

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 XXXIII

February 1992

Number 2

THINK ON
THESE THINGS

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Born Again Into The Kingdom

The church is the people who are "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2: 9). The kingdom includes only those who are "delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Col. 1: 13). One enters the kingdom by the birth of water and of the Spirit and not by a physical birth (John 3: 5).

Among religious people it is almost universally accepted that one must be "born again" in order to enter the kingdom of heaven. It is the means by which one gets into the kingdom of God. Nicodemus came to Jesus by night and acknowledged him to be a great teacher from God. Jesus came directly to the point by saying unto him, "... Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3: 3). That is explicit! He further said, "... Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (vs. 5). This language is plain and to the point. The word "Except" is used in both verses and it allows no alternative if one enters into the kingdom of God. He MUST be "born again" or "born of water and the Spirit" in order to SEE or ENTER into the kingdom of God.

The context of John 3: 3-13 shows that Jesus was speaking of entering the kingdom of God upon this earth, and Nicodemus so understood that. He did not

understand the nature of the birth of water and the Spirit, but he understood that Jesus was talking about entering the kingdom here upon earth while man lives. Jesus distinguished this from a physical birth and that is what confused Nicodemus.

One must be born again to enter the kingdom. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3: 5). "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet. 1: 23).

The inspired John said that Jesus came to his own and they received him not, but as many as received him, to them he gave power to become the sons of God ... "Which were born, but of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1: 12-13). Jesus spoke of ONE birth, not two. One birth of water and the Spirit, not a physical birth.

Other expressions in the New Testament help us understand the significance of the birth of water and the Spirit into the kingdom of God. The germ of life is in the seed. Jesus said, "... the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6: 63). Peter said, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever" (1 Pet. 1: 23). The seed is the word of God (Luke 8: 11). "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures" (James 1: 18). Paul said to the Corinthians, "... I have begotten you through the gospel" (1 Cor. 4: 15).

There are parallel passages to John 3: 3-5 which make the meaning clear. Christ loved the church and gave himself for it, "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word" (Eph. 5: 26). That statement is equal to "birth of water and of the Spirit." In the New Testament there is no cleansing or sanctifying by washing of water except by baptism of a penitent believer.

Another is Titus 3: 5, "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." The washing of regeneration is

the washing of rebirth. The renewing of the Holy Spirit is the effect of the work of the Spirit through the word. "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind..." (Rom. 12: 2). The renewing of the mind comes from the teaching of the Spirit by the word.

Stating it plainly: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16: 16). The word is the work of the Spirit which produces faith (Rom. 10: 17), and baptism is the only washing of water authorized in the New Testament for cleansing anyone. "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22: 16).

The new birth which inducts one into the kingdom of God is exactly the same as that which brings one to be added to the church. It all occurs in the same way and brings the individual to the same place in relation to Christ and the remission of sins (Acts 2: 38, 47; 16: 31-34; Rom. 6: 3-6; Col. 2: 12, 13). These conditions reconcile one to God through Christ in one body (Eph. 2: 15, 16). We get into one body by baptism as directed by one Spirit (1 Cor. 12: 13). Since there is only one Spirit, one baptism and one body (Eph. 4: 3, 4), the only way to get into that one body is by baptism as directed by that one Spirit through the word of God. That equals "he that believeth and is baptized" (Mark 16: 16), and "born again of water and of the Spirit" (John 3: 5).

Searching The Scriptures

VOLUME 33 FEBRUARY, 1992 NUMBER 2

Published Monthly at
BROOKS, KENTUCKY

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

CONNIE W. ADAMS, Editor

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

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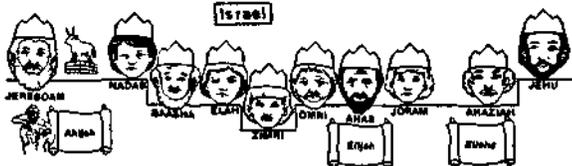
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" QUOTE

"People, like nails, are no longer useful when they lose direction and begin to bend."

UNQUOTE "

Editorial

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Rules, Patterns And Women's Role In The Church

For sometime now the institutional brethren have been facing increasing difficulty among themselves over woman's role in the church. There have been instances in which women have spoken to mixed audiences of men and women. Randy Mayeaux of Dallas, Texas was present, on one such occasion and reported that the woman who spoke was "dynamite." He thought it was great. More and more articles are appearing in journals advocating an enlarged role for women in the churches including, leading public prayers, making announcements, serving at the Lord's Table, and teaching where men are present.

The November-December, 1991 issue of IMAGE contains an article from Edyth Lane of Wynne, Arkansas in which she argues for such an enlarged role, though her article stopped short of directly advocating that women fill the pulpit. Several things in her article identify the mind-set out of which this contention grows. She said:

"Many Christians have been unsettled by recent questions about male and female roles. Some define these roles by appealing to instructions in Scripture that were addressed to first century people who lived in a society very different from our own. Then they have used these definitions to set down rules and patterns for this present age. I think it is time to take a look at the nature of Christianity and try to come to a more reasonable approach."

Later she wrote:

"If we are obliged to fill differing roles, it is a result of adapting to the world we live in, not because God demands it."

Again:

"We have come down to the 1990s with a lot of cultural and ecclesiastical baggage. There are some long-standing traditions in churches of Christ, some relating to participation in Sunday-school teaching, presiding over and serving communion, public prayers, and making announcements. Unwritten law says that only males are allowed to participate in these activities; but we must all agree that these restrictions really are traditional, for we do not get these rituals from Scripture."

She closed by saying:

"I hope this situation will change. I believe it can change only when we become really spiritual, when we

learn true humility and mutual love and respect in seeking to serve Christ out of a pure heart. May God grant it to be so, and soon. In our rapidly changing world, it will be a matter of necessity."

Several things emerge from these excerpts, which seem to summarize the gist of her article. First, she decries the idea of a pattern drawn from Scripture. The assumption is that the Scriptures which address this subject do not establish a rule, or pattern but must be understood in the light of cultural circumstances. This is another case of arguing that the church must continually change with the times and that the word of God does not constitute a binding pattern for action.

While it is true that Christians have to adjust to the circumstances which surround them, it is not true that the issue of the role of men and women in congregations is to be determined on that basis. Paul admonished "Let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing" (Phil. 3: 16). Paul's prohibition against the wives of the prophets speaking in the assembly was consistent also with what the law had said. "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law" (1 Cor. 14: 34). Therefore, the principle upon which Paul worked here was of wider scope than a mere cultural environment. The teaching of Paul under the gospel was rooted in the same fundamental principle as that which pertained under the law. Paul went back to the beginning when he dealt with this relationship in 1 Tim. 2: 11-15. He said "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity with sobriety."

In 1 Cor. 11: 3 Paul argued from an unchanging order of things when he said "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God." There is a chain of authority here which must always be kept intact. It is from this same base that the instruction flows that the wife is to be "subject to her husband" for her husband is the "head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church" (Eph. 5: 23).

None of this instruction gives any man the right to be smug, arrogant, self-righteous or insensitive to the dignity and feelings of women. They have too often been made the object of sarcastic barbs thinly disguised as humor. I have seen some of the sisters cringe at thoughtless things said in classes and sermons. Such ought not to be. But that does not change the fact that God, in His word, made no provision for women to exercise leadership roles in the church. Godly women have never had any problem about this because they respect the authority of the Scriptures. With them, this is not a matter of "cultural baggage," mere tradition to be altered by changing times.

The Feminist Movement has attempted to create a greater awareness of injustices toward women and set

in motion the means to rectify these injustices. But it has also developed a strident spirit and placed a chip on the shoulder of many women, including some Christians, which tempts some to disregard what the Bible teaches about the roles of both men and women.

Personally, it is gratifying to me to find more and more articles written by more conservative-minded writers among the institutional brethren stressing the need for respecting the pattern and crying out against the "liberals" among them. They almost sound like "antis" and some of them have even been called by that odious name! But let none of us become too smug. There are straws in the wind which indicate that we shall not be immune to this problem. One of the surest ways to get flogged by an increasing number of sisters (and not a few brethren) is to teach exactly what the Bible says on this subject and then warn against any departure from it. I know of some churches considered rather conservative which have had problems in this area already and the end is not yet. For that reason we are thinking of preparing a special edition of this paper for July which will address a woman's role in the church.

