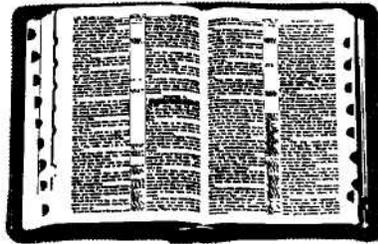


# SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

"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

MARCH, 1989

NUMBER 3

## THINK ON THESE THINGS

*H. E. Phillips*

P.O. Box 1631  
Lutz, FL 33549



### WHY WE DO NOT HAVE UNITY

To the discerning reader, it seems hopeless that brethren will find the unity of the faith with their approach to the word of God. I am not talking about matters of judgment such as whether to sing two songs or three at the beginning of public worship, or whether to have the Lord's Supper before preaching or after preaching. I am talking about obeying the authority of Christ in all things (Col. 3: 17). Some are urging that we must all agree that we cannot have unity on many things, therefore, we should accept each other as being faithful and true to Christ while holding our differences, and extend the right hand of fellowship to each other without qualification. This presents too many problems for all those who respect the authority of Christ. In this article I want to present the case as it really is and ask how we can accomplish true unity as required by the word of God.

There are many issues that well illustrate this hopeless effort at Bible unity. One is the use of instrumental music in worship. Presently, many are trying to generate fellowship between those who oppose the use of instrumental music in worship and those who use it. Those who do not use the instrument of music in worship take that position because they believe it is not authorized by scripture. They cannot in good conscience sing praises to God with the use of instrumental music. It is a matter of faith just like being immersed in water for the remission of sins. No other action for any other purpose is acceptable as scriptural baptism. In that

same sense no other music in worship to God is acceptable but vocal without any accompaniment.

The only possible way for unity to exist is for those who use the instrument in worship to give it up forever and sing only as public worship to God. Those who hold the position that instrumental music is acceptable to God, also say that they can sing acceptably without the instrument. Few if any contend that the instrument is essential to scriptural worship; they admit that they can scripturally worship God without the instrument. But all those who oppose the instrument of music in worship do so because they believe the instrument is sinful; it is without authority and thus not of faith. These cannot compromise their conviction without violating their consciences.

Now how can unity exist? We say that unity must be based upon God's word; that means that God's word must authorize its use by command, approved example or necessary conclusion. Not many argue that instrumental music is essential to scriptural worship — a matter of faith. The only conclusion that can be reached is that Bible unity is possible only when those who use the instrument of music in worship give up the practice and sing only psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, making melody in their hearts to the Lord. We know therefore why we do not have unity, and who is responsible for the divided condition. It is because those who use the instruments will not give them up for the sake of unity among brethren. This has been the case for over 150 years. It will continue to be the case as long as the instrument is used in worship to God. These are the very ones who are begging for the unity for which Christ prayed in John 17, and yet they are the very ones who are causing division, and perpetuating it by insisting upon the instrument in worship.

Those with whom I stand did not cause the division; we did not initiate any action or attitude that brought about the division. Unity was lost because the instrument was introduced in worship. To restore things as they were before the division, the instrument must be eliminated. When this is done, unity will exist as it was before the instrument was introduced. The only other way unity could exist would be for all to begin to use the instrument in worship, but then it would involve ALL in

the sinful practice because it is without divine authority, and such would cause many to offend their consciences by doing what they believe to be wrong.

All that I have said gets back to the standard of God's word as the only basis for that unity for which Christ prayed. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17: 20, 21).

Scriptural unity involves more than action; it involves attitude toward divine authority, the word of God, and the right respect for brethren in the Lord. Until the hearts of men and women are turned to the Lord and His word, they will walk in different directions and destroy the unity for which Christ prayed. When men are interested in pleasing God and not men, they will inquire what the scriptures say and abide therein. They will not add to nor take from the words given by inspiration. Only then will they walk by faith, and Bible unity will prevail. May God hasten the day when brethren will walk together in the light of God's eternal word. But until that day comes, division will exist because some will add to His word.

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## Editorial

Connie W. Adams

P.O. Box 69  
Brooks, Kentucky 40109



### PRINCIPLES OF TRUTH AND MEN OF HONOR

The November, 1988 issue of CHRISTIANITY MAGAZINE, contains a three page article by Ed Harrell entitled "Homer Hailey: False Teacher?" In it, brother Harrell laments what he calls "the personal attack on Hailey" and offers what he calls "my personal defense of Homer Hailey as a man who has earned the respect and esteem of the Christians of our time." He further states "I confess that the recent personal attacks on him seem to me to be an unheroic assault on an 85-year-old warrior." Other statements in the article seek to explain why brother Hailey has been held in such high esteem for so many years and judges him to be a man of integrity with a "devout desire to please God."

#### Focusing the Issue

If anyone has made an "assault" on the character of Homer Hailey, or challenged his integrity, I have been kept totally in the dark about it. We have all benefited by his study. The integrity of Homer Hailey is not in doubt. If you read only what brother Harrell wrote about this you would think that the most ungracious comments had been made about brother Hailey, as a man. That is absolutely false. In the process of defending brother Hailey from personal attacks, which have not, in fact, occurred, brother Harrell has seriously indicted the character and motives of those who have questioned Hailey's teaching on whether or not an alien sinner is subject to the law of Christ, and the ramifications of that doctrine in terms of the marriage and divorce issue. Some have expressed the opinion that those who have written about brother Hailey's teaching on this subject are "politically motivated." I deny that and call for the proof, if anyone thinks he has it.

As I pointed out in an editorial in this paper in September, 1988, many of us have known for many years that brother Hailey held a view on this subject which a great many believe to be false, the present writer included. So far as we knew, he did not seek to press this view to the disturbance of churches and it was more or less a "study point" which he has always been willing to discuss with any interested enough to ask. But in a meeting at El Cajon, California, he preached on the subject during a gospel meeting. Later he was involved in a disturbance over this question at Belen, New Mexico. A letter from him, which we published in our January issue, is his account of what took place. Much has been made of the argument that this was just a private meeting with a few people and not a "whole

church" affair. But the whole church suffered from it. People involved in questionable marriages left the church in the aftermath of this dispute and remained in their condition martially. The brethren thought the matter serious enough that they invited another brother to come in and review what brother Hailey had taught. Having preached on the subject (brother Hailey made reference to that in his remarks at Belen), and then having stated that he would become more outspoken on the subject, it was in order to take him at his word. His letter indicates that he does not intend to press the matter at this present time, but that was not the indication from what he said at Belen.

#### A Doctrine With Serious Consequences

While brother Harrell says he opposes the position taken by brother Hailey, he has nonetheless rendered a great disservice to the cause of truth and right by making the issue a man and his integrity. Brother Hailey is a man. All of us know he is a man who wants to do right and who acts out of sincere motives. I will defend his character as quickly as anyone else. But he espouses a doctrine which argues that the alien sinner is not amenable to the law of Christ, therefore, God's marriage law does not apply to him, and should he have been divorced and remarried a dozen times without fornication as the reason, he can obey the gospel and continue to live in the same relationship as before. Or, if a believer is married to an unbeliever and the unbeliever leaves the believer, because of his or her faith, then the believer is free to marry for the simple reason that the unbeliever was never under law to Christ in the first place.

I believe this to be the most serious doctrinal issue since the premillennial and institutional controversies. If true, then the mission of the church is invalidated. What is the point in preaching the gospel to those who are not subject to it? The work of every gospel preacher is an exercise in futility.

Here is where the doctrine becomes entangled with another serious fallacy: the false and arbitrary distinction between gospel and doctrine. It is argued by some that you preach gospel to the alien and teach doctrine to the Christian. Thus, the gospel is not actually a part of the law of Christ. It is upon this basis that the question of fellowship can be placed on a par with eating meats (Rom. 14), the wearing of a covering, and military service. We have our disagreements over these and other questions, but they are, after all, just "doctrinal" differences. Ketcherside, Fudge and all who took that path were wrong in making such an arbitrary distinction and then using that as a broadened base for fellowship with the Christian Church, institutionalism and you name it. Romans 14 was bent out of shape and more things were pressed into it than the Lord ever intended.

We are mixing oranges and apples when we decide that remaining in an adulterous state is in the same category as whether or not to wear a covering in the assembly. Paul did not believe adultery was to be tolerated in the church at Corinth and taught as much in 1 Cor. 5. But, mark my word, brethren, before all this is done, you will discover that the doctrinal base for such

advocated tolerance, is this false distinction between "gospel" and "doctrine." That has already been injected into the controversy over this marriage question among the liberals. It has been involved in the published debate between McClish and Billingsly on "The Amenability of Alien Sinners To The Law of Christ" and in the exchanges between Thomas B. Warren and James D. Bales. The gospel of Christ IS the doctrine of Christ and the doctrine of Christ IS the gospel of Christ.

