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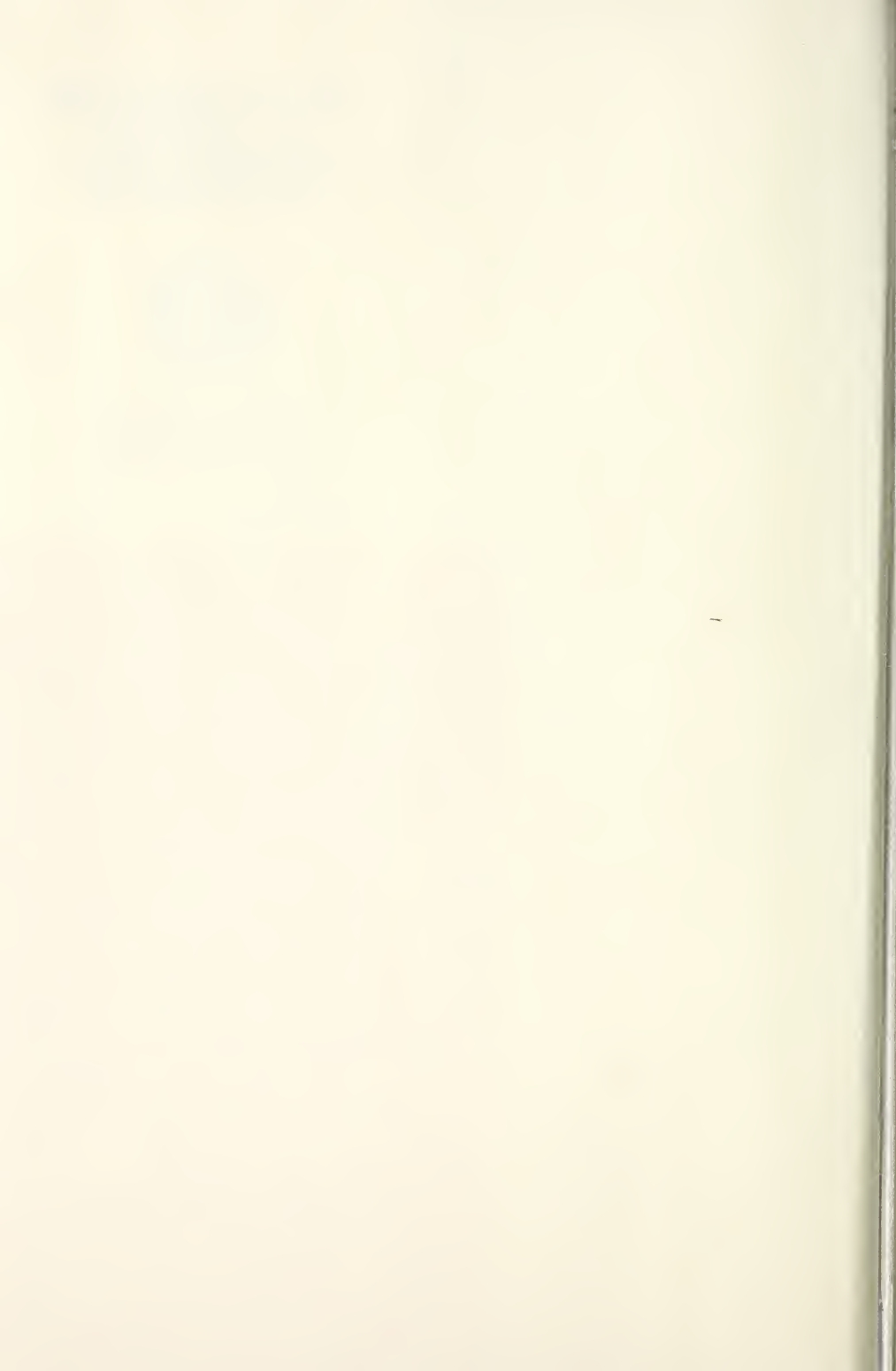
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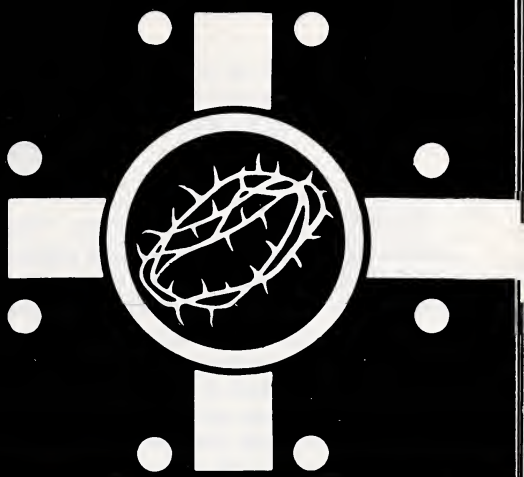


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CAROLINA CHRISTIAN

VOL. 31, NO. 1, JANUARY 1989



C289.21 / C292

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Bamberg Church of Christ
(See Page 5)



Elsewhere in this issue is a poem, "The Devil's Hell-Bound Train." It is, of course, based on imagination as regards many of the descriptions given; but it is based on Biblical reality as regards the danger of going to a place of eternal torment. The poem may lack literary excellence. It would probably be seen as trite to some critics, and sensationalism to others. Still, there is value in it — if only one hell-bound sinner can be made to see where his life is taking him.

It may be that we have become too sophisticated to speak plainly, as we once did, about the reality of hell. "Fire and brimstone" sermons are rarely heard. What could be a refreshing emphasis on the "good news" may have been carried to such an extreme that the "bad news" is hardly mentioned.

Hell is a real place for real people. It is a lake of fire (Rev. 20:15); a furnace of fire (Matt. 13:42); everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt 25:41); and "hell fire: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:47-48).

It is a mist of darkness (2 Pet. 2:17), outer darkness (Matt. 25:30), and the blackness of darkness forever (Jude 13).

The torment is day and night forever (Rev. 20:10); there is no rest (Rev. 14:11); only weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matt. 8:12).

It is everlasting punishment (Matt. 25:46); a punishment worse than death (Heb. 10:28-29). Heaped upon those who are there will be indignation, wrath, tribulation, and anguish (Rom. 2:8-9). The scenes in the poem's hell-bound train are no more terrifying than our Lord's own description of a soul in torment (Luke 16:23-24).

But some will object: "The gospel is a message of love, and it is not loving to frighten people by telling them about hell." The fact is, however, that the most loving person who ever lived had more to say on the subject of hell than any other Bible person. No one loves like Jesus, and no one has

been more forceful in telling us of the reality of the place called hell.

He warned of the danger of hell fire (Matt. 5:22). He spoke of the damnation of hell (Matt 23:33). He said He would sentence some to everlasting punishment (Matt. 25:46) with the curse, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (v. 41). He cautioned that men should "Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell . . ." (Luke 12:5).

The gospel emphasis is on love — not merely our love for one another, nor even

EDITORIAL AND PUBLICATION STAFF:

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CAROLINA CHRISTIAN is published monthly by Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., at 71 S. Fairfield Road, Greenville, SC 29605. Subscription price; individual \$7.00 per year; club of five or more \$6.50 per year; quantity of 15 or more in bundles or direct mailing 40¢ per copy per month. Publication number, 091160.

Second class postage paid at Greenville, SC.

POSTMASTER: Send undelivered copies with Form 3579 to Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., Johnny Melton, Managing Editor, Route 2, Box 137, Conover, North Carolina 28613.

RETURN REQUESTED

Address editorial matter to David Pharr, Editor, ETSOPM, 6608 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37931. Address news items to Dennis Conner, P.O. Box 1219, Yadkinville, NC 27055.

All items to be printed in a given month's issue should reach the editor not later than the next-to-the-last Thursday of the preceding month.

Address commercial advertising inquiries to Jacobs List, Inc. Clinton, SC 29325. Address all advertising pertaining to the Church of Christ or its members (including related organizations) to the editor.

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our love for God; but His love for us. The greatness of that love is demonstrated in the fact of his willingness to save us from the torment of hell. Jesus did not die to save us from a place that is not real, nor from a place to which there is no danger of going. The threats of judgment are not idle threats. The consequences of sin are not exaggerated.

It is comforting to know that God "is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). God does not want us to perish. But what is the force of the rest of the verse? It is plainly that in spite of God's longsuffering those who do not repent will indeed perish.

Fund Raising

Almost every day the mail brings fund-raising letters for important brotherhood projects. Many programs being operated by brethren have adopted the kind of mass mailing and promotional methods that are used by secular, as well as sectarian, fund raisers. The difference, though, is that Christians are using these methods for legitimate purposes to the glory of God.

Thus, the letters keep coming — orphan homes, radio broadcasts, building programs, Christian schools, foreign missions, campaigns at home and abroad, aged preachers, camps, etc. Almost all of these seem important. We read of their needs and want to help.

It is possible, however, that the sheer number of such requests can make us indifferent. We may even get tired of so many people asking for money. We may resent being on all those mailing lists. But consider this: every legitimate request represents a good work being done. The gospel is being preached. Poor are being helped. Young people are being guided. Whether we can send money or not, we can be thankful such works are being done.

No doubt the number of requests for contributions will multiply in the future. We will not be able to send money to all of them. We should not, however, let their multiplicity turn us sour on all fund-raising efforts. We must make decisions — sending to some, refusing others. But when we have to turn

down what seems to be a good work, let us do so with thankfulness and prayer that others are able and willing to keep such works alive.

Ambassadors for Christ

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We have been asked to comment on the idea of being "ambassadors for Christ." In 2 Corinthians 5:20 Paul writes, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

The expression has been frequently used in lessons intended to emphasize that we are the Lord's representatives in the world and that as such we should be careful and diligent in the way we present him to the world. It is true, of course, and needs to be emphasized, that what we do and say will be an influence on the world. It is doubtful, however, that this is a proper use of this term.

The term **ambassador** is found but twice in the New Testament (2 Cor. 5:20; Eph. 6:20). In both places it is used by Paul, an apostle, in the first person. This is consistent with the specialized meaning of the term. **Deissman (Light From the Ancient East, p. 374)** says the Greek words in the two places "were the proper terms in the Greek East for the Emperor's Legate." This is adequately conveyed in the English word **ambassador**. The problem is, though, that people have not thought through the implications of being an ambassador.

An ambassador is an **official** representative. This means he has special authority to speak in the place of his king. The apostles were ambassadors of King Jesus. This is the idea in Matthew 18:18. "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." This authority was given to the apostles, Christ's ambassadors.

All Christians are citizens in the kingdom of God and serve under the King. As citizens they have the duty of living so as to give honor to the King, and to publish His will among men. All Christians are not, however, ambassadors. Only the apostles were official spokesman for the King. They acted "in Christ's stead."

On Dealing With False Doctrine

Managing Editors Column

Johnny Melton, Hickory, NC

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer” (1 Tim. 4:1-5).

In this passage Paul exhorted Timothy to be alert for false teachers and false doctrines. He established the responsibility of the faithful servant of God to not only uphold that which is true and right, but also to oppose that which is false and contrary to the will of God.

In our world today there are many religious folk, even religious leaders, who believe we must uphold what is right; but they refuse to oppose that which is wrong. They suggest that opposition to false doctrine displays either a mean, ugly spirit; or else, it is evidence of a smug and arrogant spirit. At any rate, it is unbecoming a child of God. But such reasoning is totally foreign to the teaching of Holy Scripture.

Paul is not giving his opinion about the matter of false teachers and false doctrine. He declares that the alarm has been sounded by the Holy Spirit Himself. The Spirit has spoken directly, clearly and emphatically to this matter. False teachers and false doctrines will arise and some shall depart from the faith. These false teachers will be seductive and hypocritical and their doctrines will be devilish. They will be past feeling, their consciences will be “seared with a hot iron.” Without pang of conscience, these false teachers will lead men and women away from God and truth.

“If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good

minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained. But refuse profane and old wives’ fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of which is to come” (1 Tim. 4:6-8).

Often it is urged that what the church needs is positive preaching. This declaration is usually made when there has been some preaching in opposition to some immoral practice, or when some false doctrine has been exposed. Now to be sure, preaching that is characterized by a negative attitude ought not be tolerated. But it is possible to be positively negative about false doctrine. And the preacher who neglects the responsibility to expose and warn against the menace of false doctrine under the guise of preaching a positive message is not being true to his calling.

Paul told Timothy that being a good minister of Jesus Christ depends, at least in part, upon reminding the brethren of the danger of false doctrines. The word good “denotes that which is intrinsically good, and so, goodly, fair, beautiful, as . . . of that which is well adapted to its circumstances or ends.” Now to what end does one serve the Lord Christ? At least a part of the inherent responsibilities of a good minister is the exposure and opposition of false doctrine.

If there be any doubt about this responsibility to oppose and expose false doctrines, consider the latter half of verse 6: “. . . thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.” What is the basis of opposition to false doctrines? The words of faith and of good doctrine. In other words, preaching a positive faith and explaining **good** doctrine will necessarily involve the condemnation of false doctrines.

Let it be understood that attitude is important here. The good minister of Jesus Christ is not concerned with merely preaching against false doctrine — rather, he care-

fully explains and encourages the acceptance of good doctrine. When it is necessary to expose the false teacher or refute the false doctrine, the good minister of Jesus does so with a tear in his eye and not a glint. And the faithful servant of the Lord always provides useful and healthy doctrine in the place of the false and destructive teaching that has been refuted.

It must be further understood that the basis of true or good preaching is not the thinking and philosophy of men. Paul said that profane and old wives' fables are to be refused.

The good minister will "exercise himself unto godliness." That is, by giving heed to his spiritual growth and development he will consciously strive to grow more into the image of Christ. When Paul said "For bodily exercise profiteth little but godliness is profitable in all things," He was not saying that

spiritual exercise should be practiced to the exclusion of physical exercise. He does not mean that physical exercise profits nothing. Literally, he said "bodily exercise profits for a little." That is, in comparison with the value of spiritual exercise physical exercise does not yield as much profit. Spiritual development, however, hinges on mental alertness and mental alertness is often tied to physical well being. Therefore, neglect of the body may lead to failure to develop spiritually. So the good minister of Jesus will take care of his body with exercise — understanding that it is a means to the exercise of godliness. And the exercise of godliness will pay rich dividends not only in this life, but in eternity to come.

God help us to be good ministers of Jesus Christ. Exercising ourselves unto godliness, proclaiming good doctrine as well as refuting and exposing the false.

Bamberg Church of Christ

Ralph Jones, Columbia, SC

The Bamberg church of Christ was established in 1962. The work flourished in the beginning and a building was erected in 1965. During the decade of the 70's, the congregation reached its zenith, but began to decline in the 80's, and then bottomed-out in 1987. A brother Griffen died and brother Leslie Rollins' health declined to the point that he was forced to sell his business and retire. He moved to Savannah, Georgia, where he had relatives. With the departure of the above mentioned brethren, who represented much of the strength of the church, the members scattered, and the work declined to the point that only one member remained.

The elders at St. Andrews Road Church in Columbia were informed of the condition of the church in Bamberg and were asked to undertake to rejuvenate the work there. They accepted the challenge in August 1987. The church in Barnwell and St. George agreed to help St. Andrews Road by assigning a family or two to attend on Sunday mornings. This arrangement remained in effect until

March 1988. At this point, Ralph J. Jones of the St. Andrews Road Church began working with the Bamberg church on a regular basis. Services were conducted on Sunday mornings only until May 1988. At that time, evening services were restored. Brother Jones began a program of visitation and in-home Bible studies. Visits were made to former members who were no longer attending church in Bamberg and seven former members agreed to return. This formed the nucleus for the base group from which to build. The in-home Bible study effort has produced five baptisms and there has been a family of four to move into the community and identify with the Bamberg church. In October 1988, we began mid-week Bible study. We now enjoy a normal schedule of services and have sufficient talent to conduct classes and worship services without outside assistance. The Sunday morning Bible study, which consists of a class for children from 3 to 5 years old, a teenage class, and an adult class, averages 21. Morning worship averages 25, evening worship averages 18, and Wednesday Bible study averages 18. The contri-

bution is averaging \$100.00 per week.

The work desperately needs a dedicated man of God, with full support, to move to Bamberg and work full time.

Bamberg is the County seat of Bamberg County and has a population of 3,500 to 4,000. Denmark is 7 miles west of Bamberg and is about the same size town. There is a AM and FM radio station about half way between Bamberg and Denmark. There is a newspaper **The Advertiser Herald**, a weekly publication, which is very cooperative and has published every article which has been submitted by the church. A schedule of ser-

vices of the church with subjects of the Bible study lesson and the sermon topics appears in the Church News Section of the newspaper every week. A church bulletin, **The Bamberg Banner** is published weekly and in it there is a teaching article, along with items of interest to the members and friends of the church.

For further information concerning this mission point, contact the elders at St. Andrews Road Church of Christ, 425 St. Andrews Road, Columbia, SC 29210; or Ralph J. Jones, Bamberg Church of Christ, P.O. Box 1135, Bamberg, SC 29003.

Concerning Deacons

Jeffrey W. Sweet, Nashville, TN

The English word for "deacon" is a translation of the Greek word "Diakonos" which simply means "servant." It is likely that the origin or background of the deacon is recorded in Acts 6. The first deacons were appointed to be assistants to the apostles. In the local church today deacons are to relieve the elders of other tasks so that they may concentrate on the ministry of the word, prayer, and spiritual oversight.

Even though deacons are not given the authority of elders, they still must meet certain qualifications. Many faithful deacons have been made elders after they have proven themselves. Notice what Paul says relating to the qualifications and job description of deacons. 1 Tim. 3:8-13: "Deacons, likewise are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything."

A deacon should be worthy of respect, a man of Christian character worth imitating. A deacon should take his responsibilities seriously, and use the office, not just fill

it. A deacon is not to tell tales from house to house; he is not a gossip. He does not say one thing to one member and something entirely opposite to another member. You can depend on what he says. A deacon should be ready to handle offerings and distribute money to needy people inside and outside the church.

To sum it all up. a deacon should be ready to serve. He should have a willingness to work. He is to use the office, not just fill it. The Greek word translated "degree" means rank, as in the army, a base, a step or a rung on a ladder. What an encouragement to a faithful deacon! God will promote him spiritually and give him more and more respect among the saints, which means greater opportunity for service. A faithful deacon has a good standing before God and men, and can be used of God to build the church.

PREACHER NEEDED

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Does This Letter Describe Us?

Jim Mullican, Clyde, NC

The following is excerpted from a letter written about A.D. 150, known as the **Epistle to Diognetus**. Diognetus is thought to have been the tutor of the young Marcus Aurelius, who ruled the Roman Empire A.D. 161-180. The author is unknown, but J.B. Lightfoot has suggested it was Pantaeus, the director of the famous Christian school at Alexandria.

"For Christians are not distinguished from the rest of mankind either in locality or in speech or in customs. For they dwell not somewhere in cities of their own, neither do they use some different language, nor practice an extraordinary way of life. Nor again do they possess any invention discovered by any intelligence or study of ingenious men, nor are they masters of any dogma as some are. But while they dwell in cities of Greeks and barbarians as the lot of each in cast, and follow the native customs in dress and food and the other arrangements of life, yet the constitution of their own citizenship, which they set forth, is marvelous, and confessedly contradicts expectation. They dwell in their own countries but only as sojourners; they bear their share in all things as citizens, and they endure all hardships as strangers. Every foreign country is

a fatherland to them, and every fatherland is foreign. They marry like all other men and they beget children; but they do not abandon their offspring. They have their meals in common, but not their wives. They find themselves in the flesh, yet they live not after the flesh. Their existence is on earth, but their citizenship is in heaven. They obey the established laws, and they surpass the laws in their own lives. They love all men, and they are persecuted by all. They are ignored, and yet they are condemned. They are in beggary, and yet they make many rich. They are in want of all things, and yet they abound in all things. They are dishonored, and yet they are glorified in their dishonor. They are evil spoken of, and yet they are vindicated. They are reviled, and they bless; they are insulted, and they respect. Doing good, they are punished as evil-doers; being punished they rejoice as if they were thereby quickened by life. War is waged against them as aliens by the Jews, and persecution is carried on against them by the Greeks, and yet those who hate them cannot tell the reason for their hostility.

"In a word, what the soul is in a body, this the Christians are in the world."

Could these things be said of us, as they were of our brethren in an earlier age?



Jerry L. Cantrell

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The Devil's Hell-Bound Train

Submitted by Donald Rhodes,
Mauldin, SC

A sinner staggered home from the
ballroom floor,
 Having drunk so much he could drink
 no more;
He went to bed with a troubled brain,
 And dreamed that he rode on a "hell-
 bound train."
The engine with blood was red and
damp,
 And dimly lit with a brimstone
 lamp;
An imp, for fuel, was shoveling bones,
 And the furnace roared with a
 thousand groans.
A boiler was filled with lager beer,
 And the devil himself was the
 engineer,
The passengers made such a motley crew:
 Church members, Atheists, Gentile
 and Jew;
Rich men in broadcloth and beggars in
rags,
 Beautiful young ladies and withered
 old hags;
Yellow men and black men, red and
white,
 Chained all together — what a
 horrible sight.
Faster and faster the engine flew,
 Wilder and wilder the country grew;
Louder and louder the thunder crashed,
 Brighter and brighter the lightening
 flashed;
Hotter and hotter the air became,
 Till the clothes were burned from
 every frame.
In the distance was heard a hideous yell —
 "Ha, Ha," cried the devil, "we're
 nearing Hell."
And, oh, how the passengers shrieked
with pain
 And begged the devil to stop the train.
He capered about and danced with glee,
 And laughed and joked at their agony.
My faithful friends, you have done my
work,

 And the devil can never a pay-day
 shirk.
You have bullied the weak and robbed
the poor,
 The hungry brother you turned from
 your door,
You amused yourself at the picture show,
 And with the theater gadders did go.
You played and gambled with the devil's
Bible; (cards)
 You danced and mixed with the sinful
 idle.
You hoarded up gold till it cankers and
rusts,
 You have given free vent to your
 hellish lusts;
You have drunken and rioted and
murdered and lied,
 And mocked at God in your hell-born
 pride.
You have paid full fare, so I'll carry you
through,
 For it's only right that you get your
 due.
And every laborer is worthy of his hire,
 So I'll land you safe in my lake of
 fire,
Where my faithful subjects you will
always be,
 And dwell in hell eternally.
Mr. Sinner awoke with an awful cry.
 With clothes soaking wet and hair
 standing high;
And he prayed to God and prayed as
well,
 To be saved from sin and a devil's
 hell.
Faith and obedience were not in vain,
 For he nevermore rode on the devil's
 train!

Repent and be baptized!

(Acts 2:38)

— Author unknown

Winters Commentary to Be Released

Carolina Christian Publications, Inc. is happy to announce the release of Howard Winter's **Commentary on Revelation**. The anticipated release date is February 6, 1989. We are confident that this will be recognized as brother Winter's best work. It was the fruit of many years of study and reflection. The manuscript was completed just days before the disease that claimed his life had advanced to the stage that he could no longer work.

In the months before his death and the weeks immediately following it interested brethren and congregations made contributions toward the publication of this book. We are grateful for this partnership. Carolina Christian Publications, Inc. is determined that even though death has taken brother Winters from our midst, he shall

continue to speak to us through his books and commentaries.

Commentary on Revelation will sell for \$8.95. Brother Winters wrote two other commentaries (Romans and 1 Corinthians) which are still available. Romans sells for \$6.95 and 1 Corinthians for \$7.95. Anyone ordering **Commentary on Revelation** at the regular price may receive either or both of the other commentaries for half price. These commentaries are both practical and explanatory. They were written on a popular level.

Use the order form below to place your order for **Commentary on Revelation**.

On the pages that follow, excerpts from **Commentary on Revelation** will be found. These excerpts demonstrate both the "practical" and the "explanatory" nature of the commentary.

COMMENTARY ON

Revelation

Practical and Explanatory

Howard Winters

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Excerpts From Commentary on Revelation

by Howard Winters

Simply stated, I see Revelation as designed to encourage Christians at all times, regardless of when they may live in their fight against evil, and the symbols as signifying the constant battle between right and wrong, regardless of when the battle is fought, what form it may take, or who the enemies are.

It seems clear to me that the theme of the book is stated in 7:14: "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful." Here war is made with the Lamb (as is always the case — evil is constantly at war with the Lamb) but the Lamb overcomes (as He always does and always will). This can be absolute consolation for the Christian: for he is on the side of the Lamb. He will have to meet and battle with the forces of unrighteousness, but just as the Lamb overcomes, so does he. Christ cannot be defeated; nor can the Christians be defeated unless Christ be defeated first. Both stand together. Revelation thus pictures the great battle between good and evil, right and wrong. At times the battle may appear to be going against the forces of righteousness, good may appear to be crushed and defeated, but in the end it is always victorious. "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom. 8:37). Thus Christians are in a battle they cannot lose if they continue to fight faithfully on to the end. Victory is sure! Evil is doomed! . . .

1:10 — **I was in the Spirit** — I came under the Spirit's power (Beck). The Spirit here is the HS, not just a state of spiritual ecstasy, disposition, devotion, or enjoyment produced by the Spirit. It describes the method by which the revelation was made known to John. The precise means by which this was done is not revealed, but the important thing for us is not to comprehend the exact method of revelation but to understand the mes-

sage John received while in the Spirit — that is, understand the message that was Spirit delivered. **On the Lord's day**, — The first day of the week, Sunday, the day the Lord arose from the dead, and the day on which Christians met to worship (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2). While the expression appears nowhere else in the NT, the vast majority of Christians from the first century to the present have understood it to mean the first day of the week. Two things are certain: (1) John considered this day peculiarly associated with Christ — a day pertaining to the Lord in a sense no other day does. (2) Those to whom he wrote were familiar with its peculiar characteristics. No day fills these requirements but the first day of the week, the resurrection day, the day Christ conquered death and the grave, and the day all Christians celebrate His victory by assembling together to take the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:23-34). Further proof of this is the fact that the Greek word for "Lord's" occurs only one other time in the NT (1 Cor. 11:20), where it describes the Lord's Supper. This connects the Lord's day and the Lord's Supper together as peculiarly pertaining to Christ. The Lord's Supper (which is taken on the first day of the week) and the Lord's day (which is the first day of the week) are joined together for a powerful memorial to the death and resurrection of Christ. But there are a few (mostly those who have a dogmatic reason for rejecting Sunday, such as the Seventh Day Adventists) who say it means either the Sabbath day, the annual resurrection day or Easter, the judgment day, or the day of the Lord (the day of the second coming). All of these, however, are strained interpretations and are foreign matters forced into the text (to make it fit into some preconceived theory) rather than a sincere exegesis of the statement itself. Thus I conclude that the Lord's day is the day of the Lord's resurrection, the first day of the week (Mt. 28:1; Mk. 16:2-9; Lk. 24:1; Jn. 20:1). . . .

2:10 — . . . and ye shall have tribulation . . . ten days: — In my judgment it misses the point to interpret the number ten literally (so as to say it signifies the ten traditional persecutions). It seems reasonably clear, when all the numbers in the book are considered, that each one is symbolic in nature, that is, each number (except when it introduces a list of things such as the seven seals, seven bowls, etc., and even then the symbolic significance may not be absent) represents completeness or perfection. Thus one should not think of the seven Spirits before the throne (1:4) as seven separate Spirits but as the completeness and perfection of the one Spirit (Eph. 4:4-6). So it is with the number ten here. It is a full or rounded number and is thought to be the number of full testing or trial to the limits of endurance (cf. Gn. 31:7, 41; the ten plagues on Egypt, Nm. 14:22; Dn. 1:12-15). If this is the case (and I think it is) then it signifies a fixed period of extreme persecution which would test them to their full limits. But as with Job (Jb. 19:2; 42:12-13) their time of trial would end in victory if they faithfully endured. . . .

3:16 — **So then because thou art lukewarm**, — Used only here in the NT, this word means to be tepid, neither cold nor hot. Thayer says it is used "Of the condition of a soul wretchedly fluctuating between torpor and a fervor of love." The metaphor is undoubtedly drawn from the water of the nearby hot springs. After it had cooled or had been mixed with the water from the cool springs it became lukewarm. The word signifies a condition in the church of a divided interest, a halfheartedness, a drifting along without convictions, zeal, or enthusiasm, and thus being characterized by apathy and indifference. It is a condition of faith too shallow for substance (Jas. 2:14-26), confession without commitment (Mt. 6:33), acknowledgment of Christ without self-denial (Mt. 16:24), belonging to Christ without following Him, having the name Christian without the character of a Christian, outward acts without obedience from the heart (Rom. 6:16-18). This reminds me of a little story I read somewhere. A preacher was at a public gathering when a young man came along selling what he said were hot chicken sandwiches. The preacher purchased one, but

upon examination found it was a cold fish sandwich. He called the salesman and said, "Young man, this sandwich is neither hot nor chicken. How do you explain that?" He replied, "It's not supposed to be. Hot Chicken Sandwich is just what it's called." And so it is with a lukewarm church. It presents itself to the public as belonging to the Lord. But a church of Christ it is not; that is just what it is called. . . .

4:10 — **The four and twenty elders . . . fall down before him . . . that sat on the throne . . . and worship him** — Worship is reverence paid. Its fundamental nature involves recognizing and expressing the proper Creator/creature relationship — the creature paying reverence to the Creator. Worship is not an attitude alone. Not is it acts alone. It is made up of proper attitudes expressed by proper acts. True worship (Jn. 4:23-23) may thus be defined as the sincere devotion or adoration of the heart expressed to God by means of divinely appointed acts. The elders display the proper attitude by falling down before Him. They properly express their adoration by casting their crowns before the throne and by acknowledging Him as worthy of all gratitude, honor, and power (v. 11). . . .

5:4 — **And I wept much**, — He cried audibly and profusely. The book obviously contained that which the voice from heaven had promised John he would be shown (4:1). But if the book remained sealed the promise would fail. Without the Lamb (who has not yet appeared) the contents of the book would forever remain a mystery. As John saw it, all the plans and promises of God depended upon the book being opened. In a similar way, the whole Christian system depends upon Revelation.

Throughout the OT God promised a new system (cf. Is. 2:2-4; Jer. 31ff) that would bring to all the knowledge and blessing of God. But that system remained a mystery (something undisclosed) for ages. Man could not know about it apart from revelation. And revelation was to be made only through the Son of God (Heb. 1:1-4). Thus until the Lamb appeared on the world scene, made that atonement and brought to light the hidden things of God, no one could know the will and plans of God (1 Cor. 2:9-11) or be

forgiven or adopted into His family as children (Gal. 3:26-29). . . .

6:2 — **And I saw, and behold a white horse:** — White is they symbol of innocence or purity and the horse signifies majesty in battle (cf. Zec. 1:7-11; 6:1-7; 10:3; Job 39:19-25). When the vision as a whole is viewed it clearly depicts a conquering force that is both pure and victorious. **And he that sat on him** — While there are many different interpretations as to who this rider is, most of them fall into one of two broad categories. (1) Christ or His church (cf. 19:11). Or (2) the forces of evil, which are opposed to Christ and His cause. Since it is totally unfitting for that which is white to be associated with evil, I conclude that this represents the church militant. This view seems to best fit the context both immediate (vv. 1-17) and remote (the whole book). **Had a bow;** — The gospel or his instrument of conquest. **And a crown was given unto him:** — The crown of victory. **And he went forth conquering, and to conquer.** — That is, he went forth conquering because his purpose was to conquer. Jesus charged His disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature (Mk. 16:15). With the message of truth (the bow) and crowned with success (the crown), Christianity, during the apostolic age, spread throughout the whole Roman world (cf. the book of Acts). It conquered because its purpose was to conquer. It had no other mission in the world. . . .

7:4 — **And I heard the number of them which were sealed.** — He did not see the sealing itself but from some unnamed source (probably from the angel) he was told the number. **And there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand** — This is the number of those who received the mark of God's seal upon their foreheads. Is it to be taken literally? Or is it symbolic? It seems incredible to me that anyone could conceive of it as a literal number of all the saved from Israel for several reasons: first, it is set in a context of symbolism; second, exactly the same number from each of the twelve tribes is given; third, ten of the tribes did not exist by NT times; fourth, all the tribes are not named (Ephraim and Dan are omitted, unless Joseph is put for Ephraim); fifth, if literal, then it is necessary to conclude that

all the tribes of Israel literally means fleshly Israel and nothing more. But this cannot be because all the servants of God were to be sealed, regardless of their nationality (cf. vv. 9-17). All the tribes of Israel must therefore be a symbol for the lost of the earth, that is, unbelieving Israel signifies all unbelievers. Hence the number 144,000 is symbolic of all the saved who are called out or separated from the unbelieving world (Mt. 19:28; Gal. 6:16; Jas. 1:1). This is further substantiated by the fact that in the next section (vv. 9-17) the same group is seen as a great multitude from all nations. Thus the 144,000 here symbolize the completed number of the servants of God, that is, every Christian or the whole church. . . .

7:14 — **And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest.** — John does not answer the question (v. 13) but instead states that the elder already knew. The whole expression should probably be understood as something similar to, "No, Lord, but please tell me." As Swete says the words "thou knowest" is at once a confession of ignorance, and an appeal for information." **And he said to me, These are they which came out of** — This is, emerge from the great tribulation. While Hailey says, "The verb tense here indicates continuous coming, not a past or completed act," it seems to me that Beckwith is more likely correct in saying that it is without reference to time and concludes, "The time is determined by the context, which in this case shows the act to have already taken place at the time anticipated in the vision." **great tribulation,** — The great tribulation (ASV). They had come through or emerged from the great trials, distresses, and persecutions that had plagued them on earth (cf. 1:9, 2:9-10, 22; Mt. 24:21, 29; Jn. 16:33; Acts 14:22; 2 Tim. 3:12). This most surely has reference to all the tribulations they had passed through or endured in this life and not to a period of time called the Great Tribulation, which some place between what they call the rapture and the revelation of Jesus, a period of time of which the Scriptures know nothing. To this Beckwith adds his testimony by saying, "There is nothing which points to one particular distress." **And have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.** — One would have to

be blinded by a threatened human theory not to see that this has reference to the salvation of the soul from sin — a salvation which is achieved by being washed in the blood of Christ (Eph. 1:7; 1 Pt. 1:18-19). The washing, of course, is metaphorical for whatever is done on the part of the sinner to bring about his salvation. Christ shed His blood to pay man's sin debt. That is, He provided the means of salvation — the means that would save all men if they would but wash and be clean. But man also has a part in the forgiveness of his sins. He must appropriate the blood through obedience to the divine will, as is revealed in the gospel (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 6:3-4, 16-18). Christ freely shed His blood (that is, by grace He provided the plan to save) to set men free. But to be free, man must wash his robes (cleanse his soul) in that blood. And the only way that can be done is by believing in Christ as Saviour (Jn. 8:24) and submitting to Him as Lord (Acts 2:36) by absolute obedience to His revealed will. The blood of Christ saves (Rom. 5:6-9) but it saves only those who appropriate it to their sins by obedience. In short, the victorious are those who believed in Christ, obeyed His word, and lived faithfully through all the troubles and trials of life. . . .

12:11 — **And they** — The brethren of v. 10. **Overcame him** — The dragon. **By** — Because of (ASV). Three reasons or grounds for their victory are now given: (1) **The blood of the Lamb**, — The blood of Christ, shed for the sins of the world (see notes on 1:5). The blood is the means by which salvation is secured. But here the means is not the concept in view. It is the reason or grounds for

their victory. The blood had motivated them to endure to the victorious end. (2) **And by the word of their testimony**; — And because of the message to which they bore testimony (Williams). That is, the reason they overcame was that they bore faithful testimony to the truth of the gospel, both in their faith and practice (cf. 1:9). Their belief had guarded them through all the pitfalls of the battle with Satan (cf. 1 Pet. 1:5; Heb. 3:14; 10:23) and no persecution could stop them from from proclaiming His good news (e.g., Acts 4:19-20; 5:29, 41). (3) **And they loved not their lives unto the death**. — They did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death (NIV). Their loyalty to Christ meant more to them than life itself. That is, they were willing to die martyrs before surrendering to Satan (cf. 2:10). . . .

20:2 — **And he** — The angel of v. 1. **Laid hold on** — seized him or took him by force. **The dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan**, — A fourfold designation of the arch enemy of God and His people (see notes on 12:9). **And bound him** — Evidently bound him with the chain of v. 1. That is, Satan is bound by the word of God. But to what extent is he bound? Does this mean that he is absolutely bound from all activity or does it mean that his activity has been limited to certain spheres? Some say the former but I think the latter because it is more in keeping with the context. He is bound in his prison house (v. 3), and from there he directs his work through his agents. Barnes says, "This passage does not require us to suppose that there will be a total cessation of Satanic influence in the earth during that period." Even so he is still bound

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from certain things. For example, he cannot destroy the Bible (Mt. 24:35); he cannot prevent the gospel (when it is believed and obeyed) from saving (Rom. 1:16); he cannot tempt a child of God with a temptation that has no escape (1 Cor. 10:13); nor can he so control man as to destroy his free will. It seems that Satan has power over man only to the extent and that man permits him to exercise that power, certainly only to the extent that God permits it. Thus Satan is bound in many way and from many activities in the Christian age, and I think this is the what is symbolized here. As an example of how he may be bound, consider the limits placed on him in the case of Job. Job was in comfortable circumstances, with a large happy family and a great deal of wealth (Jb. 1:1-5). But a day came when the sons of God presented themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also (Jb. 1:6). The Lord asked him if he had considered His servant Job. Satan replied that the reason Job feared God was because He had hedged him about with so many blessings (Jb. 1:7-10). The devil said if he could remove the hedge from him, Job would curse God to the face (Jb. 1:11). "And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thy hand" (Jb. 1:12). God thus bound Satan from touching Job's person. He could destroy his goods but he could not put a hand on Job because God limited his power. When Satan had destroyed all Job's possessions and he was still faithful, he appeared before God again and said, "Put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life" (Jb. 2:5-6). Some of the restrictions were now

lifted and Satan was permitted to attack the person of Job, but he was bound from destroying his life. From this it should be obvious that Satan can only work to the extent God will permit him — he is bound from all other activities. Jesus asked, "Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? And then shall he spoil his house" (Mt. 12:29). The strong man is the devil and this tells us that when Christ entered the realm of death and then broke its bonds by His resurrection He bound Satan. Thus the binding of Satan took place at the resurrection and he will remain bound (by the gospel) until he is loosed for a little season at the time of judgment. . . .

22:17 — **And the Spirit** — The Holy Spirit, God's medium for revealing, confirming, and delivering the message of redemption (Jn. 14:26; 16:13; 1 Cor. 2:12-13; Heb. 2:3-4). **And the bride** — The church of Christ (Rom 7:4; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25-27, 32), God's medium for spreading the message of redemption to the world (Mk. 16:15-16; 2 Tim. 2:2). **Say, come.** — The Spirit and the church extend the invitation to all to share in the heavenly blessing. **And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come.** — Whoever has a burning need for more than sin and Satan can possibly offer. **And whosoever will,** — The invitation is universal — every kindred and tongue, people and nation (5:9). God is not willing that any should perish, but pleads for all to come to repentance (2 Pt. 3:9). **Let him take the water of life freely.** — Jesus gives freely the water of life (Jn. 4:10), producing within each individual a well of water that springs up unto everlasting life (Jn. 4:15).

Reexamining the Fundamentals, IX

David Pharr, Knoxville, TN

In the previous installment we introduced the subject of congregational autonomy (self-government). Respect for this principle is an essential fundamental in the restored New Testament church. The church of Christ has

no organization above the local congregation. The only government of the universal church is the rule of Christ, who is the only head of the body (Col. 1:18). There is no organization of congregations within a district, state, etc. Each local church is vested with

authority over its own affairs, subject only to the ordinances of heaven. Cooperation among congregations is voluntary, as equals, none being over or under the others, regardless of location, size, wealth, or fame.

The word **autonomy** does not appear in Scripture. The idea of autonomy, however, is inferred from a review of New Testament teaching regarding church organization. A study of the church in the Bible will show that the only provision for church organization pertained to local congregations, and that, obviously therefore, there was no provision for any hierarchy above the local congregation.

Respect for the Biblical pattern always means rejection of things that are not authorized. This principle is illustrated in the way Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for enjoining traditions which had no authority from God (Mark 7:1-13). In Hebrews 7:14 the writer proves his point on the change of the priesthood and the law on the fact that "Moses spake nothing" concerning priests from the tribe of Judah. This inspired writer considered the lack of authorization (implied by silence) to clearly prove a prohibition. What was not spoken was not authorized, and what was not authorized was prohibited. The very existence of a pattern demands respect for the boundaries it establishes (Heb. 8:5; Deut. 4:2).

We have continually emphasized this principle in the debate over instrumental music. Singing is commanded. Instrumental music in worship is something about which the New Testament "spake nothing." Just as Hebrews 7:14 uses the silence of the Old Testament regarding priests of the tribe of Judah to prove that such was unlawful, so the silence of the New Testament regarding instruments in worship proves that such are unlawful. This same respect for Bible authority must be applied to the issue of church government. There is no scriptural provision for any organization of the church above local congregations. In the absence of such a provision, to inaugurate such is to go beyond the boundaries of the New Testament pattern. The absence of any record of any New Testament congregation overseeing the affairs of another congregation is in itself sufficient to prove congregational autonomy.

The silence of the New Testament regarding any governing arrangement over the churches in a district, state, country, etc., is sufficient to prove that such were not authorized, and being not authorized are therefore unlawful.

The apostles were men specifically appointed by Christ himself. They were endowed with power by the Holy Spirit and given a special commission as Christ's ambassadors. This office was temporary, as is obvious from the fact that they had to be eyewitnesses of the resurrected Lord (Acts 1:22; 1 Cor. 9:1) and that Paul was the last person to be provided this qualification (1 Cor. 15:8). There was no provision for the apostleship to be transferred to succeeding generations, and any who now claim for themselves either the title or the prerogatives are frauds (2 Cor. 11:13; Rev. 2:2).

An examination of the work of the apostles will show that they were over the churches in New Testament times by the authority of the doctrines and ordinances they taught. In this they acted as official representatives of the Lord. Their message was His message. All that we can possibly know of their instructions are in the written word. It follows, therefore, that they continue to exercise exactly the same authority over the church today. (See Matt. 18:18; 1 Cor. 11:1-2; 14:37; 16:1-2; 1 Tim. 3:15). Then and now the church is to be subject to the teaching of the apostles.

It is within the framework of apostolic authority that we find the Jerusalem conference of Acts 15. This was not a meeting of delegates from all the churches (such as characterizes missionary societies, Baptist conventions, etc.); but a meeting of Spirit-guided men to demonstrate a united position on the issue before them. Their position was not determined by a vote, but by apostolic declaration. This was precisely according to the provision stated by Jesus in Matthew 18:18-20, a text that pertains specifically to the ministry of the apostles. Apostolic authority, therefore, was the essential element of the conference of Acts 15. The event cannot, then, be used as authority for any legislative convention today.

Denominations have typically made artificial distinctions among the several terms

that are used in the New Testament to refer to those who oversee in the local church. They make a distinction between "bishops," "elders," and "pastors." A simple comparison of passages will show that several terms apply to the same office. In Acts 20:17 Paul addressed the "elders of the church," but in verse 28 he says they are "overseers." The word **overseers** is from the same word elsewhere translated **bishops**. Qualifications for "elders" and "bishops" are the same (1 Tim. 3:1ff) the terms being used interchangeably in Titus 1:5 and 7. "Presbytery" (1 Tim. 4:14 KJV) is from the same word elsewhere translated "elders" and could properly be rendered "eldership." "Pastors" (Eph. 4:11) means the same as "shepherds." Elders are the ones who shepherd the flock (1 Pet. 5:1-2). This same pastoring duty is named for elders in Acts 20:28. Denominations have created a variety of offices and misappropriated these terms to designate them. For example, "bishop" might be used to designate one who oversees all the congregations in a state. Simply clarifying the meaning of these terms could go a long way in correcting misunderstanding of the New Testament form of church government.

Men who are elders (presbyters, shepherds, pastors, overseers, bishops) are supposed to rule the church. Paul wrote, "Let the elders that rule well . . ." (1 Tim. 5:17). Of course this authority to rule is limited to that which is in the best interests of the flock they shepherd (1 Pet. 5:1-3). Just as a father is to "rule his own house," so elders are to "take care of the church" (1 Tim. 3:5). This is consistent with the instruction that they are to take the oversight. The same idea is in 1 Thess. 5:12, which refers to them which "are over you in the Lord."

Though a different Greek word is used in Hebrew 13:15, the passage still points to the rule of elders because of the way it parallels the description of elders found in other passages. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves. . . ."

It is significant that every reference to elders in New Testament congregations shows a plurality. The authority to oversee is shared. No allowance is made for a Diotrepes to be preminent (3 John 9).

The other side of this must also be rec-

ognized. Since elders in a local congregation are given the oversight of that congregation, it must follow that no one other than the elders of that congregation has any right to exercise oversight there. For some person, or hierarchy, from outside the congregation to exercise oversight there would have to be a usurpation of the oversight assigned to the local elders. Whether agreeable to the parties involved or not, any governmental arrangement other than local autonomy is a violation of the New Testament plan. On the one hand, the outside overseers ("bishops," "superintendents," "pillar churches," etc.) would be guilty of usurping authority not given to them. On the other hand, local elders would be guilty of ignoring the mandate given to them.

Men are rarely content with the simplicity of the Divine arrangement. They suppose that a big work requires a big organization. They will argue that many independent congregations, bound together only by their mutual respect for the will of God and their love of the brotherhood — that such is not adequate to accomplish the mission of Christ's church. Such reasoning, however, is faulty in every way. It presumes to know more about how the church should function than does the head. It overlooks the wisdom of not providing for high offices. (See Matt. 20:25-27.) And it forgets that just such an arrangement of autonomous congregations was all that could be found in the days when the gospel was preached to every creature (Col. 1:23).

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Life in Full Dimension

Harmon Caldwell, (Deceased)

Methusela, according to the Scriptures, lived longer than any other person. Yet his life was only in one dimension as far as we can determine — it was characterized by great length, there is no word of any breadth or depth. There is no indication that his was a life of complete dedication and service. In fact we do not have any idea what kind of man he was. The Bible just says that he lived a long, long life.

Christ lived on the earth only thirty-three years. His actual public ministry was limited to the brief space of three and a half years. Consider, however, the contrast in Methusela's sojourn in this world with that of the Savior's. Ponder the tremendous and incomprehensible impact Jesus of Nazareth has had on mankind. Residing among us but such a short time — yet influencing the world mightily. His noble life is the supreme example, for His life was one of absolute abundance in dedication, love, devotion, loyalty to purpose, obedience, and sacrifice. It is no wonder, then, that the word of God in so many places upholds Him as the one in whose path we are to walk.

He stated, "I am come that you might have life and have it more abundantly." Reference is here given, no doubt, to the abundance of reward in eternal life. Peter gives us to understand that if we are diligent in making our calling and election sure by being faithful, virtuous, knowledgable, temperate, patient, godly, full of brotherly kindness and love, and if these abound in us, then, "... so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. 1:5-11.) Glorious indeed, therefore, will be our entrance into heaven and our life there. Abundant will be our happiness as we forever sing hymns of praise around the eternal throne of God.

That this abundant life be ours, our lives even now must be complete in Him who gave Himself for us. The service to which we are called in faith, knowledge, love, etc., is to be abundant. These things are to be in us "and abound."

Jesus' gift of an abundant life, then, begins in this life. Believing in Him, obeying Him, and thus dedicating oneself entirely to Him is to be possessed of and to manifest the fulfillment of human purpose. Thus to the actual length of life, the Lord in His life and teachings, adds depth of meaning and broadness of vision.

In behalf of the Philippians Paul invoked, "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent" (Phil. 1:9-10). A recog-

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dition and thus a consequent approval of the high and holy and heavenly things is derived only from abundance of love and knowledge of the truth of God. Those who are ignorant of, or who disregard the divine precepts and appointments of God are those who cannot approve of the excellent things of divinity. They cannot appreciate the need to depend on Him whose love passeth knowledge. They see only so far as time and matter. They are not concerned with the only true fulfillment in an otherwise stale and aimless existence. They are unaware of the fact that Jesus is the only one to whom we must go, to whom we must look as Author and Finisher of our faith, for He only has the words of life.

Hence inspiration declares that we must "abound in the work of the Lord." Jesus gives us life abundantly, but such cannot be ours unless we accept that life, and live that life abundantly in work and service. This is

why Paul prayed of the Ephesian church: "Ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ" (Eph. 3:17-19).

The Christian's life indeed is full. It is an abundant life. Jesus has given it to us. Let us use it to His glory. Let us realize that the only true fulfillment of existence here is an abundant life of service; that the only true meaning of life in this world is living in anticipation of an abundant entrance into the next.

Are we truly living to the fullest measure an abundant life — with Christ? Are we engaging in all that we possibly can do as members of His church? Let us think on these matters as time comes and goes. And there will follow an abundance of results!



BROTHERHOOD NEWS

Dennis Conner, Yadkinville, NC

Around North Carolina . . .

The Asheboro church of Christ has enjoyed a year of growth in 1988. Through the end of November there had been 11 baptisms and Sunday morning attendance was averaging in the upper 90's. Mike Mayes serves this church well as its preacher . . . The church in Wilkesboro has also experienced significant growth this past year with 11 baptisms as well. Charles Fetters is the preacher. . . . Many in the Carolinas may not be aware that there is a new church meeting in Shallotte. The Shallotte church of Christ meets on Northside Drive. The mission effort in Shallotte is overseen by the Westside church in Charlotte. Jerry Bell is the new preacher in Shallotte. They are presently needing an additional \$838 per month in financial support. Any churches or individuals interested in helping or needing additional information may contact brother Bell at (919) 754-8173 or 754-7860 . . . The Brewer Road church of Christ in Winston-Salem will be hosting its 1989 Missions Seminar January 27-28. The

theme will be "Send Our Workers" and the guest speaker will be Joe Cannon of the Mission 1000 Program at the Highland St. church in Memphis, Tennessee. The sisters at Brewer Road will be hosting their annual Ladies' Day on March 4. Sandy Collins of Nashville, Tennessee will be leading a study of the book of Jeremiah . . . The Archdale church of Christ in Charlotte will be hosting its annual Youth Happening February 10-12. The speakers will be Geoff Sikes, Jimmie Hampton and John Risse . . . Linville Forest in Kernersville will have Ivan Stewart with them for a "Personal Evangel-

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sm Improvement Course" April 7-9 . . . The Yadkinville church of Christ will be hosting its third annual Small Church Workshop. The date is set tentatively for May 19-20 and the theme will be "Leading the Small Church."

And South Carolina . . .

The Crawford Road congregation has enjoyed a successful year evangelistically with 10 baptism through the first of December. Melvin Williams is the preacher for this Rock Hill church . . . The Central church of Christ in Spartanburg set an attendance record on October 30 of 458. The previous high was 394. A Sunday School record was also set.

The Nation . . .

J.J. Turner has been named as the new editor of *Christian Bible Teacher*, replacing John Waddey. Turner presently preaches the Newland St. church of Christ in Garden Grove, California . . . Freed-Hardeman College in Henderson, Tennessee will be offering the M.A. degree in two fields. Beginning with the summer of 1989 a program in ministry will be offered and the summer of 1990 will offer a program in the Biblical text . . . Percy Keene, a gospel preacher for 44 years and a former teacher at the White's Ferry Road School of Biblical Studies, died on October 26, 1988.

And the World . . .

The Southwest church of Christ in Ambervale, Australia recently collected more than \$21,800 in a special contribution. The church was established in 1983 and averages more than 110 in attendance . . . The church is growing in Liberia with 78 conversions accounted for through November of 1988. Most of those converted were students of World Bible School. . . . A team of eight Brazilian Christians have moved to the coastal city of Vitoria, Brazil, where they have established a downtown congregation . . . The World Bible Translation Center in Fort Worth, Texas has announced the completion of a Russian translation of the New

Testament. The translation has been in the works since 1982. The Center hopes to have it in print by early 1989.

Calendar of Events

January

27-28 — Missions Seminar, Brewer Rd. church of Christ, Winston-Salem. Theme: "Send Our Workers"

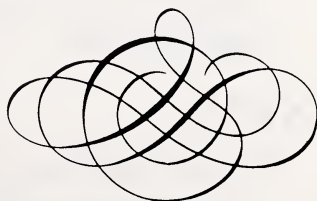
February

6-10 — Freed-Hardeman College Bible Lectures, Henderson, Tennessee

19-22 — Abilene Christian University Lectureship, Abilene, Texas

10-12 — "Youth Happening," Archdale church of Christ, Charlotte

Note to Carolina churches: It is our desire to provide the most accurate and up-to-date news information possible. To do this, we need your help. If you are not currently sending your bulletin to brother Conner, please begin now. You may send bulletins, news releases and special announcements of your congregational happenings to brother Conner at P.O. Box 1219, Yadkinville, NC 27005. Please include all gospel meetings and other events you have planned for 1989. Thank You.



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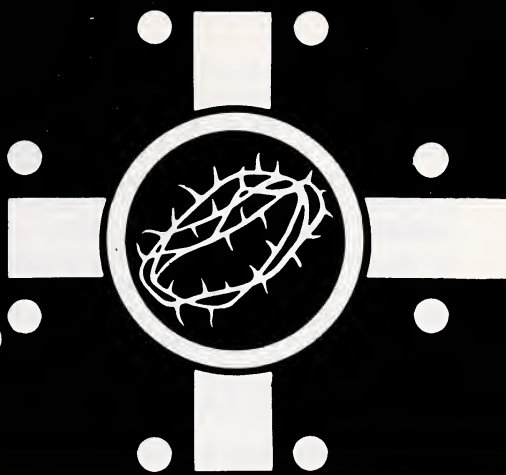
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CAROLINA CHRISTIAN

VOL. 31, NO. 2, FEBRUARY 1989



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SPECIAL ISSUE

The Question of Sensitivity Larry Eppley

The Question of Brotherhood Paul Jarrett

The Question of Goodness Ron Newberry

The Question of Fear Terry Gunnells

The Question of Identity John Risse

The Question of Suffering Phil Stapp

The Ultimate Question

Whom Are You Seeking? Dennis Conner



editorial

Johnny Melton*, Hickory, NC

An oft-repeated anecdote has a father walking with his young son. The boy said, "Daddy what is electricity?"

"Well now, I do not really know," the father said. "I never knew much about electricity. All I know about it is that it makes things run."

A little farther on, the boy said, "Daddy, how does the gasoline make the automobiles go?"

The father replied, "Well, I do not know. I do not know much about motors."

Several more questions followed with much the same result, until at last, the boy said, "Gee, I hope you do not mind my asking so many questions?"

"Not at all, son," said his father, "you go right ahead and ask. How else will you ever learn anything!"

Asking questions is an important way to learn, provided questions are put to people who can give adequate answers. More important to the learning process than asking questions is having questions asked of us.

Socrates, in ancient Athens, caused his students to think and reflect by asking penetrating questions. He understood the importance of intellectual struggle to arrive at life-changing truth. When students grapple with probing questions, they soon learn that they do not know as much as they thought. Once students understand that truth is something to be discovered, not merely dispensed, they will be more serious and careful in their thinking.

Socrates was famous for his question-asking, but he did not originate the format. Jimmy Allen, in a sermon entitled, "The Right View of Jesus," related the following:

Somewhere in my reading I found the statement that the question and answer method of teaching originated with some great philosopher. Well, I beg to differ with that conclusion. Teaching by

means of questions originated with God Almighty in the very beginning. Shortly after God created Adam and Eve, they sinned and hid in the foliage. God came into the garden and asked, "Adam, where art thou?" Do you not think God knew where they were? Do you think Adam and Eve could shield themselves from the all seeing eye of God? He knew where they were. Then why ask the question? He wanted Adam to see where he was. When Jesus asked, "Whom do men say that I, the son

EDITORIAL AND PUBLICATION STAFF:

David Pharr, Editor; Johnny Melton, Managing Editor; Dennis Connor, News Editor.

CAROLINA CHRISTIAN is published monthly by Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., at 71 S. Fairfield Road, Greenville, SC 29605. Subscription price; individual \$7.00 per year; club of five or more \$6.50 per year; quantity of 15 or more in bundles or direct mailing 40¢ per copy per month. Publication number, 091160.

Second class postage paid at Greenville, SC.

POSTMASTER: Send undelivered copies with Form 3579 to Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., Johnny Melton, Managing Editor, Route 2, Box 137, Conover, North Carolina 28613.

RETURN REQUESTED

Address editorial matter to David Pharr, Editor; ETSOPM, 6608 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37931. Address news items to Dennis Conner, P.O. Box 1219, Yadkinville, NC 27055.

All items to be printed in a given month's issue should reach the editor not later than the next-to-the-last Thursday of the preceding month.

Address commercial advertising inquiries to Jacobs List, Inc. Clinton, SC 29325. Address all advertising pertaining to the Church of Christ or its members (including related organizations) to the editor.

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of man, am” He knew exactly what others were saying about Him. However, He was leading His disciples into a great spiritual truth which they would not soon forget.” (*What Is Hell Like?*, p. 90).

Merrill C. Tenney has written a book entitled, *12 Questions Jesus Asked*. He introduced the book with the following observation:

The use of questions characterized all of Jesus’ teaching. From the beginning of His ministry to its end He was continually probing the minds and memories of his hearers. These questions were not academic, but personal. His aim was not to gain information for Himself, but to stimulate discussion with others, and to bring them to a commitment to Himself and to His program. He used this method to compel consideration of His claims, and to draw from His disciples the confession that would seal their allegiance to Him” (p. 7).

When questions are put to us, we may or may not wish to consider them. When Cal-

vin Coolidge was President, he was notorious for ducking questions. One day the reporters formed a conspiracy against him. Before a news conference to which he had reluctantly agreed, each reporter wrote out precisely the same question: “Are you going to run again in 1928?” Coolidge read each slip carefully, without comment or change of expression, then threw them all in the trash basket. “Gentlemen,” he said, “the only question in this lot I care to answer today concerns public schools in Puerto Rico.” He then delivered a fifteen-minute talk on the subject, full of statistics.

The questions Jesus asked must be answered. We dare not side-step them or duck them. They are designed to bring us to spiritual maturity. To trifle with them is to court spiritual disaster.

This special issue of *Carolina Christian* will focus on seven questions Jesus asked. Each of the articles is well-written and will challenge the reader to honest soul-searching.

This issue is sent forth with the hope that it will motivate us to grapple with the spiritual issues Jesus raises in the questions under consideration. By struggling with these matters, we will be able to internalize the great truths these questions are designed to uncover.

The Question of Sensitivity: “Who Touched Me?” Mark 5:31

Larry Eppley, Charlotte, NC

As Jesus was on his way, the crowds almost crushed him. . . . “Who touched me,” Jesus asked (Luke 8:40-47).

The crowds gave way as the frantic Jewish official intercepted the Teacher. Stricken by grief and fearing the worst, he fell at Jesus’ feet, begging Him to intervene. His twelve year-old daughter was dying. If Jesus could only come while there was still time. Then, Jairus believed, she would live.

As a ruler of the synagogue (a group not

normally of Jesus’ constituency), Jairus stands out as one of those great believers. He was thrilled when Jesus agreed to visit his home, yet uneasy, believing that time was of the essence. The multitudes decided to follow; no doubt slowing their return to the dying child.

In the context of such urgency, it must have startled Jairus when Jesus abruptly stopped, turned around, and asked, “Who touched me?”

“Who touched me!” Could this Teacher be so easily diverted from His mission? The

disciples were stunned. What could Jesus possibly mean? He was literally thronged by humanity; everyone was touching Him.

These words, incomprehensible as they were to the disciples and Jairus, were not lost on one impoverished sufferer. For even in a crowd, Jesus knew that someone had enlisted His aid.

Imagine the astonishment of the pathetic soul who had dared to touch Jesus' garment, convinced that this insignificant act of faith in the Lord of Life would accomplish what neither time nor doctors had done.

She did not expect Jesus to stop and acknowledge that she had touched His clothing. Overwhelmed, the embarrassed woman fell down before Him, explaining her actions.

One does not truly understand the Jesus of the New Testament who has not observed the manner in which this Teacher dealt with people. The context of this interaction suggests that the sick woman thought it inappropriate to speak to Jesus. Perhaps it was because she was a woman, and tradition did not smile upon a woman speaking to a man in public. Perhaps she was ashamed of her pitiful state, her condition making her feel unclean. Without doubt, she knew Jesus was on an urgent mission.

Yet she was neither unclean nor insignificant. Jesus would take time. Jesus' question was simply a demonstration that He placed value upon the individual.

We forget that, you know. Elders and preachers and other designated leaders often think in terms of the congregation, but are numb to the touch of the individual. They are out there, those hurting souls. Afraid to ask for the time of some busy leader. Just not feeling important enough. Or, maybe, feeling a bit unclean.

Yes, Jesus would get to Jairus' home and perform a mighty miracle. But Jesus was not in the miracle business, He was in the people business. The short tax-collector with the big heart. The victimized of Sychar who was the first to evangelize Samaria. The misunderstood sister of Lazarus who understood much about Jesus and His imminent death. Even the apostles. Just people, special to Jesus, if to no one else.

What was there about this carpenter-

turned-teacher that He could care about people so?

"Who touched me?" Who indeed! Humanity touched Him, and He reached back.

Preachers and other Bible teachers often speak about being more like God. Yet God expressed Himself in many ways. Is it the God who spoke in thunderous tones from the quaking mountain; or the God who talked with Moses as friends do? Surely this is the same God, but I can perceive Him differently. So what manifestation of God is to become my model? The writer of Hebrews answers this way: "In the past, God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son."

Moses once asked God to demonstrate His power that he might (as we say) see God, up front and personal. Even when God obliged, Moses' humanity restricted his view of the God Most High. Perhaps Philip had something similar in mind when he said to Jesus, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." But Jesus did not bring merely a physical manifestation like Moses saw. Jesus replied, "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the father?' " (John 14:8, 9).

Philip was overlooking the obvious. He had not considered that Jesus was the ultimate manifestation of the person and personality of God.

A Jewish Rabbi on the way to an important engagement feels the touch of a diseased pauper in the streets of Capernaum. The renowned Teacher requires that she identify herself. Hurting Humanity answers: "It was I. The nobody, the anonymous one. The victim of fruitless attempts to attain wholeness. It was I. The timid. The unclean. The unlovely one. Please Good Teacher, I meant no harm. I thought, if only I could just touch, just come into contact, just. . . ."

The Teacher says, in effect, "It is all right, dear one, I am not trying to embarrass you. Thank you for your faith. Go in peace now for you have been freed from your plague."

Yet these were not merely the words of a carpenter-rabbi. These were Heaven's

words. In fact, He was Heaven's Word.
"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. And we beheld His glory. Glory as of the only begotten from the Father. Full of Grace. And truth," (John 1:17).

Jairus' daughter would be healed; raised from death, actually. But only after Jesus responded to the nameless woman within the crowd.

The Question of Brotherhood: "Who Are My Brothers?" Matthew 12:46-50

Paul Jarrett, Charlotte, NC

When I was first asked to write an article for this special issue of **Carolina Christian** on "The Question of Brotherhood," I was somewhat apprehensive. It is no secret that in recent years the question, "Who are my brothers?" has been an extremely controversial one. While numerous sermons have been preached, and articles written, in an attempt to provide a definitive response to this question, the end result has generally been to only add to the confusion and strife.

My trepidation was relieved somewhat when I came to realize what the true focus of this article needed to be, based on the theme of this issue and the assigned text. The theme of this issue pertains to questions Jesus asked. Thus, the question of brotherhood, to be dealt with in this article, is not who you and I consider to be our brothers, but who does Christ count as His brother.

In reflecting on the difference between these two questions, I realized that often our approach to the question of brotherhood is not unlike that of the lawyer described in Luke 10. Remember how when Jesus had instructed this man to love God and love his neighbor as himself in order to inherit eternal life, he attempted to justify himself by asking "Who is my neighbor?" I fear that we are sometimes guilty of raising the question "Who is my brother?" in a similar attempt to excuse our lack of brotherly kindness in dealing with others.

When we look to our text in Matthew 12:46-50, we find Jesus' response to His own question, "Who are my brothers?". His response is: "Whoever does the will of my Father Who is in heaven, he is my brother

and sister and mother." Notice that just as Jesus defined "neighbor" as something to be done and not as a person to be identified in Luke 10; he also links "brother" with doing, not with identity in our text. On the basis of identity James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas (See Matt. 13:55) would have been His brethren. Jesus said, however, that His brothers were those who were doing something. The something, in this instance, being the will of the Father.

Our penchant for identifying brethren, rather than actively seeking to be brethren to Jesus in the things we do, surfaces in our obvious enthusiasm for judging the level of other people's performance of God's will, rather than examining our own performance of that will. We would all do well to give serious attention to the fact that our primary concern needs to be focused on showing ourselves to be Christ's brethren by doing the will of the Father, rather than judging who is, and who is not, our brother (see James 4:11; Rom. 14:10-13).

We often try to justify our tendency to be judgmental by quoting Jesus' instructions to "judge with righteous judgment" (John 7:24). In order to use this text as justification for judging the conduct of others, we must totally ignore its context. Jesus makes this statement in repudiation of those Jews who were angry with Him for His actions in healing a man on the Sabbath (John 7:23). Jesus' challenge to them is to judge their own conduct (not His) and do the righteous thing required on their part. He is not giving them the right to continue to pass judgment on the conduct of others. Rather, to judge righteous judgment, in this instance, would have been

for them to have actively glorified God that a man had been healed.

I am firmly convinced that if all of us would devote more time to judging our own performance of the Father's will, and less time judging others in their performance of that will, we would show ourselves to be brothers of Christ, and would go a long way towards resolving many of the issues which divide us. We must do more than make a verbal claim to be one of Christ's family. We must, instead, be actively involved in personally doing the Father's will (see Matt. 7:21-

23).

To understand more perfectly what constitutes the Father's will, we need look no further than the example set by the only one who ever did His will perfectly. Of Him, Peter said, "He went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed by the devil; for God was with Him" (Acts 10:38). It would be grand if all who claim to be Christ's brethren would make a personal commitment to proving that claim to be true by doing the Father's will in the manner in which He set the example.

The Question of Goodness: "What More Are You Doing Than Others?" — Matthew 5:47

Ron Newberry, Greensboro

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus addressed ethical questions such as murder, adultery, retribution, etc. He spoke to the issue of loving our enemies and praying for those who persecute us. Just loving those who love us is to do no more than is common among the people of the world. To reciprocate the love of others in like measure has no real advantage. In Matthew 5:47b, Jesus asks, "What are you doing more than others?" In a parallel text, Jesus says, "But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked" (Luke 6:35).

The point Jesus impresses upon us is this: there is no room for a mind set of mediocrity or average in His disciples. His emphasis, in principle and in context, is: **excel**. He expects us to do better things, greater things, more things than the ordinary things done by those who do not call him Lord. Lip service is not an adequate substitute for living what He preached. Convictions are not worth much, if we are not ready to live by them. The call of Jesus is to a higher plane

of existence. It is a call to second-mile service, cloak-giving and cheek-turning (Matt. 5:40-41).

The living oracle of Jesus is embodied in the word "goodness." Christianity is not a "negative goodness." That is, the heart of Christianity is not bound up or fenced in by "thou shalt nots." It has prohibitions, to be sure. However, the emphasis is constantly placed on what we should be, think and do; not just on what we should avoid.

Elton Trueblood wrote in his book, **The Company of the Committed**, "The best way to understand what the church ought to do is to try to understand what the church is. The partially realized or even unrealized dream is our most precious possession because it shows us where we fail and helps us,

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accordingly, to see the direction in which we ought to be moving.”

The church is the body of Christ (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23). It is, therefore, no less than the embodiment of Jesus on earth. The implication is that the church should move, speak and work as Christ would move, speak and work if He were still on earth. The reality of the incarnate Jesus is that He is still alive and well and moving through His people.

Implied further in this truth that the church is the body of Jesus is the call for every individual member of the body to live above mediocrity because Christ lived above it. The authentic mandate of Jesus is that we involve ourselves, engage the world and participate in His mission.

The point is: involvement is not an option we choose; it is an imperative He chooses for us. A detached, aloof, disengaged, uninvolved, nonparticipating disciple is a contradiction in terms. Christians understand the motto, “The quality of a man’s life is directly proportional to his commitment to excellence.” Christians are committed to excellence in goodness. “What are you doing more than others?” The penetrating question is still being asked by Jesus.

So far we have noted two specific characteristics of goodness expected by Jesus. Each disciple must have a positive thrust and must excel the goodness of others. There is one other point that needs to be made before we

explore specific applications of these principles.

What does the Bible mean by goodness? We have often heard that the Bible is its own best interpreter. Let us allow the Scriptures to help us understand the level of goodness implied in Matthew 5:47.

There are only four texts in the New Testament where the word goodness occurs. In Romans 15:14 Paul asserts that the Roman Christians are full of goodness. In Ephesians 5:9 he says that goodness is a fruit of the light. Paul repeats that thought in Galatians 5:22 in his list of the fruit of the Spirit. Finally, the word is used in 2 Thessalonians 1:11 where it is translated “good purpose” (NIV), “goodness” (TEV), “good resolve” (RSV), and “goodness” (ASV). From these texts, we can tentatively conclude that goodness has to do with purpose, desire, intentions, maturity, completeness, etc.

Turning to Matthew again, note that 5:48 concludes with, “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” A study of the word perfect leads one to conclude that perfection does not deal with abstract flawlessness. Perfection deals with maturity, completeness, wholeness, etc. It carries with it the idea of a seasoned veteran as opposed to a rookie.

The point is a simple one: goodness and perfection are linked. Perfection implies our purpose and design; goodness implies an abundance and generosity as we fulfill that



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purpose.

Let us now take the general admonitions implied in our text and apply the principle to our situation. Are we doing more than others? Are we fulfilling our purpose in abundant fashion? Are we functioning, excelling, engaging our lives to meet our designed purpose? What are we doing more than others?

What are we doing more than others in making disciples (Matt. 28:18-20)? Many of the denominations put us to shame with their expectations of their members. They search for ways to put more members in the field to individually teach the lost. We frequently engage in discussions about evangelism being a talent and dismiss our responsibility because, we conclude, we just do not have that talent. Therefore, we feel comfortable with a life that never mentions Jesus and the cross to another human being. Does this meet the test of goodness?

What are we doing more than others in the area of world evangelism? Once again, many religious groups exceed our rather puny efforts many times over in both money and man power. Billions of individuals go to bed each night lost. They need men and women who will go and teach them the truth. We have difficulty finding such men and women. Then when we find them, we turn them into beggars who scour the country for support. We bounce enough seed off the inside of our church buildings every Sunday

to sow the entire world with the seed of the kingdom. Does that stand the test of goodness?

What are we doing more than others in the area of benevolence? Read the Gospels and note the times Jesus was "moved with compassion." Our communities are filled with hurting, hungry, distressed people. Social groups and the government have taken over many of the tasks in which we ought to be engaged. Read Matthew 25:31-46 and note the criteria Jesus uses to validate our service to Him. Does our answer to the nagging reminders of pain, poverty and distress around us answer the test of goodness?

The applications of the principles in Matthew 5:47 are almost endless and implications stagger the mind. If we do only the minimum, only what gets us by in our minds, Jesus cuts our hearts to the quick with the ancient question, "What are you doing more than others?" Goodness cannot be relegated to just "not doing that which is wrong." Goodness addresses a positive, active, engaged heart that is open-handed, generous and desires to exceed the letter of the law. Goodness speaks to growth, development, and fulfillment of our designed purpose.

What other areas in our lives need the application of the principles in Matthew 5:47? Whatever they are, we dare not be satisfied with mediocrity when we realize we are to emulate the Master and that the Master gave us His very best.

The Question of Fear: "Why Are Ye Fearful?"

Terry Gunnells, Charlotte, NC

And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm (Matt. 8:26).

It is my assignment to explore the fear factor found in this narrative which has to do with the relationship between Christ and His disciples.

A plausible definition of fear is:

An emotion of violent agitation or fright in the presence (actual or anticipated) of danger or pain. It is marked by extensive organic changes and behaviors of flight or concealment (**A Comprehensive Dictionary of Psychological and Psychoanalytical Terms**).

The actual Greek word for fear in this passage is *deilo*, which is an adjective and means timid. **The World Book Dictionary**

defines timid as "easily frightened or shy." It is significant that the "timid" in Revelation 21:8 are listed with the transgressors, thus we can ascertain that at some point fear becomes sinful. Children are afraid of many things that adults take for granted and babes in Christ function the same way. The more mature the Christian becomes, the less fearful he or she should be. This maturation took place in the lives of the disciples as their role in the church unfolded.

It could be that Jesus upbraided the disciples because they were demonstrating a sinful timidness rather than shaming them for reacting to danger in such a normal way. Dr. Tony Whitehead says of fear:

"Not only is fear a very normal emotion, but it is also an essential emotion. To be totally without fear is to be in serious danger. Fear is an essential defense mechanism" (**Fears and Phobias**, p. 7).

Common sense supports the right for humankind to react with fear to real danger, but the kind of relationship that Christ had with His disciples taught them that He could rectify the unpleasant events with which they were faced for they had already seen Him heal such dreaded diseases as leprosy and palsy, thus they called on Him to save them from their peril.

Of course, even the most seasoned seamen had a healthy respect for the fury of the Sea of Galilee which was subject to sudden and violent spasms to which the Greek language refer as earthquake-like disturbances. The fear of drowning is universal among all creatures that depend on oxygen for life. Even amphibians panic when they sense an insufficient supply of air. This should be fresh on our minds since the news media dramatized the three whales recently trapped in the ice in Alaska. So the disciples were justified for being fearful from a physical perspective.

I would surmise that this was another of the events in the lives of the disciples which demonstrated their abject humanity as well as their lack of understanding of the true nature of Christ, a weakness that they completely overcame before their lives were ended by the hands of angry men. The fact that the disciples feared death was demonstrated when they asked, "Carest thou not

that we perish?" (Mark 4:38).

I am presently doing extensive study on the topic of death and dying, a subject in which all rational persons are interested. I have concluded that it is not wrong to dread death, but when we lose faith in the Good Shepherd to see us through the valley, our faith has reached a dangerously low level. This is analogous to submitting ourselves to a surgeon. We are rightfully afraid of the uncertainty of the anesthesia, the pain and risk which accompanies the invasion of our bodies, but we have enough faith in the training and success of the medical personnel that allows us to submit ourselves to them, which demonstrates the possibility of being **apprehensive** and yet **submissive** at the same time. I have read that the basic cause of the fear of flying, for instance, is the unwillingness to submit ourselves to the control of others, and not the fear of heights as it has previously been supposed.

In his book, **Celebration of Discipline**, Richard J. Foster cited the following lines penned by George Matheson about submission and the benefits of it:

Make me a captive, Lord,
And then I shall be free;
Force me to render up my sword,
And I shall conqueror be.
I sink in life's alarms
When by myself I stand;
Imprison me within Thine arms,
And strong shall be my hand.

