

# SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

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



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

*"Devoted to the Search for Divine Truth"*

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THINK ON  
THESE THINGS

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## The Word Is Inspired of God

Some time ago I came across this paper that I had written several years ago. I believe it is useful to publish it now, with some modification. I hope it may serve to enhance the reader's respect and love for the sacred scriptures.

I accept the Bible as the word of God without reservation because I believe it was verbally "breathed" of God, every word of it. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness..." (2 Tim. 3: 16). I understand that it was not written in English. It was given by "inspiration of God" in the Hebrew and common Greek of the time when it was written.

This generation lacks reverence and respect for the word of God. Efforts to destroy the Bible have been continual and violent through all the generations from the time it was written to this present time. In spite of the persecution, it stands as strong today as it did in the days of the apostles. There is something unique about the Bible that distinguishes it from all other books ever written.

The Bible is a book apart from all other books that exist. It makes claims that, if not true, would indict it as the greatest fraud ever perpetrated upon man. The writers, the central figure, the subject matters, the doctrine, and the promises of it would be as evil as Satan himself, IF the Bible is not all it claims to be.

If, on the other hand, the Bible is what it claims to

be, it is the word of God and is not in any sense the word of man (1 Thess 2: 13). This Book is not just the theme of religious thought that has come down to us through the ages. It is the very words of God given to the apostles, no subtraction or no modification by any of them. In fact, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, the apostles forbade anyone to add to the word given (Rev. 22: 16), or to take from the words given (Rev. 22: 17), or to change them in any way (Gal. 1: 6-9). It is sin whether this is done by teaching something not in the word, or by failing to teach what is revealed; or by trying to modify the word by translating it in an "in-other-words" type translation. This does not respect the revelation of God, nor the inspiration of the Bible.

I like to preach and teach about the **inspiration** of the word of God because that is what separates it from all other religious literature. I have heard men from the pulpit, in the classroom, and I have read articles that leave the impression that the men who wrote the Bible were speaking from their own experiences and wisdom instead of being verbally directed by the Holy Spirit. I am sure most of these men believed in the God-breathed message the apostles spoke and wrote, but we should make sure that those who hear us understand that fact.

All the apostles testified that the message they preached and wrote came from God. Moreover, they affirmed that the Holy Spirit gave them the words to reveal the message from heaven. The apostle Paul wrote: "How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit (Eph. 3: 2-5). The mystery pertains to that which was in the mind of God, which only God could reveal (1 Cor. 2: 10, 11). God made known this revelation by the Holy Spirit through WORDS (1 Cor. 2: 13; Matt. 10: 19, 20).

Paul wrote to Timothy to "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they



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shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Tim. 4: 2-4, ASV). Paul affirms that he wrote the commandment of the Lord by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 14: 37; Eph. 3: 2-5; Gal. 1: 11-12; 1 Cor. 2: 10-13). The charge he wrote to Timothy was by the inspiration of God. Those who turn away their ears from this truth, are turning away from God's inspired revelation and are turned to false doctrines. That is where most of our problems begin.

The "revelation" began on the day of Pentecost, after the ascension of Jesus into the heavens (Acts 1: 8; 2: 1-4). God has chosen to reveal His mind by Christ through the Holy Spirit. This revelation is made by "speaking words" given to the apostles by the Holy Spirit. "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come" (John 16: 13). "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God"... "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Cor. 2: 10, 13). One cannot respect the words unless he respects the Person who gave the words.

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## " QUOTE

**"There are lots of people who  
mistake their imagination  
for their memory."**

**—Josh Billings**

## UNQUOTE "

# Editorial

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## Searching The Scriptures To Cease Publication

With the December, 1992 edition, *SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES* will cease publication. That issue will complete thirty-three years of service to our readers. Several things have combined to bring us to this decision. The continual financial pressure from printing and postal costs, plus other necessary expenses certainly have been a factor. But the principal cause for this decision is the need for relief from the taxing deadlines with which this editor and publisher has lived for the last nineteen and a half years.

Since 1975 I have been involved in gospel meeting work for nine months of each year. Every time I have returned from a meeting, there has been one of two monthly deadlines to face. Some work had to be done on the road along with the busy activities of gospel meetings. The years have taken their toll. It is necessary to relieve some of the pressures under which I have been working so I may devote my remaining days to the work which has always been first with me - preaching and teaching the gospel.

### Agreement with *GUARDIAN OF TRUTH*

I have entered into an agreement with the *GUARDIAN OF TRUTH* to the effect that all rights to the name *SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES* will be owned by them to prevent any further publication under that name and to guarantee that our subscribers will receive their money's worth for any unfulfilled portion of their subscriptions. *GUARDIAN OF TRUTH* has agreed to supply one and a half issues of their magazine for every one that was due from *SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES*. In other words, if you still have six months remaining on your subscription to STS, you will receive nine issues of GOT. All church ads will be fulfilled in GOT on a one-for-one basis. Our readers will get more than their money's worth from this arrangement. *GUARDIAN FOR TRUTH* is ably edited by Mike Willis with a staff of capable writers. That magazine is published twice a month and contains 32 pages per issue. We have had only 24 pages once a month.

### Editor to Write for *GUARDIAN OF TRUTH*

I have been asked to write regularly for GOT and have consented to do so. I am comfortable working with Mike Willis and the able men which assist him in his work. The two papers have cooperated with each other through the years. Our general aims and purposes have been the same. It was my privilege to serve as an Associate Editor for what was then known as *TRUTH MAGAZINE* (which later became *GUARDIAN OF TRUTH*) from 1966 until June, 1973 when I became editor and owner of *SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES*. I left the staff of that paper with goodwill and continued to urge people to subscribe and read it. It will be a great pleasure for me to do the same again. Those who have followed my writings in STS for the past nineteen and a half years will now be able to find what I write in GOT. In addition to a column which will appear frequently, though certainly not in every issue, I will continue to write the short items which have appeared in STS under the heading "Editorial Left-Overs." This has been a popular feature in STS and many readers have told me that they always look for that first.

In addition to that, it is hoped that many of the writers for *SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES* will continue to write and submit their good material to GOT. Without the faithful work of these men, we would have been out of business long ago. Their reward for their labors has been the good they have done for their readers.

Our final issue will include a history of the paper from first to last by H. E. Phillips, who, along with James P. Miller began this work in January, 1960. As you might expect, we will take a nostalgic look back and then we will consign *SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES* to the archives of history where its merits or demerits will be judged by those who have read it through these years, or those into whose hands bound volumes may fall. I will sit down to write that last editorial with mixed feelings. But I am thankful for the opportunity to teach the word through these pages and grateful for the good men who have helped in so many ways and for those who have subscribed for themselves and for others. Over the years many kind words have been written and spoken about this paper (and some no so kind). We will cherish the kind words and try to learn from the other kind.

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15: 58).

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## ACCEPTED OF HIM

(2 Cor. 5:9)

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### The Proper Perspective

In our service to the Lord we must maintain the proper perspective. If we do not, we can easily become discouraged or we may become overly excited and euphoric when we need to be a little more cautious.

Getting a proper perspective means that we take an honest look at the way things *really* are and not just see what we *want* to see. The proper perspective comes when we see the larger picture. We sometimes become weary and disgusted because we are only focusing on part of the picture. Taking a bigger view may give reason to be encouraged and even quite optimistic.

At times our optimism and enthusiasm overshadows our sense of being realistic. I believe it was Luther Blackmon that told about the man who thought he had a good pair of shoes. All they needed were half-soles, heels and uppers. Besides, the strings were real good. We cannot afford to ignore real problems. Neither can we allow a few problems to blind us to the good that is present.