I am bothered considerably by the assertion of the Arkansas sister who said the situation, which she attributes to cultural baggage and tradition, can only change "when we become really spiritual, when we learn true humility and mutual love and respect in seeking to serve Christ out of a pure heart." If words mean anything, those who insist on the Scriptural limitations upon women are not "really spiritual," do not have "true humility" and lack "mutual love." And this loving conclusion is intended to melt our hearts to penitence so we will discard this unnecessary baggage and tradition and open the way for female leadership roles in the church. Oh yes, and don't forget, this change is essential in order to "serve Christ out of a pure heart." I suggest that it is entirely possible to be "really spiritual," possess "true humility," manifest "mutual love" and serve Christ "out of a pure heart" while walking by the same rule and respecting what the Bible says about the roles of women in the churches.

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Other Observations

It is prophesied of Jesus in Isaiah 9: 6: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulders: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Such designations and praise were never given to a mere man. This verse has reference to the Immanuel, "God is with us" (Isa. 7: 14). In clear language, the inspired prophet identifies Jesus and describes what He is. He is "Mighty God" thus "the child to be born is identified with the Godhead, both in deity and power. He is equal with God... The title Everlasting Father or 'Eternal Father' clearly places the child outside the pale of created beings; as God, He is eternal" (Homer Hailey, **A Commentary on Isaiah**, p. 1034).

A mere man could not perform miracles, but Jesus did (Jno. 20: 30, 31). Some contend that since Jesus gave up His divine power, the Holy Spirit enabled Him to work miracles. They refer to Matthew 12: 28 as a proof text. Jesus said to the Pharisees, "But if I by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you." In the first place, it is assumed that Jesus was referring to the Holy Spirit in His statement. The footnote of the ASV on this verse offers the alternate "in" the Spirit of God. But let us notice the parallel passage, Luke 11: 20, "But if I by the finger of God cast out demons ... " In the book of Exodus is recorded the account of the ten plagues which were inflicted upon the Egyptians. The magicians of Egypt could duplicate the first two, but they were unable to accomplish the third (the lice). Then they said: "This is the finger of God" (Ex. 8: 19). What did they mean? They were simply saying, "this is the power of God." In Matthew 12: 27, 28, Jesus was contrasting God's power with that of Beelzebub (prince of demons, see vs. 24). It is a mere assumption, and out of harmony with what the Bible teaches about the nature of Christ, to suppose that He gave up His divine power and could only perform miracles because the Holy Spirit enabled Him to do so. The power of Jesus was inherent, not derived (Jno. 5; 21, 26; 10: 17, 18). As to the miracles of Jesus: "They differ from the miracles of prophets and apostles in that, instead of being answers to prayer, granted by a Higher Power, they manifestly flow from the majestic Life resident in the Worker" (H. P. Liddon, **The Divinity of Our Lord**, p. 158). Jesus was Himself God and His divine power distinguished Him from an ordinary man.

When Jesus was in Capernaum and it was told that he was in the house, four men carrying a man sick of the palsy, broke up the roof and let down the bed where the man lay. Mark 2: 5 reads, "And Jesus seeing their faith saith unto the sick of palsy, Son, thy sins are forgiven thee. " But some of the scribes sitting there were reasoning in their hearts and asked, "Why doth this man thus speak? he blasphemeth: who can forgive sins but one, even God?" (vs. 7). Jesus said in verses 10, 11: "But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath authority on earth to forgive sins (he saith to the sick of the palsy), I say unto thee, Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thy house. " The scribes were right in that only God can forgive sins, but they failed to recognize Jesus as God. They would not admit that the miracles of Christ attested to His divinity. Please note that only God can forgive sins. Jesus forgave sins; therefore, He was GOD. It was the scribes, not Jesus who were guilty of blasphemy because they did not accept Him as being God and even spoke against Him.

Jesus said in John 5: 21, "For as the Father raiseth the dead and giveth them life, even so the Son also giveth life to whom he will. " Here Jesus attests that He possesses the same power through the Father. He raised those dead in sin to life (Jno. 5: 25) and He raised Lazarus from the dead (Jno. 11: 43, 44), the widow's son (Lk. 7: 14, 15) and the daughter of Jairus (Mk. 5: 41, 42). A man (only a man and no more) could not have such power, the power to give either spiritual life or physical life. Jesus was a man, but He was also more than a man. He was GOD.

Jesus declared in John 10: 30, "I and the Father are one. " Jesus and God the Father are separate entities, but they are one, as in indicated in verses 28 and 29. For example, both can give eternal life. They are one in purpose, both possessing the divine nature. The God-head is composed of three distinct personalities: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, but one God.

To Martha, Jesus said in John 11: 25, "I am the resurrection, and the life... " Here again we see that Jesus had the power to produce eternal life for those who would believe in Him.

Jesus could read the minds of others (Jno. 2: 25). This is not true of just a man, and only a man.

Jesus declared His deity in John 5: 58, "Before Abraham was born, I am. " William Hendricksen observes the error of the Jews as he comments: "They saw only the historical **manifestation**, not the eternal **Person**; only the human, not the divine. Jesus, therefore, reaffirms his eternal, timeless, absolute essence" (**The Gospel of John**, ch. 8, p. 66). Because Jesus declared Himself to be deity is the reason the Jews took up stones to cast at Him (vs. 59). They would not have done so had Jesus claimed to be no more than just a man. They accused Him of blasphemy because they did not believe He was divine. Prior to verse 58 Jesus had said to them, "except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (vs. 24). Literally, Jesus was saying, "except ye believe that I am" (the word "he" is in italics). B. F. Westcott says of the expression, "that I am, " "not simply 'that I am the Messiah, ' such as your imagination has drawn for you;

but far more than this, **that I am**, that in me is the spring of life and light and strength; that I present to you the invisible majesty of God; that I unite in virtue of my essential Being the seen and the unseen, the finite and the infinite" (op. cit. p. 131). Both passages affirm that Christ was God.

Never has it been said to a mere man, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. " But Peter said this to Jesus. God spoke from heaven at the baptism of His Son (Matt. 3: 17) and at the transfiguration of His Son (Matt. 17: 5), in both instances declaring: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. " At the transformation scene the expression "Hear ye him" is added. H. Leo Boles observes that "the term 'Son' is applied to the Messiah (Psalm 2: 7; Isa. 42: 1), not merely in reference to his official character, but more especially to his divine nature" (op. cit. p. 93).

No mere man taught as Jesus did (Matt. 7: 28, 29; Jno. 7: 46).

Let us not be deceived into believing that Jesus was only a man (just a man) while He was here on earth. He was God manifested in the flesh. "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name" (Jno. 20: 30, 31).

One who was only a man and nothing more than a man could not atone for sin. Jesus not only did this, but He was the mediator between God and man. He was the only one who could fill this role. He represented God to man and He represented man to God. Indeed, He was God-Man. He was the incarnation of God. We must remember also that our Lord was man as well as God. As man, He was touched with the feelings of our infirmities ... one that hath been in all points tempted as we are" (Heb. 4: 15). What a glorious example for us to follow (1 Pet. 2: 21-23)!

One has said: "The divinity of Christ is in solution in the Bible as salt is in sea water. " On the memorial of William Ewart Gladstone in Howarden Church, England, is the following inscription taken from his own words:

"All I think, all I write, All I am, is based on the divinity of Christ, the central hope of our poor wayward world. "

I pray that these articles have made some contribution to the important study of the nature of Christ.

Some Suggested Reading

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 Kellems, Jesse. **The Deity of Jesus**. Joplin: College Press, reprint, n. d.
 Liddon, H. P. **The Divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ**. Minneapolis: Klock and Klock, reprint, n. d.
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 Vos, Geerhardus. **The Self Disclosure of Jesus**.