All humans have a need to believe in some Divine protection or unique healing power. Most doctors agree that the person who is most likely to recover from a serious illness or injury is the one who believes that there is a special power that will assist him or her to recover. The human psyche is made in such a way that when we believe we are in danger, we usually suffer the somatic symptoms of the imagined problem. Conversely, there seems to be an army of little soldiers, made up of hormones and white blood cells, that will rush to the affected area of the body and attack with a powerful force if our thinking is right. Dr. William Davis, our distinguished editor's first cousin, suggested in a seminar, that this is a learned behavior and is a potent healing aid when

employed correctly. Note he said it was an aid to healing and not the only factor involved. Dr. Norman Vincent Peale would call this **The Power of Positive Thinking**, which I think is the answer to much of our modern divine healing that is claimed by many.

The point is that faith is belief that something can be done, and fear is a result of disbelief which is the basis of the Biblical idea that **faith** is the antithesis of **fear** (Heb. 11). There seems to be a bipolar relationship between fear and faith, for if there is little faith, there is much fear and vice versa. Fear can be debilitating while faith can be rehabilitating.

Our faith produces the hope that lets us live in a world of danger, disease, and death without succumbing to despair. When the words, **NO HOPE**, reverberate through our heads, we have sinned the sin of the fearful disciples by forgetting that the Master of Tumults is with us in our personal ship of state. Can you imagine the despair on the Titanic when it became evident that it was sinking? Oral tradition propagates the story that the band members, who once played for dancing feet, went to their ocean graves playing "Nearer My God to Thee." All of us should hope that at our demise we should feel the nearness of God through our faith.

How ashamed I am to have a doctor even remotely suggest that I am suffering from anxiety, or that my malady is stress-related; which is a reminder that the scales are tipping to the side of fear because I am becoming overwhelmed with worldly care. It is usually this kind of weakness that our high-tech society demonstrates. Dr. Stacey B. Day (**Cancer, Stress and Death**, p. 216) gives this definition of anxiety:

Anxiety may be defined as "a specific conscious inner attitude and a peculiar-feeling state characterized by a number of vectors." These vectors include:

- (1.) A physically and a mentally painful awareness of being powerless to do anything about a personal matter.
- (2.) Premonition of an impending and almost inevitable danger.
- (3.) A tense and physically exhausting alertness as if facing an emergency.
- (4.) An apprehensive self-absorption which interferes with an effective and advantageous solution of reality problems.

It is of utmost importance to note that Peter, who was in the ship with Jesus that frightful evening, on the eve of his pending execution was sleeping so peacefully in his dungeon cell that an angel had to smite him on his side to awaken him for his miraculous escape (Acts 12:6-7). What brought him and his fellow disciples to such a high level of faith? I might suggest that when Jesus was raised from the sleep of death, there was never again any doubt in the minds of the disciples that their Master could save them from harm, neither was there any doubt that they were willing to suffer death for Him.

Though Paul was not one of the disciples in the storm-tossed ship, he later wrote, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31). Why, then, are we so fearful? Could it be the result of the lack of the knowledge of God, which produces faith which is the precursor of love. Love in return casteth out fear (1 John 4:18).

We, too, serve a risen Savior who providentially cares for us. May this knowledge scatter our fear as the sun scatters the night.

Issues Wanted

Due to moves (etc.) this old native Carolinian has many gaps in his set of **Carolina Christian**. Willing to pay reasonable prices for needed copies, including earlier **Messenger of Truth**. Please send list. Do not send any material until we have made an agreement. Also need a few of the bound volumes.

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The Question of Identity: "Who Do People Say I Am?" Matthew 16:13-18

John Risse, Charlotte, NC

"The Last Temptation of Christ" was a movie that aroused the ire of thousands of Christians all over the world. *Time* magazine followed up all the controversy surrounding the movie by dedicating a substantial part of one Fall issue to the subject of Jesus. The cover of the magazine portrayed over thirty different images of what Jesus supposedly looked like. Included within the issue was a new article that asked an age-old question, "Who was Jesus?"

The question of who Jesus really was, what He said, and why He said it has puzzled millions for almost two millennia. The irony of the whole situation is that the answer to these questions is very clearly and succinctly found within the pages of God's Holy Word. Substantial evidence is found in historical sources other than the Bible that Jesus actually lived upon the earth. Non-Christian historians such as H.G. Wells, Josephus, Will Durant, and Tacitus record abundant evidence proving that a carpenter from Nazareth by the name of Jesus really did live upon this earth during the first century. Will Durant goes so far as to say, "That a few simple men should in one generation have invented so powerful and appealing a personality, so lofty an ethic and so inspiring a vision of brotherhood, would be a miracle far more incredible than any recorded in the Gospels" (Will Durant, *Caesar and Christ*, p. 557). However, there is a tremendous difference between simply acknowledging that Jesus was an historical figure and coming to the knowledge of who Jesus really was. John 17:3 identifies eternal life as knowing God and His son Jesus. The original word translated know is *ginōskōsin* and carries the idea of knowledge gained by experience or to know completely. A simple acknowledgment of existence by well-meaning secular historians is not the

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way to eternal life and *knowing* Jesus. The only way to know about the idiosyncrasies of Jesus involves an in depth study of the life of Christ as recorded in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. It is the study of the life, personality, mannerism, character traits, and struggles of Jesus from the abundant gospel material that answers the question "Who is Jesus?". The charismatic "feeling," the Bultmannian "experience," and of course Shirley MacLaine's "god on the inside," all suffer futility in answering the question "Who is Jesus?" when compared with the gospel record. The Bible therefore, is the only way to learn about the nature and significance of the carpenter from Nazareth.

William Barclay, in *Jesus as They Saw Him* (p. 5), presents forty-two different ways in which the first-century followers of Jesus viewed Him and this list by no means is exhaustive. For the sake of brevity, we will look at the immediate context of Mark 8:27-38 and attempt to derive the four first-century explanations of who Jesus was. We will discover that three of the four identifications were incorrect; and that although the fourth identification was the right one, it was totally misunderstood by the twelve.

Mark 8 (also Matt. 16, Luke 9) punctuates a turning point in the life of Jesus. The popularity portion of His ministry has now ended: heartache, discouragement and the cross lie before him. Luke 9:51 captures the mind of Jesus at this time by recording that He "resolutely set His face to go to Jerusalem!" (NASB) Why? The answer is easy: Jesus has now identified Himself, explained His mission, and pronounced His future. Jesus brought this about in Caesarea Philippi. He had fed the four thousand, healed the blind man in Bethsaida, and had now traveled the twenty miles north to Caesarea Philippi.

The city was the perfect setting for Jesus

to reveal both His identity and mission. Caesarea Philippi was a center of Baal worship in Old Testament times, the supposed birthplace of the Greek god Pan, and, during the time of Jesus, a center of Roman emperor worship. Our Lord was noted for speaking with authority (Matt. 7:29); and it was here amidst all the past, as well as current, false religions that Jesus chose to show unquestionably who He was.

Jesus, being the Master Teacher, began by asking His disciples the question, "Who do people say I am?" (Mark 8:27). The disciples proceeded to inform Jesus of the four predominant views, or should we say, uninformed rumors, of who he was. John the Baptist was the first answer, and it is easily understood why some would mention him. Israel had experienced a "prophet vacuum" ever since the departing of Malachi (c. 425 B.C.). John the Baptist exploded onto the scene and called the people to repentance, warning that the axe was already laid at the root of the tree (Matt. 3:10); and even though he did no sign (John 10:41) the people regarded him as a prophet (Matt. 14:5). However, the next supposed identity of Jesus explains John the Baptist and that is in reference to Elijah.

Elijah was a great and powerful prophet of God. First-Century theology had taken Isaiah 40:3 and Malachi 3:1; 4:5 literally to mean that Elijah himself would return and prepare the way for the Messiah. Jesus confirmed that Elijah would indeed come, and had in fact already arrived, in the person of John the Baptist, (Matt. 14:14-15). The first two mistaken identities of Jesus are explained through Jewish misconception and the mission of the Baptist.

Thirdly, people thought that Jesus was one of the prophets of old returning to Jerusalem. Matthew's account specifically names that prophet to be Jeremiah. Here again the people suffer from equating tradition with Scripture. (Perhaps this context will help us to understand our Lord's argument against tradition in Matt. 15 and Mark 7). Jewish tradition stated that the weeping prophet had taken the ark of the covenant, the tent, and the altar of incense and had hidden them in a cave (2 Macc. 2:4-8). Some thought he would return and somehow re-

establish the "ancient paths."

Suddenly, Peter interjected that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God. Right answer! Wrong understanding! Jesus, at a critical point and location in His ministry, explains that he is the Christ. Jesus is the anointed, the Old Testament Messiah, the chosen of God. It is here that all the physical, traditional views of Jesus fail, including the view of the twelve. Jesus explains that He is the Christ, but the suffering servant of Isaiah 52-66 and not the "John Wayne" type physical king that they supposed He would be. He is the Davidic prophet, priest, and King that would be the salvation of Israel; but this was to be accomplished not by might in the view of men, but by the expressed power of God through the sacrifice of Jesus. Jesus elaborates in the rest of the chapter on His Messiahship by challenging the people to action. Not zealous, rebellious action against the state as was expected; but rather internal, life-changing actions to show all people that they were His disciples. He challenged them to a deeper level of discipleship by calling them to (1.) desire to follow Him, (2.) deny themselves and take up their cross, (3.) lose their lives in order the find them, and (4.) to be unashamed of Jesus.

Who is Jesus? He is everything the gospel records view Him to be; but in a word, He is Christ — the chosen of God to be the Savior of the world through the sacrifice of Himself. Therefore, the preaching from the book of Acts is clear, "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified" (Acts 2:36, RSV). Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God and calls each and every Christian to bow down before Him and offer their lives as a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1-2).

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The Question of Suffering: "My God, Why Hast Thou Forsaken Me?" Matthew 27:46

Phil Stapp, Winston-Salem, NC

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" is the familiar cry of Jesus on the cross in Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34. What Jesus meant by this statement has confused many readers of the Bible. Is it a cry of despair? Was Jesus saying that he felt that God had deserted him? Or is it the cry of God in the flesh experiencing the human predicament?

"**Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani!**" is the Aramaic quotation of the Hebrew text of Psalm 22:1. While Matthew and Mark provide a Greek translation for their readers, they wanted their readers to recognize that Jesus was quoting the Psalm and that his statement should be understood in the context of Psalm 22.

It is interesting to see how Psalm 22 parallels the passion narrative of Jesus. We can outline the Psalm as follows:

- A. Cry of despair and distress (vv. 1, 2)
- B. Praise of God for past saving acts (vv. 3-5)
- C. Mocked and rejected because of trust in God (vv. 6-8)
- D. Recalls life of trusting in God (vv. 9-11)
- E. Description of present crisis (vv. 12-18)
- F. Plea for God's help (vv. 19-21)
- G. Declaration of confidence in God and His Salvation (vv. 22-31)

David's cry of despair turns into a cry of victory in Psalm 22. He was able to endure the suffering of this life because he knew that God would deliver him.

Verse 1 is not the only verse of this Psalm to be quoted or alluded to in the passion narrative. Verse 7 recalls the mocking Jesus endured during His trial and crucifixion. Verse 8 is paralleled in Matthew 27:43. Verses 9 through 11 parallel Jesus' faithfulness to doing the will of God throughout his life,

even unto death. Verse 18 is quoted in John 19:24 and verse 31 brings to mind the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ (see Luke 24:46-48 and Matt. 28:18-20).

In the context of Psalm 22, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" is not a question, it is a statement. First, it is a statement of distress. Jesus was God in the flesh. In Gethsemane (Matt. 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42) Jesus expressed His human agony and distress over the events about to take place. Three times He prayed for it not to happen. In each case, however, He stated His willingness to do God's will. On the cross Jesus was experiencing the pain that He had prayed would be prevented. It was a statement of the pain, agony and distress that the man Jesus was experiencing.

It was also a statement of love. Jesus was God in the flesh to demonstrate to man that He understood the human predicament. On the cross Jesus went to the ultimate depths of the human experience. He took on the full burden of the sins of the world (see 2 Cor. 5:21) and was going to suffer the consequence of sin: death. That Jesus would become flesh and suffer and die for our sins is a statement of great love.

Finally, it is a statement of victory. As in Psalm 22, Jesus is anticipating God's victory. Even in the midst of suffering and death, Jesus knew that victory comes by trusting in God. Jesus was willing to obey the will of God, even if it meant being crucified, because He knew that God would raise Him from the dead and bring victory over Satan and death. Through His death God would offer life to the world. This is the victorious message that deserves to be proclaimed to every nation by every generation.

Jesus, on the cross, was living out the situation described in Psalm 22. He expressed

His feelings in biblical language, imploring the help of God in a plea of anguish and in a prayer of confidence. In His experience, Jesus teaches us to trust in God, no matter what our human situation. Victory over the suffering and death of this life is found in living a life of faith and endurance. A life that is devoted to doing the will of God can

endure the pain and suffering of this life because it knows that God will save.

It is not easy to deal with the pain of life in this world. It is not easy to sacrifice our wills to do the will of God. Just ask Jesus. But Jesus has overcome the world for us and shown us the way to eternal victory, by trusting in and doing the will of God.

The Ultimate Question: "Whom Are You Seeking?" John 20:15

Dennis Conner, Yadkinville, NC

It was early Sunday morning, when the first gray streaks of dawn had just begun to penetrate the darkness. As I made my way silently to the tomb of Joseph, where the body of my Lord Jesus had been laid to rest, my world was enveloped by another kind of darkness; a darkness of grief and pain. Over and over the same questions kept filling my mind: "Why did they kill Him? What did He do to them to deserve crucifixion? He was so loving, so tender. All He did was tell them the truth. Why? Why . . . ?" Only questions, however. No answers.

The three of us, Mary the mother of James, Salome, and me, Mary Magdalene, were on our way to the tomb to anoint the body with burial spices. I arrived at the tomb just a little ahead of them. I wasn't prepared for what was waiting for us there. The stone, so massive, had been rolled away from the entrance. We had wondered earlier who would move the stone for us so that we could anoint the body. Now we wondered who could have moved it. With Mary and Salome now at my side we cautiously, and with a strange sense of foreboding, peered inside. It was as we feared — the body was gone. Who could have done this? Was it not enough that they killed Him? Must they desecrate His grave as well? Then we saw him, a man sitting inside, his face so bright, wearing clothing as white as newly fallen snow. We reasoned later that he could only

have been an angel. It was as if he was expecting us. "Jesus is not here," he said, "He is risen. Come, see the place where the Lord lay." Then he told us to go tell Peter and the others what we had seen.

The Lord is risen, indeed. I ran to where Peter and the others were. "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have laid Him." Immediately Peter and John bolted out the door and raced to the opened sepulchre. I followed, keeping up as best I could. On my way to the tomb Peter and John passed me by on their way back to their respective homes. Neither of them spoke as they passed. They seemed not even to have noticed me. What could they have seen? Or heard?

Arriving at the tomb, an uncontrollable weeping overwhelmed me. You know that feeling, don't you, when grief and confusion conspire within you, and all there is left to do is weep? Stooping down I looked inside once more. Through my tears I could make out the forms of two men dressed in white, one sitting at the head and the other at the foot of where Jesus had lain. They asked me, "Why are you weeping?" My heart answered, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I don't know where they have laid Him." Empty. That's the way I felt inside. As empty as this tomb.

I backed out of the entrance and turned to make my way home, making no sense out of any of this. There was a man standing

there. He, too, asked me, "Why are you weeping?" But then he also asked, "Whom are you seeking?" I thought to myself, "He must be the gardener. Perhaps he knows where the Lord is." Hoping against hope, I replied, "Sir, if you have moved Him, please tell me and I will take the body with me." At first the man said nothing, and I turned to leave. Then he called my name "Mary." I knew that voice. It had spoken my name a thousand times before. It had uttered the most wonderful teachings. It had forgiven my sins and changed my life. Yes, I knew that voice. At that moment it seemed that a dam had burst somewhere deep within me, releasing waves of joy, love, and a new understanding, and I called out to Him, "Master." After speaking with me further He sent me to tell the other disciples. I obeyed, laughing and singing all the way back to the city.

As I look back on that day I see now how foolish I had been. My faith had been that of sight and thus was so easily shaken. He had asked me what I now realize to be the ultimate question in life, "Whom are you seeking?" All the while I had been seeking

not a risen Lord, but a misplaced corpse, a dead hero. Pre-occupied with myself, my own grief and pity, I had not even recognized my Lord. I had been weeping when I could have been praising, not understanding that my Lord and Master was alive. And then He sought me and spoke my name. The joy I felt at the sound of my name cannot be explained, only experienced.

Let me ask you something. Whom, or what, are you seeking? Have you given your life to the dead heroes of the world, or to the risen Lord? Or perhaps you worship your things, your money and your status, rather than the God of the empty tomb. Yet you still find yourself weeping in despair. I think most of you are a lot like I was. The answer is right there in front of you. It's just that you are seeking the wrong thing, or person. Well, I also realize that there was someone else seeking that day. Jesus sought me out and called me. As a matter of fact, that's what His life, and death, were all about. He said it Himself, "The Son of Man has come to seek and save the lost." All I can say is, thank God He found me.

Providence Road Report: Jamaican Relief

Hurricane Gilbert was awesome: the size of Texas, 200 mile an hour winds, the most powerful ever recorded. When it swept through the Caribbean last September 12, the hardest hit country was Jamaica. This report is to inform you about relief efforts there, but mostly it is given that you can join with us in thanking God for the good He has done.

Once the report of the devastation reached us, brethren throughout the Carolinas responded with a tremendous display of unity and overwhelming support. The following congregations have participated by collecting funds, goods, and volunteer reconstruction crews as part of the relief effort: Providence Road, Westside, and Archdale in Charlotte; Shelby; Wilkesboro; Friendly

Avenue, Greensboro; Thomasville; Apex; Ashboro; Albemarle; Concord; Yadkinville; West Jefferson; Asheville-Biltmore; and Hendersonville in North Carolina and Rock Hill and Orangeburg in South Carolina.

A total of 48 brothers and sisters have traveled to Jamaica to assess needs, distribute food, replace roofs, and rebuild homes. Much of the transportation was paid for by the donation of frequent flier points accumulated by members of several congregations. One brother anonymously sponsored three or four volunteers, who took unpaid leave from their jobs, by contributing funds equal to their total weekly wages. Others took vacation time from their jobs, and one even gave up seven straight Saturdays off to make up for the time he was gone. Many sacrifices

have been made by brothers and sisters throughout the Carolinas which are too numerous to mention in this article. Our Jamaican brethren in Montego Bay, Fort George, Benbow, Free Hill, Saint Annes Bay, and Ocho Rios have received the teams with open hearts, and open homes as well.

A DC-3 was chartered to ship the first 8,000 pounds of relief supplies, which consisted of seed and 2,000 pounds of fertilizer. The crops were all but destroyed, and the land was in desperate need of reclamation. The majority of our brethren had their crops washed away completely, and as a result, faced hunger. It was found that at least 80% of the houses in Fort George were seriously damaged. Benbow was reported to be in even worse condition.

The first trailer load of food, tools, building materials, seeds, and fertilizer weighed 39,800 pounds. Members of the church had contacted Campbell's Soup, Lowe's Company, and a Kroger grocery store, and as a result, 1300 cases of soup, roof materials, and an additional 8,000 pounds of assorted groceries were received as donations. Another member contacted the Heinz Food Company and a pickup truckload of baby

food was donated. Many other contributions were made. Each team member was able to take an additional 140 pounds of relief goods as part of their personal luggage.

The Thomasville and Friendly Avenue, Greensboro, congregations collected a large quantity of supplies and shipped them to Charlotte as part of the second trailer load shipment, which was sent during the third week of January. Also included in the second shipment was a car donated by a businessman who was driving by the Providence Road building, and saw the Jamaican Hurricane Relief Center banner. For some time now, brother Harrison, minister of the Fort George congregation, has been in need of a vehicle. (He has been walking 14 miles from his home to reach the church building every week!) The Lord provides.

As of the first week of December, the relief teams have repaired or completely constructed several homes and distributed several tons of relief supplies.

A brother was sent to Jamaica shortly before Christmas to assess the current needs of the brethren and reported that the brethren in Granville are worshipping in a building missing most of the roof.

Here are some of the brethren's current needs. One house in Saint Annes Bay was completely destroyed, and another was in serious need of repair, missing half a roof. Ocho Rios was left with five completely destroyed homes, and one, built from materials salvaged from the wreckage, that needs to be rebuilt. Five families from this community have been relocated, waiting for us to help them rebuild what was destroyed. The food situation is critical.

We have come together in a marvelous way to help our brethren in Jamaica, but there is still a great need for us to continue what we have begun. Over \$40,000.00 has been given by you through Providence Road and these funds are nearly exhausted. Plans are being made to collect relief supplies for a third trailer load.

Over fifteen people have expressed an interest in participating in another construction team, but funds for transporting them to Jamaica must be raised before they can go. Approximately \$800 is needed for each team member, which includes all travel, liv-



Jamaican house with repaired roof.

ing expenses, and materials to be used in Jamaica.

It costs approximately \$1600 to construct one house in Jamaica, and when we say house, we mean a structure measuring 10 feet by 12 feet (120 square feet). The work must continue.

Speakers are available to come to your congregation and present this work. Contact Daryl McCuiston evenings at (704) 825-4500.

This unified effort by congregations in the Carolinas has been a living example of

New Testament Christianity. We close this report by giving God the glory, for He has done it all, and with a reading from Psalm 133. Amen.

"How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity! It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron's beard, down upon the collar of his robes. It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the Lord bestows His blessing, even life evermore."

Your Untapped Power

Bob MacDonald, Hendersonville, NC

In your congregation, where is your **primary** power, and how can you magnify its effect? Where is your **untapped** power, and how can you put it to use?

Is much of your teaching done by young parents (of toddlers to teens)? Do they also have a prominent place in song leading and other assembly functions? Do they add strength to your programs of visitation, benevolence, building maintenance, etc.? These young parents are your primary power. They are active because of their love for God's work and because they want to set a good example for their children. Yet, they need some help.

Now consider your untapped power: your young adult group (16 to 25) has more unused energy and time than does your active and over-worked young parent group. And these young people have a great need: acceptance, recognition and belonging to a cause. Help them satisfy this God-given need in church-oriented activities rather than making them seek outlets for their energy in worldly areas. Help them assist the busy young parents by linking each of them to some active over-worked young parent. No need for extra meetings if the young parents feel "over-meetinged" already, just a "buddy system" of help and togetherness.

Can you remember when you were a high teen or young twenty? Were you more or less ignored by adults other than in the expectation that you attend class and assembly, and

pay attention? Many were so ignored; many are today. And we contribute to "youth fall out" today by doing so.

I said "no extra meetings" to avoid overworking the already overworked young parents. Yet, perhaps in your church you could afford (and benefit by) periodic meetings. This would be beneficial; this would enable your high teens and young twenties to feel that they are a more active part of the church, to feel more purpose and accomplishment in their lives, to learn how adult meetings function, to have fellowship with adults.

High teens and young twenties will want to be with a group of young parents only if they are treated as **learning equals** in a "partnership." They do not want to be "talked down to." They do not deserve only the menial tasks. They need acceptance and appreciation and recognition. God created them so they would try to grow from dependence to independence in these precious years. Your actions can be a blessing to them.

You can enable them, you can assist in God's plan. And you can have a strong influence in holding them in Christ's church.





BROTHERHOOD NEWS

Dennis Conner, Yadkinville, NC

Around North Carolina . . .

The Friendly Ave. church of Christ in Greensboro recently appointed four additional elders to accompany their existing eldership. The new elders are Robert Aldridge, John Boozer, Dewey Merritt and Ed Thomas. The congregation has also recently purchased a piece of property which adjoins their present property. This new acquisition will provide the necessary space for a planned expansion in the future. Ron Newberry is beginning his eighth year as the church's preacher. . . . The sisters at the Brewer Road church of Christ in Winston-Salem will host their annual Ladies' Day on March 4. The guest speaker will be Sandy Collins of Nashville, Tennessee. The theme for the program will be "The Book of Jeremiah." . . . The Archdale church in Charlotte hosted its fourth annual Youth Happening February 10-12. The speakers were Geoff Sikes, Jimmie Hampton and John Risse.

And South Carolina . . .

"Project Compassion" is an outreach of the Lexington church of Christ in Lexington. Through this benevolent ministry the church has served the needs of nearly 75 families with gifts of food, clothing, toys, and assistance with utility bills . . . Brooks Kennedy has resigned as the Involvement minister at the Northeast church of Christ in Taylors. He will remain in the Greenville area and has accepted an offer to work with a computer software company.

And Elsewhere . . .

The annual Preacher's Forum at Harding Graduate School of Religion will be conducted April 11, 1989. The forum will feature a discussion of the book, **The Worldly Church**. Participants will include Michael Weed, one of the authors of the book as well as Earl West, Doug Brown, Bob Hendren, and Howard Norton. . . . Churches in the Boston area are reporting an increasing number of walkaways from the Boston church of Christ. Local church lead-

ers have formed support groups for these Christians. Research by Jim Woodruff indicates that approximately 2,000 people have left the Boston church in the past eight years. Woodruff began working with walkaways on a full-time basis nine months ago. F.H. "Buddy" Martin, a professional counselor who also preaches for the Cape Cod church of Christ, works with Boston walkaways as well. He has said, "All the ones I have worked with show the symptoms of classic

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post-stress syndrome — depression, insomnia, inability to make decisions and fear of relationships.” Woodruff characterizes these Christians as “hurting people who are trying to give God . . . another chance.” Doug Hall, preacher for the South Easton church of Christ, says, “In the years to come I think the former Boston members will prove to be a great blessing to the mainline churches in New England. They have brought a renewed zeal to evangelism and a vibrancy and excitement to congregations.” Those who are working with ex-Boston members are concerned about those they have been unable to reach. Said Woodruff, “There are hundreds of them who need help.” Woodruff and others are planning to locate former Boston members by advertising a special meeting in local newspapers in the spring. . . . More than 700 attended a historic meeting between church leaders from both sides of the institution issue. The meeting was conducted December 1-3 in Nashville, Tennessee. It was the first nationwide meeting on the subject in at least 20 years. The meeting provided seven three-hour segments with speakers from both the “institutional” and “non-institutional” groups. There was no attempt to formulate churchwide policies of any kind, but organizers of the meeting said communication between estranged churches was the primary goal. The meeting was organized by Steve Wolfgang of Danville, Kentucky and Calvin Warpula, of Stillwater, Oklahoma. The non-institutional churches generally are those that oppose funding from the church treasuries “human organizations” such as orphanages. They are believed to represent nearly 15 percent of churches of Christ in the United States. . . . The churches of Christ have more than doubled in the African nation of Ghana since 1986. In 1984 there were 120 congregations with approximately 20,000 members. By 1986 these numbers had increased two-fold with 240 congregations and over 40,000 members. Presently there are 500 churches with an estimated 100,000 members. . . . Glen Harrison of the Manzini Bible School in Manzini, Swaziland reports that two princes and several princesses of the royal family have been baptized. As a result, the king has invited the

church to choose any site it likes for a church building. Once the building is completed, they royal family wants it to be their home congregation. . . . The gospel is bearing great fruit on the foreign mission field. For example, in recent months 130 have been baptized in Malawi, 20 have been converted in the Dominican Republic city of Barahona, 35 in the Northwestern Province of Zambia, 19 in Costa Rica, 25 in Pakistan, and 88 in the Badewatcho area of Ethiopia. With so many people around the world needing to hear the gospel, and eager to hear the gospel, the churches of Christ yet maintain one of the smallest missionary forces of any major religious group with approximately 500 missionary families in the field. One could easily get the impression that the need to evangelize the world is more a matter of lip service with us than conviction.

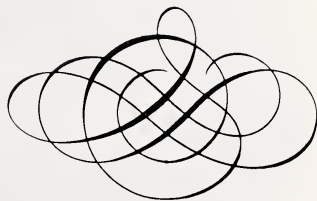
Calendar of Events:

March 4 — Ladies Day, Brewer Road church of Christ, Winston-Salem, NC

March 10-12 — Youth Rally, Providence Road church of Christ, Charlotte, NC

March 5-8 — East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions Lectureship, Knoxville, TN

Theme: “The Case for Christianity”



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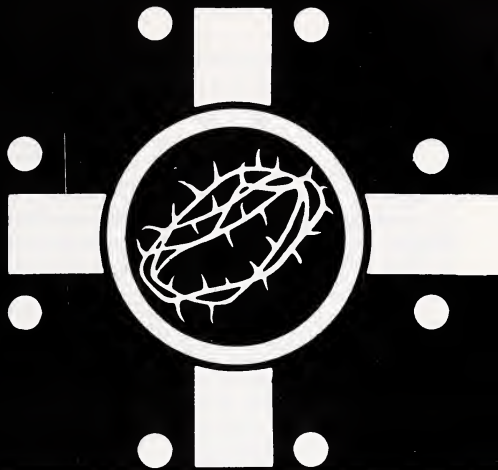
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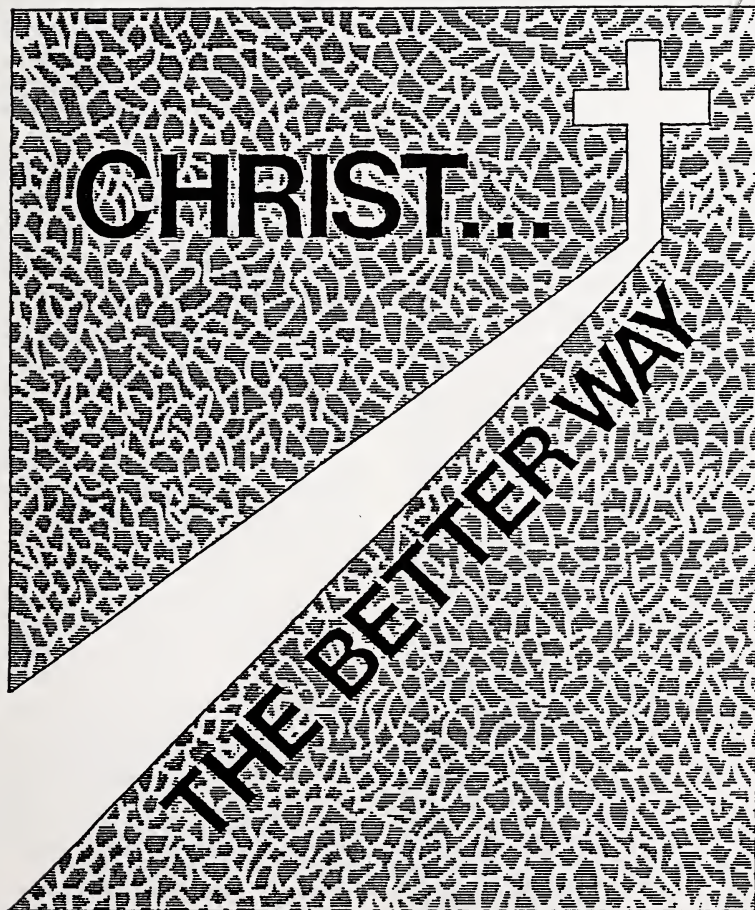
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CAROLINA CHRISTIAN

VOL. 31, NO. 3, MARCH 1989



C289.21 / C292



45th ANNUAL CAROLINA LECTURES

(see back cover)



editorial

Printed below is a letter from Crawford Slagle, Jr. who is working with the church in Troy, North Carolina. It is a strong and loving statement which seeks to bridge any reservations brethren might have had about the congregation at Troy. All your editor knows about the situation is what is in the letter. Because peace and confidence among brethren are always desirable (when on Scriptural bases), we are pleased to publish this statement. We are strongly committed to any legitimate effort that endeavors "to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace."

Brother Slagle refers to "anti-ism" and repudiates it. He also mentions that they had been labeled as such. This underscores the problem with labels. It is regrettable when labels are applied unfairly. It is also regrettable when labels have a derogatory connotation. On the other hand, it seems almost impossible to communicate without some recourse to labels.

Among us the designation "anti" usually is applied to the brethren who oppose church supported orphan homes, cooperative arrangements such as the way the "Herald of Truth" program is supported, and certain other activities which involve how a congregation's money and property are used (such as a kitchen in the church building). There has been much controversy over these matters and division has been the result. Generally there is no fellowship between those who oppose the orphan homes, cooperation, etc. and those who believe such things are Scripturally acceptable. The label "anti," therefore, has become a way of indicating that segment which opposes these things. To be "anti" means to be opposed to, to be against a thing. On the other hand, those who hold such convictions have labeled our practices as "institutionalism"; meaning that we favor such institutions as orphan homes. They may also designate us as "liberals" because they believe our practices go beyond what the New Testament pattern authorizes. We do not, of course, consider our

practices to be "liberal"; only consistent with the liberty the Bible allows.

It is easy to see how the labels used by either side have legitimacy, from the perspective of the views each holds. All that they necessarily mean is that those who are so labeled hold that particular viewpoint.

In reality, however, such labels often convey defamatory connotations. Both "anti-ism" and "institutionalism" may be perceived as slurs. While their usage may be defended as merely descriptive, it must be admitted that they are often perceived as insulting.

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CAROLINA CHRISTIAN is published monthly by Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., at 71 S. Fairfield Road, Greenville, SC 29605. Subscription price; individual \$7.00 per year; club of five or more \$6.50 per year; quantity of 15 or more in bundles or direct mailing 40¢ per copy per month. Publication number, 091160.

Second class postage paid at Greenville, SC.

POSTMASTER: Send undelivered copies with Form 3579 to Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., Johnny Melton, Managing Editor, Route 2, Box 137, Conover, North Carolina 28613.

RETURN REQUESTED

Address editorial matter to David Pharr, Editor, ETSOPM, 6608 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37931. Address news items to Dennis Conner, P.O. Box 1219, Yadkinville, NC 27055.

All items to be printed in a given month's issue should reach the editor not later than the next-to-the-last Thursday of the preceding month.

Address commercial advertising inquiries to Jacobs List, Inc. Clinton, SC 29325. Address all advertising pertaining to the Church of Christ or its members (including related organizations) to the editor.

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We understand brother Slagle's use of "anti-ism" to have no more purpose than to indicate a particular position that some brethren hold. The spirit of his letter suggests that he wants to be neither inflammatory nor insulting. He simply seeks to designate a position with which he does not want to be identified. It is his observation that "such a doctrine of men leads to bitterness and hatefulness." While we might have made a different choice of words, there can be no doubt but that the way some have pressed their opposition to brotherhood practices has resulted in numerous divisions and immeasurable hurt. At the same time, however, we must be candid enough to admit that the other side has sometimes exhibited an uncharitable spirit, and a lack of respect for the honesty of their brethren's convictions.

The cooperation-institutionalism controversy has dragged on for several decades. The lines of fellowship have been clearly defined. In effect, there are now separate brotherhoods. None who love the Lord and his church can be pleased.

Is it not time for all of us to reexamine our positions, especially our attitudes, in this matter? We are not suggesting that the truth be compromised. Good works, including benevolent care for children, should not be abandoned in order to appease the opposition. Neither are we suggesting that brethren who have scruples against certain activities should wound their own consciences by beginning to practice them. What we are suggesting is that brethren who differ on these matters should look for and appreciate the numerous and significant areas in which we stand on common ground. Paul's point in Ephesians 4:3-6 is that because we are united in the seven ones he names, we ought, therefore, to endeavor to be united and at peace in all other things. Surely, both "anti" and institutionalists" agree on the one body, the one Spirit, the one hope, etc. Perhaps from such a beginning the things which divide may someday be resolved.

We rejoice that the brethren at Troy want to be known and fellowshipped as brethren in Christ — that they do not want to be a faction of the church, but the church. We do not know whether they support cooper-

ative programs financially, whether they have a kitchen in their building, etc. Such does not concern us. What does concern us — what we appreciate about them — is that whether they do or do not participate in such activities they are not desirous of making their own practices and viewpoints an occasion for separation from the fellowship of their brethren. Here is the letter.

Dear brethren:

"Beloved, it is with deep soul searching that I pen this letter in which I plan to set things in order about the church of Christ in Troy, NC and myself. My name is Crawford Slagle, Jr. I was baptized into Christ in August of 1961, having been taught and grounded in the truth. I began to labor with the church in Troy in 1980, and then in 1983 I accepted the responsibility of minister to which I am now entrusted by the grace of God.

"My story unfolds as I try to come to grips with the division which plagues the brotherhood, specifically the attitude surrounding the use of the Lord's money. Brethren, I have always tried to be a brother to all, not wishing to be labeled or characterized. I have remained silent, always hoping that some resolve may be forth coming. My desire is to do what is right in the sight of God with my goal a home in heaven, but because of my silence many have already labeled the church in Troy and myself as 'anti,' and therefore out of fellowship with the church.

"Let me now say that I love the church of Christ and fellowship with the church, therefore, we do not want to be silent any longer in this regard. We are not 'anti,' nor do I preach 'anti-ism' which I believe has turned the church not for the better but for the worse. In all the teaching of love and compassion, I find no room for such a doctrine of men which leads to bitterness and hatefulness.

"The Son of God, Who shed His blood that we might live, left His life for an example for us. Can we say His desire was for any of His church to bury His talent? Can we say His desire for us was to withhold our goodness to ourselves? How would our Saviour react to this? Would He praise us? I

must say now that if Jesus Christ were to come back in the flesh that He would **not** be an 'anti.'

"Brethren, if you hold any directory of the churches of Christ which list the church in Troy, North Carolina as party to this error, **please make corrections** and pray for us that the Word of God be not hindered as we continue to serve the Lord.

"I ask for your encouragement — for we are brethren of 'like precious faith.' Yours in Christ, Crawford Slagle, Jr.; Troy church of Christ; P.O. Box 233; Troy, NC 27371; (919) 576-0832."

Book Dedicated

The 1989 Lectureship book from the East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions has been dedicated to the memory of our late editor, Howard Winters. The book, **The Case For Christianity**, is available from the school, \$10.

Brothers Winters' **Commentary On Rev-**

elation became available early in February and is being widely acclaimed. Order it from Carolina Christian Bookstore.

Lectureship

All who possibly can, should attend the 1989 Carolina Lectures at Seneca, SC April 3-6. This is the forty-fifth such program. The series began with the purpose of bringing together the brethren scattered over the Carolinas in order to encourage sound doctrine, cooperation, and a stronger sense of brotherhood. It was also intended as a stimulus for greater zeal in the various fields of labor. Though the church is much larger numerically now than forty-five years ago, the same needs exist among us. Actually, there may be now an even greater need for such gatherings as will help brethren to know one another, and to encourage one another in faithfulness and zeal. I plan to be at Seneca. How about you?

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Marriage and Spiritual Growth

Robert Ball, Mocksville, NC

Each marriage union is constructed from two individuals, one man and one woman. When a man and a woman get married they are joined together by God (Matt. 19:6). God, in His infinite wisdom, instituted the home in this fashion. "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2:24, ASV). This writer believes that God instituted the home for the good of mankind. God knows and wants what is best for mankind in every area of life. But each individual exercises free will. Therefore, marriages often experience many difficulties.

Clifford J. Sager, in his book **Marriage Contracts and Couple Therapy**, suggests that each individual comes into the marital relationship in possession of his or her own individual marital contract. "The term 'individual contract' refers to a person's expressed and unexpressed, conscious and beyond awareness, concepts of his obligations within the marital relationship, and to the benefits he expects to derive from marriage in general and from his spouse in particular" (Sager, p. 4).

An individual who is about to be married usually has pictured in his mind exactly what married life is going to be like. Furthermore, the spouse-to-be also has pictured in his mind exactly what married life is going to be like. Unfortunately, these two pictures are never exactly the same. Therefore, problems arise, especially in the early years of marriage (although they may occur later), because of the conflict that exists between the two individual contracts.

Marital therapists often try to help the troubled couple by aiding each spouse in identifying his or her individual contract. According to Sager, the expectations included in each individual's contract exist in three levels of awareness. (1) **Conscious, Verbalized:** "This would include what each partner tells the mate about his or her expectations in clearly understandable language" (Sager, p. 19). (2) **Conscious, But Not Verbalized:** "This refers to each

partner's expectations, plans, beliefs, and fantasies, which differ from the content at level one only in that they are not verbalized to the mate, usually because of fear of anger, rejection, or shame at their disclosure" (Sager, p. 20). (3) **Beyond Awareness:** "This third level comprises desires or needs, often contradictory and unrealistic, of which the contractor has no awareness" (Sager, p. 20).

It is the prayer of this writer that the above will help individuals contemplating marriage to have a greater appreciation for the seriousness of marriage. Marriage should not be entered into capriciously. Furthermore, it is the prayer of this writer that the above will help individuals contemplating marriage to have a greater appreciation for three things.

First, that premarital counseling should not be considered an option but a necessity. Many potential problem areas can surface and be discussed before the marriage takes place, thereby avoiding much of the seriousness these problem areas may produce after marriage. Furthermore, if a problem arises during premarital counseling sessions that cannot be worked out between the counselees, needless to say, it is far better to end the relationship before marriage.

Second, that God has definite laws and instructions concerning marriage. To violate these laws is sin. "Every one who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3:4, RSV). In talking about marriage and divorce in Matthew 19:3-12, Jesus said, "but from the beginning it hath not been so" (Matt. 19:8, ASV). This shows that God has had definite laws concerning marriage from the beginning. Marriage should be a vessel

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which helps carry one toward spiritual maturity. There is nothing more important than an individual's relationship with God. One's marriage should be an aid to this relationship, not a hindrance.

Third, that marriage is a once-in-a-lifetime decision. Therefore, it is one of the most important decisions one will make. One

should be careful in choosing a partner for life.

Each person is urged to consider carefully his or her decision to get married. Marriage can be a wonderful, fulfilling life experience, or it can be a life-destroying experience. May God bless your marriage, and may your marriage bring glory to God.

Disobedience *Deja Vu*

David Clayton, Spartanburg, SC

Abraham replied, "I said to myself, 'There is surely no fear of God in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife.' Besides, she really is my sister, the daughter of my father though not of my mother; and she became my wife. . . .'" (Gen. 20:11-12 NIV).

Genesis 12, 20, and 26 deal with repeated sin — disobedience *deja vu*. Have you ever found yourself bringing before the Lord the same or similar sin? It is frustrating because you thought you had learned that lesson. You thought you were beyond that, and now, God is again having to hammer away, file away and shape me in the same area — disobedience *deja vu*.

Not only does Abraham repeat his sin, but his son, Issac, almost to the letter, makes the same mistake. The sins that are not dealt with by the parent will be passed on to their children.

The recording of Abraham's struggle with the repeated sin of lying should be a source of encouragement to all who have ever struggled with repeated sins. We all are great about making commitments when we gather to worship God; and we are sincere

in our commitments when we say, "We are not going to do that again." However, come Monday, some Christians find themselves repeating the very thing they said they would not do again. Whether it is lying, lust, anger, or whatever sin it may be, we must come to terms with that particular sin or it will rob us of the life that God wants us to enjoy.

Genesis 20 should serve as a warning post to make us stop and think before continuing in a particular sin. The tragedy of disobedience *deja vu* is that it has a way of dulling the edge of our lives so that the next time it is easier to do, until a hardness sets in and we refuse to repent.

Examining the text of Genesis 20 and the excuses of Abraham, I see several underlying reasons why Abraham (like ourselves) was destined to repeat a sin over again. Let us examine two of the reasons close up:

1. **God is not relevant.** "There is no fear of God in this place" (vs. 11). Abraham did not believe that obeying God before a godless man would be relevant. Our society is becoming more and more a society of options. We speak more of pluralism than ever before. Many of the values and ideas expressed by our society, in a variety of ways,

Howard Winters'

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relay to us the fact that we truly live in a society where there is no fear of God.

This has certainly affected many Christians' thinking. It has led many to conclude that God's promises, principles, and precepts will not work on a day-to-day basis in a society which has no fear of God.

We live among people who live with the prevailing attitude expressed in the words of Frank Sinatra, "Whatever gets you through the night." We are surrounded by people who will encourage us to go to church and do our thing. After all, if you need someone or something and going to church helps you in your life, then by all means do it. Whatever gets you through the night.

If other people are helped by drugs, recreation, meditation, new age thoughts, variety in relationships: great! Whatever gets you through the night. Live and let live. We treat it like a narcotic, a tranquilizer to soothe our souls.

The result of that type of prevailing mindset is that church is viewed as something you go to with your family on Sunday to escape from the world, to tranquilize and soothe your souls for an hour out of the week. God's ways are not relevant — just a soothing narcotic. Going to church is a place of refuge, a haven of rest. "It is a tough world out there, full of Abimelechs waiting to see one moment of weakness, coveting what belongs to me; and I cannot survive in this society if I try to live according to God's principles every day, in a society where there is no fear of God."

That is what Abraham concluded, so he lied to Abimelech. It was the wrong conclusion. God's way is the only way. God deals with the ultimate issues: life, death, forgiveness, judgment, eternity, salvation. It is important to be concerned about the issues that are confronting our world today, but if we just deal with those issues and not the real issue of where will we spend eternity — how do we please God — then we have missed the real relevant issue of life.

2. We repeat a particular sin when we see everything as relative. "They will kill me because of my wife" (11b). Abraham's fear was justified. It was a common practice for kings and rulers to kill husbands if they wanted their wives. Abimelech might have

seen nothing morally wrong with doing that. Abraham is under an incredible amount of pressure. He had been under this same pressure before and had mishandled it. And as incredible as it may seem, here he is again doing the same thing. Maybe that is not so incredible to us. If we honestly reflect upon our own lives, we realize that we have been guilty of the same thing. It is interesting what pressure can do to us.

Whether it is the pressure of peers, pettiness, job, marriage, etc., it is **me-ism** that wins out when we give in. Abraham wanted to spare his neck so he was willing to give Sarah away. It is an attitude of what is best for me. Whatever is best for my self-interest; I will do it. Everything becomes relative. Abraham had no problem in presenting Sarah as his sister because he saw that the situation demanded it.

So many see everything as relative. Perhaps Abimelech thought that it is all right for him to have Abraham killed because he wanted Sarah for himself. It is all right for Abraham to lie about Sarah because he wanted to save himself. It is all right for David to have Uriah, the husband of Bathsheba, killed because David wanted her for himself. It is all right to commit adultery because it makes you feel good and your needs are being met. It is all right to be dishonest in business because you are having to provide for your family. It is all right to have an abortion because you are not emotionally or financially ready for a child right now. And the list goes on and on.

How selfish can we be? Whenever we see everything as being relative, we will seek to satisfy our needs, even if it means disobedience unto God. God and Christ stood against that kind of relativism. As Christians we are not living for ourselves. We have been bought with a price. We died so that Christ might live in us.

We are doomed to disobedience *deja vu* when we no longer see God's way as being relevant to the circumstances we face. I am headed for a fall when, under pressure and the desire to please "me," I will compromise. When we fail to heed the warning signs, then we are destined, just like Abraham, to fall into repeated sin.

Christian Growth

J.C. Watkins, Greenville, SC

After Jesus was born into the world, Scripture tells us, "And the child grew, and waxed strong in the spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him" (Luke 2:40). After the family's trip to Jerusalem when he was twelve years old we are told, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52).

The growth process is not done overnight. It takes time for something or someone to grow. But growth is a natural process. It is natural for a child born into the world to experience physical growth. When the natural growth process does not occur we become alarmed and rightfully so. It should be cause for alarm if a baby does not grow and develop as he should.

Likewise, it should be cause for alarm when there is a lack of spiritual growth in one who has obeyed the gospel. Scripture plainly teaches the need for spiritual growth. "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Pet. 2:2). A lack of growth among Christians was cause for alarm to the writer of Hebrews. The writer is addressing people who had had ample time to grow but had not done so (Heb. 5:12-14). Their lack of spiritual growth was a threat to their spiritual well-being. These people needed to leave the principles of the doctrine of Christ and go on to perfection or maturity in Christ if they were to enjoy eternal life (Heb. 6:1ff).

I am afraid that many times today there is a serious lack of spiritual growth among Christians. Concerning widows, Paul said that some of them were dead while they were living (1 Tim. 5:6). Though Christians are alive physically, unless they grow spiritually they are dead while living. Let us examine some of the things the Bible teaches about Christian growth.

Scripture reveals a number of things in which the Christian is to grow. Namely, the Christian is to grow in:

- (1) Grace and knowledge (2 Pet. 3:18).
- (2) Faith (2 Thess. 1:3).

- (3) Love for one another (1 Thess. 3:11-12).
- (4) Abounding more and more in pleasing God (1 Thess. 4:1).
- (5) All things in Christ (Eph. 4:15).

Peter was certainly talking about Christian growth when he stressed the things to be added to our faith (2 Pet. 1:5-11). He revealed that it is through proper development in Christian growth that we are to make our calling and election sure that we might gain entrance into the everlasting kingdom of God (2 Pet. 1:10-11). Proper development of Christian character involves growth in all these things.

We readily understand from the physical realm that food is essential to growth. Growth in the spiritual realm also requires food (2 Tim. 3:16-17; Jas. 1:21; 2 Pet. 1:3). Spiritual food is required to enable the Christian to discern good and evil (Heb. 5:12-14).

Another essential element to Christian growth is care and concern. All members of the body of Christ should have the same care for one another (1 Cor. 12:25-26). The prophet Malachi tells us that those who feared the Lord spoke often one to another (Mal. 3:16). Members of the Lord's church need to speak often one to another in encouraging Christian growth. The public assemblies are important because they give us opportunity to speak often one to another, encouraging love and good works. Therefore, we ought not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together (Heb. 10:24-25). Care and concern for one another is very essential to proper Christian growth.

The final essential element to Christian growth we will notice is exercise. Scripture teaches that godliness is exercise and that it is profitable (1 Tim. 4:8). Godly living is compared to running a race (1 Cor. 9:24-26). Running a race is certainly exercise, and so is living the Christian life. We are instructed to be always abounding in the work of the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58). Therefore, exercising ourselves in godly living is vital to Christian growth.

Christian growth results in our being strong in the Lord (Eph. 6:10). We become full grown and able to exercise our senses to discern both good and evil (Heb. 5:14). Growing up in Christ and living in obedience to God brings happiness to our lives (Rom. 14:22-23). Christian growth enables us to save ourselves and others (1 Tim. 4:16). Through the good influence we wield as we "grow up into him in all things, which is the

head, even Christ" (Eph. 4:15), others are led to obey the gospel.

Brethren, let us eliminate all cause for alarm due to lack of Christian growth among us! Let us strive diligently to grow everyday as we serve God here on this earth. We must do that to make our calling and election sure that we might gain entrance into the everlasting home in heaven!

Come, Be a Servant

Sara Kemp, Stanley, NC

Being a servant is hardly one of the things we aspire to be when we are grown. When we ask our children what they want to be when they grow up, being a servant is usually never on the list. What is so important about being a servant?

After all, there are no "How To Be a Servant" books at the public library. There are no "Servant 101" classes taught at college. There are no college degrees offered. So how do we learn to be a servant and why should we want to be one?

We need to look at the Bible and Jesus, Himself, to realize the significance of servanthood.

Webster defines servant as: "a person employed to perform certain services for others; a person ardently devoted to another or to a cause, creed, etc." Was Jesus ardently devoted to His Father and to the cause or work that He was sent to do? Yes! Yes! Yes!

How did Jesus feel about this area of being a servant? Matthew 20:28 says, "Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." Jesus came to do His Father's will. Did He willingly serve others? Yes, He did. Did He serve according to the talents and abilities that God gave Him? Yes, He did.

Service is an attitude of heart that all Christians can develop. It is an attitude of being devoted to a cause (Christ), a creed (the Bible) and services for others (our fellowman).

Let us look at some areas of service that can be a part of every Christian woman's ac-

tivities.

1. Send cards to the sick. This takes such a small amount of time. Most congregations either list these names in the church bulletin or announcements are made at the worship services. I usually make a note of the ones who need cards and then take a few minutes on Sunday afternoon to address them. It usually only takes about ten minutes at the most. Is this being a servant? Yes, it is performing a service for others.

2. Send cards for birthdays. Our church secretary uses the last bulletin of the month to list all members of the congregation who have birthdays during the coming month. I immediately take the list and sit down on that same Sunday afternoon and address cards to all the adults on the list. In order to know when to mail the cards, I write the date each card needs to be mailed in the upper right-hand corner of the envelope. This is where the stamp will eventually be placed. I then mark my calendar to remind myself that I have some cards that need to be mailed. Again, this usually only takes about ten or fifteen minutes at the most. For those of us who only seem to receive bills or mail addressed "Occupant," this is a nice piece of mail to receive. Is this being a servant? Yes, it is performing a service for others.

3. Use the telephone. Call someone you feel comfortable talking to on the telephone. It could be a shut-in, someone who is recovering from an illness, or just someone you would like to share something with. "Reach out and touch someone" is clearly a biblical principle. Is this being a servant? Yes, it is performing a service for others.

4. Send cards of encouragement. Do you realize how discouraged the preacher can sometimes become? What about the elders, the deacons, the Bible School teachers? Cards and notes only cost 25 cents to mail, but their value cannot be counted. Is this being a servant? Yes, it is performing a service for others.

5. Send cards to new families and new converts. New families need to know that they are important to you and to the church family. Many times, they are new in town and need someone to identify with in the congregation. Send a note to a new convert and tell them how glad you are to have him as a brother. We all know the rush of excitement that follows a baptism, but what about the days that follows? Is this being a servant? Yes, it is performing a service for others.

6. Be aware of special needs in the congregation. Many times we fail to serve because we fail to see. We are like the ostrich — if we cannot see it, it must not be there. We recently had a special need arise in our

congregation. Our deacon in charge of building and grounds, asked for volunteers to sign up to clean the church building. The elderly deacon who had been performing this service was unable to continue due to poor health. Couples were asked to sign up to do this for a month at a time. Two couples would be assigned to make the work go faster. Now, I am the first to admit that dusting, mopping and cleaning are not on the top of my favorite things to do. But, God has given me the ability, the knowledge and the opportunity to serve in this capacity. Is this being a servant? Yes, it is performing a service for others.

Just as Jesus came to serve and not be served, so must we develop an attitude of service to others. Through our service to others, we are serving Christ.

John 12:26, "If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor."

Will all the servants please stand?

Is God Serious?

Ed Hoover, Charleston, SC

Does God really hold people accountable for obedience to His written word? Has He really given us everything we need to know in order to live acceptably before Him? Is He really capable of giving us a book which would be sufficient for all ages no matter how long time were to last? Was it God's intention to give us such a book?

The answer to all four questions is a very emphatic "Yes." One characteristic of God is that nothing is impossible for Him. Jesus, in Matthew 19:26 said, "but with God all things are possible."

God's power is limitless. Look at Halley's Comet. Think of the millions of miles this comet travels during its orbit, and yet its return can be accurately predicted. Chance? The odds against it happening by chance are so staggering it makes it impossible to imagine that it happens that way.

Does God really hold people accountable for obedience to His written word? Ask Uzzah! King David was transporting the ark to

another location when Uzzah touched it. For his error, he died. God, several hundred years before, had given instructions concerning the ark. Time did not erase the commandment (Num. 4; 2 Sam. 6).

Does God hold people accountable to the law under which He has placed them? Yes! Hebrews 1 and Matthew 17 emphasize we are to hear Christ. Jesus authorized his apostles to speak for Him. In John 16 Jesus said the Holy Spirit would guide the apostles into all the truth. Second Peter 1:3 informs us that God's divine power has given us all things which pertain to life and godliness. Jude 3 states it was given once for all (times). Second Timothy 3:16, 17 tells us the Scriptures are sufficient for all good works. Jesus reminds us in John 12:48 that His word will judge us in the last day.

Yes, God does hold people accountable for obedience to His written word (John 12:48; Rev. 20:11, 12). Yes, God has given us everything we need to know in order to live acceptably before Him (2 Tim. 3:16, 17;

2 Pet. 1:3). Yes, God is capable of giving us a book which would be sufficient for all times. (In 2 Peter 1:3, the term "divine power" is used.) Yes, it was God's intention to give us such a book (Jer. 31:31-34; Isa. 35:8; John 16:13).

What law are we under today? We are under the Christian law. All mankind is under this same law, no matter who they are or where they live (Heb. 1:1, 2). It is God's intention and desire that all mankind obey and live faithfully to this law as long as life shall last. God wants us to be in the family where salvation and all spiritual blessings are (Eph. 1:3 and 3:14, 15).

God requires certain things in order for us to be placed in His family. We must hear the gospel (Rom. 10:14). We learn from the gospel what is expected of us concerning God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit. We learn from the gospel that it is God's final revelation to mankind. We must believe the gospel (Mark 16:15, 16). We can hear it all day, but unless we believe it to be the truth and obey it, we are lost and will stay in that condition. We must turn from our sins. We cannot hold on to our old life of sin (Luke 13:3 and Acts 17:30). We must confess Christ as

the true Son of God (Matt. 10:32). This means to acknowledge Christ as God (Isa. 9:6, Matt. 1:23 and Heb. 1:8). We must be buried in baptism for the remission of our sins (to take away our sins) (Acts 2:38 and Col. 2:12). Baptism is the final act which puts us into Christ where forgiveness of sins is and where all spiritual blessings exist (Gal. 3:26, 27; Rom. 6:3 and Eph. 1:3).

God expects us to live faithfully to His revealed word and worship in the manner He has prescribed. Only worship which is in spirit and in truth is acceptable to God, according to John 4:24. No worship can correctly be said to be "in truth" unless it is authorized by the New Testament, the law by which God will judge us (John 12:48).

Is God serious? In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus asked God to consider if there were some other way for mankind to be redeemed instead of the cruel cross. The answer was no, there was no other way. Sin is so evil in God's eyes that it required the blood of Christ to remove it. Yes, God is serious. He loves mankind so much that He asked Jesus to die for us (John 3:16). But failure to obey the gospel will result in eternal punishment (2 Thess. 1:7-9).

MANAGING EDITOR'S COLUMN

In the Beginning God

Johnny Melton, Hickory, NC

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1).

The phrase "in the beginning" has reference to the beginning of time and the beginning of creation as we know it. Prior to this was timeless eternity. This is not the beginning of God. God had no beginning; He is eternal. God is not bound by time. You remember the statement of Scripture: "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2 Pet. 3:8). That does not mean that God's days are equal to 1,000 of man's years. It simply means that time does not mean anything to God; He is not bound by time.

It has been observed that there are five fundamental facts of science: time, force, ac-

tion, space and matter. Herbert Spencer announced these to the scientific world in the 19th Century. It is interesting to note that that these facts are all accounted for in Genesis 1:1 and in the order in which Spencer identified them:

- Time — "In the Beginning"
- Force — "God"
- Action — "created"
- Space — "the heavens"
- Matter — "and the earth"

It is our faith that God created the worlds and everything in them by fiat. He gave the order and it was done. This is in direct opposition to the doctrine of evolution. Evolution assumes that there is no God and that creation out of nothing by fiat is impossible. These two assumptions are fundamental to the evolutionary hypothesis. However, the

evolutionist faces a bizarre predicament. He must ultimately get back to a beginning or starting point — and evolution has no adequate beginning place. Whatever scenario the evolutionist describes as the beginning, the question can be raised, “Where did it come from?” For instance, one evolutionary model suggests that in a vast primeval sea, a stray molecule was struck by a chance ray of sunlight; and that stray molecule was somehow altered and became an amino acid; and this led to a chain-reaction that ultimately produced life as we know it. But we are well within reason to ask, “Where did the primival sea come from? How do you account for the sun?”

No. Evolution has not been proved; regardless what its proponents argue to the contrary. Evolutionists sometimes ridicule the creationist’s faith. But I submit that the

evolutionist’s contention involves faith, and not just faith, but faith of a wild and speculative sort. The creationist looks to God as the Uncaused Cause, the Unmoved Mover, and accepts the testimony of Scripture. The evolutionist, on the other hand, must deny the existence of an uncaused cause, or an unmoved mover and irrationally accept the notion that something came from nothing, and that life came from non-life, and that the human family came from lower forms of life, and that all of this just happened by chance.

No one should be ashamed to admit faith in the biblical account of creation. It is neither childish nor dim-witted to believe in creation. Creation, as an explanation for the origin of the universe, fits the known and established facts of science far better than evolution.

The Holy Spirit; I

Randy Yost, Greensboro, NC

Several years ago, I began studying the Bible for an understanding of the identity and operation of the Holy Spirit. Then, as well as now, this journey entailed overcoming many obstacles that prohibit a biblical understanding of the identity and operation of the Holy Spirit: traditionalism, emotionalism, and dogmatism.

In this article, I will share my understanding of the biblical identity and operations of the Holy Spirit. And though it is a complex subject — in the sense of explaining the Trinity and contrasting teachings on the operation of the Holy Spirit — I will humbly and sincerely cling to the Bible in explaining my understanding, praying that the reader will likewise depend on daily Bible study and prayer for his understanding of the identity and operation of the Holy Spirit. And if in my vehement inclination to put on the entire armor of God in order to share this understanding, I unconsciously resort to one of the “isms,” I repent and pray that God will ratify my sole intention to use only the Bible as the source for sharing my understanding.

In discussing the identity and operation of the Holy Spirit, I have discovered that most agree that the Holy Spirit is, like Christ and God, a personality — a “He” and not an “it.” According to the Bible, the Holy Spirit is a personality, not a mere force. For example, in John 14:26, Jesus says, “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things.” Notice the use of “He.”

Not only is the Holy Spirit a personality, He is a divine personality. In John 8:42, Jesus says, “I proceeded forth and came from God.” That is, Jesus is not merely sent by God like John the Baptist was sent by God (John 1:6); rather He proceeds forth from God, for He is one with God (John 1:1-14). Likewise, the Holy Spirit is not merely sent from God; He also proceeds forth from God: “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father” (John 15:26). In other words, if it is the case that Jesus Christ proceeds forth from God because He is one with

God, it is also the case that the Holy Spirit is one with God, since He also proceeds forth from God. Or, to say the same thing in another way, since to proceed forth from God demands being part of, or one with, God (cf. John 8:42 and John 8:58), both Christ and the Holy Spirit are part of, or one with, God (Matt. 28:19-20), since both proceed forth from God (John 8:42; 15:26).

Thus the Holy Spirit is a divine personality (John 14:26) and/or one with God (John 8:42, 52, 58; 15:26; Matt. 28:19-20). But what about the operation of the Holy Spirit? Or better, how does He exist and work among us?

Unlike the identity of the Holy Spirit, there is much disagreement among various religious people as to the operation (purpose or function) of the Holy Spirit. Thus, once again, I want to remind the reader that in explaining my understanding of the operation of the Holy Spirit my sole intention is to use only the Bible; and if in my attempt to do this, I unconsciously stray from biblicalism to traditionalism, emotionalism, or dogmatism — I ask for God's forgiveness.

When considering the totality of the Scriptures, it seems that the Bible portrays four measures of the Holy Spirit: the unlimited measure, the baptismal measure, the miraculous measure, and the limited measure.

In talking about Jesus Christ in John 3:31, the Bible says that Jesus came from Heaven and is above all earthly things. Since Jesus is from Heaven and/or one with God (John 1:1-14), it follows that Jesus would receive or encompass something greater than His followers would receive: "God giveth not the spirit by measure unto Him" (John 3:34). That is, God gives Christ the Holy Spirit in full measure, in an unlimited measure. And since God gives the Holy Spirit in full measure, this implies that God might have given the Holy Spirit in a limited measure. This implies that there are different measures of the Holy Spirit.

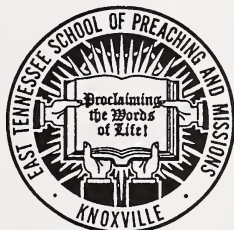
It seems from Matthew 3:16-17 that Jesus received this unlimited measure of the Holy Spirit when the Holy Spirit descended on Him like a dove after His baptism. And according to John 1:32-33, it seems that this unlimited measure of the Holy Spirit is intimately connected with the baptismal mea-

sure of the Holy Spirit; for in John 1:33 the Bible says Christ administers the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which shows that the full measure of the Holy Spirit is reserved for only Christ, since only Christ is responsible for the baptismal measure — "the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Spirit."

Who are the recipients of the baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit? Some say all of God's children's can receive the baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit; whereas others say the baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit is reserved for a select number, like the full measure is reserved for Jesus Christ only.

Carefully examining Luke 22:1-34 reveals

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the parity between these verses and John 13 (i.e., both passages contain the feast of the passover, the mention of Judas' betrayal of Christ, and the prophetic announcement of Peter's denial of Christ). Without a doubt, these two chapters refer to the gathering of, and participation in, the Passover Meal. And Luke 22:14 provides vital information on the participants at the Passover Meal with Christ: "He sat down, and the **twelve apostles** with Him" (emphasis mine). In other words, Jesus Christ and the twelve apostles are the participants at the Passover Meal in John 13.

Understanding who were the participants at the Passover Meal is vital in the following sense: Christ is talking to the apostles in John 13-16. And though it is true that the principles of humility, love, and faithfulness taught in these chapters are applicable to 20th century Christians — as the totality of the New Testament teaches — it is essential to understand that John 14:26, 15:26-27, and 16:13 are addressed to the apostles only, the ones of John 13-16. For example, in John 14:26 Jesus says, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have **said unto you**" (emphasis mine). It is obvious from John 14:26 that Jesus is talking to the apostles when stating that they will receive the Holy Spirit, for He makes the reception of this measure of the Holy Spirit dependent on having heard Him audibly. (Reading John 15:26-27 and 16:13 reveals the same — Jesus is addressing the apostles.)

But what measure of the Holy Spirit is Jesus talking about in John 14:26, 15:26-27, and 16:13? It is the same measure that is mentioned in John 1:26-34 and Acts 1:1-8, the baptismal measure. Notice, for example, that John 1:33 parallels with Acts 1:4-5, which parallels with John 14:16-17, 14:26, and 15:26. Yes, John 1:26-33, 14:26, 15:26-27, 16:13, and Acts 1:1-8 are talking about the same measure of the Holy Spirit that is given unto the apostles, which is the baptismal measure! "All that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy

Ghost had given commandments unto the **apostles** whom he had chosen . . . And being assembled together with **them**, commanded **them** that **they** should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father . . . For John truly baptized with water; but **ye** shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence . . . But **ye** shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon **you**" (emphasis mine, Acts 1:1-8). The terms **them**, **they**, **ye**, and **you** refer to the apostles.

When was the baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit, promised unto the apostles in John 14:26, 15:26, 16:13, and Acts 1:1-8, received? It was received in Acts 2:1-5. Note verse four says: "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." (This manifestation of the baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit resulted in mockery and false accusations. The apostle Peter, however, told the audience this miraculous manifestation of the Holy Spirit was in fulfillment of prophecy.)

In telling the apostles to wait for this measure of the Holy Spirit, Jesus told them to wait in Jerusalem (Acts 1:1-5). Acts 2:1-5 shows it occurring in Jerusalem. Also Acts 1:8 shows that the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles would be the baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit. And, again, the coming of this measure of the Holy Spirit takes place in Jerusalem in Acts 2:1-5.

This baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit occurs again in Acts 10 with the conversion of the Gentiles. However, to understand the significance of why this happens in Acts 10 requires an understanding of the inaugural event in Acts 2.

According to Hebrews 12:23-28, the church is the kingdom, the kingdom is the church. Thus to speak of the church is to speak of the kingdom, for the kingdom and the church are the same thing. This is important because in Mark 9:1 Jesus says, "Verily I say unto you, that there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." In other words, this Scripture is saying that some present as he spoke would be alive when the church was

established, since the church and the kingdom are the same thing.

Shortly after telling them that the kingdom or church will come with power (Heb. 12:23-28; Mark 9:1), Jesus told them how they would receive this power: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you" (Acts 1:8). Jesus said the power would be the result of the coming of the Holy Ghost.

Now the conclusion: since the church or kingdom was to be established with power (Heb. 12:23-28; Mark 9:1) and since the power is the result of the coming of the Holy Ghost (Acts 1:8); once we find the coming of the Holy Ghost, we will find the power; and once we find the power, we will find the establishment of the church. Acts 2:1-5 reveals the coming of the Holy Ghost; thus the church or kingdom was established in Acts 2. Therefore, not only is the baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit a fulfillment of prophecy, it is also the inauguration of the church or kingdom — the beginning of the church or kingdom, or the initiating of the Church.

This connection of the baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit with the inauguration of the church in Acts 2:1-5, along with Acts

11:15-16, explains why the Gentiles likewise received the baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit in Acts 10. This baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit upon the Gentiles was necessary to show the Jews, as well as the Gentiles, that the Gentiles likewise were to have access to the church or kingdom. So, in this sense, the inauguration of the church for the Gentiles took place in Acts 10; and, as in Acts 2:1-5, this inauguration is authenticated by the baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:44-46). (Read Acts 11:1-18 in connection with this.)

It seems to me, therefore, that the baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit, which is administered by only Christ (John 1:31-33), takes place only two times — once in Acts 2:1-5 for the fulfillment of prophecy and the inauguration of the church and again in Acts chapter ten to confirm that the Gentiles have access to the church/salvation also.

The baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:1-5, and again in Acts 10:44-46, opens the door for the miraculous measures of the Holy Spirit, which involve the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit as recorded in 1 Corinthians 12. But exactly how are these nine gifts of the Holy Spirit given? And what purpose do they serve? (To be continued.)

Substitute For What?

Paul Kidwell, Sr., Ringgold, GA

Some singing groups from different quartets, including some of our colleges, are making "strange noises." These noises are made as the group sings songs with religious content. What began as "humming" and "ah-hing" has in some cases progressed to sounds much like those produced on mechanical instruments of music. Some have specialized in this music, which has been described as the "gift of intonation." It is quite evidently pleasing to the ears of many of our young people. Some believe we can not have a successful youth gathering without such.

We should be concerned. One has questioned: "Do we know that all we do in singing must be confined to words?" Strange question! It has never occurred to most of us that we could sing without words! Ephesians 5:19 emphasizes our "teaching and ad-

monishing one another, in Psalms, and hymns and spiritual songs." **In the worship of God, the addition of instrumental music, or the addition of vocal imitations of mechanical instruments to our singing is sinful.** Either is rebellion against the authority of God's word. Therefore, either is parallel to any other addition.

Those who use instrumental music do so as a **substitute** for singing. They argue, "It is an aid, like a cane to a crippled person." Our response to this is simply — God never gave a crippled commandment. So, whether they admit it or not, those who use mechanical instruments do so **rather than simply singing**, as God has authorized. Those who invent unto themselves "imitations of instruments of music" are **substituting this for the use of mechanical instruments.** A song, popular with one group says, "We do not need

a guitar, or an instrument to use. . . .” ’Tis true! They do not need a **mechanical instrument**. They can make the same sounds with their vocal chords. The digressives substituted the mechanical instrument for singing. The “vocal band” is simply substituting imitation for the real. Instrumental music in the worship of God is not wrong because it came out of a box, or a horn, etc. It is wrong because it is substituting what man wants, what “sounds good” to man, for what God specified.

Occasionally, those engaging in such actions affirm that they are worshipping God. Frequently an allusion to some “ministry to the Lord” is made. Some are not sure whether the conduct discussed is worship, entertainment, or something else. If it is worship, then we must oppose it just as we would the use of mechanical instruments of music. If it is not worship, then we must determine what restrictions, if any, apply. A question of importance then is, “If this is not worship, could the same group sing the same songs to the accompaniment of mechanical instruments of music?” Again, for emphasis, **If the same group were to sing the same**

songs, in the same setting in which they are presently sung, but with the use of mechanical instruments of music, why would it be wrong?

If another debate on instrumental music ever takes place, mark this. We will be embarrassed by the vocal band. No competent debater, in support of instrumental music, would allow his opponent to escape the consequences of the actions of these “imitation instrumentalists.” Those who have encouraged such action need to do some thinking. The ground won by faithful defenders of the faith is being surrendered. We should be attempting to get as far as possible from the line of sin, rather than “flirting” with such.

In the worship of Jehovah, we can be sure that what we do is pleasing to him when we do only what he authorizes. Have we forgotten this basic principle? Remember our sermons from John 4:24 as regards worship “in truth”? We need to return to preaching on “The Pattern.” There are many who are “not going around over the country preaching against instrumental music,” as one preacher stated. **But . . . we all should be doing so!**

You Could Be a Millionaire

Don Nix, Union, SC

Every so often I receive in the mail those notices that I may have already won \$10,000,000. Most of these wind up in the trash since the probability of winning is staggering. But, just suppose that somewhere it had been determined that I had won \$10,000.00 and all that they required was that I go to New York City so that the check could be hand-delivered, do you think I would go? Or, suppose that a local merchant decided to give away a prize and gave away stubs with each purchase, the other end being used to draw from all his customers. All I would have to do is present the stub after my name was drawn. Do you think that I would expect to be able to pick up my prize if I did not have a stub?

Many people today are expecting the greatest riches of all with no “proof of purchase”; they have not met the requirements

of the contest. We have no problem with these things in the physical realm, but we can offer all kinds of excuses when it comes to the spiritual realm. Yes, you and I have already won the most valuable treasure that this world has ever known, but many of us are not willing to meet the rules to claim our prize.

Jesus Christ died for every man, but that does not mean that the gift of eternal life is without any effort on our part. Everything we do in a spiritual sense depends upon faith, but a faith that is inactive is worthless. James tells us faith and work go hand in hand, in the second chapter of the book that bears his name.

Grace that comes from God and faith that we supply is met in our actions. Those actions demonstrate that we are believers. If I truly believe, is there anything that God asks me to do that is unreasonable? Further,

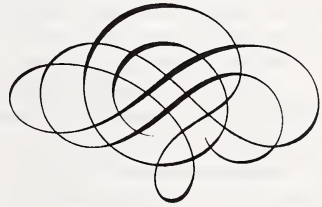
it should be pointed out that there is nothing that I can do that would ever equal the value of the eternal life that He offers to the obedient. God told Abraham to offer his only son, Isaac, as a sacrifice, was that too much to require (Gen. 22)? Would Abraham have become the "father of the faithful" if he had refused to carry out God's command?

God does not want any of us to be lost (2 Pet. 3:9); Jesus died for every man (Heb. 2:9) and yet, we know that every man is not saved. Why? Because they have not met the conditions to receive the "prize."

What must I do to receive the gift of eternal life? (1) I must hear God's Word, the Bible (Rom. 10:17). We believe that men have gone to the moon because we have seen various reports in all types of media that says that they did. Likewise in the spiritual sense, faith comes by hearing. But, one can hear from the wrong source. There are those who do not believe the reports of men on the moon and think that it is all a hoax. The proper kind of faith must come from the Bible and not some creed, manual or discipline. (2) I must have faith (Heb. 11:6). The Hebrews writer gives a definition of faith in chapter 11:1 where he writes, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for the evidence of things not seen." The evidence referred to is that which is recorded throughout the Bible, and that evidence becomes the substance or support for the things we hope for in eternity. This faith must move us to action. James shows that one may believe and still not be saved by stating that "the devils also believe, and tremble" (James 2:19b). (3) I must repent of my sins (Acts 17:30). Note Paul says "All men everywhere" are to repent. That seems very reasonable since "all have sinned" (Rom. 3:23). If all have sinned, then all should/must repent of their sins. Repentance could be defined as a change of attitude that results in a changed life. We become sorry for our sins committed against God and determine to change the way we have been living. (4) I must be baptized for the remission of my sins (Acts 2:38). Now, I know that many people will tell you that you do not have to be baptized in order to be saved, but just remember that is what "people" tell you. What does God say that you must do to "receive the prize"? You see

it does not matter what people say; only what the Bible says matters. The Bible is the "rule book" that has to be followed to get the desired eternal life. Some of the specifics concerning baptism are as follows: (a) it is a burial (Rom. 6:3-4); (b) it is "for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38); or to "wash away . . . sins" (Acts 22:16); to be saved (Mark 16:16); (c) it is in the "name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19); (d) it is the means by which we enter into Christ or His church, (Acts 2:47; Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:27; 1 Cor. 12:13).