At one time Elijah had lost the proper perspective. He thought there was no one but himself wanting to do what was right. He said, "I alone am left." God had to help him get the proper perspective by telling him that there were yet 7, 000 that had not bowed their knees to Baal (1 Kings 19: 10, 14, 18).

There are three things we need to see to get the proper perspective.

#### The Progress We Have Made

We need to look back and see where we were and how far we have come. Have we made any progress? Are things better now than they were? Or, are we going in the wrong direction? Remember, that progress is in many instances, slow (Heb. 5: 11-12).

Individual Christians need to stop and consider the progress they have made. Do you know the Bible better now than you did a few years ago? Are you stronger and more mature (Heb. 6: 1)? Are you able to endure and overcome things that you could not in the past?

Churches have to do the same. While things may not be as we would like them to be in the congregation, the question is "Are we making progress?" Are we moving (even though slowly) in the right direction? Are we more united, stronger and striving to do things according to

the Bible? Are we trying to *deal* with problems rather than ignore them? Don't forget that progress will not always be labeled "progress" by some.

#### What Are We Doing Now?

The proper perspective involves seeing what we are presently doing. Are we striving to do what the Lord says do? Can our concepts, teaching and practices be justified by the Bible (2 Cor. 4: 13)? Is there a stronger sense of unity than in times past (1 Cor. 1: 10)? Are we growing in knowledge, in maturity and in number? Are we moving in the right direction rather than in the wrong direction?

We can easily get discouraged when we listen to those who are discontent. If we focus our attention there, it will give us a limited picture of the church. We can begin to think that most of the people care little about doing what is right. It is somewhat like three or four old frogs in a pond - they can make enough noise that it sounds like a hundred. What we need to do is take a look at how many are wanting to follow the Bible and try their best to live by it (Phil. 1: 27). Those people don't make as much "noise," but must be taken into account to get the proper perspective.

#### Our Potential And Goals

To get the right view we must see how bright or gloomy the future is. Is there reason for some optimism as we contemplate the coming days?

What is our potential as individuals? What are you capable of doing? What kind of growth can you experience? What can you become? It is sad to see those who waste their time and throw away their potential (Heb. 5: 11-12).


What is our potential as a church? What will the church of tomorrow be? Will the homes and the families that comprise the church be good solid homes or will the lack of Christianity in the home destroy the church? What is the potential for future teachers, song leaders and even elders? Does the future look better and brighter than the past?

What goals do we have or should we have? Individually, we must set our sights on being the kind of individuals that the Bible describes (1 Cor. 15: 58). When we do, we have also set our sights on heaven (Col. 3: 1-3).

As a local church, we must set our goal to become like the local church that God approves (Rev. 2-3). That means we must deal with the things that God does not approve of- even though such processes are unpleasant (Rev. 2, 3; 1 Cor. 5 and 2 Thess. 3). We must strive to be active and carry the gospel to others (1 Tim. 3: 15). We must work toward becoming scripturally organized (Acts 14: 23). Churches that are content with the status quo and just "keeping house" (though sometimes they really don't do that) just don't have much of a goal to do what is pleasing to God.

Getting the proper perspective always helps. At times it will paint a dark picture. But in most cases it will give us some reason for encouragement.

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



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## "Safe Sin"

Go ahead and drink but have a designated driver. Give the drug addict clean needles to make using drugs safe. Legalize prostitution so we can control it and keep the girls healthy. Legalize liquor so the drunk will not drink dangerous home brew. Legalize abortion so you won't kill yourself with a coat hanger. Pass out contraceptives to students so they won't produce babies or get AIDS.

"In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25).

### A Contradiction

I know those two words, "safe sin," contradict each other since "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). Man has not ceased his ingenious ways at trying to make sin safe. A sinful practice is acceptable if the undesired consequences can be avoided. While man likes to avoid the consequences of sin in this life, it is extremely dangerous for it deceives him into thinking he got away with it. Consequences of sin in this life can be deterrents to eternal consequences if we will use them as warn-ings.

### Safe(?) Sexual Sin

In my youth (not as long ago as you might think), we were warned of two sexually transmitted diseases (STD's). Now there are over 40, with AIDS being the major one at present. The consequences of promiscuity can be any of these STD's, unwanted pregnancy and unwanted family responsibility. When the idea of promoting "safe sex" is advanced, we are communicating to society to go ahead and commit fornication, but be careful to prevent any undesirable consequences. It is acceptable to practice illicit sex, but try not to contract AIDS or other STD's and try not to cause a pregnancy (if you do, there is always abortion).

### Why Illicit Sex Is Not "Just A Physical Thing"

We are commanded in 1 Cor. 6:18 to "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body: but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body," or his own being or self.

"Did you love her? Naw, it was just a physical thing." Illicit sex is never just a physical thing. Paul says our body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, that our bodies are members of Christ (1 Cor. 6:13-20). In marriage, it is

Christ who joins two who have made the commitment to be true to each other, including sexually. We are also connected to Christ "your bodies are members of Christ" (1 Cor. 6:15). Sin is a spiritual term. We damage our being in every sexual act committed outside God's limits, because we become "one" (blended, intermingled) with someone other than who Christ joined us to. Then, in a few minutes we tear that oneness apart into two separate beings again. It doesn't rip our body, but it rips our *mind, will, emotion, and spirit*.

The *mind* is now damaged because it has memories and knowledge it was not equipped to cope with apart from a lifetime commitment. The *will* is damaged because it has been bent like a wire against our conscience saying "no," and is made weaker. The *emotions* have been traumatized by the pulling back that comes after being blended and intermingled. And we get a deep wound in our *spirit* because death is administered to us instead of life. This happens whether or not you catch a STD. "*When Potiphar's wife tried to lead Joseph into premarital sex... it was not fear of conception, infection, or detection that kept him from it, he said: 'How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God (Gen. 39:9)'*" (Earl Kimbrough, STS, Vol. XVII, No. 7).

We say, "God you just don't understand." Yes He does. Sex was 100% His idea. He invented the whole process. He is for us, but in His love He tries to prevent us from damaging our lives and our being. He has given us proper channels for every drive we have.

### Marriage: Just A Piece Of Paper?

Concerning sex outside marriage, Farrah Fawcett said, "*I see nothing wrong with it if you know you love each other and are really committed. What difference does a piece of paper and a ceremony make? It's purely a business contract.*" ("*Farrah Fawcett Has Decided Marriage Isn't For Her,*" *Jonesboro Sun (AP) 5/1/90*). My answer: If you are not married, you are not committed, because MARRIAGE IS THE COMMITMENT! It is the legal, publicly witnessed and binding commitment between a man and a woman. Nothing else is. When two people live together outside of marriage, they want the privileges but not the responsibilities. When responsibility begins to develop one begins to look elsewhere. It is not "What therefore sex has joined together," but "What GOD has joined together" (Mt. 19:6). So it is not just a physical joining, it is a spiritual joining of two people.

### The God Of Taste Buds

Did you know God didn't need to give you taste buds? You don't need them. This ought to tell you something about God and how thoughtful he was of us. Food is simply to maintain and repair your body and you don't need to go "Mmmmmmm, mmmmmmm," over chocolate sundaes. There is only one reason for taste buds, and that's pleasure.


Someone may reason, "If God is the God of pleasure and wants me to enjoy what I eat, then I ought to be able to enjoy any amount at any time in any way. Right? Wrong! That's not logical. I know my stomach holds 2 quarts, so to eat 10 pizzas, 15 cheeseburgers and 8 chocolate malts is not really smart. It's best that I limit

my enjoyment. Likewise, we can't reason that because God has given us sexual appetites or the gift of attraction, that any amount is good at any time.