(Continued on bottom of next page)

**A Review Of Jerry Bassett's
Rethinking Marriage, Divorce
& Remarriage (No. 2)**

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Marriage, The Bond And Adultery

One of the problems in the divorce and remarriage discussions is the use of terms associated with the topic. If one uses the term "marriage" or "adultery" to mean one thing while another uses it in an entirely different way, obviously, the two have different starting points and will reach diverse conclusions. This same principle is true with other terms like divorce, bond or fornication.

Marriage And The Bond

I am convinced that a clear concept of the distinction of the marriage and the bond erases many of the problems and questions raised in a discussion of divorce and remarriage.

Brother Bassett confuses the two by presenting *marriage* and the *bond* as one and the same thing (Bassett, pp. 59-60). He must make them the same to fit his doctrine, for he argues that if the couple are no longer *married*, they are no longer *bound* (Bassett, p. 60).

1. **There is a difference in the marriage and the bond.** This is obvious from the fact that the woman in Rom. 7: 2-3 is *bound* to her first husband even though she is *married* to another man.

2. **Defining marriage and the bond.** *Marriage* is a relationship entered into by agreement and ratified by compliance with civil law. The *bond* is a covenant with God that joins one to his mate. The "law of her husband" (Rom. 7: 2) refers to the bond or the "law which binds the wife to her husband" (G. Kittel, *Theological Dictionary Of The New Testament*, Vol. IV, P. 1070).

3. **It is possible to be bound to one and married to another.** That is certainly the case in Rom. 7: 2-3. The woman in the text was "bound by the law to her husband" even though she was "married to another man." This is what makes the second marriage adulterous.

(Continued from previous page)

Nutley: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co.,
1953.

Warfield, Benjamin B.: **The Person of Christ.** "The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, James Orr, General Editor, Vol. IV, pp. 2338-2348.
The Lord of Glory. Grand Rapids: Guardian Press, reprint.

Adultery

1. **Defining adultery.** Bassett tells us that when a couple "commit adultery" (as in Matt. 5: 32; 19: 9), it refers to the act of *divorce* and *remarriage* and not to unlawful sexual activity.

"Notice that Jesus used two verbs, 'divorces' and 'marries,' and said the result of these two ACTIONS is the commission of adultery... The very fact that the adultery Jesus talked about was the result of the two-fold action of divorcing and marrying argues that he was not talking about adultery in the sense of sexual activity later on in the marriage itself" (Bassett, pp. 68-69).

We are told that even if "adultery" refers to the sexual activity, the sexual activity in the second marriage could not be adultery because adultery (as defined by Webster) refers to sexual activity with someone other than one's wife or husband (Bassett, p. 71). "Further, when one divorces and marries another, he is married to that person" (Bassett, p. 71). Jerry ridicules the idea of an "adulterous marriage." He claims that this is a contradiction of terms. If it is adultery, it is not a marriage. If it is a marriage, it is not adultery (Bassett, pp. 71-72).

First, Bassett has again confused the marriage and the bond. Rom. 7: 2-3 demonstrates that they are not the same. This text shows that what makes the second marriage adulterous is when one is still bound to a previous mate. It so happens that in this text the woman was *married* to another man. Yet, she was called an *adulteress*. A thing that brother Bassett says cannot be.

With this, Matt. 19: 9 will agree. A man who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery. If Bassett is right, how could he commit adultery? He is no longer married to the first woman. He is married to the second. So, if he is married, how can he commit adultery?

Secondly, to define adultery as being the two acts of divorce and remarriage will not work. In John 8: 4 the Jews brought a woman to Jesus saying, "Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act." "I wonder, did they catch her in the act of divorcing her husband and marrying another? Or did they catch her in the very act of sexual intercourse?"

Furthermore, Jesus warned about the man who would look upon a woman to lust after her, saying he has committed *adultery* already with her in his heart (Matt. 5: 28). Was this man fantasizing about divorcing and remarrying "with her" or committing a sexual act? In Matt. 5: 32, the one who *is* put away (thus not guilty of unlawful divorce) commits adultery when she remarries.

The Old Testament usage of the term "adultery" harmonizes with those cited above from the New. Consider Ezek. 16: 15, 16, 25, 26, 32; Jer. 3: 8-9; Prov. 6: 20-35.

By the way, speaking of adultery, Jerry informs us that the woman of Matt. 5: 32a doesn't really commit adultery. It is just that "her husband made it appear so by his action in divorcing her" (Bassett, p. 34). Thus, she is just stigmatized.

2. **Continuous adultery?** Based upon the definition that Bassett has given for adultery, he argues that it is not a continuous act (i. e. living in adultery), but it refers to the one-time act of divorce and the one-time act of remarriage (Bassett, pp. 68-70).

The conclusion that Bassett and others who argue as he does are trying to reach is obvious. "Indeed, they must repent of their sin in divorcing and remarrying. However, there is nothing in the words of Jesus to be served by then dissolving another marriage. Rather, let them demonstrate their repentance by faithfully maintaining their marriage" (Bassett, p. 78).

First, Col. 3: 5-7 clearly shows that one can "live in adultery." Verse 5 enumerates some sins which must be put to death. Among them is the sin of *fornication*. Then, verse 7 says that the Colossians had one time "lived in them." They had lived in fornication; the very thing that Bassett says cannot be done.

Rom. 7: 2-3 shows that a woman who marries another man would be called an adulteress as *long as her first husband lives*. Indeed, people can and do live in adultery!

Secondly, the word translated "committeth adultery" in Matt. 19: 9 is in the present tense in the Greek. Bassett says, "Generally speaking, the present tense does indicate continuous action" (p. 69). He then cites about four references where this is not the case. However, concerning the text under dispute, Leonard Latkovsky, Professor of Classical Languages, Belarmine College, Louisville, KY comments, "And the present tense form of the Greek form *moichatai* = commits adultery means 'continuous action at any time,' i. e. as long as the condition of the second marriage continues to exist" (written statement to Gene Frost). I do not base my conclusion on the tense of the Greek alone. But, what Mr. Latkovsky says harmonizes with Col. 3: 5-7 and Rom. 7: 2-3.

In the next article we will look at 1 Cor. 7: 15.

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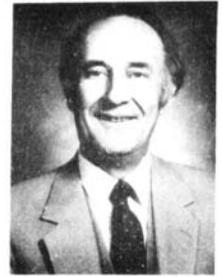
WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

Send all questions to:

Weldon E. Warnock

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Was Wine Always Fermented?

QUESTION: Does "wine" mean "wine" or other kind of juice? I believe you should look up "juice" to see what juice means. And, what are wine bottles? Why could they not use old wine bottles when they made new wine?

ANSWER: Yes, *wine* means "wine" but wine was not always fermented in the Bible. The context determines whether it is fermented or unfermented. For example, Isaiah calls the juice of the grape "wine" while it is still in the cluster. Hear him: "Thus saith the Lord, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it" (Isa. 65: 8). Solomon wrote, "So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine" (Prov. 3: 10). Here the juice is spoken of as "wine" when it is squeezed out by the presses. Obviously, in the preceding texts, the wine is unfermented.

"Wine" is used biblically in a generic sense without the word denoting whether it is sweet or alcoholic. The word "cider" is a good illustration. It is generic and can mean that the substance is either sweet or hard. If we say, "He got drunk on cider," the conclusion would be that it was hard or fermented. Cider is the juice of fruit (as apples) and wine is the juice of fruits (as grapes), and many times fermented. In our current vernacular, wine means "fermented juice," but this is not always true in the Bible, as already shown. As to "juice" that the querist asks me to look up, it is "the liquid part of a fruit or vegetable" (Webster), so juice can fit the definition of wine as heretofore described.

In reference to wine bottles, Jesus said, "Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles and both are preserved" (Matt. 9: 17). Notice that Jesus said it was wine before it was put into the bottles, even before fermentation started to take place.

Today, "bottles" refer to glass or plastic containers which the common people did not use in the time of Christ. The word translated "bottles" is *askos*, which means a "leather bag, esp. wine-skin" (Arndt-Gingrich, p. 116). A wineskin was a goatskin that was removed from the animal without slitting the skin. After it was tanned and the hair cut close to the skin, it was turned

inside out. The neck opening was used as the mouth of the container and the other openings at the feet and tail were closed with cords.