### **Rampant Factionalism**

Brother Harrell argues that "doctrinal unanimity... does not, and probably cannot, exist." Question: Is it impossible for all to know and practice truth on this subject? He then spoke of military service, marriage ceremonies in church buildings and head coverings and warns about branding as false teachers any who disagree with us on such subjects and says this will lead to "rampant factionalism." But the subject here is the doctrine of whether or not the alien sinner is subject to the law of Christ. Is it "rampant factionalism" to contend that the alien IS under law to Christ? Is it "rampant factionalism" to point out the consequences of this doctrine? Brethren, it is a false doctrine fraught with frightful consequences. Is it "rampant factionalism" to insist that those who seek congregational fellowship be people of upright moral behavior who, in true repentance, severed themselves from whatever sinful relationships they formerly occupied, whether drunkenness, thievery or adultery?

### **Differences on the Question**

Yes, it is true that brethren over the years have differed touching several points on the issue of marriage, divorce and remarriage. Brother Harrell referred to the exchange which we carried in this paper between H. E. Phillips and Marshall E. Patton. It is certainly true that they differed in application on one aspect of this subject. But both of them stated their objections to any notion that the guilty party has any right to remarry, and to the view that the alien is not under law to Christ. They both contended that fornication is the only scriptural cause for divorce and remarriage, whether we are speaking of aliens or Christians. Neither of them took a position which eventuates in nullifying the Great Commission, rendering useless the evangelistic effort of every congregation and nullifying the work of every preacher of the gospel. Those who hold this view may deny the acceptance of these consequences, or the foundation stone of a false distinction between "gospel" and "doctrine," but they logically follow as the night follows the day. Others may proceed as they think best, but I intend to press these consequences wherever this doctrine raises its head. My quarrel is not with any man, on a personal level, but with the doctrine being taught.

### **A Danger**

Brethren, it is right for us to give "honor to whom honor is due." But it is a dangerous thing to reach the point that we cannot call in question the public teaching of any brother, regardless of how much good he has done and how much he is respected. We must not "think of men above that which is written." It is also in order to point out that great respect places great responsibility

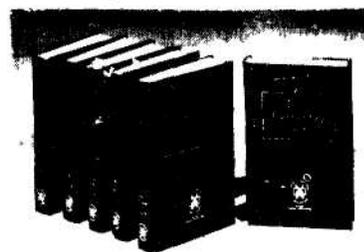
on those who preach. All of us are going to answer for the influence we wield in teaching others. Because a brother may become "a legend in his own day" does not exempt him from facing the consequences of what he teaches and the effect it has on the lives of Christians and the fortunes of congregations.

### **On Fellowship**

If we will all preach the truth as plainly as we can, expose error for what it is, and call the teachers of error to account, then those who love the truth will hold up our hands and stand with us and those who do not want the truth will oppose us. The fellowship will sort itself out, if we will let it. "I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts" (Psa. 119: 63). The fellowship of the people of God is a precious thing. None of us should teach or practice anything foreign to the truth which would endanger it. But we must not choose sides over men, even admittedly the best of men. Doctrines are advanced by people, and people have names. But this dispute is not about one good man and whether or not his integrity has been challenged; it is about principles of truth and right. We must keep the issue clearly focused. Are alien sinners under law to Christ? If they are, then those who teach otherwise are teaching a false doctrine, regardless of how much we esteem them. If they are not, then those of us who teach that aliens are amenable are wrong, regardless of how well respected any of us may be. "What saith the scripture?"

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### ANTIOCH — THE POWER OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

Acts 11: 19-26 introduces us to the newly established church in Antioch of Syria. It wasn't easy being a Christian there. Living in the midst of a mega-population center known for its corruption and crime was a terrific challenge to these young believers. The perils of persecution were to be faced daily. But they were there and they were committed!

Christianity wasn't stale to the Antioch disciples. They didn't take it for granted. They certainly weren't Christians because their parents were "church of Christ" (as in: "He's a 'church of Christ' preacher." Do you cringe when you hear that, too? It affects me about like fingernails scraping across a blackboard. Sorry...) These Antioch saints understood what it meant — the commitment, the challenge, the pressure. And, so, armed with the knowledge that tough times follow those who follow Jesus, they climbed out of the pit of paganism in order to live on a higher plane of illuminated light in Jesus Christ. Thank God for their courage!... and their inspiration to us.

**2. The Antioch church made a commitment to teaching.** After seeing last month that a **commitment to teaching means a commitment to people**, we now turn our attention to the second phase of their teaching program found in verses 24b-26:

**And considerable numbers were brought to the Lord. And he (Barnabus) left for Tarsus to look for Saul; and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. And it came about that for an entire year they met with the church, and taught considerable numbers...**

#### **A Commitment to Teaching Means a Commitment to Excellence**

The church at Antioch knew what some today fail to appreciate: A successful, growing, and strong church becomes that way by making an all out effort and no holds barred commitment to excellent Bible teaching. No half-heartedness here. No room for mediocrity among these people. They served a risen Savior and were dedicated to giving Him their very best. Excellence, nothing less.

**Antioch was committed to quality teaching.** And just what is "quality teaching?" It has nothing to do with style, or mode of delivery or a preacher's personality. On the other hand, it has everything to do with a love for the Book, an earnest plea to adhere to divine truth

and a teacher who will himself seek to live up to the standard he proclaims. It's a longing to give all you have in the pulpit, in the classroom and in every teaching situation. It's a burning passion to do your VERY BEST with the talents and opportunities that God presents. The bottom line: it's an **attitude** — an attitude toward God, His will, and the lost. "Quality teaching." It's what gave a solid foundation to a new church. It's what will strengthen any church.

Paul came. The opportunities in this mega-population center were endless. Originally a "large number" had turned to Christ (vs. 21) and now "considerable numbers" were being added (vs. 24). Barnabus could see the vision of future possibilities if only he had more help. Verse 25 reads, "And he left for Tarsus to look for Saul."

Why Paul? (referred to as "Saul" until Acts 13: 9) (1) **First, Barnabus knew the kind of man Paul was.** Back when Paul had first arrived in Jerusalem it was Barnabus who reached out to welcome the man nobody wanted (Acts 9: 26-27). Barnabus believed in Paul. He knew that his commitment was strong and that God's truth would be upheld at all cost. He knew that Paul would give the Lord and the work at Antioch all he had. **Second, Barnabus knew that Paul had been divinely appointed to preach to the Gentiles** (Acts 9: 15). And if ever an opportunity presented itself for the apostle to set in motion his mission, it was Antioch.

Look again at 11: 26. What a year that must have been! Barnabus (the encourager) and Paul (the apostolic teacher) working in tandem in a two-preacher arrangement with the result being an opportunity to teach "considerable numbers" (vs. 26).

#### **A Twentieth Century Application**

For a congregation of Christ to succeed in the eyes of God in 1989 (or, for that matter, anytime), it must get serious about the business of TEACHING! "Considerable numbers" weren't brought to the Lord in Antioch by accident. It happened because they worked hard and made quality teaching their top priority. We must do the same.

But there is a point to be made concerning teaching that I'm afraid has been overlooked at times. It has to do with (now how can I say this?) **how** we present the gospel. (It's the old adage that if something is worth doing, it's worth doing RIGHT!) Do we present God's message as **the most important message in the world deserving our very best effort at communication** or... do we treat it as a half-hearted hobby that warrants only mediocre commitment? Tough question. Let's get specific.

I had the occasion not long ago to visit a well established church in a rather large city. I left with a feeling in my mouth similar to the one I get when I've eaten one of those onion-laden hamburgers from the corner fast-food place (you know—the feeling that you could scrape the grease from the roof of your mouth!) The exterior of the building was shabby. There were more weeds than grass and it looked as if the bushes hadn't been trimmed since Eisenhower was in office. The interior wasn't any better. The yellow paint was now beige and peeling. The smell reminded me of my grandfather's old storage shed

and I thought at first I had entered a museum of early American cobwebs. The tracts in the rack had obviously been there for a very long time and each was yellow (not their original color). The classrooms were no better and looked more like a broom, paint, and trash collection center than a place of learning. And, by-the-way, who was collecting all those wrinkled up periodicals in the corner? Grot the picture?