Yes, you may have already won! But, have you met all the conditions necessary to receive your prize (eternal life)?



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Dennis Conner, Yadkinville, NC

Around North Carolina . . .

The CARY CHURCH OF CHRIST will host its 12th Annual Youth Rally April 28-30 at Camp Kanata. The camp is located between Wake Forest and Durham. For more information contact the Cary Church of Christ, P.O. Box 279, Cary, NC 27512. . . . The SOUTH FORK church in Winston-Salem appointed elders on February 12. Now serving the church in this capacity are Charles Belch, Ted Stewart, and Claude Pharr. Brother Pharr also preaches for the church. . . . The sisters at the FRIENDLY AVE. CHURCH OF CHRIST in Greensboro will host their 7th Annual Ladies Day on April 29. The theme will be "Do I Communicate Christ?" The featured speaker will be SANDY MALSOM. . . . The ladies of the church in WEST JEFFERSON will also host a Ladies Day on April 29. The featured speakers there will be KITTY BOYD and HATTIE SMITH of Nashville, Tennessee. . . . The YADKINVILLE CHURCH OF CHRIST has finalized the dates of June 15-16 for their 3rd Annual Small Church Workshop. This year's theme is "Leading the Small Church." This workshop is unique in that it focuses on the needs, problems, challenges, and opportunities that are peculiar to smaller churches (membership of 150 or less). Elders and leaders of larger churches that are involved in supporting small churches are also encouraged to participate in the workshop. For more information write the church at Rt. 3, Box 673, Yadkinville, NC 27055; or call (919) 679-8924 The SPRING LAKE CHURCH OF CHRIST is expecting more than 300 women to gather at the Bordeaux Inn and Convention Center in Fayetteville April 7-9. This meeting will focus on the theme "Christian Women Facing Difficult Matters of the 20th Century." For more information call (919) 497-1628.

. . . and South Carolina

The church in HARDEEVILLE enjoyed a year of growth in 1988. Brother PRIMUS GLOVER reports that there were 10 baptisms during the year. The church had its beginning on August 23, 1987. The current average Sunday worship attendance is 25. JACK McNEIL will begin working with the church in June. . . . MICKEY BELL is now working with the ESSEX VILLAGE CHURCH OF CHRIST in Charleston as the associate minister. This is Mickey's second work in the Carolinas, having served previously with the Central congregation in Spartanburg. . . . The 45th Annual CAROLINA LECTURES will be hosted this year by the SENECA CHURCH OF CHRIST, April 3-6. The theme is "Christ, The Better Way: Studies in Hebrews." Thirty-three different speakers will be featured during the four-day program. If you would like more information you may call (803) 654-7105.

The Nation . . .

REUEL LEMMONS, well-known preacher and long-time editor of **Firm Foundation**, died January 25, 1989, following a massive heart attack. After serving as editor of the **Firm Foundation** for many years, brother Lemmons was more recently editor of **Image** magazine until January 1. . . . About 3,500 young people, their parents and others will gather in Nashville, Tennessee, March 24-26 as Lads to Leaders/Leaderettes conducts its 20th anniversary convention. This remarkable program for developing spiritual leadership qualities in young people was begun by Jack Zorn in Warner Robins, Georgia in 1969 "in response to an observed lack of righteous leadership and frequent youth rebellion in our nation." The program emphasizes individual attention in activities that build leadership qualities; activities such as speech competition, mass media productions, songleading, puppet

theatre, and Bible knowledge. . . . The 6th Annual Virginia Bible Lectureship will be held at the Christiansburg Church of Christ in Christiansburg May 24-26. The theme is "Study To Show Thyself Approved." If you would like to know more about the program you may call (703) 382-3629. . . . Stephen

Bilak, editor of the **Ukrainian Messenger**, published a letter in the Oct.-Dec. issue from a Christian in Beltsy, Moltavia, the Soviet Union. The letter states that the church there has over 2,000 members and has had over 170 baptisms through August of 1988.

"No Deposit, No Return"

David Vaughn, Burlington, NC

To a certain extent all people identify with their culture. If there is not a compelling reason to stand apart, most people blend in with society. To some degree we must conform, but God clearly warns us to be aware of worldly influence — "Do not be conformed to this world. . . ." The world and the things of the world are temporal and will eventually pass away.

The Christian should have values based on God's truth. God's truth is durable, abiding forever. To live godly and righteously we must find meaning and direction for life in His eternal truth. Then, instead of developing in a similar fashion to our ever-changing society, we have the choice "to become conformed to the image of His son" (Rom. 8:29).

If we decide to follow the world we have chosen to follow the "No Deposit — No Return" Philosophy of life. We drink "soft drinks" from bottles marked "No Deposit — No Return." I am writing this article with a pen that will be thrown away when the small tube of ink in the pen is gone. Automobiles are designed to last for a few years and then be replaced. Buildings are regarded as temporary. If we assess prevailing attitudes we realize we have a "temporary, disposable, throw-away society. This attitude has gone beyond "things" and is damaging relationships.

Values rooted in God's word are suffering. Family units are permitting society's demand on time and for **things** to crowd out the time that families must have if they are to follow godly standards. As it takes time for a child to grow physically, it takes time

to train a child in the way of the Lord. Somehow, families must find ways to resist the pressures of society and move back to the wisdom of God in building families.

It takes time to become Christ-like in behavior. No one is raised from the waters of baptism with a mature faith. There must be time for private study and prayer, exhortation, and for public assemblies. There are no short cuts to spiritual maturity. It can not be purchased, borrowed, willed or leased; it must be developed. If we are not most diligent, Satan will see to it that society is attractive enough to draw us away from our spiritual pursuits.

The mobility of society and the "disposability" attitude does harm to friendships. If we, as God's people, are going to accomplish the work He has given His people to do, we must have relationships that go beyond the surface. Relationships rooted in faith will supply much needed strength and comfort in difficult times. Our fellowship is not to be developed to help us in a particular place, but to help us on our faith journey. Such ties are difficult to build and more difficult to maintain. When we uproot our families and move every three to five years, there is a real threat to close relationships. The world promises to be our friend, but in reality robs us of spiritual friendships.

When we adopt the philosophy of "No Deposit — No Return" we have gone to the garbage can of the world for our values. They will change tomorrow, and they do not help us in any but temporal pleasure. Choose wisely.

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STUDIES IN HEBREWS

Monday Theme: THE BETTER MESSENGER

9:00- 9:45	Better Qualifications	Charles McDonald
10:00-10:45	Better Than Angels	Clee Reddinger
11:00-11:45	The "Great Salvation"	Dwane Casteel
1:30- 2:15	(LADIES) Sarah	Susan Smith
1:30- 2:15	Better than Moses	Jerry Laxson
2:30- 3:15	Better Rest	Craig Hinrichs
3:30- 4:15	Danger of Missing The Rest	Oscar Craft
7:00 p.m.	Mission Work In Jamaica	Dwane Casteel
7:30 p.m.	KEYNOTE	Robert Curry

Tuesday Theme: THE BETTER PRIEST

9:00- 9:45	Our Approach To God	Steve Ashworth
10:00-10:45	The Great High Priest	Jack McNeil
11:00-11:45	Immaturity Reproved	Al Dunkleman
1:30- 2:15	(LADIES) Jochebed	Billy Jo Buzbee
1:30- 2:15	The Warning	Jim Hunter
2:30- 3:15	The Encouragement	Al Simmons
3:30- 4:15	Christ And Melchizedek	David Ferneyhough
7:00 p.m.	Southeastern Children's Home	Paul Mash
7:30 p.m.	KEYNOTE	Robert Curry

Wednesday Theme: THE BETTER COVENANT

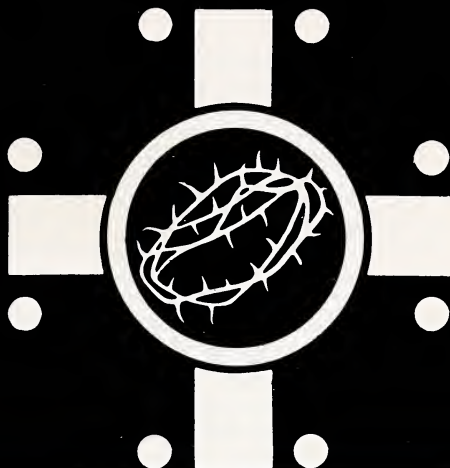
9:00- 9:45	"Better Promises"	Frank McElveen
10:00-10:45	Sacrifices Compared	Jesse Ham
11:00-11:45	The Covenant Validation	Gary Shaver
1:30- 2:15	(LADIES) Rahab	Monica Morehead
1:30- 2:15	The Sacrifice "Once For All"	Don Nims
2:30- 3:15	The Right And Wrong Way	Robert Oliver
3:30- 4:15	Exhortation To The Right Way	David Vaughn
7:00 p.m.	Agape of North Carolina	Tom Slaughter
7:30 p.m.	KEYNOTE	Robert Curry

Thursday Theme: FAITH — IN LIFE AND LIVING

9:00- 9:45	Faith Defined	Frank Shepard
10:00-10:45	Faith's Servants	Wallace Beasley
11:00-11:45	Faith's Supreme Example	M.H. Tucker
1:30- 2:15	(LADIES) Deborah	Brenda Currie
1:30- 2:14	Faith's Exhortations	Jack Cooper
2:30- 3:15	Faith's Practice	Tom Bolick
3:30- 4:15	Faith In Prayer	Larry Mathis
7:00 p.m.	Charleston, SC Campus Work	Frank Shepard
7:30 p.m.	KEYNOTE	Robert Curry

CAROLINA CHRISTIAN

VOL. 31, NO. 4, APRIL 1989



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ABC's of Christianity

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| A — Affection (Rom. 12:10) | N — Newness (2 Cor. 5:17) |
| B — Benevolence (Acts 20:35) | O — Obedience (Acts 5:29) |
| C — Contentment (Heb. 13:5) | P — Peace (Phil. 4:7) |
| D — Devotion (1 Cor. 6:20) | Q — Quietness (2 Pet. 3:4) |
| E — Endurance (James 1:12) | R — Redemption (1 Cor. 6:20) |
| F — Faithfulness (1 Cor. 16:13) | S — Salvation (Eph. 2:8) |
| G — Growth (2 Pet. 3:18) | T — Temperance (2 Pet. 1:6) |
| H — Honor (Phil. 2:15) | U — Unity (Eph. 4:3) |
| I — Integrity (Tit. 2:7) | V — Victorious (Phil. 4:13) |
| J — Joy (Gal. 5:22) | W — Wisdom (James 1:5) |
| K — Kindness (Eph. 4:32) | X — (e)Xample (2 Pet. 3:1) |
| L — Love (Matt. 22:37-39) | Y — Yielding (Heb. 12:11) |
| M — Meditation (Psalms 1) | Z — Zeal (Tit. 2:14) |

— Sara B. Kemp, Stanley, NC



“And they bend their tongues like their bows for lies: but they are not valiant for the truth . . .” (Jer. 9:3).

The lament of Jeremiah over “treacherous men” was because of the way they used their tongues to spread lies, but were not “valiant for the truth.” The context shows they could not be trusted (v. 4); would “supplant” (undermine) their brethren (v. 4); and “walk with slanders” (v. 4).

Much emphasis (and rightly so) is given among us to the necessity of standing up (being valiant) for the truth of the Scriptures. We respect and appreciate every man who is so committed to the Lord’s way that he is always ready to be counted on the side of truth.

But the emphasis of the above text seems not to be so much on being valiant for doctrinal truth as it is on being truthful about people and events.

One should be valiant for the truth in that he always deals honestly and fairly with the reputations of others. To publish a hurtful falsehood about anyone, whether he be a criminal, a false teacher, or anything else, is to be guilty of slander — a most devilish sin.

One should be valiant for the truth in that he defends the reputations of those who are slandered. There is little difference between one who speaks against another and the one who stands silent without protest. Valiant men will demand proof. If we make a practice of requiring a person to prove his charges against others, we will be hearing fewer of such charges.

One should be valiant for the truth in that he is not convinced by hearsay evidence. In Roman 3:8, Paul speaks of false reports that were circulated about him. In some places there were those who could tell of Paul’s “heresies.” Would one have been right in assuming that “where there’s smoke, there’s bound to be fire”?

One should be valiant for the truth in that he insists that accused people have the right to state their own case. “Doth our law judge

any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?” (John 7:51).

One should be valiant for the truth in that he does not charge guilt on the basis of associations. Remember that His enemies were much perplexed by the kind of people with whom Jesus visited. Numerous problems and distortions arise in society and the church because of the tendency we have to stereotype.

One should be valiant for the truth in that he does not use innuendo to hurt the name of another. We have seen much of this. Among certain people there are certain terms which immediately raise specters. Among us, some

EDITORIAL AND PUBLICATION STAFF:

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CAROLINA CHRISTIAN is published monthly by Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., at 71 S. Fairfield Road, Greenville, SC 29605. Subscription price; individual \$7.00 per year; club of five or more \$6.50 per year; quantity of 15 or more in bundles or direct mailing 40¢ per copy per month. Publication number, 091160.

Second class postage paid at Greenville, SC.

POSTMASTER: Send undelivered copies with Form 3579 to Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., Johnny Melton, Managing Editor, Route 2, Box 137, Conover, North Carolina 28613.

RETURN REQUESTED

Address editorial matter to David Pharr, Editor, ETSOPM, 6608 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37931. Address news items to Dennis Conner, P.O. Box 1219, Yadkinville, NC 27055.

All items to be printed in a given month’s issue should reach the editor not later than the next-to-last Thursday of the preceding month.

Address commercial advertising inquiries to Jacobs List, Inc. Clinton, SC 29325. Address all advertising pertaining to the Church of Christ or its members (including related organizations) to the editor.

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of these terms include "liberalism," "Pentecostalism," "emotionalism," "homosexual," etc. One does not have to prove a connection with these things to hurt a reputation. All he has to do is to hint, to express a suspicion.

One should be valiant for the truth in that he refuses to swallow everything he reads in the papers, including church papers. Things

are sometimes printed and mailed which are lies and distortions. Apparently many feel that if a story is published it must be true. This does not follow.

Among abominations that God hates is "a false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren" (Prov. 6:16-19).

Managing Editor's Column

The Folly of Sin

Johnny Melton, Hickory, NC

Jeremiah did his prophetic work during the last forty years of the Southern Kingdom. His work concluded with the overrun of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C.

During his ministry, Jeremiah warned his people of their wickedness. He besought them to repent and to forsake their sins. Finally, he warned them to prepare to meet the judgment of God which would surely be meted out against them.

Jeremiah's unrelenting exposure of sin should serve as a model for preachers today. Sin is an affront to the holiness of God. We dare not become too tolerant of it. Sin must be exposed and condemned wherever it exists.

In Jeremiah 2:11-13, Jeremiah brings the word of the Lord to the people. Judah is guilty of apostasy and rebellion against God. They have violated the first commandment of the Decalogue by practicing idolatry. The folly of idolatry in particular, and all sin in general, is described in these verses.

God raised the accusing question, "Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods?" (Jer. 2:11a). The wicked, pagan nations about Judah never considered abandoning their idol gods. Even though these gods were no gods at all, and were, in fact, powerless to render aid in a time of trouble, the people, nevertheless, remained loyal to them. With biting irony, God confesses, "but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit" (Jer. 2:11b). It is amazing that the Hebrew people would be so fickle toward God, while the pagans

around them were loyal to their idols. God had demonstrated Himself repeatedly throughout Israel's history, and yet, the allurements of the flesh, the excitement of the pagan ritual, repeatedly led them astray.

"Be appalled, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord" (Jer. 2:12). The word translated **appalled** in the AV can also be rendered **astonished**. Even the heavens were greatly surprised at the stupid behavior of God's people. Despite all God's efforts, the people persisted in following after idols of wood and stone. There was neither rhyme nor reason for their sordid behavior. It defied both reason and logic. That people could forsake the lovingkindness of God is appalling, indeed.

Now consider God's assessment of the behavior of His rebellious people: "For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water" (Jer. 2:13). Not only had the people rejected Jehovah, but they had added insult to that rejection by substituting worthless idols as their gods.

It is like having a fresh, bubbling stream of pure water to drink from, and then refusing to drink. It is foolish to refuse pure, clean, refreshing water when one is thirsty; but it is the height of folly to turn instead to the stagnant, germ-infested water of a mud puddle to slake one's thirst. That is the picture God paints of the sinfulness of idolatry.

We must not think that this is simply an

interesting lesson about a foolish people long ago that bears no relationship to our world today. It may not be the case that we are forsaking God for idol gods carved from wood or stone, but idolatry is still a major problem in our world today. We have worshipped at the shrine of promiscuity and debauchery and we now have venereal diseases spreading in epidemic proportions throughout our land.

In a land of Bibles, ignorance of God's will is rampant. Our nation was founded upon the principle of religious freedom. Freedom of worship was important to our forbears. Today this principle which grants freedom to worship is apparently understood to mean freedom from worship. We have be-

come a more and more profane people. We do not blush at wickedness. Instead, we laugh at it and joke about it.

Satanism and other cultic religions continue to enslave young and old alike. These blasphemous systems are not limited to the major urban centers, as they once were; but police report evidence of Satanic rituals in small towns, and rural communities as well.

The people of Jeremiah's day did not have a monopoly on folly.

We must learn to avoid the mistakes of the past. We must guard our lives from the wickedness of idolatry. God help us to drink deeply from the fountain of living waters, rather than from the broken cisterns of rebellion.

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Reexamining the Fundamentals, X

David Pharr, Knoxville, TN

Denominationalism by its nature is a contradiction of the biblical doctrine of one true church. It is not popular, therefore, to give emphasis to the truth of the oneness of the church. A religious climate that assumes the privilege of everyone having his own personal choice of religions is offended by an emphasis on biblical unity — an emphasis that shows that unity must be in the one church defined by the Bible. So little attention is given to this in most of American religious society that it probably never occurs to most people that they should be seeking to identify and to be members of the only Scripturally authorized religious body.

Denominationalists generally will agree on an ideal of oneness so long as allowances are made for almost every kind of diversity. In fact, ecumenism has been a popular theme. There is much talk of unity, oneness, brotherhood; but in reality almost nothing has been done to actually move toward the unity required by the New Testament. They have convened conferences, delivered speeches, and proposed plans; but what has not been done is the one thing that is absolutely essential. They have not given up their unscriptural beliefs and practices, and they have not accepted the New Testament faith and practice that will identify them as members of the one body of Christ.

Briefly, the most obvious failures of the ecumenical movement can be summarized as follows.

(1) It seeks unity on a corporate level. This may involve the merger of two or more denominations. But when denominations merge, the result is only another (although bigger) denomination. Two wrongs don't make a right, and two denominations joined together do not make a church of Christ. The fact is that there is absolutely no Scriptural provision for bringing any sect into the body of Christ. Only individuals can be added, and they are added only by personal obedience to the New Testament plan. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body" (1 Cor. 12:13).

(2) Closely related to the above is the error of seeking unity through denominational hierarchies. Members of the sects let their leaders speak for them. The hierarchies seek to negotiate unity. The rank and file have little say in the matter. In almost all cases, when they get past the "good words and fair speeches," these leaders will be more concerned about maintaining a high position for themselves than they will be for any real biblical unity. Aside from this, however, all who want to please Christ should realize that each has a personal duty in "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3). None are excused to let others negotiate them into the one body. Every member of every denomination ought to ignore their hierarchy — indeed renounce it — and by gospel obedience come into the fellowship of the one body of Christ.

(3) The unity envisioned in ecumenical movements among denominations always makes allowances for significant differences in faith and practice. The "unity in diversity" concept started with them. What they call unity and brotherhood, therefore, is little more than toleration and indifference. In effect they say, "If you won't criticize our unscriptural practices, we won't criticize yours."

(4) Undergirding (or perhaps we should say undermining) the whole of ecumenism is the idea that Christian unity can be achieved without accepting the faith and practice which is characteristic of the New Testament church. Ecumenism fails to see that the only way to have "the unity of the Spirit" is to let the Spirit (through the Scriptures) determine the basis for unity. This

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means that human creeds must be repudiated, traditions must be abandoned, organizations must be dissolved, and denominational rules must be burned. What the Bible requires must be accepted, and what the Bible does not authorize must be rejected (Matt. 18:18; 28:18-20; 2 John 9-11).

In churches of Christ those who are bold for the truth have not hesitated to show what the Bible teaches about the oneness of the church. We know that such does not exalt "our" church, but Christ's. We are not saying that we are the only ones right, but that Christ is the only one right. It is not at all embarrassing, nor are we the least ashamed, to be as narrow as the doctrine of Christ makes us.

There are, though, devious forces at work among us.

In the first place, worldly pressures are causing some to feel more tolerant toward religious error. The sad truth is that many have let the world draw them away from their study of the Book, and the desire to not offend and to be accepted by the world has kept them from taking a stand even for the truth they know. Some preachers refuse to preach the oneness of the church, simply because it would not be popular, "and my people love to have it so" (Jer. 6:31).

There is also a philosophical movement disturbing the church in many areas which is arguing for unity without any correction of the errors which have caused divisions. We have no objection to sincere appeals for kindness and charity, for dialogue and study, for an end to ugliness and bitterness; but we must — the word of God being our authority — object to, refuse, and denounce those appeals for unity which compromise truth and error, which tolerate unscriptural practices, and which bid Godspeed to those whose faith and practice violate the authority of the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9).

One example of the problem is in regard to those usually designated as the Independent Christian Church. A number of gatherings have been reported in which discussions have been held as to how there might be fellowship between them and churches of Christ. Doubtless much good has been said relative to the need for unity, for Christ-like attitudes, and for open-minded Bible study.

We are also confident that faithful brethren have taken a Scriptural stand relative to those things which are the cause of division, instrumental music as one example in particular. The problem is, however, that others who say they are themselves convinced that instrumental music is unscriptural are at the same time saying that they are willing to give the right hand of fellowship to those who continue to use it. This illustrates the philosophy that there can be unity, one church, even when the authority of the Scriptures is ignored.

It is important, in view of such things, that we reexamine the fundamental truth that God has only one church and that the one church is not a conglomeration which is **inclusive** of a variety of heresies, but rather a unity based upon Scriptural authority, being **exclusive** of all which is not approved of God.

It is significant that the unity for which Jesus prayed is a unity based upon mutual acceptance of the teaching of His apostles. "Neither pray I for these [apostles] alone, but for them also which shall believe on me **through their word**; that they all may be one . . ." (John 17:20-21). Which believers are to be one? Those whose faith comes through the teachings of the apostles. Any kind of unity which is not based on apostolic teaching is not the unity for which Jesus prayed. Even if men should agree to unite, even if they decide to overlook the issues that divide them, even if every sect merged into a single group; there still would not be the oneness Christ desires, unless it is a unity based on apostolic teaching.

It might be objected that believing on Christ "through their word" only means acceptance of the apostolic witness relative to Christ Himself and that it does not require acceptance of everything the apostles taught. This objection is quickly refuted, however, by noticing a few other passages on the same subject. Jesus declared the apostolic prerogative of binding and loosing (Matt. 18:18). Can we imagine Him to mean by this that fellowship is the same for those who ignore this authority as it is for those who accept it? The Great Commission sent the apostles to teach all disciples to observe all of Christ's commands (Matt. 28:18-20). If rebellion on

one point of Christ's law makes one guilty of rebellion to all (Jas. 2:10-11), is such a one still in fellowship? The apostle Paul warned that one who did not obey his instructions was not to be fellowshipped (2 Thess. 3:14). The circumcision sect believed on Christ, but because they went beyond the doctrine of the apostles, Paul would not yield an inch (Gal. 2:5).

The New Testament makes no allowances for sectarianism. The plan of God never provided for a multiplicity of bodies. Neither has it provided for a diversity of doctrine and ordinances within one body. "But now are they many members [Christians], yet but one body" (1 Cor. 12:20). In this one body there are to be no divisions (1 Cor. 1:10).

The oneness of the church is a central theme in the epistle to the Ephesians. The closing verses of the first chapter tell us that the church is the body. (Cf. Col. 1:18, 24.) Since there is but one body and that one body is the church, it must follow that there is but one church. Ephesians 2:16 shows that those who are saved are members of the one church. Both Jews and Gentiles (all people) who are reconciled to God are reconciled "in one body." Those not in the one body are not reconciled.

Ephesians 4:3-6 demonstrates the Biblical concept of unity in a way that everyone should be able to understand it. First the apostle admonishes that we should endeavor "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (v. 3). To enforce the importance of this endeavor, he follows it with a list of seven things, which he declares to be unique — one of a kind. "There is one body, and one Spirit, . . . one hope . . . , one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God . . ." (vv. 4-6).

Some of the things the Holy Spirit named are things few would question. That there is only one God, only one Lord, only one Spirit, or even only one hope are points rarely disputed.

On the other hand there is considerable controversy over whether there is only one faith, or only one baptism, or only one body. The Spirit's wisdom, however, mixed the list together to confound all objections. By using exactly the same language the text shows that there can be no more faiths than there

are Lords. There can be no more baptisms than there are Fathers. Neither can there be more than one body. Remembering that the body is the church, we have an absolute affirmation that there is one church.

It is being arbitrarily argued by some that acceptance of the seven things of Ephesians 4:4-6 is the only requisite for achieving unity. It is said that if we can come to agreement on these points we may then overlook differences on other matters — even when they are differences over Biblically mandated matters. For example, some would say that the error of instrumental music in worship can

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be overlooked as long as there is agreement on the seven ones of Ephesians 4. Such reasoning, however, misses the point and implications of the passage.

In the first place the items themselves are too comprehensive to allow compromise with error. What does "one body" mean? Does it mean merely accepting the idea of one body? Or does it not mean accepting all the truth about that one body, including the worship it offers to God? How comprehensive is the "one faith"? Is it all of the faith Paul preached (Gal. 1:23)? The faith which replaced the law of Moses (Gal. 3:25)? Is it not the faith that comes by hearing God's word (Rom. 10:17)? When one is instructed in the word of God does not that instruction become a part of the one faith he holds? Our point is that "one faith" comprehends the entire New Testament system.

Looking at the passage, however, we find that it was not Paul's purpose to list the only essentials. Instead as he addressed the need for the Ephesians to be united, he names seven things they already held in common. His point was that since they held these seven things in common they had every reason to be united on all other matters as well. These are not the only essentials. In 1 Corinthians 10:17, there is another "one" — the one

bread (communion). Love is an essential not listed in Ephesians 4:4-6. Confessing Christ is as essential as the one baptism (Rom. 10:9-10). Nothing is named in the list that covers moral conduct, but such is essential for fellowship (1 Cor. 5:1ff). It is arbitrary and self-serving to use Ephesians 4:4-6 as the only gospel essentials. Some err in not recognizing these seven ones. Denominations forget that there is only one body, one faith, and one baptism. Others, seeking justification for compromise, err in making these things the only essentials of Christian unity.

There is one Father and one Lord, our Saviour. We have been given one Book — a book inspired through the medium of the one Holy Spirit. If we will all submit to the guidance of the one Book, there will no longer be divisions over baptisms, nor varieties of faith. Instead there will be one body — one church — all believing and practicing the same things, all with the same assured hope of eternal life.

No, it may be unrealistic to look for this in a world so torn apart by the doctrines, traditions and prejudices of men. But whatever others may do, let us encourage one another to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints" — the one faith of the word of God.

Medical Evangelism in Central America

Carl Lancaster, Greenville, SC

Health Talents International has been involved in medical evangelism in Central America for around 15 years. For the past two summers, Martha Sue and I have spent part of our vacations working in Belize, Central America. In 1987 we, along with four native teenagers, conducted a vacation Bible school in a village that had never had one before. Our major problem was that **too many came** — more than 200! Last summer we built benches, invited people to VBS, conducted cottage meetings, taught mothers how to teach the Bible to their children, etc.

The Carolinas are also involved in this work! Jeff Jackson from Williston, S.C., along with his wife and children, has been working full time for several years in Placencia, Belize, and Bill Searcy of Rocky Mount, N.C., along with his wife and 1½ year old son, works in Seine Bight. The small congregation in Clemson has contributed to this work for several years.

Living conditions and health care are poor in that part of the world. The average income in Belize is \$1,000 per year. Many people literally live off of the land, surviving on tropical fruits and nuts and fish each

day until they catch enough for their meal. Many children die as a result of the myth that the solution to diarrhea is to cut off all liquids!

Health Talents International is made up of members of the churches of Christ and is organized like our Christian colleges with a board of directors. It encourages churches to send workers into these areas and the congregation has the oversight of the person it sends. There are three major aspects to the work HTI is promoting.

1. It encourages Christians to show the compassion of Christ while sharing the gospel of Christ. Many of the workers in Belize are trained as nurses. They provide care for the sick while teaching the gospel. They have trained a number of natives to serve as community health workers to improve health care knowledge. The philosophy that it is better to teach a man how to fish than to give him a fish is strongly supported.

2. It provides opportunities for students in our Christian colleges such as Abilene, Lipscomb, and Harding to serve an internship in Honduras, live with a native family, and work with Dr. Robert Clark to receive medical evangelism training first hand.

3. It encourages congregations to take their young people to conduct a VBS in villages where a medical evangelism team is working. It has a tremendous impact on the young people who go. More than 700 Belizeans attended five weeks of Vacation Bible School last year. Churches in Atlanta, Nashville, Memphis and a number of other areas have been doing this each summer. It is quite a thrill to walk down the dirt street of a village and hear the native children at play singing in creole the songs they learned in VBS!

HTI is expanding its work this year. In addition to its work in Belize and Mexico it plans to assist the Zone 12 church of Christ

in Guatamala City to establish a medical clinic to provide basic health care for the multitudes of poverty stricken people who are gravitating there. The congregation has about 150 members including some medical doctors, but it needs assistance in securing an adequate facility, the necessary equipment, etc. **It is estimated that one of every four children there die before age five!**

HTI provides numerous support services for all these efforts such as boat motors and vehicles to enable the team to reach rather inaccessible villages, medical supplies, portable dental equipment to be used by Christian dentists who volunteer to provide services in these countries during their vacation, and an array of other things as the need arises.

Funds are needed. This year's program will require \$130,000. Most Americans have been blessed materially more than we know how to appreciate. Sharing a little with others can greatly improve their health and living conditions and enable them to hear the Good News. Just giving your cold drink money may do more good than you realize!

For more information contact me at 803-246-9341. A video tape is available, or I will travel at my own expense to speak in behalf of this work. Your involvement will help others and it has the potential to change your life as well! Send your donations to Health Talents International, P.O. Box 59871, Birmingham, Alabama 35259-9871. They are tax deductible.

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The Threat of Pornography

Robert Curry, Duncan, SC

Some time ago I tuned to a popular morning news broadcast. An extremely attractive woman was being interviewed and my interest was sparked to learn what she had done. Was she a journalist, having covered a controversial story of national importance? Was she a scientist working to cure a fatal disease? Did she write a best-seller? Unfortunately, I soon learned the awful truth. This beautiful young woman was the "Playmate of the Month" for **Playboy** magazine. As the interview progressed the situation became even more distressing, for not only had she wasted her beauty on the pages of pornography, but her children had assisted in the selection of the proofs to be used.

Pornography is a timely and highly sensitive issue in our society today. In an age when so many shiver behind the skirts of the American Civil Liberties Union (A.C.L.U.), our national leaders have failed to properly define and address this plague of moral abandonment and perversion. In the report of the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography it was decided that pornography had a "casual relationship" with sexual violence and criminal action. One editorial writer, when criticized by a representative of **Playboy** magazine for an article on censorship, quickly defended himself by stating that he was not referring to magazines such as **Playboy**, but only "hard-core" material. According to the standards reflected by this editorialist, the filth, perversion, and hedonism splashed across the pages of the popular "men's" magazines are not really pornographic, merely journalism.

By what criteria do our national leaders decide that one "adult" magazine is pornographic and another is not, when both, yea all, are based on a fantasy world of sexual hedonism and immorality? I contend that pornography is more than just the material found in certain "adult" magazines. Some of the commercials and advertisements for perfumes, soaps and other personal products come under the same category for they

offer either an illusion of sexual fantasy or are a simple display of the human body, or both.

If the world will not decide on this issue then Christians must, as representatives of the truth, take a stand, proclaiming aloud the statutes of decency and morality. In the beginning God considered what he had created "very good" (Gen. 1:31). Adam and Eve, at first, were naked and unashamed. However, sin entered and they became aware of their nakedness and were ashamed (Gen. 3). Modern society is naked, but is unashamed, making their nakedness a way of life, and even a source of income.

Society allows this because it cannot decide what is right and wrong. The Christian can decide, however, for the Bible is quite clear on the subject. In Leviticus 18:16, God commanded, "None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him, to uncover their nakedness: I am the Lord." The text summarizes a bit later: "Ye shall therefore keep my commandments and my judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations: neither any of your own nation, nor any stranger that sojourneth among you: For all these abominations have the men of the land done, which were before you, and the land is defiled; That the land spue not you out also, when ye defile it, as it spued out the nations that were before you" (vv. 26-28). Shall we wait until our nation is "spued out" before society will awaken to its own abominations?

Paul included in his list of works of the flesh the words "fornication" and "lasciviousness." Fornication is derived from the Greek **porneia**, meaning "sexual immorality," from which our word "pornography" is aptly derived, for sexual immorality is the heart and soul of its purpose. The word lasciviousness is from the Greek **asegleia**, meaning "sensuality; indecency, vice," which is a fair assessment of pornography's effect. How long will society be duped into believing that magazines such as **Playboy** are merely journalism when the very biblical word for pornography is a description of the

filth and perversion contained therein?

It is time to begin instructing our young people about the threat of pornography in our society. Since our very humanity is part of the creation that God considered "very good," does it not stand to reason that we should use God's wisdom for our instruction, forgetting the Dr. Ruths and their hedonistic, misguided opinions? Solomon said, ". . . a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame" (Prov. 29:15). Henry Boatwright, chairman of the U.S. Advisory Board for Social Concern, was quoted in the **Dallas Morning News** that seventy percent of the pornography sold in this country ends up in the hands of minors. That is our children! Let us then tell our sons that the contents of "adult" material is not reality, but pure fantasy conceived in the minds of a twisted and demented society. Let us tell them of the grip that pornography can have on their lives. Let us tell them that they are to respect the female, not dominate her through perverted fairy tales. Let us tell our daughters that they are privileged to bear the children of their marriage union. Let us emphasize that their femininity is intended to

be honored and not exploited. Let us tell them all that pre-marital sexual relationships are not acceptable, but are scars upon a still pliable future. Let us tell them clearly that they can be in control, at all times, not needing to follow a "soap-opera" mentality, but a wisdom becoming young Christians.

The enemy is here and our society continues to remain undecided on its danger. If society cannot, will not, decide, then we, as New Testament Christians, must. We cannot ignore the warning signs and the clear Biblical definitions of right and wrong. In a society that allows fornication and immorality to become a way of life it is no wonder that the leaders of that same society will label pure filth as journalism. It simply reveals, quite plainly, what has been true for generations: That society will never be the guide for the truth that is needed by the sincere and dedicated Christian. There is only one guide for our survival in an evil world. Whether we can erase the threat of pornography to our nation and to the minds of the innocent is left to be seen. We can, however, strengthen the cause of truth in our homes through the knowledge of a risen Savior.

Saul of Tarsus

Bill Heinselman, Cary, NC

We are first introduced to this man as a persecutor of the church of Christ. Those who stoned Stephen to death laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul (Acts 7:58-59). He made "havoc" of the church, persecuting both men and women (Acts 8:3). He threatened to kill those who followed Jesus Christ (Acts 9). But God had plans for Saul. His conversion to Christ is related three times in the book of Acts in chapters 9, 22, and 26. Luke, the Gentile writer of Acts, soon begins to use Saul's Gentile name — Paul, and by this name we know him as one of the greatest characters of the New Testament.

In order to be of service in the Lord's kingdom, it was necessary for Paul to become a Christian. A careful reading of the three accounts of his conversion will show that Paul was not saved on the Damascus

highway as some think. At that time, Paul said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6). The Lord told him to go on into the city (Damascus) and he would be told what to do (Acts 9:6).

Paul's sins were not left behind on the highway, because we are told in his own account of his conversion given in Acts 22 that when the preacher, Ananias, came to him, he told him to "arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Paul understood that baptism was a burial, for that is what he told the Romans (Rom. 6:4). He understood that baptism would put one into the death of Christ and into the body of Christ (Rom. 6:3). Paul understood that in baptism we put on Christ for that is what he told the churches of Galatia (Gal. 3:27). Paul realized that it is through obedience to the gospel that one is made free from sin (Rom. 6:17:18). This same Paul wrote these things!

The Holy Spirit, II

Randy Yost, Greensboro, NC

As already stated in the previous article, Jesus is the only one who received the full measure of the Holy Spirit (John 3:34), and He is the only one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit. Further, it seems that the apostles and Gentiles of Acts, chapter 10, are the only recipients of this baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit — the former for the inauguration of the church in Acts, chapter 2, and the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit (the miraculous measure), and the latter for the acceptance of the Gentiles in the church for salvation. So it seems the following pattern emerges in reference to the full, baptismal, and miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit. As the only one who possesses the full measure of the Holy Spirit, Jesus is the only one who gives the baptismal measure. Since the apostles are the only recipients of this baptismal measure (Acts 2:1-5), which is a miraculous measure, it seems that likewise only the apostles have an intimate connection with the miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit, since they are the recipients in Acts 2:1-4 of that which is responsible for the miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit, like Jesus is the recipient of that which is responsible for the baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit.

But do the Scriptures confirm that only the apostles could impart the miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit — the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12? If the Scriptures confirm this, then the miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit — the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit — is given by the apostles who possess the power to do this by receiving the baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit. But what about Cornelius and the other Gentiles of Acts 10 who likewise receive the baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit? Like the apostles who received the baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:1-5, did Cornelius and the other Gentiles of Acts 10, who received this baptismal measure also, possess the ability to impart the miraculous measure of the Spirit too?

In studying the book of Acts for the past several years, I have seen a consistent pat-

tern for the imposition of the miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit. In Acts 3, for example, the apostles Peter and John utilize the gift of healing — they heal a lame man. In Acts 6, however, the apostles lay their hands on seven Christians. After this, Stephen, one of the seven, performs miracles. Likewise Philip, one of the seven also, performs miracles in Acts chapter 8. Further, Peter and John laid their hands on Philip's converts in Acts 8, like the apostles laid their hands on the seven Christians in chapter 6. Since therefore the laying on of the apostles' hands in chapter 8 is to impart the miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit, it is obvious that the laying on of the apostles' hands in chapter 6 is for the same purpose. Hence, though Stephen and Philip performed miracles, it was because they received the miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit by the laying on of the apostles' hands in chapter 6; and though they are able to perform miracles because of this measure of the Holy Spirit, chapter 8 shows they are not able to impart this to others.

So the pattern is this: The apostles received the baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:1-5, which opens the door for the miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit; and in turn they lay their hands on others in order to impart this miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit as well as perform miracles that show they possess the miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit and though the recipients of the miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit perform miracles also (Acts 8 — Philip), it seems that they **cannot** impart this miraculous measure to others, as the apostles did. Further, since the apostles are the recipients of the baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:1-5 — that which Jesus promised them in John 14:26; 15:26-27; and 16:13 — it seems logical that they alone are the ones who impart the miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit, since the baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit opens the door for the miraculous measure (Acts 2:1-4).

But what about Saul in Acts 9 who received his sight and the Holy Spirit? Further,

verse 17 says Ananias puts his hands on Saul, and Ananias was not an apostle. How can Ananias impart the miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit unto Saul when he is not an apostle?

Because the apostles Peter and John impart the miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit unto Philip's converts in Acts, chapter 8, which would be unnecessary for them to do if Philip could have done it, coupled with Acts 2:38 and Acts 22:16, I am confidently convinced that Ananias did **not** impart the miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit unto Saul in Acts 9:17. Acts 9:18 says Saul received his sight and was baptized. It doesn't say he received his sight **and the Holy Spirit** by the laying on of Ananias' hands; rather he received his sight and was baptized. And according to Acts 2:38, being baptized for the forgiveness of sins results in receiving the gift, or limited measure, of the Holy Spirit. According to Acts 22:16, Saul was baptized for the forgiveness of sins. Therefore, Saul (Paul) received the gift, or limited measure, of the Holy Spirit in Acts, chapter 9, and not the miraculous measure!

In Acts 9, Jesus Christ chose Paul to be an apostle, just as He chose the twelve in the gospels to be apostles. Excluding Judas, in this sense Paul, I feel, can be considered the thirteenth apostle. And as an apostle, he too possessed the miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit. In Romans 1:11 he says, "For I long to see you, that I may **impart unto you some spiritual gift**" (emphasis mine). Being an apostle (Romans 1:1), he possesses the miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit and the power to give spiritual gifts to others.

But does Ananias heal Paul? Yes, according to Acts 9:17-18, Ananias restored Saul's sight. Is Ananias an apostle? No! But Jesus Christ appeared unto Ananias in a vision for a special mission, which entailed a special commission — the power to heal Saul's blindness (Acts 9:10-12).

As already stated, Cornelius and other Gentiles received the baptismal measure of Acts 2:1-5 in Acts 10:44-46. And as already asked, does this also mean Cornelius and the other Gentiles possess the ability to impart the miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit? Based on the following reasons, I do not believe Cornelius and the other Gentiles pos-

sessed the ability to impart the miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit. Unless I overlooked an incident, nowhere does the Bible mention an incident where Cornelius or the other Gentiles of Acts 10:44-46 imparted the miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit unto others. The baptismal measure of Acts 10 and 11 — unlike that in Acts 2:1-5 — was only for the inauguration of the church for the Gentiles, or to show God accepts them in the church also.

What purpose do these nine gifts of the Holy Spirit in 1 Corinthians, chapter 12 — the miraculous measures of the Spirit — serve? According to Ephesians 4:8-14, Paul says Jesus ascended into Heaven and gave spiritual gifts unto men, like Jesus says He would do in John 16:7-16 and Acts 1:1-8. (Acts 2:1-5 shows it happened, and Acts, chapter 6, and chapter 8, show how the apostles imparted or gave these spiritual gifts.)

In Ephesian 4:12 Paul says these spiritual gifts are given "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." But 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says the Bible does these things. As we realize, however, that the Bible was not completed at the time Paul penned Ephesians 4:12, the wrinkles were not ironed out. Simply, these spiritual gifts were for the welfare of the first century church because she did not have access to all the Bible — the source that does the perfecting and edifying of the saints today (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Hebrews 2:3-4 says, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His will?" The writer explicitly says these spiritual gifts are given to authenticate the gospel. Why? Because the first-century church did not possess the complete, written record of God's word at the time. These spiritual gifts — miraculous measures of the Holy Spirit — were essential for the authentication of God's word.

Based on Ephesians 4:8-14 and Hebrews 2:3-4, the miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit — the spiritual gifts of 1st Corinthians, chapter 12 — serves to edify Christians,

perfect Christians, and confirm the authenticity of the gospel that it is God's word. But since 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and 2 Peter 1:3 teach that the Bible — all of the Bible — does these things today, why is the miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit needed today? The only logical answer seems to be that they are not needed today. I believe this is what Paul is saying in 1 Corinthians 13:8-10.

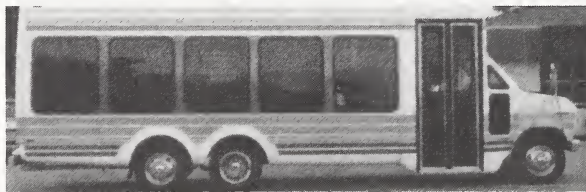
In light of everything that has been said thus far, some are possibly concluding that I do not believe God's children possess the Holy Spirit. Nothing could be as erroneous as such a conclusion! In Romans 8:9, Paul says we must possess the Holy Spirit in order to be God's children. So I do believe God's children possess the Holy Spirit in 1989. But the question is what measure of the Holy Spirit do God's children possess today?

Based on the totality of the Scriptures, it seems that the Scriptures teach that God's children possess the limited measure (gift) of the Holy Spirit today. In Acts, chapter 2, for example, Peter preached about the Christ. After hearing this sermon, sinners asked Peter what they needed to do. Peter's response is recorded in verse 38: "Repent and

be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall **receive the gift of the Holy Ghost**" (emphasis mine). Notice that the reception of the limited measure (gift) of the Holy Ghost is dependent on receiving the gospel, or responding to the gospel by becoming a Christian. It is not dependent on receiving the baptismal or miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit. It has nothing to do with receiving the baptismal or miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit.

What does the limited measure or gift of the Holy Spirit do for God's children today? The Holy Spirit dwells in all of God's children today, according to Romans 8:9. And according to the Bible, the Holy Spirit does the following for God's children today: He gives God's children strength for living the Christian life (Phil. 1:19); He helps God's children to pray (Rom. 8:26); He inspires hope or confidence in God's children (Rom. 15:13); He is a seal or pledge of eternal life for God's children (2 Cor. 5:5); He helps God's children in ways they cannot help themselves (Rom. 8:26). Praise God for the Holy Spirit that dwells in us today!
(To be continued.)

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“338, Stand in the Door”

Charles Lambert, Myrtle Beach, SC

Number 338 was a number taped to my helmet when I was in jump school at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. I was eighteen years old when I learned this command. When I heard it, cold chills ran up and down my spine, and the adrenaline was pumping hard, which made me ready for action.

We were flying low, just a couple of thousand feet, over Fort Campbell, Kentucky. The C-130 cut its engine idle to jump speed. It was the last few minutes before we made our first jump, but the sun was shining and I could see the treetops below. The acreage beneath was in shapes of triangles, squares, and a small lake here and there as they zipped by my window. This was my first time up in an airplane and I did not want to miss a thing.

The time was getting near for the exit. We had been watching two lights on the door of the plane, a red light and a green light. At that moment the red light came on, which gave us five minutes till jump time.

We had two jump instructors with us; each one controlled a door and ten paratroopers. They went wild! They made a final check on all our harness and reserve parachutes. One instructor got on top of our bodies and literally walked on our heads and shoulders. They checked everything, but time was running out. Then came the command **STAND UP, HOOK UP, SHUFFLE TO THE DOOR.**

The way most army troops jump is with a T-10 parachute which is hooked up inside a plane on a steel cable before you jump. Then as you jump, the chute is pulled out of its case and catches air. A real paratrooper has to hook up inside the plane. Shuffling to the door is a safety precaution. Troopers shuffle so they won't get their feet tangled in the tie down rings on the floor of the aircraft.

Standing there all hooked up and tensed up, we hear the last command. We count the streets below as we glide over them. The last check point, 41-A, **“Stand in the door, 338.”**

There was a sudden tap on my shoulder and I heard the word **GO!** From a standing position in the door I leaped into the blue skies, feet first with my eyes closed as tight as I could close them. I felt the strong propeller blast next to my body. My whole figure was laying there in the air as I counted, “one thousand, two thousand, three thousand, four thousand.” The next instant my chute was open and I was jerked back into reality.

There I was suspended in mid-air about a thousand feet off the ground. I heard noises all around me as other men discovered that they too were alive, so we just floated on down to mother earth. I had made it; I was a paratrooper with God's help.

There was another time I stood in the door of life. I stood in the door when I saw this real nice-looking girl walking down the street I lived on. I asked a friend of mine to get me a date with her. We saw a movie that night and seven weeks later we were married. Three years later we brought our son into the world. The doctor called me to the nursery where he held him in his arms. It was my first glance at what I helped create. His blue eyes, pink skin, and dark brown hair were beautiful, so, “Stand in the door, 338.” The doctor said he had never seen a father as proud as I was, but God had been good to Judy and Charles.

All through life you will be standing in the door of the living, but only the living are called out by God to be Christians. April 4, 1973, I obeyed the gospel and it was again like, “Stand in the door, 338.”

Romans 8:28: “And we know that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose.”

If you stand in the door every day and live for God, the sky is the limit. Romans 12:1-2: “I beseech (beg) you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of

your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

There is a greater one that stood at the door and said in Revelation 3:20, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will

come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”

Becoming a child of God is like standing in the door of an airplane, because it is a life you have never known before. It is peace with God, a new beginning; it is life everlasting.

Church Growth or Swelling?

Mike Mays, Asheboro, NC

In the church today two schools of thought prevail in the area of church growth. One stresses the need for involvement of the members of the local congregation in some phase of the work of the church, without necessarily involving them in evangelizing those within their circle of influence. The other emphasizes every member evangelism — every member seeking to reach his family, friends, and associates for the Lord using every available means, much as Cornelius did even before he was a Christian (Acts 10:24; 1 Cor. 9:22).

Involvement is essential for spiritual survival. Members of the body of Christ are either used or lost (Matt. 25:29). No one questions the necessity of involvement. But the facts tell us that involvement alone will not grow a church.

A church may “swell,” but it will not grow using the “involvement only” approach. Churches can increase their membership through three means: (1) Transfers from other congregations; (2) Biological growth, i.e. converting the members’ children; (3) Conversions. If a congregation is healthy, the greatest growth results from conversions.

To illustrate, a large congregation that advocates the “involvement only” approach had an average Sunday morning attendance of 2,100. Yet, they had only 90-100 baptisms a year over the previous three years, including the additions through biological growth. Only 22 percent of the growth was through conversions. It took 21 members to make one convert. Another large congregation that practices the same principles over a four year period had 70 percent growth through trans-

fers, with only 10-27 percent growth through conversions.

Transferring to another congregation per se is not wrong, if a member can more effectively serve the Lord at another congregation. However, the kingdom of God has not grown if we simply transfer members from one local church to another.

The involvement of every member in reaching the lost within his sphere of influence is the only valid way to grow the church for a number of reasons:

1. **It is biblical.** Acts 8:4 reads: “Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word.” Who are “those”? Verse 3 tells us they were the Christian men and women whom Paul was persecuting. Where were the apostles during this time? The Scriptures inform us they were back in Jerusalem (verse 1). The rank and file members were the foot soldiers who grew the church through naturally sharing the word with those they contacted wherever they were. The reason they shared the word with the lost after they were scattered is because that is what they were doing **before** they were dispersed. In the New Testament, evangelism was the responsibility of everyone in the church.

2. **It results in spiritual growth.** No one can be mature in Christ until he has grown to the point that he can teach the first principles of God’s word to others (Heb. 5:11-6:2). Hebrews 5 describes Christians who spiritually were still in the cradle roll when they should have been promoted to the adult class. Involvement in evangelism results in growth of the church in **quality** as well as in quantity.

3. **It works.** The early church grew with megapower — 12, 3000, 5000 — from ad-

ditions to multiplying. The key to their success is recorded in Acts 6:7: "And the word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem. . . ." Christians spreading the word is the key to growth of the kingdom. The seed of the kingdom is God's word (Luke 8:11). As Charles Hodge has written: "Fads! Brethren always are into a fad — gimmicks, gadgets, projects. We believe

more in methods than the message! God's method is man. Prospects artificially gotten must be artificially kept. We 'schemed' them in — now we need another scheme to keep them in. Christians are not in the fad business." Sowing the seed of God's word in good and honest hearts is God's way for growing the church (Luke 8:15). God's plan will work — if we will only go back to it!

Glorifying God

Al Simmons, Charleston, SC

(The following lines are excerpts from a lecture delivered at the East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions Lectures in March. The complete lecture is entitled "The Case From Internal Evidence," and is in the lectureship book. Brother Simmons works with the Folly Road church in Charleston.)

This discussion is not designed to prove that the evidence within the Bible is valid, but, while understanding it to be the inspired word of God, to show that when through wisdom and prudence one appropriates its content, Christianity is the result. The intentions are to bring to light some of its ultimate goals as evidence for Christianity. Therefore, Christianity is a conscious and diligent effort to follow the appropriate teachings of the Bible, founded upon one's desire to attain and maintain his relationship with God, ultimately resulting in the glorification of God through the magnifying of Jesus Christ.

The Bible is the creed of those who profess Christianity and it begins with "the beginning of things." It tells of a Creator who at His word created the universe. It is difficult for man with his finite mind to conceive how God brought the world into existence merely by speaking. Yet those who adhere to the teaching of the Bible have no doubt that it explains the origin of things. When one comes to know God as Creator, it can be said that the glorification begins.

The glorification continues as one also acknowledges Him as Sustainer. For the in-

spired Hebrew writer penned, ". . . he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power . . ." (Heb. 1:2-3). So, as one looks into the observatory of heaven and gives God the credit for the beauty seen, as did the Psalmist (Psa. 19:1), God is glorified. The believer of the Bible sees God clearly as being merciful, gracious, long-suffering, kind, loving, etc. The world blames God for its lack of the ideal life; the believer thanks God for the joys of life. The world complains about the hot summers and the cold winters; the believer is grateful for being able to stay warm in the winter and cool in the summer. While it is too wet on a rainy day and too dry on a sunny day for many in the world, the believer recognizes that each day brings with it the appreciation of another. Some are complaining about it being a lonely world, but the believer rejoices over his fellowship with God and other believers, which is brought about through the vicarious death of a Sovereign Lord.

God is glorified when obedient believers come to know Him as Father and themselves as sons and daughters. Obedient and well-behaved children bring honor and praise to their parents. The believer is like a child who puts complete confidence in his daddy taking for granted that he will protect him from danger, provide his every need, and rear him to be successful in life. He feels very secure in daddy's presence. The believer's Father gives him His right arm of protection as a shepherd protects his sheep (John 10:11), He gives life in abundance (John 10:10), and He

promises ultimate victory and a wonderful life in eternity for his children. Fathers personify strength and protection. Believers seek refuge in God for He is their strength and protection. David said, "In God is my salvation and glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge is in God. Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us" (Psa. 62:7-8).

One is not a child of God simply because he has been created in his image. One becomes a child when he humbles himself to the obedience of the Father's will. Furthermore, when one perfects holiness in his life, submits to the Fatherhood of the Almighty One, is converted and committed to doing His will, the Father is glorified. It is the relationship with God which is established through one's compliance with God's commands that is called Christianity.

God's plan to adopt children into His family originated in His mind before the creation. The apostle tells us: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved" (Eph. 1:3-6). This plan of God was revealed to man by God's own Son, Jesus Christ. It's revelation was at the Father's expense for man's gain. It is through Jesus Christ that the world is able to come to know God as Father. During His earthly ministry Jesus said, "He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me" (John 12:44-45). Thus, it is through Jesus that the Father is known.

The plan was to benefit mankind. It was designed that by Jesus the Father would adopt children, redeeming them from their enemies, saving them from their sins, that they live holy and blameless before Him to His praise and glory. How is it that one lives holy and blameless before God? Jesus lived the life of an example. He was tempted like all men are to transgress God's will, yet He

did not yield to temptation (Heb. 4:15). Jesus realized at an early age that His life which one is privileged to live here on earth should not be one of idleness, but should be one of work for the Father (Luke 2:49). He ministered to the people. He helped the needy. He was compassionate toward the less fortunate. He practiced and taught humility while rebuking the "self-righteous." He laughed and cried with varying situations. He encouraged conviction and commitment to the Father while discouraging complacency and unconcern. He practiced giving more and receiving less. He exemplified following the Father's commands. He personified "love through sacrifice." Jesus is the example to follow in order for one to be found holy and blameless before the Father. He was holy (Acts 4:27) and He did no sin. The inspired apostle Peter stated, "For even hereunto were ye called: Because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (1 Pet. 2:21-22). Therefore, the call is to magnify Christ in one's life by following His example.

The God of heaven deserves complete glorification from all who have ever lived and will ever live on the earth. He is the Almighty One who expressed His power when He brought this world into being. He is the Father of all who obey Him. He devised a plan for man's salvation and fulfilled that plan by sacrificing His only Son. He raised His Son from the dead which assures all believers that His plan is truth. This same God invites all to come to Him and be blessed. He is a wonderful God. He is a just God. He is a patient God. He gives life to all so that all will glorify Him. Those who acknowledge Him fully are Christians, for that acknowledgement comes through one's commitment to Christ. Christianity is for all, while all may not be for Christianity. God's wonderful grace makes it possible for all to be God's children. He pleads for all to come to Him. He does not look so much at what one is as He looks at what one may become. When the raw truth is looked at, surely one can see the case for being a Christian. God deserves the glory this world can give Him and more.



BROTHERHOOD NEWS

Dennis Conner, Yadkinville, NC

Around South Carolina . . .

BOB BICKLE has been selected as the new preacher for the CHARLOTTE AVE. church in Rock Hill, succeeding David Pharr. Brother Bickle and his family had moved to Rock Hill several months earlier from Hood River, Oregon. His intention at that time was to open a counseling office. Bickle had been serving as the interim preacher and officially began his ministry with the church on a full-time basis March 1. . . . The HARTSVILLE CHURCH OF CHRIST dedicated its new building March 26. . . . The BAMBERG CHURCH OF CHRIST enjoyed a banner day on February 19 with record attendance at all of its services. There were 26 present for Bible school, 36 for morning worship, and 26 for the evening worship.

And North Carolina . . .

GARY PAYNE is now preaching for the SUNNYCREST CHURCH OF CHRIST in Reidsville. Brother Payne has spent the past four years ministering to the Morley Church of Christ in Morley, Missouri. The Sunnycrest church was established five years ago and currently has an average worship attendance of approximately 30. . . . The Third Annual Small Church Workshop, hosted by the YADKINVILLE CHURCH OF CHRIST, has been re-scheduled from June 15-16 to May 25-26. The change was due to scheduling conflicts with other events in the area. The theme of this year's workshop is "Leading the Small Church." The Yadkinville church celebrated its tenth anniversary in January and is now self-supporting.

And Abroad . . .

Hurricane Gilbert damaged and destroyed hundreds of homes in the Yucatan Peninsula, south of California. Through the efforts of many Christians and churches in California, Texas, Arkansas, and the Penin-

sula itself, a calamitous event has been turned into a redemptive event. Relief efforts on the part of the Arlington Heights church in Fresno, California, the White's Ferry Rd. church in West Monroe, Louisiana, four preachers from Texas, and hundreds of Christians in the Peninsula region led to 109 baptisms among the disaster victims. . . . A recent survey by a brother Deyamo, an Ethiopian preacher, has found that there are currently 389 assemblies of the Lord's church in Ethiopia. It was noted that one of the primary factors in the recent growth of the church in Ethiopia was the benevolence of the church in the famine areas. . . . The church in Poland has been given government permission to furnish Bibles for hotel rooms in that country.

Calendar of Events

April 30-May 3 — Gospel meeting at the Linville Forest church of Christ in Kernersville, NC. The guest speaker will be Virgil Trout.

May 3-7 — Gospel meeting at the Church of Christ in Wilkesboro, NC. The speaker will be Claude Pharr of Winston-Salem, NC.

May 5-7 — Gospel meeting at the Westside Church of Christ in Charlotte. Preaching will be Dennis Conner of Yadkinville, NC.

May 14-19 — Gospel meeting at the Mooresville Church of Christ in Mooresville, NC. The preacher will be Clayton Winters of Erwin, Tenn.

May 19-21 — Youth rally at the Goldsboro Church of Christ in Goldsboro, NC. The theme will be "Heaven . . . Don't Miss It for the World." Speakers will be Geoff Sikes (Clarkesville, Tenn.), Kirk Sams (Statesville, NC) and Dennis Conner (Yadkinville, NC).

May 20 — 5th Annual Ladies Day at the Gastonia Church of Christ, Gastonia, NC. Theme: "The Joys of Being a Christian Woman."

May 25-26 — 3rd Annual Small Church Workshop, Yadkinville, NC. Theme: "Leading the Small Church."

May 24-26 — 6th Annual Virginia Bible Lecture-ship, Christiansburg, Va., Church of Christ.

June 24 — Youth rally at the church of Christ in West Jefferson, NC. Speaking will be Eddy Craft and David Allgood. Theme: "Just As I Am."

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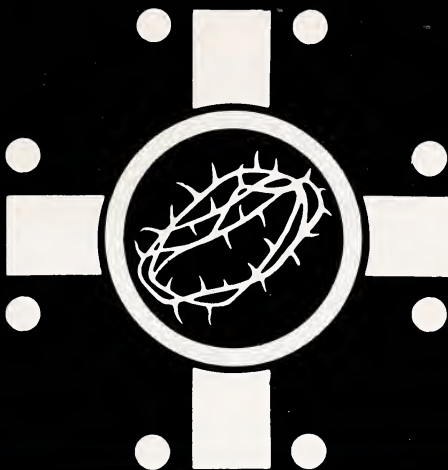
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VOL. 31, NO. 5, MAY 1989



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Howard Winters

It was a year ago May 11, that Howard Winters, our beloved brother and capable editor, went to be with the Lord. We miss him, but we "sorrow not, as others who have no hope."

In the months that have passed we have heard his name spoken with respect by literally hundreds of people. Lectureship books have been dedicated to his memory. Speakers have remembered his works. His last writings have been published. In many meaningful ways his influence continues.

Brother Winters' body rests in a beautiful hillside cemetery in the Carolina mountains. His spirit, we believe, rests in the "bosom of Abraham." In so many precious memories his presence is always near.



editorial

This is being written from the home of Burrell and Hazel Prince in LaVergne, Tennessee. Though in his seventy-first year, brother Prince continues to serve the Lord at a tremendous pace. Always interested in the kingdom's progress, he and Hazel have special memories and concerns for the work in the Carolinas.

The Princes worked with the Abilene Church of Christ near Statesville from 1944 to 1949 when they moved the short distance into town to work with the Broad Street congregation, which they had helped to establish. They also helped with several other congregations in that area.

At the time they moved to North Carolina he was one of only three full-time preachers for churches of Christ in all of the state. While there is still a great challenge, we rejoice in the progress made in the forty-five years since they came to the Carolinas. They left the Carolinas in 1950, but have always stayed in touch and have come back many times to help in many ways.

Brother Prince preached the first true gospel sermon I ever heard. It was at what became the Broad Street congregation, meeting then, however, in an American Legion hall. Most of the work that led to the conversion of my mother and the rest of our family, I credit to Cliff Walter, the man who baptized me. Brother Prince knows this, but he likes to use a line he borrowed from Marshall Keeble: "I didn't get him, but I think I winged him!"

The Princes are celebrating their 52nd wedding anniversary in May. They are beautiful people, happy and spreading happiness all around them. Their years of ministry together, even with the sometimes disappointing and difficult times, have given joy and rich meaning to their lives. They send their love to all their friends in the Carolinas.

About Elders

Not many years ago, congregations in the Carolinas longed for the time when they

could have elders. Occasionally now, we hear of those who want to overthrow their elders. While a spirit of rebellion against elderships is not the problem in the Carolinas that it may be in other places, it is profitable that we give the subject some attention.

In Numbers 16, Korah and others "rose up before Moses" and Aaron "and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you. . . ." They asked these leaders appointed by God, "Wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?"

The fact was that Moses and Aaron were only serving in the position in which God had placed them. The fact also was that Korah

EDITORIAL AND PUBLICATION STAFF:

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CAROLINA CHRISTIAN is published monthly by Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., at 71 S. Fairfield Road, Greenville, SC 29605. Subscription price; individual \$7.00 per year; club of five or more \$6.50 per year; quantity of 15 or more in bundles or direct mailing 40¢ per copy per month. Publication number, 091160.

Second class postage paid at Greenville, SC.

POSTMASTER: Send undelivered copies with Form 3579 to Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., Johnny Melton, Managing Editor, Route 2, Box 137, Conover, North Carolina 28613.

RETURN REQUESTED

Address editorial matter to David Pharr, Editor, ETSOPM, 6608 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37931. Address news items to Dennis Connor, P.O. Box 1219, Yadkinville, NC 27055.

All items to be printed in a given month's issue should reach the editor not later than the next-to-the-last Thursday of the preceding month.

Address commercial advertising inquiries to Jacobs List, Inc. Clinton, SC 29325. Address all advertising pertaining to the Church of Christ or its members (including related organizations) to the editor.

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and the others resented having to be followers. They had a spirit of rebellion, and the earth swallowed them alive.

We live in a world that greatly resents authority. Criticizing governmental leaders is the great American pastime. In the work place, the boss is typically the brunt of much resentment. This attitude is sometimes brought into the church.

The eldership is a Holy Spirit-ordained arrangement (Acts 20:28). Elders are to tend and oversee the church (1 Pet. 5:2). They are to rule, govern (Heb. 13:17). They are to take care of the church (1 Tim. 3:5). They rule in word and doctrine, as well as in other things (1 Tim. 5:17). This includes administration of funds (Acts 11:29-30).

These are only a few of the texts that demonstrate the place elders have in a local congregation. When a person resents the authority of elders, he can rationalize many

things to excuse himself from submission. There will always be unruly and vain talkers (Titus 1:10). But let the conscientious child of God study the Scriptures carefully before he seeks to overthrow the overseers of God's church. Yes, we know that there are some unqualified elders. But we also know there are many unqualified critics. One's disagreement with the elders' decisions is not a reason to reject their leadership position.

Let us let the Bible be our guide and quit thinking as carnal men.

Milton Parker

We have received word that Milton Parker has died. He worked in the Carolinas for a number of years. He was a congenial, kind and faithful preacher — a loyal soldier of the cross.

Managing Editor's Column

The Salt of the Earth

Johnny Melton, Hickory, NC

"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men." (Matt. 5:13).

Usually this statement is recited as an admonition to get folks professing Christianity to do more — to realize their potential. It strikes me, however, that the Lord is not so much encouraging as He is warning. Jesus did not exhort His disciples, those possessing the qualities outlined in the Beatitudes (Matt. 5:1-12), to become the salt of the earth. Instead, He emphatically charged them: "You **are** the salt of the earth" (emphasis added, JRM).

While it is true that salt has a number of functions, for instance, it enhances the taste of food and it can be used to purify, in the ancient world it had one primary function — to preserve. In his book, **Now for Something Different**, Stuart Briscoe writes, "What did Jesus' statement mean to those who were his immediate hearers, the fishermen of Gal-

ilee? Those fishermen knew immediately what he was talking about. For them salt was not something in a shiny silver shaker on the dinner table. It was a preservative vital to their way of life. Once they caught a fish, they had to get it to the market. They had no refrigeration. The only way to get it there in marketable condition was to salt it down, pack it between layers of salt so they could carry it with them down to the market in Jerusalem where it could be sold as fresh as when they caught it. Salt arrests corruption. It keeps fish fresh and edible."

It is this role as a preservative that gives salt its inherent value. With our modern processes for preserving foods, and with our abundant supply of pure salt, we cannot fully appreciate the compliment and the responsibility Jesus gave to His disciples.

In the ancient world salt was valuable. The English word, *salary*, is a derivative of the Latin word for salt, and it came to mean wages, because Roman soldiers were sometimes paid with salt. The value of salt is at the heart of such idiomatic expressions as,

“He is not worth his salt!” or, “People like that are the salt of the earth!”

Jesus made a very serious indictment against this old world in His statement, “You are the salt of the earth.” That indictment is this: The world, left to itself, will rot. Society, in general, is in a serious state of decay. I am convinced the thing that has delayed the sure return of Jesus for His saints is the influence they are exerting upon the world. Make no mistake. The world has not continued to stand because of God’s respect for the scientific, medical, artistic, or literary advancements the world has made. To the contrary, the world remains intact today because of the saltiness of God’s saints. This fact is illustrated by the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. A little more salt (more true followers of God) and those cities would have survived. But for lack of salt, they were destroyed with fire and brimstone (Gen. 18:16; 19:29).

When we appreciate the work being done by salt, we can understand why salt losing its saltiness is such a terrible tragedy. Salt that has lost its saltiness is worse than useless; it is dangerous. Salt that can no longer preserve can still destroy. Just take some rock salt that has been contaminated and pour it on your front lawn, if you need an illustration of this truth. The Christian who is not influencing the world for good is like

salt that is not salty. Jesus declared such an individual to be “no longer good for anything.”

There is a final point to make. Salt, even salty salt, has no preserving power in the box or in the shaker. Salt cannot preserve without being applied. It cannot add flavor or zest to food it never touches. In the same way, Christians must be in contact with the people of the world if they are to have an influence for good. That was Jesus’ plea for His disciples. He prayed for the apostles, “My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. . . . As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world” (John 17:15-16; 18). Salt can have no influence if it remains in the shaker. Christians can have no influence if they remain in their church houses. Rebecca Pippert entitled her book on evangelism, **Out of the Salt Shaker and Into the World**. That is certainly the Biblical concept.

In this verse there is a description to appreciate: “You are the salt of the earth.” There is a danger to avoid: “But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again?” And there is a destiny to abhor: “It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.”

A Deflated Basketball

Greg Smith, Raleigh, NC

It is nice to see that some things are still more important than winning.

During the NCAA Tournament, the coaching staff of the UNC basketball team made a radical decision: suspend star player J.R. Reid from their game against UCLA for a 5-minute curfew violation. When questioned about the incident, Head Coach Dean Smith simply replied, “The seniors make the rules, the coaches enforce them; that’s it.”

The University of Iowa also suspended one of its star players from tournament action — in this case, though, it was for academic reasons. The athlete in question was

meeting academic standards for both the NCAA and the Big Ten Conference; he simply was not “demonstrating sufficient academic progress” in the opinion of the school’s athletic department.

I am really glad to see that, in a world

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obsessed with "winning," there are still some folks — whose livelihoods depend on winning — that recognize other priorities which must be considered. The decisions made by both coaching staffs were not very popular; I am sure that a different decision could have easily been rationalized. In each case, the coaches' desire to win was superseded by a higher ethic: In the case of J.R. Reid, it was the responsibility of a commitment to the team; in the case of the Iowa athlete, it was

the ultimate well-being of the student.

The head coach of the Notre Dame team keeps a deflated basketball on his desk. He explains, "I keep it there to remind me that for every player that comes through my program, there will come a day when the basketball is over. My responsibility to prepare him for that day must always be paramount to my need to win."

Thanks, Coach.

Report From Port Royal

Jim Seelbach, Port Royal, SC

We have just completed our first year of work with the church in Port Royal. It has truly been a great year! We have had ten baptisms since our work began. There is a spirit of love and co-operation that we have never before experienced.

We had a "Work Program" planned to begin the first of the year. We are working our plan and our plan is working. We had an average Sunday morning attendance of 40 in December. We had 46 members with an average attendance of 50 in January. In February our average attendance was 61 with a high of 73. (There were about 25 members in April '88.) The people who are coming are people from the community who have been invited by our members. "For the people had a mind to work."

We are meeting in a school cafeteria, but we only have access to the library and one small reading room for a classroom. We have two classes meeting in the hall, but when it gets hot I do not know where we will put the children as there is no air-conditioning in the hall.

We are in desperate need of a building. We had a donation to purchase property and we have done that. We still owe \$15,897 on that land, and we need to get this paid before we can start a building. We are concerned that we may lose some of our visitors because of a lack of facilities.

I have been in mission work for 12 years, but I have never seen so many people starving for the gospel as in the Port Royal and

Beaufort area.

The church has started a building fund and we now have \$500 in that fund. I am needing \$200 more a month for my personal needs. If you can help us in this work, or know of someone who can, we would appreciate very much your letting us know.

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The Holy Spirit, III

Randy Yost, Greensboro, NC

It is significant to point out that the contexts of Acts 2:1-38; 8:12-18, and 10:44-48, respectively, reveal the differences among the baptismal, miraculous, and as is measures of the Holy Spirit. In Acts 2:1-4 and Acts 10:44-46, the Holy Spirit simply falls on the recipients **before** water baptism (baptismal measure); in Acts 2:38 the Holy Spirit is given **upon** water baptism (gift or limited measure); in Acts 8:12-18 the Holy Spirit is given **after** water baptism (the miraculous measure). In other words, these Scriptures show that the baptismal, miraculous, and limited (gift) measures of the Holy Spirit are different.

It is also significant to point out something else. In Acts 2:38; 8:16; and 19:5, the measure of the Holy Spirit that is received upon being baptized is called the gift of the Holy Ghost. But the receiving of the baptismal measure in Acts 10:44-46, and the miraculous measure in Acts 8:17-20, are also called the gift of the Holy Ghost. This is somewhat confusing. Allow me to share my understanding of this; realizing that I am not speaking *ex cathedra*.

Thayer's Greek-English lexicon defines the gift of the Holy Ghost as God's power or agency that is freely given. In other words, the phrase, "gift of the Holy Spirit," is used in a general sense and includes all three measures of the Holy Spirit. That is, the limited measure or gift (Acts 2:38), the miraculous measure, and the baptismal measure are all freely given by God and are all the result of His power. So this is why the phrase "gift of the Holy Spirit" is used interchangeably: all are measures of the Holy Spirit.

The way to determine what the phrase, "gift of the Holy Ghost," is referring to specifically is to examine the context of its usage. For example, I know, based on Acts 2:38, that the limited measure of the Holy Spirit — the gift of the Holy Spirit — is given at the time of water baptism. And even though the measure of the Holy Spirit that is given in Acts 10:44-46 is called the "gift" of the Holy Spirit as in Acts 2:38, I know that in

Acts 10:44-46 it is **not** referring to the limited measure of the Holy Spirit, because He is given before water baptism, and not at the time of water baptism. Therefore, in Acts 10:44-46, the phrase "gift of the Holy Spirit" is referring to the baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit, unlike Acts 2:38 where it is referring to the limited measure of the Holy Spirit. (In using the term limited, I am not using it as a contraposition term, solely in reference to the term unlimited; rather, I am using it as a contraposition term in reference to the terms unlimited, baptismal, and miraculous; for all three terms connote a higher or greater order than the term limited.)

According to my understanding of the Scriptures, there are four measures of the Holy Spirit: unlimited, baptismal, miraculous, and limited. Jesus Christ is the only one who receives the unlimited measure of the Holy Spirit (John 3:34). The apostles, Cornelius, and some other Gentiles are the recipients of the baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; 15:26; and 16:13 with Acts 1:1-8; 2:1-5; 10:44-46 with 11:1-18). Those who received the laying on of the apostle's hands are the recipients of the miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit, the measure instigated with the coming of the baptismal measure in Acts 2:1-5. (See Acts 6:6-8; 8:12-18.) Today all of God's children possess the gift (or limited measure) of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38; 5:32).

The Holy Spirit is a divine personality who is one with God (John 14:26; 15:26, and Matt. 28:19-20). Unlike the Holy Spirit, I am **not** a divine personality; I am a fallible personality. Therefore, let me remind the reader that I have tried to use only the Bible in sharing my understanding of the identity and operation of the Holy Spirit. And if in this article I have unconsciously resorted to traditionalism, emotionalism, or dogmatism in sharing my understanding of the identity and operation of the Holy Spirit — I repent and pray that God will ratify my sole intention to use only the Bible for this task.