**Sex: A River of Beauty and Joy**

God's intention was satisfaction and fulfillment. He limits our behavior before marriage, not to take away, but to channel this beautiful flow like banks channel a river. It is foolish to knock down the banks of a river to give it "freedom" or "liberation." If the river said "I'm going to flow where I want to flow when I feel like flowing," we would end up with a flood and destruction and loss of life instead of something beautiful. CONCLUSION: There is a vast difference between "freedom" and a "free-for-all." Once we understand why God said what he said, it won't be as hard to control.

Using the  
**SWORD OF THE SPIRIT**



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**Walking By Faith**

For we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5: 7). We come to Jesus by faith (Mark 16: 16), and the whole journey from conversion to glory is made by faith as we look at the things that are not seen (2 Cor. 4: 18).

Let us consider some aspects of this spiritual life which is comprised of trusting rather than seeing.

**I. Believing that Jesus lived and walked among men:** We, of course, never saw Him. We did not behold the signs He performed; neither did we hear the gracious words that He spoke. Jesus said to Thomas, "... because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20: 29). We walk by faith, not by sight.

We tend sometimes to consider this a disadvantage. Things would be much easier, we think, had we lived when God became flesh and walked among men. Surely all doubts would vanish if we could see Him and hear Him.

Yet the stubborn fact remains that all who did see and hear Him did not believe. He was despised and rejected by men. He came unto His own and His own did not receive Him.

Those who will not accept the gospel account would not believe if they saw the evidence for themselves.

**II. Believing the miracles of the Bible:** When we challenge the alleged miracle workers of modern times to demonstrate their powers, we are accused of being unbelieving sign-seekers. But, in fact, we are not unbelievers. We believe in God; in the Son of God; in the inspiration of the Bible; and we believe every miracle that is recorded in the Bible. We believe that the sun stood still over Gibeon; that the dumb ass spoke; that the walls of Jericho fell; that Jesus healed the sick, lame, and blind, and walked upon the sea. We believe it all.

What we do not believe is that such power has been given to men today. We do not have to believe this to believe God. We walk by faith, not by sight.

**III. Believing that our labor in the Lord is not in vain:** We are assured that this is the case (1 Cor. 15: 58). "In due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart" (Gal. 6: 7).

Such assurances imply that we need not expect to always see the fruit of our labor. Others may reap where

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we have sown. When we are at the point of crying out: "What good am I doing?!" it may well be that we have done more good than we know. We must labor by faith, not by sight. Let us continue to preach the word; teach the Bible classes; put forth the personal efforts to save the lost, and just accept God at His word that such will not return unto Him void.

**IV. Believing in God's providential workings:** God holds the world in His hands. In Him we live and move and have our being. All things work together for good for those who love God and are the called according to His purpose (Romans 8: 27). But we often do not see this. An old Puritan proverb says that God's providence, like Hebrew, can only be read backwards.

When we travel by air, few of us could explain the physical and aerodynamic laws that enable a hunk of machinery to fly. I certainly wouldn't want to fly in anything that I had a part in building. I really don't know how the thing works. And yet I'm reasonably confident that it will take me to my destination.

A child in a loving home certainly does not comprehend the purpose and the wisdom of much that is done for him and to him. He does not understand that denials and discipline are for his good. Yet he trusts the love, the goodness, and the wisdom of his parents.

How much more is it true that we do not fathom the providences of our God. Yet we trust Him. We walk by faith, not by sight.

**V. Believing in the incorruptible inheritance:** We have never been privileged to ascend on high and behold the wonders of that city whose builder and maker is God. We have not peered into that book of life to see our name written there. Yet we believe the promise of our Lord that He will come again and that where He is we shall be also (John 14: 1-3). We believe that a rest remains for the people of God.

Like Israel of old in the desert, they had not seen Canaan land. They had not beheld the beauty of Mount Zion or stood on Jordan's banks, but they believed. They walked by faith. And we also who are traveling to the promised land are walking by faith, not by sight.

The day is coming when we shall walk by sight. We believe that our Lord walked among men; but one day we shall behold Him as He is and we shall be like Him. We believe the evidences of His power, but we shall one day know from experience that power that raises the dead. We believe that our labor is not in vain; but we will one day know the results of that labor. We believe that all things work together for good; but we shall one day behold the whole picture. We believe that there shall be fullness of joy in the presence of God; but one day we shall taste that joy, and we shall walk by sight.

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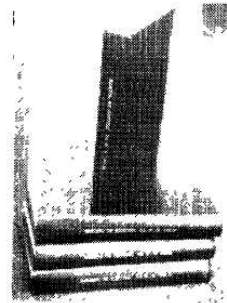
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## SIMPLICITY IN CHRIST

*P. J. Casebolt*

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### Simplicity In Christ

For more than 40 years I have contributed articles to various periodicals published by brethren in the church of Christ. I also have contributed articles on a variety of subjects to secular publications, and for the past several years have written a regular column for the Chiefland (Fl), *Citizen*.

In all of my writings, I have endeavored to display one main characteristic—simplicity. I have studied the English language in textbooks, dictionaries, by reading from other authors, and have taken special courses with one thought in mind—communicating in the most effective manner possible. And in my judgment, the most important ingredient to effective communication, whether speaking or writing, is simplicity.

When the editor of *Searching the Scriptures* asked me to write a regular column for that publication, under a heading of my choice, I did not hesitate. I would write under the caption, "Simplicity In Christ" (cf. 2 Cor. 11: 3). The first of those articles appeared in November, 1984 (p. 10/250), though I had contributed articles to STS in past years.

I think that I am capable, as anyone with an average education would be, of composing complicated sentences and paragraphs, using ambiguous words and ideas. But even in the age of miraculous gifts, the apostle admonished, "... except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air" (1 Cor. 14: 9).

The apostle Peter said that in Paul's writings there were "some things hard to understood..." (2 Pet. 3: 16). And notice that Peter said some things, not all things. Even if you have the knowledge and are able, it is hard to explain some things to some people when their ears are stopped, their eyes are closed, they have not grown as they should have, when they are encumbered by the traditions and philosophies of men, or when they are willfully or carelessly ignorant.

I do not mean to leave the impression that there are only a few writers/speakers who possess the quality of simplicity in desire or ability, but why are some so "hard to be understood"? It may be that some readers/hearers still possess some of the hindering qualities mentioned above, or that others have already clouded the issue with the muddy waters of half-truths, statements out of

context, or "foolish and unlearned questions," but when you try to follow someone through a maze of sophistry, hypothetical situations, or ambiguous and nebulous language, you will have a difficult task in such a journey.

Some writers/speakers may wish to appear profound and learned, resorting to deep, dark dissertations which are intentionally foreign to simplicity. And, whether such ones succeed or fail in this attempt, the result is still the same as far as the hearer/reader is concerned. Paul speaks of the man who intrudes "into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind" (Col. 2: 18).

There may be a time and place for scholarly offerings, but simplicity is not necessarily foreign to scholarship. Then, there are those who simply are unable to reduce their literary or polemic offerings to simplicity, even though they may have such a desire to do so. Some in this category know that simplicity is not their forte, and some may not know it, but the reader/hearer knows.

Then, there are those writers/speakers who either consciously or unconsciously avoid plain language because they do not want the reader/header to understand the author's true position on a given subject. This attitude is patently unfair to the issue being discussed, as well as to all those who are involved in or concerned with the issue.

Others may engage in rash, shoot-from-the-hip pronouncements which invariably need explanation or retraction later, and yet it is the hearer or reader who is often victimized by such careless, offhanded oratory or writing. All of us have said things on the spur of the moment that needed some clarification, but it is hard to understand why some writers are continually being "misunderstood" or "misrepresented," when a writer has more time to contemplate what is being written than does one who engages in extemporaneous speaking.