Listen up folks: WE REPRESENT THE KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS AND WE HAD BETTER DO OUR VERY BEST IN PRESENTING HIS MESSAGE. We need to:

1) **Take a look at our classrooms.** Are they bright and cheery places with appealing decor generating an atmosphere of warmth or are they rooms of cold storage? (If my child's schoolroom looked like some of the Bible classrooms I've seen I wouldn't stand for it. Would you?) And by-the-way, some of the ones I've heard say we can't afford better sure have nice stuff at home and in the driveway. It's a matter of priorities.

2) **Take a look at our teaching aids.** Are we using materials that are outdated and stale? Do our film strips, tracts, and other teaching tools look fresh or do they carry that "nostalgic" look? Check into the possibility of purchasing a video system for the church to use in its teaching program. Many materials are now available on video tape including Norman Sewell's series for the non-Christian as well as Rodney and Carla Miller's series on teacher-training. More things are becoming available as time goes on.

3) **Take a look at our church buildings.** Do they have that "nobody's home" and "nobody cares" look or are the grounds kept and the appearance clean?

4) **Take a look at our advertising.** Are our meeting announcements well laid out? Does the bulletin have "eye-appeal?" Have we done our very best?

5) **Take a look at our services.** Are things done decently and in order? Do we start on time? Do the men who wait upon the congregation do so with an air of respect for the occasion? Do the services tend to be long drawn out endurance contests or periods of spiritual refreshment?

What I am attempting to say is that while the message must NEVER be tampered with, updated or changed, the way that message is presented and ultimately perceived by the world needs to be reviewed. Do we present the greatest message in the history of man with only a half-hearted attempt at mediocrity or are we committed to excellence in the proclamation of His Good News? That's the point.

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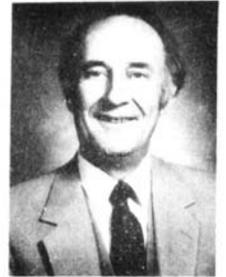
## WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

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*Weldon E. Warnock*

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### MAY A CHURCH DRAW INTEREST?

**QUESTION:** *Can a church take money given by it's members for the Lord's work and buy C. D.'s or other forms of interest bearing offerings? If so, what is the difference in that and investing in a business and running it for profit?*

**ANSWER:** The Bible teaches how the church is to raise money (1 Cor. 16: 2), but it does not specify how to hold or keep it. Obviously, we would want safety and security for the treasury. Churches generally use banks to keep their contributions. This is much safer than in a safe at home, or in a sugar jar or coffee can. It is also more expedient as banks offer checking accounts.

But mainly the querist is asking about C. D.'s (Certificates of Deposit) and other forms of interest bearing deposits. The C. D.'s would be just as Scriptural as the Savings Account or the Checking Account as far as a depository for the money. The issue is a question of a church drawing interest. Of course, if a church may receive interest on one kind of account, it may receive interest from another kind.

A congregation turns thousands of dollars each year over to a bank, which in turn loans the money out for profit. This is the bank doing this, not the church. The bank simply guarantees the money and it pays a small interest rate for the use of the money. The interest simply helps offset the inflationary spiral so that the money deposited has close to the same buying power when it is withdrawn as it did when deposited. Certificates of Deposit do have a higher yield, but they must be left in the bank until maturity or there is a penalty for early withdrawal. C. D. s might be practical under peculiar circumstances, like a building fund.

A congregation who refuses interest on its money may actually lose money as far as its buying power. Why is it right to lose money value, as some reason, but wrong to draw interest in order to have the same value when withdrawn? Such thinking is fallacious and irrational in my opinion.

Motive or purpose is involved in this controversy. Certainly, the church may not go into business in order to make a profit, nor invest its money for the purpose of enhancing a bank account. Money raised by the church is through free-will offerings by the saints on the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16: 2). But there are special circumstances where there is no intent or purpose to raise money contrary to the Scriptural procedure stated in the

New Testament.

A church may sell its meetinghouse for double or triple the amount it cost to build it in order to build a new one. A large tract of land might be willed to or given to a congregation and the church may want to sell part of it or all of it, gaining possibly hundreds of thousands of dollars. A down-payment may be put on church property by a business establishment, say for \$2000, to hold it for three months. But the business decides not to buy, and forfeits the down-payment to the church. Alien sinners many times contribute on Sunday when they are present at worship. Other examples could be given but these suffice to show that money is received in additional ways by the church than just through contributions from its members.

If a church began buying and selling property to raise money or soliciting alien sinners for contributions, then the purpose is evil and a divine principle would be violated. I don't know anybody who prohibits an alien sinner to give into the collection basket (this would necessitate barring all aliens from our Sunday services), or refuses to take land that is willed (or given) to the church, or sells church-property for what it originally cost and not current market value. If we can realize money from these special circumstances, then we can accept interest given to us by a bank. The bank says, "We are giving you 5 percent on your money," and wisdom, it seems to me, teaches us to accept it on the same basis we accept a tract of land that is donated by a generous person, or the forfeited money on a down-payment. It is strange that we can take money from an alien sinner, land from a beneficent person and a forfeit from a business, but we cannot take interest given to us from a bank. What have we got against banks?

All Christians are stewards of God (1 Cor. 4: 2; 1 Pet. 4: 10). Elders are stewards (Tit. 1: 7) as the overseers of the church, including its work and resources. They would be remiss in their duty as caretakers if they were not prudent in the financial transactions of the church.

Let's say a congregation has a building fund with the intention of building in five years? Where do the elders put the money? If there are \$50,000 and the elders refuse interest, then they have relinquished several thousand dollars to the bank and diminished the buying power of the money. For all practical purposes, the church has indirectly donated those thousands to the bank. Is this good stewardship? I think not! It is about like the one talent man who hid his talent in the earth (Matt. 25: 24-27).

Some congregations love their bank accounts, but if we would be more involved in the spending business to preach the gospel, and less involved in the saving business, we would not have near the problem of whether it is right to draw interest, be it from C. D. s, Savings Account or Checking Account. I venture to say that there are likely millions of dollars lying in the banks in the accounts of churches of Christ that are being saved for that "rainy day" or "emergency" which will never come in most cases. The Lord may come before our imaginary exigency occurs. The emergency is now; men are dying daily unprepared to meet God.

I have no qualms with a "cushion" or operating fund, but too many of these "cushions" have become excessive and exorbitant amounts, far beyond the needs of the operation of a local church. Too, a church inherits a large amount of money or it sells a tract of land for thousands of dollars, and several months, or longer, are needed to dispense the money in a responsible manner. I have no problem with this.

This question of churches drawing interest is a "sticky" issue among us and has caused some churches no little distress, even division. Each congregation will have to use sound and wise judgment in dealing with this matter to maintain harmony and peace.

## SIMPLICITY IN CHRIST

*P. J. Casebolt*

P.O. Box 1487  
Chiefland, Florida 32626



### WHERE DID GOD GO WRONG?

If a child becomes delinquent, the parent often asks, "Where did I do wrong?" Society is often held responsible for the conduct of the criminal. There may be times that both parents and society are partially to blame for those who rebel against authority, for "to err is human." Even so, I doubt if there are many cases where **all** the blame should be shifted away from those who show contempt for civil law.

But, there are those who will hold God responsible if anything should happen to the disobedient and ungodly. Is God unrighteous (wrong), if He punishes the evildoer? Some say yes, but if so, I ask, "Where did God go wrong?" If God is at fault, then we should be able to trace His dealings with the human family, and find out where God made His mistake.

The earliest account of God's dealings with man is in creation. "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Gen. 1: 27). Is this where God went wrong? If not, let us continue.

Next, God placed man in the garden of Eden, and supplied his every need. Every other form of life was under man's dominion, and at his disposal. This was man's first taste of "the paradise of God." Did God go wrong here, by placing man in Eden?

The next incident in God's dealings with man is the confrontation between the two which developed after man's transgression. Yes, God could have made man like the beast, whose spirit "goeth downward to the earth" (Eccl. 3: 21), or He could have made him like a sycamore tree, but man was made in God's image, and given the power of choice. God didn't force man to eat of the forbidden fruit, the Devil tempted man (Gen. 3: 13).

Did God do wrong when He drove man from the garden? This was man's only hope at the time—get him away from the tree of life in his fallen condition, that he might be returned to it in a justified state.

Every since the transgression, God has been merciful and longsuffering toward man, planning and bringing about his redemption. God is still trying to bring all to repentance (2 Pet. 3: 9), and would "have all men to be saved" (1 Tim. 2: 4). Is this where God went wrong?