I have spent several years in daily Bible study and prayer for an understanding of the

identity and operation of the Holy Spirit as set forth in this article. But again, I am not perfect. I do not know everything. Hence my prayer is that the reader will accept my sincere effort to use only the Bible in sharing my understanding, and that he will likewise study his Bible and pray to determine whether my explanation is biblical or sincerely wrong.

Daily Bible study and prayer are life-long journeys that consist of overcoming several hills and pits that humankind resurrects because of inevitable weaknesses; but they are

journeys I would not exchange for all the money this world contains. Daily engulf yourself in Bible study and prayer and you will receive great rewards. (As I reread this article, I felt compelled to add the following: Since I want to teach only God's will on all issues, and realizing that I am not infallible, I want to invite responses from those who teach something contrary to my explanation of the identity and operation of the Holy Spirit as set forth in this article. In love, we can study and discuss this together [Acts 17:11; 18:24-26; 1 Cor. 13:6; 2 Tim. 2:15]).

Do Not Forget God

Deuteronomy 8:1-20

Bob Bickle, Rock Hill, SC

It was reported that eleven millionaires went down on the Titanic. Major A.H. Peuchen left \$300,000 in money, jewelry, and securities in a box in his cabin. "The money seemed a mockery at that time," he later said. "I picked up three oranges instead."

The nation of Israel is reminded in the book of Deuteronomy of God's law and provisions for them. As we examine Deuteronomy 8:1-20, two dangers become evident: forgetfulness of past discipline (vv. 1-11) and self-deification (vv. 12-20). Let us examine these two dangers.

In verse 1 we are reminded of the value of keeping God's commandments, "that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land." The Psalmist called a man "blessed" whose delight is in the law of the Lord and who meditates on the law day and night (Psa. 1:2). Jesus reminds us that, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21).

In Deuteronomy 8:2-4, Israel is exhorted to remember what the Lord had done for them. He had led them through the wilderness for 40 years to humble and prove them. He had provided for their daily needs. In v. 18 they were reminded that it was the Lord

who had given them power to get wealth. Remember the risen Lord gave the church at Ephesus this exhortation. "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen and repent" (Rev. 2:5). We would all profit from taking time to remember what our Lord has done for us.

Among the lessons that the Israelites learned was, "man doth not live by bread only but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord" (v. 3). Remember Jesus met His first temptation in the wilderness by quoting this verse to Satan. We need to remember that the words of Jesus are spirit and life (John 6:63).

Another lesson we learn from Deuteronomy 8 is God's providential care for His people. The Lord provided Israel with food, clothing, and all of the necessities of life (vv. 4-7, 10, 15-16). The apostle Paul reminds us, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28). It was Paul who spoke to the Athenians about our God who is not far from anyone of us and in whom we live, and move, and have our being (Acts 17:27-28).

There is still another lesson that God wants us to consider, "As a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee" (v. 5). The Hebrews writer reminds us that God chastens those that He loves (Heb.

12:6-13).

Israel is told to keep the commandments of the Lord, to walk in his ways, and to fear Him (v. 6). The apostle Paul wrote that Christians are God's workmanship, "created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10). Solomon's search for identity brought him to this conclusion: "Fear God, and keep his commandments" (Eccl. 12:13).

We need to also heed the warning that prosperity can cause one to forget God. In Deuteronomy 8:12-14, the Israelites are reminded that when they "have eaten and art full and hast built goodly houses, and dwell therein; and when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all thou hast is multiplied; then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God. . . ." Jesus told us about the rich farmer who forgot God (Luke 12:16-21). Jesus reminds us that we ought to say "If the Lord will, we shall live and do this or that" (Jas. 4:15).

God is the source of our life (Deu. 8:18). He gives us every good gift (Jas. 1:17). Our heart beats 103,680 times per day. But it would not beat one time if God should so choose. "What shall I come to Father," asked a young man, "if I go on prospering in this way?" "To the grave," replied the father.

Let us be careful to not forget God because of our prosperity! An eagle once dived down to the surface of Lake Chautauqua and rose with a fish weighing about 10 pounds. He flew up to about 1,000 feet. As his wings tired, he tried to let the fish go, but his talons were so imbedded that he could not turn loose. He dropped into the lake and drowned.

An entire nation is exhorted, "Do not forget God." We must learn this lesson before it is eternally too late. Jesus told it this way, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16:26).

God's Plan for Marriage

J.C. Watkins, Greenville, SC

Marriage is the most solemn, most glorious, and greatest earthly relationship that God has ordained for man. God ordained marriage to allow man to enjoy the greatest happiness which can be enjoyed in his earthly pilgrimage. "What greater thing is there for two human souls than to feel that they are joined for life — to strengthen each other in all sorrow, to minister to each other in all pain, to be one with each other in silent, unspeakable memories at the moment of the last parting?" (George Eliot).

Marriage is not something that was originated by man, nor is it a mere social custom. Marriage originated in the mind of God Himself. Notice what the Bible says: "And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him. And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them

unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all the cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof: And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2:18-24).

Therefore, God, in the very beginning, created woman especially to be a companion for the man. Woman was created to be a help meet (or, suitable) for the man. Man and

woman complement each other in the marriage relationship. There can be no doubt that God intended for a man and a woman to marry because He said, "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife . . ." (Matt. 19:5).

When the Pharisees questioned Jesus about marriage and divorce, He quoted from Genesis 2 and added: "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matt. 19:6). Thus, not only is it God's plan for a man and a woman to marry, it is His plan for that couple to be united in the holy bond of wedlock for life! Marriage vows are "till death do us part." It is a lifetime vow! It expresses what was in the original plan of God for one man and one woman. Man must not only consider man in breaking the marriage vows, but also God. Since God intended that marriage be a life-long relationship, it is to Him that man must give account if the vow is broken.

According to God's plan, death is the only way for the marriage vows to be broken (Rom. 7:1-4), "except it be for fornication" (Matt. 19:9). Except for death, fornication is the only way man can rightfully "put asunder" the marriage vows. Malachi gave the "burden of the word of the Lord to

Israel" (Mal. 1:1) by saying ". . . therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. **For the Lord God of Israel saith that He hateth putting away . . .**" (Mal. 2:15-16).

So it is God's plan that only death should break the holy bond of marriage. In answer to questions from the Corinthian church concerning marriage, the apostle Paul said, "The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord" (1 Cor. 7:39).

In this age of "divorce for any cause," or "no fault divorce," man needs to turn back to God's plan for marriage. Husbands need to love their wives (Eph. 5:25, 28) and wives need to reverence their husbands (Eph. 5:33). By respecting God's plan for marriage, working through marital problems with His help, giving Christ a prominent place in the home, and following the teachings of the Bible; a man and a woman can enjoy the greatest of happiness, contentment, and usefulness in a lifetime together as husband and wife. By realizing and accepting our responsibilities before God and man in the marriage relationship, the greatest of joys can be ours now, in this life, and in eternity!

Biblical Leadership

Michael Yuhas, Knoxville, TN

The role of leadership carries with it an awesome responsibility. The example, decisions and attitudes of leaders are often directly responsible for either the success or failure of the nation, corporate group, or institution being overseen. It is a fact that men seldom rise above their leaders. God's people throughout history illustrate this truth.

Under the leadership of Moses and Joshua, the nation of Israel was led to and conquered Canaan, the land of promise. However, in the days of the Judges, when "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judg. 21:25), Israel sank to an embarrassing state of social chaos, disobedience, and apostasy. If God had not inter-

vened and raised up leaders (judges) at intervals to deliver them, Israel would have vanished from the face of the earth. God's leaders did not always set a righteous example for the people, nor did they always make the wisest decisions.

Solomon's lavish lifestyle, which often involved sensual sins, caused him to impose heavy taxes on the people. Because of his many wives and concubines, idol worship was introduced among the people, bringing with it a general disrespect for Jehovah and His laws. Following his death, wise leadership could have prevented the calamity of a divided kingdom, and solidified the nation. However, because of a decision influenced by a spirit of pride, arrogance and dictatorial

insensitivity, the kingdom was divided.

Jeroboam and Israel came before Rehoboam, Solomon's heir, saying, "Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee" (1 Kgs. 12:4). Rehoboam rejected the advice of the older, experienced men, who had been with his father, Solomon. They counseled him saying: "... If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever" (1 Kgs. 12:7). Rehoboam instead adopted the counsel of the young men, and spoke roughly to the people, saying: "... My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions" (1 Kgs. 12:14).

Wise leaders can learn a valuable lesson from Rehoboam. It may have been that his intentions were not entirely dishonorable, and that he was simply trying to use this incident to establish his authority, and assert himself as sovereign ruler of Israel; nevertheless, the ten northern tribes rejected his leadership and drifted into apostasy under the leadership of Jeroboam.

A leader of downtrodden, overburdened men, or, one who has no followers, can hardly be effective. Jesus pronounced scathing rebukes upon Jewish leaders during his time on earth. He said: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi" (Matt. 23:2-7).

Jesus made it clear that God desires servant leadership when He said: "But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be

abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Matt. 23:11-12).

Our Lord came to those struggling under the burden of sin and offered not more rules, regulations or meritorious works, but a rest (Matt. 11:28-30). He not only lifted our burden of sin by becoming a sin offering Himself (2 Cor. 5:21), but He also lifted the burden of the Law of Moses, nailing it to the cross forever (Col. 2:14). The apostle Peter rebuked those who were trying to bind the law on the Gentile converts saying: "Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But

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we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they” (Acts 15:10-11).

Isaiah saw our Lord as a lowly, suffering servant who would not be particularly appealing to the world (Isaiah 53), and thus His life and death on this earth would be one of humble, loving service. Paul said of him: “Who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross” (Phil. 2:6-8, ASV).

Effective leaders are able to communicate empathy in a way that will encourage others to greater heights of devotion and service. One must know that his leader feels his innermost doubts, fears and pain, and will be ready to give a helping hand or word of encouragement. We are reminded of the Hebrews writer’s words about Jesus: “Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that

is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4:14-16).

God wants leaders like Jesus who have the seemingly paradoxical qualities of boldness and meekness, strength combined with tenderness and sensitivity, and who are uncompromising but flexible. Men who do not have inflated egos and who are willing to give their lives, if need be, for the ones they love and serve. Good leadership is a much needed and precious commodity in any age, but it is especially needed in these difficult times if God’s people are going to grow, and New Testament Christianity is to expand its horizon. May God raise up servant leaders among us who are willing to follow in the footsteps of the Master — our Lord Jesus Christ.

HE LEADETH ME . . .

Frank W. Shepherd, N. Charleston, SC

“I will lead on softly, according as the cattle that goeth before me and the children be able to endure” (Gen. 33:14).

When Jacob reunited with his brother, Esau, he had his own flocks with him and he also had the children of his household making the journey. A beautiful picture of Jacob’s thoughtfulness is presented to us in this passage. He would not allow the children to be overdriven even for one day. He knew the little ones could not keep up with the pace of a man like Esau. He knew how far they could go in one day. He had made the same journey in the wilderness years before. He knew about its heat and length. He knew about its roughness. So he said, “I will lead on softly.”

As we face the challenges of our lives in today’s world, many of them are things we face for the very first time. They are new territory for us. A professor who cares nothing

about our beliefs, an illness in the family when we cannot be there to help, financial responsibility that demands that we work instead of study or be with friends, a heart really broken by a relationship that was significant to us, the death of a friend or loved one, a new and difficult relationship; the list is endless.

We may not have passed this way before, but Jesus has. He knows it all by personal experience. The steep places that take away our breath, the stony stretches that make our feet ache, the hot shadeless distances that make us feel so exhausted, the roaring rivers we must cross — Jesus has gone through it all before us. He was wearied with the journey, but never overcome. “He became perfect through the things which he suffered” (Heb. 5:8). “He knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust” (Ps. 103:14). He is remembering all the time. Not one step will He

make you take beyond what you can endure (1 Cor. 10:13). Even if you think you cannot take the next step, remember, He will strengthen you (Phil. 4:13).

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me" (Ps. 23:4).

Happiness

Henry L. Fuhry, deceased

Unbroken communication with God is necessary for true happiness. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve were in a state of constant communion with their benevolent Creator. Not only did they know God, God knew them; they heard His voice, and all was well. In such a context happiness was their fortunate lot. This was the case until sin severed them from God and removed them from their Garden home. Thereafter the situation became a confused one. Paul observed: "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (Rom. 8:22). But the lesson on happiness had been established, and the New Testament bears this out. May we learn it! A man right with God is a happy man! The Beatitudes witness to this. Jesus said, Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matt. 5:6). Of course, "blessed" means to be happy and fortunate. This happiness does not come by seeking after it. It comes as a by-product of seeking after righteousness — being right with God. Paul speaks of this righteousness which comes by knowing God and casting all our cares upon Him (Phil. 4:6, 7). John relates that in fellowship with God and His Son our "joy may be full" (1 John 1:3, 4).

Employment is necessary to happiness. Man was created, "and the Lord God took the man, and put him in the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it" (Gen. 2:15). The "garden of delights" was not a place of lazy leisure, but one of work. Man was made, and then put to work. Work is not part of the curse of sin later placed on man. The Lord has so constituted us, it seems, that we are not really happy unless we are active in doing something. An idle mind is the devil's workshop. Christianity looks upon all honest

employment as honorable. It is a dignified thing to be an honest man and throw your heart into your work. We are happy when we are doing the best we can at any task we attempt.

Companionship adds to happiness. The Lord God said it was not good for man to be alone. So He made a helpmeet for Adam (Gen. 2:18). The implication is that man realizes his greatest happiness in relationship to others. Marriage is the highest form of this relationship in our earthly connection. A Christian needs to marry another Christian if he really wants to be happy. Marriage can be a little heaven on earth if properly fulfilled. Christianity has to do with man's relationship to God and man's relationship to man. The essence of both relationships is love (1 John 4:20). "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love" (1 John 4:18). Love is out-flowing, and this produces happiness as we get our minds off ourselves. Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." The opposite of love is selfishness. When you think about it, all sins are out of selfishness. A man wrapped up in himself makes a mighty small package! People who merely live for self usually fail to enjoy themselves! If we are to be happy we must give of ourselves to others. We must be friendly, neighborly, helpful, kind, and compassionate to others. We must possess humility, be truthful, honest, and develop integrity if happiness is to be attained. It is not good for man to be alone indefinitely. Too much self-introspection is not a healthy condition. Companionship adds to happiness.

Proper environment is conducive to happiness. But, environment does not always bring happiness. Surely in such a beautiful setting as the Garden of Eden, one would be happy. Adam and Eve soon experienced the

loss of perfect happiness — they sinned! (Gen. 3). If man is not in communion with God, happiness becomes a fleeting thing. The mansion on the hilltop, and everything that one could desire, does not necessarily bring happiness — sometimes these people are the most miserable; especially if God is left out. However, if a person is in communion with God, he can find happiness in the most wretched place. Paul, writing from the prison in Rome, admonished the Philippians, "Rejoice in the Lord always and again I say rejoice" (Phil. 4:4). If the inner man is right with God, the outer man can adapt to external circumstances. If a man is right with God, a hovel may become a sanctuary of heaven, and

happiness will be his. We must remember that no amount of effort expended directly for the purpose of becoming happy ever brings the human heart the least bit of happiness. Proper relationship with God and with our fellowman is the key to happiness. Too many believe that the key to happiness is to "have." They do not realize that the key really is to "be." Possessions, whether it be money, property, prestige, power, etc., will never bring happiness; and many possessing all these often commit suicide because they are unhappy. Getting right with God and our fellowman through love, devotion, and communion is the key to unlock the door to happiness.

Are You Thankful?

David Vaughn, Burlington, NC

"Thankfulness could well be the finest sentiment of man — and also the rarest." No heart should be so filled with the feeling of "deserving" or pride that thankfulness cannot be expressed. Jesus exposed the ugliness of ingratitude by asking two questions: "Were there not ten cleansed? But the nine — where are they?" (Luke 17:17).

According to Luke 17:11-19, ten leprosy men cried out, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" Jesus told them to "Go show yourselves to the priest." As they were going they were cleansed. All were healed, but only one went back to Jesus and gave "thanks to Him." The same voice that begged for mercy expressed gratitude. Thankfulness is a condition of the heart; it is not what one has but what one is that causes one to be thankful. Being thankful enables one to receive even greater blessings. To the one thankful man Jesus said, "... your faith has made you well."

Some people, like the nine, are never thankful. Such people are selfish and shortsighted. Their focus is on the blessings received when it should be on the source. As afflictions cause people to look to God, blessings should cause people to be thankful to God.

Some people need to be reminded to express gratitude. Parents understand this to be a part of child-training. We are to grow out of childhood and start practicing the things that are important. We should never become so "familiar" with blessings from God that we forget to say "thank you." We should never be so expectant of His blessings that we feel "deserving" and have no need to say "thank you."

There are many reasons why people are ungrateful. However, none are acceptable. God's blessings are great and numerous. The faithful heart does not forget the goodness and mercy of Almighty God. Paul expressed thankfulness in each letter he penned. Notice a few expressions:

"Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!" (2 Cor. 9:15). He knew he was redeemed by the love of God.

"Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks

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be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Rom. 7:24-25). In bondage; then deliverance; then thankfulness!

"But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:57). Defeated by sin and death; but victory in Jesus!

"I thank my God in all my remembrance

of you" (Phil. 1:3). The memory of precious fellowship is a reason to be thankful.

Let us, if we are not doing so, "in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thess. 5:18). Look around: "count your many blessings, name them one by one." Would you be surprised? Are you thankful?

Freeloaders

Jim Mullican, Clyde, NC

Thirteen years ago, when I was preaching in Vidalia, Georgia, a man arrived one Saturday afternoon telling a sad story. He had recently had surgery in Florida, and was now on his way to Hattiesburg, Mississippi, where his grandmother had died and left him "the old home place." He said he was a Christian, and he did know the church well. He could quote Gus Nichols and Batsell Barrett Baxter, both of whom were still living then. He knew all the issues over which brethren sometimes disagree. He was also broke and asking for help.

He ate supper at our house, and we (the church) rented him a motel room for the night. The next morning we bought him breakfast; brought him to Bible class and worship, gave him lunch, and finally paid his bus fare to Hattiesburg. It was not until the following summer that I learned from some other preachers that this was his habitual way of living.

Since then, I've encountered him three more times. About six years ago, a deputy-sheriff in Mississippi picked him up hitchhiking and brought him to the church building. Two years ago he called from Waynesville, wanting someone to "come pick him up." Then last month, he came through again, and since I was tied up and could not see him at the time, he modified his story slightly and went to the Methodist church. The Methodist preacher called me, and together we had a discussion with him about honesty and the fact that he will soon be standing before the God whose people he has defrauded for so many years. I seriously doubt that it reformed his character, but we

let him out at the Hazelwood entrance to U.S. 23. While my Methodist friend and I disagree on many things, we both agreed that when people sacrifice to give their money for the work of the church, the leaders of the church have a responsibility to practice good stewardship.

This man is not the only who lives by free-loading, victimizing the church and making it more difficult for those in genuine need to be recognized. I could tell of others I have encountered, but it would fill many pages.

However, we need to be sure that we are not just as guilty as he is. The church is a body of people, saved by the blood of Christ and charged by him to extend the knowledge of him to others. Let us each be sure that we fulfill our responsibilities as Christians. We cannot leave all the work, all the teaching, all the sacrificing, and all the serving to others and hope to ride into heaven on their coattails. Paul warned in Galatians 6:5 that "each man will have to bear his own load." Let us all be fellow-workers with God and his people, rather than being free-loaders.

Preacher Seeks to Relocate

Married, 4 children, 1971 graduate of Preston Road School of Preaching. 18 yrs. full-time local/mission work. Bible-focused, would like to stay in the Carolinas. J.H. Exum, Jr., 2304 Hathaway Drive, Greensboro, NC 27408. (919) 288-3692.

Oak Trees and Mushrooms

Gary D. Durham, High Point, NC

An observation from nature teaches us that it takes years to grow a strong and mature oak tree while a mushroom is grown overnight. Many times we do not want to take the time and effort to grow a congregation that will be like the strong and majestic oak. We would rather take short cuts to instant success with sensationalism, gimmicks or "fun and games" programs. What kind of congregation do we really want, though, an oak or mushroom?

Members become impatient with slow results which brings on discouragement. Things do not happen overnight and individuals look for answers. The answers may not be as difficult to find as some suppose. Suc-

cess in reaching the lost for Christ is not the result of simply pressing a button. If you are truly interested in seeing results, then you must be willing to make the necessary investment of time and effort to do the job. A harvest cannot be brought forth until someone takes the time to plant and water and then trust in God to give the increase (1 Cor. 3:6).

If you are content to sow sparingly then do not complain about a small harvest. On the other hand if the lack of progress in evangelism bothers you, then now is the time to firmly place your hand to the gospel plow and work for a bountiful harvest. You cannot expect God to bless you with an oak tree if you only plant a mushroom. While we

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Subjects: "Book of Jonah," "Book of Daniel," "Book of Habakkuk," "Book of Ruth," "Book of Job," "Book of Haggai," "Book of Revelation," "Book of I Timothy," "Book of Mark," "Book of I Thessalonians," "Book of I Peter," "Book of James," "Book of Malachi," "Book of Colossians." Also daily Open Forum.

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vainly search for an easy and quick answer, souls are dying, entering into eternity. Every one of us needs to go to work with a united

spirit of determination to grow an oak, and forget about mushrooms!

With Great Patience and Instruction

Paul Jarrett, Charlotte, NC

Radio newscaster Paul Harvey has gained considerable fame for his radio broadcasts and books titled, **The Rest of The Story**. In this article I would like to focus on what might be referred to as, "the rest of the verse." The verse I am referring to is 2 Timothy 4:2, the better known portion of which reads:

"Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort. . . ."

It is not uncommon to hear and read pleas for ministers to "preach the word." Numerous sermons and articles have been devoted to expressing concerns that our ministers are not holding to sound doctrine, and our people are guilty of seeking teachers who teach only what they want to hear. (See 2 Tim. 4:3).

As a result of this fear of compromise the Bible Departments of our colleges and our preacher training schools go to great lengths to declare and prove their allegiance to "sound doctrine." This fear, while it may have a degree of legitimacy, may have spawned a paranoia in our brotherhood.

While I am in agreement with the need for ministers and churches to be committed to and supportive of sound doctrine, I am saddened by the hurt being done to individuals and churches by the paranoia that sometimes is found among us. It seems to me that if we are to avoid destroying ourselves we are going to have to read "the rest of the verse," the portion where Paul writes of the manner in which the word is to be preached. This portion reads:

"With great patience and instruction"
(emphasis mine).

I would like our colleges and preacher training schools to train our new ministers to be men who know how to deal patiently with people, to "not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition. . ." (2 Tim. 2:24, 25). I fear that the present emphasis is producing preachers who are not unlike many surgeons — knowledgeable, but lacking in bedside manner.

I would pray that all of our ministers, old and new, and all of our churches would learn that it is not a sign of doctrinal compromise to be patient with people. We can be firm in our own adornment of Christ's doctrine while giving patient instruction to those who have not yet reached our level.

If I could make one suggestion to our brotherhood that might help us to achieve a balance of patience and doctrinal soundness, it would be to get our focus on people. In John 8 we have illustrated the difference between Jesus and the Scribes and Pharisees. When the Scribes and Pharisees brought the woman taken in adultery to Jesus they were only interested in a legal question. Jesus, on the other hand saw the woman, and in his handling of the question, forced the Scribes and Pharisees to look at themselves, if only for a moment.

If we are to avoid biting and devouring one another, we must refocus. We have got to cease merely debating the law and start seeing people. Certainly, the law, when used lawfully, is beneficial to people. However, when we lose sight of people in our handling of the law, we are in danger of becoming more like the lawyers of Christ's day, than the Christ.

If we are to "live in peace with one an-

other" (1 Thess. 5:13), we must cease promoting an unbalanced allegiance to doctrinal positions and learn to deal with people in accordance with these words from the pen of Paul, which stress the individuality with which we are to deal with one another.

"And we urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage

the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all men. see that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one and another and for all men" (1 Thess. 5:14, 15).

THOUGHTS TO PONDER

Open Windows

Henry L. Fuhry (deceased)

The windows in our houses serve a double purpose. They admit light and air, and they provide for us a view of that which is on the outside. The houses of our souls, too, must have windows through which the knowledge of God's word may pour into our hearts, and through which we may gaze upon the visions which God has provided for us. However interesting the windows of our houses and souls are, we are concerned in this article with the windows of Daniel's house, his experience with them, and the suggestions which they offer for us (see Daniel 6:1-15).

The Courage of Open Windows (Dan. 6:7-10). Whether or not the decree was intended to affect Daniel's private devotions, he evidently looked upon it in that sense, and it seems that he immediately regarded the demands that were made upon him as having a direct bearing upon his conscience. There is no evidence that his prayer before the open windows was intended on his part as a public display of his private devotions. Daniel simply acted "as he did aforesaid," and there is no indication that his prayers would have been known or heard by his enemies, had it not been for the fact that "these men assembled together, and found Daniel making petition and supplication before his God." It must be assumed that Daniel customarily did what he believed was pleasing to God; and now when a purely human ordinance was intended to regulate his relation to his God, he resolved to keep his conscience

clear by continuing to do that which he believed to be right. If Daniel had taken any other course at that time and under those conditions, it would have been said, and with some measure of justice too, that he was afraid of the consequences that would follow if he continued to do as he had done before. That, of course, would have been disastrous to him for it would have ruined his character and destroyed his influence. He would rather die than have that happen to him. (See Acts 23:1; 24:16; 21:7-14.)

The Piety of Open Windows. Courage and piety are in no sense incompatible: On the contrary, no one can be pleasing to God who does not possess both of these traits of character (2 Pet. 1:5). **Daniel knelt down and prayed.** He could have refrained from bowing before the open windows; his position was such that he could have remained in utter seclusion. But in doing as he did he demonstrated both his courage and his piety. Such trials often come upon us when we find ourselves in opposition to the opinions of the majority. We silence the voice of conscience when we yield in such instances. Unless one's life is governed by principle and unless he acts from conviction, he is in grave danger of yielding to sin in this respect. **Daniel prayed three times a day.** There was regularity in his conduct; and that, doubtless, was a great aid to him in such emergencies. Someone has said that it is good to have men who run so close with the sun that when it is foggy one can tell what time it is by looking in their faces. Regular hours for devotions will help us keep our minds on God; but when we take

the liberty to neglect or omit them, we usually grow careless and indifferent.

The Imagination of Open Windows. The people of God during Daniel's day were taught to pray with their faces toward the temple in Jerusalem (1 Kings 8:46; Psalm 121:1, 2). We must pray through Christ (John 14:13, 14). The windows which were opened toward Jerusalem, therefore, meant for Daniel an easier approach to God, and a surer starting point for faith. "The soul with a view is a soul with a way of escape and a path of ascent and a fountain of cour-

age." A young person looking back on his home where godliness and reverence were emphasized, and on the church where the word of God was honored and Jesus was glorified is strengthened because of the inspiration such a view gives him for overcoming temptation and living closer to God.

"We are bound to Thee, O Lord, by the ties of a great Love. May that love lead us into the paths of duty, that as Thou hast done mercifully unto us, so may we ever try to be worthy of Thee."

Growing Old or Growing Up

Jerry McCaghren, Taylors, SC

There is a tremendous difference between growing old in the Lord and growing up in Him. One is automatic and requires no expenditure of energy or effort . . . just aging. Growing up in the Lord, however, is not easy and is never automatic. It is a painstaking journey requiring personal discipline, constant determination, and a deep spiritual-hunger. Churches are saturated with a host of worshippers who are simply "logging time" in the assembly.

When spiritual maturity is lacking, congregations are brought to a standstill. Commitment becomes shallow. Vision grows dim. Sacrifice is virtually non-existent. Dreams are lost. What a tragedy!

Sleeping giants grace the pews across America regularly. God is seeking mature people who are willing to run the risk of faith

— not just show up for church. He is searching for people who will not be intimidated by the distant echo of visionless, negative voices. He longs for those who hear the clarion call of Calvary. He cannot build His church with a bunch of pablum-fed, tenderfooted recruits, still tied to the apron strings of motherland.

He can, and will, build His church with those adventurers whose hearts are broken by the things that break His heart. He can, and will, build His church with those believers who are willing to pay the price of discipleship.

Our God is working among us. He is granting each of us the opportunity to know Him more deeply. Commit yourself to become more deeply involved in his truths. Seek His presence regularly. Do not just grow old in the Lord! Let us grow up in Him . . . **together!**

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BROTHERHOOD NEWS

Dennis Conner, Yadkinville, NC

Around North Carolina . . .

An area-wide worship service is being planned for Piedmont area churches (Winston-Salem, Greensboro, High Point) on Nov. 12. The worship service will focus on the theme "Keeping the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace" and is being organized by leaders of the FRIENDLY AVE. CHURCH OF CHRIST in Greensboro. . . . The church in WEST JEFFERSON is hosting a youth rally on June 24. The speakers will be EDDY CRAFT and DAVID ALLGOOD, with KIRK SAMS leading the singing.

And South Carolina . . .

Brother C.E. SMITH is now preaching for the IRMO-CHAPIN church in Gellentine. He was formerly with the Ben Creek congregation in Wharnccliffe, West Virginia. . . . The following report comes from JIM SEELBACH, who preaches for the PORT ROYAL church: "We have just completed our first year of work with the church in Port Royal. It has truly been a great year. We've had ten baptisms since our work began (April '88). There is a spirit of love and cooperation that we've never before experienced. . . . In February our average Sunday morning attendance was 61 with a high attendance of 73." The church is presently meeting in a school cafeteria, but is in the process of securing land for a new building. . . . It is always unfortunate when there are conflicts in the local church. It is even more unfortunate when those conflicts go apparently unresolved. The result is often that the effectiveness and reputation of a church is called into question. While it is not our purpose at **Carolina Christian** to get involved in congregational conflicts, much less to take sides, we do occasionally receive letters asking for an opportunity to clarify reports that might have been heard or statements that might have been made pertaining to particular churches. One such letter comes from the GREGG AVE. CHURCH OF CHRIST in Florence. Brother LARRY JELLEY writes, "After a recent conversation with a brother in Columbia, I believe it would

be good to clarify some reports that have gone out about Gregg Avenue. About a year ago, due to some personality conflicts and a disagreement about an internal matter of the congregation, one couple began attending another faithful congregation within driving distance. Before they took that action, attempts were made to resolve our differences but were not successful. They have been very vocal with their criticisms and word seems to have spread that we are in turmoil. . . . Then in April of last year, two families and one other woman began meeting elsewhere because we support Southeastern Children's Home and have dinners in the building. They have since attracted a few other disgruntled former members, some of whom seem to be unaware of the doctrinal differences. Things aren't perfect here by any means, but I believe the impression that has circulated is very inaccurate. If anyone has further questions, please call me any evening at (803) 662-1281 or (803) 662-0424." . . . The SENECA CHURCH OF CHRIST on the Highway 123 By-Pass in Seneca is to be commended for its good work in hosting the 45th Carolina Lectures April 3-6. JIM PHILLIPS and BILL CANNON serve the church as elders, and RANDY SMITH is the preacher.

And Elsewhere . . .

R.N. HOGAN and the FIGUEROA CHURCH OF CHRIST in Los Angeles, California, are celebrating the 50th anniversary of their work together. . . . The NAMWI-ANGA BASIC SCHOOL CHURCH OF CHRIST has begun a six month effort to provide funds for a full time evangelist to work with the NAZILONGO CHURCH OF CHRIST. This is significant in that this is one of the first efforts of Zambian churches to send full-time evangelists to other mission points. . . . Two Thai Christians, a brother SENG and brother LERT, were chosen to be elders of the church in the city of NAKORN Phanom in N.E. Thailand. They are the only elders of a church in Thailand at the present time.

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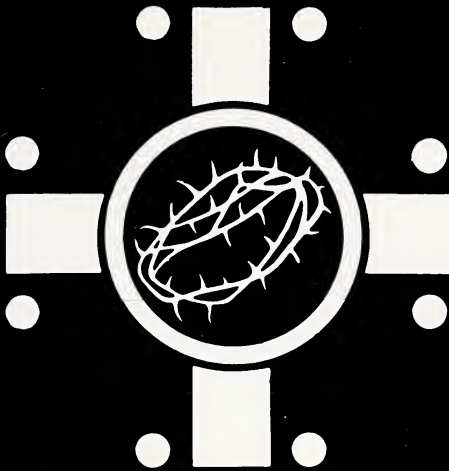
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CAROLINA CHRISTIAN

VOL. 31, NO. 6, JUNE 1989



I Drew My Circle Again

C289, 21

C292

When I first became a member of the church, my circle was very big . . . for it included all who, like myself had believed and had been baptized. I was happy in the thought that my brethren were many . . . but, having a keen and observant mind, I soon learned that many of my brethren were erring. I could not tolerate any people within my circle but those who, like myself, were right on all points of doctrine and practice. Too, some made mistakes and sinned. What could I do? I had to do something! **I drew my circle**, placing myself and a few as righteous as I within, and the others without. I soon observed that some within my circle were self-righteous, unforgiving, jealous and proud, so in righteous indignation, **my circle I drew again**, leaving the publicans and sinners outside, excluding the Pharisees in all their pride, with myself and the righteous and humble within. I heard ugly rumors about some brethren. I saw then that some of them were worldly minded; their thoughts were constantly on things of a worldly-nature; they drank coffee, when like me, they should drink tea. So, duty bound, to save my reputation, **my circle I drew again**, leaving those reputable, spiritually-minded within. I soon realized in time that only my family and myself remained in the circle. I had a good family, but to my surprise, my family finally disagreed with me. I was always right. A man must be steadfast. I have never been a factious man! So in strong determination, **I drew my circle again**, leaving me quite alone.

— Author unknown



In our files we have discovered some more items written by our lamented brother Howard Winters. While much of this material does not seem relevant to our present needs, we are running some excerpts which provide practical advice and insight. Some thoughts from the pen of Howard Winters:

On Christian Education

While we have never ventured into the field of teaching academically (our teaching has been almost totally confined to the pulpit and the press), we have long felt that there is no higher attainment (beyond learning the truth itself) than that of a Christian education. And by Christian education we mean an education with Christian principles as its fundamental foundation. Regardless of what field of labor one may choose, whether farmer, mechanic, engineer, factory worker, doctor, lawyer, or preacher, he needs to have a working knowledge of the Scriptures. But more, he needs to have the principles of the Scriptures so instilled into his heart and mind, his very being, that they become a part of his total character, the guiding rule of his life. No education, regardless of the heights it may attain, is complete without this. Without this one is not, nor can he ever be, prepared to make the moral decisions that must govern any occupation that is constructive and useful. Thus Christian education is more than the acquisition of knowledge, just as the Bible itself is more than a book of facts to be rotely learned. To be sure Christian education involves that, at least to a large degree, but that is not its fundamental nature. Its function is to build into man the kind of character that will properly use knowledge — that will use knowledge to the glory of God and the benefit of man. Hence Christian education must aim at the character as well as the mind. And there is simply no way to build right character without instilling in the mind the principles taught in the Scrip-

tures. To build the mind without building the character is a travesty on the student — it simply prepares him to be a more effective sinner.

While we believe that the Christian colleges among us are doing a good job for the most part, we fear that they are becoming more obsessed with the preparation of the mind than with training man's moral nature. There are numerous reasons for this (such as financial pressure and the need and desire to enroll large numbers of students), but none of them alone, nor all of them together,

EDITORIAL AND PUBLICATION STAFF:

David Pharr, Editor; Johnny Melton, Managing Editor; Dennis Connor, News Editor.

CAROLINA CHRISTIAN is published monthly by Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., at 71 S. Fairfield Road, Greenville, SC 29605. Subscription price; individual \$7.00 per year; club of five or more \$6.50 per year; quantity of 15 or more in bundles or direct mailing 40¢ per copy per month. Publication number, 091160.

Second class postage paid at Greenville, SC.

POSTMASTER: Send undelivered copies with Form 3579 to Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., Johnny Melton, Managing Editor, Route 2, Box 137, Conover, North Carolina 28613.

RETURN REQUESTED

Address editorial matter to David Pharr, Editor, ETSOPM, 6608 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37931. Address news items to Dennis Conner, P.O. Box 1219, Yadkinville, NC 27055.

All items to be printed in a given month's issue should reach the editor not later than the next-to-the-last Thursday of the preceding month.

Address commercial advertising inquiries to Jacobs List, Inc. Clinton, SC 29325. Address all advertising pertaining to the Church of Christ or its members (including related organizations) to the editor.

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justify the abandonment of Christian education in its highest aspirations.

Primarily (at least in our conception) education should be directed toward building the character by improving the mind. An improved mind without a corresponding improved character is not Christian education, even if it is received in a Christian college. The world already has enough education without character. The purpose for which Christian colleges exist is to remedy this problem. If we fail to build Christian character then we fail to provide Christian education. If we fail to provide Christian education then Christian colleges are useless appendages to both society and the people of God.

Preaching in the Carolinas

Let me make a point here, one over which I am very concerned: brethren should learn that while it is possible to be too cautious in choosing a minister, a preacher should be employed only after much consideration, prayer, and investigation. The whole future of the church may well depend on the choice — the right choice may mean growth and success, while the wrong choice may mean failure and destruction. No preacher is right for every place, and no place is right for every preacher. The right man at the right place at the right time is an ideal worth striving for. Preachers come in all sizes, shapes, attitudes, and talent, and for a church to choose a man not fitted for its purpose and work is to do both the church and the preacher an incredible injustice.

One thing that brethren in general have not understood is that when a preacher agrees to work with a church he puts his whole life, and the life of his family, in the hands of the church's membership. All his earthly possessions are given as collateral to assure success. When a move does not work out it may take him years to get back on his feet financially (in fact it may so discourage him that he will quit preaching altogether).

Here I need to make a confession. (The Bible says, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed . . ." [James 5:16].) Before I moved to the Carolinas I was completely

puzzled as to why the church grew so slowly. It seemed to me that if enough quality work and preaching (and that has enough ego in it to show that I thought I had the right quality of work and preaching to do the job) were done the church would have to grow more rapidly. "Surely," I thought, "the workers must not be working." I began to try to discover the problem. I concluded (after my usual haphazard way of studying a matter — a limited study with limited data) that the problem was, at least in part, a large turnover of preachers — preachers moving into the two states, staying only for a short while (some coming only to work on a college degree and having no plans to stay after it was earned), and then leaving before they got to know the people or understood how to reach them.

Thus I determined that if it was the Lord's will I would come to the Carolinas and make them my life's work — come and stay until I understood the people, became a part of them, and knew how to reach them. I thus felt that I had found the key that would unlock the treasure chest of success — that I would eventually be able to reach thousands where others had only reached tens or hundreds at most. But I was in for a terrific shock. I had not been in Wilmington six months before I concluded that all my preconceptions were totally and absolutely wrong. I then confessed to both God and man that I did not know how to reach the native people. The work was slow and frustrating, and nearly every church seemed to go backward nearly as much as it went forward. I did not have the solution (in fact I wondered sometimes if I were not part of the problem).

And now, after having lived one-third of my life in the Carolinas and preached here for half of it, the problem is still here. Growth is still slow and the work is still frustrating. I have tried every means and method at my disposal and nothing seems to work well or for long. The only way that I have found to get the job done is through dogged persistence — constantly preaching the truth with compassion and concern.



Be Perfect

Johnny Melton, Hickory, NC

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. 5:43-48, NIV).

With the phrase "You have heard that it was said," Jesus set Himself at variance with the religious leaders of His day. The instruction given by the rabbis which Jesus cited was a perversion of the Law of Moses. The rabbis taught, "Love your neighbor and hate your enemy." However, such instruction is never found in Scripture. Consider the actual words of the Old Testament which were the object of rabbinic wrestling: "Do not hate your brother in your heart. Rebuke your neighbor frankly so you will not share in his guilt. Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD" (Lev. 19:17, 18, NIV).

Now the rabbis argued like this: The Lord said love your neighbor. My enemy is not my neighbor. Therefore, I do not have to love my enemy. Furthermore, the Lord expressly required that I love my neighbor, then I must hate him. This is just the type of sophistry that characterized the religious leaders of Jesus' day. They were willfully ignorant of the instruction contained in the Law concerning strangers (i.e., non-Jews) among them. "When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fal-

len. Leave them for the poor and the alien. I am the LORD your God" (Lev. 19:9, 10, NIV; emphasis mine, JRM). Now those schooled in the Law should have deducted from this instruction that at least they were not to hate their enemies (and Jews considered anyone not a neighbor, a kinsman, a fellow Jew, to be an enemy). But note Leviticus 19:34, "The alien living with you must be treated as one of your native-born. Love him as yourself, for you were aliens in Egypt. I am the LORD your God" (emphasis mine, JRM).

Beyond deduction, the Law gave specific instruction on dealing with an enemy. For instance, in Exodus 23:4, 5, "If you come across your enemy's ox or donkey wandering off, be sure to take it back to him. If you see the donkey of someone who hates you fallen down under its load, do not leave it there; be sure you help him with it." Identical instruction is found in Deuteronomy 22 dealing with a brother. The Law's commands for dealing with either an enemy or a brother were the same. Nowhere does God teach that one should hate his enemies.

Someone may ask about David's statement in Psalm 139:22, "I have nothing but hatred for them; I count them my enemies." Before anyone draws the conclusion that because David hated it is all right for us to hate, we must be sure to read the verse in context. Psalm 139:19-21 states, "If only you would slay the wicked, O God! Away from me, you bloodthirsty men! They speak of you with evil intent; your adversaries misuse your name. Do I not hate those who hate you, O

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LORD, and abhor those who rise up against you?" David did not hate his enemies, but God's enemies. That is why he called his feelings, "perfect hatred." The evildoer, the one in persistent rebellion against God, is the object of both love and hate. We love them in that we want that they should repent of their wickedness and obey God and be saved. We hate them in that we desire that if they refuse to repent, if they refuse God's grace, they will incur God's judgment. This is "perfect hatred." But it is hatred for God's enemies, and not our own.

When Jesus dismantled the rabbinic tradition, He established a higher order of human conduct. Instead of hating enemies we are to love them. Jesus declared, "But I tell you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven." Let it be stressed that love is active and not passive. The words of John are appropriate here, "Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth" (1 John 3:18, NIV).

God blesses the good and the wicked, the just and the unjust. "He causes his sun to

rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous." In like manner, we are called to a higher level of conduct than that practiced by tax collectors and pagans. "If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?"

Jesus closed this exhortation with the words, "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." This, of course, is not a call to sinlessness. Sinless perfection is not a viable option for us. The Good Book says all have sinned and if anyone says he has not sinned, he is deceived and the truth is not in him (Rom. 3:23; 1 John 1:8). But the word "perfect" does not have to mean sinless perfection. The word means complete or mature. Jesus called men and women to spiritual maturity. Only the spiritually mature can love enemies and pray for persecutors. God is the epitome of maturity. Jesus has called us to spiritual maturity in imitation of God Almighty. And it is within our ability to attain it.

Reexamining the Fundamentals, XI

David Pharr, Knoxville, TN

In the previous installment of this series, we examined the Biblical emphasis on the oneness of the church. We noticed some of the errors of denominational ecumenism and how that the "unity of the Spirit" is not achieved by compromising the principles of faith and practice found in the New Testament. We should have no hesitancy at all in urging people to come out of denominationalism and to unite by faith with the people who respect the Scriptural pattern.

In considering the oneness of the body of Christ, however, there is another aspect that needs attention. In human nature there is always the danger of extremes. We may sometimes go so far in trying to avoid one

error that we fall into another. Our concern for the purity of the church may have caused some of us to see the Lord's emphasis on oneness as being more of a basis for **exclusion** than for **inclusion**.

While our faith does not stand on the positions of the early American restorers, there is much profit in the study of positions they took. We should remember that they were taking a fresh look at what it means to restore Christianity. They were not encumbered by the demands of "where we have always stood," or "what we have always thought." Accordingly, they sought to see things only as the Bible presented them. Keeping this in mind, let us notice some things stated by

Thomas Campbell in his famous **Declaration and Address**:

“That (in order to church union and communion) nothing ought to be inculcated upon Christians as articles of faith, nor required of them as terms of communion, but what is expressly taught and enjoined upon them in the word of God. Nor ought anything to be admitted as of divine obligation, in their church constitution and management, but what is expressly enjoined by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ and His apostles upon the New Testament Church; either in express terms, or by approved precedent.”

These ideas are not important because they were written by the elder Campbell, but because they are eminently Scriptural. We should observe the emphasis on avoiding any barrier to fellowship which has not been clearly established by the word of God. This forbids, rightly so, the use of prejudices, our traditions, and quaint interpretations as criteria for fellowship.

In reading from the pioneers we are impressed by their desire to make fellowship as broad as possible. Without doubt they sometimes carried this too far; but it is nonetheless refreshing to see how they yearned for the unity of all believers. They had seen and had suffered from the sectarian spirit that controlled denominationalism. They wanted none of the narrowness of closed communion. In his desire to make fellowship as broad as possible, Thomas Campbell reworded an old motto to say, “In faith unity; in opinion liberty; in all things charity.”

No informed person could doubt the Scripturalness of Campbell's motto. It may be, however, that we have somethings emphasized the first point of it to the neglect of the other two. Lest I be misunderstood, let me state unequivocally that we must insist on Biblical consistency before there can be unity in matters of faith. Sincere zeal for this may, however, blind us to the equal necessity of recognizing liberty in matters of opinion and of showing love in all things.

The history of churches of Christ in modern times has reeked with the shame for factionalism, a major part of which could have been avoided if matters of opinion had not been treated as if they were matters of faith,

and if sincere charity had characterized all brethren involved. Two problems are evident. There has been a tendency to elevate the importance of our own conclusions to where they are viewed as equal to the principles of Scripture; and there has been a lack of the kind of love that would go to the limit to try to resolve differences.

We have heard many sermons (and preached them) on the identity of the New Testament church. Most of these have focused on the Scriptural pattern of doctrine, organization, worship, etc. All of this is vital, of course. The one thing that too often has been missing from these sermons, how-

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ever, is emphasis on the one identifying feature to which Jesus gave primacy: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35).

We are aware of the validity of the arguments which say that love requires us to rebuke error. We know that denouncing sin is a loving thing to do. But, brethren, let us beware lest such arguments serve only as smoke screens to hide an appetite to "bite and devour one another" (Gal. 5:15). There is something wrong if we find more joy in **exposing** a heretic than we do in **embracing** a brother. Peter shows us that love is a divine priority, and that "love shall cover the multitude of sins" (1 Pet. 4:8). This does not mean that love is a substitute for repentance. Neither does love turn heresy into truth. But surely, brethren, the text does mean that love will cause one to go to the furthest extremities allowed in seeking to overcome barriers that divide us. The background of Jesus' great love pronouncement in John 13:34-35 was His washing of His disciples' feet. Maybe we need to hold pens less and wear towels more! Maybe we need to spend less time arguing and more time washing feet!

This writer has no personal doubt as to whether the true church exists in the world today, nor as to whether he is a member of it. The church of Christ exists as the restored New Testament church. It is the brotherhood of which we are a part. We view it as a grave mistake, however, to view the work of restoration as having been completed. If we hold a bigoted satisfaction that we have learned and applied all truth; and that our duty now is only to maintain and defend the church as it presently is: we have forgotten what restoration is all about. Perhaps our preaching ought to be less on the church we **are**, and more on the church we **are trying to be!** Such will include a genuine application of all three of the Scriptural tenets Campbell stated in his motto. It will also embrace for real the above quotation from his **Declaration and Address.**

Coming back now to the idea expressed in the beginning of the article, we need to appreciate that the Biblical spirit of oneness, or unity, will lead us to seek to include all in fellowship that we possibly can. It is superfluous to say that we ought to accept all as

brethren that God accepts as **children**. The desire for this should cause everyone who loves the Lord to go to heroic and even self-denigrating extremes in order to find grounds for fellowship so long as no clear principles of Scripture are violated.

That God wants us to hold as broad a view of fellowship as possible ought to be obvious. Though we have rightly understood that the passages on unity contradict the divisions of denominationalism, the fact is that such was not the only purpose in those texts. We need to reread them to see that unity is a priority with God. They were not written to teach us to make the circle of fellowship as small as possible, but rather that we should have a fellowship that is as broad as possible, limited only by those requirements that are clearly taught of God.

The Lord's own desire to fellowship all He possibly can ought to shape our own attitudes. Is it not true that He loves all (John 3:16); that He wants all to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4); that He wants none to perish (2 Pet. 3:9); and that Christ is the propitiation, not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2)? How we hate the "limited atonement" view of Calvinism. But we may hold an equally deadly prejudice if we are more comfortable with a smaller fellowship because it is easier than trying to solve the problems that seeking a broader fellowship might entail. Let us read afresh Ephesians 4:3. The unity of the Spirit is not something merely to guard. It is something for which to **endeavor**.

A passage which perhaps has not been given the attention that is due it is Mark 9:38-41: "John said unto him, Teacher we saw one casting out demons in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followed not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man who shall do a mighty work in my

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name, and be able quickly to speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is for us. For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink, because ye are Christ's, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."

This does not teach, as some have argued, that we ought to fellowship denominationalism and every false teacher who professes to be working in Jesus' name. Such an application is an obvious contradiction of numerous plain warnings to the contrary (Rom. 16:17-18; 2 John 9; Gal. 2:5; etc.). The one John had observed was not one whose teaching or practice was "against" Christ, but rather one who was working "in my name." This person was thought to be an alien by John, but he certainly was not an alien so far as Jesus was concerned. Jesus knew what the man was doing, and approved of it. He may have been a stranger to John, but he was no stranger to the Lord.

It is possible, though, that our study of this text may have concentrated so much on answering the misuse of it that we have failed to appreciate what it should mean to us. My observation has been that we have more enthusiasm for the text that states the other side of the coin — "He that is not with me is against me" (Matt. 12:30) — than we do for: "He that is not against us is on our part" (Mark 9:40).

Does this not teach us that we should not be hasty in drawing lines of fellowship, but instead be ready to recognize any and all, unless and until it is evident that they are indeed "against us" (against the cause of Christ)? John seems to have wanted to make the followers of Christ a more limited fellowship than was necessary, to view it as exclusive rather than inclusive. Jesus showed the possibility of a broader fellowship than John perceived.

Jesus' added statement in verse 41 should caution us against hasty denunciations of those who are seeking to do even the smallest good work. Is it not sad that we have sometimes been more ready to see the flaws in their methods instead of the good of their intentions, when brethren have given a cup of water (or fed the hungry, encouraged youth, housed the homeless, cared for orphans, etc.)?

In speaking of the need for a broader perspective of fellowship, we realize that, practically speaking, this will have little application to our relationship with the various denominations. Their doctrines and practices are so obviously contrary to sound doctrine that the impossibility of fellowship is evident. Individuals among them, however, may be of kindred spirit with us, needing only the loving and welcoming instruction that would lead them into the fellowship of the saints.

Our attention, though, is on the divisions and suspicions that arise in the brotherhood of the church. Reexamining the fundamentals may call for us to reassess how we have handled some matters. To try to give specific examples would be folly since there are always a variety of factors that need to be considered. Our only point is that the spirit of Christ within us should make us as openminded — yes, even as broadminded — as the Scriptures allow us to possibly be. One may think himself "sound" because he draws a very small circle of fellowship. Such circles may, however, be made so small — God forbid — that there is hardly room for a loving, forgiving, longsuffering Lord.

We were told of a brother who had compiled a list of preachers, colleges, and papers in the brotherhood that he was against. As the matter was reported, it seemed that the brother felt some security in this, fearing lest otherwise he might accidentally fellowship someone he should not.

We have heard it occasionally argued that one's baptism is not valid and that he cannot be accepted into fellowship unless he was baptized by one of "us." No one who respects the great and Biblical principles of the restoration would acquiesce to such folly. It is sectarian to the core, sacerdotalism in its implication, and casts doubt upon the baptism of every one of us. (For who can really



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know the spiritual condition of the one who baptized him?) Still we have no doubt that such positions have been taken because of concern for the purity of the church. It may seem a more safe and easy course to follow; but it may also serve to exclude from fellowship those whom God has received.

When those who had been influenced by Barton W. Stone and those who had been influenced by Alexander Campbell became aware of the common ground between them, they did not unite on the basis of agreement of all matters of opinion. Instead, as John Rogers wrote in 1844, "No one ever thought that the Reformers, so called, had come over to us, or that we had gone over to them; that they were required to relinquish their opinions or we ours. We found ourselves contending for the same great principles of Christianity, and we resolved to unite our energies to harmonize the church, and save the world. . . ." (Campbell and those with him were often called "Reformers" at that time.) Instead these thoughtful men saw themselves as free men in Christ. They guarded their own freedom to study the Bible for themselves and to follow and teach it according to their own convictions. They also extended the same freedom to others. They were determined to draw no narrow circles over minute and vague points. Alexander Campbell wrote in 1826: "But to connect myself with any people who would require me to sacrifice one item of revealed truth, to subscribe any creed of human device, or to restrain me from publishing my sentiments as discretion and conscience direct, is now, and I hope ever shall be, the farthest from my desires, and the most incompatible with my views."

This does not mean that these restoration-minded men did not oppose heresy and oppose heretics. It was just that they did not make such their only occupation. Instead their business was to preach the gospel for the winning of souls. They fought division; they answered error. But they loved liberty, and felt at liberty to love! Their vision of the true church was not how small and narrow they could keep it, but how great and embracing it could become.

In reexamining the fundamentals we should not be satisfied to merely justify the beliefs and practices which are current among us. What is right we must defend as right. But at the same time we should constantly examine ourselves in the light of the Scriptures. I am not so much concerned that our teachings and practices are wrong, indeed I believe them to be truly Scriptural. I am concerned, however, lest we lose sight of the "weightier matters" that give the restoration ideal its vitality and appeal. Gnat straining and camel swallowing is no more becoming to us than it was in Pharisees. We still need to distinguish between motes and beams (Matt. 7:3-5; 23:23-24).

By now, Dear Reader, you have no doubt followed these rambling remarks, wondering to what specific issue the writer intends to apply them. The answer is: to no specific issue, and yet to all issues. This has been altogether about attitudes. No fundamental of religion needs to be reexamined more than what we believe and practice in our attitudes toward others. New Testament Christianity is never restored wherein is lacking the love, patience, liberty, forbearance, and courtesy taught by our blessed Lord.

I'd Rather Have Jesus

Bill Nicks, Knoxville, TN

"Ye are of God, my little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4). This passage presents the truth that we have two choices with whom to cast our lot: Jesus or the world. The inspired writer affirms that the one who dwells in

Christians is the greater of the two. The world is dominated by Satan, who is "the prince of the world" (John 14:30). That is why we are told, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of

the eyes and the vain glory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever" (1 John 2:15-17).

The purpose of this article is to help us appreciate the blessing of this having Jesus as the Pilot to chart and direct our course in life. The following song beautifully expresses the Scriptural sentiment we wish to convey in the lesson:

*I'd rather have Jesus than silver or gold;
I'd rather be His than have riches untold.
I'd rather have Jesus than houses or land;
I'd rather be led by His nail-pierced hand,*

*Than to be the King of a vast domain,
Or be held in sin's dread sway.*

*I'd rather have Jesus than anything
This world affords today.*

*I'd rather have Jesus than men's applause;
I'd rather be faithful to His dear Cause.
I'd rather have Jesus than world-wide fame;
I'd rather be true to His Holy Name.*

Than Money or Possessions

What is silver or gold without Jesus? God warned Israel that they might one day say, "My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth . . . and if thou do at all forget the Lord thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, . . . ye shall surely perish" (Deut. 8:17-19). As silver and gold of idols could turn their hearts from God then, it is even so now (Deut. 29:16-18; 1 Tim. 6:7-11). Inspiration tells us what true riches are. They are "gold refined by fire" (Rev. 3:14-17), a good name (Prov. 22:1), and a "word fitly spoken" (Prov. 25:11). The wise man affirmed that wisdom is better than silver, fine gold and rubies, or anything "thou canst desire" (Prov. 3:13-15).

What is land, or what are houses without Jesus? Does not the yearning for these develop covetousness, and warp the Christian personality? (Luke 12:15). Jesus promises the real houses, lands, mothers, sisters, fathers, children if we leave them for the sake of Him and the gospel (Mark 10:29f). A man

once said to a missionary to Africa, "You could have been worth a half million or more if you had not gone abroad." He replied, "You don't know the extent of my wealth. I have helped start over 300 churches in Africa, and thousands now know the Lord who would not have." Having Jesus is worth more than all the wealth of Croesus, or the cattle on a thousand hills.

Than Be Held in Sin's Dread Sway

"I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness" (Psa. 84:10). David also said, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple" (Psa. 27:4). This is the Christian's spirit. He knows Jesus is better than to dwell in sin. He has a clean conscience, peace of mind, love, truth and righteousness. He knows that Christian freedom is not to be used as an occasion to the flesh, "but through love be servants one to another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another" (Gal. 5:13-15). Misery loves company. The world wants the Christian on his side, but the child of God must "abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (1 Pet. 2:11). Any persecution that comes as a result of godliness should not be considered strange. It is a means of partaking of Christ's sufferings and an occasion of rejoicing "at the revelation of his glory" (1 Pet. 4:12f). To continue in sin is to be "entangled" in the world and "overcome; the last state is become worse than the first" (1 Pet. 2:20). I'd rather have Jesus than sin's dread sway, which leads to eternal ruin, as well as misery in this life.

Than Men's Applause or Fame

Jesus said, "What doth it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Matt. 16:26). Henry Clay said, "I'd rather be right than president." Vain ambition leads to sins. It leads some men to step on others, crushing them, on their vain

way up the ladder of "success." It is much better to have Jesus and miss the dazzling limelight of fame and power, than to rise at the expense of mistreating others. It is much better to have Jesus and a clean conscience. When we have Him, we respect the rights of others (Phil. 2:3), "in honor, preferring one another" (Rom. 12:10), and being "clothed with humility" (1 Pet. 5:5), the Christian does not "think of himself more highly than he ought to think" (Rom. 12:3).

Someone has said we have the following things if we have Jesus: "A love that can never be fathomed; a life that can never die; a righteousness that can never be tarnished; a peace that can never be understood; a rest that can never be disturbed; a joy that can

never be diminished; a hope that can never be disappointed; a glory that can never be clouded; a light that can never be darkened; a happiness that can never be interrupted; a strength that can never be enfeebled; a purity that can never be defiled; a beauty that can never be marred; a wisdom that can never be baffled; resources that can never be exhausted."

If you know the Lord, He will see you through the darkest night, and open the window of true light to your path (Psa. 119:105). "The way of the ungodly shall perish" (Psa. 1:6). "But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. 4:18).

The Damning Betrayal

David Vaughn, Burlington, NC

Shakespeare had one of his characters say to another, "There's neither honesty, manhood, nor good fellowship in thee."

When Jesus met with the twelve for the last supper He knew betrayal was near. Jesus knew that "honesty, manhood, nor good fellowship" was to be found in Judas. Jesus says, "Truly I say to you that one of you will betray Me." The apostles are grieved and anxiously ask, "Surely not I, Lord?" Then Judas said, "Surely it is not I, Rabbi?" (Matt. 26:21-25). How truthful are the words: "Though those that are betrayed do feel the treason sharply, yet the traitor stands in worse case of woe." The "woe" of Judas was indeed great. In his prayer for the apostles Jesus said, "... they have kept Thy word. . . . I guarded them, and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled" (John 17:6, 12).

To betray, one must first belong. Judas was a part of the twelve, however, he did not have a sense of fellowship with them. When Mary anointed the feet of Jesus with ointment, Judas complained about the cost. John correctly identified Judas as a thief (John 12:3-6). Judas was so interested in "things" he could not focus on the spiritual. Judas dipped in the same bowl with Jesus,

but he did not partake of the same values. He made personal advantage the thing of supreme value. In this demonstration of love for Jesus, Judas is plotting how he will betray Him. Fellowship? No! Honesty? No!

Judas was not honest with himself or with others. He went to the chief priests and asked, "What are you willing to give me to deliver Him up to you?" (Matt. 26:14-15). He was not just betraying his Lord, he was selling his own soul. He had a price and Satan met it. For Judas "getting" was more pleasurable than serving. He had dollar signs in his eyes, but the money he received from betraying Jesus could not buy back the past. He could not undo what he had done. Sin can be forgiven, but not undone. Things Judas coveted could not ease his conscience (Matt. 27:3-7).

Sin is as quicksand! It devours us. We don't know how far Judas intended to go, but he went way beyond where he wanted to go. The prodigal did not intend to go to the depths he went. But, when one turns from God to Satan, what else can be expected? The Bible says for us to "be steadfast, stand firm in the faith"; keeping our eyes fastened on Jesus. When we turn from Jesus to "things," whatever the "things" may be, we are as Judas, saying "things" are more important than our Lord.

Reason: A Divine Discipline

Richard T. McWilliams, N. Charleston, SC

It is strange that a Christian would ever attack being reasonable (i.e., rational or logical) especially since the Scriptures unmistakably direct all men everywhere to reason correctly in order to know the truth (1 Thes. 5:19-20; 1 John 4:1; et al.). Yet logic bashing is an increasingly popular sport among some brothers. Why this is true, since reasonableness is in direct contradistinction to unreasonableness, is not always obvious. Still, reason is a trait of God which is seen in all of the teachings of His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the writings of every Bible author. For example, Jesus called on people to accept His claim to be God's Son, not just on His say so, but based on the proper conclusion about (1) the evidence of Scripture, (2) John the Baptist's testimony, and (3) the works He did (John 5:30-40). Jesus also constantly challenged His followers and His enemies to think in a rational way, e.g., "What do you think" (Matt. 17:25; 18:12; 21:28; 22:42).

We are taught in Scripture of the need to know and obey the truth in order to be saved (John 8:32; 1 Pet. 1:22, et al.). The "truth" is "fact," or "that which conformed to reality." The reality of anything not directly experienced (as, for example, God's existence) may only be known in the following way: (1) examine sufficient and pertinent evidence, (2) do it in a rational or logical way, and (3) draw the proper conclusion concerning it. Even the proper evaluation of a personal experience is subject to reasoning correctly about it.

The only way that a person can know that any book (including the Bible) is or is not the word of God, is to consider the evidence about the book (from without and within), reason properly about the evidence, and draw a logical conclusion based on that evidence. Otherwise one has only feelings to direct him, and one person's feelings are as real as another's.

To call on someone to believe and obey the gospel of Christ is **not** to merely ask them

to feel the way we do, but is to present the truth, the gospel, the evidence, to them and assist them in drawing the proper conclusion, and then urge them to do what they then **know** is right. "Come now, and let us reason together," says the Lord, "though your sins are as scarlet they will be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool" (Isa. 1:18).

Logic or reason is a tool, but it is a tool of divine origin, not human origin. Logic begins its task with the self-evident, not mere assumption. It begins with one's own existence and the self-evident environment and its obvious characteristics. Then, using logic, man comes to know things not directly experienced. God has not simply called on man to believe (leap-in-the-dark faith), but has supplied ample evidence, solid reasons, for man to know and believe (1) that He is, and (2) that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Heb. 11:6).

It is true that men study logic just as they study the creation. Some may be better at using logic (reasoning) than others, just as some may be better at using the creation than others. Yet, let us remember that both reason and the creation come from God, and that people can be hurt by the misuse of either.

It has been said that people never oppose approaching the Bible in a reasonable or logical way until that proper approach prevents their holding to their opinions, prejudices, or false beliefs. But what is truly amazing is to see someone try to develop a logical argument to undermine the importance and necessity of logic in properly understanding the Bible.

False ideas may even be advanced to try to rationally prove the unreliability of being rational (logical). For example, if one places false statements into the framework of logic, the conclusion may be false. This is called an "unsound argument." To try to use this fact as a weapon against being reasonable is at best ignorance. The logical framework is only as good as the information introduced. If true statements are in a valid

logical form, the conclusion which follows is true. This is called a "sound argument." Jesus always made sound arguments.

It is true that God exists, that the Bible is His word, and that Jesus is His Son no matter what any person or group of persons believes about it. But the only way for any person to **know** these truths is to gather the

pertinent evidence (including the Bible) and draw a proper (reasonable) conclusion based on that evidence.

Let us be reasonable, not unreasonable; rational, not irrational; logical, not illogical in our faith in God and in understanding and following His word. This will show that we are like our Father, the source of reason.

The Homeless

Mike Hinrichs, Columbia, SC

They have touched the heart of America. We see them on our streets, and we hurt for them. Many aimlessly push shopping carts. Living nowhere, going no place, belonging to no one. They are the homeless. No home and no hope. It is revealing that we do not call them the "houseless." In reality, the absence of a physical structure is only one aspect of their plight. Life is more than food, shelter and clothing. That is exactly what Jesus said almost 2000 years ago (Matt. 6:25ff). The problem runs much deeper than the absence of a house: they do not belong anywhere. They have no place to turn when life goes sour.

The homeless on our streets are easy to spot. The homeless in mansions are more difficult to detect. People who have a spiritual hunger gnawing at their hearts are homeless in the worst way. They own it all, but belong no place. A giant house but no home. They,

too, are going no place. They are just going in style. They have scratched and clawed their way to the top only to discover it is a lonely place. It is an illusion, a dirty trick. Success promised everything, but delivered nothing.

The homeless come in all shapes, sizes and colors. They are rich and poor, young and old, male and female. They are everywhere but belong nowhere. It is a tragic story. The truth is that only God can offer a remedy. Jesus had no place to lay his head (Matt. 8:20). He grabbed a nap in a boat, stopped by a friend's house for a night, slept where He could. Was He homeless? He may have been houseless, but He was not homeless. He knew full well where His home was. And thanks to Him, we have a home (Eph. 2:19). Finally, a home for the homeless. Embrace it. Cherish it. Share it. The church offers all who will come to her a place to belong. Thank God.

Howard Winters'

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Cherokee, North Carolina

Brother Bruce writes from Cherokee, North Carolina, where the work among the Indians was established a number of years ago. The work in Cherokee has never been easy. It has been a "mission" endeavor all the way and continues to be a mission effort.

The Indians are not the only people who are blessed by reason of the work in Cherokee. Many, many visitors from across the nation have attended the services. Cherokee is part of the attraction in the Great Smoky Mountains.

The work at the present time is in need of support for replacement of worn out equipment and payment of financial obligations incurred by the church in its effort to reach the lost. Brother Bruce has recently lost

\$150.00 of his personal support. He would like to stay in Cherokee at least another year and a half. He has served the church in Cherokee for the past two years.

The work of the church in Cherokee is known by brethren far and wide. Surely, there are those who wish to see it continue and grow. This means that brother Bruce and the work in Cherokee must be financially supported.

We hope that brethren who read this note will be encouraged to call brother Bruce, if there is a possibility of support for the work, by a one-time contribution, or support on a regular basis. E.R. Bruce, P.O. Box 1202, Cherokee, North Carolina 29719, Phone: (704) 497-9576.

No Luck, Just Power

Michael R. Mobley, Mooresville, NC

Did you know that in 1977, shortly after his death in his native Switzerland, someone stole Charlie Chaplin's body in an unsuccessful ransom attempt? It was later found buried in a cornfield some twenty miles from his grave. That is a befitting postscript to the luckless character Chaplin portrayed in his films.

Many people believe that they live their lives as that hapless character Chaplin made famous. Still many more seem to feel like that character at various times in their lives. However, this doctrine of life is a fake. No matter how many times things seem to be going wrong, the Christian does not live a luckless life! Satan has fed us the line that we really do not have any control over our lives; and that there is really very little we can do about anything; and many have bought and eaten it! The Christian must understand, must be convinced of it, and must believe that he does have control and can do something about his life! Christ Himself gives that power, strength, wisdom, and direction for

self-control and problem solving (Phil. 4:10-13). He is the way, the truth, and the life of God given to us (John 14:1-6). Christ is God's power of self-control given to us by the love and faith we have for Him and God (1 Pet. 1:6-9, 1 John 5:4-5).

This power of self-control that Christ is for us, is the power to make one's own decisions and choices so that he will not be manipulated. It is the power to be obedient to God in living the Christian life so that we will enjoy living it, and living it faithfully. Christ is the power to successfully resist the evil that is around us so that we will be responsible in our loyalty to the Lord. It is the power to stand up and speak, or to dig in and hold our ground so that we will be a teacher and a living example of righteousness. In short, it is the power to control yourself and your life because it is that which enables us to control our thoughts and actions. Faith gives us self-control because it humbles us to accept and submit to God's authority. Faith will control who we are and what we do, because it makes the authority practical for our lives.

Yes, we will make mistakes. They will slow us down, but never stop us if God's authority is operating in our lives. God's authority at work in our lives has the power to change us, and faith is the channel through which it works when that faith is expressed in obedience (Phil. 2:12-13).

While Chaplin is humorous, his luckless

character is not the true story. The Christian does not live a hapless life, but a powerful one given him by God (John 1:12; Rom. 6:3-14). If we will use our faith in obedience and trust in God, we will not be controlled by circumstances, situations, peers, and the evil that is around us. We will control ourselves. Actually, we will be controlled by Christ.

“Let Me Kinda Work a Wrinkle”

Charles R. Lambert, Conway, SC

Christmas time was a happy time for us, like most folks; but when our mother told my father what all six kids wanted for Christmas, he would say, “Let me work a wrinkle.” I had a wonderful father even though he had no education at all. “Let me work a wrinkle” was an expression he used when he was in a bind or needed money in a hurry. This could mean he was going to sell one of his pigs, borrow the money from a friend, or as a last resort, go to the bank.

One thing you could count on was my father's wrinkles. If he ever made up his mind he was going to fulfill a promise to Mother, or one of the kids, he did it. Whether it be a pair of shoes for the youngest or a birthday present for the oldest, he could get anything he wanted in our hometown. Everyone knew him and everyone knew he would pay it back if he borrowed money to work out one of his “wrinkles.”

One winter we all came down with the flu. Mother and Father had it and most of the kids. We all loaded up in the old truck and went into town. Father marched us all into the doctor's office and then into the drug store for medicine. We never had any money, so how did my father get away with not paying the doctor or the druggist? He worked another wrinkle. My father knew that the doctor and the druggist loved barbecue pork, so he made sure they had it for Christmas.

Working a wrinkle was also for wheeling and dealing. My father had an old truck and the two of us went around the countryside buying young pigs from small farmers. We

bought a pig from a farmer one time that was so poor it did not look like it could stand up. The farmer did not have the food to feed the pig so the pig just stood around waiting for acorns to fall off the old oak tree in the yard. The pig was glad to see us because no acorns had fallen in a week. My father was smart though. He could talk a man out of a pig and make him feel guilty for selling it to us. My father knew with food and care the pig that weighed 50 pounds today would weigh 250 pounds in six months. I learned from my father that you can't keep a good man down, not as long as he can work a wrinkle!

One of our sisters went away to college and our father got the money for her tuition. Where he got the money no one ever knew, but he sent our sister off to college because he could work a wrinkle.

My father's best friend came to me when my father died and said to me, “Are you honest, Charles?” I said, “I think so, but I could never be as honest as old Charley Lambert when he was trying to work one of his wrinkles.”

This whole story is built on the faith and trust our little family had in our earthly father. It illustrates how we must have faith and trust in God our heavenly father. In Hebrews 10:23, “Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised).” God stands behind His word. The power of faith is taught when Jesus said in Mark 9:23, “If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.”

Manning Church of Christ

George Carlisle, Manning, SC

October 21, 1984 was the beginning of the first congregation of God's people in Clarendon County, South Carolina. It was on this date the community was informed that the church of Christ would start assembling for regular services. The church assembled that day with some 23 in attendance.

On October 16, 1988 the Manning congregation hosted their dedicatorial service for their new building. It was a joyous occasion for all of us because in many ways it marked a new beginning for the work here in Clarendon County. The building was dedicated for use to God's glory and honor. But beyond the dedication of the new building, the occasion marked a reaffirmation of our lives being dedicated to the Lord's service. Our theme was, and is, "Together We Stand. . . ."

Much hard work went into making the day a success. Our thanks to the women of the congregation for planning a nutritious meal. All this would not have been possible if it had not been for the help given by the congregations at Andrews, Dunbar, Lake City, Kingtree, Bishopville, Plaza, and Kingsbury. They provided food and other items. Over 350 meals were served.

We are thankful to so many people, such

as Westwood for their oversight and initiative in backing the construction of the building, and those who cleaned in and around the building. Our thanks to the ones purchasing special items, or contributing toward their purchase. Through such generosity a new water cooler was provided, as well as the new public address system, furniture, file cabinet, kitchen cabinets, classroom desks, wall clock, nursery items, mirrors for the restrooms, flowers, shrubs, exit signs, bookcases for all the rooms, and songbooks. Some simply came to be with us on that day, for their presence we are most grateful.

There are yet many things in and around the building to be done for which help is needed. So as you make financial plans, please remember the Manning work seriously. We are now in need of a good bus or van.

Our thanks to brother James Kennedy for being with us for our dedication service, and for conducting a three-day meeting afterwards. Since then we have seen eight souls baptized into the body of Christ.

As you pray for the saints the world over, please remember our efforts here in Manning.

The Kingdom Has Come

Bill Heinselman, Cary, NC

Jesus Christ taught his disciples to pray. In Matthew 6:9-13, he gave to them an example prayer. This is commonly called "The Lord's Prayer." In this prayer, among other things, Jesus prayed, "thy kingdom come."

The kingdom did come during the lifetime of Christ's disciples (Mark 9:1). It was a fulfillment of prophecy that the kingdom came on the first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection from the dead. Acts 2 tells of these events. The prophecies are found in Isaiah

2, Daniel 2, and Joel 2. These were all fulfilled in Acts 2. Entrance into the kingdom was based on repentance and baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

Paul told the Colossians that they had been delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son (Col. 1:13). The kingdom must have existed for them to be translated into it. In Hebrews 12:28 we read that the first-century Christians had already received the

kingdom. John wrote that he was a companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ . . ." (Rev. 1:9). So, there is no doubt that the kingdom has already come. The Bible teaches that when Jesus comes again, he will deliver up the kingdom over which he NOW reigns to God

the father (1 Cor. 15:23-28).

It would not be appropriate for us to pray today: "Thy kingdom come"; for his kingdom has come and we need to become citizens of that kingdom through obedience to the gospel of Christ.

On Missionary Preachers

Larry R. Scott, Williamston, NC

When we speak of a missionary, we speak of one who has a mission to accomplish. The gospel preacher in a stateside mission field is one who has gone to an area of our country where there is no church of our Lord, or where the church is weak. This man often is a married man with two or more children. He has usually given up the pulpit in a location where the church is strong and his financial needs were well met. Sometimes a stateside missionary may not have to move far to accomplish his mission for Christ, but others may move several hundred or thousand miles to do so. These individuals are special in that they have left the comforts of a strong community, where the church is prevalent to go to one where it is almost non-existent.

While in this new location, he may feel as if he is in a foreign country. He feels alone and often times disheartened over the results of his efforts. These men spend long hours in sowing the seed of God's word. They and their families sacrifice time, effort, health, and money to keep the Lord's work going. In a mission field, the missionary quite often feels that he is taken for granted, overlooked, and unappreciated. The local brethren do not see him and his family at all times of the day and night. They are unaware of his "calling" being like that of a doctor. He is subject to call 24 hours every day. The supporting home congregations are felt to be so far away, and when a real need or crisis comes upon him and his family, he is again left out in the cold.