We should be ready to give an answer concerning anything which has to do with our "hope" (1 Pet. 3: 15). But that doesn't mean that we are obligated to answer every foolish question which people may ask on untaught subjects (2 Tim. 2: 23).

Brethren, let us desire and strive to "use great plainness of speech" (2 Cor. 3: 12). And the more we "speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4: 11), the nearer we will come to accomplishing our goal.

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## A BURNING FIRE

(Jer. 20:9)

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### Things The Lord Hates

Hate is a strong word. It has stubbornly resisted the metamorphosis that some words have undergone wherein their meanings were softened or watered down. Some may use the word casually (as in "I hate English peas") but generally, this word is reserved for use only when we feel the deepest of dislike and despise.

Hate means to loathe, detest, to despise; to feel ill will toward; to find deeply distasteful or disagreeable. It is an emotion so strong that it sometimes brings about physiological changes in men. At the thought of some-thing or someone toward which one feels hate the stomach begins to roll. Accompanied with a feeling of bitterness, the heart rate, blood pressure and even body temperature begin to rise. Considering this, it is no surprise that the feeling of hate is generally thought to be bad.

But consider that hate is also an attribute of God. God's feelings of hate are expressed toward evil things and evil men. Solomon wrote, "There are six things which the Lord *hates*, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, And hands that shed innocent blood, A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that run rapidly to evil, A false witness who utters lies, And one who spreads strife among brothers" (Prov. 6: 7-9).

Our goal should be to think like God thinks and feel like God feels. The things which God loves are things which we should love. The things that God hates are the things we should hate. Let's take a closer look at this passage in Proverbs.

**GOD HATES "HAUGHTY EYES."** Haughty is a synonym for proud and carries with it the idea of being vain to the point of arrogance; having excessive self-esteem; having or showing great pride in oneself and disdain, contempt, and scorn for others. Certain of the Pharisees "trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt" (Luke 18: 9) prompting Jesus to teach a parable showing that such pride will be humbled (Luke 18: 10-14). God hated this attitude in them and He hates it when it surfaces, and it does, among us! God wants us to have a different attitude (Matt. 5: 3).

**GOD HATES "A LYING TONGUE."** Lying is an

attribute of the devil (John 8: 44). Since the dawn of creation it is a sin that has plagued otherwise good men of God. But God hates lying no matter who the liar is. "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who deal faithfully are His delight" (Prov. 12: 22). God wants us to lay aside such as a part of the old man of sin and speak truth with one another (Col. 3: 9-10, Eph. 4: 25).

**GOD HATES "HANDS THAT SHED INNOCENT BLOOD."** The key word in this phrase is "innocent." God had established the nation of Israel on the foundation of righteousness and justice (Psa. 89: 14). Provision was made in her laws for the guilty to be punished and the innocent to go free and instruction was given to judges to be fair and impartial (Deut. 16: 18-20) in their judgments. But alas, such was not to be. Judah was carried in chains to Babylon in part because of the sins of king Manasseh who "filled Jerusalem with innocent blood" (2 Kgs. 24: 3-4). It is not hard to understand the hatred God has for this sin when we understand that wicked men shed the innocent blood of His only begotten Son (Acts 3: 14-15). God wants us to be fair, honest, and impartial in all our dealings (1 Tim. 5: 21; Jas. 2: 1, 9).

**GOD HATES "A HEART THAT DEVISES WICKED PLANS."** It is one thing for a man to sin in a moment of weakness and another, entirely different, when he plans and schemes to commit his wickedness. Both are sins of which one must be accountable, but one is committed when knowledge or discipline is less than what it ought to be while the other is committed out of high-handed rebellion. The latter is described in Micah 2: 1-3 as a people who scheme iniquity on their beds at night only to awaken in the morning to follow through with their wicked plans. God loathes such rebellion!

**GOD HATES "FEET THAT RUN RAPIDLY TO EVIL."** It is hard for those of tender conscience to comprehend that there are actually people who hate good and love evil and who consciously choose an evil way of life over that which is good. But a realistic view of events in our own hometown proves it to be so. David accused and warned, "You love evil more than good, falsehood more than speaking what is right... But God will break you down forever; He will snatch you up, and tear you away from your tent, and uproot you from the land of the living" (Psa. 52: 3, 5). For all those who constantly seek for evil to do, **BE WARNED!** God hates such! Our attitude should be to "abhor what is evil; cling to what is good" (Rom. 12: 9). If our generation perishes, the number one reason could be because **WE DO NOT ABHOR SIN!**

**GOD HATES "A FALSE WITNESS THAT UTTERS LIES."** Exodus 20: 16 commanded, "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor." That one would bear false witness suggests collusion to pervert justice (Cf. Deut. 17: 6-7; 19: 15). "A false witness will not go unpunished..." (Prov. 19: 5, 9). When Jezebel sought false witnesses to rise up against Naboth she knew it would take worthless men (1 Kgs. 21: 9-10) for such is unbecoming the righteous. Bearing false witness is a sin which comes from the heart and, according to Jesus, such defiles the man (Matt. 15: 19-20). Please remember

this the next time you are tempted to say that you heard someone say something they didn't say, or declare that you saw someone do something they didn't do, that such is false witness. You will have to stand before God and answer for it.. He hates such!


GOD HATES "ONE WHO SPREADS STRIFE AMONG BROTHERS. " God wants His people to be people of unity. It is one of those few things that is both good and pleasant (Psa. 133: 1). Once obtained, we are to be diligent to preserve it (Eph. 4: 3). Strife, dissension, and division are signs of carnality (1 Cor. 3: 1-3). It's no wonder that God hates him who spreads strife. Remember this the next time that you are tempted to say something that has no other real purpose than to spread discontent and perhaps cause anxiety among brethren. God hates such!

Each of the seven things listed above deserve a more complete treatment than it is possible to give in one article. But the one thing I hope rings clear is that God is passionate in His feelings about such evil things and the evil men who promote them. They will not be overlooked in judgment. He HATES them and so should we, His people! For that reason let these things not be named among us.

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## Preaching The Living Word Of The Living God In Order To Produce A Living Faith And Living Hope(III)

*Billy Ashworth*

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"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.... But without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11: 1, 6). "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2: 20). "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also (Jas. 2: 26).

From the passages above, we find that a living, not a dead faith is absolutely essential to be pleasing to God. I believe that Paul is the greatest example of having a living faith of any person who ever lived. In addition to his affirmation to the Galatians as quoted above, I thrill at the account of his addressing the captain of the ship on the voyage to Rome "when neither sun or stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away. But Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am and whom I serve, Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and lo, God hath give thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me" (Emphasis mine, BA; Acts 27: 20-25).

Observations: This is the greatest statement ever recorded regarding a LIVING FAITH! Paul, an apostle of the Lord Jesus, without fear of men or apology to those who were heathens, boldly affirmed his living faith in the living God. He was not in the least ashamed to declare his faith in the face of those who did not believe. Paul's faith was a settled faith. "I BELIEVE GOD THAT IT SHALL BE EVEN AS IT WAS TOLD ME. " The life of Paul from the time of his conversion in the city of Damascus, where "it shall be told thee what thou must do" (Acts 9: 6), is the greatest demonstration of the power of the gospel that has ever been recorded on the pages of Divine Revelation. The great persecutor became the persecuted for Jesus' sake. He believed God, obeyed Him, and never looked back - never wavered in his living faith.

Notice his confidence in death: "For I am ready to be

offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all of them that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4: 6-8).