God gave His only Son as a sacrifice for man's sins, and Jesus has prepared the way to heaven (Jno. 3: 16; 14: 1-6). Did God do wrong to man by the manifestation of such grace?

Now, God has provided an invitation for all, and provisions for their salvation (Rev. 22: 17; Mk. 16: 15, 16), that man may once again partake of the tree of life (Rev. 22: 14). Is God unrighteous in this matter? And, if God is not at fault anywhere, or at anytime, in His dealings with man, why say that God is unrighteous "who taketh vengeance" (Rom. 2: 1-11; 3: 4-6)?

Man, disobedient and rebellious, needs to quit trying to place the blame on God for his own sinful condition, and get busy and obey the very gospel which can also condemn him.

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## STUDIES IN 1ST AND 2ND TIMOTHY 2 TIMOTHY 3

### ANTICIPATE AND KNOW THE NATURE OF APOSTASY (V. 1-9)

If a minister of God is to save himself, through faithfulness in the discharge of his "gift" (charge), he must be aware of the possibility, even certainty, of apostasy, of which he has been forewarned by the Spirit (1 Tim. 4: 1), and take heed lest he himself be ensnared. He must also, by this awareness, be concerned for those who hear him, constantly warning them of the things that are threats to their faith, lest they be lost. Thus, the salvation of both the minister and the hearer is at stake.

The "last days," when the perilous (difficult) times would come, may refer to that great struggle between truth and evil preceding the coming of the victorious Christ in judgment (When Satan is loosed for a little season - Rev. 20: 7-8). The nature of the apostasy described mentions characteristics of men that have existed in every age, even in the days of Christ and when Paul wrote them to Timothy, but such actions and characteristics would become worse — continue to grow and become manifest before the end, or the coming of Christ in judgment. Because of this, Timothy, every minister, and every saint would need to increase their watchfulness and zealous heed, lest souls be lost.

### Characteristics of Ungodliness (v. 2-9)

These are now listed, by the Holy Spirit, so that all may know and recognize those characteristics in men that will damn the soul.

"Lovers of self has always been, is now, and continues to be a worsening characteristic of many. This feature is the foundation for many other evils. Making self the center of one's life is that which keeps one from obeying the gospel. Denying self is a prerequisite to coming to Christ (Matt. 16: 24). As long as self is enthroned, submission to God and true love for our fellow man is impossible. In seeking the cause for absenteeism (assembling with saints - Heb. 10: 25) or lethargy in service, everything points to "love of self." The guilty do not think of their responsibility to edify others, set a good example, grow in knowledge, teach others, or pray together, but of pleasing self. They had rather please and satisfy self than show consideration for God or their brethren.

"Covetous" (lovers of money), the root of all evil (1

Tim. 6: 10), is next listed as a characteristic of apostates, or godlessness. Paul has previously warned Timothy, and others through Timothy, of the dangers and folly of thinking "gain is godliness" (1 Tim. 6: 5-10) and that the success of man is determined by the amount of things he possesses (Lk. 12: 15). This characteristic of godlessness is manifested in those who spend their time, energy and money on things that satisfy the flesh, to the neglect of laying up treasures in heaven by giving and doing for God and their fellowman.

"Boasters" (boastful, braggarts) is a characteristic of the ungodly who claims great qualities that he does not have, or possesses in a much lesser degree than is claimed; makes promises he can not keep, and claims powers or ability that he does not have, for personal gain. Such is often found among politicians, business magnets and preachers. True ministers of God, however, magnify only the truth, and not themselves.

Being "proud" (filled with conceit-arrogant) is closely related to the boastful (braggart). The braggart will, with claims and promises, bluster his way into prominence, but the proud does so, holding in his heart contempt for everyone other than self. "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (1 Pet. 5: 5; Jas. 4: 6; Prov. 3: 24).

"Blasphemer's are people who speak evil against others. The enemies of Jesus were guilty of this when they charged him with casting out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils (Matt. 12: 24-31). It is a matter of hurling insults against others, even the Lord. The NASB uses the word "revilers." Those who espouse a false doctrine, anxious to deceive others and discredit contenders for truth, often engage in this evil action.

"Disobedient to parents" is rebellion to the law of God in both the Old and New Testament which says "Honor thy father and thy mother." In Roman law, we are told that to strike a father was as bad as murder. Anyone who would disregard authority in this area could not be expected to respect God or any other authority. Jesus said that following Him might involve "foes in your own household" (Matt. 10: 36).

"Unthankful" (ungrateful-NASB) is a trait of those who do not feel they are indebted to either God or man. Their own self-esteem keeps them from feeling any obligation to others.

One who is "unholy" is actually irreligious. The Greek word is Anosios and Vines (p. 170) lists "unholy" and "profane" as it's translation. The unholy act and speak disdainfully of that which is divine and sacred.

"Without natural affection" (unloving-NKJ; NASB) involves the love that parents have for children and the children have for parents and one another. It is a family love. This is found even among animals, but some humans, without this, are worse than brute beasts.

"Trucebreakers" (implacable-ASV; unforgiving-NKJ; irreconcilable-NASB) are people who will not keep their word or promises or make any truce with an enemy, or one from which he is alienated.

"False accusers" (Slanderers-ASV; NKJ; malicious gossips-NASB) spread tales on others that are designed to damage or destroy one's reputation or good name. The

tale is usually false, though, sometimes, it may have some truth in it, but is circulated with the evil motive of injuring or destroying.

"Incontinent" (without self-control-ASV, NKJ, NASB) is to be unrestrained in appetites and passions, involving money, the tongue, pleasures, touch and taste.

"Fierce" (brutal-NKJ; NASB) is from "ferus," meaning wild, savage. The illusion is to savages and wild beasts. With such, there is no restraint or control of their passions.

"Despisers of those that are good" (no lovers of good-ASV; despisers of good-NKJ; haters of good-NASB) suggests someone who has no desire or appetite for good people or things. They have become so enthralled with evil that the thought of God or the things of God provokes hostility on their part toward good.

"Traitors" (treacherous-NASB) will readily betray the trust that others have in them, and the cause that has been committed to their trust.

"Heady" (headstrong-NKJ; reckless-NASB) is an inability on the part of an individual to think wisely, because of passion and impulse, so that he stubbornly pursues his own will or desires.

"Highminded" (puffed up-ASV; conceited-NASB; haughty-NKJ) describes one who is puffed up (inflated) with his own importance.

Being "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God" (rather than-other Versions) causes one to make any sacrifice to obtain earthly pleasures, but gives nothing up for the cause of Christ or truth. With these, honoring God must never interfere with their own fleshly desires. This characteristic is clearly seen in those who grow lukewarm or become reprobate concerning faith.

It is sadly true that these numerous characteristics of ungodliness are seldom, if ever, found existing singularly in an individual. Possessing one quickly multiplies into all. Those thus afflicted may profess godliness and hold to many forms, but that's all it is — a profession... a sham (v. 5). Their actions show that their professed faith lacks the power to influence their heart and life. Paul's instruction to Timothy, and all saints, is to turn away from such. Of course, Christians must exhaust all scriptural means to save such, but when people refuse to submit themselves to the word (will) of the Lord, they must not be allowed continued fellowship with the saints.

Verses 6-7 describes the determined action of these apostates and the effect they have on some, particularly women who were controlled more by their desires than the word of truth. Such women were laden with sin, being condemned by their own conscience. These false teachers offered a teaching or philosophy (Gnosticism) that would allow them to follow fleshly passions and still have a clear conscience, being convinced by false teaching that they have done no wrong. The teaching that only the spirit matters and nothing done in the flesh does, is false and results not in salvation, but condemnation. God's ministers must ever do battle with these apostates and their philosophies if they are going to be successful in saving themselves and their hearers. Such false teachers are ever studying every new theory or

idea that comes along and discussing them, but are ignorant of truth.

An illustration of such opposition to God's truth is given in verse 8 in the mention of Jannes and Jambres who withstood Moses. These are not mentioned elsewhere in the scriptures. Early Jewish writers say these were magicians in Egypt who "by their enchantments" apparently duplicated some of Moses' miracles, by which Pharaoh was deceived, and withstood Moses and God in delivering Israel. The false teachers Paul is here warning against, may have claimed some mystical powers, as they often did, to better deceive and influence the people. Truly, such have "corrupt minds" and are "reprobate concerning the faith." The words "corrupt" and "reprobate" indicate these men were once Christians, members of the body of Christ, and embracers of truth, but their minds had been so filled with error (theories and philosophy) and their own self esteem, that now they were enemies of truth. This has happened, can happen, and will evidently continue to happen, hence this warning to all of God's ministers who are interested in their own salvation, and others.