Ralph Earle wrote, "When grape juice ('new wine') is placed in a wineskin, it soon begins to ferment. But the new leather wineskin will stretch as the volume of the fermenting increases. If, on the other hand, fresh grape juice is put into a used wineskin which has already stretched, the fermentation will cause the skin to burst, and both wine and wineskin will be lost" (*Word Meanings of the New Testament*, p. 33).

Sometimes Jesus' turning the water into wine at Cana (John 2; 1-11) is used as justification for drinking alcoholic beverages. But that had to be sweet wine, unfermented juice. Would the Lord tell us that wine is a mocker (Prov. 20: 1), to look not upon the wine when it is red, which biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder (Prov. 23: 31-32), and then provide that kind of wine at a wedding feast? Would he furnish strong drink when he said, "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink" (Hab. 2: 15)? Absolutely not! Those who like to "take a little nip" can find no solace in the teachings of Jesus.

SINCERE WORDS

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

Dick Blackford

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To The Editor Of The Gospel Advocate — An Open Letter To Furman Kearley

Dear Brother Kearley,

I was perplexed at your November, 1991 editorial in which you praised and thanked the 4000 congregations which participated in the "One Nation Under God" Campaign.

First, you said it was a success because it has stirred our minds to remember the Great Commission. I suppose one could say the same about the Boston/Crossroads Movement, the Missionary Society, and the Billy Graham Campaigns. But we don't need these or the "O. N. U. G. " Campaign to be reminded of our duty.

Second, you said the campaign did more to unite the "fiercely independent" churches of Christ throughout the nation. "I believe the Bible teaches congregational autonomy and that each is to be independent from the other." The Sycamore church and the contributing congregations are practicing the opposite of what you

say you believe. When the contributing congregations joined the campaign, they delegated a portion of the oversight of their work and resources to the Sycamore elders. God has limited the oversight of elders to "the flock which is among you" (1 Pet. 5; 2; Acts 20: 28). What ever pertains to the local flock (its work, resources, worship, edification, discipline), is what they oversee.

What would have been readily recognized as a society had the overseers of the campaign identified themselves separate from the church was obscured by the fact that they assumed the title of "elders" in both roles. To call themselves elders in **both** the role of overseeing a local church and overseeing a multi-church or churchhood project is deceptive, whether intentional or not. They were already overseeing the local work at Sycamore. But when they took control of a National Campaign through which all other churches function, they assumed a dual role and become **more than** local elders. To refer to themselves as "elders" in a role God never gave elders (overseeing a churchhood function) is a misnomer. When the scope of their oversight became larger than a local church they overstepped God's boundaries for oversight. They corrupted the organization of the church and have developed a "brotherhood" (churchhood) oversight. This is the point at which they sinned, and so did the contributing churches. Regardless of anyone's sincerity, we can only know them by their fruit.

Third, you said the benefit of the campaign was related to unity and brotherhood. "**Tragically, a sense of fragmentation has been running throughout our brotherhood for a number of years.**" Yet you said the 4000 contributing churches comprised only 33% of all congregations. So which is the fragment, your 33%, or the 67% that did not participate in this corruption of the organization of the church?

Continuing your quote: "**Some have been moving toward liberalism, while others have moved toward... legalism. The focus of too many has been upon agitation, argumentation, and hostility.**" Brother Kearley, were you agitating, argumentative, hostile, and being legalistic when you opposed the Boston/Crossroads Movement in the pages of the **Gospel Advocate**? What is legalism except insisting that we do all things according to the pattern?

Fourth, you called the campaign a "positive effort." Is it positive to violate the limitations God has placed on the scope of elders? No, a person is being positive when he is moving along the lines of scriptural authority, not when he disregards God's will and involves a sizable segment of God's people in error.

The Herald of Truth has split the brotherhood twice. The "O. N. U. G. " Campaign not only maintains a division over the sponsoring church but has divided some institutional brethren who have spoken and written against it. Is this positive? Is this expedient?

Fifth, you said "**visible results demonstrate success.**" But they don't demonstrate that the "Sponsor-ing Church" concept is scriptural. Again, one could say the same about the Boston/Crossroads Movement, the Missionary Society, and the Billy Graham campaigns.

You told us that more than 250 baptisms have been reported. Since \$10, 000, 000 was the amount needed, that figures to approximate \$40, 000 per baptism. We can do better than this in gospel meetings for a lot less than \$40, 000! Many of the responses may have obeyed anyway as a result of some of the local churches conducting their gospel meetings in conjunction with the campaign. I suspect 4000 congregations could each conduct a gospel meeting and have as many baptisms without having to corrupt the organization of the church. Further, \$10, 000, 000 will support 357 American preachers for a WHOLE YEAR (at an average of \$28, 000 annually). Surely each of them could convert one person in a year's time! That's more than 250 even if they convert a minimum of one per year. The "O. N. U. G." Campaign was not expedient even from a financial point of view.

Brother F. B. Shepherd said, "**There is absolutely no precept or example in the Holy Scripture for the existence of any organization, federation, or society which embraces more or less than one local congregation through which to perform the work of the Lord in the furtherance of the gospel**" (GOSPEL ADVOCATE, 2/25/32).

Foy E. Wallace, Jr. said, "**For one church to help another church bear its own burdens, therefore, has scriptural precedent. But for one church to solicit funds from other churches for general dis-tribution in other fields or places, thus becoming the treasury for other churches, is quite a differ-ent question. Such procedure makes a sort of society out of the elders of a local church, and for such there is not scriptural precedent or example**" (GOSPEL ADVOCATE, 5/14/31).

F. B. Syrgley said, "**The agency system of collect-ing funds from many churches, even if it is done under some eldership, is without authority, ties churches together and has a tendency to destroy the initiative and independence of the local church... The greatest objection to the whole scheme is that it is not in the New Testament**" (GOSPEL ADVOCATE, 11/1/34).

Numerous and similar quotes can be produced from H. Leo Boles and several others, all from the pages of the ADVOCATE. It was known as the "Old Reliable." But what must be said of the **Advocate**, brother Kearley, now that you are teaching that all congregations may do evangelistic work under the oversight of one centralized eldership? Does this not make them a "churchhood" eldership? You say churches of Christ are "fiercely inde-pendent" and you believe they should be. But there is a vast difference between what you preach and in what you praise and practice. It is similar to the Southern Baptists who claim to be fiercely independent while promoting the Southern Baptist Convention. You be-moan that some have been moving toward liberalism. Brother Kearley, "thou art the man." For the sake of truth above all else,

Dick Blackford

Commending you to

THE WORD OF HIS GRACE

Marshall E. Patton

1024 Coronado Dr., S. E.
Huntsville, Alabama 35802



The Love Of God — Romans 8 (No. 7) God For Us — More Than Conquerors — Vs. 31-39

"What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh interces-sion for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

The final lesson in this series brings us to what may well be called the golden text of the whole chapter. Indeed these verses are climactic. After setting forth **the love of God** as manifested in the various things identified in this chapter, and after recapitulating the whole scheme of redemption (vs. 28-30), Paul steps out upon the stage before all mankind and challenges the whole world to fault the love of God or the security such love has provided for the faithful. God has left no stone unturned. Come what may, His love has provided us with a sufficiency that enables us to be "more than conquerors"!

God For Us

When Paul raises the question, "What shall we then say to these things?," he has in view the "all things" (v. 28) as well as the whole scheme of redemption recapitulated (vs. 29-30). In view of the love of God and its sufficiency so clearly made manifest, what in all the world, in heaven above, or hell below, can possibly militate against the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose? No enemy can possibly militate against the fulfill-

ment of God's eternal purpose? No enemy can possibly set at naught God's eternal purpose, design, and ultimate glorification of His saints. With God on our side, victory is assured! God who went so far as to sacrifice His own Son has not and will not leave one thing undone in our behalf.

It should be remembered just here, however, that nothing that God has ever done, is doing, or will do infringes upon the volition of man. Man's power to choose right or wrong, accept or reject what God has provided, is ever present, and, therefore, in the final analysis man must bear the blame for any failure. For this very reason man must give an account of himself unto God (Rom. 2: 6-11; 2 Cor. 5: 10).