Paul did not say that his confidence in death was because he had been baptized, although that obviously was essential, nor that he was a member of the church of Christ as many today hope to make heaven do, but he said "I have fought a good fight, I finished the course (he was not a quitter), I have kept the faith. " I believe that Paul was setting forth a principle that I have held for a long time: Anything worth believing that is so essential to salvation, is worth defending. If it is not worth defending, it is not worth believing. Paul was a **fighter!** This sets him apart from many members of the Lord's church today. We who have fought the battles over the years to save people from sin and false doctrine and to save a remnant from the apostasy that has occurred in the past twenty-five years, are not very popular with brethren and sisters of the younger generation. Those of us who have stood on the polemic platform toe-to-toe, face-to-face with false teacher, both within and without the church of our Lord, have not endeared ourselves to many of the saints.

I believe Paul demonstrated his living faith and love for the Lord and the church of the Lord when he confronted a "certain sorcerer a false prophet named Bar-Jesus" as recorded in Acts 13: 6-12. This false prophet tried to turn away Paul from the deputy, a prudent man, named Sergius Paulus, who desired to hear the word of God. "Then Saul, (who is called Paul, ) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him (Bar-Jesus) and said, O full of all subtlety and all mischief (villainy, ASV), thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now the hand of the Lord is upon thee and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season... Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed. "

Paul claimed to have the spirit of Christ. He felt the same way that the Lord did toward false teachers. Read Matthew 23 and see how Jesus felt toward false teachers, Pharisees, who were Jews. Then listen to His warning in Matthew 7: 13-16a: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be who go in thereat... Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. " To what did Jesus refer when He said, "Enter ye in?" Obviously He meant "Enter Ye into the coming kingdom" as is evident at verse 21. Frankly, I feel toward false teachers as Paul did. I do not believe they are "good men" who "all they need to do is be baptized" as I have heard some brethren say. They need to quit sinning and repent of their evil ways and believe and obey the gospel of Christ.

### A Living Hope

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pet. 1: 3-5).

What a wonderful passage left by the apostle for those of us who make our way through "this present evil world" and amid trials, heartaches, disappointments and persecutions. This is motivation to us to "finish the course, keeping the faith, " that we might receive that "crown of righteousness at that day (judgment day)" (2 Tim. 4: 7, 8). Paul wrote: "For we are saved by hope" (Rom. 8: 24). This shows that all of us who hope to make heaven are living by faith in the living word of the living God. We can say with Paul: "I believe God that it shall be even as it was told me" (Acts 27: 25).

Yes, I believe that Christ was **bodily** raised from the dead and became "the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Cor. 15: 20). Christ was the first raised from the dead not to die again and is the assurance of the general resurrection of all the dead of all time at His second coming. He said: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5: 28, 29). I believe Him, that it will be even as it was told to the people who heard His wonderful promise, and that you and I who read it were included in His promise.

We can and must do as the Hebrew writer exhorted: "Let us lay aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of" the throne of God" (Heb. 12: 1b, 2). Then we can sing with Paul: "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15: 57). What blessed hope! I love the words of the song: "Heaven will surely be worth it all. "

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## Bass Fiddles and "Church Work"!

*Luther W. Martin*

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It is always in order to provide definitions for any subject being considered. *Ekklesia* is the word most commonly rendered "church." Therefore, we define EKKLESIA - A Greek word, composed of two Greek terms: (*ek*) out of, or out from; and (*klesis*) a calling; or (*kaleo*) to call; therefore meaning "to call out of," or "a calling out from." We should emphasize that the word *ekklesia*, was not in itself a religious word. However, it has become such, over the centuries.

Historically, *ekklesia* was used by the Greeks to designate an assembly or gathering of citizens, called as a body to deliberate concerning affairs of State. It is so used in Acts 19: 39.

The term was also applied in Scripture to a riotous or unruly mob (Acts 19; 32, 41).

Next, we define CHURCH - An English word that has become an "ecclesiastical" word, over the ages. It derives from the German (*Kirche*); Dutch (*kerk*); Scottish (*kirk*); Anglo-Saxon (*circe, cyrce*); and Middle English (*chirche*).

Other English words that may properly be used, are: assembly, congregation, gathering, or community. Unlike "church," these synonyms carry no religious implication, although "congregation" is beginning to do so.

Inasmuch as the Lord's people, initially, owned no buildings in which to assemble, until some time after the first century, consequently the word "church" is never applied to a building, in Holy Scripture.

Neither the King James Version nor the Revised Version of the English Scriptures, have the word "church" in the Old Testament.

The Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, the Septuagint (LXX), does contain the word "church," and renders it from two different Hebrew words. *Edhah*, the older of the two words, comes from a root word, which means "to appoint." Therefore, a congregation assembled by appointment; such as, the congregation of Israel in the Exodus. They had an appointment with God, and were to obey His instruction. *Qahal*, comes from a root word, meaning "to call." Initially, this word applied to the mustering of men for military service; and the summoning together of the community for civic counsel.

Gradually, in both the Hebrew and the Greek societies, the words being applied to political and civic gatherings, began to be applied to religious assemblies and purposes.

The word "church" is used in Scripture in both a singular and plural local application; and, in a singular

universal sense.

### **Ekklesia in the Gospels and Acts**

The word *ekklesia* is used 115 times in the *Majority*, *Byzantine*, or *Koine* Text, which represents about 85 to 90% of all manuscripts; and 114 times in the Nestle-Aland/United Bible Societies text. The single omission in the latter text, is Acts 2: 41.

The *Textus Receptus*, which is one example of the *Majority Text*, contains *ekklesia* in Acts 2: 41, indicating that the Lord's assembly was then, (on Pentecost, A. D. 33), in existence. The textual critics, Griesbach, and Wordsworth are in agreement with this. But, Lachmann, Tregelles, Tischendorf, Alford, and Westcott-Hort, choose to delete *ekklesia* in this passage.

The only instances of *ekklesia* or *church* in the four Gospels, are found in Matthew 16: 18, and 18: 17 (twice). These passages look to the future, inasmuch as Christ's community or congregation had not as yet been established. (See Acts 2). Matthew's biography of Christ was written for Jewish readership, and therefore such subjects as "church," "kingdom of heaven," and "the exception allowing divorce" (due to the Jews' hardness of heart), are included in the first book of the New Testament, but are not found in Mark (for the Romans), Luke (for the Greeks), or John (written many years after the kingdom, the church, had been established).

In Acts of the Apostles, *ekklesia* was used to designate the congregation in Jerusalem, that convened as a result of the call of the apostles' preaching (5: 11). Stephen, in his sermon as recorded by Luke, made reference to the *ekklesia* (congregation, assembly) in the desert or wilderness, led by Moses (7: 38). Due to persecution, the people of the "Way" were dispersed throughout Judea and Samaria (8: 1). The *ekklesia*, (used in a collective sense) church(es), congregation(s), in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, were at peace and gained strength, after Saul's conversion to Christ (9: 31).

Elders (plural) were appointed in every church (*ekklesian*); i. e., in each assembly (14: 23). The *ekklesian* was gathered together (14: 27). The Apostles and elders, with the whole *ekklesia*, sent their own selected messengers to Antioch (15: 22).

### **Ekklesia in the New Testament Epistles**

In his Epistle to the church in Rome, Paul's first use of *ekklesias* is in reference to "Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea." (16: 1). This verse has "worried" some brethren, because, depending upon the theology of the translator, some versions refer to Phoebe as a "deaconess" (C. B. Williams); "a ministering servant" (Conybeare); "deacon" (NRSV), "servant" (C. K. Williams); "omostram" (Young); or "helper" (New Life N. T. ). The Greek word, *diaknonon*, simply refers to a duty, rather than an office. Phoebe was a female servant, just as all sisters in Christ should be.

Paul writes about the churches *ekklesiai* of the Gentiles; churches of the nations, *ethnon* Rom. 16: 4. He was writing about Aquila and Priscilla's work and sacrifice in his behalf. That, if it had not been for this husband and wife team, Paul might have lost his life, and the "ethnic assemblies" or "Gentile congregations" would have been deprived of the teaching afforded them by the Apostle.