Local brethren, as well as supporting

brethren, must face the facts. These are the facts: The missionary is not in the work for money or personal honor. He wants to do the will of his Father in heaven. He cares that others go to heaven. He and his family daily try to make an eternal difference. Because of this love on his part, the brethren must learn to accept their individual responsibilities and not put on the local preacher any added burden.

Important to this issue is that brethren adequately provide for his financial needs. It should never reach a point where the missionary would have to take on secular work just to be able to stay. He would willingly do so, if there was no other choice; but brethren do God's servant a great disservice by not providing adequately for the needs of a preacher and his family. The national norm among churches of Christ is that the average gospel preacher does not live extravagantly, but rather is just getting by. We must learn to take the responsibility for helping these servants of God, who do so much unselfishly for the cause of Christ and for love of the brethren. If we are to survive as the family and people of God, then we must learn to work together and respect one another for the work's sake. We are workers together with God. Oh, that we would believe it and practice it. May God help our struggling missionaries and those precious brethren who support them constantly with prayers, a shoulder to cry on, and financial assistance, to do the work of an evangelist (1 Cor. 3:6-11; 2 Tim. 4:5).

Book Reviews

Michael R. Mobley, Mooresville, NC

Quality Cooking; Quality Publications, P.O. Box 1060, Abilene, TX 79604; 215 pages, paper \$9.95.

"Are some important people eating here?" begins the poem that opens this cookbook compiled of recipes submitted by various authors from Quality's library of publications. These easy to use recipes are designed for the evening meal and to make those who are participating know their importance to the cook. It contains nine neatly divided sections for a total of twenty categories. From appetizers and beverages to meats and main dishes and desserts, you will find meals that will make the tummy smile.

Because God Loves Us — Old Testament Coloring/Activity Book, Susan Backman; Quality Publications, P.O. Box 1060, Abilene, TX 79604, 16 pages, paper \$1.95.

This activity book designed for preschoolers contains coloring pictures, one follow the dots, and one word search. Each is

designed to illustrate a specific Bible thought such as trust and obedience, God speaking to man, creation, and praising God. Each lesson contains a Bible text. Children will enjoy this book; and because it is designed to be a teaching tool, parents and teachers will appreciate it as well.

A Time to Plant — Creation to Salvation, Herb and Hazel Woodward; Quality Publications, P.O. Box 1060, Abilene, TX 79604, paper \$3.95.

This Bible survey series is designed for fifth and sixth graders. It covers an entire year in four quarters of 13 lessons each. The fall quarter begins with the creation and the summer quarter ends with a look at Christian living and the apostolic church. Each lesson deals with Scripture texts and is designed to implant in the student's mind the importance of the will of God for all of us. It is well designed and accomplishes its goal in an effective way.



BROTHERHOOD NEWS

Dennis Conner, Yadkinville, NC

Around South Carolina . . .

The MYRTLE BEACH CHURCH OF CHRIST will host its annual lectureship program October 20-22. The theme will be "Have You Ever Wondered?" . . . Churches in the up-state area have been involved in a quarterly area-wide seminar since the fall of 1987. The seminars are held on the second Saturday of March, June, September, and December of each year. The March seminar was hosted by the church in Chester with 48

people attending, representing seven churches. The June seminar was hosted by the church in Lugoff and dealt with the theme "Divisions in the Church." All who live within driving distance of Union are invited to participate in these quarterly meetings. . . . There is a new church now meeting in the Batesville-Leesburg area. The TWIN CITY CHURCH OF CHRIST began meeting April 30, 1989 in the home of Michael and Era Rikard. The community room of Newberry Federal in Batesburg has been secured as a temporary meeting place.

This work was undertaken with the knowledge and approval of the elders at both the St. Andrews Road and Lexington churches. Planting efforts were spearheaded by Ralph Jones and Charles Davenport, both of the St. Andrews Road congregation. Brother Jones is a member of the Board of Directors of Carolina Christian Publications and has been involved in other church planting efforts. Both he and brother Davenport are to be commended for their vision and dedication. The mailing address for the church is: Twin City Church of Christ, P.O. Box 411, Batesburg, SC 29006. . . . The church in PORT ROYAL, little more than a year old, has been experiencing steady growth from its inception. Beginning with 25 members in April, 1988, the church now has 46 members and averages 61 in Sunday morning attendance. The church meets at the Port Royal Elementary School at the present time. Jim Seelbach is the preacher. The church still needs additional monthly support in the amount of \$200 for brother Seelbach. Those interested in helping this good work may write: Church of Christ, P.O. Box 156, Port Royal, SC 29935.

And North Carolina . . .

A special contribution at the BROOKS AVE. church in Raleigh on April 23, resulted in a contribution of \$45,611. That is nearly \$38,000 over the weekly budget. . . . Cameron John, a rising senior at Oklahoma Christian College, will be working this summer with the SOUTH FORK CHURCH OF CHRIST in Winston-Salem. . . . The PROVIDENCE ROAD church in Charlotte has become the sponsoring congregation for the church in HARDEEVILLE, SC. Jack McNeil, formerly the preacher at the church in Moncks Corner, SC, is now preaching at

Hardeeville. . . . The annual North Carolina Lectures will be hosted this year by the EASTCHESTER CHURCH OF CHRIST in High Point.

And Elsewhere . . .

The World Bible Translation Center and Eastern European Mission began distributing the Scriptures in the Soviet Union in April. The initial distribution consisted of 5,000 copies of the Gospel of Mark, part of a new Russian translation by the World Bible Translation Center. EEM will also distribute 50,000 copies of an older Russian New Testament translation. . . . Talk about taking the Lord seriously when he said "Go into all the world." Brother Darrell Foltz recently returned home from his tenth solo World Bible School follow-up trip, having traveled the backroads of eastern Nigeria. Foltz traveled by foot, taxi, and bicycling, occasionally hitchhiking as well. As a result of his efforts, 73 people were baptized. And you think it is too difficult to travel down the street to talk to someone about Christ! One other thing, brother Foltz is 65 years old.

Calendar of Events

June 23-25 — Gospel meeting at the Yadkinville Church of Christ, Yadkinville, NC. Preaching will be David Pharr of Knoxville, Tennessee.

June 24 — Youth rally at the West Jefferson Church of Christ, West Jefferson, NC. The speakers will be David Allgood and Eddie Craft.

June 11-July 23 — Palmetto Bible Camp

July 30-August 18 — Carolina Bible Camp

August 18-20 — North Carolina Evangelism Seminar, Brooks Ave. Church of Christ, Raleigh, NC.

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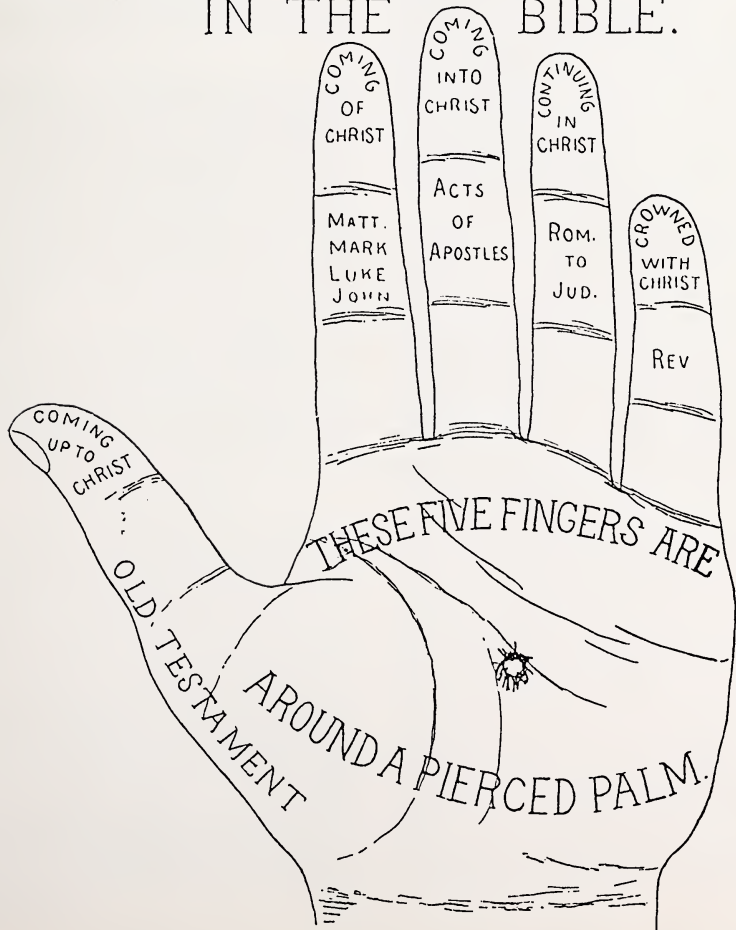
CAROLINA CHRISTIAN

VOL. 31, NO. 7, JULY 1989



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THE HAND OF DELIVERANCE IN THE BIBLE.





Readers will find a new feature beginning in this issue. The mailing address of writers with an occasional note about the writer will be placed at the end of articles.

1 Timothy 5:19

We have been asked to comment on 1 Timothy 5:19. "Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses."

The "elder" under consideration means one who is a bishop. This is clear from the context of the verses before (17-18). "Elders that rule" are elders given the place of oversight. Special caution was needed to prevent hasty and unwarranted charges against them. Persons who are jealous, resentful of the elders' rule, or even merely careless in their criticisms, must not be allowed to hinder the elders' work by bringing unprovable charges against them.

The requirement of two or three witnesses comes from antiquity (Deut. 19:15) and carries the approval of Christ (Matt. 18:16) and the apostles (2 Cor. 13:1). This obviously does not mean that one person cannot go to another who has done wrong to seek correction. In cases, however, wherein the accusation would be denied, wherein it would be the word of the accused against the accuser: the accusation is not to be received from an unsupported witness. The principle of two to three witnesses indicates a preponderance of evidence. It is not so much the number of witnesses as it is the weight of the evidence. It goes without saying that such witnesses must be competent, reliable, in a position to know the facts, and not unduly biased. As under the law, common sense, as well as a sense of justice, requires that "diligent inquisition" be made to ascertain that witnesses are telling the truth (Deut. 19:15-18).

What the apostle does not say, as some have supposed, is that one can accuse an

elder as long as there are two or three present when he makes his charge. Such an interpretation overlooks the purpose of such witnesses, which is to establish a matter, not to hear about it.

But what does Paul mean by "receive not an accusation"? We are not to act on charges against an elder when those charges cannot be substantiated. Unsubstantiated charges are not to be the basis for public or private investigations. They are not to be taken seriously. No discipline can be exercised because

EDITORIAL AND PUBLICATION STAFF:

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CAROLINA CHRISTIAN is published monthly by Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., at 71 S. Fairfield Road, Greenville, SC 29605. Subscription price; individual \$7.00 per year; club of five or more \$6.50 per year; quantity of 15 or more in bundles or direct mailing 40¢ per copy per month. Publication number, 091160.

Second class postage paid at Greenville, SC.

POSTMASTER: Send undelivered copies with Form 3579 to Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., Johnny Melton, Managing Editor, Route 2, Box 137, Conover, North Carolina 28613.

RETURN REQUESTED

Address editorial matter to David Pharr, Editor, ETSOPM, 6608 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37931. Address news items to Dennis Conner, P.O. Box 1219, Yadkinville, NC 27055.

All items to be printed in a given month's issue should reach the editor not later than the next-to-the-last Thursday of the preceding month.

Address commercial advertising inquiries to Jacobs List, Inc. Clinton, SC 29325. Address all advertising pertaining to the Church of Christ or its members (including related organizations) to the editor.

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of them. Persons making unsubstantiated charges should be rebuked instead of being encouraged.

The principles involved generally apply to all men, but Paul gives particular attention to the case of elders. Why? When the bishops faithfully do their duty, they especially may become the targets of those who are jealous of their authority, or who see the elders as a hinderance to their personal agenda, or who are simply "unruly and vain talkers and deceivers" (Titus 1:10). Such can always find something to say against an elder. If such charges, unproven and unprovable, are given credence, the result will be disruption and destruction. When a person speaks against an elder without having the Biblically required evidence, he should be given no heed; he should be rebuked; he should be shown 1 Timothy 5:19.

Controversial Issues

We would enjoy dealing only with positive themes. Love desires never to have to criticize. This is especially our feeling regarding controversial issues among brethren. What a pleasure it would be if we never had to write a critical word. Such, however, is not reality, and those who love to proclaim the wonderful story of love must also be "set for the defense of the gospel."

Churches of Christ in the Carolinas are rarely among the first to be affected by errors and trends that infiltrate the church. Through publications and conversations with people from other places some may be informed of problems and dangers; but it may be assumed that such is not a threat to the Carolinas. The fact is, however, that almost every heresy sooner or later (and probably sooner than expected) invades the Carolina churches.

It is a correct saying that to be forewarned is to be forearmed. There is a duty, therefore, to tell brethren of dangerous trends that may be coming their way. All change is not necessarily progress, and what is often called progress is actually digression. When 2 John 9 warns of "whosoever transgresseth" the Greek literally indicated those who are **progressive**. Progress has much appeal, but when "progress" means that one "abideth not in the doctrine of Christ," it is not really progress, but digression. This

Bible warning is especially pertinent when so many brethren seem to be clamoring for "new" ideas and "new" methods. In too many cases the rule by which such are accepted is not "Prove all things; hold fast to that which is good" (1 Thess. 5:21; Cf. 2 Tim. 3:16-17), but rather the fleshly rule of "Let's try it and see how it works."

I have no desire to seem negative and suspicious. Neither do I want to be hasty to find fault with my brethren. There are some things, however, that love for truth demands to be examined. It is this concern that prompts the article elsewhere in this issue on "Dangerous Musical Trends." We ask no more than it be considered in the light of Scripture, common sense, and a genuine love of pure New Testament Christianity.

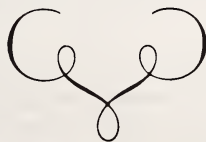
The Cover

The diagram on the cover is from an 1897 book edited by Z.T. Sweeney, **Pulpit Diagrams**. The drawing itself was credited to C.B. Newnan.

The simplicity of this arrangement makes it useful in remembering how to "rightly divide" the Bible. The central theme of the entire sixty-six books is Christ, His cross in particular (Acts 3:20-26; 1 Cor. 2:2; John 5:39).

The Old Testament prepares the way, **coming up to Christ**. Matthew-John tell of the **coming of Christ**. The book of Acts, by showing how people were converted, is about **coming into Christ**. The epistles explain how Christians are to practice the teaching of Christ in their own lives, how they are to be faithful in this, and are, therefore, about **continuing in Christ**. Revelation shows the victory of the saints, **crowned with Christ**.

This simple memory device can be learned as easily as counting the fingers on one hand. And each time we count through the divisions, let us remember the hand that was pierced for our sins.



Dangerous Musical Trends

by David Pharr, Editor

We assume that readers of this article know that there is no Scriptural precedent for instrumental music in Christian worship, and that, not being authorized, instrumental music is not a part of worship that is in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). In the face of the contrary position of almost all of the religious world, we continue with determination to reject such unscriptural innovations.

The music authorized for Christian worship is singing (Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19; et al.). Singing is the musical praise and musical exhortation commanded by God. Thoughtful Bible students realize that worship acts not authorized by God must be (as the only alternative) authorized by the doctrines and commandments of men, making the worship vain (Matt. 15:9).

The singing taught in the New Testament involves the expression of ideas, communication of thought. It involves "teaching and admonishing one another." Mere sounds, whether noise or music, do not in themselves communicate thought. This fact underscores the difference between the music God authorizes (singing) and the music men have added.

Over the country the church is being disturbed by singing groups who have developed the innovation of making vocal sounds in imitation of musical instruments. Some of these are professional groups, members of the church, who perform for the youth rallies, school programs, and at the buildings of congregations. Instead of using instruments, they sing to the accompaniment of what sounds like instruments, sounds which they make with their voices. Some have developed considerable skill in this and are able to greatly excite and entertain. There seems to be a naive kind of pride that no instruments are being used, but that they are imitated sufficiently to make it sound as though they were.

Young people, who are more likely to be impressed with novelty and who may lack spiritual discernment, are especially pleased with such innovations. Adults and leaders

who seem more anxious to see happy crowds than to maintain Scriptural propriety have closed their eyes to the implications of such antics. We need to recognize that just because something is invented by our brethren does not make it right.

Candidly we recognize that there are borderline areas involved. We will not quibble over whether a distinction can be made between what is done in the assembly for worship and in what is done on other occasions. This writer does not propose to define when and how that distinction can or cannot be made. We are concerned, however, when a questionable practice can only be defended by a legalistic approach that argues the technicality that it is not actually being done in worship. Surely we realize that simply making a disclaimer does not change the fact that many, or most, people hearing such performances would have difficulty distinguishing why singing religious songs to the accompaniment of a "vocal band" is acceptable in one setting, but not in the other. This would seem especially the case when such is under the auspices of the church. I am persuaded that especially as far as young people are concerned: that they would be just as pleased to hear the same kind of performance in the Lord's day worship. The fine points by which we might legalistically differentiate between worship and entertainment might satisfy some theologians; but they will hardly counteract the influence of the performances themselves.

It is revealing, though, to observe that the theory behind the vocal instrumental innovation was that such would be acceptable because it is vocal, not mechanical. Early defenses of it were that it did not violate the New Testament pattern of music because it involved only vocal sounds. But if the performances are mere entertainment, why does this matter? Further, if the performances are merely entertainment and do not fall under the principles governing worship, why not actually use mechanical instruments instead of imitating them? This writer's view of the

trend (unless it is stopped), is that such will be the next step. And that then we will be but a short step from there to brazenly bringing instruments into our regular assemblies for worship. This is not to say that such is the present intention, only my judgment as to the danger of such trends.

Some particular attention should be given to their involvement with the Christian Church. One of the issues — perhaps the most prominent issue — that separates us from the conservatives in the Christian Church is the issue of instrumental music. They have sought to persuade us that the instrumental music issue is insignificant and that we ought to just accept them, instruments and all. A few among us have been willing to make this compromise, and Christian Church people have been greatly delighted. Imagine, though, how delighted they feel over having one of “our” groups join them in worship with imitation instrumental music. Imagine too, how they must think our resistance to instruments must be crumbling when they know these same imitations are accepted in some of our own assemblies.

One specific instance took place at Ozark Bible College, a Christian Church school that has led the way in seeking a compromise over instrumental music. It was during their teaching and preaching convention. One of “our” singing groups performed, with their imitation instrumental sounds. The speaker on the occasion was also one of “our” men. He began his sermon immediately after their performance by saying, “And you thought we didn’t have instruments!” Since his sermon was concluded with extending of the invitation, there can be little doubt that the occasion was intended as worship. The sermon, instead of dealing with the error of instrumental music, played down the importance of the issue. Both the musical performance and the brother’s speech were such as would only confirm the Christian Church in their error.

In considering this issue, however, there are four questions that need to be addressed.

First, if instrumental music is unscriptural, why would we want something that would serve as a substitute for it? The instrumental imitations serve as a substitute either for singing or else for instruments.

Why would we want something to replace what God has commanded — singing? On the other hand, why would we want something to serve as a substitute for what God has not authorized? A simple illustration will make the point. God has commanded bread for the communion. To add jelly to the bread would be an unscriptural addition. We all know this. Suppose, however, someone says, “We know we can’t add jelly, but let’s add some homemade preserves as a substitute for jelly.” Such is the folly involved in seeking to substitute so-called vocal instrumental accompaniments. (Paul Kidwell had an article on this point in our March issue.)

Secondly, how can mere musical tones be thought to serve the teaching requirements involved in the command to sing? Remember that Colossians 3:16 says, “teaching and admonishing one another.” Rhythm, pitch and tone are involved in singing, but alone they are not Biblical singing. The Bible shows that singing conveys meaning. Tones and rhythm do not by themselves express meaning (as in teaching and admonishing). The sounds of instruments may be imitated by the voice, but such is not singing.

Thirdly, we ask, when is an instrument an instrument? We have witnessed amplifier systems being used as musical instruments. By setting tone controls and by humming into the microphones, musical sounds are produced very much like what might be heard from an organ. Amplifiers are not wrong when they serve simply as an aid to hearing, but when they are used as improvised musical instruments they should be so recognized.

The issue is not whether it is right to speak or sing through an amplifier. The issue is whether it is right to use an amplifier as an instrument of music.

But someone will say, “The only sounds made over the amplifier are vocal sounds.” This misses the point. The sounds may originate from the vocal cords, but they are not singing. Humming, buzzing, and clicking with electronic enhancement is not what is authorized in Colossian 3:16, or anywhere else in the Bible.

Readers are probably familiar with the kazoo. It is a tube-like instrument that is played by humming. As one hums upon it

his vocal sounds are modified to produce various musical tones. It is a musical instrument that is played by humming. All of us who reject instrumental music in worship would immediately reject the use of a kazoo. Can we not also see that when an amplifier is used in the same way — to modify and enhance the sounds of humming, etc. — it also becomes a musical instrument?

Finally, we come to the most basic question of all. It is difficult to assess because it involves motives, and we cannot fully discern the motives of others. It is proper, however, for us to suggest some things for consideration that may be helpful to spiritually-minded people. The question is, **What spirit prompts us to desire such innovations as "vocal bands"?**

In 1851, when the issue of instrumental music first began to be examined among churches of Christ, Alexander Campbell wrote the following indictment against it. After citing the unscriptural basis for denominationalism, "I wonder not, then, that an organ, a fiddle, or a Jews-harp, should be requisite to stir up their carnal hearts, and work into ecstasy their animal souls, else; 'hosannahs languish on their tongues and their devotions die.' And that all persons who have no spiritual discernment, taste or relish for their spiritual meditations, consolations and sympathies of renewed hearts, should call for such aid, is but natural. . . . So to those who have no real devotion or spirituality in them, and whose animal nature flags under the oppression of a church service, I think with Mr. G., that instrumental music would be not only a desideratum, but an essential prerequisite to fire up their souls to even animal devotion. But I presume, **to all spiritually-minded Christians such aids would be as a cowbell in a concert**" (Emphasis mine, D.P.).

We have given this quotation from Campbell because we believe he was hitting at the real issue involved. Have we become so worldly in our appreciation, so fleshly in what stirs us, so entertainment oriented, so unsatisfied by the simple New Testament worship: that we seek more and more to employ the world's devices to stimulate religious interest? While we cannot judge the hearts of all involved, we believe it is a fair genera-

lization to say that this whole vocal band idea has been popularized because there are so many who still feel some constraints against instrumental music, but who want to get as close to the world's practices as they can. It is also a reasonable prediction to say that many who can accept vocal bands today will be ready for other bands tomorrow.

These issues are symptoms of what is an even more grievous problem. In too many ways we have lost sight of the meaning and beauty of worship. We have been caught up in a society so expectant of entertainment, so attracted to the sensational, and so demanding of something new, that simple New Testament worship does not satisfy.

We see a serious fault among us. Too many members of the church have not been adequately taught the principles that prohibit instruments in worship. We fear that some congregations want to avoid such a "negative" emphasis altogether. On the other hand, there are too many who have been drilled as to why the instrument is wrong, but who have not been taught the meaningfulness of the various aspects of Scriptural worship. If the New Testament acts of worship are merely exercises, lacking in spiritual depth, they are less than the Bible requires. Many factors are to blame for a shallow approach to worship, but it is just such shallowness that paves the way for worldly innovations.

Youth rallies are central in this issue. Certainly we are not opposed to gatherings of Christian youth for fellowship, for exhortation, and even for wholesome entertainment. But look at the emphasis of some of these rallies. More concern is shown for speakers who are exciting and interesting than whether they are Scripturally sound. Advertising gives more attention to the frills, fun, and fanfare than to what is genuinely spiritual. And then there is the music! Immature youth want music that is like music of the world. Some youth rallies give them this — music with religious lyrics, but with a rock beat, with a rhythm that stirs physical excitement (clapping, swaying, etc.), and now with the accompaniment of amplifier enhanced sounds which imitate musical instruments.

There was a youth rally which scheduled a rock band as an **entertainment** part of the

program. Many objected to this. But other youth rallies schedule a vocal band as a **worship** part of the program. I have little sympathy for rock music; but it would seem no more harmful to have a rock concert and call it what it is — entertainment — than to have a religious vocal band and let people think that it is a worship experience.

We realize that some have been caught up in such things without realizing the implications. We also admit that there are areas of judgment involved where spiritually-minded leaders will have to discern what is best. Further, we want to encourage every wholesome and Scriptural activity for youth and others. But in times when both the secular and the religious worlds are making more and more inroads into the church, it is urgent that both those who sponsor and those who support youth rallies, and all other activities,

exercise careful Scriptural discernment.

Issues of this kind will continue to trouble the brotherhood. We have heard of divisions over it. Some have been hastily branded as false teachers because they have not immediately seen any Scriptural error involved. Others seem to have closed their minds to all criticism, determining to continue with what they like regardless of how it might affect the church. "My brethren, these things ought not so to be."

We have not written as one who possesses all wisdom on this issue; but as one who loves the church and the truth, and who fears that some of the musical trends are signs of even more serious problems yet to come.

[Editor Pharr is Director of East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions, 6608 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37931. He preached at Rock Hill, SC, 1963-'88.]

Managing Editor's Column

The Light of the World

by Johnny Melton

"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven" (Matt. 5:14-16, NIV).

Immediately following the Beatitudes, in which He described the character of the men and women who are citizens of the kingdom of heaven, Jesus used two metaphors to speak of the relationship that such individuals sustain with the world. The first metaphor was that of salt. The significant characteristic of salt in the ancient world was its preserving ability. The world, left to itself, will rot. Christians have a preserving effect upon the world.

The second metaphor used by Jesus to describe His disciple's relationship to the world was that of light. It is important to note that Jesus did not encourage His disciples to become light. He did not tell them

to be light. He affirmed, "You are the light of the world." Just as a city set on a hill cannot be hidden, and lamps are not lit only to have their light obscured, just so, men do not become disciples of Jesus in order to be indifferent to the world around them.

When Jesus said to His disciples "You are the light of the world," He was emphasizing a fundamental difference between His followers and the rest of mankind. Men and women, boys and girls, who do not follow Jesus are in spiritual darkness. They are lost and undone, without God, without Christ, without hope in the world. Paul said of the Ephesians, "For you were once darkness . . ." (Eph. 5:8, NIV). He then admonished them, "Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them" (Eph. 5:11, NIV). Consider the description Paul made of those who did not know Christ: "They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Hav-

ing lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more” (Eph. 4:18, 19, NIV).

Indeed, the burden of the Sermon on the Mount is to call the followers of Jesus to be different from the Jewish establishment, different from the world. The followers of Jesus are not darkness, but light. And it is fundamental to understand that Christians do not “generate” their own light. Rather, they reflect light. Just as the moon reflects the light of the sun, Christians reflect the light of God’s dear Son.

How do citizens of the heavenly kingdom reflect the light of the Son of God? By their good works. A light that cannot be seen is of no value. A Christian who does not do good is of no value. The work that is under consideration here is that which follows the example of Jesus. While on earth, during his three-year ministry, Jesus went about helping the helpless, feeding the hungry, loving the unlovable, instructing the lost. Peter summarized the work of Jesus by observing that He “went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him,” (Acts

10:38, NIV). In Matthew 25, Jesus described the judgment. In that awesome scene, those who are blessed are those who fed the hungry, cared for the stranger, clothed the naked, ministered to the sick and visited the imprisoned. It is in serving one’s fellowman that one can be the light of the world. To be sure, the good works must also include sharing the “light” of the gospel. Christ must be exalted as the ultimate “light of the world” by proclaiming the Good News of salvation, in His name and by His blood. However, preaching a message while remaining indifferent to the hurts of people, is completely inappropriate. We are called to imitate the example of Jesus.

It should be underscored that the good works done by the followers of Jesus will draw attention to God — not to the workers. Just as salt uses itself up doing its work, light gives itself away doing its work.

Is your life a reflection of the light of God’s Son? Or, are you engulfed in spiritual darkness? Think about it.

[Johnny Melton preaches for the Hickory Church of Christ. His address is Route 2, Box 137, Conover, NC 28613.]

“Don’t Kill the Rats”

by Ron Ulrey

During my tenure with the church in Southwest Virginia, I met many aged men who spent most of their working lives in the coal mines. Almost without exception, they mentioned an unwritten code or law among the miners which said, “Don’t kill the rats.” Further, they told me that they actually fed these rats from their lunch boxes so that they would remain close by.

This code so fascinated me that I proceeded to find out the reason for having such a code or law, because frankly, I cannot stand these rodents, nor can I think of anything they are good for except to be destroyed.

I was told that the rats in the mines had actually saved many of the miners’ lives through the years. It seems that the rats have

a special sense of detecting any slight movement of the earth above them long before humans can, and they would all begin to run for the exits at the slightest shift of the ground above; and, of course, when they began to run, so did the miners, and thus they escaped many cave-ins that would have otherwise killed them.

In thinking about this, I thought about all of the congregations I have worked with for the past thirty-five years, and almost without exception there were some members who were always trying the patience of the Lord’s people with their critical, insulting dispositions; and of all the virtues we need, surely patience would top the list. This phenomenon is no coincident! Evidently, the Lord knows our need for more patience and

allows these people to be among us to make us better people.

The moral to this story is that there is something worthwhile in everything and everyone, if we only muster the patience to find it. So the next time someone in the congregation of which you are a member tries your patience, remember this code of the miners, "Don't kill the rats."

The Bible says, "In your patience possess ye your souls" (Luke 22:19), and "the trying of your faith worketh patience" (James 1:3).

[Ron Ulrey preached for several years in North Carolina. He is now with the Oak Level church, Bassett, VA, Route 3, Box 229 24055.]

What Is "The Lord's Work"?

by Tom Atkinson

One expression that I have heard throughout my lifetime is: "The Lord's work." Often a person will speak of "doing the work of the Lord" as opposed to doing "secular work." I have sat in groups of ministers where, over and over again, all of us would say, "Our members need to be about the 'Lord's work.'" How do we help people actually "be about the Lord's work"? As I began to struggle with this, I came to realize that I had used this expression without giving much thought as to what it meant. This is not to say that I did not have some idea about it! This is only to say that the view I had was not adequate.

Traditionally, the "Lord's work" has been defined as, setting up Bible studies, caring for the building, carrying food to the sick, being present for services, etc. While I would not say that these areas of service are not the Lord's work, at the same time I would point out that to confine the "Lord's work" to these activities is to miss the Biblical portrait. Paul said, "Whatever you do in word or deed do all in the name of the Lord" (Col. 3:17). The so-called gulf between the "secular and sacred" is something that 20th century man has imposed upon the Biblical text. However, according to these texts there is no "secular" as opposed to the "sacred." Jesus is Lord over every area of life. For example, what, of the following, would you say is not the Lord's work?

- (1) *Working for a living* (2 Thess. 3:10)?
- (2) *Listening to someone share a problem* (James 5:16)?

- (3) *Taking time out to cry* (John 11:35; Rom. 12:15; Ecc. 7:1f)?
- (4) *Sitting up all night with a sick child* (Eph. 6:1f)?
- (5) *Sharing our feelings with one another* (Eph. 4:12)?
- (6) *Taking time out to learn patience, self-control, and hope* (Gal. 5:22-23)?
- (7) *Learning to develop trust* (2 Pet. 1:5; Heb. 11:6)?
- (8) *Paying our debts and learning how to better manage our money* (Rom. 13:8; Prov. 22:7)?
- (9) *Learning to be a better father, husband, wife, son, daughter, and/or person in general* (Prov. 22:6; Eph. 5:21-6:8)?

Colossians 3:23 says, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men" (Emphasis mine, TA). In truth, everything that we do, if done ethically, responsibly and "unto the Lord" is the "Lord's work." The young mother struggling with her children, is doing the Lord's work. The husband listening to his wife share her pain is doing the Lord's work.

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The father taking time out to care for his home, is doing the Lord's work. Teaching a child how to balance a checkbook is the Lord's work. On and on the list could go. Let us stop needlessly, discouraging people by placing a limited definition on what is considered by some to be the Lord's work.

Instead, let us see the interrelatedness of our faith to all of life and truly be about the Lord's work!

[Tom Atkinson is about the Lord's work in Madisonville, KY. He can be contacted at 1144 Bradford Street, Madisonville, KY 42431.]

A Sense of Community

by J.C. Townsend

Sometimes, in newspapers or on TV, advertisements are presented for diet plans or for fitness programs. Usually an individual is portrayed as being overweight, unhappy, and in a very poor condition before the program is started. Then, after following this plan, the same individual is portrayed as being healthy, happy, well-dressed, and in a very desirable condition. The idea is presented that if one will participate in the program, he will achieve the same good results.

The apostle Peter addressed his first letter to the scattered Christians in the Roman provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia. He wrote and called to mind their condition before they heard the gospel and their condition after they had accepted it.

It is interesting to look at 1 Peter 2:9-10 and to see the wonderful thoughts presented there about the gospel and what it is able to do for lost human beings. At one time, the people addressed were very likely without very much in common, were geographically scattered, racially diverse, and very different socially. The Christians had been called by the gospel out of a world that was very much against any kind of spiritual realities.

Before the gospel was proclaimed to them, they had little sense of community or solidarity. Peter declared, "Once you were no people but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy but now you have received mercy." As the diet plans which are advertised have pictures of people before they enroll, Peter said that before the redemption of the Lord touched them,

they were not a people but when this wonderful event took place, then they became a blessed and wonderful group.

One can call to mind God's call of Israel out of Egyptian bondage. Before they were brought across the Red Sea into the wilderness, they were a subjugated and weak people. The Book of Deuteronomy emphasizes that God brought them out with a high and mighty hand and constituted them a people — God's people. In the same way, before one is translated out of the kingdom of darkness, he can be described as a nobody, but when this takes place, he becomes privileged and blessed indeed.

Not all human communities are created by acts of God. There are all kinds of clubs and organizations in the world. These exist because of an interest that their members have in a particular cause or activity. There are such clubs as the East of the Mississippi, or the West Virginia, or the Sierra Club, or the Lions Club, or the Civitan Club. All such groups exist because of some need or interest.

The author of 1 Peter declares that the community of saved people, the church, was not created by any sense of common interest by its members. It was not created by human labor or initiative. It is not the case that one day a group of people suddenly became aware of deep spiritual deficiencies and decided that they would bring into existence an organization called the church. This group of people constitute the called out. They are the recipients of the mercy of God. They were created according to God's plan and purpose. The children of God are people who once were mired in sin but who have

been touched by the saving gospel. They have a common experience of the grace of God which makes them a people.

In 1 Peter 2:9-10, four facts are given in describing the Christian community. Peter said you are: (1) a chosen race; (2) a royal priesthood; (3) a holy nation, and (4) God's own people. Christians have been constituted a new Israel. They are the ones who have given heed to the plan of God and have been chosen by Him because they have received the saving gospel. They are a people who have been gathered into a wonderful community known as the church of the Lord.

Sometimes in discussing the Christian life, great emphasis is placed upon a person's individual relationship to Christ. There is great joy and a deep sense of gratitude involved in knowing that one is in Christ and enjoys a personal relationship to Him.

Paul declared in 2 Corinthians 5:17 that if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature but it also seems that one needs to give em-

phasis to a principle that is stated in Romans 14. Paul there declared that no man lives to himself and no man dies to himself. In giving these words, the apostle is showing that Christians need to realize that they must be aware of others, live for others, be concerned for others, and not just live a life of selfishness and self-concern. We are our brother's keeper and have a responsibility to the church for which Jesus died.

It seems that God's people often forget their responsibility to the church and do not realize, as they should, that we are a community of people, and, as a community, there are things which bind us together and there are responsibilities that we have to one another.

The purpose of this article is to call attention to the sense of community, the sense of responsibility which we should have as members of the body of Christ. There are some points that need to be considered and some lessons to be learned.

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First, the community known as the church was created for a specific purpose. Peter said that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. The church was not established in order to be merely a social club designed to suit or supply the need for companionship. The aim which the church has, should not be to serve self but to declare the gospel of God and to live lives of gratitude that others may see their good works and glorify the Father who is in heaven.

The purpose that God had in calling us out of darkness into the light was to enable us to become His people. So everything that Christians do, things such as preaching the gospel, worshiping God, feeding the hungry, helping the oppressed, is to be done in response to the mercy which God has extended, and we are to act in our lives not for our own personal gratification and advancement but so that we can set forth, in a mighty way, the wonderful mercy of God who has called us to be His people.

Second, Christians are all a part of the body of Christ, the one institution established by Jesus Christ. That places us in a position of being connected with all other Christians wherever they might be. When we realize that we can stretch our hands across the sea and be united with people of like precious faith in other parts of the world, it presents to us a vision of the fact that the church is a community of people. And, as we contemplate this, our concern and our prayer and our support of Christians in all parts of the world should become a reality.

People in a local congregation need to have a renewed realization of the responsibility which they have and the relationship which they sustain to the people of God in all parts of the world. This will enable us to rise out of our provincial spirit and it will help to get rid of complacency and inspire us to do as Jesus said when He commanded us to lift up our eyes and look upon the fields that are white unto harvest.

Brother Terry Gunnells makes most of the announcements at Providence Road church in Charlotte. From time to time, he mentions or describes the church which meets here as being a family — the family

has done this or the family has this responsibility. The church must realize that it needs to be a tightly knit body. We need to know one another. The Lord tells us that we are to rejoice with those that rejoice and weep with those who weep (Rom. 12:15). We must suffer with people who are in pain. We need to extend the hand of help to those in need, and certainly we need to pray for one another and to make it clear that we are vitally interested in and concerned about the lives of our fellow Christians.

Third, a sense of community, properly realized, will make the church a most attractive institution. When Christians truly realize that they are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, and hold up the light of truth and righteousness in a world of darkness and despair, the religion of our Lord will be attractive, indeed.

There will be a realization on the part of humanity that there is reality in the religion of Jesus Christ. The good works and the love manifested will become a drawing power and will cause people to want to be identified with this wonderful system which enables people to be different.

A community of people, bound together by love and a common purpose, can be the means of reaching out and lifting mankind to new heights. When the church responds to the gospel and is filled with this sense of community, it will draw people rather than repel them. The shortcomings and failures of the church have often caused it to be a very maligned institution, but it does not need to be. With the proper attitude and a renewed realization that we are the people of God, and are called together to show forth the mercy of God and the excellences of God, the church can become the institution

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that will draw people and bind them in a spirit of unity and love and concern which will be the envy of the world.

When a sense of community is absent, the church is robbed of power, energy and talent which are needed to advance the kingdom. A keen sense of community will help eliminate much of the bickering, division, and in-

difference which so often besets the Lord's people.

[J.C. Townsend preached for several years in Orangeburg, SC. He now works with Providence Road church of Christ and teaches in the ACSR Extension at Providence Road. He can be contacted at 4900 Providence Rd., Charlotte, NC 28211.]

Blessed Are They Who Are Persecuted . . .

by Sara Kemp

Jesus tells us in Matthew 5:10, "Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Few of us living in the United States will ever suffer physical persecution because of our belief in God. However, much of our persecution will be of a different nature. All of us can expect at one time or another to face rejection, harassment, attacks on our self-esteem and discouragement. Many times these come from those who are closest to us — family members, etc. Jesus was betrayed by one of His apostles, Judas.

Jesus knew that there would be times in our lives when even our own family members would be our persecutors.

Persecution knows no social lines, color lines, education lines. People who never have a good word to say about anything, who are constantly complaining and arguing, who have only negative reactions to events are many times the ones who persecute the ones who feel positive and encouraged.

There is hope, though. We can **choose** to be happy in spite of those who would like to see us in a negative-thinking situation. But, how can we accomplish this?

In Philippians 4:11 Paul said, "I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances" (NIV). Paul could not change his situation, but he chose to be happy **in spite of** the persecutions.

We can also seek out those of our Christian family who will help us when we are discouraged, when we feel pressure from those around us, when we need reassurance. God gave us a church family because He knew there would be times when we would need support and encouragement.

We need to remember that we need to "keep on keeping on." When we are faced with persecution, discouragement, or just a lack of encouragement, it is so easy to stop doing anything. This is the very time when we need to remember that God still loves us, that He is on our side. Paul wrote in Romans 8:38-39, "For I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from His love. Death can't, and life can't. The angels won't, and all the powers of hell itself cannot keep God's love away. Our fears for today, our worries about tomorrow, or where we are — high above the sky, or in the deepest ocean — nothing will ever be able to separate us from the love of God . . ." (TLB).

We can also forgive our persecutors. This is so hard to do, but Jesus gave us an example. When He was on the cross, He said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." When we have a difficult time with forgiving our persecutors, then we need to spend more time in prayer asking God to help us work through the hurt. We cannot control how others feel, but we can learn to control how we feel.

When we are hurting, it is easy to take

our frustrations out on others. And many times those others are close to us (i.e. family members). This is when we need to continue trusting God. He has all the answers. We do not. We read in Job 13:15, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust Him." Our faith and trust in God should be strong enough to help us overcome persecutions.

There is a song in one of our books, written by Carl Glaser, entitled "O For a Faith That Will Not Shrink."

*O for a faith that will not shrink,
Tho' pressed by every foe,
That will not tremble on the brink,
Of any earthly woe.*

*That will not murmur or complain,
Beneath the chastening rod,
But in the hour of grief or pain,
Will lean upon its God.*

*A faith that shines more bright and clear
When tempests rage without;
That when in danger knows no fear,
In darkness feels no doubt.*

*Lord, give us such a faith as this;
And then, whatever may come,
We'll taste even here the hallowed bliss
Of an eternal home.*

We need to be more earnest in prayer. Persecutions will come and go. They are never everlasting. One of my favorite expressions is, "And this, too, shall pass." Jesus is our perfect example. He was persecuted while He was trying to do His Father's will here on earth. He died as a result of the physical persecution inflicted on Him. Jesus knew all about betrayal by those close to Him, rejection by His own people and misunderstanding of who He was and why He was here on earth.

Matthew 5:10-12, "Happy are those who are persecuted because they are good, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs. When you are reviled and persecuted and lied about because you are My followers — wonderful! Be happy about it! Be very glad! for a tremendous reward awaits you up in heaven. And remember, the ancient prophets were persecuted too" (TLB).

[Sister Kemp is a member of the Gastonia church, where her husband is an elder. 131 Devine St., Stanley, NC 28164.]

What Makes Life Worthwhile?

by Cleveland R. Reddinger, Jr.

Over the centuries man has pondered many great and profound questions. For a man without the Bible, many of these questions are without answers. However, when we go to God's word we find satisfaction: for therein we find the Divine commentary on life.

One of the great questions that each of us will answer in one way or another is, "What makes life worthwhile?" Some may say this is not as important as "Where did we come from and where are we going?" but I disagree. You see, every day we live, we are saying that something kept us going. For that day something made **this** life, in **this** world, worth holding onto for another day. Some

people, and, sadly, more and more of the best and the brightest, are saying that life is not worthwhile, and we read about them in articles under the title "Suicide." Are they right? Is life worthwhile or not? If it is, what makes it so? The answers to these, and many other questions, are to be found in the Garden of Eden.

The Bible, in its first two chapters, describes the Garden of Eden as a paradise on earth. It had every kind of tree and herb pleasant to the eye and good for food (Gen. 2:9). There were animals of every kind and four beautiful rivers (Gen. 2:10-15, 19). It was here that the Lord God placed Adam and Eve and told them to "be fruitful, and

multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it" (Gen. 1:26). This in itself answers our first question, "Is life worthwhile?" The answer is a resounding "yes!" That the Lord God created man and woman in the first place, and told them to multiply, proves that life must be worthwhile, for God does not make mistakes. God wanted life to be good for Adam and Eve.

Well now, just what did God give to our first parents to make life sweet for them? A close look shows that there were three things given to them by God, **that are also available to each of us**, in order to make life good in this world. What are they?

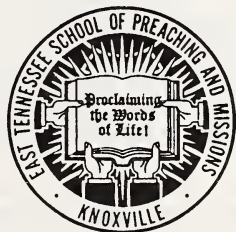
First, God gave them **family**. To Adam, the Almighty presented Eve, the mother of all living, who was bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, as a help meet for him (Gen. 2:20, 23; 3:20). To Eve, Jehovah gave Adam, a protector and provider, one who would cleave unto her (Gen. 2:24). God then gave them the command to multiply and continue the family as He had instituted it (Gen. 1:26). Family helps make life good because everyone has one, for it is the only way to get into this world. We all remember the love of Mom, and greeting Dad as he returned from work. To those of us who are no longer under our parents' roof, but have children of our own, we know there is nothing in this world to compare with the first time we laid eyes on the children of our love. Brothers and sisters, cousins, aunts and uncles: each in his own special way helps to make this life worthwhile. Family helps to give a sense of continuity and participation in the working out of the affairs of the universe.

Second, the Lord God gave to man an **occupation**. In Genesis 2:15 we read, "And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and keep it." Even in Paradise, there was a job for man to do. I never thought much about an occupation making life worthwhile until I had the opportunity in the early and mid-eighties to speak with some men who had been laid-off from their jobs at a steel mill near where I lived. Some had been off for a number of years. It truly began to work on their sense of self-esteem and how they viewed life, whether it was good or bad. You see, much of what a man thinks of himself

is wrapped up in what he does for a living. A man answers the question, "Who are you?" by telling what he does to support his family, and this is true whether he be a bricklayer, an executive, or a preacher of the gospel. When this is taken away from him, through no fault of his own, or by bad teaching, then he has no means of contributing to the building-up of society. No decent man wants to feel like a leech on the goodness of others.

What would life be like if there were no work for us to do in order to get along in this world? Just try to imagine it and you will

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soon see what an occupation does to make life in this world so very important and good.

Third, God gave to Adam and his wife a **religion**. To us it may not seem like very much, but to them it was their way of maintaining their fellowship with God and showing their love for Him. We read in Genesis 2:16-17, "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

This was, to be sure, a very simple religion, but it accomplished everything that re-

ligion is to accomplish in that it gave man freedom of choice, a way of establishing and maintaining a relationship with God, his Creator, and a means of judging between right and wrong in the world in which they lived.

If we look at people around the world today who have happy and fulfilled lives there are three things that are in evidence: family, occupation and religion. And if we are to have true fulfilled life, we also must put a priority on these three areas.

[Brother Reddinger preaches and serves as a deacon. P.O. Box 95, Rockingham, NC 28379.]

The Carolina's Best Kept Secret

by Johnny Melton

In the world of Church Growth studies, a "small church" is one with fewer than 200 members. The majority of Carolina churches of Christ fall into this category. Because this is the case, the Small Church Workshops that have been hosted by the church in Yadkinville, North Carolina, have addressed a timely and pertinent need. The quality of these Workshops and the benefit received by the participants is the best kept secret in the Carolinas.

In May 1989, the third annual Small Church Workshop addressed the issue of "Leading the Small Church." This theme was well developed by the various speakers during the course of the two-day event.

The program was well attended and an atmosphere of brotherly love and mutual encouragement prevailed. Jim Stutts, a former Carolina preacher, now living in Florida, read of the program in **Carolina Christian**, and determined to attend for the inspiration

and information that he could receive. Carolina preachers from Charleston, South Carolina, to Clyde, North Carolina, participated in the Workshop. However, the attendance could have been and should have been much better.

The time was Carolina preachers were forced to go to Tennessee, Alabama, Texas, or Oklahoma for quality workshops and lectureships. While there are certainly quality programs elsewhere, it is no longer necessary for Carolina preachers to leave home for edifying and motivating workshops and lectureships.

The Yadkinville church has tentatively scheduled the next Small Church Workshop for May 10-11, 1990. Make plans now to be present. You will be glad you did.

[Johnny Melton, Managing Editor for Carolina Christian, has served Carolina churches since 1973. He may be contacted at Rt. 2, Box 137, Conover, NC 28613.]

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LSD

by Jerry McCaghren

The screaming headlines inform us daily that something in our society is in desperate need of repair. The Dan Rathers, Charles Os-goods, and Paul Harveys of the media reveal to us the shocking rise in crimes of murder, rape, robbery, juvenile delinquency and teen violence. Divorce is no longer looked upon as a disgrace but now as an easy way out. Integrity is lacking from Washing-ton to the field of professional sports. So-cietly is in tremendous need of self-exami-nation.

The lyrics of a famous Mary Popkins song remind us that "a spoonful of sugar makes the medicine go down." True! How-ever, a spoonful of sugar without medicine accomplishes nothing. The social ills of our nation cannot be sugarcoated. God offers us a solution, but it is pretty stiff medicine. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. In-press them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home, and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up" (Deut. 6:4-7).

Stated simply, if our homes are going to offer stability, then we need to have a good

dose of LSD! Not the psychedelic poison that puts people on a hallucinogenic trip; but the LSD I speak of is Love, Security, and Dis-cipline.

1. **Love:** being there . . . caring . . . assisting . . . sharing . . . understanding . . . feeling . . . weeping . . . hurting . . . communicating . . . accepting.

2. **Security:** stability in the home . . . provision for the body . . . sustenance for the soul . . . hope for the future.

3. **Discipline:** guidance . . . saying No! and meaning it . . . restrictions . . . train-ing . . . teaching . . . limitations . . . cur-fews . . . rules . . . regulations . . . laying on of hands (and I do not mean for the im-parting of the Spirit!).

This is strong medicine. But the times call for it. God has given us divine instruction on how to stabilize our homes and rear our children. Why do we not start taking His medicine? We have been trying the sugar remedy, and it has not worked. A good dose of tough love without the sugar may be the remedy we have all been looking for.

[Jerry McCaghren, minister, Northeast Church of Christ, 3506 Edwards Rd., Tay-lors, SC 29687.]

Noisy Lids

by Jeff Golson

A little boy told a salesclerk he was shop-ping for a birthday present for his mother and asked to see some cookie jars. At a coun-ter displaying a large selection, the boy care-fully lifted and replaced each lid. His face fell when he came to the last one. He asked, "Aren't there any covers that don't make any noise?"

This humorous story presents an accu-rate description of human nature. It also shows us that right motives should coincide with right actions. Sin is so prevalent that it is possible to do what is right for the wrong reason.

At times we all need to examine ourselves
July 1989

in the light of God's word. We also need to examine our reasons for doing what we do. The apostle Paul prayed that the Philippians might do this. He asked God that they would be "pure and blameless" (1:10) so that their inner motives might correspond with their conduct.

Let us test our actions. Let us ask God to show us wrong motivations so that we may be able to say that "we conducted our-selves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity" (2 Cor. 1:12). Then we will not have to worry about "noisy lids."

[Jeff Golson, associate minister, 1975 Haywood Rd., Hendersonville, NC 28739.]

Tell Them Jesus Has Come!

by Rick Parks

Moral decadence has planted its roots deep in our society. Sensuality reigns. Lust-driven men and women live lives of moral unrestraint. People freely boast of their immoral lifestyles. Those who live for this world seem to receive great pleasure in mocking those who have chosen the nobler life: "They think it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they heap abuse on you" (1 Pet. 4:4).

During his presidency (1861-1865), Abraham Lincoln recognized the greatest threat to the United States: "Shall we expect some transatlantic military giant to step across the ocean and crush us at a blow? Never. At what point, then, is the approach of danger to be expected? I answer, if it ever reaches us, it must spring up among us. It cannot

come from abroad. If destruction be our lot, we must ourselves be its author and finisher. As a nation of freemen, we must live through all time, or die by suicide."

Lincoln virtually prophesied with those words. His vision of a moral nightmare has become reality before our very eyes!

So, what is a Christian to do when the darkness surrounds him? Shine the light more brightly! We can wring our hands in despair and wonder aloud what this world is coming to, but God has called us to announce that His Son has come to the world! Tell your friends that through Jesus Christ they can escape the pollution of the world (2 Pet. 1:4), and live the rest of their earthly life for the will of God (1 Pet. 4:2).

[Rick Parks, minister, 649 Barr Rd., Lexington, SC 29072.]



BROTHERHOOD NEWS

by Dennis Conner

Around North Carolina . . .

A merger between the OXFORD CHURCH OF CHRIST in the town of Oxford and the LATTA ROAD CHURCH OF CHRIST in Durham was accomplished on March 15. The new church is presently meeting at the Latta Road property, but this is only a temporary arrangement. Plans call for that property to be sold and the church

to relocate at a new site between Durham and Butner. JOHN GAINES, formerly the preacher for the Oxford church, is now the preacher for the newly merged church. Latta Road had been served well by ELTON RITCH. We are saddened to report that brother Ritch died in March of throat cancer. He had been preaching at Latta Rd. while working full-time at a secular job. While

brother Ritch died in March of throat cancer. He had been preaching at Latta Rd. while working full-time at a secular job. While brother Ritch was not known to most Christians across the Carolinas, he was known to the Lord. The new church now has a core of 25-30 faithful Christians. . . . There are five prisons in the Raleigh area with a total inmate population of over 3,000. The **BROOKS AVE CHURCH OF CHRIST** in ing a program called **Televised Home Bible Studies**. Plans call for a class that would be filmed at Brooks Ave. for broadcast on local cable TV. It would be advertised on the program that study groups are meeting throughout Wake County. During an evening of the week groups would meet and view the television program and then be led in group discussion. This is an innovative idea with tremendous possibilities. . . . The third annual Small Church Workshop hosted by the **YADKINVILLE CHURCH OF CHRIST** last May was attended by 30 participants. This is more than double the number who registered the previous year. Next year's workshop is tentatively scheduled for May 10-11. . . . **JIM MANKIN** of Abilene Christian University will be conducting a church growth seminar at the **ARCHDALE** church in Charlotte the weekend of Oct. 6-8. . . . The 1989 North Carolina Lectures will be hosted by the **EASTCHESTER CHURCH OF CHRIST** in High Point Sept. 8-9. The theme is "Just As I Am." This annual lectureship is in danger, however. It is in danger of death by neglect. While this program offers excellent material year after year, only a few preachers and others have taken advantage of this great opportunity for fellowship and Bible study. Perhaps such lectureships are fast becoming a dinosaur, a thing of the past. That's sad. These programs offer preachers and other Christians from different areas an opportunity for much needed fellowship and communication. Please support this year's N.C. Lectures.

And South Carolina . . .

The **ST. ANDREWS** church in Columbia will host its 14th annual youth rally Aug. 5-6. They will also have **DAVID PHARR** in a gospel meeting Oct. 29-Nov.1. . . . The

Myrtle Beach Lectureship at the **MYRTLE BEACH CHURCH OF CHRIST** will be Oct. 20-22. This year's theme is "Have You Ever Wondered?" . . . **GREG SMITH** is the new youth minister for the **SUMMERVILLE CHURCH OF CHRIST** in Summerville. Greg was previously the youth minister at Brooks Ave. in Raleigh, N.C.

And Other Places . . .

Inmates who are members of the Lord's church at an Oklahoma federal prison at El Reno are being denied the right to practice their religion, according to inmate Richard Shutt. Shutt has filed a civil lawsuit in an attempt to change the situation. According to the suit, inmates are not allowed by prison officials to baptize other inmates, to hold personal Bible studies, or to conduct their own worship services on Sunday. Jack Mattingly, Shutt's lawyer and an elder of the Park and Seminole church in Seminole, Okla., claims that some federal prisons are cracking down on prisoners who are members of the church of Christ. He says, "We have seen a definite trend of restricting the activities of inmates at El Reno since 1986." . . . Ted Lingren, missionary in N.E. Thailand, reports that in 1988 there were 456 people baptized into Christ. There have been 119 baptisms through March, 1989 . . . In Portugal 96.7 percent of the population is Catholic. The barriers presented by this statistic are obvious. However, the Lord's church is growing. After a slow beginning, 180 have been converted in the last four years with more than 80 percent remaining faithful. New churches are being planted as fast as the work force is able to handle the load, and Portugese Christians are taking the lead in these new works rather than relying solely on missionaries. . . . The church is also growing in Liberia, West Africa. There are currently 44 congregations there, with most of them being less than 10 years old. A recent World Bible School follow-up campaign conducted by two WBS workers from California resulted in 319 baptisms . . . Campaigns into El Salvador and the Yucatan peninsula of Mexico during January and February resulted in 62 baptisms. The campaigns were led by Joe Cross Romero.

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- 7:00 p.m. — “Just As I Am! Without One Plea. . . .”
Steve Short, Statesville, NC
8:00 p.m. — “Just As I Am! And Waiting Not. . . .”
Jack Simons, Clemmons, NC

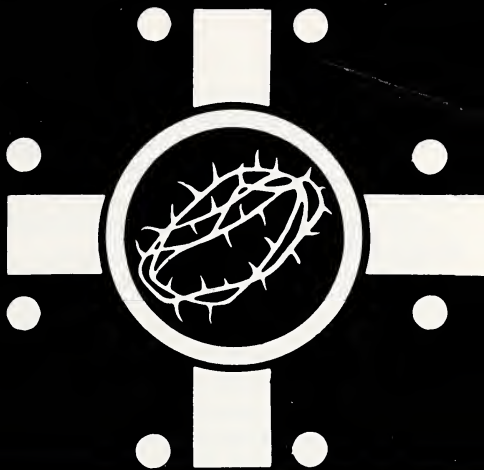
Saturday, September 9, 1989

- 10:00 a.m. — “Just As I Am! Tho’ Tossed About. . . .”
Charles Feters, Wilkesboro, NC
11:00 a.m. — “Just As I Am! Poor, Wretched, Blind. . . .”
Ron Newberry, Greensboro, NC
12:00 p.m. — Lunch (provided by the ladies of the Eastchester
congregation)
1:00 p.m. — “Just As I Am! Thou Wilt Receive. . . .”
Kirk Sams, Statesville, NC
2:00 p.m. — “Just As I Am! Thy Love Unknown. . . .”
Floyd Deathrow, Winston-Salem, NC

Limited housing will be provided by members of the Eastchester congregation for Friday, September 8. Please contact Gary Durham, P.O. Box 1789, High Point, NC 27261, by August 23, to reserve housing. A Lectureship book containing outlines of the Lectures will be available at no cost. Carolina Christian Bookstore will have a Book Fair during the Lectureship.

CAROLINA CHRISTIAN

VOL. 31, NO. 8, AUGUST 1989



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NC LECTURESHIP
Just As I Am

September 8-9
Eastchester Drive
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High Point, NC



editorial

I am concerned with the declining interest in planting new congregations.

When I was converted in the 50's, there was much fervor for getting the Lord's church established in new places. While congregations now exist in most counties of the Carolinas, there are still many places where the church cannot be found.

A few congregations still have a vision for starting new churches. Some are especially to be commended for their zeal in this. But on the other hand, there seems to be a trend for congregations to turn their attention inward, to focus on internal programs rather than extending themselves outward by taking the initiative and responsibility of starting new works.

In some cases, members choose to travel considerable distances in order to attend an established congregation, rather than taking the responsibility of starting a work where they are. Sometimes individuals are even discouraged from considering such a church planting by the folks where they are meeting, who want to keep them there.

We realize that wisdom and planning are essential in these matters. New works should not be started without considering numerous factors. We would not encourage people to "go off half-cocked." Starting a work prematurely may result in failure. Such failures may, in turn, delay the beginning of a successful work for several years.

Church growth, congregational growth, we mean, is a wonderful thing. Every congregation should want to grow as much as possible. There is, however, serious danger when leaders and members see a big congregation as an end in itself. No one has a right to set a limit on a congregation's size, nor can we legislate how far a congregation should go in providing larger facilities and expanded programs. We rejoice with success in every good work. At the same time, however, brethren should be cautiously thoughtful about their motives and direction. Centralization always has its pitfalls. When our

work and size get to where our attention is primarily on keeping what we have, something is bound to go sour. We have many more large congregations in the Carolinas now, and we love them all; but we are not sure that the church is really growing (in terms of souls saved) as much as it was thirty years ago.

Two years ago, Gilbert Tripp and his family moved to Easley, South Carolina, to establish a congregation. Gilbert is both dedicated and capable. For several years he preached for the fine congregation in Golds-

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David Pharr, Editor; Johnny Melton, Managing Editor; Dennis Connor, News Editor.

CAROLINA CHRISTIAN is published monthly by Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., at 71 S. Fairfield Road, Greenville, SC 29605. Subscription price; individual \$7.00 per year; club of five or more \$6.50 per year; quantity of 15 or more in bundles or direct mailing 40¢ per copy per month. Publication number, 091160.

Second class postage paid at Greenville, SC.

POSTMASTER: Send undelivered copies with Form 3579 to Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., Johnny Melton, Managing Editor, Route 2, Box 137, Conover, North Carolina 28613.

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Address editorial matter to David Pharr, Editor, ETSOPM, 6608 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37931. Address news items to Dennis Connor, P.O. Box 1219, Yadkinville, NC 27055.

All items to be printed in a given month's issue should reach the editor not later than the next-to-the-last Thursday of the preceding month.

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boro, North Carolina, and served as an elder as well. He is not an unrealistic visionary who jumped into something on the spur of the moment. He moved his family to Easley knowing the kinds of problems they would encounter, but determined to build a solid work. Several congregations and individuals have helped with support. Sadly, though, we have to acknowledge that brethren have never come through with adequate finances. And, Brethren, think about it: all they are asking is for some of your money! They are giving the prime of their lives to this work!

The Easley story is one of several. Somehow we must grow out of the habit of sending our "leftovers" to mission work. I am convinced that Carolina congregations themselves are able to underwrite such missions and at the same time start numerous addi-

tional works.

We would like to hear from readers. Tell us what you think about these matters. Suitable comments will be printed. We would also like to hear of areas where congregations are needed. Let us communicate on the subject of church planting in the Carolinas.

One other point: we have little sympathy for those works which perpetually receive help, but who do little to help themselves. Mission support ought not to be used just for the convenience of having a preacher and meetinghouse. We cannot criticize missions for not growing, but we are very critical of any that will not work. The Bible says "that if any would not work, neither should he eat" (2 Thess. 3:10). That can be appropriated to say that a mission that will not work should not be supported.

Managing Editor's Column

The Lord's Complaint

by Johnny Melton

Micah 6 depicts a great courtroom scene. God, the righteous judge, had a case against His people (Micah 6:2). That is, He had grounds for a lawsuit. The cause of action was breach of contract. When God delivered the people of Israel out of Egyptian bondage, He entered into a covenant, or contract, with them. The terms of the contract included, in part, the following stipulation: "See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse — the blessing if you obey the commands of the Lord your God that I am giving you today; the curse if you disobey the Lord your God and turn from the way that I command you today by following other gods, which you have not known" (Deut. 11:26-28).

Every Bible student knows that Israel failed miserably to keep the Lord's commandments. Time and time again she played the harlot, consorting with false gods. To be sure, there were periods of repentance and renewal; but these episodes were brief and became more and more infrequent. Hosea declared that Israel's righteousness was like the morning dew: it never lasted very long.

God's patience had worn thin. The time for judgment had arrived.

God summoned the people with the compelling question, "My people, what have I done to you? How have I burdened you? Answer me" (Micah 6:3). The prophet spoke for the people. He formulated a response based, not on what the people would have said, but on what the people were saying by their actions.

"With what shall I come before the Lord and bow down before the exalted God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?" (Micah 6:6). Because of their wickedness, the people doubted that they could come to God acceptably with the prescribed sacrifices of the Law of Moses. Would God be satisfied with burnt offerings, with calves a year old as the Law required? It is ironic that the farther people stray from God, the more inclined they are to think that God cannot be satisfied with simple heartfelt obedience. Since the people had been offering sacrifices and God still had a case against them, they almost sarcastically suggested that what the Lord wanted was multi-

plied sacrifices. "Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" (Micah 6:7).

Such a response suggested that the people really could not satisfy God. In their immaturity, they acted as though they could not understand why God was angry. The people had been offering sacrifices, and God was still angry. What would it take to satisfy Him? If ordinary sacrifice was insufficient, could an extraordinary amount of sacrifice appease God? Could God be induced to drop His charges and dismiss His case against the people if they dramatically increased the number of sacrifices that were being offered? And if that would not satisfy God, how about the sacrifice of their firstborn children? Would a human sacrifice appease the anger of God? If a few sacrifices were insufficient, and large quantities of sacrifices would go unheeded, how about a human sacrifice? Human sacrifice was not without precedent. The Canaanites worshiped Molech, the fire god; and that pagan worship involved the sacrifice of firstborn babies. Such a gruesome practice was not unique to the Canaanite people. God's own people had engaged in the same thing, even though it was clearly forbidden in the Law of Moses (cf. Lev. 18:21; 20:2; Deut. 12:31; 18:10). Ahaz, the son of Jotham, "walked in the ways of the kings of Israel and even sacrificed his son in the fire, following the detestable ways of the nations the Lord had driven out before the Israelites" (2 Kgs. 16:3). Manasseh, "following the detestable practices of the nations the Lord had driven out before the Israelites . . . rebuilt the high places his father Hezekiah had demolished; he also erected altars to the Baals and made Asherah poles. He bowed down to all the starry hosts and worshipped them. He built altars in the temple of the Lord. . . . He sacrificed his sons in the fire in the Valley of Ben Hinnom, practiced sorcery, divination and witchcraft, and consulted mediums and spiritualists. He did much evil in the eyes of the Lord, provoking him to anger" (2 Chron. 33:2-6). Not only did the kings engage in this abomination, but the people were guilty as well. Ezekiel brings this word of the

Lord against the people, "And you took your sons and daughters whom you bore to me and sacrificed them as food to the idols. Was your prostitution not enough? You slaughtered my children and sacrificed them to the idols" (Ezek. 16:20, 21).

God's case against the people was not that they had not offered enough sacrifices. Increasing the number of sacrifices would not sway God, and He certainly would not be swayed by human sacrifices, which were an abomination to Him. The problem God had with the people was never with their lack of sacrifice. There is no evidence that the people, as a whole, ever ceased to offer their sacrifices. Now, to be sure, there were times when their sacrifices did not meet the standards of excellence that had been established in the Law (cf. Mal. 1:6-14); but the people were still offering sacrifices. The case God had against them was not with the absence of sacrifice, but rather it was with the lack of moral purity and integrity in their lives.

The prophet explained God's expectations for the people, "He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8). This passage does not mean that God was unconcerned with sacrifice. He had commanded sacrifice and no man could be well-pleasing in His sight without making sacrifices. However, this passage does mean that sacrifice alone was insufficient to maintain a covenant relationship with God. The design of sacrifice was to bring the individual worshiper into a closer relationship with God. Sacrifice, for the sake of sacrifice, was never God's intention.

There is a principle in this passage that has application to God's people today. Some would suggest that we should learn from this passage that God is more concerned with social justice, mercy and humility than He is



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with obedience to specific commands. But to suggest that God is only concerned with attitude and relationship and that, consequently, He is really unconcerned with matters of obedience is to err grievously. Today we must worship God as He has prescribed. We must never think that God's plain commands can be set aside and ignored. However, we must not repeat the mistakes of ancient Israel and Judah, thinking that mere commandment-keeping, from a ritualistic point of view, will be adequate. God demands

that we worship as He has commanded; but our worship must bring us closer to God, we must become more like Him in our daily walk; or else, we become guilty of empty ritual. Commandment-keeping must never take the place of justice, mercy and humility in our lives. Our covenant relationship with God will be sustained when we obey His commandments from the heart.

[Johnny Melton preaches for the Hickory church of Christ. He may be contacted at Rt. 2, Box 137, Conover, NC 28613.]

The Awful Consequences

by David Pharr

“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame” (Heb. 6:4-6).

The text tells of those who were “once enlightened.” That is, they knew and obeyed the truth. (See John 8:32; 1 Pet. 1:22.) But they fell away. The description is of complete apostasy. They have gone so far from the Lord's way and their hearts have become so hardened that repentance is not possible. Such is the most wretched of all conditions. Having forsaken the Lord and His way, “the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them” (2 Pet. 2:20-21).

When one comes to Christ for salvation and then leaves the church, denying the truth and living outside the will of Christ, “there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries” (Heb. 10:26-27).

In our work in the kingdom we have seen nothing which has caused us more sadness than the tragedy of one who was “once enlightened” falling away. There is first the joy

of having found the truth, the peaceful assurance that this is the Lord's way. What happens next? Perhaps it is temptation. Sometimes there are pressures exerted by others. Whatever the means, Satan instills doubt, causes discouragement, and weakens the resolve to hold on. Soon there is a marked lessening of enthusiasm, worship is forsaken, and contact with brethren is avoided. Efforts to restore (Gal. 6:1; Jas. 5:19-20) at first cause the conscience to sting, but the time comes when admonitions fall on deaf ears. When the heart gets hard enough there will be no words, no reminders, no conscience, which can bring about repentance and restoration.

Some case studies are demonstrations of the principle described in 2 Thessalonians 2:10b-12. “They received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

One who does not love God's truth can be deluded into believing a lie. The result is damnation. What sets the stage for such a “strong delusion”? “They received not the love of the truth.”

We have known those who were “once enlightened.” We have heard statements like “I am just not sure anymore.” “I used to accept that, but now I have my doubts.” Others have become diametrically opposed to the truths they once held dear.

Jesus said there are some "which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away" (Luke 8:11). The apostle Paul cautioned, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12). In Hebrews we are warned against being among those "who draw back into perdition." In the same context we find the words, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the

hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31, 38-39). Those who were "once enlightened" and "then fell away" (ASV) ". . . crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." Such are the awful consequences.

[David Pharr, Editor, is Director of East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions.]

Who Is Jesus?

by Bob Bickle

Caesarea Philippi is located on the southwest slope of Mt. Hermon. The towns of Dan and Caesarea Philippi are just four miles apart. Caesarea Philippi is located on a terrace 1150 feet above sea level, in a beautiful and luxurious area overlooking the fertile north and upper Jordan River valley. No doubt Jesus had observed this city as being a center of pagan worship. He would have observed the useless gods of the heathen. Since the time that Jesus appeared in Caesarea Philippi, the pantheons of gods and goddesses that were worshiped in thousands of temples throughout the Roman Empire have disappeared. They are gone; but Jesus rules in the hearts of millions of people throughout the world.

It was at this site that Jesus asked His disciples, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" The phrase, Son of man, refers not only to the deity but also to the humanity of Jesus. In Daniel's prophecy we read, "I saw in the night visions and behold one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven and came to the Ancient of days and they brought him near before him." The apostle Paul wrote to the Roman Christians, "Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh" (Rom. 1:3).

The answers that were given to Jesus were, "Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets." Herod, no doubt out of fear, said of Jesus, "This is John the Baptist: he is risen from the dead: and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him" (Matt. 14:2).

Others said Jesus was Elias. It was prophesied by Malachi, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." John the Baptist fulfilled this prophecy, not Jesus. Others said, "Jeremias." J.W. McGarvey saw Jesus' characteristic denunciation of the sin of the age combined with the genuine sorrow He felt for the people as suggestive to some that He was Jeremiah. Others said He was one of the prophets. In Luke 9:19 we read, "Others say that one of the old prophets is risen again."

What do some say concerning Jesus today? Is He the humanistic Jesus of the play "Superstar"? Is He the simplistic, emotional Jesus of the "Jesus Freaks"? Is He merely a great teacher and ethical guide like Socrates? Is He the founder of a religion like Confucius, or Mohammed or Joseph Smith? Is He just a good man, but nothing more? (How could Jesus be good if He is not the Son of God like He said He was? He would be a liar and not a good man.) Is Jesus, uniquely, the divine Son of God? His perfect life, His superior teachings, His genuine miracles, and His death and resurrection combine to prove that He is the Son of God.

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Jesus was not content to hear of what others were saying of Him. He asked, "But whom say ye that I am?" Simon Peter answered and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." The word "Christ" means the anointed one of God. The Psalmist wrote, "I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." This occasion was not the only time that Peter would confess Jesus as the Son of God. In Matthew 14:33, after Jesus had pulled Peter from the sea, he declared, "Of a truth thou art the Son of God." In answer to the question that Jesus asked the Twelve after His sermon on the bread of life, "Will you also go away?" Peter said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6:67-68).

Just prior to Jesus' resurrection of Lazarus from the tomb, Martha said, "Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world" (John 11:27). The Ethiopian eunuch, prior to his baptism, confessed, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:37).

Soon after Saul was baptized, he preached Christ in the synagogues that He is the Son of God (Acts 9:20). John wrote in his first epistle, "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God" (1 John 4:15). We also read, "Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God" (1 John 5:5).

Yes, Jesus is the Christ, the anointed one of God. Aaron and his sons were anointed and designated high priests (Lev. 8). Jesus is our anointed high priest (Heb. 7). Prophets were anointed signifying the approval of the Lord concerning their message (1 Kgs. 19:16). Jesus is our prophet today (Heb. 1:1-2). Kings were anointed by the prophets of God indicating whom God would have rule over His covenant people (1 Kgs. 19:15f). Jesus is our king today (John 18:37). Truly Jesus is the anointed priest, prophet, and king today.

Peter's confession was a good confession and Jesus was pleased with it (Matt 16:17). This is a confession that we must make today. If we would stand with Peter and ex-

press the conviction of our hearts as he did, we must believe that Jesus of Nazareth fulfills the prophetic office of God, bringing that final word from God in His own person and through His work. We must confirm that Jesus of Nazareth is our only High Priest, who in His own body made adequate sacrifice for sin, and who now continues His priestly work at the Father's right hand.

If we would confess that Jesus is the Christ in the meaningfulness of its context, we must submit to His kingly power and enthrone Him as Lord of our lives (Matt. 28:18; Phil. 2:6-11). (Gresham, **Christian Standard**, 1965, p. 108.)

Jesus said that if we are not willing to confess Him before men, He would not confess us before His Father in heaven (Matt. 10:32-33).

It was upon the basis of the confession that Peter made that Jesus would build His church. Not even death (Hades) would prevail against His church! Death today interrupts many plans, but it was necessary for Jesus to die to usher in His kingdom (the church). Despite the death of His followers, the loss of each single member of the church to death would not mean the death of the church. The kingdom of darkness and death cannot at any time hold out against the power of the church to break its hand and come forth.

How about you today? Whom do you say the Son of man is? Malcolm Muggeridge, a humanist and atheist for years, said in a televised speech to the nation of Great Britain, "As far as I am concerned, it is Christ or nothing." He told why: "So I came back to where I began, to the other king, one Jesus, to the Christian notion that man's efforts to make himself personally and collectively happy in earthly terms are doomed to failure. He must indeed, as Christ said, be born again, be a new man, or he's nothing. So at least I have concluded, having failed to find in past experiences, present dilemmas, and future expectations, any alternative proposition."

[Bob Bickle preaches for the Charlotte Ave. church, 339 Charlotte Ave., Rock Hill, SC 29730.]

Hugh Palmer (1901-1989)

by Bruce Green

Heaven became a little richer and earth a little poorer March 5, 1989, as Hugh Lawson Palmer passed from this life. Like Abraham, Hugh lived a full life and died at the "good old age" of eighty-seven. He left behind his wife of fifty-one years (Martha), four daughters, three sisters, six brothers, thirteen grandchildren, five great-grandchildren, and a multitude of friends near and far. He served as an elder and treasurer of the church at Long Island, New York, and was also the treasurer at Plaza (Sumter) for many years. Part of Hugh's legacy, that would be of special interest to readers of this journal, is his contribution to Palmetto Bible Camp and Southeastern Children's Home.