Paul raises other questions, the answers to which continue to emphasize the all-sufficiency of God's love in making possible our eternal salvation. "Who can lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" Again, "Who is he that condemneth?" The Judaizing teachers made accusations against and condemned Gentile Christians because they failed to keep the covenant of circumcision and other ordinances of the law of Moses. Since such ordinances were no part of the New Covenant, made effective by the sacrifice of Christ, such accusations and condemnations went for naught. When God justifies, that justification stands in spite of all the accusations of men to the contrary. Christ who sacrificed His life, who ever makes intercession for us, and by whose authority all things must be done (Col. 3: 17) supersedes any and all men who would accuse and condemn. This affords all Christians comfort and consolation in the face of all foes.

The Love of Christ

The answer to Paul's final question is the ultimate in assurance. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?"

Before looking carefully at Paul's answer, a point of controversy needs attention. Does the "love of Christ" refer to His love for us, or does it refer to our love for Him? The difficulty lies in the fact that the expression "love of Christ, " of its self, can be understood either way. However, I am persuaded that in light of its context and in the light of all else revealed, it must be understood to refer to **the love of Christ for us**. Here Paul personifies those things that try the faith of men and shows that there is no enemy that can break the bond of Christ's love for us. While our love may fail, His never does.

Practically all Calvinist hold that the expression refers to our love for Christ, and based upon that concept they seek to strengthen a fundamental tenet of their doctrine, namely, the eternal security of saints, or which is the same, the impossibility of apostasy. That Calvinism is in error in this matter is evident from the factual experience of those whose love does fail (Cf. Matt. 24: 12), the warnings against the danger of falling from grace (Heb. 3: 12; 1 Cor. 10: 12), the examples of those who did fall (Acts 1: 25; 1 Cor. 10: 8; Gal. 5: 4), and in view of man's accountability (Rom. 2: 6; 2 Cor. 5: 10).

However, not all who say the "Love of Christ" refers to our love for Him are Calvinists, nor do they use these verses so as to infringe upon man's volition. From their

viewpoint, the general idea is that **if** one's love is strong enough, none of the things mentioned will turn that love from Christ.

In reply, I would say that Paul did not mention any "if. " He boldly affirmed unconditionally the "love of Christ. " It is always present—now and forevermore, come what may! Furthermore, it seems to me to be altogether incongruous for Paul to spend practically the whole chapter on the love of God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit for us, and then come to the climax of that theme and suddenly change to the love of the Christian for Christ. Besides this, the things mentioned by Paul as being unable to separate one from the "love of Christ" are the very experiences that often, yea, many times over, do cause Christians to fail in their love for Christ. In the midst of such they frequently become weary, discouraged, yield to despair, and separate themselves from Christ, concluding that God has forsaken or forgotten them. Jesus said, ""And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold" (Matt. 24: 12). Even Paul quotes from Psalm 44: 22, "For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter, " which is in the context of people thinking that God had forsaken them because of their misfortunes. Paul's point is that such people were wrong and so are we, if and when we think God has turned His back on us during such trying experiences. His love is always there! We may forsake Him, but He never will forsake us (Heb. 13: 5).

More Than Conquerors

In the last verse of this chapter Paul burst forth in the song of victory: "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us... " Thus, Paul continues his theme of Christ's love for us. This love has made possible our triumph over all foes. Notice the victory comes through Christ. Apart from Him there is no hope. No wonder Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4: 13).

Paul's deep convictions are expressed further as he enumerates those things which are often hostile to the Children of God, but which can never break the bond of heaven's love for us. How apropos the song:

"The cross that He gave may be heavy,
But it ne'er out-weighs His grace;
The storms that I feared may surround me,
But it ne'er excludes His face.
The cross is not greater than His grace,
The storm cannot hide His blessed face;
I am satisfied to know That with Jesus here below,
I can conquer every foe. "

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Review Of A CRI Statement

A reader of STS has written regarding a radio program called "The Bible Answer Man," sponsored by the "Christian Research Institute" of San Juan Capistrano, California. She relates: "on almost every show someone calls in with questions about the Church of Christ... The position of the Christian Research Institute is that the Church of Christ is heretical... CRI position on baptism is that it is not necessary and certainly not required for salvation."

She has forwarded a statement that this organization sends out on the "Church of Christ." It is this reader's desire that some sort of debate or exchange with this organization be attempted. Brother Adams has asked me to review their statement. We will see that the CRI gets a copy of this review. If they are disposed to defend the truth and integrity of their statement in a public forum, this writer or a host of others, will gladly accommodate them. If readers would care to obtain a copy of the 7 page statement, CRT's address is P. O. Box 500, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92693-0600.

There is much in their thesis with which we would take no objection. The brief history of the Restoration movement is generally accurate. They claim, however, that "These churches stem from the "Restoration" movement... begun by (among others) Thomas and Alexander Campbell..." I would not expect them to accept **a priori** our insistence on this matter. But for the record, let it be stated that we do not consider the Campbells, or any mere man, the originators of our faith. We look upon these men as talented teachers of the Scriptures. We applaud their efforts to be done with unauthorized denominational organizations and unscriptural practices and to simply speak as the oracles of God. As A. C. Grider used to say, "Show me something that I believe or practice that originated with Campbell and I'll give it up."

The statement says, **"Basic to 'Restoration' theology is the call to return to 'New Testament Christianity', the beliefs and practices of the first century Christian church as documented in the New Testament. Only by rejecting everything not specifically found in the New Testament, it was reasoned, could true Christian unity be achieved."**

I doubt that any representative man from any of the various branches and sub-branches of the "Restoration movement," that are enumerated in the statement, would maintain that everything must be **specifically**

found in the New Testament. The Scriptures give authority for many things in a general rather than a specific manner.

The essay goes on to say that the Campbells, Barton Stone and other such leaders of the "Restoration" taught **"that it was best to preach and teach about God and Christ without reference to words like 'Trinity'."** It is somewhat reluctantly admitted that the Campbells were **"roughly trinitarian,"** whatever that is supposed to mean, but it is asserted that **"Stone, however, flatly rejected the doctrine of the Trinity, and denied that Jesus was God."** Then, **"In the DOC (Disciples of Christ, K. G.) and a small number of the COC (Churches of Christ, K. G.) and NACC churches (North American Christian Convention), there is still a tendency to avoid references to the Trinity, although most churches in the latter two branches today accept the Trinity in substance if not in word"**

It seems that Mr. Robert Bowman, Jr., who prepared this statement is making an effort to be fair while attempting to cast some shadow of doubt regarding what we of the churches of Christ believe about the nature of Jesus. The point that he apparently misses is the desire among us to call Bible things by Bible names. Personally, I have no strong objection to the term "Trinity," for I believe it describes a biblical concept of God. But I prefer the Scriptural term, "Godhead."

The assertion that Stone denied the deity of our Lord is news to me. I am not a Restoration historian, but in the nominal reading I have done in that field I have not come across such. Neither have I found any documentation for it. But if true, then I believe he was wrong. My faith in Jesus as "my Lord and my God" (John 20: 28) would not be shaken in the least by such a revelation.

A bit further we read, **"... the members of the Restoration churches are a prime target of the Jehovah's Witnesses because of their weakness on the Trinity."** Such is an outrageous and ludicrous statement. Probably more debates have been held by preachers of the church of Christ with oneness Pentecostals on this subject than any other religious group. As many or more sermons have been preached by us who simply prefer to be called gospel preachers against this heresy of the Jehovah's Witnesses and in declaration of the deity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as any religious group anywhere.

We are then advised that, **"on the basis that they are not mentioned in the New Testament, most of the COC reject the use of musical instruments in church services."** Such is an oversimplification. The fact is that we oppose such because there is absolutely no indication in the N. T. that they are sanctioned by the Lord. The basis of our objection is quite fundamental: Shall we limit our religious service and our worship to that which the Lord has clearly revealed to us?; or shall we do what we want to do?