Paul was known as the Apostle to the Gentiles (Eph. 3: 8; 2 Tim. 1: 11).

*Ekklesiai* - "... The churches of Christ salute you. " (Rom. 16: 16). Literally, "all the congregations of Christ greet you; " or "all of Christ's assemblies express regards. "

Numerous synonyms are used in the New Testament for the word "church. " Many of these are based upon Old Testament themes in reference to the Israel of God. Consider: the Seed of Abraham (spiritually), living stones built into a spiritual house, royal priesthood, holy nation, temple, bride of Christ, chosen generation, olive tree, and Vine and branches = Christ and His called-out-ones.

#### **Contrast Between "Synagogue" and "Church"**

As we mentioned earlier in this article, the term "church" **never** refers to a building in which the "church" assembles. This misuse of the word "church" may have been helped along by the gathering place of the Jews, the synagogue.

(1) "They have **burned up all the synagogues** of God in the land. " (Psalms 74: 8). A structure that could be destroyed.

(2) For example, a synagogue could be "gone **into**" (Matt. 12: 9).

(3) A synagogue had "chief seats **in it**" (Matt. 23: 6).

(4) A synagogue could be "come **out of** " (Mark 1: 29).

(5) A popular Centurion had "**built us a synagogue**" (Luke 7: 5).

(6) Immediately after his conversion, Saul "preached Christ **in the synagogue**" (Acts 9: 20).

(7) Justus' house was "**next door to** the synagogue. " (Acts 18: 7).

A synagogue was a material building, but an assembly, community, congregation, gathering or church is made up of people, persons, individuals, or figuratively, "living stones. "

#### **"Robbers of Churches" An unfortunate Translation!**

In Acts 19: 37, the KJV reads: "For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither **robbers of churches**, not yet blasphemers of your goddess. " Now this sounds as if "churches" are material buildings, subject to plundering. But the Greek word which the KJV translators essentially rendered as "church-robbers, " is *hierosulous* which actually means **temple robbers**. The episode had to do with Demetrius the silversmith, and his fellow-craftsmen, who were makers of silver images of the goddess Diana (Artemis). Since Paul and his associates were teaching against idolatry, Demetrius accused them of blaspheming the goddess and of plundering her temple! Hence, "church-robbers" according to the KJV. Demetrius was making use of any popular accusation against the Christians, that might sway his audience. It would be like shouting "horse-thief!" at a western neck-tie party. The word *ekklesia* is not used in Acts 19: 37.

#### **Conclusion**

In addition to misusing the word "church" by applying it to a building, many folk misuse the word by misapplying it to their conception of the work of the Lord's

church!

Many years ago, when I was manager of a radio station, we had a number of western bands, or "hillbilly musicians" who appeared regularly on various programs. One fellow was a skilled bass "fiddle" player. Now, in hillbilly parlance, a bass fiddle was not played with a bow, such as was the practice in symphony orchestras. Instead, the instrument was "slapped" providing rhythm and syncopation for the rest of the band. Anyway, this particular musician had been quite popular, playing for night-clubs, honky-tonks, and such like. But at some point, he left town, and I had not seen him for several years, when, one morning, I encountered him on a downtown street. We met, shook hands, exchanging pleasantries, and he remembered that I had not appreciated nor approved of his having played for dances, etc. So, he was eager to tell me, that: "I no longer play for dances! I've gone into church work!"

His family had been of the Pentecostal persuasion, and actually all the family members had learned their music by playing at Pentecostal church services. Of course, when he started playing for dances, his family was gravely embarrassed, and did not approve of his actions. But now, he had returned to the fold, so to speak, and he and his bass fiddle had "Gone into church work!"

So, when the word "church" is used, it can and may be woefully abused and misused! The New Testament specifically gives instruction as to just what constitutes "church work!" Many brethren need to learn this fact.

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## The Christian Is Not A Sinner

*Voyd N. Ballard*

9289 Skyway #6  
Paradise, California 95969

The word "sinner" (singular) is found some eleven times in the New Testament, and the word "sinners" (plural) some thirty times; however neither word is ever used with reference to the faithful child of God. The fact that a child of God can sin and sometimes does sin no one with any Bible knowledge will deny. However, this does not mean that sin dwells in the child of God, nor that he practices sin. If he allows sin to dwell in him and if he is habitually practicing sin he has fallen from grace and is again walking in darkness. The child of God walks in the light and if he does stumble and sins he repents and prays the forgiveness of God through the Advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous (1 John 2: 1). Can a child of God sin? Yes. Does he sin? Yes. However, there is a world of difference between a child of God who sins occasionally and a person in whom sin dwells and who habitually practices sin. The sinner is a servant of sin and sin dwells in him. The child of God is a servant of righteousness and **SIN CANNOT DWELL IN THE CHILD OF GOD!** Sin may slip in occasionally but the child of God does not permit it to dwell there. Through repentance and prayer he is cleansed from it by the blood of Christ. **"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin"** (1 John 1: 7). Walking in the light includes repentance and prayer on the part of the Christian, and guarantees forgiveness for **ALL** sin. When an alien sinner who believes in the Lord and repents of his sins is baptized he has all of his sins washed away by the blood of Christ. **"Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins"** (Acts 22: 16). When he comes up out of the water of baptism he is just as clean and pure and sinless as he was the day he was born, for he has been **cleansed by the blood of Christ.**

Likewise when a child of God repents and prays for forgiveness of his sin he is cleansed. God has forgiven him and he is just as pure and sinless as he was when he was born into this world and when he arose from the water of baptism. Repentance, confession, and prayer for forgiveness are God's requirements and when a Christian who has sinned meets these requirements **"the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from ALL SIN."** I will always remember the prayer of one of the elders (Bro. Roades who went to Heaven a few years ago) in the Turlock, California church where I preached for over five years. Bro. Roades prayed like this: "Lord forgive us of all our sins and now that Thou hast forgiven us" I like that

kind of prayer-"**NOW THAT THOU HAST FORGIVEN US**"-That is a prayer of faith, and I could tell by the way Bro. Roades prayed that he believed it. He asked God's forgiveness, and he believed that God had done just that very thing. And you want to know something? **I BELIEVE IT TOO!** This is the assurance that the faithful child of God has. Sure, the child of God can sin, and admittedly does sometimes slip into sin, but if he allows himself to dwell in sin or sin to dwell in him, he does so because he fails to "ask in faith, nothing wavering" (Jas. 1: 6).

If you go to sleep at night with sin against you it is your fault, because you did not ask for forgiveness.

When I say sin cannot dwell in the child of God I am not saying that such is impossible, but I am saying that you cannot be a faithful child of God and allow sin to dwell in you. And you do have control over whether or not you will serve sin. **"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof"** (Rom. 6: 12). The attitude on the part of a Christian that "I am a sinner and I am going to sin because I am a sinner" is a defeatist attitude, and wholly contrary to the teaching of the New Testament. We need to rid our minds of the idea that Christians just have to sin. We may sometimes sin, but there is no provision made for us to sin, but rather that we "sin not" (1 Jno. 2: 1). What John says here can be said of every epistle in the New Testament. Everything written to Christians are things written **"unto you that ye sin not"** (1 Jno. 2: 1). John says exactly what every epistle in the New Testament says to Christians, **"These things write I unto you, that ye sin not."** God does not want us to sin; He does not expect us to sin, and He has not therefore made provision for us to sin. He has provided a way of cleansing in case we do. **"And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world"** (1 Jno. 1: 1, 2).