In verse 9, Paul says that false teachers (apostates) and the havoc they cause among saints, "shall proceed no further": that "their folly shall be manifest unto all men." Moses exposed Jannes and Jambres, having the power to do so, and all Egypt saw it. Christianity (the Gospel-Truth) has always been able to prove itself over the numerous and strong actions of Satan and his messengers, and it still has that power today. God will raise up faithful ones, like Paul and Timothy, who will faithfully contend for the faith (exposing every false way), diligently teach it to others, and constantly warn and edify the saints, thus truth will always be manifest and will triumph.

**Follow Paul's Example Of Suffering For Christ And Others (v. 10-13)**

That divinely revealed to Paul (Gal. 1: 11-12), he had diligently and fully made known to Timothy and others (1 Cor. 2: 1-5; 4: 1-2; Acts 20: 26-27; 2 Tim. 1: 13; 2: 2). In doing this, his purpose, conduct, faith, longsuffering, love, and patience were well known and realized by Timothy and other saints. Such was Paul's manner of life in the midst of numerous persecutions and afflictions, but the Lord was his deliverer. He assures all true saints that they too will suffer persecution (v. 12), because the evil men and seducers (false teachers) that confronted Paul would continue to increase. In view of this, it would be very important that Timothy and all saints act as Paul did, lest they be deceived and lose their souls.

**Be Steadfast In The Scriptures (v. 14-17)**

Timothy, to save himself and his hearers, is told to continue in the things he had learned and been assured of from Paul, an inspired apostle (v. 14). Since Paul learned what he taught by revelation (Gal. 1: 11-12) and it was confirmed by miracles (Acts 15: 12), it was truth-the Word of God-Scripture. Scripture, divinely revealed truth, is something Timothy was acquainted with in youth, and respected. It is that which makes one wise unto salvation through faith in Christ (v. 15). The

importance of being scriptural (All we believe and do by inspiration of God) is further emphasized by pointing to what Scripture does (v. 16). It is profitable for doctrine (teaching). No man, interested in saving himself and his hearers, has any business teaching anything that is not found in Scripture.

"Reproof," in the Greek, is "Elegmas," which Vines says "denotes a proof, proving, test, as in Heb. 11: 1" (Page 283). This means if you want to prove a doctrine to be true, Scripture is the thing to use. Human reasoning, philosophy, or theorizing won't do it.

"Correction" simply means to "make straight." When one relies on scripture for his doctrine it is straight; otherwise it is crooked. The only thing that will correct crooked teaching is scripture. Pitting one theory against another will never reveal truth.

Scripture furnishes us with all the "instruction in righteousness" there is. Any doctrine or religious practice not found in scripture is no part of God's righteousness. Scripture, alone, completely furnishes man unto all good works (v. 17).

I am appalled at the popular belief in the religious world, and even among some brethren, that one does not have to be scriptural in all his beliefs and practices to be saved. This exhortation to Timothy to continue in the doctrine divinely revealed, which Paul enjoyed many other times in these letters, was given in order that Timothy might be successful in saving himself and them that heard him. Abiding in truth is a condition of salvation.

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## SOUNDNESS? OR PERFECTION?

**J. F. Dancer, Jr.**  
**P.O. Box 1259**  
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I guess in much of my writing I am a reactionary. That means that I read something written by another and write in reaction to it. That is not all bad but it doesn't always lead to healthy, upbuilding constructive articles. This article is something of that type. Many months ago I read an article in this magazine devoted to our use of the word "sound" in describing a congregation. I don't think I really disagreed with anything that was actually said in the article but did disagree with some things I saw implied in it. I put the article aside and in time forgot it. Recently, I came across it and this is a result of my reaction.

The first time I remember the word "sound" being used in regard to a congregation of God's people was in the mid 1950s. I was preaching in Illinois and the word was used to describe those churches that were not influenced by the teaching of Carl and L. E. Ketcherside. I also found them using it to describe those churches that did not have "full time preachers." In the following years the word came to be used (by me and others) to refer to churches that did not support any human institutions from the common treasury. And when we used it that way those with whom we conversed understood what we meant. Then as time passed, concepts changed and the word came to be used in other areas.

It came to mean (as the writer of the former article set forth) a church that taught the truth on (1) the plan of salvation, (2) a scriptural name, (3) a rejection of human institutions, (4) opposition to the social gospel, and (5) the right order of worship. We need to stop using such terms without an explanation as it is not really fair. The first definition in my dictionary of the word "sound" is: "Free from flaw, defect, or decay; undamaged or unimpaired" (Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, Second Edition).

The implication of the aforementioned article was that in addition to the five things above we also need to include (6) punitive church discipline. The author showed the lack of such in his experience and rightfully called upon individuals and churches to practice that doctrinal and practical purity in this matter as in others if they were to be considered "sound." I can agree with some of that but the danger is we will then have to list other things and finally will have a "creed" that identifies what is a "sound church." Let's get away from such terminology.

But to the matter of punitive church discipline. I have been a member of the body of Christ for about 43 years and during that time have been a part of eleven congregations scattered over six states and the District of Columbia. These congregations ranged from a small rural one to a very large, metropolitan institutional one and then to all sizes of non-institutional ones. I know of no other way to describe them. Now to my point — in all of these (save one about which I don't remember) punitive church discipline was practiced! I remember two cases in the rural church of my youth when a deacon was disciplined for drinking whiskey and one of the other members disciplined because he cheated a man in a mule trade. In other churches I remember people being spiritually punished for things from forsaking the assembling of the saints, to sowing discord, to drunkenness, to adultery. All of this done in obedience to Matthew 18: 15-17; Romans 16: 17; 1 Corinthians 5: 1-13; 2 Thessalonians 3: 6-15 and Titus 3: 10.

Since I have been preaching the gospel ALL of the congregations with which I have worked have practiced punitive church discipline. One elder told me at one place he just couldn't have a part in putting one out of the church. However, in less than three years he was working with the others in punitive discipline as well as in other areas. Through patience he learned what the Bible taught and then led (with others) in doing it. I know that I have been blessed in being able to work with some of the better of God's people. Others (as the writer of the former article) have not been so blessed.

Now, another point. In NONE of the churches where I have worked as a preacher was punitive church discipline always carried out EXACTLY AS I THOUGHT IT SHOULD BE! Sometimes I thought they waited too long, at other times I thought they acted too quickly. Sometimes I thought they were not completely impartial in such practice. In other words, they didn't always do it the way I thought it ought to be done — but they DID IT! And generally, they did it well. It didn't take me long to realize that a lot of judgment is to be used here. The Lord didn't say how long to wait between the three contacts in Matthew 18: 15-17. And Paul didn't tell Titus how long to wait between the first and second admonition in Titus 3: 10 nor how long to wait after the second admonition before the heretic was to be rejected. How quickly was the one in Romans 16: 17 to be marked and avoided? Judgment must be used in these areas.

Brethren, we have to learn to be patient in our efforts to teach one another what the Bible has to say about punitive church discipline. Paul told Timothy to reprove, rebuke and exhort with ALL LONGSUFFERING and TEACHING (emphasis mine, jfd - 2 Timothy 4: 2). In his appeal to the Ephesian saints to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4: 3) there was to be the exercise of meekness, longsuffering and forbearance (Ephesians 4: 2). This is not justification for over-looking and condoning sin of any sort. But it is an appeal to recognize that we have to give people time to learn and then help them develop the courage to act.

We are not going to find PERFECTION in a congregation. And should a church accomplish such if one of us preachers moved there we would probably "mess it up." I write that in jest but I think you can see my point. Sometimes we are looking for perfection all at once and

don't give people time to learn and grow. Let's strive to build congregations that are "free from flaw, defect, or decay." At the same time let's recognize that there are many things that do not affect our working and worshipping together over which we will differ and we need patience to work them out. There are many matters of judgment in serving the Lord and we must not divide over them. We need to use care that we don't "draw lines" against all who disagree with us. For some reason we expect them to learn as quickly as we think we did. I still recommend a church as being a "sound" or "good" church if someone is asking for a place to worship while away from home. I use these terms to describe one where I believe they can worship without violating their conscience and where truth is upheld. If someone is considering a move to an area and asks me my opinion of the churches there I go into more detail and describe them as honestly as I can. There are a lot of fine brethren and fine congregations (is that another word that will have to be explained?) scattered around over the world but I still don't know of any PERFECT ones.