The statement affirms in response to our opposition: **"... at best it is fallacious (since it is based merely on the silence of the New Testament) and at worst actually contrary to the New Testament. The apostle Paul specifically approved the use of**

'Psalms' in church worship (1 Cor. 14: 26; cf. Eph. 5: 19; Col. 3: 16); and the word "psalm" in Greek generally means either instrumental music or singing accompanied by musical instruments. Admittedly, it can refer to non-instrumental singing as well, but there is no reason to restrict its meaning to exclude all use of instruments. "

I am not familiar with the practices of this CRI group, but I suspect that we would share opposition to any number of things "based merely on the silence of the New Testament. " I doubt that they would endorse pizza and coke as elements in the Communion, though, opposition would have to be based on "merely the silence of the New Testament. "

Those who argue for instrumental music on the basis of the Greek word for "psalm" or the verb "psallo" misuse the Greek lexicons without fail. This is no exception. The only source given is "Delling, Gerhard, hymnos, hymneo, psallo, psalmos, in **Theological Dictionary of the New Testament**, Vol. VIII, ed. Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids, MI William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972, pp. 489-503. The meaning of the word 'psalm' in classical, common, and biblical Greek. "

I have perused this source carefully and find no basis for the claim that the word implies the use of instrumental music in the New Testament. In fact, it states regarding **psallo** in Eph. 5: 19: "The literal sense by or with the playing of strings, ' still found in the LXX is now employed figuratively" (p. 499). In a footnote on the same page we read: "he ref. to stringed instruments in heavenly worship at Rev. 5: 8; 15: 2 need not mean that such instruments might sometimes accompany the singing at primitive Chr. worship. "

It is indeed strange that if these words necessarily imply the use of musical instruments, the translators do not know it, for there is not a standard translation of the N. T. that so renders them; the lexicographers do not know it, for they consistently render the words as used in the New Testament to mean "to sing"; and the early Christians did not know it, for by common consent of church historians, such instruments were not used in church worship until at least the 7th century, being first introduced by Pope Vitalian I.

Other subjects touched upon briefly in the statement are water baptism, charismatic gifts; and eternal security. Of the first, strong objection is taken to our understanding that baptism is a condition of salvation. Those interested are asked to write for material on the subject. We would simply encourage those interested in the truth to read Mark 16: 15, 16; Acts 2: 37, 38; 22: 16; Rom. 6: 3, 4; Gal. 3: 26, 27; 1 Peter 3: 20, 21.

Of charismatic gifts and eternal security, the CRI statement avers that these are not **'matters essential to the Christian faith. However, we strongly oppose the extreme condemnation of the charismatic movement and of the doctrine of eternal security by some in the COC. "** We believe the Bible speaks plainly regarding these issues and that our condemnation of the doctrines are based upon the oracles of God. Further discussion of these questions would be welcomed.

MUSINGS

J. Wiley Adams

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"Make The Message Plain"

"... And the common people heard him gladly" (Mark 12: 37).

In the above passage we learn that the common or ordinary people heard Jesus gladly. This is not to say that those who were not ordinary never heard Him for in the preceding verses of the same chapter a certain scribe answered Jesus so discreetly that Jesus told him he was "not far from the kingdom of God. " But in the main it was the common people who paid the most attention to what Jesus was saying. If they heard him "gladly" it is inferred that they must have understood what Jesus was teaching.

There is a song that includes the line "make the message clear and plain. " Nothing is more scriptural than making the message of Truth clear and plain. I do wish some of my brethren who preach and teach would learn this. Either the lessons are so shallow there is no spiritual food in them or they blast us to the moon and put us in orbit as we leave the building or lay down some periodical with our minds literally reeling as we wonder what in the world the man was saying.

Some preachers would do well to get more education so as to be able to speak the English language (or whatever the spoken language may be). Some use such bad grammar that a hearer of even ordinary education is made to wince. On the other hand some who do have a good education are also unable to make the message clear and plain. Really, brethren, is there not a happy medium somewhere in all this?

Brethren who say "so and so is a good man but he preaches over my head" ought not to be simply dismissed by telling them to "climb up. " Maybe there are not enough rungs on his intellectual ladder to do so. Maybe we should bring the message down to the understanding level of the common man as Jesus did. If this is done, you have not hindered the man of greater ability or intellect. He can surely understand simple, down-to-earth preaching. But if we are treated to a discourse of unfamiliar words and high sounding phrases, then usually the biggest segment of the audience will not profit thereby. I say this because the most of the audiences are made up of ordinary people. Such preaching and teaching is useless if not so presented that **all** can understand.

Brethren, let us "make the message clear and plain!"

A BURNING FIRE

(Jer. 20:9)

Jim Deason

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The Participation Principle

There is a maxim that circulates through secular organizations that 90% of the work is usually performed by 10% of the people. Personal observation has confirmed that this is generally true not only among the secular organizations of the world but also among most local churches as well. Most duties, ranging from the spiritual work of teaching to making the physical preparations necessary for the worship and work of the local congregation, rest upon the shoulders of a small minority. This is not good and wherever these conditions exist corrective changes are needed.

A Christian cannot grow spiritually where there is no development or exercise of his abilities. Therefore every congregation should have a program in place where each member's abilities are developed and used. It falls the responsibility of the leadership of the local church (evangelists, pastors, and teachers) to equip "the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4: 11-12).

A local church cannot grow, it cannot even function properly, without every member of the body carrying his or her share of the work load. As we sometimes truthfully sing of the kingdom. "There is room, There's a place, There is work that we all can do. " The leaders in any given local church cannot and should not be expected to perform all of the individual duties necessary to carrying out that church's overall program of work. The apostles and the Jerusalem church illustrate this in Acts 6: 2-4. The text says, "And the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, 'It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables. But select from among you, brethren, seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task. But we will devote ourselves to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. "

This model church and its leaders observed priorities in their work. They demonstrate for us that, while no good work should be neglected, there are things that are to be deemed more urgent and important than others. Thus we see the apostles delegating work to others; work which these men were able to do. The lesson for us should be clear. While there are buildings that need cleaning and lawns that need mowing, surely elders and teachers should not have to spend valuable time doing janitorial and gardening services

while souls go untaught. Getting others involved was the only way the Jerusalem church could accomplish the amount of work that faced them; work that had to be done. Let me suggest some single things that I believe will help us in getting people involved today.

The work that needs to be done within the local church should be identified clearly and job descriptions specified. The church needs a list of all the work to be done: mowing the yard, cleaning the building, preparation for the Lord's Supper, teaching Bible classes (in home as well as in regular Bible class hours), keeping the track rack, taping of sermons and making copies available to those who request them, and many more. Further, they need to know exactly what each job requires and what is expected of someone who volunteers for a specific duty.

Training sessions need to be held regularly in those areas where they are needed. Bible class teachers need all the help they can get in learning to teach more effectively. The talents of men wishing to take a public part in worship can and needs to be developed in men's training classes. Even those doing tape work need to know how the recorders and duplicators operate as well as when and from where to order blank tapes. They may seem trivial to some but there are people who would love to be involved but don't know what to do and are too shy to step forward and ask.

Finally, people need to be encouraged to take part. Some elders seem hesitant to delegate work to others. In such case, growth both as individuals and in the local church is obstructed and such leaders are defeating their very purpose for existence. People need to be challenged to participate rather than be spectators, to grow rather than stagnate. Where there is no delegation of responsibility most of the work that a local church could accomplish, particularly in the area of evangelism, is left undone. However, when everyone is encouraged to participate and do their part then preachers are left to preach, teachers can teach, elders can oversee the souls of all and men will be brought closer to the Lord. This is true spiritual growth. In addition, evangelist efforts will increase with responses to those efforts resulting in numerical growth. All of this because people are motivated and mobilized to be a part of the work of God.

The challenge is always before us to reach a world lost in sin with the story of Jesus' love. How can we do this effectively, how can we do it at all, without using every ounce of talent which can be found in the body of Christ? To the end that we might all be more active in the work of the Lord, let us remember the words of the beloved apostle Paul to the Corinthians. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15: 58).

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Time, Division, And Judgment

Solomon said, "Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing: and a Wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment. Because to every purpose there is time and judgment, therefore the misery of man is great upon him" (Eccl. 8: 5, 6).

