bitter tears ever shed are those of remorse, postponing a thing until it is too late. All the "weeping and gnashing" of countless billions will not quench the fires of hell.

Some of us may have better control of our tears than others. I knew one lady who was unable to cry, even at the death of her husband, yet she was just as sad inwardly as the next person. Some of us may have cried until there was no tears left, or until it seems that tears are useless.

But don't try to determine the truth of a matter by the absence or presence of tears. The tears may be dripping from the heart, and not from the eyes.

FAITH AND THE FAITH

By Roy E. Cogdill

This series of sermons is on faith.

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"If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" (Jno. 7: 37).

SHE HATH DONE WHAT SHE COULD (Mark 14:8)

Fred A. Shewmaker
58305 TR 1195
West Lafayette, OH 43845

Some months ago I received a letter from a sister in Christ that began: "I'll begin this by copying from a letter that I received at the church building this morning." It was a letter to her on the occasion of her husband's death. In it are some things which may be an encouragement to other children of God to do what they can.

"You probably won't remember me, but you have been thought of over the years in helping me to be more determined to become stronger in my faith." The letter went on to tell why. It relates circumstances and events that occurred some 27 years earlier. At that time, the author had a small child, was expecting another and her husband was in the military overseas. "When we moved into the housing, you sent a post card telling the address of (the local church). "I was a member, but went on Sunday A. M. only and then usually when my husband wasn't home. But I never had a clear conscience about missing any time. You and bro. _____ being friendly and concerned helped and made an impression on me. When the

baby was born you and either your daughter or daughter-in-law came to see me a few days after we came home from the hospital. That impressed me. Any way I wanted to say 'thanks,' and let you know what has happened since then." For about four years she continued to attend services

For about four years she continued to attend services intermittently. Then she "determined to do it right or not at all."

"Until then my husband didn't care. After that, it was not so easy, with him as a Baptist, but with the Lord's help and much prayer we got through it. He was baptized" (about five years later). "All our sons are faithful members" (they have four). Our youngest just obeyed the gospel this past June and is learning to speak. All the rest are active in the services. We have nine grandchildren and my prayer is all will be faithful Christians. THANKS! In Christian love," The sister who shared that letter with me also wrote,

"I believe I needed that letter very much. I've always felt that I haven't done much in setting examples for others." As I reread that letter, a few days ago, it reminded me of the words of the song:

"Have you lifted a stone from your brother's way,
As he struggled along life's way,
Have you lovingly touched some frail toil worn hand,
Shared with some one his heavy load?
Oh, the things we may do, you and I, you and I
Oh the love we can give if we try;
Just a word or a song as we're passing along,
They will count in the great by and by."

—Lizzi DeArmond

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

CORRECTION

In the August issue of STS on page 478, in the article by Wilson Adams, the following sentence appeared, incorrectly: "And the miraculous element in first century teaching and instruction remains (2 Tim. 4: 1 -2)." The following is what the article actually contained: "And the miraculous element in first century teaching is gone for the same reason. But the need for teaching and instruction remains (2 Tim. 4: 1 -2)." This was an error in printing and we apologize for it.

ALBERT SHEARER, Ft. Walton Beach, Florida—A new work with about 25 in attendance has begun in Mary Esther, Florida which is located just west of Ft. Walton Beach on Hwy. 98. The meeting place is just off the Mary Esther cutoff. Services on Sundays are at 9: 30, 10: 30 A. M. and 6 P. M. and Wednesday nights at 7. Call 244-2335 for information.

PEWS NEEDED

LEON MAULDIN, P. O. Box 9, Lexington, AL 35648 — The North Bibb congregation, located near Blockton, Alabama, is interested in obtaining some used pews for their new meeting house. If you have some either for sale or to give away, call Wallace Reach at (205) 938-2491, or Tim Mauldin, 926-5726. They would prefer about 14 foot

length, but would consider other sizes as well.

KEITH SHARP, 2510 Lakeland Hills Blvd., Lakeland, FL 33805 — It is a great pleasure to have Jady and Dorothy Copeland back to work with the Lakeland Hills Blvd. church. He labored here as an evangelist for 8 years before moving to Springdale, Arkansas in 1987. He was an elder of this congregation at the time he resigned.

Brother Copeland will be working with me in a two preacher arrangement. I will be doing most of the preaching, whereas we will both teach classes, both publicly and privately, and write. We hope the members of the church will select him to serve as an elder again. Jady Copeland's new role will allow him to preach more gospel meetings. Since he is now on Social Security and limited in the amount of income he can receive, he would be especially happy to help small, struggling churches who have limited ability to pay. This good man's years of experience and excellent knowledge should be put to use. His new address is 235 Marcum Trace Drive, Lakeland, FL 33809. His phone number is (813) 853-1339.

LARRY A BUNCH, P. O. Box 461, Dawson, TX 76639—We are now working with the church in Dawson, Texas. There are about 25 in attendance. So far as I know, the nearest conservative churches are

at Ennis and Waco, some 35 miles away. We will try to encourage the brethren, visit those not attending who should be, and trying to set up Bible studies with non-Christians. I will utilize every means available, within our financial ability to reach the public. At present, I have only \$700 a month in support. Help is needed.

GEORGE SLOVER, P. O. Box 5244, San Marcos, TX 78666 — In 1988 a group of Christians saw a need for a congregation that would stand opposed to the institutional trends found in the other churches in this area. They began meeting in February, 1988. After outgrowing a rented place just off of I-35, excellent commercial property was bought and a building at that location was remodeled for present use. It seats about 100 and has good classroom space. We began work here in June, 1989. If you visit in this area, you will find an enthusiastic and friendly group of Christians striving to do Bible things in Bible ways. We are located at 1607 River Rd. about 1 block off of State Hwy. 80. Phone (512) 396-2399 or 353-0364.