## **PAPAL POWER ("A Study of Vatican Control over Lay Catholic Elites")**

**Luther W. Martin  
707 Salem Ave.  
Rolla, MO 65401**

The title of this article, is copied from the title of a book, published in 1980, by the University of California Press. The original manuscript was initially submitted as a Ph. D., dissertation, by Jean-Guy Vaillancourt, who is now an Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Montreal. Basically, this book deals with the relationship between Papal power and the submissive strata of the Roman Church, termed by them, "the laity."

Let us quickly picture the pope as "the man who sits on the throne of Saint Peter, since the pope is an absolute ruler, elected for life, who is not accountable to any judiciary or legislative control." (**Papal Power**, page 10).

The Catholic author has the pope "on the throne of Saint Peter," however, this is an assertion that rests upon ancient legends rather than upon historical fact.

"The organizational image that still most often comes to mind when reference is made to the Church is that of a pyramidal or monarchical structure. On the top is the pope, the Supreme Pontiff, with his chief assistants and advisers, the cardinals, who also hold the top positions in the Roman Curia. Below the cardinals come the various types of bishops and monsignors: the archbishops and metropolitans, the resident bishops, the vicars and prefects apostolic, abbots and prelates and apostolic administrators. Below these august figures are pastors, priests, brothers, and nuns. Finally at

the bottom, in another world practically, is the great mass of the faithful, the laity. The development of this stratified and basically two-tiered conception of the Church, shaped during many centuries of history, was challenged at Vatican II, and other, more collegial, models were considered in its place. One such model is that of an organism, a body, the mystical Body of Christ. Another is that of a new Israel, the pilgrim people, the people of God. A third is that of an open community where those in positions of authority consider themselves to be the servants, rather than the masters of the whole community. **This third model seems to be the original form that predominated in the early Christian church.**" (Ibid, page 12. Underscoring mine. LWM).

The above description is a "far cry" from the New Testament description of the Lord's church, as established and implemented by the Man of Galilee and the twelve apostles.

"From its inception, the Catholic Church has moved gradually from grass-roots democracy and collegial authority to a vast concentration of power and authority in the hands of the clergy and hierarchy, and especially in the hands of the pope and his curia." (Ibid, page 19).

Once again the Catholic author describes the gradual change that has occurred in Catholicism. Although I disagree with his use of the term "grass-roots democracy" if by that expression he implies any practice of "majority rule."

"The New Testament view of authority in the church was based on functionality and service rather than on legality, dignity, and power. The leaders were those who had certain charismatic gifts and who were chosen by the apostles or by the community to render certain religious service to their religious brothers and sisters. They were called overseers (bishops) and elders (priests). The **laos** was not a body separate from these leaders and dominated by them. Although in the Greek language the word **laos** referred to the mass of the people, as distinguished from their rulers and leaders, this usage does not occur in the Bible except in a few places in the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament - LWM). The more comprehensive meaning, just described, is the one generally found in both the Old and New Testament. The laity-clergy dichotomy as we know it today is never mentioned in early Christian documents, because it did not exist as such. The earliest functional classifications we know of in the Christian communities (assemblies - LWM) around the Mediterranean are those of apostles, disciples, prophets, overseers, elders, and deacons, **never those of priests (or clerics) and laymen.**" (Underscoring mine. LWM. Ibid, pages 20-21).

### **Copying more from Papal Power:**

"The early Christian gatherings were local churches, presided over by a number of elders. Then the elders, along with the rest of the membership, elected an overseer. At first this overseer, or bishop (episcopos), was only "**primus inter pares**," (first among equals - LWM), but his authority grew, influenced in good part by pagan and Jewish conceptions of priesthood, and especially by the fact that he controlled the funds of the local church.

"The first use of **laikos** in the sense of "the masses" appears in a letter written to the Corinthians by Clement of Rome around AD. 96. The letter is a strong Paulian defense of Corinthian bishops who had been dismissed by a rival party. It expresses loyalty to the empire and has a certain tone of Roman arrogance (the obedience of Roman legionnaires is cited as an example to be followed, in the church of organization, at a time when Roman emperors were persecuting Christians). The doctrines of apostolic succession and irremovability of the clergy are among those affirmed by Clement. He makes use of **laikos** to mean the rank-and-file members of the church, as opposed to the clerical and episcopal leaders.

"With the increasing Romanization of the Western church during the second century, this definition of **laos** and its derivative **laikos** rapidly prevailed, especially among the Gentile Christians. From the third century onward, the definition of **laos** as a people distinct from church authorities becomes the only accepted one..." (Ibid, page 21).

#### **Disregard For Scriptural Authority!**

The admissions made by the Catholic author are generally historically accurate. His conclusions describe the departures of the Roman Catholic Church from the New Testament blueprint. This pattern of apostasy has been repeated over and over, in many places, in many centuries, dealing with many different doctrines, and by many and various peoples.

Among the latest being from the pen of Reuel Lemmons, **Action**, April 1988; when he makes reference to brother Darrell Foltz, as "a lay preacher."

Another, and more spectacular departure has featured in recent years the Crossroads Philosophy and more recently the Boston-based satellite-church, discipler-discipling ministry.

In recent decades, a number of Catholic scholars have come to a realization of the departures of the Roman Church... yet some of our brethren are repeating the same mistakes and departures from the New Testament, that Rome made centuries ago!

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## **"THEY HATE HIM ... THEY ABHOR HIM" Amos 5:10**

**Richard Boone  
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Hayden, AL 35079**

Amos 5: 10 reads, "They hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly." These words were written to an apostate Israel who had known God and seen the works that He had done for them (see Amos 3: 6-16). However, Israel had not been faithful in following god's Law. Instead, the people were followers of the false religion set up by Jeroboam (1 Kings 12: 25-33). In their departure from God, Israel had become so corrupt that even civil rulers who spoke truth and judged righteously were no longer desired, as our text shows. Israel desired those judges who "afflict the just, take a bribe, and turn aside the poor in the gate from their right" (Amos 5: 12). For that apostasy, Amos, the prophet from God (3: 1), plainly passed the sentence "... prepare to meet thy God, O Israel" (4: 12).

Today many Christians have the same attitude as Israel. Whereas it used to be that evangelists could speak forthrightly about sin and problems among God's people, that is no longer the case. Indeed, many "hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly" in reference to preachers and their preaching the truth of God's Word. We see that so easily in the "liberal" churches where Christians have been led father and farther away from the truth by weak and "Bible-less" sermons. Sadly, that type of preaching is even desired among "conservative" churches. I believe we have reached a turning point. A point that, if left unchallenged and uncorrected, will direct us straight toward apostasy and ultimately into hell! The cry from the pews in many places is no longer for the clear and forceful proclamation of the Truth, but for the latest pop-psychology and human wisdom. I have heard of days long ago when preachers boldly proclaimed God's Word, without worrying whether or not they may be disliked or whether they may lost their jobs at local churches. They had deep convictions and were not ashamed to speak their convictions when opportunity came knocking. Why don't we hear that same preaching today? The answer is simple. Let me offer my answer with an illustration.

In my Western Civilization class in college, the teacher made a statement that makes very much sense. In reference to the French dynasties of the 1500's and 1600's, he said, "As was the king, so was his kingdom." So it is with many churches now.: "As is the desire of those in the pews, so it will be the preaching that comes from the pulpit." I am certainly aware that this is not true of every individual of every church. I am also aware that weak preaching does not come from every preacher. But, we cannot ignore the simple fact that this is true in too many places (and

really one place is too many!). It appears to me that we are becoming concerned with sophistication and polish more than the unashamed and truthful proclamation of God's Holy Word. Brethren, learn lessons from history (Rom. 15: 4, 1 Cor. 10: 10-6)! Do you remember Israel who wanted a king so they could be like all the nations around them (1 Samuel 8)? They were concerned with their appearance before neighboring nations rather than being righteous before God. We also must be more concerned with our condition before God rather than follow the trends of the denomi-"nations" around us.

I hope that you will sincerely and seriously consider what I have said. I am not an enemy of positive preaching (as long as it is positively Biblical) or of eloquence per se. But what I am worried about is the attitude that is behind brethren who would rather be entertained than taught. Fellow Christian, if you would rather be entertained, "thy heart is not right in the sight of God" (Acts 8: 21). If you would rather be taught, "desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Peter 2: 1).

## CHAOS OR ORDER?

**Wayne Greeson**  
**2630 N. 72nd Way**  
**Hollywood, FL 33024**

"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork" (Ps. 19: 1).

With the increase of man's knowledge comes the constant confirmation of the Psalmist's statement. The evidence continues to build that this universe is not the product of chance but a system of order and design. The design of the universe points to a designer.