Besides working with the Railway Express Agency for forty-six years, Hugh also did considerable work in the field of real estate. He used this experience to help locate land for the camp and was instrumental in that land being purchased at considerable savings. He was quite active in the camp during its early, formative years, and especially enjoyed working in the kitchen.

Hugh was also involved in the beginnings of Southeastern Children's Home. Hugh was named to the Board of Directors July 12, 1969. In May 1970, he took over as treasurer when R.W. Senn took to the road to spread the news in the Carolinas about SECH. Hugh continued to serve as treasurer for the next ten years. At the same time, Hugh and Martha's home became the temporary address for the children's home. Later that

same year (November 17), Hugh helped the children's home to secure and purchase four acres of land just outside Sumter. Here the first cottage was built and named the Palmer Cottage in honor of Hugh. He continued to serve the children's home, adding to his responsibilities editing and mailing the bulletin (Southeastern News) and serving as superintendent of the home. Though he retired from the Board of Directors in 1980, Hugh continued to have an active interest in SECH.

As you can see, Hugh was a special man whom God used to touch the lives of many. Although there was over fifty years' difference between our ages, I considered it an honor to be counted among his good friends, and I learned much from him in our association together. Hugh and I were fishing partners and I would like to close this tribute to him with this poem that was inscribed on a plaque which hung in his den. It is called "A Fisherman's Prayer."

*I pray that I may live to fish until my
dying day,
And when it comes to my last cast I
then most humbly pray,
When in the Lord's great landing net
and peacefully asleep,
That in his mercy I'll be judged big
enough to keep.*

*[P.O. Box 1385, Sumter, SC 29150.
Brother Green preaches for the Plaza con-
gregation.]*

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God Bless America!

by Jerry McCaghren

I love America. I love it in spite of its imperfections . . . its industrial waste . . . its oil spills . . . its HUD scandals. I love it in the midst of its poverty and its bulging national debt. I love it in spite of the racial bigotry and the rising number of homeless people wandering our streets. I love it even though we made a mess in Viet Nam and continue to run the risk of doing the same in other parts of the world.

I love America because I have seen what the rest of the world has to offer. . . . I have smelled the rotting garbage that fills the harbors in Haiti. . . . I have witnessed the endless stream of people coming from the deserts of Sudan and Somalia and across the mountains of Ethiopia in search of bread and water. . . . I have felt something of the intense racial hatred seething from the mouths of political leaders in South Africa. . . . I have dug the graves of infants and young children who were denied human dignity and deprived of human need. . . . I have watched in anguish and in tears the suffering, the pain, and the loneliness etched deeply on the faces of the tribes of the earth.

I wept for them then. I weep for us..I weep because some have forgotten.

Freedom of expression they call it. They want to trample on Old Glory and burn it in public. Perhaps these adherents could better express themselves while they sip the stagnant water from the poisoned wells of India, eat the meager gruel from the tins in Ethiopia, experience the agony of burying a family member in a shallow unmarked grave, hear the cries of the living on behalf of the dying in Ethiopia, sit in some jungle hiding place waiting for the enemy, whisk the flies away from the running open sores of a child that will never see another sunrise. . . . Then, and only then will they love America and the flag that flies across our country.

Perfect . . . I never said that! We have a long way to go. But we will never arrive if we destroy those precious symbols that remind us of our place in history.

God bless America!!!

[Jerry McCaghren preaches for the Northeast church, 3506 Edwards Rd., Taylors, SC 29687.]

“Put the Light Back”

by J.C. Townsend

David H.C. Read tells of a young writer of the modern school who composed a short story crammed with realism. One day he was privileged to read it to an old and wise author.

The story was of the only son of a poor widow, living in a country cottage somewhere in a Pennsylvania valley. The lad set out for New York to seek his fortune. As he left, his mother said, “Now remember, son, if you ever get in trouble, no matter how bad it is, you come home. And as you come over the hill, you’ll always find the light burning in this window and I’ll be waiting to welcome you.”

With lurid realism, the young author de-

scribed all that happened in the big city, sparing no sordid detail in the moral decline of this young man. Finally, after a term in jail, the boy determined to head for home and his mother, hitchhiking most of the way in the best tradition of the “beat generation.” As he came over the crest of the hill and looked down, there was the old cottage silhouetted in the evening gloom — but there was no light burning at all. At that point, the old author, listening to the tale, leaped to his feet and cried angrily, “You young devil, put that light back.”

Who has not seen enough in the contemporary scene to want to utter a similar statement? There is so much corruption and

hypocrisy that we readily see the need for the light of God's word to shine through. The art of our day portrays the distortions of the human spirit. In many a modern drama, not a single decent motive seems to operate. Many are taking the church to task and cannot see any good the church has done. In recent days, even some far-out theologians have said that God is dead.

But you and I, as students of God's word, know that **the light** is already here. The light was turned on when Jesus came and His saving gospel was proclaimed. John says of Jesus, "In him was life; and life was the light of men" (John 1:4). Jesus described Himself, "I am the light of the world" (John

8:12).

We need to put the light of truth back into this world of darkness. David said God's word is a lamp to the feet and a light to the path (Ps. 119:105). By faithful teaching of the Bible, and sincere, righteous living, Christians can cause the light of Christianity to burn brightly again in our own land and throughout the world.

[J.C. Townsend works with Providence Road church, Charlotte, teaching in the ASCR Extension. He was several years with the Orangeburg, SC, work. He can be contacted at 4900 Providence Rd., Charlotte, NC 28211.]

The Cost of a Bible

by Gary G. Payne

How much would you be willing to pay for a Bible? Today you can buy New Testaments in bulk rate for 25 cents each. Or, you can spend a lot of money for one of those "home Bibles." People buy them and put them on their mantle or on the table in the living room. In them are recorded deaths, marriages, and special family times. They become keepsakes to be handed down. However, I doubt this is exactly the intention God had for His word. Is the Bible to be a piece of art which we are to admire? or is it a sacred text by which we live? Is the Bible to be an idol which we worship? or is it the word of life for which we are willing to die? What does the Bible mean to you? What is God's word worth to you?

Across the pages of history, men and women have given their lives for this book we call the Bible. They have lived by it. They have bled for it. They have died because of it. God's word carries with it a great heritage, a great history. We would do well to follow the example of some great men who sacrificed themselves for God's word. Let us take a look at some of the highlights of our Bible in history.

John Wycliffe produced the first Bible in English (1300's). Wycliffe lived almost 100 years before movable type was invented. This

means his Bible was produced and copied by hand. Having to copy the Bible by hand made it expensive — almost \$150! In reaction to Wycliffe's translation, a decree was passed in 1408 which prohibited anyone to translate the Bible into English without the authorization of the Bishops. In 1415 the Council of Constance condemned Wycliffe's writings and burned them. Then, they dug up his corpse, burned it, and threw his ashes into the River Swift.

William Tyndale made the next translation into English. He constantly ran into church leaders who opposed him. He is reported to have said to one, "If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth the plow shall know more of the Scripture than thou knowest." Tyndale put

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the Bible in modern everyday language. And, there was a great demand for his work! He had to smuggle his New Testament into England in cases of merchandise. In those days the Bible still cost a lot of money. One Bible cost about five days' work. Tyndale was treacherously kidnapped and tried for heresy. On October 6, 1536, he was executed — strangled by the hangman, then burned at the stake.

The Great Bible became the first legal Bible. Bibles were still rare and expensive. They had to chain the Bibles to reading stands. They did not chain them so no one could read them. They chained them so no one would steal them! Crowds came to hear the Bible read. More came to hear it read than they did to hear the preacher. Finally, a bishop had to issue an admonition that public Bible reading had to be before or after the sermon — those at the service could not hear! People were hungry for the word of God.

Later the King James Version was produced in 1611. The King James Version was the work of Anglican and Puritan churchmen, linguists, theologians, and laymen. They had in mind to produce a version for the common man — a translation which, for their day, was in modern, everyday English. The King James Version was very popular. In its first twenty-nine years it went through forty different editions.

Today people keep the same spirit: "Let the Bible be in the language of the people." Whether losing life as Tyndale or losing the respect of traditionalists, they know the power of God's word is in understanding it. For them, the Bible is worth more than any price tag. It is worth dying for, for in it are the words of life.

[Brother Payne works with the church in Reidsville, NC; 907 Courtland Ave., 27320.]

An Introduction to Eschatological Essentials

by Paul E. Jarrett

In 1971 Max R. King of Warren, Ohio, published a book titled **The Spirit of Prophecy**. In this book, brother King set forth what has come to be commonly designated as "the 70 A.D. doctrine." At the heart of this doctrine is the belief that the second coming of Christ took place in the events surrounding the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. In connection with this view (referred to by brother King and those who share his position as "realized eschatology"), it is further affirmed that the eternal kingdom of Christ began, the resurrection occurred, and judgment took place in A.D. 70.

It has come to my attention that a rumor has been circulating in the Carolinas that I am an advocate of this so-called "70 A.D. doctrine." Since I came to the Carolinas from Northeast Ohio, and since my eschatological views do attach significance to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, I can

understand how such a rumor might get started. However, it is almost amusing in light of the fact that while living in Ohio I was challenged to a debate by one of the leading proponents of this doctrine because of a series of articles I had written in refutation of some of its basic tenets.

I have mentioned this, not so much as an attempt to squelch this rumor, but as a means of introducing this series of articles I have written for publication in **Carolina Christian** pertaining to the topic of eschatology (i.e., the doctrine of last things). I am submitting these articles in the hope that they might prove helpful (or at least thought-provoking) to those who are wrestling with the kinds of questions posed by the various competing views of eschatology that are being advocated today within the Lord's church, and in the denominational world.

My primary aim in this series of articles

is to seek to provide a firm anchor to those who are being "tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine" (Eph. 4:14), particularly in the deep, and largely uncharted, seas of eschatology.

It is not within the scope of these articles to attempt to answer every question someone may have regarding the second coming of Christ, etc. I am not inclined to be dogmatic regarding many of these issues because I am still struggling to answer my own questions. What I do want to share is those things of which I am certain — things which enable me to live my life by faith.

While there are tenets of the so-called "70 A.D. doctrine" with which I am in disagreement, I must acknowledge that (as is the case with most eschatological viewpoints) there are also aspects of it which are to be commended. What is not to be commended is the negative impact it has had on the faith of some, and the seeds of discord which have been sown by its proponents. (In fairness to Max King and those who share his views, I must also point out that some of his opponents have also contributed to this discord at times by the manner in which they have opposed his position.)

The chief error of the "70 A.D. doctrine" and its proponents parallels that of Hymenaeus and Philetus (2 Tim. 2:14-19) whose wrangling about words, coupled with their bold assertion that "the resurrection has already taken place" had "upset the faith of some." It is the error of upsetting men's faith that occurs when men "wrangle about words, which is useless and leads to the ruin of the hearers" that this series of articles is being written to address.

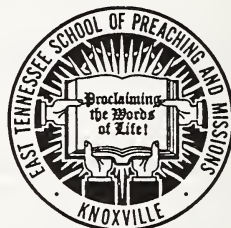
I propose to oppose this error by means of an affirmation of what I perceive to be the essentials of eschatology upon which we all can (and must) unite, rather than by addressing the kinds of questions which have tended to divide us into premillennial, amillennial, and A.D. 70 camps.

While not normally an event associated in our minds with the second coming of Christ, the proponents of the "70 A.D. doctrine" advocate that the establishment of the kingdom of Christ "with power" (Mark 9:1) also took place at the time of Jerusalem's de-

struction. This particular teaching has met strong resistance among churches of Christ which have traditionally taught that the kingdom began on Pentecost when the Holy Spirit descended on the apostles endowing them with power from on high (cf. Mark 9:1, with Acts 1:8; 2:1-4).

I mention this conflict regarding the birthdate of the kingdom that exists between proponents of the "70 A.D. doctrine" and those who hold to the view that the kingdom began on Pentecost because it is illustrative of the kind of arguments that have often divided us, particularly in the area of eschatology, because of our tendency to wrangle about words due to our fleshly fas-

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cination with times and seasons. It would seem to me that, if we are to stand united on solid ground in our study of eschatology, we must first turn our focus away from times and seasons, and place it where God intended it to be — on “Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith” (Heb. 12:1).

This point is illustrated in the lives of the apostles who manifested their fascination with the times and seasons of the restoration of “the kingdom of Israel” to the very eve of Pentecost (Acts 1:6, 7). They did this despite the fact that Jesus had taught them that “the kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is,’ or, ‘There it is!’ For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst” (Luke 17:20, 21).

In light of the fact that Jesus’ own apostles suffered from an improper focus regarding the kingdom, I suppose it should not surprise us that such continues to be the case today. What should disturb us more than the lack of understanding is the fact that our lack of focus has caused us to divide God’s people in foolish wranglings over times and seasons. I, for one, do not believe the solution to these conflicts is going to be found in getting everyone to “get their dates right.” Rather, the answer to our conflicts will only be found in getting our concept of the kingdom right, “for the kingdom of God is . . . righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he who in this way serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men” (Rom. 14:17, 18).

When the apostle Paul was confronted with the eschatological questions raised by the Thessalonians, it is interesting to note how that he repeatedly shifted their focus away from “times and seasons” and in the direction of conduct more in harmony with the true nature of the kingdom. The following text illustrates what I mean. “Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. While they are saying, ‘peace and safety!’ then destruction will come upon them suddenly like birth pains upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that

the day should overtake you like a thief; for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night. But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with Him” (1 Thess. 5:1-10).

A thoughtful reading of Paul’s writings (and those of all the New Testament writers) will indicate that eschatology to them was not a matter of “times and seasons,” but was a means of exhorting men to proper behavior. (Read Romans 13:11-14 for another good example of this focus.) I believe this eschatological emphasis reflects an appreciation for the true significance of the request made by David in Psalms 39:4.

In that passage David requested, “Lord make me to know my end, and what is the extent of my days, let me know how transient I am.” David’s request was not to know the exact time of his death. Rather, his request was that he might know and appreciate the significance of his end, or destiny. In the same manner I want to suggest that the focus of our eschatology should not be on times and seasons, but on the significance of our end, or destiny.

It may, or may not, be significant, but I can find no place in Scripture which speaks of the “end of time.” There are references in Daniel (8:7; 11:40; 12:4) to the “time of the end.” I mention this because I believe it illustrates how badly out of focus our approach to eschatology has been. We have focused on “times and seasons,” rather than on what God has used “times and seasons” to teach us about, our end.

I want to conclude this article by referring again to the issue raised by the proponents of the “70 A.D. doctrine” as to whether the kingdom began on Pentecost, or came with power in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. In defense of their position, we might note that a belief in the

coming of the kingdom with power in A.D. 70 would help to explain certain texts, such as Hebrews 12:28, which seem to indicate that the kingdom was, at least in some sense, still being received after Pentecost. Of course, this reference is no more confusing than Jesus' reference in Luke 17:20, 21, quoted earlier, to the kingdom being in their midst prior to Pentecost.

In each of these instances, the conflict exists because of our tendency to focus on "times and seasons," rather than focusing on the true message, which in this instance has to do with the nature of the kingdom. To those who received it, the kingdom of God came with power on Pentecost, just as surely as July 4, 1776, is our nation's birthday. On the other hand, to the unbelieving Jews, the kingdom of Christ came with power in the destruction of their earthly temple (i.e., "the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, in order that those things which cannot be shaken may remain" [Heb. 12:27]) as surely as Cornwallis' surrender at Yorktown in 1781

marked England's acknowledgment of our nation's existence.

The message for us today that can be learned from the illustration just noted is that Christ's kingdom has come for those who have acknowledged Jesus as Lord of their lives. For those, like the unbelieving Jews, who refuse to acknowledge His rule, they can be certain that the reality of His power will one day be acknowledged by them, for we are promised that "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow" (Phil. 2:10; Isa. 45:23).

In the next lesson, "The Revelation of Salvation," I will have a great deal more to say about how God used His dealings with the nation of Israel to teach us about our own end (i.e., destiny). In the concluding lesson in this series, "The Just Shall Live by Faith," we will note how faith in Christ must lie at the heart of our approach to eschatology.

[Paul Jarrett preaches for the Archdale church. He may be contacted at P.O. Box 241002, Charlotte, NC 28224.]

Pink Pencils

by Charles R. Lambert

The biggest, strongest, most honest man I ever knew was my father. He always looked the same with his deep blue eyes, ruddy complexion, and his straight hair combed back. He dressed simply in khaki pants and shirts, but these characteristics describe the man, not the life he lived.

One of my earliest memories of my father was late one fall evening when he came home to feed the cows. I ran out to meet him and the first thing he asked me was, "Do you have your homework done?" I said, "No." He then proceeded to give me a long lecture on life and how he wanted me to be a white collar worker. I did not know at that time that my dad had never had any education. He could barely write his name, although he knew the value of an education and was a very smart man. When Dad finished talking, he gave me a pink pencil that he used in the

mill where he worked. That little present was just about all he could afford and I loved it so much, just because Dad gave it to me.

The pencil was made of cedar and had number three hard lead, with a fresh coat of pink paint. I enjoyed using the pencil because the eraser was firm and lasted longer than other erasers. Getting a pink pencil from Dad was such a delightful experience because we knew he loved us. Dad was a man who was kind on one hand, but stern when he had to be. He had come up the hard way. He was born during the Great Depression, and his mother died at his birth. He had no one to love him but his father, who did not have much time for him. His first experience with love was with my mother, whom he loved and worshiped, because he could depend on her throughout his life.

He grew up when farming was the only

way to get something to eat. Transportation was a mule and wagon or a worn-out Model-T Ford. I guess that is why he made it so hard on us, because life was so hard on him.

My grandfather died when my dad was a very young boy and he had to live with relatives. Not one relative could keep him. He was just an orphan being transferred from home to home. Each family that got him thought they could make him work in the fields, but he fooled them! Although my father did not like working in his relatives' fields as a boy, he did become a man, and as an adult he was never afraid of hard work. Father always rewarded us with a pink pencil when we did really well at a task. This brings my story to a certain Sunday afternoon.

On this particular afternoon my sisters and I were playing ball. The ball was a Carnation milk can and the bat was a crude stick about three feet long. My sister threw the can to me, and I hit it right back to her, striking her on the forehead. It was bleeding a little, although it scared her more than anything else. She cried and cried, but perked right up when Dad reached into the pocket of his shirt and handed her a pink pencil.

I was in the third grade and not doing too well in my studies. My teacher got in touch

with my father and told him I would probably fail the third grade. Dad persuaded me to try harder, but I failed anyhow, so Dad talked to me at great length. I was shedding a lot of tears until Dad pulled out of his shirt pocket a very new and beautiful pink pencil. Then he said, "This is for next year because I know you can pass the third grade with a pink pencil."

We grew older and I went away into the service. I came home one weekend to see one of my sisters in a beauty pageant. The contestants sang and danced, and, in the end, they were judged. My sister took second place in the school pageant that night, and I had the honor of taking her out to dinner afterwards. Dad was waiting up for her when we arrived, and he took her in his arms and told her how proud he was of her, then, out of his pocket, he took a pink pencil. "Here," he said, "you are never too old for a pink pencil."

I will never forget the lessons my father taught me, even though he was no scholar. He gave me pride in myself, honesty, strength, and always a pink pencil!

[Charles Lambert is a member of the Myrtle Beach church. His address is 3418 Longwood Ln., Conway, SC 29526.]

A Lesson From the World of Creation

by Ed Hoover

Does God really understand our lives, our circumstances and our physical and mental "make-up"? God never leaves anything to "chance" where our well-being is concerned. Look at the sun as an example.

The earth is approximately 93 million miles from the sun. Before the creation, God calculated in His mind what the correct distance and orbit must be. God knew if the earth were too close to the sun, water would be in the form of a vapor. If the earth were too far away, water would be frozen all the time.

God knew what heat range the human

body could withstand. With that in mind, God calculated what the heat loss would be for the sun's rays traveling 93 million miles through space of varying degrees of temperature. Having arrived at that answer, God calculated what the size and composition of the sun must be to sustain that range of temperatures during man's existence on this earth.

God knew that by tilting the earth, He could give man different seasons and also increase the habitable area on the planet. So He planned it to be that way.

All of this was calculated and planned

before God said let it be, and it came into existence.

Adam, Eve, and millions of others walked on the face of this earth before Deity joined the ranks of those with a human body. Yet, God's calculation concerning the sun was perfect. It did not need any "fine tuning."

Likewise, God's dealing with mankind has not needed any "fine tuning" in the thousands of years He has been taking care of man. God knows our innermost thoughts and problems. There is nothing in our lives which escapes the mind of God.

God knew David had followed Him with all of his heart (1 Kgs. 14:8). Jesus knew the poor widow had cast in all her living (Mark 12:44). Jesus said that God knows what we

need before we ask (Matt. 6:8).

The more we learn of the immense universe, the more we realize it required a knowledgeable Architect.

Life is designed to help us see that God is a Father who knows and understands us. He knows the problems and trials we face each day. Jesus said, ". . . Pray ye: Our Father which art in Heaven . . ." (Matt. 6:9). The word Father here includes all a good earthly father should be, but also everything a Heavenly Father is capable of being.

Look at the sun — we can learn a lot from it.

[Ed Hoover serves the Essex Village church as a deacon. His address is 1968 Green Park Avenue, Charleston, SC 29414.]

Baptizing Children

by David Pharr

Children brought up in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord" usually express an interest in being baptized at an early age. Parents are rightly concerned about giving their children proper guidance in this. They want to avoid a stand which appears to hinder the child's obedience to God. But at the same time they do not want the child to act prematurely.

A young person should not be baptized (1) until he has a genuine understanding and conviction about sin; (2) until he understands and believes the fundamental facts of the scheme of redemption; (3) and until he is ready to accept the responsibilities of the Christian life.

Understanding the fundamentals of the scheme of redemption is more than merely being able to recite that baptism is "for the remission of sins." Grace, atonement, the Deity of Christ and His sacrifice on our behalf must also be understood. Certainly these things must be taught to a child on a child's level; but a person is not ready for baptism without knowing and believing these fundamental matters. We fear that too often we have "explained" baptism to those who lack a sufficient foundation in other matters to

receive it.

Baptism is not the end. It is the beginning. The commitment to Christian discipleship is not an easy commitment. Parents should be careful to explain this to their children who desire baptism. The tragedy is that sometimes parents have set such a poor example themselves that they are unable to properly teach this. Some parents want their children to be baptized but they do not want them to attend faithfully. We can see this to be the case because the parents do not bring them. Some parents want their children to be baptized, but they want their children to be more a part of the world than of the church.

Young people should not be baptized because they have reached a certain age. The calendar has nothing to do with it. Neither should they be baptized because their peers have been. We love to see children give their lives to Christ. But this requires more than just baptism.

[David Pharr, Editor, is Director of East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions.]

A Book Review

by Michael R. Mobley

The Growth Factor, Bob Moorehead; College Press Publishing Co., P.O. Box 1132, Joplin, MO 64802; 131 pages, paper, \$4.95.

The thesis of this study book is that church is a consequence, not a means to an end, the result of the church truly "being" the church in worship, witness and word. Moorehead believes that God has not destined every church to be a "large church," but he has destined every church to grow. To develop that theme and belief, he studies such concepts as the vision, evangelism, maturation, leadership, giving, birthing, action, and missions factors. The study covers 10 "factors" of growth.

The author does a good job except for two major problems. First, he discusses the "worship" from a denominational concept. He speaks of spontaneous hand clapping, "clap" offerings (applauding God as a means of praising him), and mechanical music. Though he does have some good practical suggestions, it is also obvious that he is concerned with entertaining to attract people. This will attract people to the entertainment and not to God. Second, he "pasturizes" the local preacher. He takes the work and responsibilities of the local shepherds and also attaches them to the preacher. This, of course, violates nearly everything taught in 1 Timothy. This book is clearly written and enjoyable to read. It can be useful if you simply disregard these two problems.

Questions and Answers, Noble Tribble; College Press, Box 1132, Joplin, MO 64801; 107 pages, paper, \$3.95.

Mr. Tribble, a minister of the Christian church, wrote a question and answer column in one of their monthly publications. This 13 lesson topical study is a collection of some of these questions and answers, some edited for the format of this study. Tribble does well until he deals with two issues: instrumental music and the name "Christian Church." He supports instrumental music and only questions whether or not it detracts

from the Lord's Supper or not (one of the questions). He also gives his support for the name "Christian Church" as he answers the question concerning the official name for the church, believing they are the Lord's church. Another problem is his belief in the personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God in man. However, he does give a clear and sound answer to the other basic questions he answers.

Love God — Love One Another, John Russell; College Press, Box 1132, Joplin, MO 64801; 103 pages, paper, \$3.95.

The emphasis of this 10 lesson study is a Biblical or spiritual perspective on human relationships and humanity. It is based on the truth taught in 1 John 4:20-21, that if we want to love God, we must love our fellows. The truth is that we can not love God if we do not love our fellowman. This study is designed to teach us how to love God by teaching us how to love each other. It covers such areas as peace and harmony, honor and devotion, rejoicing and weeping, accepting and judging. Russell believes that so many people live reactionary lives while God has called us to live "creative lives." This study develops that thought.

This study can be used to help us have better home and congregational relationships, relationships with the lost, and all human relationships. It is a practical study that is easy to read, to the point, and insightful with illustrations and stories in each lesson.

At The Master's Feet, J.J. Turner; Quality Publications, P.O. Box 1060, Abilene, TX 79604; paper, 108 pages; \$4.95.

Mr. Turner has added another study to his list of excellent works. These thirteen lessons discuss some of the basic, yet vital teachings central to the ministry, life, and doctrine of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. They present to us the Lordship, Saviorhood, and deity of Jesus; and they show us the redemption, truth, compassion, and responsibility we need. This study covers

such topics as what Jesus taught about priorities, His mission and Himself, sin, and human relations. It is an excellent investigation of the heart and core of the gospel packed with Scriptural and very useful material. It is one of those books that causes the reader to stop and ponder its thoughts.

Positive Sermons That Encourage, J.J. Turner; Quality Publications, P.O. Box 1060, Abilene, TX 79604; paper, 117 pages; \$4.95.

Whether you are looking for a sermon outline book or a study guide for the positive approach to Christian living, this is one worth adding to your library. These 26 lessons deal with such topics as motivation, wholeheartedness, daily religion, attitudes, the friendship of God, joy, and purpose. They stress the promises and commands of God in the context of hope and the potential within each one of us.

Strength in Times of Trouble, Lea Fowler; Quality Publications, P.O. Box 1060, Abilene, TX 79604; paper, 74 pages.

Mrs. Fowler believes that suffering and stress have their own "peculiar purpose," or particular purpose, for our good. The thirteen lessons of this Bible class study book cover grief, trouble in the local congregation and the home, lost love, and one's own death. The book also contains lessons that deal with various aspects of suffering. Though designed for a ladies Bible class, it would be enjoyable and helpful to any who read and study its thoughts. It is enjoyable, sensitive, caring, and fresh in its direct approach.

Highway to Heaven, Barry Cunningham; Quality Publications, P.O. Box 1060, Abilene TX 79604; paper, 67 pages, \$3.95.

As the subtitle suggests, this Bible class study is "a road map for teens." These excellent thirteen lessons cover such topics as goals, desire, persistence, and success. They are designed to be adaptable to every situation typical of teen life and development. These lessons are well outlined for easy-presentation, enjoyable for easy reading, practical and direct for easy understanding.

Each is designed to teach how to succeed in life.

Leaves Only, Jo Ann Mills; Quality Publications, P.O. Box 1060, Abilene, TX 79604; paper, 131 pages.

A fruit-bearing tree that bears only leaves is a fruitless tree that has betrayed its usefulness. It is a disappointment. Fruitless Christian lives are like that fruitless tree and that is the theme of this Bible class study book. Its primary concern is the fruit one bears through his or her influence that can affect the lives of others and the world. It covers such topics as self-worth, prayer, listening, personal faith, meditation, stress, and "thistles and thorns." It is good for class study and personal use.

What the Bible Says About Growing Old, Bill and Judy Norris; College Press Publishing Company, Joplin, Missouri; hardcover, 303 pages, \$13.95.

This is an interesting study. As the subtitle suggests, it is a study on "aging; a celebration of creativity." The authors believe that the Scriptures, through example and teaching, say that growing old is something to use in life and not something that defeats us. The book divides the Bible into fifteen sections and discusses what they have to say about aging. These fifteen lessons cover Biblical people and Biblical law, the poetry of the Old Testament and the Beatitudes, the prophets and the apostles, the teachings of Proverbs, and the teachings of Jesus. They deal with all those themes that are important to the aging: security, love, peace of mind, hope, activity, and so much more. We recommend it for your meditation on the Scriptures.

[Michael R. Mobley preaches for the Glenwood Dr. church of Christ, P.O. Box 312, Mooresville, NC 28115.]

Brotherhood News

by Dennis Conner

Around North Carolina . . .

The **BOONE CHURCH OF CHRIST** has recently planted a new congregation in **BANNER ELK** under the leadership of Don Iverson. Don is a graduate of the East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions and a former missionary to Hong Kong. The new church had its official beginning on July 9, 1989. For more information concerning this new work, you may contact brother Iverson at (704) 898-6724. The church in Boone also announces that it will have its Spiritual Enrichment Weekend Sept. 29-Oct. 1. The speaker will be Ron Newberry from Greensboro and the theme will be "Our Commitment to Jesus: Its Joys and Challenges." Terry Graves preaches for the church in Boone. . . . The **HENDERSONVILLE CHURCH OF CHRIST** enjoyed a record Sunday morning attendance of 236 on June 18, 1989. . . . Jim Mankin of Abilene Christian University will be conducting a Church Growth Seminar at the **ARCHDALE CHURCH OF CHRIST** in Charlotte Oct. 6-8. . . . The new campus minister for the **FRIENDLY AVE. CHURCH OF CHRIST** in Greensboro is **CLIFF MANN**. Brother Mann comes to Greensboro from Florence, Alabama. . . . The **PROVIDENCE ROAD** church in Charlotte will have its 1989 Homecoming on Oct. 15.

And South Carolina . . .

The annual South Carolina Lectures will be hosted this year by the **WINNSBORO CHURCH OF CHRIST**. The dates are Nov. 13-16. . . . The **MYRTLE BEACH** church will host its own annual lectureship Oct. 20-22. The theme will be "Have You Ever Wondered?"

Calendar of Events:

Sept. 8-9 — The North Carolina Lectures, hosted by the **EASTCHESTER CHURCH OF CHRIST** in High Point, NC. Theme: "Amazing Grace."

Oct. 4-8 — Gospel Meeting/Homecoming,

HICKORY CHURCH OF CHRIST, with Barry Elliott.

Oct. 6-8 — Church Growth Seminar, **ARCHDALE CHURCH OF CHRIST** in Charlotte, NC, with Jim Mankin.

Oct. 8-12 — Gospel meeting at the **WARNERS CHAPEL CHURCH OF CHRIST** in Clemmons, NC, with Glenn Ramsey.

Oct. 15 — Homecoming, **PROVIDENCE ROAD CHURCH OF CHRIST** in Charlotte, NC.

Oct. 20-22 — Lectureship, **MYRTLE BEACH CHURCH OF CHRIST**, Myrtle Beach, SC. Theme: "Have You Ever Wondered?"

Oct. 29-Nov. 1 — Gospel meeting, **ST. ANDREWS ROAD CHURCH OF CHRIST**, Columbia, SC, with David Pharr.

Nov. 13-16 — South Carolina Lectures, **WINNSBORO CHURCH OF CHRIST**, Winnsboro, SC.

*Special note: The **FOREST CITY CHURCH OF CHRIST** will host the 3rd annual Foothills Gospel Singing on Oct. 27. The Cool Springs Auditorium will be used for the singing, beginning at 7:30 p.m. This year's special guest song leader will be Paul Brown from Franklin, Tenn. Wayman Love, who preaches for the Forest City church, says, "This auditorium will seat over 500 and we hope to fill it this year as folks come from all parts of the Southeast." Choral groups, quartets, etc., are encouraged to attend and should contact brother Love at: Church of Christ, P.O. Box 1206, Forest City, NC 28043. You may also call (704) 245-2720 or 248-1239.

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1989 North Carolina Lectureship Eastchester Drive Church of Christ High Point, North Carolina

“Just As I Am”

Friday, September 8, 1989

- 7:00 p.m. — “Just As I Am! Without One Plea. . . .”
Steve Short, Statesville, NC
- 8:00 p.m. — “Just As I Am! And Waiting Not. . . .”
Jack Simons, Clemmons, NC

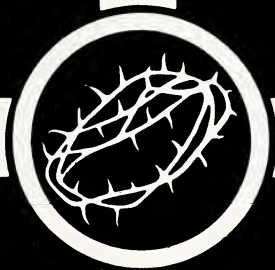
Saturday, September 9, 1989

- 10:00 a.m. — “Just As I Am! Tho’ Tossed About. . . .”
Charles Fetters, Wilkesboro, NC
- 11:00 a.m. — “Just As I Am! Poor, Wretched, Blind. . . .”
Ron Newberry, Greensboro, NC
- 12:00 p.m. — Lunch (provided by the ladies of the Eastchester
congregation)
- 1:00 p.m. — “Just As I Am! Thou Wilt Receive. . . .”
Kirk Sams, Statesville, NC
- 2:00 p.m. — “Just As I Am! Thy Love Unknown. . . .”
Floyd Deathrow, Winston-Salem, NC

Limited housing will be provided by members of the Eastchester congregation for Friday, September 8. Please contact Gary Durham, P.O. Box 1789, High Point, NC 27261, by August 23, to reserve housing. A Lectureship book containing outlines of the Lectures will be available at no cost. Carolina Christian Bookstore will have a Book Fair during the Lectureship.

CAROLINA CHRISTIAN

VOL. 31, NO. 9, SEPTEMBER 1989



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C392

MYRTLE BEACH LECTURESHIP

“Have You Ever Wondered . . .”

October 20-22

*CHURCH OF CHRIST
U.S. HWY. 17 BY-PASS AT 38th AVENUE
MYRTLE BEACH, SC*



editorial

The **Guardian of Truth**, July 20, 1989, carried the following item from the Associated Press.

“Gatlinburg, Tenn. — A school principal prevented a seventh grader from displaying her anti-abortion science project, which consisted of ten jars of human fetuses, saying the award-winning exhibit was too much for his students.

“‘Carrie Walker placed the jars, which contained fetuses from pregnancy stages ranging from 6 weeks to 5-1/2 months, on her exhibit table at Pi Beta Phi Elementary School,’ said Principal Al Cardiel.

“‘To an untrained eye, the (fetus) 5-1/2 months along was definitely a child,’ said Jim Wade, curriculum director for Sevier County schools.

“‘The girl said she got the fetuses which were kept in preservative solutions, from her uncle, a pathologist. The girl’s mother said the fetuses came from miscarriages.’” (World [5 May 1989], p. 12).

While all we know about the Gatlinburg situation is what is quoted above, we have to comment that the curriculum director’s remark represents the ultimate in bigoted stupidity. “To an untrained eye” the fetuses looked like babies! Perhaps this is because that is what they are. Perhaps doctors are “untrained” when they talk to pregnant mothers about their “child’s” growth, or let the mother hear the “child’s” heartbeat. Perhaps parents are just “untrained” when they feel the movement of the baby and think it is really a child! Surely the seventh graders of Gatlinburg have an advantage in being “untrained” since they seem to have enough sense to know that a child is a child!

The abortion controversy would be much simplified if advocates of abortion would be more honest with words. The term “fetus” is a legitimate word, but it is used by abor-

tion advocates to camouflage the issue. Correctly understood, a “fetus” is a person in one stage of his development, just as “infant” and “teenager” mean a person is in those stages of development. Abortionists, however, would have us believe that a fetus is not a person. The magic of their semantics makes a child merely a “product of conception,” a mere “mass of tissue” before delivery, and a child after delivery.

There is much furor over the possibility of changing abortion laws in this country. Without regard for God, the Supreme Court a few years ago legalized a most abominable crime. Their ruling, however, was only a reflection of the decadence of much of society. We would favor laws that would restrict abortions; but we are candid to realize that laws are not going to reverse the fact that millions are “without natural affection” (Rom. 1:31).

Comments

We are pleased with the response we have received relative to recent articles, especially the one on “Dangerous Musical Trends” (July). There has been only one negative letter. We are not alone in the concerns we have. Since most of our readers are in the Carolinas, we especially urge churches in the Carolinas to resist all unscriptural innovations, even if they seem to be accepted elsewhere. “Prove all things; hold fast to that which is good. Abstain from all appearances of evil” (1 Thess. 5:21-22).

More on Evangelism

In the August issue we asked for comments on church planting in the Carolinas. We are unwilling to let the matter rest. Evangelism needs to be our real priority. We are not opposed to facilities and programs that encourage fellowship and internal growth; but such must not be allowed to diminish zeal for soul winning. When we forget that we have the only thing that will save people from

hell, it may be that we no longer have it.

Where are new congregations needed in the Carolinas? Which metropolitan areas need new works in other parts of the area? Which small congregations need encouragement and support? Who will move to difficult places to establish and strengthen the church? Which congregations are ready to invest more money in mission work in the Carolinas?

Managing Editor's Column

"Love Your Neighbor"

by Johnny Melton

Without question, most people will admit the responsibility to love their neighbor. Unfortunately, it is too often the case that we pay only lip service to this divine injunction. And if pressed concerning our failure in this matter, we are tempted to respond with the question, "And who is my neighbor?"

The parable of the "Good Samaritan" was told by Jesus in order to answer, in a vivid way, the question regarding the identity of one's neighbor. Rather than studying the parable itself, I want to reflect on the attitude that prompted it.

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

"What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"

He answered: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind' and 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' "

"You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live" (Luke 10:25-28).

The King James Version speaks of "a certain lawyer," but this individual was not an attorney, as we think of lawyers and attorneys today. It was not his responsibility to plead a case before a judge. Rather, he was called a lawyer because he was "an expert in the law" (i.e., the Law of Moses), as the New International Version describes him.

It is my opinion that every congregation ought to budget some of its funds for mission work from the time of its establishment, even if it is only \$10-\$25 per month. This may seem to be a small amount, but consider what could be done if every small congregation in the Carolinas were adding this to what could be done by the larger churches. Consider, too, the psychological benefits of every small church being thus involved.

The question this "expert in the law" put to Jesus was designed to test Him. The King James uses the word "tempt" here. "Tempt" may cause us to think of seduction to do evil. There is no evidence that this individual was making an attempt to seduce Jesus to do evil. Instead, Jesus, as a teacher of the Law Himself, was being tested. Unlike His questioner, Jesus had had no formal training; and yet, He was teaching the people, explaining the Law, and often challenging the positions taken by the Scribes, Pharisees and others who were supposed to be knowledgeable of the Law. This "expert" wanted to discover for himself Jesus' ability and discernment, or His lack thereof.

Jesus' response was appropriate. He refused to be put on the defensive. He challenged, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" This exchange took place in a public setting, likely in the synagogue on the Sabbath. It was common to discuss the Scriptures by means of an exchange of questions. The second question, "How do you read it?" was intended to get the expert's interpretation of the Law. It should have been easy enough to cite a Scripture. Jesus wanted to know how His antagonist reasoned.

The expert responded by quoting, at least in part, the Shema, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength" (Deut. 6:4, 6). And then he added, from Le-

viticus 19:18, "love your neighbor as yourself."

On another occasion, Jesus had referred to these two commandments as the first and second commandments in terms of their significance. These were summary commandments. Upon these fundamentals — love of God and love of neighbor — hang all the law and the prophets; so said Jesus in Matthew 22:34-40. No doubt Jesus was pleased with this expert's response. He had no debate with this man. Consequently, Jesus responded, "You have answered correctly. . . . Do this and you will live" (Luke 10:28).

I am convinced that there are many people in our land who, like this "expert in the law," have sufficient knowledge of Scripture that they know what God wants them to do. The problem is getting people to see that Scripture is to be obeyed.

Verse 29 is a sad reflection on an otherwise capable man, "But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?'" The teaching of Jesus was too simple. It was not enough that God had said,

"Love me unreservedly and your neighbor as yourself." The expert wanted to dull the force of the commandment by seeking to modify it. If he could define "neighbor" in such a way as to satisfy himself, he would need to make no life changes. He wanted to "justify himself" more than he wanted to do God's will.

To our shame, the disposition to modify the definition of neighbor in order to remove our responsibility for having to do anything that we may be uncomfortable with is widespread. But this disposition is not only true in matters of hospitality and charity. Despite the fact that we know the Scriptures on drunkenness, lust, lying, worship, forgiveness, brotherly kindness, and numerous other issues, we are far too often disposed to "justify" ourselves by asking questions designed to blunt the impact of the Scriptures on our lives.

God help us to not only be able to give the right answers and to quote the right Scriptures, but to be willing to submit our lives to God's will without reservation.

"Treat ME Right"

by James A. Akers

In today's fast-paced society, an aggressive attitude along with an "I'm the only one that matters" belief will get you high up the ladder in a very short period of time. The "taking care of one's self" concept is not new. Christ tells the story in Luke 10:30-37 of a man robbed by thieves and left for dead. A certain priest came by, but saw the man and passed on the other side. The priest was more concerned with himself than others. A Levite came by, but saw the man lying on the side of the road and also passed on the other side. Again, someone watching out for number one. These men had no care for the wounded man on the side of the road. They probably would have not cared even if he was unharmed. How many of us are acting like this and do not even realize it? Are we so busy with our own selves that we fail to see the wounded man on the side of the road? Are we so caught up in a "treat ME right" society that we do not take the time

to care anymore? Or are we like the man who gave of himself, a man who stopped what he was doing long enough to help? A man like the Good Samaritan?

The ability to treat each other in the way we would like to be treated is a concept that is oftentimes overlooked in our day-to-day lives. As Christians, we are always ready to treat each other extraordinarily nice on Sundays and Wednesdays in front of other people watching, but what about outside of the church building when there may not be other Christians watching, where our worship to

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God gets tested? How many times do opportunities go by in which we should have turned our cheek instead of getting even? In Luke 6:29 Christ says, "And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also." Christ does not want us to repay evil with evil (Rom. 12:17), but to accept things with patience, not allowing hatred and strife to fester in our hearts. How many times should we have gone the extra mile? In Matthew 5:41 Christ tells us, "And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain."

Being able to take abuse, whether it be verbal, physical, or spiritual, is not an easy thing to do. Instead, we oftentimes strike back unintentionally and sometimes not even realizing we have. Retaliation is a very subtle tool of Satan, yet it is a very powerful tool. It is a weapon that Satan has in his arsenal and uses effectively in destroying many lives. Christians must not succumb to worldly attitudes when it comes to our relationship with our fellowman or with our fellow Christians. We must continually strive to over-

come the "treat ME right" attitude.

We all recognize a football or baseball player in his uniform, a police officer in his uniform, and likewise a medical doctor in his hospital attire. Concerning Christians, in John 13:33 we are told, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another." The uniform of a Christian is our love. It is what identifies us as the followers of Christ. We are not wearing our uniform when we are more willing to accept criticism from our employer than from a brother or sister in Christ who gives criticism with a loving heart. The way we sometimes treat one another is discouraging. It is indeed a deeper hurt when we are done wrong by a brother or sister in Christ than by an acquaintance. As Christians, we must never forget that we are wearing Christ's love.

If we are ever going to enter the kingdom of God, we must overcome our worldly attitude. We must go on to maturity and shed our "treat ME right" attitude and put on a "treat YOU right" attitude.

[Brother Akers resides at 125 Allendale Dr., West Columbia, SC 29169.]

Thank You, Lord, for Stormy Evenings

by Cleveland R. Reddinger, Jr.

Just how do you spend your evenings at home with the family? I know that far too often my family and I waste an evening surrounding the "Boob Tube." It seems like an automatic magnet, drawing the attention of eye and ear away from the real world, into the fantasy of someone else's creation.

Recently, though, we had an unexpected blessing. Due to the presence and threat of lightning in the area, we turned off the stereo and the television (which, contrary to common sense, were both on at the same time) and unplugged them from all outside connections. Being left with "NOTHING TO DO," my mind searched frantically for something to keep my two kids and wife occupied until bedtime. At last an idea struck me like a thunderbolt (pardon the pun)! I sent my six-year-old, Anita Jo, into her bed-

room to get her Bible and bring it to me. We had been working on her reading using the Old Testament book of Psalms. (When she could read the Twenty-Third Psalm to me, fluently, from the King James Version, then she and I went out for breakfast together. Her breakfast for Psalm Twenty-Three was two days earlier.) On this night we would begin work on another passage out of the Old Testament, Proverbs 31:10-31, the description of the virtuous woman.

As she sat on my lap and labored through the words she would find only in the Bible, just an occasional thunderboomer interrupted our time together. Nancy sat with our three-year-old, Heidi Kristin, on her lap and they listened to Anita Jo read. We only worked through verse 15, and then put the Bible down, took up the songbook and sang

for the rest of the evening.

We all had a good time. Anita Jo was challenged by the opportunity to read for her family and the prospect of going out for breakfast, and Heidi loved the songs and the thought of eating breakfast alone with Mommy seemed pretty good to her. Mom and Dad liked the idea of trading a wasted night before the altar and high priest of Humanism for a simple evening nourished by the words of life. That was a better than even trade for us from our point of view, a trade

that will be repeated more often in the days to come.

How about you? What does your family do together in the evening? Are you in the trading mood? Trades like this can do nothing but good for your family. I am just sorry that it took a thunderstorm to bring it to my family. Thank you, Lord, for stormy evenings.

[P.O. Box 95, Rockingham, NC 28379.
"Clee" preaches for the Rockingham church.]

The Revelation of Salvation

by Paul Jarrett

This article is the second in a series of three articles dealing with eschatological essentials. As is the case with each article in this series, I am setting forth my view of what should be the true focus of our approach to eschatology (i.e., the doctrine of last things) in contrast to what I perceive to be the misplaced emphasis of the so-called "70 A.D. Doctrine," as introduced among churches of Christ by Max R. King in a book titled **The Spirit of Prophecy** (c. 1971).

In **The Spirit of Prophecy**, Max King set forth a view of the second coming of Christ and those events associated in Scripture with that coming (i.e., resurrection, judgment, etc.) that placed the accomplishments of these events in their fulness as having occurred at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. While I have personally found much to commend brother King's treatment of a number of passages of Scripture, as they apply to the events that transpired in that generation in which the New Testament was being revealed, I have taken strong issue with his position that those events constituted the fulness of God's message. To me, Max King's position has always appeared to be like confusing the map one is given to follow with the road on which one is to walk.

The fact that I concur with many of brother King's applications of New Testament Scriptures in the events surrounding God's judgment on the nation of Israel in A.D. 70 may have contributed to a rumor

alluded to in the opening article in this series that I am an advocate of the "70 A.D. Doctrine." (If attaching significance to the events of A.D. 70 are proof of one's being an advocate of the "70 A.D. Doctrine," then Foy Wallace, Jr.'s commentary on Revelation, Franklin Camp's book on the work of the Holy Spirit, and Robert R. Taylor, Jr.'s introduction to that book would make them advocates of the "70 A.D. Doctrine" as well.) However, my use and emphasis varies enough from Max King's as to have led a leading proponent of this doctrine to challenge me to debate our differences. It is this difference that I want to address in the remainder of this article.

In presenting many of these same thoughts in a series of articles that were published in Franklin Camp's paper, **The Word of Life**, I made the point that "God used events to set forth His message." It is important for us to grasp this point because,

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as was noted in the preceding article in this series, our tendency in the study of eschatology has been to focus on the times and seasons of the events, rather than on the message revealed in these events.

For example, consider how the usual approach to the study of the book of Revelation in the denominational world has centered on using the book to forecast future events. The reality is that the events prophesied in Revelation were fulfilled, as promised, at a time that was "near" (Rev. 1:3; 22:6, 10) when the book was written. This is true whether you believe the book was written prior to A.D. 70 or in the Domitian era of about A.D. 96. The message of the Revelation to us today is not about events to come, but about what the events that did come tell us about our end, or destiny.

While I personally believe that dating Revelation prior to A.D. 70 and interpreting the events prophesied therein in a manner consistent with the destruction of Jerusalem as dealt with in Jesus' prophecies, the Old Testament prophecies of those such as Daniel, and New Testament writings such as Hebrews is more consistent, I am not dogmatic in my dating of Revelation and specific assignments of meaning to the events to which it refers.

What I am dogmatic about is my position that the essential thing to be derived from the Revelation (and the whole of God's counsel) is what is taught regarding the end of every man. The message is that temporal things decay and/or are destroyed and therefore we need to seek those things which are eternal (2 Cor. 4:16-5:4; 2 Pet. 3:10-13).

In the remainder of this article, I want to expand on the analogy I referred to earlier when I wrote of how Max King's position errs in confusing the map with the road on which we are to walk. I confess I am indebted to Max King for helping me to have a better understanding of the map of God's word. I only wish I could persuade him, and those who share his views, to place their emphasis where it needs to be — not on A.D. 70, but on what God revealed to us about our end through the events surrounding the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. That which was revealed at that time is what I have referred to in the title of this article as "The

Revelation of Salvation."

In the first chapter of Peter's first epistle, he wrote, by inspiration, of the salvation that was to be revealed to those of his day (1 Pet. 1:3-13). To appreciate the significance of what Peter was speaking of here, as well as any number of other similar New Testament references, we need to appreciate the historical and theological context in which the New Testament was being revealed. This context was one of conflict between the old covenant (and its advocates) which had been made "obsolete" and was "ready to disappear" (Heb. 8:13) and the new covenant, written on the hearts of men (Heb. 8:10), which had come as the fullness of the old which had existed only as "a copy and shadow of the heavenly things" (Heb. 8:5).

The conflict raged around and even within the church. Stephen, the first Christian martyr, had been slain for his advocacy of what had contributed to Jesus' own death, that is, that the temple would be destroyed, and there would be an alteration in the customs handed down by Moses (Acts 6:13, 14).

Within the church this controversy manifested itself in the efforts of the Judaizers (Jewish Christians) to bind circumcision and the Law on their Gentile brethren. The book of Galatians was written expressly to confront this error. Also, Hebrews was written to encourage Jewish Christians who had accepted the better covenant to not be drawn back into entanglements with the old covenant.

The issue around which this conflict raged can be summed up in questions such as: "Who are the sons of God (i.e., God's chosen)? Are they those of fleshly descent from Abraham, or are they those who share the faith of Abraham? Is salvation of the law, or of faith? Is fellowship with God to be found in an earthly temple in the city of Jerusalem in Palestine, or is fellowship with God to be found in the Jerusalem that is above — the Heavenly city?" (See Rom. 2:28, 29; 8:1-19; Gal. 3:1-29 and 4:21-31 for these questions, and the answers given by Inspiration.)

The significance of the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and, in particular, the destruction of the temple as had been prophesied by Christ lies in the statement made

about the true nature, source, and certainty of the salvation that is now ours in Christ. The "salvation of souls" spoken of in 1 Peter 1:9 (the words "our" [KJV] or "your" [NASV] do not appear in the original text) was exhibited by God to all in the final destruction of the earthly city and tabernacle and the revelation of "the holy city, new Jerusalem" (Rev. 21:2) and "the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man" (Heb. 8:2).

Throughout Israel's history, God had used His dealings with them as a nation as a means of presenting His truths regarding heavenly realities to man. It should not surprise us that God would use the destruction of their earthly city and temple as the final means of pointing man in the direction of heaven (see Heb. 12:18-28).

It would seem that the importance of these events (i.e., the destruction of Jerusalem), which were clearly "at hand" at the time the New Testament was being revealed and recorded for our enlightenment today, could hardly be overstated. However, I am convinced that the proponents of the "70

A.D. Doctrine" do just that when they focus on the events and fail to place their emphasis on the message of God regarding the destiny of all mankind which was revealed in those events.

When it is affirmed that the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 constituted the fullness of Jesus' second coming, the fullness of God's judgment, and the resurrection of the righteous to eternal life and the unrighteous to eternal damnation, far too much is being affirmed. Even if the proponents of this doctrine claim that such is not their intention, they owe it to those whose faith they have undermined to explain themselves in words more easily understood. (See 1 Cor. 14:9.)

In the concluding article in this series, titled "The Just Shall Live by Faith," we will be devoting attention to the eschatological essentials that must be held fast in order for us to truly live by faith and also avoid upsetting the faith of others who are attempting to do the same.

[Paul Jarrett preaches for the Archdale church in Charlotte, P.O. Box 241002, 28224.]

Jerry Westmoreland

by Don Nix

A friend, a brother, and a gospel preacher are small words in describing Jerry Westmoreland. Jerry loved people as much as he loved the truth of the gospel.

It was Jerry and his good wife, Teen, who first met a scared Alabama boy and his wife and took them home for Sunday dinner (Kentucky Fried) in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1968. I was from the small town of La-Fayette, Alabama, and had been attending a congregation of about 40 members. Now, my wife and I were in a large town and worshipping with a congregation of about 500 members. I was just beginning at the Memphis School of Preaching and felt very lost. Jerry and Teen showed us love and made us more comfortable in our new surroundings.

This story can be repeated numerous times by numerous individuals whom Jerry and Teen have touched with their hospital-

ity. Jerry had the unique ability to make friends and cause them to listen when he spoke. Many have become Christians, others went on to become preachers and all were made better for having known him. At his funeral in West Memphis, Arkansas, it was overwhelmingly clear that Jerry did not have any "exclusive" friends, but was a friend to all. It was that love for others that made him such a wonderful servant in the Lord's service.

Jerry will long be remembered for his work in South Carolina; but he also served in Belize, South America, Alabama, Tennessee, and Mississippi. South Carolina has been changed because of the work that Jerry did here.

During the last ten or so years, Jerry lived with a very serious heart problem. During the last several years, this made him unable to

continue to preach full time, but his desire to preach never lessened. He and Teen spent the last couple of years with a group of retired Christians called "Sojourners," who travel the nation working with struggling churches. It was on one of these trips that found Jerry speaking at a chapel service at Northeastern Junior Bible College in Villanova, Pennsylvania. During that talk, one

of the points Jerry made was "that if I miss heaven, I have missed it all." Just a few minutes later his struggle was over and life was no more.

We are better for knowing him and will miss him as long as the Lord gives us life.

[Don preaches for the church in Union, SC, P.O. Box 64, 29379.]

"Unless You Become As Little Children"

Matthew 18:3

by Wellington H. Smith, Jr.

Everyone on this planet was at some point a little child. During that time most of us thought our parents were the smartest, strongest, richest, most loving and forgiving of all the parents in the whole, wide world.

We thought this because, in the process of growing up, we witnessed our parents teaching us things, protecting us from bad situations, providing us with all the things that make and keep a child happy. Through it all, they loved us and forgave us. But then something happened. As we grew older, our desires turned to exterior means of gratification. We were no longer content with hugs and kisses. We wanted more. We began to see that parents were not all-knowing and all-powerful. We learned that they were not so loving and forgiving at times. The world intruded into our young lives and changed us in ways that caused us to lose the innocence of our youth. We became men and women of the world, able to go our own way and do our own thing. When that happened, the special bond of love that little children have for their parents was broken in some cases and drastically changed in others. Parental authority became acceptable only when it agreed with personal preference.

This is what happened to Adam and Eve. When they decided to go their own way and do their own thing, they broke that special bond with their Father in heaven. This state of affairs has existed until now.

We know from the Bible that Nicodemus

was a religious man, a ruler of the Jews, and that he came seeking Jesus. We do not know exactly why he came, but I believe that there were some doubts in his mind about where he stood with God. Jesus knew Nicodemus' condition, looked in his heart, saw the fears and doubts and gave him the answer he sought (John 3:3-5). Basically, Jesus gave the same answer He had given His disciples in response to a different question (Matt. 18:3).

We might well ask the same question Nicodemus asked: "How can a man, when he is old, be born again?" In effect, how can we "become as little children"? Our flesh cannot shrink. We must remember that Jesus' focus was on spiritual things, therefore Jesus was speaking of spiritual children.

Paul, in Romans 8, discusses the differences between flesh and spirit. He maintains that as long as we are concerned about and controlled by the flesh, we live under the bondage of sin. Then he tells us that Christians have been bought and brought out of that bondage.

"For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, Abba, Father. The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children then heirs — heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together" (Rom. 8:15-17).

What does it mean to "become as little children"? It means simply, a restoration of innocence, trust, and unquestioning love.

Have you ever watched little children at play? Have you seen their imagination at work? Have you told them stories from the Bible and watched their little eyes grow wide with wonder? You see, children are much more spiritual than adults. Their whole experience, with the exception of abused children and similar circumstances, is completely positive. They tend to live in a world different from ours. Theirs is a world where the good guys always win. Their heroes are larger than life. I remember a little fellow about five years old asking me who is strongest, He-Man or God. I tried to explain that good people get their strength from God. He replied, "I understand, there is God, the Holy Spirit, Jesus and He-Man." He did not have any trouble believing in the Godhead or in adding He-Man to it.

Paul spoke of God as being the Father of all through creation (Acts 17:24-29). The philosophers who heard him were willing to accept the idea of a great, creative God, but drew the line at the resurrection. They were apparently willing, in part, to accept God as their creator, but not as their savior. Although some did, others were not ready for the concept of a judgment day. Unlike these people, content with their own knowledge, we must accept God as our Father, sustainer and Savior.

Acceptance of God is not enough to bring salvation. Although God created everyone and everything, we must remember that unbelievers stand condemned before God (John 3:18; Rev. 20:11-15). Through spiritual birth, those who have believed and obeyed the gospel have had their child-like relationship with God restored. Jesus told Nicodemus, "Unless you are born of water and the Spirit, you cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:3, 5). Peter responded on Pentecost to those believers in the same way when he said, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). Here is the concept of spiritual rebirth spoken of in 1 Peter 2:9, 10 and 2 Corinthians 5:17. You can see from this that being born again will

bring about some changes in one's life that the world sees, and should bring drastic changes in one's spiritual life that God sees.

When we become God's spiritual children, we must take on His nature. Confidence in His promises brings sonship (2 Pet. 1:4). We are to have His mind and example (Phil. 2:5-7). As His children, we should not be concerned about material things (Matt. 6:25-34), but rather trust that all good things come from Him (Jas. 1:17, 18), and that if faithful, we are kept safe in His love (Rom. 8:38, 39).

God tells us that because He loves us He will, from time to time, have to discipline us (Heb. 12:5-11); but we are to have confidence that it is for our benefit (Rom. 8:28).

What, then, does it mean to "become as little children"? It means faith in and acceptance of Jesus' teaching to gain sonship (John 1:12). It means obedience to Jesus' commands (Mark 3:35; Luke 8:21). Finally, it means accepting the responsibility of sonship. As His children, we must be innocent before Him, have complete confidence in His knowledge and power, and serve Him willingly and lovingly. This must result in inviting unbelievers to meet God as Father rather than judge (Matt. 28:18-20).

Would you like to have that wonderful bond of childhood restored? If you have never obeyed the gospel, you can do so now. You can stand innocent and clean before God by putting on His Son in baptism. If you are already a Christian but you have been playing in the world and have gotten your robe of righteousness soiled by the devil's devices, you should have it cleaned today (1 John 1:6-2:2).

[Wellington Smith lives in Charlotte and is a student at Alabama Christian School of Religion, Carolina Extension. He does fill-in and interim preaching. He may be contacted at 9927-A Oakbrook Dr., Charlotte, NC 28210.]

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Hunger & Thirst for Righteousness

by Sara B. Kemp

In Jesus' fourth beatitude, He states, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled."

What is this righteousness that we are to long for, to hunger and thirst for? Webster defines righteousness as: "Acting in an upright manner, doing what is right; virtuous; morally upright."

"Happy are those who long to be just and good, for they shall be completely satisfied" (TLB). This translation indicates that only when we long for righteousness, when we really want to be good, can we reach this state of blessedness. But just being morally good and upright is only the beginning of what Jesus wants for us.

True righteousness comes through our "hungering and thirsting" after God's word and His desire for us to be His children. The Psalmist says the righteous "delight in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night." The righteous person shall be "like a tree planted by streams of water, that yields its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers."

When we are living a life of "hungering and thirsting" we are living by God's rules. Righteousness comes through true repentance and complete trust in God's desire for His children.

Many of us in America have never experienced **real** physical hunger or thirst. When we are hungry, we go to the refrigerator or cupboard and get something to eat. When we are thirsty, we get something to drink. Have you ever been to the doctor for a 12-hour fasting blood sugar test? I have. And believe me, I get to the office as soon as the door opens. The whole time I am waiting, I keep thinking about getting a cup of coffee and something to eat. It is pure agony for me because I am "hungering and thirsting." Is this our same attitude toward God, His word, and His plan of living for us?

Do we hunger and thirst for time to spend

in prayer, in Bible study, in meditating on Him? Do we long for a life of righteousness? Psalm 42:1-2a says, "As the deer pants for water, so I long for you, O God. I thirst for God, the living God."

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled." Only when we increase our spiritual hungering and thirsting will we be complete and sat-

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isfied. Jesus says He is the "bread of life: he that comes to me shall not hunger, and he that believes on me shall never be thirsty" (John 6:35).

[Sara B. Kemp, 131 Devine St., Stanley, NC 28164, is a member of the Gastonia, NC, congregation.]

Was the Lord's Supper Observed Daily in the Early Church?

by Wayne Jackson

It is becoming increasingly common to hear brethren argue that the first-century church, under the oversight of the apostle, observed the Lord's supper on a daily basis. Hence it is alleged that it does not matter upon which day Christians celebrate the communion; such is an optional matter.

The "Proof-Text"

The chief proof-text for this new concept is Acts 2:46. "And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat [food] with gladness and singleness of heart." Some are contending that this passage affords evidence that those primitive saints broke bread, i.e., partook of the Lord's supper, on a daily basis. The exegesis underlying this view is flawed in several particulars.

First, the expression "daily" denotes the frequency with which the disciples were meeting in the temple. Grammatically, it does not modify "breaking bread." Thus, even if it could be established that "breaking bread" in verse 46 is an allusion to the Lord's supper, there would still be no proof that communion was an everyday occurrence.

Second, the term "breaking bread" in this passage does not refer to the Lord's supper; rather, it denotes a common meal as evidenced by the fact that it is paralleled with "eat their food" in the same clause. The word "food" translates the Greek *trophe*, which essentially means **nourishment** (Arndt & Gingrich, *Lexicon*, p. 835). The term (employed some sixteen times in the Greek New Testament) is never used of the com-

munion, for such was not designed to nourish the physical body. A comment of Albert Barnes speaks to this point: "Here [meat — KJV] it means all kinds of sustenance; that which nourished them — **trophes** — and the use of this word **proves** that it does not refer to the Lord's supper; for that ordinance is nowhere represented as designed for an ordinary meal, or to nourish the body" (*Commentary on Acts*, p. 59).

Third, in Acts 2:42 there is a reference to the disciples "breaking **the** bread." Notice the article preceding "bread" (not translated in our common versions, but present in the Greek text). The article indicates that a special "bread" is under consideration, i.e., the Lord's supper (cf. Acts 20:7, "the breaking of bread" and 1 Corinthians 10:16, "the bread which we break"). However, in Acts 2:46 there is no article in connection with "bread," hence a distinction seems to be drawn between the "bread" of 2:42 and 2:46 (cf. A. Campbell, *The Christian System*, pp. 272, 273). Numerous scholars do not believe that the Lord's supper is referred to in Acts 2:46 (cf. R.C.H. Lenski, A.T. Robertson, J.W. McGarvey, W.E. Vine, etc.).

Fourth, there is an interesting context later in the book of Acts which may add some insight to this matter. Near the conclusion of his third missionary journey, Paul had departed from Philippi just after "the days of unleavened bread" — which came just following the Jewish Passover — (cf. Acts 20:6) and he was **hurriedly** making his way to Jerusalem. He hoped to arrive there in time for Pentecost — fifty days after Passover (cf. 20:16). In spite of the fact that he

had a journey of several hundred miles, which could involve difficult sailing conditions, he took the time to **tarry** seven days in Troas. Why? The best answer is — so that he could meet with the saints of that city and observe the communion with them. Burton Coffman notes: “Presumably, this delay from Tuesday till the following Monday was to enable the missionary group with Paul to observe the Lord’s supper with the church in Troas, an inference from the fact that no reason was given for the delay, coupled with the account of the Lord’s day meeting in Troas immediately after mentioning the delay” (**Commentary on Acts**, p. 384). If this reasoning is correct, the following question is entirely appropriate: if the communion was being observed daily, or if the time of this commemoration was optional, what need would there have been for a delay of one week? This is circumstantial evidence for a weekly Lord’s supper.

The Record of Church History

The testimony of the writings of those who lived shortly after the apostolic age

bears unmistakable witness to the fact that the Lord’s supper was observed each week on Sunday, and only upon that day. In the **Didache** (a document written about A.D. 120) the statement is made that Christians “come together each Lord’s day, break bread, and give thanks” (7:14). Justin Martyr (c. 152) also speaks of Christians meeting on Sunday and partaking of the communion (**Apology I**, 67).

In his book, **Early Christians Speak**, Everett Ferguson has observed that the literature of the post-apostolic age indicates that the Lord’s supper was a constant feature of the Sunday service. He declares that there is no second-century evidence for the celebration of a daily communion (p. 96).

Thus, it must be concluded that there is no Biblical authority for the novel concept that one may partake of the Lord’s supper at his own discretion.

[Brother Jackson preaches in Stockton, CA, P.O. Box 55265, zip 95205. He edits the Christian Courier, from which this article was taken.]

Hickory Church of Christ

On October 8, 1989, the Hickory church of Christ will celebrate her forty-fifth anniversary. Claude and Bessie Downey, Loyd and Mable Downey, Hobson Allen and two children met for worship in a room in a building occupied by Duke Power Company on October 8, 1944. This was the first meeting of the church in Hickory, North Carolina.

From November 1945 to 1949 the church met for worship and Bible study in the offices of the Hickory Steam Laundry, which was owned and operated by Claude and Loyd Downey.

In 1948 a fire-damaged building, formerly occupied by an Episcopal church, was purchased and remodeled. This building was occupied by the church on November 20, 1949. M.E. Burns of Valdese and Burrell J. Prince of Statesville spoke at the morning and evening services respectively.

From 1949 to 1971 the church met in this renovated building in downtown Hickory.

The church made slow but steady progress over those years. Since November 1971, the church has met in a spacious building located on Fairgrove Church Road, east of Hickory, serving not only the Hickory area, but also the Newton-Conover area as well.

The church is overseen by three elders: Bill Martin, Bob Miller, and Cliff Walter. Mark Kidd, John Little, Mike Martin, and Garry Quarles serve the church as deacons. Johnny Melton presently serves as pulpit minister for the church.

The Hickory church of Christ, since its beginning forty-five years ago, has experienced periods of both growth and decline, as do most churches. Over the years, two other congregations have been established by brethren from the Hickory church of Christ. The West Hickory church of Christ was established in 1981, and the North Hickory church of Christ began in 1988.

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acterizes the church. The congregation is proud of its heritage and rejoices in the blessings God has granted over the past forty-five years. However, the church is confident that her best years are still in the future.

A Homecoming/Fall Revival is planned for October 4-8 to celebrate this milestone in the history of the Hickory church of Christ. Barry Elliott, a former minister of the

Hickory church who now lives and preaches in Clanton, Alabama, will preach in the Revival.

All former members of the Hickory church of Christ are invited to return for this event. For more information, contact Johnny Melton, Route 2, Box 137, Conover, NC 28613, (704) 464-4983 or 465-6739.

Reexamining the Fundamentals, XII

by David Pharr, Editor

Among churches of Christ the rejection of ecclesiastical titles, such as "Reverend," "Pastor," "Father," etc., has been consistent. While both Protestants and Catholics have generally favored such distinguishing appellations, we have insisted that titles are unscriptural in their origin and fleshly in their design.

A text that goes directly to this issue is Matthew 23:8-12. "But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted."

Words are symbols of ideals. Titles are used to indicate positions. The same words might be acceptable in one context and rejected in another. Jesus forbade the use of titles for distinguishing one as of a special class, for elevating certain ones above their brethren. One might be a "father" to others, as was Paul to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 4:15), or a "son in the faith" as was Timothy to Paul (1 Tim. 1:2), but this only describes a relationship. Never do we find apostolic example of the use of "Father" as a religious title.

Clearly, Jesus reserves exaltation to Deity, and therefore reserves for God titles that exalt. When men appropriate titles that imply special positions, superiority, or spir-

itual favor, they are in direct violation of the principle Jesus taught.

In the King James Version the word "reverend" occurs only in Psalm 111:9, where it is said of God, "holy and reverend is His name." The word translated "reverend" occurs in various connections in the Hebrew Old Testament and is applied with various connotations to men as well as to God. It is not, therefore, correct to say that it is a "title applied only to God," as sometimes we have argued. What is correct is to say that it is not a title at all, and certainly is not suitably appropriated as a title when Jesus has forbidden all such pretension.

Thoughtful reflection on Jesus' words shows that the problem is deeper than the titles themselves. The root is human pride, and especially the spirit that forgets every man's position before his Creator. Being rebuked by Jesus are all who think they are in a special class both as relates to their relationship with God and their relationship with their fellow men. One specific way such a spirit is manifested is in the use of titles.

There is, sadly, a human tendency to seek position, prominence, and power. Titles have always been a reflection of this. The high-sounding terms of distinction used by most of the religious world, such as "Reverend," "Bishop," "Father," etc., are only reflections of a deeper error — the unscriptural concept of clergy and laity. The idea of a class of clergy which is separate and above the masses (lay people) is totally foreign to the New Testament. Yet most of the religious

world accepts it.

The clergy has been ordained to a special class to whom usually is reserved the right to perform sacerdotal functions (baptism, communion, etc.). It is also generally accepted that the clergy have greater spiritual insight, and that they are closer in their relationship with God. The fruit of this erroneous distinction has been a tendency to leave religion to the select few, the clergy. Personal responsibility for knowing the truth from the Bible and for many aspects of Christian ministry has been abdicated by the people and assigned to the clergy class. The clergy, for the most part, revels in its importance, profits by its prominence, and wears its titles with pride.

We can hardly miss how contrary all such is to the teaching of Jesus. Notice again that in the very place where he warned against titles, he urged that we be servants and that we humble ourselves (Matt. 23:11-12). Matthew 20:20-28 brings the matter into even sharper focus. When there was contention over who would have high positions in the kingdom, Jesus rebuked the apostles for even considering such an issue.

There is equality among the children of God. "And all ye are brethren" (Matt. 23:8). "Ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). Paul's remark about leaders in Jerusalem is significant: "But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) . . ." (Gal. 2:6). Every Christian is a priest (1 Pet. 2:5). Christ is the only high priest. It matters little whether they be styled "priests," "reverends," "clerics," or "fathers"; the truth is that there is only "one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5). The clergy-laity notion is among the worst abominations to come from Rome. Protestants have modified and softened it, but their clergy system is of the same fabric. It is all without Bible authority.

We have insisted that we ought always to "call Bible things by Bible names." This is a safe approach (though we may sometimes have equated "Bible names" as being strictly terminology from the King James Version). We understand that terms convey certain meanings. What is important, therefore, is

that we use terms that denote correct meanings.

This principle is important in the use of the word "pastor." This is a New Testament term meaning shepherd (Eph. 4:11) and is connected to the work of elders (1 Pet. 5:1-3; Acts 20:28). Since the New Testament makes a very plain distinction between the role of elders and preachers, it follows therefore that preachers (who are not elders) should not be called pastors. In the denominational world, however, this has been almost universally ignored. In churches of Christ preachers of the gospel are not designated as "pastors." In denominational circles the typical expressions are "pastor," "the pastor," "our pastor."

There is, of course, some overlapping of the things elders and preachers do. In some ways a preacher may be involved in pastoral work. By this we simply mean that he is involved in serving the needs of the flock. But this does not mean that being a preacher makes one a pastor, in the Biblical use of the term. In the fleshly emphasis of so much of the world, however, we can hardly fail to detect the pomp, pride, and exclusivity implied as people speak of "the pastor of the church."

We are taught to give honor to whom honor is due (Rom. 13:8). The question arises as to whether honor should be given to men because of their academic achievements. Should a brother be introduced as "Dr. _____" to recognize his earned degree? It is useful to observe that when Jesus spoke of those who loved to be called "Rabbi" the title Rabbi indicated what we would call an earned degree. This was not an empty honorary designation, but one that represented much study. Still Jesus warned against its use as a tool of pride and superiority.

We were told of a congregation that had a number of military people among the members, including one with the rank of major. The elders found it necessary to explain to this brother that when he arrived at the church building, he and everyone else needed to forget that he was a major. One of the elders who provided this admonition was himself only a sergeant. The point is that positions and titles, whether military, academic,

judicial, governmental, or any other kind, are to be laid aside when we are involved in the service of Christ. Just as water always seeks its own level, so the blood of Jesus has levelled all men to the rank of equal brotherhood.

While among us we have not adopted the use of titles characteristic of most of the sects, there is always a danger that the same spirit might manifest itself in other ways. A preacher who seeks exaltation is guilty of sin whether he accepts the title "Reverend" or not.

Sometimes Scriptural terms may be used in an unscriptural way. For example, it is obviously right to address one as a brother. We are, though, seeing the word brother used frequently with the implication of a title. Some seem to be reserving it for preachers, and seem to use it as a substitute for "Reverend." For example, one might say, "This is our preacher, Brother _____," but not ordinarily introduce other Christians as "Brother" or "Sister." The error is not in the terminology, but in the exclusive use of it. It is not wrong to call a preacher a brother, but it is wrong to use "Brother" as a title.

This is seen further in the use of capitalization and abbreviation. We see "Brother _____" in the middle of sentences where the rules of grammar do not require a capital

"b." Letters are begun, "Dear Brother _____," or worse, "Dear Bro. _____." The use of the capital and especially the abbreviation suggest that the Scriptural term "brother" is being used unscripturally as a title.

We are also concerned about the misuse of the word "minister." It is proper that those who preach be known as ministers (1 Cor. 4:1; 2 Tim. 4:5, etc.). We must guard, though, against the same spirit that brought others to their use of "Reverend" and "Pastor." When a man is exalted by the title "Minister," when this is used to designate a special class, when "our Minister" is only a euphemism for "our Pastor," the cautions Jesus gave need to be applied (Matt. 23:8-12).

Some may feel these are trivial concerns. Jesus did not treat them as trivial. He showed that the use of titles was a symptom of a deeper malady. Churches of Christ have not rejected titles as a mere quirk of tradition. These are issues that involve the heart. We cannot be right with God unless our hearts are right. Hearts that are right will not seek the pomp and prominence implied by high-sounding titles.

[Editor Pharr is Director of East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions, 6608 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37931.]

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Brotherhood News

by Dennis Conner

Around North Carolina . . .