If this is good advice for those who would escape the wrath of an earthly king (vv. 2-4), how much more for those who would escape the wrath of the King of kings (Rev. 6: 17; 19: 16)?

Brethren, the wrath of God is reserved for somebody because of division in the body of Christ, and time is going to be an important factor in this judgment. The wise among us will discern "both time and judgment."

Many mysteries of life are solved by the time element. Guilt or innocence with respect to a crime is determined by when the crime was committed, and where affected parties were at that time.

A miracle of Jesus was confirmed because the healing took place "at the seventh hour" (Jno. 4: 52, 53).

When Peter and the other apostles were accused of being drunken, Peter neutralized that charge by saying, "For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day" (Acts 2: 15). The same logic may not apply to the drinking habits of today's society, but it did back then.

When Paul was accused of sedition and other crimes, he countered those charges by pointing out "that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship" (Acts 24: 11).

The time element helps to establish the part which the Holy Spirit played in the circumstances surrounding the conversion of Cornelius. And, it helped to substantiate Peter's explanation of these events to his Jewish brethren. Luke said that the Holy Spirit fell on those who heard the word "while Peter yet spake" (Acts 10: 44), and Peter later confirmed that the Holy Ghost fell on those Gentiles "as I began to speak" (Acts 11: 15).

This proved to Peter's Jewish brethren, and should prove to us, that the baptism of the Holy Spirit on this occasion was not commanded as a condition of salvation, but rather was given by God to prove that the Gentiles were subject to the same conditions of salvation as were the Jews.

When Hezekiah invited Israel to unite with Judah in the observance of the passover feast, he reminded Israel

that they were the ones who were guilty of trespassing against God's commandments. Unity among God's people was desirable, but the time element would con-vict Israel as transgressors, and no amount of dialogue or compromise would change that fact (2 Chron. 30: 6-12).

We have no trouble establishing the origins of Catholicism and Protestantism with respect to the departure from the faith spoken of by the apostle Paul (2 Thes. 2: 1-12; 1 Tim. 4: 1-6).

Brethren used to have no trouble proving that those identified with the Christian Church (Or Disciples of Christ), were the ones who caused division among the Lord's people over such issues as missionary societies (1849), mechanical instruments of music in worship (1859), and kindred practices which followed thereafter.

And, when we determine what has divided us in this century, and **when** it was introduced and began to be generally imposed as a wedge of division, we can determine the part division plays in time and judgment.

When the messengers invited the digressives of Israel to come to the passover feast, some 'laughed them to scorn, and mocked them.' Yet, some humbled themselves, and accepted the invitation (2 Chron. 30: 10, 11). Judah was also guilty in dereliction of duty, and Rehoboam was guilty of poor judgment when the kingdom originally divided, but such did not justify Jeroboam and those who followed him into digression and division.

King Jesus will sort out all the matters of time and judgment, and the part which division has played in the scheme of things, and will do so in righteousness.

Like we tell the alien sinner, "... behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6: 2).

A WORTHY WOMEN

By Darlene Craig

This is a well-written book with a chapter on each verse of Proverbs 31:10-31. The author is the wife of a faithful gospel preacher, a mother, homemaker, and grandmother. Her writing style is fresh and her research is extensive. Her applications are alive to the needs of godly women today. This 220 page paperback book is attractively bound, the layout is neat and the printing is excellent.

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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*

CORRECTION

In the October issue of STS I wrote an editorial on the "One Nation Under God Campaign." In it I said "Over 2,000 churches of Christ (and a few denominational churches) have sent money to the Sycamore church." I based this statement on a newspaper article that quoted Daniel Whitworth who was chairman of the Shoals area campaign (Florence, AL *Times Daily*, Jan. 5, 1991). When questioned about the accuracy of my statement I called the campaign headquarters in Cookeville and spoke with brother Whitworth himself. Both stated that the reporter had misquoted Whitworth. Both denied that any denominational churches had contributed to the campaign. —Donnie V. Rader

LARRY A. BUNCH, P. O. Box 461, Dawson, TX 76639-0461 — The work in Dawson is doing well. When we began in September, 1989 there were two men besides myself. Now, we have five. I baptized one 80 year old man who had put off obeying all his life. We have a weekly column in the Hubbard paper (Dawson section) and publish a weekly newsletter. We are planning a gospel meeting in February, 1992 with a black preacher (we have one black lady meeting with us). I have lost \$450 a month support and my present amount is far below what is needed.

RON HALBROOK, 654 Gray St., West Columbia, TX 77486 — On October 30 I had surgery to remove a non-malignant growth on one of my vocal cords. This was done by a new technique called micro-micro surgery which does not leave scar tissue as older methods have done. I was able to preach the first time after surgery on December 8. It was short, slow and subdued in delivery and I am trying to be patient with therapy. All of this has reminded me of what a great privilege it is to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ (Eph. 3: 8)! Cards and calls have come from around the country. I wish to thank all by saying "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you" (Phil. 1: 3)!

GARRETT-THRASHER DEBATES

Two four night public debates on the subject of "free will" are scheduled for 1992 between Thomas N. Thrasher of Decatur, Alabama and Stephan M. Garrett of Wingate, North Carolina. The first debate is June 1-2, 4-5 in the building of the Winchester Road church of Christ, Huntsville, Alabama. The second is August 3-4, 6-7 at Nancy's Creek Primitive Baptist Church, Atlanta, Georgia. Sessions begin at 7:00 p. m.

The propositions to be discussed are: (1) "The Scriptures teach that God had determined freely and unchangeably, all things that come to pass." Garrett affirms, Thrasher denies. This will be the subject June 1-2 and August 6-7. (2) "The Scriptures teach that God has given man the power of free choice or will with regard to his salvation." Thrasher affirms, Garrett denies. This will be discussed on June 4-5 and August 3-4.

Although this will be the first debate between these men, Mr. Thrasher has debated Mr. Garrett's father three times since 1970 on different propositions. Both men anticipate a gentlemanly discussion of these vital issues. If you desire additional information, write Thomas N. Thrasher, P. O. Box 1941, Decatur, AL 35602 or phone 205-353-3085.

ASA MONROE PLYLER (1902-1991)

On November 12, 1991 the spirit of AM. Plyler left the body in a peaceful way. After 89 years he fulfilled the appointment of Hebrews 9: 27.

Dad had preached the gospel in central and north Alabama for 71 years. Though he lived near Jasper on the farm, he traveled over several counties preaching for the most part to the small churches in rural areas. His early travel in preaching was by walking, horseback or train. However, in time he used and wore out the Model T and Model A Ford and several other cars in the work.

Good health and a clear mind continued until within two months of his death. At the hospital in Birmingham it was determined that he had a brain tumor. Though surgery was a possibility, Dad judged it unwise and chose not to have it.

Brother Sewell Hall spoke at the funeral services and pointed out that we had gathered to celebrate the passing of this one. Brother Hall preached the word - challenging the audience to follow Jesus as Dad had tried to do. The body was returned to the earth in the family cemetery on the farm adjoining the Valley View Church, where he worshipped when he was not away preaching. We are grateful to the many who encouraged and comforted him in the last days of his life. Leo B. Plyler 2245 Forestdale Blvd. Birmingham, AL 35214

NEW CONGREGATION REPORTED

We have been informed that a new congregation is now meeting at Dunbar, West Virginia on the west side of Charleston. Take the Dunbar-Rexalana exit and turn left immediately after crossing the railroad tracks.

PREACHER NEEDED

PRINCETON, WEST VIRGINIA — We are desperately in need of a sound preacher in this small community. We have 12 Christians meeting. Our meeting place is free of debt. We can provide \$700 a month support plus moving expenses. We know of other congregations that might help support a preacher here. Contact Len Matlock (304-425-4627) or write to us at: 1013 Old Athens Road, Princeton, WV 24747.

CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA — The church here needs a preacher the latter part of February, 1992. The church has a nice three-bedroom, two-bath house located next to the building. The church is able to furnish the house, utilities and \$1800 per month. Interested preachers may contact Rudy Cribb (704-537-6592; Don Honbarrier (704-825-5929) or Jim White (803-547-4291).