The argument from design is a powerful argument that proves the existence of God. Atheists feel the force of this argument in discussion and debate and they are often compelled to take a rather strange position. To refute the argument from design, the atheist will often assert that there is as much disorder in the universe as order. The conclusion is drawn that the existence of randomness and disorder in the universe disproves a total system of order and design, thus there is not a designer.

This argument was presented in the Bales-Teller debate by the atheist Woolsey Teller. Mr. Teller repeatedly argued that the world and the organisms in it are so poorly made that this world could not have been designed, thus there is no designer. Mr. Teller said, "Any comment on the God idea and design in nature would be incomplete if we failed to consider the arrangement of the planets in their relation to the sun, that is, their placements in point of distance, and what occurs because of their positions. Now, if the universe was de-

signed (and the universe includes our solar system), it was designed in a very peculiar way" (Bales-Teller Debate, 1947, p. 49).

Mr. Teller proceeded to argue that the lay-out of the planets of the solar system was "ridiculous" because of its lack of order thus the universe could not be the creation of divine being. This general line of argumentation has been used by atheists in numerous debates.

While the atheists' "argument from chaos" sounds impressive, it is built upon a faulty premise. The assertion that there is chaos or disorder in the universe is an unproven and false premise. Recent scientific studies have concluded that what superficially appears to be random behavior in systems, closer observation reveals complex patterns and design!

Within the last decade, a number of scientists have studied apparent random behavior of various systems such as the turbulence of a stream, air turbulence, the development of sun spots, the spread of flames, water dripping from a faucet and water movement in the oceans. Studies in this area have even advanced to the point that this year there was a scientific conference on the subject in Monterey, California, the International Conference on the Physics of Chaos and Systems Far From Equilibrium. Scientists involved with these studies have concluded, "There is order in chaos. Underlying chaotic behavior there are elegant geometric forms that create randomness in the same way a card dealer shuffles a deck of cards or a blender mixes a cake batter ... Random-looking information can be explained in terms of simple laws" (Scientific American quoted in the "Miami Herald", Jan. 14, 1987).

The atheists' "argument from chaos" is an argument from ignorance. For an atheist to declare that a particular system or organism is without order, design or purpose simply reveals that the atheist is ignorant of the order, design and purpose of that system. Closer examination and study of what appears to be without design or purpose can often expose design and purpose.

A good example of the atheists' argument from ignorance is the once weighty "evidence" of vestigial organs. A vestigial organ is an organ or structure of the body that has no apparent purpose and has supposedly degenerated because of lack of use. One hundred years ago, science listed over 186 organs of the human body as "vestigial organs", organs with no apparent purpose. These "useless" structures were seen as evidence of evolution and disproof of the existence of God. Today, only five organs remain on the list of vestigial organs and even the classification of these five as vestigial organs is hotly debated by the scientific community. The problem with "vestigial" organs was not that they had no purpose, but that men were ignorant of their purpose.

Order, design and purpose, not chaos, rule throughout the universe. Even seeming chaos is carefully ordered. Order and design demand a Designer. That Designer is the God of the Bible. "Thus saith the Lord, the Holy One... I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded" (Isa. 45: 11-12).

## 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*

### URGENT APPEAL FOR HELP IN CHINA

**JEFFERY KINGRY**, AMCONGEN Shenyang, Box 45, FPO San Francisco, CA 96655 — (The following is a summary of information gathered from recent letters and reports from brother Kingry. Editor) Six have obeyed the gospel, the first fruits of the effort in China. The visa for the Kingry's expires in June and they will have to return to the states to get the children settled in school. It is urgent that someone capable of teaching English come to follow up the work started. There is a need for at least three other men to volunteer for Shanghai and Fuzhou, Fujia for at least one semester.

There are two ways to gain entry into China: (1) English Teacher. No Chinese language required. You will not be teaching on a U. S. College level, but a fifth grade level (modelling native English, outlining, topic sentences, conversation, vocabulary, etc. ). A Bachelor's degree would be good, but is not absolutely necessary. You would teach 6-18 hours a week with wage of about \$200/month. (2) Intensive Chinese Language Instruction. Come as a student, pay tuition, live in a dorm or hired house, and learn the Chinese language for one or two semesters. School year is Sept. 1989 - Jan. 1990, March 1990 - June 1990.

**SHANGHAI:** The East China Univ. of Chemical Technology in Shanghai needs teachers for the 1989-90 school year, Shanghai is the biggest city in China, 11. 5 million. It is crowded, but has diverse history and many western refinements. The atmosphere in Shanghai would be very liberal for a worker. Brother Lu Wei Min would be there to provide a reliable Chinese-speaking helper and fellow-laborer.

**FUZHOU, FUJIA:** The Fujian Normal University, a teacher's college needs an English teacher for the same time. Fuzhou is the capital of Fujia, a city of 1. 5 million people. Fuzhou is a historical city with western housing, temperate climate, and close contacts with Shanghai. While sister Li Xiu-zhong is only 22, she is by far the quickest study I know and fearless. She needs someone to work in her community for Christ.

**SHENYANG, LIAONING:** I have two choices, teaching English at Dong Gong (NW Tech. Univ. ) or taking the Chinese language semester at Liaoning Univ. There are advantages and disadvantages for both choices. But, I would stay in Shenyang to bridge for another man or to continue my work with the little church here. Whether I return or not, there is work here for two. Xue Xiao-bin and Jie Wen-jie would present a permanent presence to help any incoming preacher.

Brethren everywhere (at lecture programs, in the journals, in meetings, between brethren) need to talk this up. I will help all I can. But we need to do it NOW. It will take a minimum of six months to make arrangements, raise support. We need also to find support for plane tickets, monthly support, shipping, literature. If good men can be found, in whom brethren have confidence, the rest will come. They have to be willing and competent men willing to give of themselves for this work. The door is now open. We have made a start and it will be easier for those who follow. We are not looking for people to commit for the rest of their lives, but to come and help on a short term basis. If anyone is willing, I will arrange to meet them in Hong Kong, Manila or Tokyo and help all I can.

(ANOTHER EDITOR'S NOTE: Brethren, this situation cries for help. It is too important to ignore. Who can go? Who WILL go? Please contact brother Kingry quickly. )

**P. J. CASEBOLT**, P. O. Box 1487, Chiefland, FL 32626 — Lord willing, we shall be leaving Chiefland as of April 30, 1989. We plan to return to Elk Fork, WV, where we previously labored for nine years (1969-1978). We should be in a position to conduct more meetings, and our address will be: Rt. 1, box 210, Middlebourne, WV 26149, after May 1.

**CARLOS CAPELLI**, Casilla #83, 1665 Jose C. Paz, Buenos Aires, Argentina — I spent 20 days preaching in El Salvador in November, 1988. Three were baptized during this time. We helped a congregation with some internal problems about the elders and deacons. I preached at Santa Eugenia Church in San Salvador, at Matazano (where they have two men who preach and support themselves as taxi drivers). I also preached in Santa Ana where Hugo Luna preaches. We had 70 each night. They have their own building. Then I preached at Zacatecolucas and in Santiago Nonualco where Daniel Alvarado works. I spent three days preaching in Lomas De Perulapia. All brethren there are farmers and three brethren take turns preaching — Florentino Hernandez, Benigno Lopez and Manuel Melgar. I saw one day some of the damage from the guerrilla war with the army of El Salvador. The war is terrible! I also preached in Guatemala and Panama on my way back home.

**PAUL A. JONES**, 1563 41 st St., Columbus, GA 31904 — I want to get on the mailing list of churches that have good **teaching** bulletins. Deaf people have souls that need to be reached with the gospel, too. Do you know of sources or churches that have video-taped sermons with sign language interpretation? I want to teach my deaf friends, so I took a course at night on sign language, but I need more help.

**RICK A. HUBARTT**, 301 Fern St., Newark, OH 43055 — I was involved in video taping the Nashville Meeting and can make the tapes available for \$45 a set. There are 7 tapes at L. P. speed with 4 hours a tape, 23 hours of actual recording. Write or call me at (614) 366-7115.

**OWEN H. THOMAS**, 5327 S. Tryon St., Charlotte, NC 28217 — After five and a half years with the church in Charlotte, we will be moving the last of February to begin work with the Tomlinson Run church near Georgetown, PA. All correspondents please note my new address. It will be: Rt. 2, Box 117, Georgetown, PA 15043. The church here is looking for someone to work with them. Anyone interested may write them at the above address or call Bill Mayo at (704) 739-3944 or Jim White at (803) 547-4291.