There have been several preacher changes to transpire over the summer. CHARLES FETTERS has given up his work at the church in Wilkesboro in order to accept the work at the Lexington church of Christ. Charles' ministry at Wilkesboro has been positive and progressive. ROBERT GOFF, a native Carolinian who has been preaching for the past several years in Malden, Missouri, is now the new preacher for the Goldsboro church of Christ. He began his work with the Goldsboro church on Sept. 3. Robert has previously served churches in King, Statesville, and Jacksonville. JOHN RISSE has moved to Abilene, Texas, to preach for the Southern Hills church of Christ. Before moving to Texas, John enjoyed a fruitful ministry as preacher for the Providence Road church in Charlotte. JIM HUNTER has resigned as preacher for the Albemarle church of Christ after a ministry of six years. In a statement in the church bulletin, Jim wrote, "At present, we are looking into two options, one of which the men have offered for me to remain working with the church here on a part-time basis as a personal worker." We pray God's continued favor upon all of these brothers in their respective preaching and teaching ministries. . . . The FOREST CITY CHURCH OF CHRIST will sponsor the Third Annual Foothills Gospel Singing on Oct. 27. The singing will begin at 7:30 p.m. at the Cool Springs School Auditorium. In addition to congregational singing, there will be some quartet and group singing. For further information contact Wayman Love at (704) 245-2720 or 248-1239. . . . DON and NANCY FILES, para-missionaries from the Brewer Road church of Christ in Winston-Salem, have returned to the States after a 2½-year stay in Belgium. . . . Piedmont area churches will gather Nov. 12 for an area-wide worship service. The service will be conducted in the Reynolds High School Auditorium in Winston-Salem. The Friendly Ave. church in Greensboro is spearheading the effort. . . . ZANE WEST is the new preacher for the church in Lenoir.

And South Carolina . . .

There is a new congregation of believers now meeting on Hilton Head Island. The church began meeting on July 16 at the Palmetto Bay Offices. Times of services on Sunday are 9:30 a.m. for Bible study and 10:30 a.m. for worship. The phone number is (803) 681-9120. . . . Homecoming for the LEXINGTON CHURCH OF CHRIST is planned for Nov. 11-12. The special guest speaker will be Joe Beam.

And Elsewhere . . .

E. W. McMILLAN, longtime preacher, celebrates his 100th birthday on Sept. 27. McMillan is the author of **The Minister's Spiritual Life**, considered by many to be a classic. . . . Dr. MAC LYNN, in a speech delivered at the Nashville Jubilee in July, reported that there are now almost as many churches of Christ outside the U.S. as there are inside. Noting that his research was still incomplete, Lynn said, "The best information I have at this point is that there are almost as many churches of Christ outside the United States as there are inside — about 11,000 congregations — but total membership is about half that of U.S. churches." His research to date shows that there are about 59 nations where there is no presence of the churches of Christ.

Calendar of Events

Sept. 29-Oct. 1 — Spiritual Enrichment Weekend at the Boone church of Christ, Boone, NC. Ron Newberry of Greensboro will be the speaker. Theme: "Our Commitment to Jesus: Its Joys and Challenges."

Oct. 6-8 — Church Growth Seminar at the Archdale church of Christ in Charlotte, NC. The speaker will be Jim Mankin of Abilene, Texas.

Oct. 29-Nov. 1 — Gospel meeting at the St. Andrews Rd. church of Christ in Columbia, SC. Speaking will be David Pharr of Knoxville, Tenn.

Nov. 13-16 — South Carolina Lectures, Winnsboro church of Christ.

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Myrtle Beach Lectureship

“Have You Ever Wondered . . . ?”

October 20-22

Friday, October 20, 1989

7:00 p.m. — “Where Is the Home Headed?” *Craig Hinrichs*

Saturday, October 21

9:30 a.m. — Registration and Coffee

10:00 a.m. — “Is There Really Life After Death?” *Larry Jelley*

10:45 a.m. — Break

11:00 a.m. — “Where Are the Dead?” *Paul Jarrett*

11:45 a.m. — Lunch (Everyone is on his own for meals)

1:30 p.m. — “What Will the Second Coming of Christ Be Like?”
Frank McElveen

2:15 p.m. — “What Will the Judgment Day Be Like?” *David Pharr*

3:15 p.m. — Dinner

7:00 p.m. — “What Will Heaven Be Like?” *Gary Durham*

Sunday, October 21

9:30 a.m. — Bible Classes

10:00 a.m. — “How Can We Be Sure That the Bible Is True?”
Mark Claypool

10:45 a.m. — Break

11:00 a.m. — “Can We Know That We Are Saved?” *Wayne Miller*

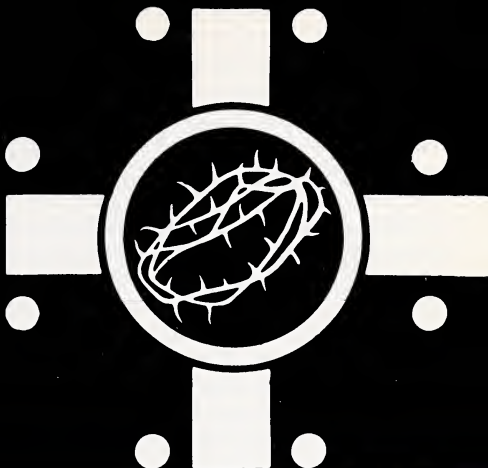
11:45 a.m. — Lunch

6:00 p.m. — “Where Is the Church Headed?” *Joseph Barr*

The Myrtle Beach church meetinghouse is located on Hwy. 17 By-Pass
at 38th Avenue, Myrtle Beach, SC.

CAROLINA CHRISTIAN

VOL. 31, NO. 10, OCTOBER 1989



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The Golden Rule

Rabbi Hillel taught, "What is hateful to yourself, do to no other." In the Book of Tobiat, the aged Tobias taught his son, "What thou thyself hatest, to no man do."

King Nicocles advised, "Do not do to others the things which make you angry when you experience them at the hands of other people."

The Stoics had a maxim that went, "What you do not wish to be done to you, do not do to anyone else."

Immanuel Kant, a more recent theologian, remarked, "I ought never to act except so that I would want my policy to become universal law."

While all these statements are similar to that teaching of Jesus we call the Golden Rule, it is significant that man tends to be concerned about the negative — what we should **not** do. But Jesus taught positive action. All the maxims cited above can be achieved by doing nothing! Jesus taught involvement. Listen: "*Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets*" (Matthew 7:12).

Johnny R. Melton



According to the Associated Press, the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ denomination) has determined by a vote of 1,768 to 1,685 that the Bible is not their "highest authority." A resolution was presented which would have declared the Bible to be higher authority than reason, tradition, and experience in determining Christ's will. The result of the vote indicated that the majority did not hold the Bible to be the final rule of faith and practice.

The Disciples of Christ are the liberal wing of the digression that left the church in favor of such things as the missionary society and instrumental music during the late 1800's. The "Independent" Christian churches are generally more conservative than the Disciples, even though both groups started with disregard for certain Biblical principles.

Those who are aware of the direction taken by the Disciples are not greatly surprised by their open rejection of Bible authority. It only confirms what has generally been evident. Still, there is a tragic irony in the fact that a movement that was once influenced by Alexander Campbell, Barton W. Stone, J.W. McGarvey, and many like champions of truth would have moved so far from the faith.

Some brethren wonder about, and may even be critical of, those who warn about unscriptural and questionable innovations. Some do not want to be bothered by such issues. Such indifference, however, is very much like the attitudes that allowed the digression of the last century. The pattern of history is clear. Men invented new things. When sound brethren opposed them, many said they did not see that it really made much difference. Innovations were accepted, first one, then another. The church divided. Departures from the Bible pattern were added and multiplied. The liberals got more liberal. Then they had a convention in 1989 and took a vote. They voted that the Bible is not the

final authority. It all started when some thought that new things (without Scriptural authority) were all right, and others were either too busy or too indifferent to take a stand.

Responsible Opposition

We have long felt that we would be more effective in opposing errors and innovations if we would do so more responsibly. It seems sometimes that we are inclined to "shoot first and ask questions later." We do not question that it is sometimes necessary to expose

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CAROLINA CHRISTIAN is published monthly by Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., at 71 S. Fairfield Road, Greenville, SC 29605. Subscription price; individual \$7.00 per year; club of five or more \$6.50 per year; quantity of 15 or more in bundles or direct mailing 40¢ per copy per month. Publication number, 091160.

Second class postage paid at Greenville, SC.

POSTMASTER: Send undelivered copies with Form 3579 to Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., Johnny Melton, Managing Editor, Route 2, Box 137, Conover, North Carolina 28613.

RETURN REQUESTED

Address editorial matter to David Pharr, Editor, ETSOPM, 6608 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37931. Address news items to Dennis Conner, P.O. Box 1219, Yadkinville, NC 27055.

All items to be printed in a given month's issue should reach the editor not later than the next-to-the-last Thursday of the preceding month.

Address commercial advertising inquiries to Jacobs List, Inc. Clinton, SC 29325. Address all advertising pertaining to the Church of Christ or its members (including related organizations) to the editor.

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a false teacher, even by name; but we should always ask whether it is being done truly for the sake of truth, or for a prideful desire to make a name for oneself. No, it is not always required that we seek to communicate with a brother before we openly oppose his error; but surely such would be better if there is any chance of his being persuaded to change his position and to correct his own mistakes. Too often a wedge is driven that might not have been necessary.

Responsible opposition also means correctly representing those whose positions we oppose. It is never proper to misrepresent or to exaggerate the errors of even a false teacher. One reason many will not heed warnings is because what they read or hear is an exaggeration of what they have actually observed.

One thing that complicated early opposition to the Crossroads movement was that some charges against it were simply not true. Some who heard such unfounded charges and knew they were untrue were naturally inclined to question whether the other charges were true.

Those who teach error may not be bound by the strictures of consistency, integrity, and decency. But those who stand for the truth are. We must use only legitimate arguments (not merely those that seem to work). We must be fair and honest regarding those with whom we disagree.

Decline in Evangelism

The decline in evangelistic zeal over the brotherhood cannot be denied. We are seeing fewer church plantings. Personal evan-

gelism is rare. Many congregations are replacing evangelistic meetings with various other programs. Too many preachers are making little effort to convert people other than those connected with church families. Where gospel meetings are held, a major portion of the congregation will be hardly involved.

One evident reason for this is the materialism that has engulfed us. We are so prosperous, so caught up in the mainstream of American prosperity, that we are drifting from the deep interest in spiritual things needed to involve us in soul winning efforts. Affluence also tends to make us fearful of appearing strange in the eyes of our likewise affluent friends.

Another thing which may be to blame for the decline in evangelism is the trend of congregations to create church growth by means of public interest programs (marriage and family, social issues, etc.) instead of by straightforward gospel preaching. Such programs may be helpful. They may even be useful in making contacts. But they must not be a substitute for plain presentation of the plan of salvation.

Perhaps the thing most responsible for the decline in evangelism is that many really do not believe that the truth we preach is the only truth that will save. To the extent that we abandon our convictions regarding the oneness of the church, the necessity of baptism for the remission of sins, the Scriptural plan of worship, etc. — to the same extent we will cease to be concerned with converting people.

Managing Editor's Column

The Cosmological Argument for the Existence of God

by Johnny Melton

Alan H. Guth and Paul J. Steinhardt have presented a new theory of cosmology called "The Inflationary Universe." They presented their theory in an extensive article

in *Scientific American* (Vol. 250, May 1984, pp. 116-128). In the conclusion of their article it was observed,

From a historical point of view probably the most revolutionary aspect of the inflationary model is the notion that all matter and energy in the observable universe may have emerged from almost nothing. This claim stands in marked contrast to centuries of scientific tradition in which it was believed that something cannot come from nothing.

Revolutionary, indeed! But they were not through. In the last sentence of the article Guth and Steinhardt wrote: "It is then tempting to go one step further and speculate that the universe evolved from literally nothing" (p. 128).

The ancient maxim so easily waved aside by Guth and Steinhardt is this: *Ex nihilo, nihil fit* — out of nothing, nothing is made. With a stroke of the pen these men set aside not only a principle that has been conceded by rational men down through the centuries, but they also deny the First Law of Thermodynamics (i.e., matter is incapable of creating itself).

In light of this new theory of cosmology, it is appropriate to restate Biblical cosmology. Cosmology has to do with the cosmos or the universe. The presence of the cosmos/universe must be explained. The Hebrew writer states the Biblical position in Hebrews 3:4, "For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything." Paul declared that men could know God by virtue of seeing the world around them. "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities — his eternal power and divine nature — have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse" (Rom. 1:20).

Thomas Aquinas (1224-74) was perhaps the most significant theologian of the Middle Ages. He stated the cosmological argument for the existence of God in Five Ways. The first three of these Ways to prove God's existence are sufficient for our purposes.

Aquinas began, "The first and more manifest way is the argument from motion. It is certain, and evident to our senses, that in the world some things are in motion. Now whatever is moved is moved by another . . ." (**The Cosmological Arguments,**

Donald R. Burrill, Editor, Anchor Books, Doubleday and Company, Inc., Garden City, NY, 1967, p. 52). This first Way is similar to Aristotle's Unmoved Mover. If the universe is in motion (and it is) then there had to be something or someone to set it in motion. The Unmoved Mover is God.

Aquinas continued, "The second way is from the nature of efficient cause. In the world of sensible things we find there is an order of efficient causes. There is no case known (neither is it, indeed, possible) in which a thing is found to be the efficient cause of itself; for so it would be prior to itself, which is impossible" (Burrill, p. 53). This is the point where Guth and Steinhardt lose their credibility. Dr. George F. Davis, a prominent physicist, has declared: "No material thing can create itself." And further Dr. Davis contends that this statement "cannot be logically attacked on the basis of any knowledge available to us" (**The Evidence of God in an Expanding Universe,** John Monsma, Editor, G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1958, p. 71).

John H. Gerstner, in his book, **Reasons for Faith,** writes:

"In the beginning matter created the heaven and the earth." What is the matter with that? Nothing is the matter with that except the matter. . . . What precisely is the matter with matter?

Matter has a past. That is, the matter with matter is that it had a mater [mater is the Latin word for mother, JRM] (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1972, p. 30).

More appropriately we would say that matter has a pater (father). God is the Uncaused Cause. He is the adequate, sufficient cause who stands back of the created universe. To suggest that "the universe evolved from literally nothing" is to invite people to abandon all reason and to give credence to the patently absurd.

Aquinas stated further:

The third way is taken from possibility and necessity, and runs thus. We find in nature things that are possible to be and not to be, since they are found to

be generated, and to be corrupted, and consequently, it is possible for them to be and not to be. But it is impossible for these always to exist, for that which can not-be at some time is not. Therefore, if everything can not-be, then at one time there was nothing in existence. Now if this were true, even now there would be nothing in existence, because that which does not exist begins to exist only through something already existing. Therefore, if at one time nothing was in existence, it would have been impossible for anything to have begun to exist; and thus even now nothing would be in existence — which is absurd. Therefore, not all beings are merely possible, but there must exist something the existence of which is necessary. But every necessary thing either has its necessity caused by another, or not. Now it is impossible to go on to infinity in necessary things which have their necessity caused by another, as has been already proved in regard to efficient causes. Therefore we cannot but admit the existence of some being having of itself its own necessity, and not receiving it from another, but rather causing in others their necessity. This all men speak of as God (Burrill, pp. 54-55).

This third Way has come to be called the Argument From Contingency. “All natural things are contingent, that is, they are capable of being or not being. In a period of eternal time every contingent thing would cease to exist. Then, there would be no world, but since there is a world, there must be some force behind it — God” (B.B. Baxter, **I Believe Because**, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1971, pp. 53-54).

God is the only essential Being. Everything else is contingent or dependent upon something else. God is the only Being which combines both existence and essence — His essence is to exist.

Denying God puts men adrift on a sea of absurdity. The universe is real. Men are rational beings. Rational minds demand reasonable explanations. It is only when men refuse to believe in God that “it is **tempting** [emphasis mine, JRM] to go one step further and speculate that the entire universe evolved from literally nothing.” The reality of God is affirmed in Scripture and is consistent with both science and philosophy.

[Johnny serves as pulpit minister for the Hickory church of Christ. He can be contacted at Rt. 2, Box 137, Conover, NC 28613.]

The Just Shall Live by Faith

by Paul E. Jarrett

This article is the final one in a series of three dealing with the topic Eschatological Essentials. Throughout this series I have addressed what I perceive to be the chief error of the so-called “70 A.D. Doctrine” (set forth first in 1971 by Max R. King in a book titled **The Spirit of Prophecy**). I have done so as a means of setting forth a way of approaching the subject of eschatology (i.e., the doctrine of last things) which I believe will help us to avoid the errors that come with a misplaced focus on times and seasons.

It is my prayer that these articles will not have contributed to the divisions that have so often resulted from the discussion of eschatology. Rather, I hope that at the con-

clusion I will have helped set forth some essentials upon which we can all unite as a first step in addressing our differences as to the specifics of this most difficult area of study.

I would like to begin this final article in this series by sharing with you my reaction when I first heard of the “70 A.D. Doctrine” back in 1970. My initial response was to think that it sounded a lot like what I had heard others say about their believing that the second coming of Christ, the day of judgment, etc., was not a cataclysmic event that would happen to all men at the same time, but was instead something that happened to all men individually at the point of death.

While that view does not constitute our traditional view of the second coming and judgment to come, I am not personally convinced that such a view of the time of our end would be cause for a great deal of debate. Whether we all stand before God's throne of judgment as a group, or individually as we leave this world at the point of death, may lend itself to debate, but I do not know that it will have any kind of negative impact on the way we live our lives in preparation for judgment. Unlike the premillennial views which encourage the notion of a second chance, and undermine the present reality of Christ's reign, the view of judgment and consignment to heaven, or hell, at the immediate end of one's life would seem to have little impact on the basic eschatological view set forth in Scripture. (In fact, Zechariah 14; Hebrews 11 and 12; and Revelation 21 and 22's portrayal of life as a pilgrimage to an eternal city may lend support to this interpretation of an ongoing judgment.)

As I became more aware of the emphasis given to eschatology by proponents of the "70 A.D. Doctrine," however, I concluded that it did pose a threat to the faith of some. Either by reason of the design of their position, or by carelessness in the manner of its presentation, advocates of the "70 A.D. Doctrine" have had an unsettling effect on the faith of some through their assertions that judgment and the resurrection are to be presented in the past tense, having had primary application to the fall of Jerusalem.

It is one thing to suggest that the order of events and the manner of our change from the earthly to the heavenly are open to discussion. It is quite another to imply that the change has already been accomplished in the destruction of Jerusalem and in the resurrection of the church from that earthly system. Such reasoning smacks of liberalism which would suggest that the resurrection of Christ was not a bodily resurrection, but a resurrection of "the truth, or ideals" for which He died.

It is essential that our view of eschatology strengthen the faith of each man and woman in the fact of personal salvation. If this is not our hope, we are, in Paul's words, "most miserable" (1 Cor. 15:19). While the

events that occurred in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 have provided us with an example, and a confirmation of the certainty of our salvation, that salvation is not of a corporate body, but of each one of us as individual members of that body in keeping with that which Paul affirmed to be "a trustworthy statement."

"It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him; If we endure, we shall also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us; If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself" (2 Tim. 2:11-13).

While there are many things that I do not know, or understand, regarding the times and seasons (Acts 1:7; Matt. 24:35, 36), I do know with utmost certainty that there is a day of judgment in my future, and a resurrection of life to those who do good deeds, and a resurrection of judgment to those who commit evil deeds (Heb. 9:27; John 5:28, 29).

I often have expressed my awe of God's wisdom in the design and the unveiling of a plan of salvation that is "from faith to faith" (Rom. 1:17). Only the all-wise God could design a system of salvation in which from the first man who ever lived, to the last man who walks the face of the earth, salvation has been, and will be, contingent upon faith and trust in God.

I do not claim to "know all mysteries and all knowledge" (and Paul says even if I did, and had not love, "I [would be] nothing" [1 Cor. 13:2]); but I do know that the "just shall live by faith." Therefore, in respect to eschatology, it would seem to me that the single most essential doctrine of all is to place one's faith in Jesus Christ as "the author and perfecter of faith" (Heb. 12:2) knowing that "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10).

[Paul preaches for the Archdale church in Charlotte, NC, P.O. Box 241002. Zip: 28224.]

A Child

by David Thompson

We have all heard sermons on Malachi 3:8. "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings." These sermons center on our returning to God a portion of our blessings. It is important for us to give for the church (body) to grow.

Let us look at this verse in a different light, not the light of our returning to God money, but our **children**. Have you been asking yourself any of the following questions?

1. Why is our church family not growing?
2. Why are we losing our young people?
3. What is happening to our Bible schools?
4. Why do our children not understand the Bible?

Questions like these should be on the mind of every Christian. The answer to these questions can be found in us (parents). We are not teaching our children at home as we should. "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6). "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3:14-15). Paul shows us the importance of Bible teaching at home. The American Standard Version uses the word "babe" in verse 15. It is important for us to start teaching our children at a young age about God and His word. We parents need to teach them that God is our God (Psalm 31:14) and that He is their God (Heb. 8:10). It is not safe to assume they will obey God just because we take them to church. They must be taught about God. Timothy's mother and grandmother did not assume Timothy would be good. They taught Timothy from the time he was a child about God and their faith was passed on to him (2 Tim. 1:5).

We must teach them about God; how God created the world and man; and all God has done for mankind. It is important for our children to hear the word of God coming from our lips. Time spent reading the Bible to children will help the parent and his children to grow closer together and closer to God. If our children see us studying the Bible they can see the importance of studying (2 Tim. 2:15). But we also need to tell them the importance of studying the Bible and encourage them to study their Bibles and to prepare their own Bible lessons.

We must teach them about the love Christ has for them. How He died for their sins and the sins of humanity (Rom. 5:8; 1 Pet. 3:18; 1 John 3:16). They need to understand what Christ gave up for all of us. We all need to understand the love of Christ, and make sure our children understand this.

We must teach them of our need for Christ. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).

Man has always needed a god. The god may be a sport, a life style, any other thing, or the true God. It is the responsibility of the parents to teach the children that God should be the center of our lives. If we need God, we also need Christ. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). God does not need man, but man needs God. We must teach our children the importance of the need for God, His love and salvation.

We need to teach them the gospel plan of salvation (the death, burial and resurrection of Christ) (1 Cor. 15:1-4). They need to understand what every step (hear, believe, repent, confess and be baptized) means, and how they build on each other.

The parent must insure that his child is equipped to battle the evil in the world. They need to learn to pray at home. Children need to see their parents praying at home. The disciples of Jesus saw the importance of prayer

so much that they asked Jesus to teach them how to pray (Luke 11:1). Prayer is the means by which we talk to God. Our prayers are times of personal growth toward God. We can open our hearts and feelings to God for His help. James, in James 5:16b, writes, "The prayer of the righteous has powerful results" (Hugo McCord's translation). Our prayers are always answered. They do have powerful results. Daniel was a man of prayer. A result of his prayer was his safe-keeping in the lions' den. Our children need to learn how to pray like Daniel. We should not let anything keep us from praying to God. As Daniel would not let a law keep him from praying, so we should "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17).

A parent must teach his child how to love and be loved. Paul, in the Galatian letter, writes, "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Gal. 5:22, 23). The Bible is centered on love, God's love for mankind (John 3:16). If it were not for Christ's love for all of us, He would not have paid the price for our salvation (1 John 4:9-11). John wrote about the kind of love we are to have. "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:18). "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3). "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love" (John 15:9). The love of the Father and Jesus

was an unconditional love. A parent must assure a child that he does not have to do anything to get the love of the parent.

A child needs to learn that the Christian life is not something to be lived only on one or two days a week, but every day. The child sees in his parent what it means to "take up his cross daily" (Luke 9:23). Our children do not need to hear things like: "The sermon was too long!" "Why do they not get someone else to lead the singing?" or any other statement which will belittle a brother or sister in Christ. We need to remember, "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves" (Phil. 2:3). A child can learn to be a Christian every day from other people, but the best example is the parent. Parents need to remember that they are role models for their children. We need to live 1 Corinthians 11:1: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."

A child is a great blessing from God. What a waste of a life (blessing), if we do not teach our children how to live! A parent is not a good steward of the blessings of God if he does not do his best to teach his child. Can we say what Joshua said, "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Josh. 24:15).

[Brother Thompson is a deacon with the Charlotte Avenue church, Rock Hill, SC.]

The Sacrifice

by Gary G. Payne

Now it was the soldiers' turn. Flogging Jesus seemed to be a sport. The whip was made with leather straps having pieces of bone and metal tied along each strand. The practice was to have the victim's hands tied to a low post so the back would be bent over. With the back bent over, the skin was drawn tight. Blood spurted at the first blow. Some men died from the Roman scourge alone.

After the flogging, they degraded Him further. Jesus became physically weakened. He was too weak to carry the cross. He was physically exhausted in Gethsemane from sorrow and stress. Then, He was kept up about all night in an unlawful court. Added to that was the flogging by the Roman soldiers. Someone else had to carry His cross.

Carrying the cross was meant to be a pub-

lic spectacle. They always made the accused carry the cross along public roads so everyone could see. The execution grounds were also in plain view for all to see. Taunts echoed in the air.

Being crucified was a great physical torture. It did no damage to vital organs. Nails seven inches long (like a railroad spike) were driven through the hands or wrists and feet or heels. Inflammation with insignificant bleeding caused traumatic fever. The fever was aggravated by the sun's heat and lack of fluids. Tetanus would sometimes come; the wounds would tear under convulsions. Ropes bound the shoulders or torso to the frame of the cross to keep the nails from tearing through the limbs. Sweat would run in the eyes as insects had their feast. Death usually came after many days — from fatigue, cramped muscles, hunger, and thirst.

Sometimes a drug was offered to deaden pain. They offered this to Jesus when they gave Him wine mixed with gall. He refused it. He was submitting to that cross for a purpose. He would let nothing get in the way of the perfect sacrifice He came to give.

As if this was not enough, further shame was brought upon Jesus. They gambled for His clothes — even His undergarment. Finally, the episode was about to end. Jesus was on the cross six hours. Fever, loss of blood, muscles straining, and exhaustion made it difficult to understand what He was saying. One ran for a drink. "Now, leave Him alone. Let us see if Elijah comes to save Him." Elijah did not come. Jesus died. With the last ounce of energy He had, He cried out, "It is finished . . . Father, into your hands I commit my spirit."

Jesus' physical torture was beyond comprehension. His spiritual torture was greater. "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor. 5:21). How do you feel about what was done?

The cross is not the end of Jesus' mark in history. Jesus was buried and He was raised from the dead on the third day. Now He offers us a new life.

[Gary preaches for the church in Reidsville. He may be contacted at 907 Courtland Ave., Reidsville, NC 27320.]

The "Magic" of the Spirit

by Ernie Thigpen

Do you believe in magic? I do. I have no question that some people have the amazing ability to perform feats of prestidigitation. They can make things appear out of thin air. I believe this because I have seen it with my own eyes. So have most married men.

Case #1: A husband is searching through his dresser for a pair of blue socks. Minutes have gone by and he has searched every drawer without success. Finally in desperation, he calls to his wife, "Honey, where are my blue socks?" "Right there in the second drawer of the dresser," which he has already searched. POOF! There, lying on top of everything in the drawer, his blue socks. "It is magic," the husband says.

Case #2: A husband is standing in front of the refrigerator with the door open looking for the mayonnaise. He has had the door open so long the butter has started to melt. Finally in desperation, he closes the refrig-

erator and calls to his wife, "Honey, where is the mayonnaise?" "Right there in the refrigerator beside the mustard," she says. Reluctantly, he reopens the refrigerator and moves the mustard which he has already moved at least ten times during his search. POOF! There, sitting in plain view, the mayonnaise. "It is magic," he says.

Why women have this magical ability and men do not is a mystery. It is my theory that this is one of the things women discuss at baby and bridal showers and that is why men cannot come to those things.

Many are searching for magic in their spiritual lives and have been led to believe that there is something more to find, a zap from God's Spirit that results in ecstatic speech or unearthly visions.

Ephesians 5:18 records Paul's command for all Christians to "be filled with the Spirit." No Christian can fulfill God's will

for his life apart from being filled with the Spirit. This involves confession of sin, surrender of will, intellect, body, time, talent, possessions, and desires. It requires the death of selfishness and the slaying of self-will and it initiates in the Christian with the rich indwelling of God's word (Col. 3:16-25). To be filled with the Spirit is to live in the consciousness of the personal presence of our Lord Jesus Christ as if we were standing next to Him, and let His mind dominate our lives.

Some Christians are looking for the Spirit in a magical way only to discover that we already have Him (Rom. 8:9; Acts 2:38). But the effect of being filled with His Spirit results in a straighter walk, not a magically higher jump. We must seek to obey this command.

[Ernie works with the Central church, 2052 N. Church Place, Spartanburg, SC 29303.]

Why the Church Should and Will Live

by J.C. Townsend

Sometimes in talking to members of the church, one gets the impression that they are rather pessimistic about the church and its future. You and I have no reason to adopt an attitude of this kind. We need to believe that the church will live and have the confidence that Christ will be with us as we proclaim His word and strive to build up the church which He established. The church which God designed and which Christ built is a wonderful institution and we need to defend it with all the power of our being. There are several reasons why the church will live.

First, it is the only universal institution except for the family. We hear of institutions claiming to be international or universal, but they are not. The church is the only institution in the world that invites people of every kindred, tribe and tongue and blends them into one family. The church is not bound by geographical confines, political organizations or racial prejudices. All other organizations have international or racial limitations and thus show that they are human in nature but this is not true of the church.

Second, the church will live because of its foundation. The strength of a building, an organization or institution depends upon the type of material in its foundation. Cities have building codes to insure that the buildings erected will be safe and will last. When I lived in Miami, Florida, I became acquainted with the strict building code which they have. They require that every building be what they

describe as hurricane proof. It must be built to withstand the terrific winds that blow during a hurricane. We need to realize that the church has the kind of foundation that will withstand every storm (Matt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 3:11).

Third, the church will live because of its head (Eph. 1:22-23). The head of the church is in heaven, not on earth, and no man has a right to legislate or to make laws for her (Matt. 28:18). The church will live because men need a guide that is sure and certain. Men need to be led through the maze of human contradiction and human frailties. We need a guide because of the tendency toward faulty living. It is wonderful to realize that we have the living, perfect word of God to direct us and to make sure that we are safe and all we need to be.

Fourth, she will live because of her cost. Cost indicates the value of an object. According to Acts 20:28, Jesus bought the church with His blood and this indicates that its worth is tremendous.

Fifth, the church will live because of its

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message (Heb. 4:12).

Sixth, the church will live because it brings salvation (Acts 2:47; Eph. 5:25). Since the church is the body of Christ, to be in Christ is to be in the church. It is in the church of our Lord that all spiritual blessings are made available (Eph. 1:3).

Seventh, the church will live because of its glorious past. During the first centuries of its existence, despite enemies within and without, it exerted the most potent influence of any institution in the world. It began in Jerusalem, grew rapidly, spread through the provinces of the Roman Empire and soon covered the world. It was opposed by the power of Rome, the philosophy of paganism, and still survived. It was corrupted during the Dark Ages but was destined to survive and be restored.

Eighth, it has produced hospitals and educational institutions and has lifted mankind

wherever its influence has been felt. The church is the light of the world. It reflects the light of its builder on the dark paths of human travels. Were it not for that light men would walk in darkness and would be most miserable indeed.

Ninth, it is the remedy for the world's troubles and deserves to live. It gives in the message that it proclaims the true sense of values. We live in a world filled with crime and corruption. The world is able to move in and bring the vices that beset mankind. But the church with its message of truth and righteousness can enable us to be triumphant. Indeed, the church will live and should live. You and I need to believe and manifest that attitude every day of our lives.

[Brother Townsend is a teacher in the extension of Alabama Christian School of Religion at Providence Rd. in Charlotte. Write to him at 4900 Providence Rd., 28211.]

Do We Have An Identity Crisis?

by Joe DeYoung

Everett W. Huffard is one of our missionaries in Israel. Several years ago he related an interesting phenomenon. In Nazareth, the hometown of Jesus, there is a congregation of New Testament Christians. And of course they have a sign which says "Church of Christ." As you might expect, thousands of tourists pass through that town each year, looking for some historical link with the life of Jesus of Nazareth. Seeing that sign, many of them assume that it identifies the place where Jesus worshiped as a small boy. Thus it was necessary for the Christians to erect another sign of explanation, in English, French, and Hebrew: "**This is not a historical site. It has importance only to the Christians who worship here.**"

Brother Huffard observes that instead of providing this explanation, they could have capitalized upon the credulity of tourists and set up a "souvenir shop" selling items supposedly used by the boy Jesus — such as crayon pieces or pieces of the wooden benches he might have sat on. There would certainly be takers among folks who are more interested in the sacredness of relics

than they are in the living words and the Lordship of Christ.

As I read this, it was not hard to conclude that this was a very isolated situation, and that our other congregations are not likely to have this kind of identity crisis. But do we have another kind? It is not likely that our sign by the road creates any confusion. Everyone who sees it probably assumes that its purpose is simply to designate the nearby building as the meeting place of a body of Christians who identify themselves religiously as "Church of Christ." However, we need to understand, and make it clear in our teaching, that the term church of Christ is not just another denominational title, but rather one of several Scriptural descriptive phrases designating the Lord's church (that body of Christians who are the "called out ones").

From this viewpoint, they should see at least two things: that a congregation so designated is one which is striving to follow the New Testament pattern in its organization, doctrine and worship; and just as important, that the individual members of such a body

are people who sincerely strive in their personal lives to demonstrate the attributes of their master, Jesus Christ.

If we do less than this, we are creating an unnecessary identity crisis, both for ourselves and for others.

[Joe DeYoung grew up in the Duncan, SC, congregation. For seven years he has been preaching in Manson, Manitoba, Canada, Box 26, ROMIJO. He preached in Greenville and Greenwood, SC, in 1975-1979.]

Baptism

by Howard Winters

Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). This verse seems simple enough to understand — so simple, in fact, that it is incredible that any average person could misunderstand it without a good deal of theological juggling. Jesus answers two questions: namely, who will be saved? And, who will be lost? Taking the last question first, who will be lost? "He that believeth not shall be damned." In another passage Jesus emphasized the same thing in different words when He said, "I said therefore unto you, ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). Thus without believing in Christ as God's Son, no one can be saved.

Now turning to the second question, who will be saved? Jesus answers, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Not the one who believes only, nor the one who is just baptized, but he who believes **and** is baptized. There are many in the religious world who do not accept this conclusion. They say, "One does not have to be baptized in order to be saved, or to have his sins forgiven." We readily concede that this may be (and often is) their opinion about the matter; but it is not, by any means, what the Lord said. He said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." There is simply no way to misunderstand it: Jesus promised to save the baptized believer. He does not promise (in this verse) to save anyone else.

In their quest to remove baptism from God's scheme of human redemption, many religious teachers and preachers, both in their belief and practice, have twisted Mark 16:16 into every conceivable interpretation. But it remains unchanged, a statement of fact so

simple that it cannot be misunderstood. We may not believe it, and we may not do what it says, but we cannot fail to comprehend it (if we are unbiased in our judgment). But let us notice how different groups have tried to change the verse — or rather how they try to understand what it says.

1. The Universalists say, "All are saved regardless of whether they believe and are baptized or not." This, they say, is what they believe about it. But, in all sincerity, it is not what Jesus said. Rather than accept what Jesus plainly said, the Universalists read their own opinions and conceptions into the verse.

2. The Calvinists say, "One who is saved will believe and be baptized." They believe that God, even before He made man, determined the exact persons who would be saved and who would be lost. This number cannot be changed, it is so certain and sure. The individual, as such, has no choice in the matter. But if God has predestinated one to be saved, that saved one will believe and be baptized. This simply says that one is already saved or lost (he is born that way), and that those who are already saved will believe and be baptized, but those who are already lost will not be able to believe. Belief and baptism thus identify the saved. We do not question the fact that this is what the Calvinists believe, but it is simply not what Jesus said.

3. The denominationalists (other than the Calvinists) say, "He that believes is saved and may be baptized." Unlike the Universalists or the Calvinists, the denominationalists say that one must believe to be saved — that salvation is given at the point of faith without any further acts of obedience. According to them, baptism is not necessary because one is saved by faith alone, faith before it expresses itself in action. They may honestly

(or otherwise) believe this, but Jesus did not say it in Mark 16:16.

4. Catholicism says, "He that is baptized is saved and may believe." For this reason a Catholic will baptize a newborn baby (so young that it is hardly capable of any actions, much less that of believing) in order to save its soul (in case of death) from the eternal fires of hell. With the denomination-
alists, belief is the only essential; with the Catholics baptism is essential, but belief is not. They leave no doubt but that this is what they believe, but it is not what Jesus said.

5. The Bible says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Those who accept Jesus as Lord (those who give all to follow Him) must accept this as the expression of His will — stipulated conditions that one must meet before the Lord saves him. Those who are sincerely seeking the way to heaven cannot profess to know anything beyond this. This is what the Lord said and it ends the matter for all who love Him. Those who promise more or less, those who take away these conditions or add others to them, make promises the Lord has not made. Those who believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God, those who believe the Bible to be the word of God, must do what the Lord has said — must do it because it is His will for them to do it. There is no other safe course to follow.

But many people (who are not willing to submit themselves completely to the words of Christ) will make all kinds of excuses to keep from accepting the words of Christ at face value. They try to justify themselves by using (or substituting) their own opinions rather than accepting the words of Jesus. Many, many times in my life I have heard someone ask, "What if one died while on his way to be baptized? Would he be lost?" In the final analysis, this is just another way of saying that the Lord could not have meant what He said because one might die on his way to obey His commands. And according to this reasoning, one simply could not be lost if he so died. The conclusion is, then, that if one so died he would (or could) be saved without baptism. But if one can be saved without baptism, baptism is not necessary to salvation. And if one can be saved without baptism, then all can be saved without it. Therefore it is not necessary to do

what the Lord commanded one to do in order to be saved. This is absolutely nothing but fallible human reason placed over against the inspired word of God in an effort to disregard a command and to change a promise. This no Bible believing person would presume to have a right to do.

But suppose we should apply this type of reasoning to other Bible subjects. We could soon eliminate the necessity of every subject in the Scriptures. Take, for example, the subject of faith. Suppose one should die on his way to hear a sermon that would make a believer out of him. Would he be lost? If not, then he would be saved without faith. Therefore, according to such reasoning, faith would not be essential. But if faith is not necessary for one, then it is not necessary for anyone. All can, therefore, be saved without believing. Such reasoning (?) is pure folly. Mark 16:16 (and any other passage in the Bible) means exactly nothing when such "logic" is applied to it. This would make man's opinion (about what should be) more important than the word of God. But the Bible is right, even if man's opinion is wrong. Paul asked, "For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar" (Rom. 3:3, 4).

We close by making this plea: do not be deceived by human opinion, even though that opinion may be your own. The Lord saves only those He promised to save. We should believe what He said and trust Him to keep His promise. As far as the Bible is concerned, Jesus promised to save only those who believe and are baptized — not those who believe only, or those who are baptized only, but those who believe and are baptized. Jesus once asked a very serious question, a question that we should all concern ourselves with: "And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46).

[Howard Winters died May 11, 1988. He was editor of this magazine for almost twenty years. We do not know when this apparently unpublished article was written.]



A Great Man Is Fallen

2 Samuel 3:38

by Donald F. Rhodes

We were all made sad when we received the information of the death of our beloved brother, Jerry Westmoreland. All who knew Jerry knew he was not in good health. Twice he had experienced by-pass surgery and had been forced into medical retirement. However, Jerry just could not sit around and not try to teach and do what he could to help others to know God's truth. To Jerry, God's "word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forebearing, and I could not stay" (Jer. 20:9).

Jerry had never learned to say no. When any congregation called needing a preacher to fill in, Jerry would always try to go. If problems came up, Jerry would try to help find a solution. He just could not quit.

About five weeks ago, Jerry and Teen left with the "So-Journers" to help with the work in the Northeast. Jerry was again in the work of his love, teaching Bible classes at camp, speaking in devotionals, and doing what he thought he could to promote the Master's cause. Jerry and Teen had almost completed what they left South Carolina to do. Just two more weeks and they would be homeward bound to be with their children

and grandchildren.

Tuesday morning, July 25th, Jerry spoke in the devotional at Northeastern College in Villanova, Pennsylvania. His text was Philipians 3:13-14. He especially presented the point: "If I miss Heaven, I have missed it all." Jerry completed the devotional and told some that he was not feeling well and was going to the motor home to rest. Jerry never made it.

Jerry has done much for the Lord in the Carolinas as well as in many other states and foreign mission work. He will surely be missed. His place will be empty.

I have lost a close personal friend, a brother in Christ, and a fellow preacher of the gospel. We cannot bring him back, but we can go to him.

Jerry's funeral was in West Memphis, Arkansas, and he was carried to his final resting place by his family, many of his friends and loved ones. His grave is in Marion, Arkansas.

Sister Westmoreland ("Teen") resides at Route 3, Box 293-C, Gray Court, SC 29645.

[Brother Rhodes works with the Mauldin, SC church: P.O. Box 731, 29662.]

Guilt Stains Upon My Heart

by Robert Curry

*I had a bad experience when I looked into my heart,
For I saw some things that ought to be and it gave me quite a start.
My guilt was there in scarlet script for me to see and read.
I had been warned so many times, but simply paid no heed.
I read the slanderous hate and guile I'd had for other men.
I saw that I had not been wise to ignore so great a sin.
With shame for myself, my soul was so stained, I realized what I should do.
I got to my knees and prayed to the Lord for my heart to be renewed.
Forgiveness was mine for my penitent heart had emptied itself of its dross.
I began, once again, to follow the Lord and happily bearing my cross.
My life is now better, my love has grown strong and I've gotten a wonderful start,
For I could not bear to stand before Christ with guilt stains on my heart.*

[Brother Curry works with the Duncan, SC, church: P.O. Box 728, 29334.]

Prose to Ponder

by Dale Hafner

"The fool has said in his heart, there is no God" (Psalm 14:1). While this passage is not exactly in total harmony with the following narrative, I could not help but think of it, as well as others, when I found myself watching one of "God's 'little' miracles."

My wife has an Evening Primrose planted in our yard, just on the other side of the driveway so it is easily seen as we leave the house. It seems that the plant would secretly bloom only in the dusk hours, while no one was around to see it. We would notice its greenery while we milled about the yard mowing, trimming, or just walking around talking. Then after the sun had set we would head in, walk by the Primrose, and boom, the yellow ecstasy of the blossoms would greet us on our way in.

One evening we carefully made plans to be there the next time it unfolded. So, sure enough, the next evening we, my wife, my son and I, found ourselves seated around the waist high still green petal pusher. It felt a little like I was eight years old again awaiting the arrival of Santa Claus on Christmas Eve. I knew he was coming; I just didn't know exactly when. As we sat and talked we grew impatient. My son and I left the scene to move the yard swing so I could mow the grass underneath. June, my wife, went over to the tomato patch. We met a few moments later at the flower bed and, you guessed it, the first blossom had popped open while we were doing other things!

Undaunted, we resumed our vigil, determined to see these little "roses" greet the day. About 8:15 we saw one bud begin to split its small green cage. At first there was just one slit, then two. We could finally see a yellow finger pushing its way to freedom. Then, with a silent "flip," the first petal jumped out of its house. I thought that was a biggie. A few moments later two petals were exposed to the world. With a victorious whisper, the full bloom exploded into view. Four yellow petals, somewhat resembling the dogwood bloom, unfolded from its natural prison.

We were transfixed on this phenomenon. I am sure you have seen the time-lapsed photography of a flower blooming on television. There is absolutely no comparison to the eyewitness of the real thing. I was impressed with the mammoth Stone Mountain in Georgia. I think this event topped even that. The actual blooming process took only about 45 seconds, but it was truly fascinating to see a flower bloom.

I have found the real meaning of "stop and smell the roses." So many of us are in such a rush to try to do great and exciting things that we totally disregard the smaller events in our lives without which there could be no big ones. "Consider the lilies how they grow; they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these" (Luke 12:27).

With amazing perfection these little creatures grew from seed, formed a bud and ultimately bloomed right before my eyes. The blooms only last for one day, but the very next day there are dozens more to take their place and repeat the process. In view of such majesty and simple beauty, yet such a complex process, I cannot help but reflect on Psalm 14:1. "The fool has said in his heart there is no God."

[Brother Hafner is a deacon with the Charlotte Avenue church in Rock Hill, SC. Write to him at 1311 Reservation Road, 29730.]

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We got married first and **then** lived together. How quaint can you be?

In our time, closets were for clothes, not for "coming out of." Bunnies were rabbits, and rabbits were not Volkswagens. Designer Jeans were scheming girls named Jean or Jeanne; and having a meaningful relationship meant getting along well with our cousins.

We thought "fast food" was what some ate during Lent, and outer space was just past Highland and Parkway.

We were born before house-husbands, gay rights, computer dating, dual careers, and computer marriages. We were born before day-care centers, group therapy and nursing homes. We never heard of FM radio, tape decks, electric typewriters, artificial hearts, word processors, yogurt and guys wearing earrings. For us, time sharing meant togetherness — not computers or condominiums; a "chip" was a piece of wood; hardware meant hardware, and software was not even a word!

In 1940 "made in Japan" meant junk, the term "making out" referred to how you did on an exam. Pizzas, McDonalds and instant coffee were unheard of.

We hit the scene when there were "5 and 10¢" stores, where you bought things for five and ten cents! The local drugstore sold ice cream cones for a nickel or a dime. For a nickel you could ride a street car (trolley), make a phone call, buy a Coke or Pepsi, or had enough to buy postage for a first class letter and have enough left over for two post-cards! You could buy a Chevy Coupe for

\$600, but who could afford one? A pity too, for gasoline was 11¢ per gallon.

In our day, cigarette smoking was fashionable, grass was mowed, Coke was a drink, and pot was something you cooked in! Rock music was a Grandma's lullaby, and AIDS were helpers in the principal's office.

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We were certainly not born before the difference between the sexes was discovered, but we were surely born before the sex change, followed by the "Sexual Revolution." We made do with what we had; but we were the last generation that was so dumb as to think one needed a husband to have a baby!

No wonder we were so confused and there is such a generation gap today!

But we survived!

(Submitted by V.A. Cooper.)

[Editor's note: This is selected from the bulletin of the Campbell Street church, Jackson, TN. We live in a changing world.]

Jesus Could Not Be Hid

by J.C. Townsend

Mark makes a very interesting and significant statement about our Lord in chapter 7 and verse 24 of his gospel, "And from thence he arose and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon and entered into an house, and would have no man know it: but he could not be hid." This describes, to some extent, the influence, impact and far-reaching notoriety achieved by our Lord during His personal ministry. There are several points which need to be made and which emphasize this truth.

First, He could not be hid while He lived upon the earth and engaged in His personal ministry. Great crowds followed Him. Hungry souls sought Him and leaned upon every word which He spoke. Before He delivered the Sermon on the Mount, people from many regions flocked around Him (Matt. 4:23-25).

According to Matthew 8:1, when He came down from the mount, great multitudes followed Him. In Mark 1:45, it is said that He withdrew to desert places, but the people came to Him from every quarter. While preaching on the seashore, the crowd became so large that there was danger that He might be pushed into the sea (Luke 5:1-3).

Second, Christ could not be hid in the lives of His early disciples. The character of Christ in them was visible to their contemporaries. In the growth of the church in Jerusalem following Pentecost, the powerful preaching of Peter and John played no minor role. The Jewish leaders were struck with bewilderment over the great progress of the church (Acts 4:13). From the 3,000 baptized on Pentecost, the preaching of these two apostles was known to make inroads into

Judaism to such a degree that they and their work could not be ignored. In a very short time, Jerusalem was filled with the gospel, and in many instances, entire cities were turned upside down (Acts 17:6). It was difficult to understand and to cope with this unusual situation and very hard to explain. Two uneducated men had come down from the hills of Galilee and led many Jews to forsake the religion of their fathers. They were called before the Sanhedrin, but this did no good. They replied that they were required to obey God rather than man (Acts 5:29). What was the secret of their success? The Bible says that they had been with Jesus. The imprint of our Lord's influence was readily seen. Peter and John lived with the Lord while He walked among men and that fact was readily apparent.

Today, you and I are not able to walk with Christ in the sense that Peter and John did; but in another way, according to Matthew 18:20, our Lord still is present with us. Our experiences in 1989 are different, but when we worship Christ, He lives with us. When we study His word, applying it in our lives, living for Him in a true sense, we live

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with Him. People who pray live for Christ, and the fact that we live with Christ is reflected in our lives just as it was in the lives of people who lived in the first century. Living with Jesus is reflected in our attitude. The attitude that we have determines our conduct. One's attitude toward the law and law enforcing agencies will determine whether he is a law-abiding citizen or a lawbreaker. A husband's attitude toward wife and a father's attitude toward his children will determine his conduct toward his family. So, in a like manner, our attitude toward the Bible will determine whether we obey or reject it. One's attitude toward the church will determine his actions toward it.

Because Peter and John had lived with Christ, they performed their duties with confidence and boldness. They learned to live boldly, to speak boldly and to live courageously by associating with Jesus. From the Lord, these early disciples learned to face the world with absolute confidence as to the rightness of their cause. We need to live with Jesus and thereby have our attitudes transformed.

Living with Jesus is also reflected in one's work. It makes us want to seize every opportunity for doing good. According to Acts 3:6, Peter and John went to the gate called Beautiful and found there an opportunity to do good and they used it. Today, through the influence of Christ, we are inspired to look for avenues and areas where we can serve others.

In the third place, living with Jesus is reflected in our words. The people could tell by Peter's words that he had been with the Lord. In Matthew 26:30-35, we find the account of Peter's denial of Christ. You remember that he boasted that he could never do anything like that. But he succumbed to the influences around him and denied the Lord who had brought him along the way. It was said to Peter, "Thou also wast with Jesus the Galilean," but Peter said that he was not. Soon, another maid said, "This man also was with Jesus of Nazareth," but Peter denied it. Then after a while, they that stood by came and said to Peter, "Of a truth thou also art one of them; for thy speech maketh thee known." It was Peter's speech that made the people with whom he associ-

ated think that he had been with Jesus. In Matthew 26:69-75, it is said that Peter started swearing and cursing. He knew that if he did this that no one could mistake him for a disciple of Christ. Today, if our language is foul, if we curse and swear, it does not take people long to know that Christ does not live in us.

Fourth, Christ cannot be hid in the lives of present-day disciples. Just as light cannot be concealed, just as precious ointment cannot be hid, so the spirit of Jesus in man is apparent. When we put on the garments of our Lord, our contemporaries see Him (Gal. 3:27). Even as the fruit of the tree is manifest, so a Christlike character shines on all around.

In the fifth place, we need to realize that a tree is known by the fruit it bears. A tree might be barren and if so, it is useless and should be cast into the fire. But a Christian tree is one that is productive and there are some wonderful fruits. The production of these fruits is seen by all around and is a means of glorifying our Lord and helping people to see the reality in the religion of Jesus.

[J.C. Townsend works with the ACSR Extension at Providence Rd., Charlotte, NC. Write to him at 60 Brittany Ct., Charlotte, NC 28226.]

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Brotherhood News

by Dennis Conner

Around South Carolina . . .

The annual South Carolina Lectures will be hosted **Nov. 13-16** by the church in Winnsboro. Well, sort of. While the **WINNSBORO CHURCH OF CHRIST** is sponsoring the lectureship, the program will actually be held in Great Falls, SC, about twenty miles from Winnsboro. Craig Hinrichs, who preaches for the Winnsboro church, writes, "The purpose of this setting is to shake us out of our comfort zone and see the direction we need to be moving to accomplish the Lord's work in South Carolina. . . . We will be spending extended periods of time in prayer to God for help, especially as it relates to evangelizing. . . . We will spend our afternoons and early evenings actually evangelizing the small town where we will be meeting. Our studies and prayer sessions will be seeking God's way in this matter. Then time will be spent doing what we have seen needs to be done." Admittedly, many of our lectureships and workshops foster little more than lip service to evangelism. Brother Hinrichs and the Winnsboro church are taking the South Carolina Lectures in a bold new direction. May God be with them in this effort, and may the rest of us be challenged by their example of faith. . . . **PAUL POWERS** recently began working with the **CHARLOTTE AVE. CHURCH OF CHRIST** in Rock Hill as their associate/youth minister. Paul is from Tupelo, Miss., and is a graduate of Freed-Hardeman College. . . . The **MYRTLE BEACH** church has enjoyed a year of growth thus far. To date there have been seventeen baptisms. They are also televising their worship services over a local cable channel.

And North Carolina . . .

JIM HUNTER, who has been preaching for the church in Albemarle for the past six years, will be the new preacher for the **BILTMORE CHURCH OF CHRIST** in Asheville. Jim is scheduled to begin his new work with Biltmore the first Sunday in November 1989

ber. . . . **KIRK SAMS** is the new preacher for the **KANNAPOLIS CHURCH OF CHRIST**. Kirk was the youth minister for the Northview church in Statesville before moving to Kannapolis. . . . A ground-breaking ceremony and barbeque supper were planned for the new Carolina Bible Camp and Retreat Center on Sept. 23, but an uninvited guest by the name of Hugo spoiled things. Also postponed by Hugo was the youth rally at the **WILKESBORO CHURCH OF CHRIST**, Sept. 22-24. The youth rally has been rescheduled for **Nov. 10-12**. . . . The **EASTCHESTER** church in High Point is to be commended for its good work in hosting the North Carolina Lectures last Sept. 8-9. This was the best attended lectureship in several years. Perhaps the good attendance is the beginning of an upward trend for the North Carolina Lectures. We hope so. Both the North Carolina and South Carolina Lectures, along with the annual Carolina Lectures, offer an excellent program year in and year out. . . . The **FRIENDLY AVE. CHURCH OF CHRIST** in Greensboro enjoyed a record Sunday morning attendance of 393 on Sept. 3. . . . The 46th Annual Carolina Lectures will be hosted in April, 1990, by the **ROCKINGHAM CHURCH OF CHRIST**. The theme will be "The Faith of Our Fathers."

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VOL. 31, NO. 11, NOVEMBER 1989



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*He asked for strength that he might achieve;
he was made weak that he might obey.
He asked for health, that he might do greater things;
he was given infirmity, that he might do better things.
He asked for riches, that he might be happy;
he was given poverty, that he might be wise.
He asked for power, that he might have the praise of
men;
he was given weakness, that he might feel the need
of God.
He asked for all things, that he might enjoy life;
he was given life, that he might enjoy all things.
He received nothing he asked for — all things he hoped
for.
His prayer was answered.*

— Unknown

by David Pharr



There is a time lag of several weeks from the time our material is written until it comes to you in the magazine. This is an unavoidable reality which makes some of our news seem old by the time you get it.

This is being written, therefore, only a few days after Hurricane Hugo, and we have only included a few brief reports on relief efforts by churches of Christ. We plan, however, to carry an extended report in a future issue. We do know that there has been a beautiful outpouring of help from hundreds of places both inside and outside the Carolinas. Brethren responded quickly and liberally. Congregations in the affected areas have been on the front lines distributing goods and money and providing various services.

Everyone who has information on how the churches were affected and how they helped are asked to send it to Johnny Melton, Route 2, Box 137, Conover, NC 28613.

Ugly Prejudice

We have heard of a white congregation in a southern state that fired their preacher for baptizing two black people. According to the report we heard, one member said that if it came to a choice between worshipping with "niggers" and going to hell, he thought he would take his chances on hell. We do not have first-hand knowledge of this situation, and we are cautious, therefore, not to identify or judge the place. At the same time, however, we realize that such attitudes do exist, even sometimes in the church.

One with only a scant knowledge of the teachings of Christ should know the wickedness of such ugly prejudice. Some may have deep-seated attitudes of racial intolerance, being victims in their minds of the culture in which they live. Tragic, though, is the person or congregation that partakes more of the spirit of the world than of the spirit of Christ. (See Romans 12:2.) Every passage in the Bible on love for others, every text on compassion and understanding, every prin-

ciple touching the issue of Jew and Gentile, indeed the great commission itself: all ought to show us that racial bigotry is wrong. Suffice it to say that "God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34-35). God is the judge; but, the Bible being true, a person who would rather go to hell than to be in the church and going to heaven with a black person will doubtless have his wish!

We have also been told of a place where a black brother traveling through stopped to

EDITORIAL AND PUBLICATION STAFF:

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CAROLINA CHRISTIAN (P.O.P.N. 091160) is published monthly by Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., at 71 S. Fairfield Road, Greenville, SC 29605. Subscription price: individual \$7.00 per year; club of five or more \$6.50 per year; quantity of 15 or more in bundles or direct mailing 40¢ per copy per month. Publication number, 091160.

Second class postage paid at Greenville, SC.

POSTMASTER: Send change with Form 3579 to Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., Johnny Melton, Managing Editor, Route 2, Box 137, Conover, North Carolina 28613.

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Address editorial matter to David Pharr, Editor, ETSOPM, 6608 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37931. Address news items to Dennis Conner, P.O. Box 1219, Yadkinville, NC 27055.

All items to be printed in a given month's issue should reach the editor not later than the next-to-the-last Thursday of the preceding month.

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worship with the local congregation. He was met at the door and told he could not enter. Shocked, he asked, "Isn't this a church of Christ?" He was told that it was a church of Christ, but he still would not be allowed to enter. My response to this would have to be that if such is the feelings and policy of the members, it certainly is **not** a church of Christ!

There is an additional aspect to this matter, however, that greatly troubles me. There are issues among us that cause brethren to be prompt in taking a stand, and oftentimes to "mark" congregations which seem out of line. Because of the use of questionable translations, or because of having a guest speaker who isn't considered sound, or because they use a film series by a denominational preacher, or because of numerous other things we may consider errors, a congregation may be openly, even harshly, criticized and boycotted. But at the same time little seems to be said against a congregation that is a hotbed of racial prejudice. My point is not that the aforementioned issues are not important; but I am asking what is the rationale that makes these fellowship issues, while the issue of bigotry gets only passing attention? Where are the brotherhood exposes of the false teachers of racism? Why are lines of fellowship not drawn against the departures from the truth involved in racism? (See Galatians 2:5). Why is this issue not openly and frequently treated in our conservative lectureships? Why is there not a cry to "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness" when that darkness is bigotry?

I absolutely believe that we should seek to be sound in every matter. I believe that we need to take a stand against every departure from the truth. But I candidly feel that sometimes the errors we tend to oppose may not be nearly so dangerous as some we tend to ignore.

God has made brotherly love a priority. First Peter 4:8 says, "And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves." Respect of persons is specified and condemned as sin (Jas. 2:9). If we have any ability at all to discern that some things are a greater threat to the church than others, surely we can see that racial prejudice, especially when directed against brothers in Christ, is more

of a threat than many of the issues we expose and denounce.

In July I published an article on "Dangerous Musical Trends." I am seriously concerned over some of the ways religious music is being corrupted and misused. It is urgent that we keep such questionable things out of our congregations. But, brethren, if a choice had to be made, I would much rather be in a congregation where there was a humming choir and a jazzy quartet than to be in one where racial prejudice is tolerated and allowed to set policy.

Or, to illustrate the point further, if a faithful gospel preacher were fired for criticizing errors in faulty translations, there doubtless would be a hue and cry from a host of conservative brethren, but when a white preacher is fired for baptizing blacks, we fear very few of the same will have much to say. I hope I am wrong.

A few years ago we learned of something that happened to a well-known and faithful gospel preacher. He was in a gospel meeting at a certain place when some black people came to hear him. They were told they were unwanted and turned away. When the preacher heard of this, he questioned whether this was indeed the policy of the congregation and learned that it was. This being the case, this man of God made plain his (and the Scripture's) objection to such ungodly prejudice and told them he could not work in fellowship with such people. He closed the meeting. We need men who will take a stand for the truth — for the truth on music, on baptism, on divorce, etc; but also on attitudes toward other races.

These editorial remarks have been directed at two concerns. There is no place in Christ's church for racial hatred. And, in how we oppose this evil in comparison to our zeal to oppose and expose other wrongs we need to be careful lest we be guilty of the mis-

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placed emphasis and inconsistency of which Jesus warned in Matthew 23:23-24. Of what ultimate value is there in upholding the truth on any of the usual issues if there is not at the same time genuine justice, mercy, and faith?

Abortion Politics

Personally I have little optimism about the ability of human government to restrain the ungodly trends of society. Generally politicians are more likely to respond to what the people want than they are to respond to what is right. There is enough hypocrisy, compromise, personal immorality, and lack of Christian ethics in politics that we can expect little improvement in the moral climate of the nation by means of either legislation or judicial decree. We sincerely applaud the leaders who do have the courage to stand for what is right, but they will, we fear, continue to be greatly outnumbered.

The abortion issue is now being studied from a new perspective. The Supreme Court has put the power to regulate it to some extent back into the hands of the state legislatures. This seems to mean that the states might be able to stop some of the killing. The question, though, is what will the states do? I speak cynically, but I am certain that the legislatures will do what they think will please the most voters. The people who favor killing unborn infants know this and they are mounting a powerful campaign to convince government leaders that the majority of Americans favor abortion on demand. They are also boldly threatening any elected official who does not see it their way.

Witness, for example, their threats against the Republican party because President Bush vetoed an abortion bill. These so-called "pro-choice" people are out to destroy anyone who votes from a God-fearing conscience or sense of morality. Last week I saw a bumper sticker which said, "I am pro-choice and I vote!" The message was clear — "Either keep abortion or I will vote against you."

Frankly, for all that is wrong in American society, I am not convinced that the abortionists are in the majority. I think their claims to political power would seem greatly exaggerated if the other side would assert it-

self. They are, however, loud, and they are passionate, and they are organized. The danger is that they are going to put on such a show, make such a big noise, and tell enough lies that many lawmakers will be intimidated to the point that they will do nothing to stop the killing of the innocents. God bless the statesmen that have the courage otherwise, but the reality is that many a politician would let a million babies lose their lives before they would take a chance on losing too many votes.

What can we do in regard to the politics of abortion? We can make ourselves heard. Nothing gets the attention of elected officials like a flood of letters from constituents. Arguments for what is right may not have much appeal, but a flood of letters will. We need not surrender the battle to the pro-abortion people. We can be as vocal as they are. In fact, in some states at least, those who oppose abortion would be clearly in the majority, if only they would make their position known.

Probably most legislators wish they did not have to take a position on this issue. They know they cannot please both sides. This is one issue wherein a compromise will not work. If they can avoid it, many politicians will not take a stand either way. But we must not let them. Let us give them no easy way out. Let us let them know that we expect them to take a stand. Let us let them know that this is a priority issue. It crosses party lines. It is more important than taxes, economic policy, and foreign affairs. Let us let them know that if they do not have the courage to try and stop the slaughter of the innocents they do not deserve to be in any office.

Attention is usually focused on the people in congress and in the state legislatures. They make the laws on issues of this kind. But grassroots politicians can have an impact. Talk to local politicians. Ask them where they stand. Insist that they take a position. Enough of this will make them nervous and they will pass the word on to the capital. There are two significant sources from which congressmen and legislatures get a feel for the mood of the people — the letters and petitions they receive and the communication they have from local politicians.

Keep the pressure on your town mayor and before long he will be calling his buddies at the state house. Incidentally, mayors and other local leaders will usually try to avoid taking a stand by saying it is a statewide, not local, issue. Do not let them get away with this. Tell them it is a moral issue and that you want to know where they stand on morality. To be middle-of-the-road on a moral issue is in itself immoral.

If we knew that our lawmakers might act, or fail to act, in a matter that would double our taxes, or would take away a large portion of what we own, I think we all would want to let them know how we feel. Will we have the same concern for the lives of unborn babies?

Dangerous Musical Trends

In the July issue I had an article on "Dangerous Musical Trends," which set forth concerns relative to innovations by certain singing groups among us. No article we have ever written has received as much written response as has come from this one. We also published it in the East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions **Messenger**.

Only one negative letter has been received. It charged me with bending and twisting the Scriptures. All other correspondence appreciated the points made and the manner in which they were presented. Among these have been letters from such respected men as Paul Jarrett, Rod Rutherford, and Johnny Ramsey.

We are sharing portions of two letters because they touch on some things we believe should be considered by all who write on brotherhood issues.

"I do not know when I have read a more thorough and yet compassionate article dealing with the subject. You addressed some dangers that are very real, and you did it out of a heart of love. . . ." — Steve Baggett.

"I was impressed with your willingness to stand for the truth. I consider that, of course, to be the most important issue in any article written.

"But teaching the truth is not enough, for we must also teach the truth as effectively and as kindly as possible. I believe that your

article was most effective. I was impressed that your article showed a great deal of thought and reflection about the issues involved. You did not attempt to show that you knew all of the answers about all of the issues to be considered, but you did hit on some tremendously important principles involved in the use of musical instruments (and their substitutes) in worship. My opinion is not worth much sometimes, but I feel that too few of our articles deal sufficiently with the principles involved in the issues we discuss. The ubiquitous three-point, alliterative subheadings usually do not sufficiently explore all that needs to be said. A more general investigation into the principles involved, and then into the specific details of the issues, will often yield a better article to read, especially for those who may be in opposition to your thesis.

"Futhermore, your article was not a diatribe nor a rally around some sacrosanct position for the purpose of demonstrating your own loyalty to the truth. Your concern for truth, though abundantly evident, was not paraded in the sense of saying 'I am loyal. I am faithful. I know what the truth is.' Rather I was impressed with your concern, not just for truth, but for the goal of getting others to an understanding of that truth. You did not use 'buzzwords' that would make someone who disagreed with you cringe. You set forth the truth simply and kindly in such a way that even those who disagree with your position should respect you and your view. . . ." — Jody L. Apple.

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The New Covenant

by Johnny Melton

Jeremiah was known as the Weeping Prophet. His heart was heavy for his people. He lamented in Jeremiah 9:1, "Oh, that my head were a spring of water and my eyes a fountain of tears! I would weep day and night for the slain of my people."

It was Jeremiah's sad responsibility to warn the people of God's sure judgment that was to be visited upon them. God's long-suffering had been taxed to its limit. He had determined to punish the people for their continued rebellion against Him and His law.

Three times God told Jeremiah not to pray for the people. In Jeremiah 7:16, "So do not pray for this people nor offer any plea or petition for them; do not plead with me, for I will not listen to you." In Jeremiah 11:14, "Do not pray for this people nor offer any plea or petition for them, because I will not listen when they call to me in the time of their distress." And finally in Jeremiah 14:11-12, "Then the Lord said to me, 'Do not pray for the well-being of this people. Although they fast, I will not listen to their cry; though they offer burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Instead, I will destroy them with the sword, famine and plague.'"

Babylonian captivity was certain. God's mercy would be meted out.

However, God would not punish His people forever. He would restore them to their land. And ultimately, He would establish a new covenant with the house of Israel.

Jeremiah, whose responsibility it was to bear such bad news, was also able to reveal this hope for Israel's future. The promise to restore the people to their land is beautifully described in Jeremiah 31:7-9, "This is what the Lord says: 'Sing with joy for Jacob; shout for the greatest of the nations. Make your praises heard, and say, "O Lord, save your people, the remnant of Israel." See, I will bring them from the land of the north and gather them from the ends of the earth. Among them will be the blind and the lame, expectant mothers and women in labor; a

great throng will return. They will come with weeping; they will pray as I bring them back. I will lead them beside streams of water on a level path where they will not stumble, because I am Israel's father and Ephraim is my firstborn son.'"

In Jeremiah 31:27-30, the word of the Lord is revealed: " 'The days are coming,' declares the Lord, 'when I will plant the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the offspring of men and of animals. Just as I watched over them to uproot and tear down, and to overthrow, destroy and bring disaster, so I will watch over them to build and to plant,' declares the Lord. 'In those days people will no longer say, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." Instead, everyone will die for his own sin; whoever eats sour grapes — his own teeth will be set on edge.'"

The generation of Israelites that was ultimately carried off by Nebuchadnezzar into Babylonian captivity were not by themselves solely responsible for their punishment. God had withheld His wrath generation after generation — raising up prophet after prophet — until it was obvious that Israel, as a nation, could not be turned from her wickedness.

So it was the case that, to some degree, the children were suffering for the sin of their fathers; but let it be understood that the children were guilty before God and deserved to be punished. The previous generations had piled up their wickedness and rebellion, but the generation deported had been as wicked, if not more so, than any prior generation.

However, God revealed that there would be a day in which "everyone will die for his own sin; whoever eats sour grapes — his own teeth will be set on edge." I take this to suggest that in the new order of things, when a new covenant is formed (vss. 31ff), it will not be with a **nation**, but it will be with **individuals**.

Obviously, when the nation was punished, innocent children experienced pain and suf-

fering as well as those who were guilty of sin and rebellion against God. With the establishment of the new covenant, God would no longer mete out His judgment in that way.

There are those who want to see in this promise of a new covenant, the restoration of Israel as a political entity and that God will once again enter into a relationship with physical Israel. But such is not the case.

“ ‘The time is coming,’ declares the Lord, ‘when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,’ declares the Lord” (Jer. 31:31-32). The first covenant was with a physical nation, written on tablets of stone. It involved a physical relationship. The new covenant will not be like that.

But now note: “ ‘This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time,’ declares the Lord. ‘I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, “Know the Lord,” because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,’ declares the Lord. ‘For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more’ ” (Jer. 31:33-34). This new covenant is not something that is yet to be worked out with the physical state of Israel. This new covenant is the gospel of Jesus Christ. The house of Israel with which this covenant is made is not physical Israel but rather it is made with spiritual Israel.

In Romans 9:4-6 Paul spoke of the “people of Israel.” He observed, “Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel.”

Today true Israel is not made up of folks with Abraham’s blood in their veins — true Israel is made up of folks with Abraham’s faith in their hearts! And it is with true Israel that the new covenant is made.

The Hebrews’ preacher quoted Jeremiah 31:31-34 *in toto* in Hebrews 8:8-12 and he applied it to the gospel. The new covenant was established by Jesus Christ. Portions of verses 33 and 34 are quoted in Hebrews 10:16, 17 and connected with the sacrifice of Jesus on Calvary.

That this is a spiritual covenant and that it is entered into upon obedience of the gospel explains Jeremiah 31:34. When God’s covenant was with a physical nation, then upon birth one became a part of the covenant people. As one grew he had to be taught concerning God and the terms of the covenant. Neighbors and brethren could be found who were a part of the covenant but who either did not know it or else did not understand it. Consequently, there were those who shared in the covenant who had to be admonished, “Know the Lord.” Within the new covenant such instruction will no longer be needed. Why? Admonition to “know the Lord” will not be necessary within the new covenant because one cannot be a partici-



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pant in the new covenant without knowing God; without confessing Christ; without obeying the gospel for the remission of sins. Therefore, they all shall know the Lord.

Today God's covenant people are those individuals who have heard the word of God (Rom. 10:17); believed on Jesus (Rom. 10:9, 10); repented from all past sins (Acts 2:38); confessed faith in Jesus before men (Rom. 10:10); and submitted to baptism in Jesus' name (Acts 2:38). They enjoy a splendid relationship with Jesus. All sin has been forgiven and will be remembered against them no more.

Jeremiah's prophetic work offered nothing but gloom to the people of his day, but he was privileged to foretell the greatest event in all the world: the establishment of a new covenant — the gospel — the offer of salvation to all who will accept it. Do not mistakenly relegate this beautiful work to either some past or future transaction between God and a physical nation. You can be a part of the house of Judah with which God has established this covenant. Remember the true Israelite today is the man or woman with Abraham's faith in his/her heart.

Comfort in His Coming — 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

by David Pharr, Editor

Different texts emphasize different things about the second coming of Christ. For example, 1 Corinthians 15 shows the reality of a bodily resurrection. In 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 attention is given to the fate of the wicked, and in 2 Peter 3 there is emphasis on the dissolution of the universe. The main purpose of 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, however, is to give comfort to dying and bereaved saints in view of the coming of the Lord.

Dying is real. And there is no fear that has a greater grip on humanity than the fear of dying. No day is more dreaded. And no loss is more lonely than the loss of a loved one. The Thessalonians were immature in their spiritual knowledge. They needed to be reassured that God would solve the problems they saw in death. Paul wrote to them, "that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope" (vs. 13). After he explained some things about what will happen when Jesus comes, he urged: "Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (vs. 18).

Paul did not intend in these verses to explain every detail about Christ's coming. He did, however, make certain things quite clear.

1. There is certainly a difference between those whose hope is in Christ and those who have no hope. No comfort is given for peo-

ple who die out of the Lord. Revelation 14:13 declares a blessing for "the dead which die in the Lord." Psalm 116:15 says, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." But those who are out of Christ have "no hope" (Eph. 2:12).

2. Our hope stands on our faith that God raised up Jesus. Cardinal in Christian doctrine is that Christ arose on the third day. He was raised and ever lives (Heb. 7:25). Thus Paul reasons, "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him" (vs. 14).

3. The "dead in Christ" (vs. 16) are only "asleep" (vss. 13, 14, 15). Ancient pagans spoke of death as sleep, but to them it was eternal sleep. Christians call death sleep because we expect to be awakened from it.

4. "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord . . ." (vs. 15). All that Paul explains is by God's promise, not by man's guess. Only He who has "the keys of hades and of death" (Rev. 1:18) can unlock its secrets. Science and philosophy know nothing of these things. But we have the word of the Lord.

5. Those who are dead in Christ will miss nothing of ultimate importance. Apparently some in Thessalonica feared that those who

had died would not get to enjoy the glory of the coming of Christ. But Paul assures that the living would not precede (“prevent,” KJV) the dead. Rather, before the righteous living would go to meet the Lord, the dead “shall rise first” so that all together could go to meet the Lord in the air (vss. 16-17).

Incidentally, it is a complete misunderstanding to think, as premillennialists do, that “rise first” indicates a different resurrection day. The word **first** has the sense of **before** and is used in relation to the ascension of the living. **Before** the living ascend, the dead will first be raised. As regards whether there will be a separate time for the resurrection of the wicked, Jesus has settled the matter by putting all resurrection in the same hour (John 5:28-29).

6. We are given a glimpse of the majesty, the pomp, and the power that will accompany Christ’s advent (vs. 16). The Lord Himself (not a representative) will descend, literally and personally. “This same Jesus” (Acts 1:11) will come with a shout. The dead will hear His voice (John 5:28). Perhaps we can see a connection in that when He called for Lazarus to be raised “he cried with a loud voice” (John 11:43) — a shout. Accompanying this shout will be the voice of the archangel and the trumpet of God. (See 1 Cor. 15:51.)

Again, premillennialists miss the truth when they say this text teaches a “secret rapture.” There is nothing secret about it. G.K. Wallace once described it as “the noisiest verse in the Bible.”

7. When Jesus comes, all saints, living and dead, will go to meet Him, to be with Him forever. John writes that “when he shall

appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2). This promise is directly tied to the famous words of Jesus in John 14:1-3. “I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”

Now, having briefly reviewed these seven points from the text, let us underscore some particular thoughts.

First, as we look again at verse 14 we are reminded that **we need a faith that will count when there is nothing else to count on**. Hope and comfort in the face of death can stand only on a real faith. Then there will be nothing else to count on. Science is amazing, but there is a world about which it knows nothing. Medicine is wonderful, but there are some hurts it cannot heal. Money can buy many things, but not comfort beside a grave. There comes a time when there is nothing else to count on, so we need a faith that counts.