METAIRIE, LOUISIANA— The church meeting at 2000 Lake Villa Dr. 70005 is looking for a preacher. We are self-supporting. You may call or write: Jim Mayfield (504-454-1606) or Lynn Sanders (504-409-5894).

FRANK CHUMLEY, 5327 South Tryon St., Charlotte, NC 28217 — I will be moving from the Charlotte, NC area the later part of February to work with the Lyons Chapel church in Tompkinsville, Kentucky. My address will be: 2401 Center Point Road, Tompkinsville, KY 42167.

FROM AROUND THE WORLD

INDIA —**JOHN HUMPHRIES**, 8705 Wooded Glen Rd., Louisville, KY 40220 — Dwight Edwards and I returned safely from our six weeks effort of preaching the gospel in India. We had Bible class for 30 preachers in Shanthi Nagar near Hyderabad for about a week. The classes were conducted during the day and we had preaching each night for the public. During the classes, Dwight and T. George Fred (Indian preacher) went to some of the churches in various districts while Wilfred and I went to Colombo, Sri Lanka for gospel work. Thus, we had two teams to cover more territory in the time we had.

For the remainder of the time, we went to as many churches as we could to teach and preach the gospel. We believe the brethren were encouraged. 84 were baptized into Christ during these visits with the churches. 38, 300 Telugu tracts were printed. These were tracts that Bill Beasley, others and I had written and had translated into the Telugu language. 817 Telugu Bibles were purchased and given to needy saints out in the village churches. Several Indian gospel preachers had also written gospel songs for worship and so we printed over 400 Telugu song books for the brethren. We appreciate the support of those who have made it possible to do this work and ask for continued help to go again and continue the work we began 16 years ago. This effort is important and, as we hope you can see, fruitful.

CHINA — Jeff Kingry's last report indicates that eight more have been baptized in Shenyang, China and four more in Hong Kong.

SPAIN — Efrain F. Perez reports another baptized at Badalona congregation (Barcelona area) and also a restoration of an erring brother. The church at Tenerife in the Canary Islands now has its own building. They now have 19 members. A brother who lives eight hours from Barcelona plans to marry one of the young women from the congregation there (he is a Christian) and they plan to begin a congregation meeting in their house in Cartagena-Murcia.

IRELAND — Two more have been baptized in Dublin. Steve Kearney baptized them in the Irish Sea. Said he "When I got into the water to baptize him, the water was so cold I thought my legs had died. Of course, that is minor when one considers that two more souls have been added to the kingdom of God." Efforts to teach from house to house continue.

HUNGARY — **RICHARD COPELAND** and **JEFF ARCHER** and their families are working together in Budapest. They report Hungarian visitors at every service, with 12 one Sunday. Stable financial support is being supplied by the 77th St. Church in Birmingham, AL and the church in Temple Terrace, Florida. Their greatest success in obtaining studies has come through advertising in the newspaper. At present they have many studies under way with others waiting. Brother Copeland says "Budapest is a very worldly city. Alcohol and pornography are everywhere. Divorce and family strife are just as prevalent as in the U. S. That makes it ripe for the gospel — and for all religious perversions of the gospel. 'Everybody' is evangelizing here (or as one contact put it, 'proselytizing' here)."

BALTICS — Steve Wallace and Derek Chambers recently visited Lithuania and Latvia to teach the gospel. The greatest interest was shown in Vilnius where they spent five days. They were graciously received by a family they had not known before and allowed to teach in their house. They set up a table on the street in Vilnius where about 1, 000 people stopped to look at literature and talk. They handed out over 300 lessons in English, German and Lithuanian. While there are many who speak English, Russian is widely used. Steve and Derek hope to be able to do more teaching here later. Their work in Germany is demanding but in addition to that, they have been able to open doors in many other places.

SOUTH AFRICA — George Harris reports from Cape that two more have been baptized there. They enrolled 12 more in the Bible correspondence course. They are getting more and more requests from blacks requesting Bible courses, but there is a need for more in the language they use.

COSTA RICA — **RUBEN AMADOR** was in Costa Rica in Central America in December. There are five preachers working in the capital city of San Jose. There are two sound churches in San Jose, both small. A congregation meets in San Carlos (near the border with Nicaragua) and another in Sixaola (near the border with Panama).

CUBA — In January, Ruben Amador and Antonio Lira (from Venezuela) were to make a preaching trip to Havana, Cuba. We anxiously await information about the results of this trip.

ARGENTINA — Carlos A. Capelli reports on his work in Buenos Aires and other places in Argentina. Spiritual progress is reported at Puente Alto where three brethren take turns preaching and teaching. The church at La Cruz is slowly building a meetinghouse. Growth and spiritual progress can be seen. He also visited with brethren in Limache where two brethren help with the preaching. At Madrid Street church attendance ran 60-80 during a meeting, with good support from brethren in the Santiago area. At Jose C. Paz congregation three were baptized recently. There is now a radio program out of Mercedes. The church in Mendoza is now in their new meeting house. They are now known as the Moreno Street church.

PHILIPPINES — Robert R. Gamiao reports growth in two congregations where he labors in the Cagayan Valley in northern Luzon. 18 were baptized in 1991. Recently in Tuguegarao a prominent denominational preacher and his wife were baptized. He is Mariano Vergela.

Dominador J. Neniell of Magpet, Cotabato reports two baptized there.

Roby L. Gumpad reports from Isabela Province that recent baptisms include two Seventh Day Adventists, a couple from a Pentecostal church and two couples who were Roman Catholic.

MEXICO — Steven Sarff sends word that a new congregation was to be started in January in Delicias, Chih. with 15-20 members. A meeting is planned at the end of each month for the next 12 months. Any faithful brother who can speak Spanish and would like to help in this effort is invited to contact Francisco Rivera/Privada del Ave. 11 PTE #509/Dehcias, Chih. / 33000 MEXICO.



EDITOR'S MEETING SCHEDULE — 1992

February — Bergen, Norway (16-21)

March — West Ave., San Antonio, Texas (1-6)
E. 10th St., Columbus, Indiana (16-22) Middlebourne,
West Virginia (23-29)

April — Westside, Warner Robins, Georgia (5-10)
 Northeast, Clearwater, Florida (19-24)

May — Brookmead, Johnson City, Tennessee (4-10)
 Conyers, Georgia (18-24)

June — Hardinsburg, Kentucky (May 30-June 5)
 Miller Ave. Lectures, San Jose, California (3rd
 week)

Lakeport, California (June 28-July 1)

July — 2nd and Walnut, Paragould, Arkansas (18-24)

August — Imhoff Ave., Port Arthur, Texas (3-9)

September — Covington, Georgia (7-
 13) Danville, Indiana (20-25)

October — Antioch (Dickson County), Tennessee (4-9)
 Olney, Illinois (18-23)

November — Helton Dr., Florence, Alabama (1-6)
 White River, Greenwood, Indiana (15-20)

We hope to greet a number of our readers during the year in the course of these meetings.

ADDITION TO INDEX

The printer inadvertently omitted the index material for the column written by H. E. Phillips. The index is incomplete without this. Our apologies to the readers and to brother Phillips. Please clip this out and paste it in the December, 1991 issue.

THINK ON THESE THINGS — H. E. Phillips

Another Gospel 97

Building Up The Church 73

Can We Attain Unity?..... 289

Define and Identify Fanaticism..... 121

Gospel Must Be Taught, The 1

Kingdom and the Church, The 409

Menace of Multiple Marriages, The..... 241

Practice What You Preach..... 169

Problem With a Little Leaven, The..... 457

Promised Seed of Abraham, The 553

Purge Out the Old Leaven..... 505

Scriptural Baptism..... 25

Sins of the Tongue..... 337

They Knew Not Why They Came Together 313

Virgie Beatrice Phillips— 1898-1989..... 49

What Does Baptism DO?..... 217

What Jesus Says About His Words 193

What Will You Do with a Little Leaven..... 481

When Thou Art Converted 265

When was the Kingdom Established?..... 385

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS 89

RESTORATIONS 23

(Taken from bulletins and papers
 received by the editor)