I am well aware of all the passages in the New Testament teaching us that a child of God not only can sin, but that he can so sin as to completely fall away and finally be lost in Hell. I am quite familiar with the many warnings directed to the children of God to "take heed lest ye fall." I have used these many passages in debates with Baptist preachers who were trying to prove that a child of God cannot so sin as to be lost. However, none of these passages teach that the child of God should sin or that he is a sinner. On the contrary they are written to teach us that as the children of God we are **"dead to sin"** and should not live any longer therein (Rom. 6: 2).

Denominational preachers are noted for declaring that all men are sinners - Christians and aliens alike, but the Bible does not so teach. I repeat again that **there is no passage in the New Testament that describes the faithful child of God as a sinner.** Let him who thinks so produce the passage. If you are a faithful child of God you are not a sinner. The fact that it is possible for you to sin does not make you a sinner, because if you do sin you will not allow that sin to

remain against you. You may occasionally slip and sin, but there is a good deal of difference between the Christian who does so and the sinner who is wallowing in sin.

Rather than being called a sinner the children of God are described as:

CHILDREN OF GOD; Rom. 8: 14, 17

SERVANTS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS; Rom. 6: 18

SERVANTS OF GOD; Rom. 6: 22

REDEEMED; Eph. 1: 7

FORGIVEN; Col. 1: 14

SAINTS; 1 Cor. 1: 2

WASHED, SANCTIFIED, JUSTIFIED; 1 Cor. 6: 11

HEIRS OF GOD; Rom. 8: 17

And this list could go on and on. As the Hebrew writer said, "And what more shall I say? for the time would fail me to tell" of all the similar terms that are used to describe the child of God, and everyone of them just the very opposite of the term "sinner." No, No, Brother the **REDEEMED, WASHED, SANCTIFIED, JUSTIFIED, FORGIVEN, SERVANT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS** is not a sinner. True, it is possible for him to sin and sin may slip in once in awhile, but he will not let it stay there. There is no way in the world that you can be consistent with the Bible or good reasoning for that matter and add the term "sinner" to the above list! I affirm again: **THERE IS NOT ONE PASSAGE ANYWHERE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT THAT EVEN SO MUCH AS IMPLIES THAT THE FAITHFUL CHILD OF GOD IS A SINNER.**

It is true that we were all sinners before our obedience to the gospel of Christ for "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Jesus came to "seek and save that which is lost." Paul said, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief (1 Tim. 1: 15). Paul, of course, is not describing his present state as a Christian and as an apostle, but is showing that he was the chief of sinners before becoming a Christian. He said it was when he was a blasphemer and

a persecutor in ignorance and unbelief (Verse 13). In Romans 7: 15 Paul says, "For that which I do I allow (**know**) not: for what I would, that do I not; (**for not what I would, that do I practice;**) but what I hate that do I." This does not mean to be simply conscious of a particular act one is performing. If a man does not know what he is doing he is demented. When Paul was persecuting the church, he was certainly conscious of his acts, but was utterly ignorant of the nature and consequences of his deeds. He did not know that every act he performed in persecuting the church was a crime against God and man; he thought he was doing right. So, the sense in which he did not know what he was doing was not that he was unaware of his acts-but in the sense that he did not know what he was accomplishing.

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## THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

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

**VERNON E. FORD, 13521 Memorial Highway, Miami, FL 33161**  
- The North Miami church desires to make contact with a faithful brother who speaks Creole fluently. A Haitian brother who is also fluent in English is preferred but another who is knowledgeable of the Haitian culture as well as being fluent in both Creole and English would be acceptable. We are interested in talking with this man with the possibility in mind of his coming to Miami and working with me in the North Miami area which has a rapidly growing Haitian population. If you are this brother please contact us. If someone knows of such a brother please have him contact us. Call Vernon E. Ford (305) 685-3203 or H. F. McLeod (305) 437-3363 or write us at the address above.

**DAVID A. PADFIELD, 2612 S. Villa Dr., Evansville, IN 47714** - A debate on Premillennialism has been scheduled between Todd Weiner,

a premillennialist from Maryland, and myself. The first part of the debate will take place at the meeting house of the Northwest church of Christ in Evansville, IN on November 5 and 6. In this part of the discussion, Weiner will affirm that "The Scriptures teach that Jesus will reign on this earth with His saints after the advent of His second coming." The second part of the debate will take place in Baltimore, Maryland on November 19 and 20. I will affirm that The Scriptures teach that the event signified by the smiting and destruction of the image in Daniel 2: 35, 44 began to take place on the day of Pentecost." For additional information, you may write to me at the above address or call (812) 477-9433.

**FLORIDA COLLEGE ANNUAL LECTURES  
FEBRUARY 1-4, 1993**

"The Gospel and Epistles of John" has been designated as the theme for the 1993 annual lectures at Florida College. The lectures will begin on Monday evening, February 1 and continue through Thursday evening, February 4.

Florida College president C. G. Caldwell, III, has been chosen by the Bible faculty as the key-note speaker. Other evening speakers are Ferrell Jenkins, Ralph Walker, Jr., and Don Truex.

Speakers during the day, who come from as far away as California and New Jersey, are: Clark Dugger, Wayne Geoff, Max Dawson, Gardner Hall, Jack Owen, Rick Lanning, Lewis Willis, Larry Houchen, Jerry Earnhart, William B. Norris, Ray Ferris and Mike Grushon.

In an effort to alleviate overcrowding in Hutchinson Auditorium, three members of our Bible faculty (Melvin D. Curry, Ferrell Jenkins and Curtis Pope) will present a series of classes on the Gospel and Epistles of John. These classes will be conducted in Puckett Auditorium and will run concurrently with the regular morning lectures.

The major lectures will be published under the title **The Gospel and Epistles of John**, and will be available during the lectures and afterwards from the college bookstore and other bookstores.

There are numerous motels within a few miles of Florida College. The college has made arrangements with the following inns for special rates: Travel Lodge, 813-935-7855 (\$33 by Jan. 24); Shoney's Inn, 813-985-8525 (\$47 by Jan. 24); Rodeway Safari Resort, 813-988-9191 (\$32 by Jan. 5); Day's Inn (\$45 by Nov. 30); Quality Suites Hotel, 813-971-8930 (\$70 by Dec. 30). Full details are available from the office of information at Florida College (813-988-5131).

We hope many friends of Florida College will come and join us for this great week of learning and association with those of like mind. - Ferrell Jenkins

#### A TRIBUTE TO JESSE FLOWERS

Jesse Edward Flowers was born on September 8, 1941 in Miami, Florida to Jimmy and Jennie Flowers. He was the only boy in a family of four children. He majored in Bible at Florida College, excelling in this subject. There he met Charlotte Smith who became his bride. Upon completion of his education, Jesse began proclaiming the gospel.

He preached on a regular basis for congregations in Miami, Florida, Seymour, Indiana, Louisville, Kentucky and Bowling Green, Kentucky. He took a strong stand for the truth and contended earnestly for the "whole counsel of God."

Jesse and Charlotte reared four children - Laura, Jenny, Jesse Alan and Rachel. All of their children are faithful Christians. Jenny and Jesse Alan are now attending Florida College. Jesse Alan has a strong desire to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. His father had the opportunity to hear him preach twice before he died.

Jesse suffered a massive heart attack in 1984. The doctors gave him only six months to live. With God's help and a cheerful, courageous attitude, he lived eight more years. He had to lie down often and could only preach once on Sundays as health permitted.

Charlotte had to go to work to help support the family. She has worked the midnight shift for Kroger's bakery so she could be with her family in the daytime. She tenderly and lovingly cared for Jesse. Her mother-in-law called her a "a worthy woman."

His spirit left his body on August 20, 1992. Rick Russell and Tim Hale conducted the funeral service in Bowling Green. Bobby Thompson and Bill Simmons spoke at the graveside in Madison County, Florida. If you would like to express your sympathy to Charlotte, her address is: 233 Mark Trail, Bowling Green, KY 42101.