FROM ITALY — Stefano Corazza reports another baptism at Udine, Italy. Also, at Pomezia, Roberto Tondelli tells of a husband and wife being recently baptized after many months of studies. They have some teen-aged children who also took part in the studies.

DOUG HEIL — We are in the process of building a new building for the church here, located at 2801 South Main St., Winston-Salem, NC 27127. It will seat 99 and has several classrooms in the basement. We should be in it by early fall. We have about 45 now, including 19 children. John Meadows and Wally Hayes serve as co-preachers with the rest of the men teaching classes. Our group is a close, cooperative, hard-working one with a love for God for each other. If you know someone in this area we might contact, please call us at (919) 784-5058; 760-2510; or 996-1253.

TEACHING IN JAPAN

PHILIP D. SMITH — My wife, Shirley, and I will be holding Bible studies and worship services in Fukuoka, Japan through August, 1990. Christians in that area or traveling to the island of Kyushu can contact us through West Chester University, 1-3-29 Nagahama, Chuo-ku, 810 Japan, where we both work. Telephone 092-761-0421 and FAX 092-761-5936.

PREACHERS NEEDED

CALGARY, ALBERTA, CANADA — This congregation of 30-35 needs a mature, experienced man to work with us. Majority of support would have to be raised elsewhere. Huge potential in this city of 700,000. There are no elders, but a good core of willing and able men. We have been without a preacher for over a year. For more information and references contact, Northside Church of Christ, c/o Wayne Bailey #1707 620-67 Avenue S. W., Calgary, Alberta, CANADA T2V 0M2.

WELLSBURG, WEST VIRGINIA — We are seeking an evangelist to labor with us. We are located in the northern panhandle of West Virginia and the church has been here since 1934. We want a preacher who will give Bible, not fashionable, answers to our questions. Unless his needs are great, one would not need outside support. Please contact Charles Isinghood, RD 1, Box 368, Wellsburg, WV 26070, or David Harless, RD 1, Box 59, Wellsburg, WV 26070.

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA — The congregation which formerly met on German School Road in Richmond is looking for a full-time evangelist as it seeks to build spiritually as well as physically. Partial support (about half) anticipated. Contact: Pete Brailey (804) 272-3546.

GOOD MAN AVAILABLE

MARC W. GIBSON has completed his college work at Florida College and at the University of South Florida in Tampa. During the seven years he has been in Tampa he has attended Fletcher Avenue church of Christ and did some preaching here. He filled preaching appointments over central Florida during the past six years. He preached during the summer months with Bob Buchanan, Harry Lewis and Ron Halbrook. Marc has been married a little over a year. He is a good student of the Bible and is dedicated to preach the gospel of Christ. He is seeking full time work, preferably in the southeast. I have known

him well during the years he has been in Tampa. I commend him to any church looking for a faithful preacher of the word. Brother Gibson can be reached at: 8700 N. 50th St., #1133, Tampa, FL 33617, phone: (813) 988-0035.

H. E. Phillips, Lutz, Florida

STANLEY LOVETT AT REST

Stanley J. Lovett passed away on July 7, 1989. He was a preacher of much ability, a man of integrity and devotion to his Lord. His labors were extensive, touching the lives of countless people. From May, 1956 until October, 1978, he edited the PRECEPTOR. His writings were always true to the Bible and he handled his editorial responsibilities with great wisdom and foresight. The last years of his life found him confined to bed and totally helpless. He was lovingly cared for by his devoted wife, Sarah. The July, 1989 issue of PRECEPTOR, now edited by Danny Brown, has several articles of tribute to him. It would do you good to read it. (Write: The PRECEPTOR, P. O. Box 187, Beaumont, TX 77704).

Funeral services were conducted by Robert Turner, W. L. Whar-ton, James W. Adams, Harold Turner and H. Osby Weaver. R. J. Stevens led those attending in four songs. His body was laid to rest in Nacogdoches, Texas. Truly, a giant among men has left us. To sister Lovett and the three children we express our condolences. (James W. Adams wrote an excellent article about brother Lovett in the June PRECEPTOR).



THANKS TO DONNIE V. RADER

The September issue of the paper was edited by Donnie V. Rader. We thank him for his excellent work. This gave us a little breather from the heavy load of meeting work and for the trip to Norway in August. By the way, the Raders are proud parents of a son, Dathan Vaden, born August 30, 1989.

ABOUT NEWS ITEMS

We carry a news column as a means of offering information which we think readers would like to know and as a courtesy to those who send these items. We are glad to have news about the work in many places. Items announcing debates, lectureships, meetings and other events with a date, should be sent far enough in advance for us to present before the event takes place. We usually work on a 30-days-in-advance basis with our printer at Berne, Indiana where the paper is printed and mailed.

But the editor carries on a heavy schedule of gospel meetings from March - November each year. That means that sometimes we have to do the news column early, or else take with us to a meeting what items have arrived before leaving for the meeting so the column can be written during that time. Because of that, sometimes there are news items, which normally would have arrived in plenty of time, which fall through the cracks, much to the disappointment and annoyance of those who sent them. We regret this and wish we knew how to avoid it. The paper is a labor of love. But those who have never lived for many years with paper deadlines to be met around meeting dates and other obligations, both work-related and personal, have no idea what is involved in making it all come together. As much as I love the paper, I have always put my commitments for preaching appointments ahead of that, and plan to continue that practice. Most people have been understanding about this, but a few have not. The Lord expects us to do only what we can do and others will have to learn to live with that. We have had to come to terms with it and could not function very long otherwise.

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	430
RESTORATIONS	106
(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)	