**DERREL STARLING**, 412 Mariner, Victoria, TX 77901 — Gospel meetings at the Glasgow St. church for 1989 include Oliver Murray, March 5-10, and Delmar Hightower, Oct. 15-20. We encourage faithful Christians looking for mild weather, to retire in Victoria. Ill be glad to supply any information needed.

**ROBERT H. FARISH**, Rt. 4, Box 4384-D, Belton, TX 76513 — We have moved to Belton, Texas. My plans are to hold meetings, preach at any congregation which wants a Sunday "fill-in" and do more writing. We are worshipping with the Leon Valley church, 306 E. Ave. C, Belton, TX 76513. Tim Coffey preaches regularly here. Work is set to begin on a permanent meeting house in the near future. I have been asked to teach a Bible class on Wed. evenings.

**WARREN E. BERKLEY**, Wallisville Road Church of Christ, Highlands, Texas — In 1988, we appealed to churches and individuals on behalf of a family in need, the Luther White family. At that time, brother White was suffering with terminal cancer, his wife was ill, and

**"Behold, I have set before thee  
an open door ..."**

**—Rev. 3:8**

his daughter was not in good health. In addition and as a result of these calamities, there was no income. Churches and individuals all across the land came to the aid of this family, in a regular and substantial way. We are thankful to God, and to you for this generosity. On January 17, 1989, brother White passed from this life, and his body was placed in the earth on January 19. The cards, letters, prayers and funds sent will remain as a refreshing memory to the family.

**FROM CHILE — SOUTH AMERICA** — On December 8, 1988, Efrain Perez, his wife and two daughters left for the USA and then on to Spain. Chris, their older son will remain in Chile until he finishes his medical training. Most of the Chilean preachers and some others gave them a "going away" party. The Lord's work in Chile has been tremendously blessed with the work of brother Perez. His preacher training classes will be missed. His work allowed us to grow, to exercise true autonomy as congregations and as individuals. The work of the Lord has grown in Chile and part of this growth is due to Efrain's dedication. Spain claims him. The Lord has other work for him there. The Spanish Conquerors brought their false religion to this continent, but one "more than conqueror" will take the Lord's gospel to them.

**WAYNE S. WALKER**, 310 Haynes St., Dayton, OH 45410 — At Haynes St. in 1988 five were baptized and two families placed membership with us. Sunday morning attendance now runs in the 80s with increases on Sunday and Wed. nights and in the contribution. We are happy that unity and peace prevail. We had fall meetings with Roger Hendricks and A. C. Grider. In the spring of 1989 we will have a meeting with Steve Wolfgang and Dale Pennock will present a series during a vacation Bible school on "The New Age Movement." In the spring of 1989 I am scheduled for meetings at Greenwood, SC, Madison, Wisconsin, and Southside in Mansfield, OH.

**NEY RIEBER**, 6413 Zion Church Rd., Sanford, NC 27330 — The work in the prisons continues to be encouraging. Where else could you go and have access to over 100 people and have them to be glad to see you? At Blanch there are from 25-50 each week and at Polk there are from 25-40 for a class each week. I baptized 3 at Polk in December. The church in Chapel Hill is small but we have unity and things look better than they have for a long time. Besides the work here, I have committed to preaching twice a month at Sanford. Our schedule at Chapel Hill is such there will be no conflict. Sanford is also a small but dedicated group. They are also looking for a fulltime preacher.

**PAUL WILLIAMS**, P. O. Box 324, Eshowe, 3815 South Africa—A 12 day tent meeting in rural Zululand saw about 100 percent each night and five were baptized. Services ran from 7-9 each night and some complained that we closed too soon. So, the services were lengthened to 10 P. M. and no one complained they were too long. We had lengthy question and answer sessions which had much to do with converting the five young women.

#### OBITUARIES

**SHERRELL D. JACKSON** of Conroe, Texas passed away on May 5, 1988 after an 8 year bout with Leukemia. He did fairly well for 6 years but began failing after that. He worked for 38 years for the Postal Service and only took five days sick time during his tenure. He and his wife, Helen Ashberry, were married 42 years and 5 months. Sherrell taught a young people's class as long as his health permitted. He was a good student of the Bible and many young people were baptized from his teaching. Preachers he had worked with for years officiated with an overflow crowd at the funeral. These were: W. H. Hance, Eris Ritchie, Robert Goodman and W. R. Jones. He is survived by his wife, Helen and two faithful children and three grandchildren.  
W. R. Jones

**DANA HAMPTON HALSTEAD** — It is my sad duty to report the death of Dana Halstead, a husband, a father, a grandfather, a gospel preacher and debater, a Christian and a member of the church in Bossier City, LA, and my friend. He was born, March 13, 1927 in Danville, WV and died in Shreveport, LA, Nov. 8, 1988.

Dana married Evelyn McGowan Aug. 31, 1950, while in the Air Force. He was not a Christian at the time, but was baptized soon after studying with Thomas D. Rose. Dana had great zeal, and very shortly after his conversion he began to teach classes, and then to preach at

small churches in the Ark-La-Tex area.

In the beginning Dana held the no-class and no-located preacher positions. But after his first debate, with Gene Frost, he decided brother Frost was right and changed his views. Following this debate, he had two eight night debates with F. I. Stanley on the institutional question. He probably did his best job when he debated Chester A. Guinn, professor of Bible at the Bible Theological Seminary, held in Cleveland, Texas. In 1961 he debated a brother Brown of the Mansfield, LA church on the institutional question. The debate was described by many of his friends and foes as being brutal in nature, but to this day the institutional churches in Desoto Parish remain weak in comparison to the faithful brethren. Dana also debated Ronnie Wade and a brother Thomas of Kentucky on the one cup/no class position, and had a similar exchange with Buff Scott, Jr. Buff affirmed that there will be many unimmersed individuals who will be saved due to their piety in other matters. Dana had great zeal for what he believed to be right, and when he discovered he was wrong, he was willing to change to be right with his God.

Dana preached for the church in Stanley, LA; Cleveland, TX; South Flores in San Antonio, TX; East Houston Rd. in Houston, TX; El Dorado, AR; Marshall, TX; and the Union Rd. church in Kansas City, MO.

At this time he moved to Columbus, GA and went into the retailing business and worshipped at Rose Hill while there. Shortly afterwards he was struck with a form of multiple sclerosis and moved back to the Shreveport-Bossier City area where, in spite of his crippling disease, he worked hard with me and the church at Bossier City. In 1965 he began alternating the preaching duties with Huey Hartsell and myself for a new work in Magnolia, AR.

He held meetings in Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, Missouri and Oklahoma. He performed many marriages and preached many funerals, but would not accept money for these services.

He was a Christian of strong convictions, and enjoyed talking about the Scriptures. When you visited Dana you talked about the Bible. Though barely able to get around, he seldom missed services, and when I had to be absent was available to preach. The church will miss him as will his family and the brotherhood. —B. J. Thomas

#### PREACHERS NEEDED

**PRINCETON, WV** — The Old Athens Rd. church in Princeton is looking for a full or part-time preacher. We are a small congregation with our own building. We are partially able to support a man, though some outside help would be needed. We can help with that. The southern part of WV is an inexpensive area to live in, and also very beautiful. If interested, contact: Leonard Matlock, Rt. 1, Box 258A, Rock, WV 24747, or phone (304) 425-4627.

**NASHVILLE, TN** — The Bell Road church is seeking a fulltime preacher. Full support will be provided within our ability. The church is financially debt free and is at peace. We believe there is a great potential for growth. If you are interested, please call (615) 832-1979 or (615) 776-1134.

**DONIPHAN, MO** — The Southside church is in need of a preacher. We are a small group of about 30 and can provide \$250 a week toward support. Those interested may contact Lial Holland at (314) 996-3513, or Rex Holland at (314) 996-3251, or write c/o Lial Holland, P. O. Box 4, Doniphan, MO 63935.

**CARLISLE, PA** — The Walnut Bottom Road church near Carlisle in south central Pennsylvania needs a fulltime preacher. We have about 25 members and are able to supply \$200 support weekly. Additional support would have to be raised by the preacher. Those interested should contact Garry Adams (717) 423-6707 in the evenings.

#### AVAILABLE FOR APPOINTMENTS

**JEFF SMITH**, 103 Beth Dr., Lawrenceburg, KY 40342 — I am available to preach Sundays on a fill-in basis for churches in driving distance of my home in Lawrenceburg. You may reach me at the above address, or phone me at (502) 839-3205.

#### IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	383
RESTORATIONS	59

(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)