Jesse's great love for his family, fellow-Christians and the Lord helped him through life. He let his light shine. I am so thankful for Jesse's life and good influence on me. - Don Hastings, 40807 C. R. 54 E., Zephyrhills, FL 33540

#### PREACHERS NEEDED

**SELMA, ALABAMA** - The Poplar St. church, 2420 Poplar St., Selma, AL 36701, is in need of a gospel preacher. Our present preacher has been with us over four years and will be leaving by the first of the year. Our attendance and membership have about doubled in that time. We can supply \$1200 per month support and any additional support will need to be raised. For additional information call: Nile Castleberry (205) 872-1839.

**MOBILE, ALABAMA** - The West Mobile church is interested in locating a gospel preacher to begin working with us in early 1993. This

is a new work which is long overdue for this area and we would like someone who has been involved in such a work before. Support from other sources will be necessary in the beginning stages of this work. We also need furnishings for a building, study materials. Interested persons may contact Robert Tate (205) 3452-2041 or write same at 605 Highland Woods Dr. E., Mobile, AL 36608 for additional details regarding this work.

#### PREACHER AVAILABLE

**MALCOM S. KING, 3310 Pine Ridge St., Orange, TX 77630** - Having completed 32 years of local work, I am now available for appointments and meetings. Should any congregation be interested please contact me at the above address or call (409) 883-5307.

#### FROM AROUND THE WORLD

**CHINA** - Recent reports indicate that eight more have obeyed the gospel in China and two more in Hong Kong. Several Christians have been in and out of China during the summer for teaching.

**NORWAY** - Thomas Bunting of Bergen reports an increase lately in the number of those taking the Bible correspondence course. A couple of those they have been studying with have visited services. Summer reports from Bergen have been encouraging. In September, Tom spent three weeks working in Vilnius, Lithuania where efforts are being made to get a good work started. Considerable interest has been shown there on previous trips from several brethren.

Tom also reports that the American dollar had fallen 20% on the money exchange which takes a big bite out of their real income. Other brethren in Italy and other European countries have reported similar things which means that all those workers depending on U. S. support have actually taken a big cut in income in terms of buying power. Churches supporting men overseas would do well to keep abreast of this situation and be prepared to help offset these losses if possible.

#### MOSCOW, RUSSIA CHURCH

**CARROLL W. PUCKETT, Montgomery, Alabama** - There is a sound church now meeting in Moscow, Russia. It is called the South West church of Christ. Contact Dan Tholen at Ramenki dom 9, Korpus 3 Apt. 424, Moscow, Russia 117607 telephone 931-23-67.

The present membership consists of two Russians and two Americans. Yelena Zakheim was baptized last year by Greg Gwin and Phil Morgan. When my wife and I were there, I baptized Ludmila Ivanovna Ereminaon July 18, 1992. Ludmila was our Russian teacher at Moscow State University for three weeks. During that time we spent many hours after class teaching her the truth. Dan Tholen from Tampa, Florida was in the class and has decided to stay there and work with the newly formed church. On or about June 30, 1992, John Farrell made contact with Yelena. John has a degree in Russian and had come to Moscow to teach the truth. He preached his first sermon in Russian on July 12, 1992. On July 19 there were nine (9) present for worship not including Yelena who was out of the city. John has returned to California. Mike Garth from Tampa, Florida is now in Moscow to work with Dan Tholen. The first service was conducted in Russian except for two songs in English and one prayer in English. On August 9, 1992 there were 13 present for worship.

The church now has a meeting place, song books, Lord's Supper accessories and has a treasury since July 5, 1992. During the three weeks we were there, Dan and I had Bible studies with eight different persons, some with more than one session. We arranged for five persons to obtain copies of sermons on video and to have Bible studies later. We made contact with five additional persons who are interested in Bible studies in the future. Follow-up has taken place on these. We gave literature, Bibles and correspondence courses to several persons.

The church at Temple Terrace, Florida paid for ads to be placed in a local newspaper in Moscow for people interested in the Bible. So far, more than 100 responses have arrived and are being contacted. Several young men from the Moscow Free Speakers Toastmasters Club have been to church services. Dan and Mike are studying with them and two of them are especially interested.

Yelena arranged for the Bible to be taught in a large school. Dan will teach the Bible in English everyday to 14 to 17 year old students. Dan will be paid as a staff teacher. Yelena has arranged for the Bible to be taught at Moscow State University from September 11 to October 10, 1992 by Greg Gwin, Phil Morgan, Tommy Poarch and other preachers



who are going to Moscow on September 10, 1992. Ed Harrell visited there in late July. I am excited about the opportunity now to spread the gospel in Moscow. The public and private schools are open and asking us to teach the Bible every day to their students. The Russians like Americans and are particularly interested in a knowledge of the Bible. Russia is free, no restrictions on religious activity and has opened its schools for the Bible to be taught.

Presently the door is open, for how long is unknown. The Russians are not only receptive but will obey the truth when compared with errors of the Russian Orthodox Church and other false religions.

Expenses are little compared to the U. S. A. Presently an American living on rubles can live comfortably on \$250 per month. Dan Tholen and Mike Garth are both being supported that amount by the church in Temple Terrace, Florida. Considering the economics of preaching in Moscow and the unusual opportunities to teach the Bible, I strongly encourage faithful preachers to move to Moscow as soon as possible. Learning the Russian language is made easier by the fact that Yelena and Mila both speak Russian and English and both are Moscow State University language teachers.

Churches and preachers should seriously consider Moscow now and parts of the former USSR a little later. Moscow's population exceeds 9 million people with another 3 million in the Moscow area.

The church at Eastbrook (Montgomery) furnished Bibles and several hundred brochures, tracts and other study materials for Betty and me to use and leave in Russia. These materials were printed in Russian and English. Brother Tommy Moore and I, as elders of the church at Eastbrook, felt the need to invest the Lord's money in Moscow. Since our return, I have had several churches, elders and preachers who have indicated great interest and willingness to support the preaching of the gospel in Russia and at least three Christians are now planning to go to Moscow in 1993. There is a great need for others to go on a permanent basis for teaching the word of God.

For additional information call me at (205) 288-1461, home at night, or during the day at my office (205) 262-2909. My mailing address is 2527 Montreat Dr., Montgomery, AL 36116-3029.



#### **EDITORIAL LEFTOVERS TEACHING THE BIBLE IN RUSSIA**

Isn't this a switch! The Bible can now be taught everyday in public and private schools in Moscow but not in the public schools of the U. S. A. It cannot even be read here in public schools. God and his word are to be left out when studying the origin of life, family relations and sex education. Secular humanism can be taught and it is being taught. Birth control devices can be handed out but the Bible cannot be taught. But you can go to Moscow and teach the Bible in schools and even be paid for your service.

Brother Puckett has thrilled us with the news of what is taking place there. An effectual door is opened. Those who can should go and those who cannot go should encourage and help those who can. It may well be that Christians from Moscow and other parts of the former USSR will need to come to the U. S. A. to try and rescue our humanistic, hedonistic, heathenistic, Godless nation.

#### **CLOSE-OUT SALE**

Through December 30, 1992 all bound volumes of SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES which are still available will be offered for sale at \$5 each plus \$3 for postage and handling. That is a saving of \$7 on each bound volume since they sell for \$12 each. We have them from Volumes 19-20 (1978-79) to Volumes 31-32 (1990-91). You may order these from: STS, P. O. Box 69, Brooks, KY 40109-0069.

Volume 33, our last year of publication, will be bound to match all the others and will be offered for sale by GUARDIAN OF TRUTH, P. O. Box 9670, Bowling Green, KY 42102. They will advertise it when it is ready in 1993.