Verse 17 has the words, “together with them.” Death is a separation. The coming of Christ will be **God’s solution to the sadness of separation**. Then the long “good-bye” will turn into an eternal “hello.”

I read of a man expressing sympathy to a friend: “I am sorry you lost your wife.” The friend replied, “I didn’t lose her because I know where she is, and I’m going to see her again.”

Finally, **the goal of our being is to be with the Lord**. The ultimate joy is not in the body coming back to life, nor even in reunion with loved ones; but in going to meet the Savior and being with Him forever. This is “far better” (Phil. 1:23) than all joys and delights ever known or imagined.

Hurricane Hugo

by Johnny Melton

Since Hurricane Hugo assaulted Charleston, South Carolina, and the surrounding coastline with 135-mile-per-hour winds and 15 feet of storm surge in the wee hours of Friday, September 22, there has been a tremendous outpouring of love and concern for the victims of this calamity. Hugo’s damage was not limited to the South Carolina coast. It swept inland cutting an unprecedented

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swath of destruction through the state and into North Carolina. Charlotte, North Carolina, was ravaged by 90-mile-per-hour winds. Tremendous losses were experienced in Charlotte, Hickory, Lenoir, Wilkesboro and other North Carolina cities and communities as (by then tropical storm) Hugo blew through the state and on through Virginia and into the Northeast. However, the

losses elsewhere cannot begin to compare with the destruction visited upon Charleston and the surrounding area.

Almost immediately churches of Christ in the Carolinas, joined by sister congregations from across the nation, began efforts to provide relief for the victims of Hugo's devastation. A survey of bulletins indicates that relief has been provided by various churches in Tennessee. A vanload of supplies was delivered to the North Charleston church of Christ by the church in New Johnsonville, which was joined in this effort by the Hustburg and Plant churches. In Nashville, the Woodmont Hills church collected \$1,200 immediately and sent it to the Northeast church in Taylors, South Carolina, to be forwarded on to Charleston. That same bulletin article indicates that the Rural Hill church in Nashville (where former Northeast preacher Bill Goodpasture is pulpit minister) "has taken the lead in alerting area churches to the needs of sister churches in the Carolinas." In Little Rock, Arkansas, the 6th and Izard church reports that brethren from all across Arkansas brought truckloads of supplies to their building which were forwarded on to Charleston. In Del City, Oklahoma, the Del City church, together with sister churches in the greater Oklahoma City area, raised an immediate \$7,300 for the relief effort as well as large quantities of food, clothing and other articles, all of which was loaded onto the church's scenic cruiser bus along with a crew of approximately 30, and delivered to South Carolina.

The Northeast church bulletin reports that the church in Duncan, South Carolina, assisted by churches in Seneca, Greenville (Edgewood and Augusta Road), Mauldin, Spartanburg (Fairview and Central), Woodruff, Moore, Union, and Clinton, gathered 30,000 pounds of food supplies and \$4,000 to send to the North Charleston church. The Northeast church has received more than \$300,000 and more than 500,000 pounds of food to aid the hurricane victims. The Lexington church reports that \$115,000 has been received from sister congregations for hurricane relief. More than 112 members of the Lexington church have been directly involved in the Hurricane Relief Effort. The bulletin from the Brooks Avenue church in Raleigh

indicates that a work group has been to Charleston to help with the clean-up as well as sending food and other supplies. The Charlotte Avenue church in Rock Hill and the St. Andrews Road church in Columbia have also been extensively involved in the relief efforts.

This report does not pretend to be exhaustive. It is based simply on reports from church bulletins. A more comprehensive report will appear in a future issue.

We do have in this issue an update from the North Charleston church written by their preacher, Richard McWilliams, as well as an update regarding the efforts of the Northeast church to target McClellanville, South Carolina, for special assistance. Read these updates carefully. Thank God for the outpouring of love that has been demonstrated already and pray for the will to stay with the task. The potential to relieve spiritual burdens will be enhanced by these efforts to relieve physical burdens.

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1. Title of Publication Carolina Christian		18. PUBLICATION NO. 09 1 1 6 0		3. Date of Filing 9-11-59	
2. Issue Frequency Monthly		19. No. of Copies Published 12		20. Annual Subscription Price 17.00	
4. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Street, City, County, State and ZIP - If Data Not Present) 71 S. Fairfield Rd., Greenville, S.C. 29605 (Greenville's County)					
5. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (Not Print) 71 S. Fairfield Rd., Greenville, S.C. 29605					
6. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Use one sheet if not in space) Publisher: Carolina Christian, P.O. Box 5423, Ste. B Greenville, S.C. 29606 Editor: David Pharr ETSOHN, 6608 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN. 37931 Managing Editor: Johnny Melton Rt. 2 Box 137 Co. nover, N.C. 28613					
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2817		2900		1. Paid and Unpaid Distribution Outside the Mails	
NONE		NONE		2. Paid and Unpaid Distribution in the Mails	
2593		2487		3. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution Outside the Mails	
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McClellanville Calls

It has been almost a month now since hurricane Hugo ravaged the South Carolina coastal area. Power is being restored as quickly as possible, but for those who are still waiting, every day is like eternity. Many victims are still sorting through the rubble that remains of their possessions, and some are finding precious little with which to start over again.

Such is the case with the devastated Dupree Road community near McClellanville. Approximately 70 families have been out of their homes since September 21. That night a wall of water swept through the tiny community, leaving water lines over five feet high inside their homes and virtually destroying everything they owned. Whatever is left is covered with muck, mildew or mud.

The Northeast church of Christ in Taylors (Greenville area) has adopted the area as an extension of their Hugo Project Relief. Networking with churches of Christ across the country and other interested individuals, an effort is under way to provide supplies and funds necessary for clean up and restoration. Work crews from the church have been on site for days and have established an office in the neighborhood out of which

to work.

On Saturday, October 14, all the residents of the Dupree Road area were invited to a town meeting organized by Tom Sutton from Northeast. Residents were registered in order to survey needs and the purpose of the Northeast presence in the community was explained. The response of the community was overwhelming support and appreciation.

Donations are urgently solicited for the HUGO PROJECT RELIEF FUND through which emergency supplies may be bought in large quantities at wholesale prices through local resources. Please send your tax-deductible gift as soon as possible to the address below. Your gift will be acknowledged and deeply appreciated.

One final request: Please pass this information along to friends and/or organizations who may share your sense of compassion for the disaster victims. Checks should be made to HUGO RELIEF FUND.

Northeast Church of Christ, 3506 Edwards Road, Taylors, SC 29687; or First Union Bank, ATTN: Tim Thigpen, Vice President, P.O. Box 1329, Greenville, SC 29602.

Hugo Relief Progress Report

by Richard McWilliams

The flow of help from the brotherhood into the Charleston area has been tremendous. The North Charleston congregation has received to date over ninety trucks loaded with supplies, and thousands of dollars from 160 congregations and from more than one hundred families and individuals.

During the first two weeks after the storm, we distributed food and supplies daily to members of the church as well as to the public. More than 1700 families were served in that effort. Also, during that time and since, we have shared incoming food with sister congregations and with surrounding communities. More than forty-five trucks and

vans loaded with food and supplies have been sent out from our building. Sister congregations in the area have made similar efforts with supplies and funds they have received. However, with supermarkets and other stores restocked and open, and with power restored, the shipment of goods into this area is no longer needed. Supplies can now be purchased here as required.

Now that the immediate crisis is past, different problems must be dealt with. Some people are out of work due to the storm and need temporary financial assistance. Some who lack adequate resources must pay for repairs on their homes and vehicles, or re-

place them altogether. Therefore, the need for extra funds will continue for some time. The elders are distributing these funds on a case by case basis.

We are also making a special effort to help the community of Copahee where ninety-seven of the one hundred homes were destroyed. Through the generous contributions of members of the church, we have been able to provide fuel storage drums, warm clothing, food, bedding, and a large tent to store supplies. We are in the process of providing a shower facility, septic tank repairs, mail

boxes and posts, as well as other supplies for repairs.

Every assistance that has come to us is greatly appreciated. Our elders are doing a conscientious job of overseeing this work. If you desire more information, please write: North Charleston Church of Christ, 6337 Rivers Avenue, North Charleston, SC 29418.

Please continue to keep us in your prayers.

[Richard McWilliams serves as the pulpit minister for the North Charleston church.]

Hugo, the Raging Tempest

(Dedicated to all those who suffered in the wake of this natural disaster)

by Gary D. Durham

Hurricane Hugo recently stormed the Southeast like a wild beast charging his prey. From the untamed Atlantic, which gave birth to him, Hugo set out on a course of destruction which ended in despair and death. The people of the Carolinas stood face to face with Hugo and felt the sting of his wind-driven fingers of death. "Nothing like it!" was the repeated description given by the survivors of the fury of this killer hurricane. No doubt, this experience with the wilder forces of nature will be etched forever in the minds of those whose lives were shattered by this raging tempest. The howling, shrieking sound of the savage wind will continue to haunt their memories. Although his life was mercifully brief, Hugo left an indelible mark as he cut a path of destruction across both the Carolinas. It will be a long time before these deep wounds are fully healed.

Under these circumstances, there was little that the residents in Hugo's path could do but to bow to the overwhelming weight of nature's crushing power. An event of this magnitude serves to place things in the proper perspective — man is not in control of everything. Mankind has a tendency to pat itself on the back and puff up with pride in all of the modern-day advances that have been made in science and technology. If you doubt that this is nothing more than a self-

seeking delusion of grandeur, I invite you to stand on the beach during the next hurricane and shake your fist at the fury of the wind and then take note of the impression you make on it. That is, if you are still in one piece. None of us mere mortals has the power to impress the forces of nature, but I know of one who does. He has proven Himself in the past by turning a raging tempest into a placid scene of calm beauty with a single command to the elements to obey His will.

Great and marvelous is the Master we serve as Christians. Jesus was with His disciples in a little ship when, with a shattering, terrifying suddenness, "there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full" (Mark 4:37). These men were wise enough to seek the help of Jesus as, "He was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake Him, and say unto Him, Master, carest thou not that we perish?" (vs. 38). We see the power of Jesus' authority when "He arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm" (vs. 39). It is certainly not difficult to see who was in charge during that demonstration of the Lord's divine power.

Our story is not complete, however, until

we consider what Jesus said to those men after He quietened the raging tempest which had threatened their lives. "And He said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?" (vs. 40). Apparently, they had lost sight of the Lord's tender care for them. This weakness of faith is one which plagues most Christians from time to time. When the storms of problems, sorrow, and anxiety break over our souls we tend to forget that Jesus is still in control of the situation. The very One who stilled that storm on the Sea of Galilee is now residing "at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Rom. 8:34). He has not forgotten any of His followers as we make our

voyage from time to eternity. Let the tempest of doubt and agitation hurl itself at us. The Lord is more powerful than any such storm. It is in this thought that we take comfort as we consider a line from that favorite old hymn, **Master, The Tempest Is Raging**, "The winds and the waves shall obey Thy will, Peace . . . be still! Whether the wrath of the storm-tossed sea, Or demons, or men, or whatever it be, No water can swallow the ship where lies The Master of ocean and earth and skies; They all shall sweetly obey Thy will, Peace, be still!"

[Gary Durham preaches for the Eastchester Church of Christ, P.O. Box 1789, Highpoint, N.C. 27260.]

In the Hands of God

by Michael R. Mobley

God is still God and man has never come from anything but God's own mighty hand (Acts 17:24-28). Do we believe that? Unbelievers do not. They believe in evolution to explain life and the universe without God. So then, is it not the purpose of evolution to make man the God, to replace God with man? If that is true, then will not all who believe in evolution finally turn their hearts, their thinking and their desires away from God and to themselves? Under such circumstances man becomes the measure of truth, and not God. Man believes, then, that he has ultimate power, and not God.

The greatest sin of all is to presume that we do not need God, that we do not need a supernatural power and authority because such does not exist (Prov. 16:2). However, God reminds us that life does not exist by chance; that He is not sitting back in a rocking chair; that He is not dead; and that He is not a created thing. God is the Creator and in His hands all things rest! "Who then is able to stand up against me? Who had preceded me, that I should pay him? Everything under heaven is mine" (Job 41:10-11). God is the supernatural power that rules the creation, or the natural world as unbelievers refer to it. Man rules nothing, but is created and ruled. This is the greatest need for our age: for man to believe that he has a creator!

This is the truth that God dealt with as He confronted Job in his day and as He confronts us today. We will find that we are on trial and we must answer God. We will find that God makes no apologies for His power and truth, nor for our unbelief and stupidity. God is direct and appeals to our natural capacity to be intelligent. "Who is this who does not know what he is talking about?" God asks as He addresses man (Job 38:1-3).

To begin with, God puts man in his proper place, not to be humiliated but to be humbled (Job 38:4, 18). God made us without our help. The question here is, "Did you do this? Did you create and set up the natural order? Because you did not, what is the source of this power?" The universe and life exist by forces in constant and balanced operation. Where is this power coming from? Hurricane Hugo reminds us that it is not coming from us!

Next, God challenges man by asking him what can he really do (Job 38:31-35, 39:26-27). We must answer God. "Does the lightning answer and come to you? Can you snap your fingers and make it come to you? And who programmed the animals? Do we tell the animals where to live, how to move about, what to eat, who is their enemy?" Because man cannot do these things, what is the source of this power to command nature?

Finally, God challenges man to correct Him (Job 40:1-14). The ultimate challenge! Try being God for a while. (Man has tried to play God since time first ticked and has only made a mess of his world.) What all of us must realize and accept is that man can never be equal to God because he can never possess the kind of power and authority that only God demonstrates in His creation (vss. 3-5). We cannot wear the glory and majesty of God and we are eaten up and rotting with sin as Job's flesh was eaten up with disease. Yet how often do we question God's truth, wisdom and power? We cannot presume to know better than something that is greater than we are, and be right. We cannot pre-

sume to understand life and the universe without listening to God and believing the Creator.

Here then is the truth to be learned, the heart of the matter, the truth about God and man (Job 42:1-5). We have a creator and we must serve Him. Man must repent to God, listen to God, and live before God. Man must hate his own sinfulness and live through God's truth. Man must repent of his own false beliefs and God will save him.

[Michael Mobley preaches in Mooresville, NC. He is a frequent book reviewer for Carolina Christian. Write to him at P.O. Box 312, Mooresville, NC 28115.]

Making Love Work

by Joe DeYoung

A "Dennis the Menace" cartoon of several years ago shows Dennis standing outside a church building asking the preacher a very profound question: "S'pose I love my neighbor, but he don't love me back?" Dennis poses a relevant question. C.S. Lewis has this suggestion: "Do not waste time bothering whether you 'love' your neighbor — act as if you did. As soon as we do this we find one of the great secrets. When you are behaving as if you loved someone, you will presently come to love him. If you injure someone you dislike, you will find yourself disliking him more. If you do him a good turn, you will find yourself disliking him less. . . ."

Jesus tells to us in Matthew 5:43, "Love your enemies . . . for if you love those who love you, what reward have you?" So since real love is not self-seeking (1 Cor. 13:5), we miss the point if our efforts to love are concerned with having it reciprocated. I am sure all of us are glad that God keeps on loving us, even though we do not love Him as much.

Brother Glenn Rogers (of Lambert Book House) says: "While love involves feelings, it is not feelings. It is acting toward others the way they need you to." Parents can see this in their efforts to discipline their children. They can see it in their efforts to make other provisions for their family — like pre-

paring meals and going to work — just to name two. And even though the "objects" of our love are often not very **likeable**, we can nevertheless find that our loving **actions** can begin to involve good **feelings**. But even so, we can still have a proper sense of satisfaction, because we know that we have done the loving thing.

And from out of this may come the serendipity that the person will indeed **love us back**. Or if he does not do that, he may find himself more capable of loving **others**. Dr. Thomas P. Malone of the Atlanta Psychiatric Clinic sees an emotional problem: "Many who need our love are saying in their behavior, 'For God's sake, love me.' Love me, that's all. He goes through a million different manipulations to get somebody to love him." Dr. Malone concludes that **healthy** people are those who walk around looking for someone to love, and when those who are screaming for it start loving others, "they can get the love they've been screaming for all their lives. It's hard to learn, but it's good when you learn it."

The love of God is to be seen in us (Rom. 5:5). Let us remember the quality and quantity of His love, then resolve to make it a reality in our relationships with others. Loving is caring.

[A native of Duncan, SC, brother De-Young preaches in Manson, Manitoba.]

Great Expectations

by Bruce Green

Once upon a time there was a man who owned and managed a construction business. Since it was not unusual for him to have several jobs going at once, he had to have responsible employees who could work well without supervision. So when his employees reported back to him at the end of each day, he would always test them by asking one question, "What did you learn in your work today?" If they could answer this question the owner knew they had been paying the right kind of attention to their work; but if they could not answer the question, he knew their work was not what it should be.

After a couple of weeks the employees caught on to this and adopted a radically different approach to their work. No longer were they satisfied to simply complete the contracted job; they began to pay close attention to every detail of their work. They began taking notes, drawing sketches, and getting ideas from others. They searched everywhere to get new insights into their work because they knew they would be sharing this information with their boss. Two things happened as a result of this new outlook: the owner was pleased, and the workers became the best they could be at their particular jobs.

This modern-day parable does not just have something to do with our discipleship — it has everything to do with it. Jesus commands us to "make disciples of all nations." However, before we can teach we must learn. The problem is that many times our goal is simply to learn about Jesus. Learning is good, but it is not all that Jesus desires. Unless we approach our learning with the goal of sharing what we learn with others, we are missing the mark. Jesus Himself stressed this when He said disciples are to be taught to "observe" and not just to learn.

This means for some a radically different approach to learning. It will mean paying closer attention to the word (Heb. 2:1ff), making sure it is put into practice in our lives (James 1:22-25), and sharing it with others (Heb. 5:11-14). It means taking notes, draw-

ing sketches, and getting the ideas of others. But it also means pleasing Jesus, and becoming the best we can be for Him. Let us approach our learning with great expectations.

[Bruce Green serves the Plaza church. He can be contacted at P.O. Box 1385, Sumter, SC 29151.]

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When the Canary Stops Singing

by Ron Ulrey

If you have a canary in your home, you know how pleasant it is to hear it sing, and how urgent it is to check on the bird if it stops singing for an extended period of time.

There are many fascinating stories that have come down through the years from the men who work in the coal mines of Kentucky, Virginia, and West Virginia. One of them goes like this:

Many years before the mines were modernized with machinery and poison-gas detecting devices, many miners lost their lives from breathing the gases of the mines. Technicians tried many devices to detect the smell of the gas before it became lethal, but to no avail.

For some unknown reason a miner brought his canary to work with him into the mine. The bird sang while the men worked together, but after a few hours it stopped. The miner who owned the bird went to its cage, only to find the pretty bird dead. The men quickly left the mine, supposing that the poison gases had killed the bird. Upon examination by a veterinarian it was found that the bird's delicate system had succumbed to the fatal gases before it was noticeable to the human system. For years after this incident,

the miners took canaries into the mines with them and would immediately leave the mines when the canaries stopped singing.

The above story is a good analogy of the church. When there is peace and harmony among brethren it is more pleasant than the singing of many canaries. No one is in a hurry to leave the premises after the services and we can feel the love "flowing from heart to heart." The Psalmist said: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." Unity can actually be seen and felt (Psalm 133:1).

But when the "poison gases" of strife and division enter the church the "canary stops singing," and the life, vitality, and fellowship begins to drain out of the church and it begins to die. Paul said, "But ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another" (Gal. 5:15).

For the sake of the body of Christ, we must all use all of the spiritual power we possess to see that the canary does not stop singing!

[Ron Ulrey has served churches in North Carolina, Georgia and Virginia. You may contact him at Rt. 3, Box 229, Bassett, VA 24055.]

Getting Away From It All

by Mike Mays

A wealthy lady who lived in a large, beautiful home hired a maid who was a Christian. The maid was constantly hearing her employer say, "I must get away from it all." She had enough concern and courage to ask the well-to-do lady what it was she wanted to get away from. The Christian maid pointed out that she lived in a luxurious, beautiful home, that her children were healthy and caused her no trouble. The poor maid could not understand what she wanted to get away from. Finally she mustered up enough courage to tell her, "Madam, what you need to get away from is yourself."

There is a great need in the church for us to "get away from ourselves," and give ourselves away to others for the Lord's sake. Tertullian said, "He who lives only to benefit himself confers on the world a benefit when he dies." Jesus calls on us to deny self, die to self, crucify self, sacrifice self on the altar of His service. Christ and selfishness cannot live in the same heart. When one comes in, the other leaves. The Christian ideal is expressed in the words of the song, "None of self, and all of Thee."

People generally spend 94 percent of their time thinking about themselves. Self is the

hardest person to kill. Most never do. Faithful Christians spend a lifetime maturing, dying to self daily, so that they will be more and more unselfishly concerned for others. God tells us in Philippians 2:4, "Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others."

When we spend most of our time, money, and thoughts on ourselves, self is still ruling on the throne of our heart. We can become like the man who prayed, "Bless me and my wife, John and his wife, us four and no more." That kind of selfish concern for us and our family hurts us and our children who will likely choose to follow in our footsteps. Only when we break the stranglehold of selfishness on our heart can we begin to be dead to self and alive for God. Jesus is

the only one who can deliver us from self and excessive self-concern.

Then we can begin devoting our time, energy, and money to serve others, save others, do good for others to God's glory. Until we reach that point, God is still knocking on the door of our heart waiting for us to allow Him to come in.

Selfish people are unhappy. Unselfish people are happy because they are the "givers" and not just the "takers" (Acts 20:35). Have you died to self so you, like Jesus, can unselfishly live for God? If not, why not do so now? You will never regret having lived for Him who died for you.

[Mike preaches for the Asheboro, NC, church, 631 Meadowbrook Road, 27203.]

You Can't Obey God Accidentally

by Bob Bickle

You are engaged in a Bible study with a man who is very sincere in his religious beliefs. At the beginning of the study, he told you that he was saved when he "accepted the Lord into his heart." This took place when he responded to an "altar call" at the "First All-Saints Church." The preacher asked him to pray the "sinner's prayer," confess his sins and his faith in Jesus Christ. One month later, he and four others were baptized and he "officially" became a member of the church. You probe a little deeper by asking, "If you had died shortly after you went to the altar and before you were baptized, would you have gone to be with the Lord?" He confidently responds, "Yes."

You continue in a study of the Bible and read the various accounts of conversion in the book of Acts. It is noted and recorded that before one became a Christian, it was necessary to have faith in God and His Son, Jesus Christ. It was also necessary for one to decide to turn from his sins and toward Jesus in repentance. It is noted that one must confess openly and unashamedly his faith in Jesus Christ. Then this believing, penitent

one must be immersed in water for the forgiveness of sins. One is **not** set free from his sins until he has been baptized into the death of Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:2-4).

After you have studied these passages with the man, he says, "Well, that is exactly what I have done. I did not realize that my baptism was for the forgiveness of sins, but since I have been immersed, I am all right with God." Is he all right with God? Has this type of scenario ever happened to you?

Can a person go through the "mechanics" and become a child of God? Can one obey ignorantly and become a child of God? The apostle Paul wrote, "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin,

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but ye have obeyed from the **heart** that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being **then** made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Rom. 6:17-18, emphasis supplied). It is clear that one must obey from the heart the **form** of doctrine before he is set free from his sins.

In Acts 2 those assembled on the day of Pentecost were "pricked in **their hearts**" and asked, "What shall we do?" In Acts 8 the eunuch was told by Philip that he must believe with **all of his heart** before he could be baptized.

What about a person who has been taught the form of doctrine correctly, but is not willing to truly repent before being immersed? Would he be saved? What about one who was taught correctly, but was baptized for a reason other than for the forgiveness of sins? Perhaps he was baptized so that

his fiancée would carry through with their marriage plans. The preacher said the "right words" before he was baptized, but the person did not obey from the heart the doctrine that would set him free from his sins. Can someone accidentally obey God? Can one stumble blindly into the kingdom? The answer, of course, is "NO."

We need to carefully and lovingly teach a person what obedience to the gospel entails and then help him to see that his previous response was not Biblical. John wrote that we can know that we have eternal life (1 John 5:13). This knowledge comes when one has obeyed from the heart the saving gospel of Jesus Christ. One cannot obey God accidentally!

[Bob Bickle preaches for the Charlotte Ave. congregation, 339 Charlotte Ave., Rock Hill, SC 29730.]

He Died for Me

by Gary G. Payne

Leaving Memphis on I-240 something caught my attention. It was an ambulance from the Memphis Fire Department. On the back and sides of the ambulance was a plaque: "In honor of . . . who died in the line of duty." The plaque reminded me of what Paul said in Romans: "Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die" (Rom. 5:7).

There is something about human life which is held sacred and good. People like this fireman — policemen, rescue workers, etc. — risk their own lives for people. They perceive others to be worthwhile. Others are worth saving. On the other hand, do you know anyone who is willing to trade places

with someone on death-row? That is what is so amazing about Jesus' sacrifice. "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8).

Jesus gave the ultimate sacrifice. What does sacrifice mean to you? How does sacrifice relate to your faith? In what ways does sacrifice tie into your life? Think about it.

[Gary serves the church in Reidsville, NC. He may be contacted at 907 Courtland Ave., Reidsville, NC 27320.]

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CAROLINA CHRISTIAN

VOL. 32, NO. 1, JANUARY 1990



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Special Issue



A Caring Brotherhood

A Caring Brotherhood

by David Pharr, Editor

It was only a few days after Hugo hit that we began to hear of the work being done among churches of Christ to aid the victims. It soon became apparent that, considering the limited membership of churches of Christ in the Carolinas, our brethren probably did more to provide initial aid than any other group — religious or secular.

Since the storm we have already printed some articles about this work; but a more comprehensive report is needed. A request for information was mailed to every Carolina congregation. Material in this issue came as a result of that request. Many reports we expected have not been received. Even with all of this information, therefore, we still do not have nearly a complete report. The full story is yet to be told.

The Cover

The church at Summerville was a major distribution point. Summerville is in the low country of South Carolina and in the direct path of the storm. Pictured is one of the continuing lines of people who came to the Summerville building for help. Food was provided to 9,000 families from this one distribution point.

A Caring Brotherhood

The theme of this special issue is: "A Caring Brotherhood." We can rejoice and praise God that our brethren are a caring people. We might imagine little good as coming from such a natural disaster; but one good thing to come from Hugo has been the generous, cooperative, and kind work of churches of Christ. As one sister in the Charleston area expressed it: "Things will never be the same after Hugo." The church will indeed be better and stronger because the hurricane gave the brethren both the opportunity and the conscience to care.

Most of the articles in this issue relate to Hugo relief work. We also have articles about child care work in the Carolinas, and a composite article summarizing other benevolent activities among churches of Christ in

the Carolinas. (Due to space limitation this article will appear in the February issue. JM) We have intended to neglect no one; but limited space has made us limit what can be mentioned. One brother wrote, however, what is surely the spirit we all share: "Do not use these specific amounts in the name of _____. It's all from God, so give Him all the credit."

Cooperation

One thing that echoes through all the reports is the way congregations cooperated to help Hugo victims. Money and goods came from churches of Christ in all parts of the country. For example, within hours after the

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CAROLINA CHRISTIAN (P.O.P.N. 091160) is published monthly by Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., at 71 S. Fairfield Road, Greenville, SC 29605. Subscription price: individual \$8.00 per year (\$15.00 for 2 years and \$22.00 for 3 years); club of five or more \$7.50 each; quantity of 15 or more in bundles or direct mailing 50¢ per copy per month. Publication number, 091160.

Second class postage paid at Greenville, SC.

POSTMASTER: Send change with Form 3579 to Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., Johnny Melton, Managing Editor, Route 2, Box 137, Conover, North Carolina 28613.

RETURN REQUESTED

Address editorial matter to David Pharr, Editor, ETSOPM, 6608 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37931. Address news items to Dennis Conner, P.O. Box 1219, Yadkinville, NC 27055.

All items to be printed in a given month's issue should reach the editor not later than the next-to-the-last Thursday of the preceding month.

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storm tractor-trailer trucks were already rolling from Tennessee congregations into the South Carolina low country. It is impossible for us to tabulate the monetary value of the help provided (my estimate of cash, goods, and labor would put it into the millions); but our joy is not just in the big figures, but also in the way even the very small congregations got involved.

A Growing Minority

The Carolinas are considered a mission field among churches of Christ. In many areas, including whole counties, there is no congregation. While a few churches have memberships of 200 or more, most congregations have less than a hundred. There has often been a tendency to feel that Carolina congregations are unable to do much. One thing that Hugo did for us, however, is to

show how much churches in the Carolinas can do.

It is interesting to hear of how several denominational groups sent help they wanted to give to local churches of Christ to be forwarded to the disaster areas. Even small mission congregations were seen by others to be caring people. Did not Jesus say that others would see such good works "and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16)?

We have prepared this special issue of **Carolina Christian** with the prayer that it will encourage us to continue zealously in such labors of love. Hopefully copies will be shared with brethren in other states to let them know of work being done in the Carolinas. (Extra copies will be available at 50¢ while supplies last.)



Working together to remove debris.

Together After the Storm

by George C. Carlisle

In the aftermath of Hurricane Hugo we here in South Carolina realize we have a lot for which to be thankful. Many things were lost due to the storm, but **togetherness** was not one of them. I saw a nation come together to help our state. I saw our brotherhood, the church of Christ, respond with love beyond description. I saw communities helping communities. Neighbors who had not spoken in years were seen together after

the storm. They worked together that each may have water, a bowl of soup, a peanut butter sandwich, a cleared path to the main road, a candle, or a flashlight, for the dark hours of the night. I will continue thanking God. But I will say to you, one and all: Thanks for the times we have had together after the storm.

[George C. Carlisle works with the Manning, SC, church, P.O. Box 895, 29102.]

A Personal Report

by Tom Bailey

I rode the first of three 18-wheelers down to the Hugo area. These trucks came from Cookeville, TN, and were packed full of donations of food and clothing from the Cookeville area churches. Averitt Express Motor Lines donated the use of the trucks and drivers. The first truck went to Summerville.

As we proceeded toward Charleston on I-26 evidence of the storm increased: thousands of trees clipped off, broken down, and power lines down. It was unbelievable the number of roofs stripped off homes and buildings, with trees on buildings and homes. The National Guard was on duty everywhere.

Almost immediately after the storm we at St. Andrews Road began to get calls from churches throughout the country. Our experience with helping people when a tornado hit South Carolina several years ago was that probably the best way to help people in the disaster area was to supply funds. This message was relayed to those who called. We at St. Andrews Road never designated ourselves as a point of distribution, but so many calls came in that we were willing to accept funds and supplies and see that they got to the disaster area.

Several days after the initial trip, a trip was made to the areas of the Isle of Palms, Awendaw, and McClellanville. The sight of whole forests broken down is indescribable. On the Isle of Palms it was hard to see a house completely intact. Numerous homes collapsed into rubble. There were just bare foundations where homes used to be. Every street was lined with debris: household furniture, stoves, refrigerators, pianos, chests of drawers, etc. Since this area was only slightly above sea level, the tide surge during the storm was about 17 feet above normal. Water came up into the houses and saturated all the household goods with salt water and mud.

From the Isle of Palms we proceeded on Highway 17N to the Awendaw community. We saw a man beside the highway near his house. All of his household goods were outside, seemingly in an effort to dry them out. This individual said that he and his wife were inside the house when the storm hit. Water began coming into the house and they had to leave the house and go onto the highway in the height of the storm. He made his living gathering oysters and the block building used to process the oysters was demolished.

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And it did not seem feasible that the house could be lived in again. That evening we went out to have supper at a restaurant with this couple and it was amazing that they did not hold any bitterness. They had the attitude that life goes on and they will start over. We wrote a check for these people and it was a good feeling to see the expression of gratitude on their faces knowing that there were those that cared about their situation and would help. I really think that the giver had a better feeling than the recipient.

We went to the small fishing village of McClellanville — about 400-500 population. The tide surge completely covered this village and had piled up shrimp and fishing boats, leaving them in a tangled heap on land as the surge receded. We stopped by a house where a church group was helping a couple redo their living quarters — they had torn out the inside and were replacing the partitions inside the house. We talked to the lady who lived there and gave her a check to buy supplies to rebuild; and again, it is hard to describe the expression on one's face when he sees people want to help with no strings attached.

We made sure each time a check was given to anyone that it was accompanied by a statement on church letterhead stating that the funds were given by churches throughout the United States and distributed by the St. Andrews Road congregation. Funds were given to several individuals in McClellanville.

The town of McClellanville had an office set up in a trailer near the boat docks. We had conversation with the town clerk concerning the storm damage to the town and future plans. It seems the town had received at that time about \$40,000 in donations. After being assured of how the town would dispense those funds, we left a check with the town clerk. It was the largest single donation that they had received up to that time.

It was really a good feeling to be a part of trying to help people in need, and no doubt they had never heard of the church of Christ before, but they now know something about the church. The only sad part about this is that as far as I know there is not a single church of Christ in this whole area between Charleston and Georgetown.


We made several trips through the back

country from McClellanville up through Manning and Sumter and the evidence of the storm was everywhere. Roofs off of homes, housetrailers turned over, housetrailers completely destroyed. It was almost impossible in most cases to find the owners of destroyed homes. Obviously they had to seek shelter elsewhere.

Contact was made with the manager of the bank in Greeleyville. We talked to him about the situation concerning storm victims and decided to put some funds on deposit with the bank with specific instructions of how these funds were to be spent. The manager assigned a young lady bank employee to handle this account. Several conversations have been had with her since then and she is working with us in the dispensing of these funds to those who genuinely have need.

There are still some funds remaining with St. Andrews Road and we will be working with this project for probably several months in the future.


Larry Russell, a member of the North Charleston church of Christ, visited us recently and we talked about the storm and the dispensing of funds to the victims. We were informed by Larry that North Charleston has somewhat adopted a small settlement just off Highway 17 a few miles out of Mt. Pleasant known as Copahoe. It seems this community of several hundred people was almost completely destroyed. It seems that as a whole, the church members in the Charleston area escaped without major damage or injury.



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by Wayne Altman

As of November 21, we have received \$409,345.64 in money, close to a hundred truckloads of food and clothing, and have had hundreds of volunteers to come and help us distribute food, move trees, repair homes, and assist those who were in need in every way.

We feel an important obligation to provide you with a brief summary of our activities. They are as follows:

Food Distribution: We have provided 9,000 families with sacks of groceries and hundreds with hot meals, and have been using rental truck vans to deliver over 200 truckloads of food and clothing to every community in South Carolina within 70 miles of the church. We continue to provide food for those who still have a need — averaging about 5 families daily. The cost to date for food distribution has been \$7,027.64.

Equipment Rental: This category includes 6 semi-truck/trailers which were used to store and sort food along with our old auditorium and 15 Sunday School classrooms, rental of 3 trucks for 4 weeks and purchase of a used pickup truck, purchase of generators that were used to sustain life for people on respirators and heart monitors, and fuel for trucks, generators, and chain saws. The cost to date for this has been \$8,688.53.

Tree Removal: Utilizing mostly volunteers, more than 4,000 trees were removed from houses and yards covering several communities. So far yards of 62 elderly people have had trees and debris removed. Twelve cases required professional tree removal experts to remove trees from houses to avoid further damage. The cost to date has been \$5,188.63.

Home Repairs: Volunteers temporarily repaired over 100 roofs in the first month. During the last month 12 permanent roofs have been installed, 5 homes have had inside walls, ceiling, and floors repaired, and we are in the process of repairing 20 more. A full-time construction supervisor has been contracted. Cost to date has been \$23,588.60.

Housing: Thousands of families lost their

homes due to Hugo. We have made available temporary housing for 25 families and have purchased 11 mobile homes for permanent housing. Cost to date has been \$77,792.69.

Benevolence: Over 100,000 people became unemployed due to damages to their places of employment. We have paid utility bills, doctor bills, bought medicine and other necessities for over 100 families. The cost to date has been \$19,518.71.

Administration: Nearly all of Hugo Relief has been accomplished using volunteers. To sustain the long-term program some part-time employees are necessary, along with telephone services and some office supplies. The cost to date has been \$3,891.08.

Other Churches: A total of \$59,799.13 has been transferred to other area churches to assist in their food distribution and benevolence efforts.

Spiritual Followup: It is extremely important that those who were helped not be forgotten. A retired preacher has been employed to follow up on these people. To date, \$16,947.80 has been spent in this category, with \$16,000.00 set aside for next year.

The elders of the Summerville church of Christ are making every effort, with God's help, to maximize the benefits of your generous outpouring of money, food and supplies. We can assure you that through your efforts, the church of Christ has gained stature and respect in this area. It is our prayer that through love and God's assistance many will be led to Christ.

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North Charleston

In addition to what they provided themselves, funds were sent to North Charleston from 26 states — 227 congregations, 2 Christian schools, 200 individuals, and a few other organizations. The total by mid-December was \$277,000 in cash, with some monies still coming. The relief efforts are ongoing, with one man now working full time with the congregation in helping Hugo victims. One weekend in December, 16 college students from Blacksburg, VA, came to work. Many others have come from other places.

During the first two weeks following the storm, daily food distribution was made to the public at the N. Charleston building. Over 1,700 families were served in this manner. Distribution continues now on a case-by-case basis. On two Saturdays special clothing distribution was advertised and over 500 families were served.

More than 50 truck and van loads have been sent out from N. Charleston to surrounding areas. They have worked especially with other churches of Christ in the surrounding area to provide for the needs of

their members and neighbors.

N. Charleston has concentrated especially on the community of Copahee. There were 103 houses in this village before the storm and only three were left habitable. The church has been doing all it can to get people back into homes. They have provided repairs for almost every septic tank in the community, sent work crews, helped with building supplies, helped with the purchase of mobile homes, and helped get mobile homes back onto foundations.

All of N. Charleston's relief efforts have included attention to people's spiritual needs. They have provided tracts, correspondence courses, and home Bible studies, as well as inviting all to attend a congregation of Christ's people.

The members at N. Charleston have worked tirelessly in the handling of the massive amounts of food and supplies that have been channelled through their facilities. *[Compiled from telephoned information provided by Richard McWilliams, N. Charleston minister.]*

Archdale Church of Christ, Charlotte, NC

by Paul E. Jarrett

The emphasis of the Archdale church in the area of benevolence is on encouraging each member to manifest the spirit and love of Christ in their personal life. This spirit is something that is always there, but was especially visible in the aftermath of Hugo. Immediately after Hugo the phone lines were busy with calls being made to check on the welfare of each family. Starting from day one, and continuing over the next several weeks members worked to remove trees, patch roofs and minister to one another. Those without electricity were treated to hot meals by those who had electricity, and hot showers, and even lodging was made available.

These acts of generosity and service extended to our neighbors in the community as young men such as 15-year-old Nathan Poling and older men, such as 65-plus-year-old Bill Dolan, and all ages in between, were actively involved in clearing trees, etc.

In addition to a host of individual efforts, food was gathered that first week following the storm and taken to the Parkway church where it was then taken to Charleston, SC. In October our "Corners of the Field" fund was given in its entirety (over \$575.00) for relief efforts in South Carolina. Money from this fund had been used in the immediate aftermath of the storm to assist local families needing food supplies.

The "Corners of the Field" program is an on-going effort of the Archdale church. The 4th Sunday of each month, members are asked to donate the loose change they have set aside at the close of each day during the month to be used for benevolent purposes. This collection of loose change is based on the principle described in Leviticus 19:9,10 in which the Jews were required to leave the corners of their fields for the poor. In the past year this fund has collected over \$2500

for the assistance of those in need. Money collected in November is being earmarked for earthquake relief.



Edgewood, Greenville, SC

by J. C. Watkins

Members of the Edgewood church of Christ collected and contributed four pickup truck loads of food and clothing for the Hugo victims. In addition, many gave cash contributions and a check for \$500.00 was sent, along with the items collected, to the North Charleston church of Christ for distribution. The items collected by Edgewood were taken to the Duncan church of Christ where they were combined with those of other area congregations and then delivered to North Charleston.

Edgewood also served as coordinator for the Chattanooga, Tennessee, congregations. The Green's Lake Road church of Christ in Chattanooga acted as the central collection agency for the Chattanooga area. Total contributions received by Green's Lake Road amounted to \$15,038.00. Out of that \$3275.82 was used to purchase food, \$287.61

for truck rental, \$239.00 for delivery expenses leaving a total of \$11,236.07 which was presented to the North Charleston elders. A total of 39,000 pounds (almost 20 tons) of food was delivered from Chattanooga to North Charleston church of Christ on October 6, 1989. Also, additional money in the amount of \$1,306.07 was sent to North Charleston from Green's Lake Road on October 23, 1989.

Edgewood recently collected another \$60.00 from members which was forwarded to North Charleston. Edgewood is pleased to have had a part in this great cooperative effort among the churches of Christ to provide relief for Hugo victims. This congregation stands ready to do what she can do to meet the needs of people at home and abroad! To God be the glory!

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Duncan, SC

by Paul Rodgers

The response to "Operation Hugo Relief" organized by this congregation has been termed a huge success due to the cooperation of several congregations in this area. Working with the Duncan church were Seneca, Edgewood and Augusta Road in Greenville, Mauldin, Central and Fairview in Spartanburg, Woodruff, Moore, Union, and Clinton. Also, Liberty Life Insurance Company's Branch Office in Greer contributed to this effort, as well as a host of individuals. Through the efforts of Mr. Tally Bright, Hertz-Penske Truck Rentals furnished a truck at no cost to transport the food and supplies collected.

On Friday, September 28, brother Elmer Smith and a volunteer driver, Mr. Ronnie Suttles from Hertz-Penske, made the trip to the North Charleston congregation carrying with them approximately 30,000 pounds of

food, supplies, and equipment. In addition to the truckload of supplies about \$4,000 in money has been sent through this congregation to the North Charleston elders for use in this relief effort. This money also includes amounts received from the Bishop Street church of Christ in Union City, TN, as well as the Lake Station church in Lake Station, IN. The Hobbs St. congregation, Athens, AL, sent an additional \$2,000.

To all that have contributed to this effort we say a big "thank you." To those who worked long and hard boxing and loading these supplies we are very grateful. This certainly was and is a time that we can fulfill what Paul wrote in Galatians 6:10: "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."



Unloading trucks at N. Charleston. (Photo by Cliff Hollis)

Northeast, Taylors, SC

Editor's Note: All who are familiar with Hugo relief efforts are aware of the remarkable way the Northeast church of Christ in Taylors, SC (Greenville area) has been involved. They intend their efforts to be an ongoing project. The following information is taken from a letter from Jerry McCaghren and from an "Update" mailed out by Northeast on November 9.

Update:

Hurricane Hugo was the worst weather disaster in U.S. history! It ravaged the South Carolina coastal area September 21, 1989. Today, some are still waiting for power and phone service, as well as much-needed settlements from insurance and government agencies. For the victims who wait, every day is like eternity.

Such is the case with the devastated Dupree Road community near McClellanville. Hugo delivered a wall of water that swept through leaving water lines over five feet high inside their homes, virtually destroying

everything they owned. Whatever was left — from family photos to furniture — was covered with muck, mildew or mud. There remains precious little for starting over.

The 400-member Northeast church of Christ in Taylors has adopted the community as an extension of their HUGO PROJECT RELIEF. Networking with churches of Christ across the country and other interested individuals, an effort is under way to provide supplies and funds necessary for cleanup and restoration. Work crews from the church have been on site for weeks and have established an office in the local high school v-tech building. It is stocked to distribute food, blankets, and a variety of household goods. Thousands of hours have been invested here!

To begin, all the residents of the Dupree Road area were invited to a town meeting organized by Tom Sutton from Northeast. About 70 families were registered in order to survey needs, and the purpose of the Northeast presence in the community was explained. The response was overwhelming



Sorting food for distribution at N.
Charleston. (Photo by Cliff Hollis)

support and appreciation. In addition to a constant shuttling of individuals and small groups, about 50 Northeast members filled a bus one weekend, making the 4-hour trip to help individual families with cleanup and repair projects. A public laundry has been provided with three washers and dryers along with a shower and dressing area. Mobile homes have been provided for a number of families until their homes are inhabitable. A special community Thanksgiving celebration is being planned for November 18 with gospel singing and a fellowship dinner in the high school gym. Needs are being met on all levels.

Jerry's Letter:

We are moving now from the cleanup phase into serious repair and refurbishing needs. There is a tremendous need for manpower in the form of work crews who are willing to come spend a week or more on various construction projects. We have materials and leadership on site. We just need willing hands to help get the job done. There are many elderly people who have nowhere else to turn. If anyone wishes to volunteer, please call Tom Sutton in McClellanville at 803-887-3578 or Jerry McCaghren at Northeast (803-244-7622).

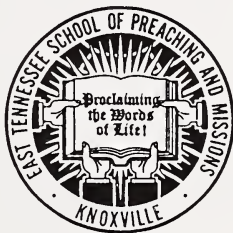
Also, individuals at Northeast have "adopted" individuals in McClellanville and are providing personal gifts for the holidays. Bibles are also being given to each family and/or individual as several have already signed up for personal Bible study.

This is a well-rounded mission outreach. As seen in the enclosed update, the Lord has channelled almost **one million dollars** in cash and goods through Northeast both from local sources and from across the brotherhood. Of this, over \$800,000 in emergency supplies have already been distributed to victims of the storm. The remainder is being used for building materials and furnishings.

The Thanksgiving Celebration in the Dupree Road Community of McClellanville Saturday, November 18, was a great success. Brethren from the Azalea Drive church of Christ in North Charleston as well as from the Clemson congregation joined Northeast in serving over 400 for lunch. There were

about 500 gathered later in the local high school gym for a Gospel concert featuring the W.C.T.S. (We Came To Sing) quintet from Winston-Salem, NC. It was a fabulous day that had a great impact on the community!

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St. Andrews Road, Columbia, SC

by Chip Holton

Immediately following the hurricane a phone chain was enacted and by Sunday 2-3 pickup truck loads were sent down with additional trucks from the Lexington church of Christ to the church at Summerville and North Charleston.

The phone chain was once again enacted and on the Wednesday following the hurricane four additional pickup truck loads were sent to the North Charleston church of Christ. Six of our men went down with chain saws and tools and went to several houses owned by church members who, at that point, had been unable to remove trees and debris from their homes and yards. On the following Saturday six additional men went to Bishopville and took several truckloads of food and supplies and also worked in the area around Bishopville and Camden.

From the beginning phone calls began pouring in to the Saint Andrews Road con-

gregation from across the country from other churches who wanted to help. Saint Andrews Road became a focal point for money to be sent to a relief fund, supplies to be sent to and then forwarded to appropriate places in Charleston and elsewhere, and also as a rendezvous for trucks heading to Charleston. Immediately following the hurricane we began making phone calls to all of the churches in the South Carolina coastal area to check to see what their needs, if any, were. From that point we were able to route people that were calling in wanting to help and those that were bringing supplies in with those that needed specific items.

A relief fund was set up in Columbia for congregations sending funds. To date that fund has reached over \$107,000 and approximately 70% has been dispersed to people in Charleston, McClellanville, and Greeleyville.

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Reports From Congregations

Editor's Note: In response to our request for information regarding Hugo relief projects and other benevolent activities we have received so much information that we have had to greatly condense it. The following list includes congregations that are very small, as well as some of the larger ones. We would like to give a complete story about every good work, but space does not allow it. All of the information below pertains to Hugo relief except when indicated otherwise. We also realize that reports were not received from some who also are involved in a wonderful way. Some congregations not listed here are featured in the other articles. As Tim Mastenbrook of Charlotte wrote, "Be sure to give God all of the glory."

SOUTH CAROLINA

Greenwood, Cokesbury Rd. On Thursday following the storm, a truck and van load with \$1800 in supplies was delivered to the N. Charleston church. Approximately \$1300 was from the congregation and the balance from friends.

Aiken, Whiskey Rd. Sent a small truckload of commodities to N. Charleston, including an additional \$2,200 in cash.

Hartsville. A small group with less than 20 in average attendance gave \$200.

Dillon. Though Dillon County was declared a disaster area the damage was not as great as in other areas. The church building had about \$3500 in damage. The church took all of the stock from their clothes closet to Moncks Corner. They also sent tracts. Having received \$1000 from one of their supporting congregations (Shiloh, Florence, AL), they added \$500 and sent the \$1500 to Northeast church in Taylors to be used at McClellanville.

Greer. This church of about 20 people sent \$450 for help in the Charleston area.

Clinton. Food and supplies sent to N. Charleston.

Anderson. The Westside church was listed by the local newspaper, along with other organizations, as a relief drop-off point. As a result, several van loads were

taken to Northeast in Taylors and from there distributed in the areas hit.

Union, Lakeside. Brethren sent \$200 to Northeast.

Clemson. They sent their entire benevolent pantry plus \$1,000 to Northeast. An additional \$200 was sent by an individual for aid at McClellanville.

Piedmont. Sent \$278 in groceries and \$145 in cash.

Rock Hill, Charlotte Avenue. They received funds totaling \$5,500 from other places which they added to \$3010 of their own money and approximately \$500 in groceries. Two crews of 7-10 men went to the Charleston area to work over a two-week period.

Union. The church on the Bypass sent 500 pounds of food through the Duncan congregation.

Mauldin. Working with Duncan, they sent a couple of tons of food, clothing, etc., to N. Charleston. Additionally, \$300 cash was provided. Later \$200 was sent to the Azalea Drive church in Charleston.

Gaffney, Marion Avenue. The members raised \$2071 for Hugo victims. "Thanks be to God."

Lexington. The church began collecting food and emergency supplies four days before the hurricane reached South Carolina. On Sunday following the storm they delivered 7 truckloads to N. Charleston. In days following more than two dozen more truckloads were sent to the church in Sum-



Car being given to a hurricane victim.

merville; N. Charleston; Azalea Dr., Charleston; and to the town of Summerton. Lexington members spent a week working in Summerton, and were the first organized group to assist in that town. The congregation also sent chain saw crews (about 60 people) into Summerville, N. Charleston, and Summerton. They hired and sent a professional chain saw repairman with those crews, offering free repair service to the residents of those areas. About 45 Lexington members assisted in unloading and distributing food and supplies at the Summerville building.

Bishopville. Inland areas received considerable damage. National attention was focused on coastal areas; but people in Bishopville, Sumter, Florence, etc., also suffered. Help was sent from other places to the Bishopville church and they distributed where needs were found. B. J. Barr writes, "There is no doubt Hugo gave us opportunity for contacts which will bear fruits in the near future. We thank all the saints who helped us with our struggle with Hugo."

Myrtle Beach. The area of Myrtle Beach was on the edge of the storm and did not, therefore, receive the damage suffered farther south. Brethren in other places, however, immediately turned to the church there as a distribution point. Cash and supplies came from more than fifty congregations in ten or more states. The Myrtle Beach church worked through nine congregations in the harder hit areas. Cash aid provided has been approximately \$50,000. Members worked day and night unloading, sorting, loading and transporting tons of food, clothing, etc. A large room (approximately 30' by 80') was kept full. As loads of goods would leave, other loads would come in. They have an ongoing program to aid those who are rebuilding. Dillon Bayes, the preacher, tells of one lady who asked for only one thing. After the storm her Bible was gone. The church bought her a Bible. She said that was all she needed.

NORTH CAROLINA

Burlington. The church immediately sent \$500, which was followed by numerous items of bedding.

Hendersonville. Within the second week,

2 van loads of supplies were sent, followed two weeks later with 2 more loads. Among things included were over 71 bushels of fresh apples. The actual dollar amount of goods sent has not been estimated. Everything was new. Additionally \$445 in cash was sent. "There were tears of sorrow and of joy as we attempted to help our friends who were victims of Hugo!"

Hickory. They sent food, clothes, and baby supplies in conjunction with the North Hickory church. A sister in Kansas sent \$1,000, to which was added \$200 and forwarded to N. Charleston.

Forest City. The church notified three area schools of plans to send supplies. They collected items from these schools. Also, an area Baptist church asked them to deliver their collections. Though the Forest City church has a membership of only forty, a conservative estimate of supplies they handled is \$7,000.

Pantego, Pike Rd. They sent \$1000 to the church at Bishopville, SC, and \$3,000 to the elders at Rock Hill, SC, to be forwarded to affected areas.

Cary. Brethren sent \$2,000 to Summerville. They also sent \$1,130 to the Bayamon congregation in Puerto Rico. The Selma, NC, church provided \$265 and the Gandy church, Lawrenceburg, TN, sent \$300. Also food, clothing, and toys were taken to the Charleston area.

Thomasville. This small congregation had a special contribution of \$569 for the Charleston area. When a hurricane hit Jamaica in 1988, they sent \$600 in cash and collected food, clothing, bedding, and building supplies which they sent to Providence Road in Charlotte to be taken to Jamaica. One of the members spent a week in Jamaica working with a group from Providence Road to build a church building.

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West Jefferson. A large pickup truck load of food, clothing, and baby supplies was delivered to Summerville. They also had helped Providence Road with the Jamaica project.

Beverly. \$560 to N. Charleston.

Roxboro. They sent checks for \$200 each via Providence Road in Charlotte and St. Andrews Road in Columbia.

Winston-Salem. Brewer Road joined with Linville Forest and other area congregations to send two school bus loads of supplies to Charleston. Brewer Road members filled to overflowing a 10' x 10' classroom. Linville Forest provided the buses.

Boone. Raised \$1,300 for Hugo relief.

Asheboro. They sent \$500 plus approximately \$240 in groceries. In the last eleven months this congregation has spent \$9420 in benevolent work (including the above). They have a goal of spending a third of their budget on benevolence.

Morganton. A pickup load of clothing was collected and sent by a Red Cross truck to the disaster area. Also \$155 was sent to Summerville.

Durham. Cole Mill Road cooperated with two other congregations to collect food and dry goods. A shipment was sent to Sumter and Bishopville, via U.P.S., and another shipment was taken by two of the men of the Cole Mill Road church. These men stayed to work for two days in the area. A special contribution of \$3,285 was sent to Northeast, Taylors, SC.

Kinston. They sent \$482 cash and \$200 in food.

Clyde, Central Haywood. Boxes of food were sent to a former area member now living in Charlotte. In 1988 they gave \$500 to help in Jamaica and in 1985 sent \$4300 to help with food for Ethiopia.

Fayetteville, Helen St. Food was collected and the benevolent pantry was emptied to provide a pickup load which was delivered to South Carolina.

Marion. The church sent \$400 for Hugo victims. They also sent \$200 for California earthquake victims.

Clemmons, Warners Chapel. After a clothing drive, goods were delivered to N. Charleston. \$1,060 was sent to Myrtle Beach. \$2,000 was sent to the church at St. Thom-

as, Virgin Islands. They also sent \$1,500 to Redwood City, CA, following the earthquake.

Jacksonville, Roosevelt Dr. Ron Edwards reports that five congregations in eastern North Carolina cooperated to collect and buy groceries and supplies. One U-Haul truck and trailer load was delivered on September 28 to N. Charleston, goods valued at \$6,000. On October 3, there was another load of goods and paper products. Churches were personally contacted in Texas and Oklahoma. They sent funds directly to congregations in Charleston.

Charlotte, Providence Road. The Charlotte area itself, though inland, was hard hit by Hugo. "Our homes were opened to each other to share water and electricity. Chain saw 'fellowships' are still going on." A van load of requested goods was taken to Summerville, with cash. Many offers of help were sent from outside the Carolinas and were referred directly to St. Andrews Road church in Columbia, Lexington, SC, and Summerville. Providence Road plans a continuing "Mission/Benevolence/Outreach Fund" to aid Hugo victims in the Carolinas.

Rockingham. They contacted congregations in their area of the state and acted as a gathering point. About \$400 in food was delivered to Summerville and Azalea Drive, Charleston.

Charlotte, Westside. Serving as a collection point for help from churches in several states, Westside provided \$4,000 to Summerville. \$600 of this was given by Westside. Members who had moved to Charlotte from other places were active in contacting their former congregations for help.

Henderson. The Dorsey Avenue congregation contributed their entire contribution for the first Sunday in November to the Essex Village Church. The total was \$1,237, which is approximately double their regular weekly contribution.

Lexington. During the first week after Hugo, 25 solid cherry headboards (value \$5,000) were donated to the church. The church purchased to match: 25 sets of box springs and mattresses, bed frames, pillows, sheets, and pillowcases (total value \$4,000). This \$9,000 worth of bedding was trucked to the Essex Village church, Charleston.

Later the Essex Village church purchased an additional 35 sets of mattresses and springs, which members of the Lexington, NC, church delivered to them.

Asheville, Biltmore. Six members were involved in 3 trips to the Charleston area. \$1,200 was given to Summerville; \$1,500 was given to Essex Village, Charleston; and an additional \$1,100 was given to Essex Village (\$1,000 of which came from the church in Rayville, LA). One of the members gave a car valued at \$500.

Mocksville, N. Main. Sent a pickup load of supplies, plus \$500. As indicated below, N. Main cooperated in this work with the Jericho congregation.

Mocksville, Jericho. In a cooperative effort with N. Main, the brethren contacted the church in Myrtle Beach to learn of specific needs. Food, clothing, etc., on two fully loaded trucks was taken to Myrtle Beach, along with \$1,050 cash.

Goldsboro. Cash, food, clothing, and baby needs (milk, baby food) which were sent totaled \$600.

Raleigh, Brooks Avenue. They received many cash contributions and gifts of food, etc. Items were packed for shipment by volunteers. The church also purchased a large amount of food and building materials. One truckload was sent to Providence Road, Charlotte, and another was sent to the Summerville-Charleston area. Some of their college students went to Summerville to help with cleanup work. A check for \$1,000 has also been sent. "We will continue to monitor their needs and send whatever help they will need as reconstruction continues."

Greenville. Cooperating with the church in Jacksonville, the Greenville congregation provided a U-Haul truck and trailer to take supplies from eastern North Carolina to N. Charleston. Carl Etchinson and Cliff Hollis were the drivers. With \$2,500 coming from outside of the Carolinas, a total of \$7,500 in supplies was provided. On the way to Charleston they stopped in Wilmington for additional goods.

[Compiled by David Pharr, Editor.]



Homes ruined by wind, mud, and water.

Agape of North Carolina

by Tom Slaughter

Almost two decades have passed since a group of Christians first met to discuss their desire to meet the needs of children. Years of planning and praying followed and in 1982 this long-awaited dream became a reality.

The Association for Guidance, Aid, Placement, and Empathy of North Carolina, Inc. is a private non-profit agency supported by churches of Christ and interested individuals. It is licensed by the North Carolina Department of Human Resources as a child-placing agency.

The bylaws and policies require that all adoptive parents, foster parents, board members, staff, and volunteers rendering services must be members of the church of Christ in good standing with their local congregation. Because of state regulations which require rotating board membership and which geographically limit the services area of an agency to an area equal to that of where the board members live, AGAPE of NC is not under the direction of a specific congregation or eldership. If such were so, services would be limited to one city or county rather than statewide.

In the mid-1960's an agency named AGAPE, Inc., in Nashville, TN, became the first licensed child-placing agency sponsored by churches of Christ east of the Mississippi River. Shortly thereafter, the Nashville board of directors gave permission to interested Christians in other locations to use the "AGAPE" name and logo in establishing other programs. Today AGAPE appears in the name of several agencies in the Southeast. All of these agencies are totally independent from one another. While a spirit of cooperation and referral exists between the more than eighty Christian child care programs, there are no corporate or financial ties.

When AGAPE of NC, Inc., actually began operation in 1982 there was literally no money in the bank, no other tangible assets, and a donated income base of \$200 per month. Christians in North Carolina stepped

out on a great deal of faith to undertake such a large project in a "mission field" where records of that time show that only about 40% of the 100+ congregations in the state were self-supporting. This program had to begin without the support of a large church population and without a large beginning endowment which makes its beginning very different from most others.

When the foster care license was issued in 1982, AGAPE of NC became one of only five private agencies in the state providing such services. Today it is one of only seven private adoption agencies, with only two others operating on a statewide basis. Many of our neighboring states have that many, or more, child care agencies in one county. The need for such services is great; but the need for **Christian** services is even greater.

Expenses for the 1989 fiscal year total \$499,197. All but about \$10,000 of that amount represents cash donations and donated services from **inside** North Carolina!

The services of AGAPE of NC include foster care for children who have been abuse/neglect victims within their own families, foster care for children awaiting adoption, adoption services, crisis pregnancy counseling, and limited family counseling. In addition to direct services provided by agency staff, in 1989 more than 66,700 hours of donated time were provided by trained Christian volunteers through LoveLine, a crisis pregnancy telephone hotline operating in a dozen cities in the state. LoveLine is a fully owned service mark of the agency and serves as an information and referral service to those experiencing a crisis pregnancy. In addition, LoveLine volunteers have the opportunity to establish relationships and support

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groups which have, in many situations, resulted in very positive Christian lifestyle changes.

Just this year over 400 non-Christian families have contacted AGAPE of NC desiring to adopt. These families were given other possible resources to contact since we could not help them and each of them received a tract explaining what the church of Christ is. When additional information is desired, these families are referred to the congregation in their local area.

The number of children placed for adoption has now reached several dozen. The numbers are growing each year. Children have now been placed in at least 11 states, but preference is given to Christian families in North Carolina. Applications are available by request through the AGAPE office.

This past year nearly 3,000 people facing a crisis pregnancy called either the agency or a LoveLine volunteer for information or help. More than 350 birth mothers have received direct services by the agency staff.

Foster care services have been provided to 103 children, some for a few days and others for months or years. Thirty-one children

were in AGAPE foster homes this year. Fifty-four percent of the foster care days this year were for children who were abuse/neglect victims. The balance of the foster care was for children awaiting adoption. There is a continuing need as the agency grows for more foster homes, especially for infants.

A written annual report which summarizes all financial and program services information is available upon request. The agency Executive Director, Tom Slaughter, is available for speaking to interested congregations, elderships, committees, or other groups concerning the services and needs of AGAPE of NC, Inc. To contact him or to request other information write or call, AGAPE of NC, Inc., 302 College Road, Greensboro, NC 27410. Greensboro phone: 919/855-7107. Raleigh phone: 919/821-4588. Charlotte phone: 704/536-1743.

If you know of a young woman or family experiencing a crisis pregnancy you may have them call any of the above numbers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Staff members are on call to answer questions and assist at all times.

Caring for the Children

by Melissa A. Thigpen

On October 1, 1989, Christians from North and South Carolina helped celebrate the fulfillment of a dream. That was the day of the Open House and Dedication ceremony for the Sarah M. Smith Cottage for teenage girls on the campus of Southeastern Children's Home in Duncan, South Carolina.

For more than twenty years, Southeastern Children's Home has been a shining light in the darkness for children of all ages and from all backgrounds. Often it has been the last stop in a frenzied trip from home to home, shelter to shelter, in a crazy world where a child doesn't know to whom he can turn, or who he can trust anymore. When a parent is the one who is supposed to provide security and love, and that parent sadly fails in this job, Southeastern Children's

Home provides a ray of hope that there is still someone out there who cares.

In 1968, a group of Christians from North and South Carolina recalled the words, "Whosoever welcomes a little child like this in My name welcomes me." They recognized that the need existed to help these little ones who didn't have the voice or the power to make known their problems. As a result of the vision of these concerned individuals, a program began which would reach its arms into the homes and very lives of hurting children and families.

Through the years, it has not been just a small group of people with compassionate eyes and hearts. From the beginning, Christians have rallied in support whenever the need was presented. A group home was built in Sumter in 1971, and another in Lexing-

ton in 1978. When a foster program was begun in 1981, the number of families willing and able to take troubled children into their homes grew from the initial four families to over thirty this year.

The most difficult task for the group of Christians who oversee planning for the future of Southeastern Children's Home, however, is to stay in touch with the changing needs of society, to be continually looking beyond this year or the next and discover what shape the agency should take. In 1986, the board of directors saw that the number of teenagers who have emotional and behavioral problems which need to be addressed with professional care is daily increasing, and the trend shows no indication of changing. After much prayer and planning, the Southeastern Children's Home Residential Treatment Facility for Adolescents became the next program area on the board's agenda.

Many Christians in the area took an interest and active part in helping Southeastern Children's Home find a place on which to locate this new facility. Finally, through the assistance of members of the Church of Christ in Duncan and Spartanburg, a fifty acre tract of land in Duncan was located and purchased. An old farmhouse was converted to office space with the help of many volunteers, and the land was prepared for construction of the first group home.

Much interest was generated about this new project. Calls and letters were received weekly from people who wanted to help in some way. Many helped through manual labor, sending funds, and helping solicit funds from other people and organizations. The campus fund was finally completed when Southeastern Children's Home received a generous bequest from the estate of the late Sarah M. Smith.

Although the construction process was lengthy and difficult to coordinate at times, dozens of people arrived at different times to contribute their special talents. From plumbing, wiring, and hammering, to digging, planting, and sowing, people just wanted to be a part of this project which would touch lives for years to come. Once someone had seen what was going on, they came back again and again, sometimes to help, sometimes just to check on the prog-

ress.

Finally, that great day came. On October 1, 1989, over one hundred and fifty people were present to share in the Open House and Dedication of the Sarah M. Smith Cottage at Southeastern Children's Home. A few weeks later, the doors opened for business when the first teenage girl came to call the Smith Cottage home.

None of the work done by Southeastern Children's Home — none of the little boys who now have someone to take them camping, none of the little girls who get tenderly kissed and tucked into bed at night, none of the babies who grow up with two loving Christian parents because of an unwed mother's tough decision to let them go, none of the teenage girls who were sexually abused and are just now learning to trust again — none of this could be done without the support of a caring brotherhood.

Across the nation, many children's homes are suffering greatly because of an alarming trend — contributions from churches are slowly becoming smaller and smaller, and programs which minister to children and families are losing support to other good works, building projects, and the mission field. So far, Southeastern Children's Home has not fallen victim to that trend.

So far this year, thirty-five churches in North and South Carolina have contributed over \$70,000 to the work of Southeastern Children's Home. Over three hundred individuals send money to support this work on an annual basis. While other programs such as this are struggling to keep from losing their current support, or looking outside the church to maintain their current level of services, Christians in the Carolinas have continued to voice their commitment to the work of Southeastern Children's Home by maintaining their support.

To continue to build the Residential Treatment Facility, however, Christians in the Carolinas need to do more than maintain at the current level. To build the next cottage for teenage boys, to place additional children in foster care, to help preserve homes so that children do not have to leave them in the first place — this requires an additional investment of time, money, and prayer.

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There are no words to describe the look on a child's face when he finally realizes that he has nothing more to fear. There's no way to tell about the feelings a foster parent has when her teenage foster daughter makes the decision to become a Christian. Pen and paper cannot contain the emotion of a church when the natural parent of foster children the church has come to love walks down the aisle with her children and says, "You've shown my children how to live in a family. I want

to be a part of this family, too."

In Mark 10:13-16, Jesus took the little children in His arms and blessed them. While others determined to focus His attention on what they thought were more important things, the Master set aside every other priority to hold the little children in His arms. For us to be like Him, we can do no less.

[Missy Thigpen, LISW, Executive Director, SECH, 825 Woods Chapel Rd., Duncan, SC 29334.]

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CAROLINA CHRISTIAN

VOL. 32, NO. 2, FEBRUARY 1990



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Hebrews: A Word of Exhortation

Hebrews: A Word of Exhortation

by Johnny Melton

The "Epistle to the Hebrews," as it is titled in our Bibles, has often been neglected in our study and preaching. Perhaps this is due to the theological arguments made from the Old Testament Scriptures that are contained in it. Whatever the reason, many know little about Hebrews beyond "Faith's Hall of Fame" in chapter 11 and "not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together" in 10:25.

Hebrews, however, deserves to be studied and preached. David Gooding describes Hebrews in the following words: "[It] is ablaze with the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ; the glory of His deity, His manhood, His priesthood and sacrifice, His triumphant life of faith, His resurrection and ascension, and the certainty of His coming again" (**An Unshakeable Kingdom**, p. 11). Recently, attention has been given to Hebrews and its message. In 1980 James Thompson wrote a little book entitled **Strategy for Survival: A Plan for Church Renewal From Hebrews**. It was used widely as an adult Bible Class study guide. In 1988 Terry Bell wrote a book entitled **Reviving Tired Faith: A Guide to Spiritual Rejuvenation From Hebrews**. Both of these works are based on the principle that Hebrews is relevant. Bell writes, "The book of Hebrews is for Christians who

- are attracted by the world,
- are losing their faith,
- are experiencing tragedy and loss in their lives,
- need exhortation and admonishing,
- have lost their first love,
- have made great sacrifices to become Christians,
- have traded the gospel for a ritual, or who
- have become desensitized to a need for growth in their spiritual lives" (**Reviving Tired Faith**, p. 8).

But Hebrews is not for individual Christians alone. It also addresses local congregations. Bell contends, "The book of Hebrews is for congregations that

- seem to have lost the desire to grow,
- seem to have lost the power to minister,

- need a greater vitality in body life,
- have stagnated in leadership and membership, and
- seem to have lost the gospel dream.

"The book of Hebrews is for a church that is perilously close to crystalizing into a monument honoring the things that *were* rather than powerfully exemplifying the realities that *are* and *are to come*" (p. 8).

Hebrews stands as a "word of exhortation" (13:22) to both individual Christians and to congregations. As a "word of exhortation" Hebrews should be understood to be a sermon rather than an epistle. James Thompson writes, "In the only other New

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CAROLINA CHRISTIAN (P.O.P.N. 091160) is published monthly by Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., at 71 S. Fairfield Road, Greenville, SC 29605. Subscription price: individual \$8.00 per year (\$15.00 for 2 years and \$22.00 for 3 years); club of five or more \$7.50 each; quantity of 15 or more in bundles or direct mailing 50¢ per copy per month. Publication number, 091160.

Second class postage paid at Greenville, SC.

POSTMASTER: Send change with Form 3579 to Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., Johnny Melton, Managing Editor, Route 2, Box 137, Conover, North Carolina 28613.

RETURN REQUESTED

Address editorial matter to David Pharr, Editor, ETSOPM, 6608 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37931. Address news items to Dennis Conner, P.O. Box 1219, Yadkinville, NC 27055.

All items to be printed in a given month's issue should reach the editor not later than the next-to-the-last Thursday of the preceding month.

Address commercial advertising inquiries to Jacobs List, Inc., Clinton, SC 29325. Address all advertising pertaining to the Church of Christ or its members (including related organizations) to the editor.

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Testament instance where the 'word of exhortation' is mentioned (Acts 13:15), it refers to a sermon. The style, train of thought, and method of argument show many parallels to the synagogue sermon. There is a statement of thesis (1:1-4) and a development of arguments in a logical order interspersed with hortatory sections ('let us'), with which one may compare *2 Clement*" (**The Letter to the Hebrews**, p. 8).

Regarding style of composition, William Johnsson has written of Hebrews, "In its construction it alternates theological exposition with homiletical application. Hebrews is often said to be a book heavy with theological reasoning. So it is — although not as heavy as claimed, when we get into it — but the theology over and over merges with practical exhortation. The following table will help us to see the pattern:

- Exposition 1:1-14
- Exhortation 2:1-4
- Exposition 2:5-3:6a
- Exhortation 3:6b-4:16
- Exposition 5:1-10
- Exhortation 5:11-6:20
- Exposition 7:1-10:18
- Exhortation 10:19-13:25

"Now we begin to grasp what the writer meant by calling his work a 'word of exhortation.' It is not intended as a theological treatise per se. Rather, theology and application dovetail into one another: exposition serves exhortation and exhortation arises out of exposition. Hebrews, in fact, is a sermon, not a letter" (**Hebrews**, p. 2).

Hebrews is an inspired model of first-century preaching. As such, we should study it to learn something about how we should preach today. One important principle that leaps from Hebrews is that we must not avoid the "meat" of the word. In that passage where the Hebrew preacher tells his audience that they "need milk, not solid food" he immediately encourages them to leave the "rudiments" (milk) and he proceeds to feed them meat (i.e., the priesthood of Jesus, the nature of the new covenant, the atonement, etc.). Effective preaching is a balance of encouragement and doctrinal exposition; and encouragement (or, exhortation) should always be rooted in biblical exposition. Other-

wise, preaching is reduced to the bland level of pop-psychology.

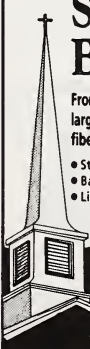
The theme of Hebrews can be summarized in practical terms. The preacher encouraged his audience, "Don't give up. Don't waver. Don't drift away. Hold fast in faith to the Christian tradition" (Johnsson, p. 3). Such a message needs to be heard by Christians today. The first congregation to hear this message was losing its confidence, it was suffering from tired blood, and it was reverting to immaturity and indifference. The same can be said for many of our churches today; and the outlook for the 21st century is not encouraging.

This special issue of **Carolina Christian** focuses on five exhortation passages in Hebrews:


- Don't Drift From the Word, 2:1-4
- Don't Doubt the Word, 3:7-4:13
- Don't Be Lazy Toward the Word, 5:11-6:20
- Don't Despise the Word, 10:26-39
- Don't Defy the Word, 12:14-29.

The articles based on these passages are from the hearts of dedicated preachers who are concerned about the spiritual progress of individual Christians as well as that of local congregations. This issue is sent forth with the sincere prayer that these articles will challenge complacency and inspire renewed confidence in the power of God's word.

[Johnny Melton has served as guest editor of the February issue of Carolina Christian since 1975. He preaches for the Hickory church of Christ. He may be contacted at Route 2, Box 137, Conover, NC 28613.]



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Don't Drift From the Word

Heb. 2:1-4

by Ron Newberry

When the diligent student of the Bible approaches any book of the Bible, there are certain basic questions which he attempts to answer. For example, there are questions such as: 1. Who wrote the book in question? 2. To whom was the book written? 3. When was it written? 4. Why was it written? 5. What kind of literature is it (e.g., a gospel, apocalyptic, history, poetry, prophecy, etc.).

However, answers to these questions in a study of Hebrews are not so easy to find. Paul may get the majority of support as the author. But others such as Barnabas and Apollos have also been suggested.

The question of the intended readers is just as difficult to determine. It has been suggested that the initial readers were Jewish Christians moving back to Judaism. Others have suggested that they were Gentile Christians in danger of abandoning Christianity altogether.

Did these Christians live in Alexandria, Rome or elsewhere? No one knows. We are not even certain about the date except to say it was written prior to A.D. 96 because there is a reference to the book by Clement of Rome in A.D. 96.

The book of Hebrews does not fit the structure or formula of most of the other New Testament books. It is best characterized as a sermon later recorded in written form. It may well be an early Christian sermon preserved because of its emphasis on the supremacy of Christ. The most dominant theme (if not **the** theme) is the preeminence of Christ. He holds superiority to angels, Moses and Joshua. He has preeminence by virtue of who He is, His priesthood and His sacrifice.

It has been suggested that Hebrews is the longest sustained argument in the New Testament. However, it is more than an argument. It is an exhortation. It is a call back to original commitment. The author expected to motivate and encourage his readers to remain secure in Christ.

While the entire book is a protracted exhortation, specific sections are clearly exhortations in themselves. The first such exhortation is Hebrews 2:1-4.

Chapter 1 is devoted to establishing the truth that Jesus is the ultimate spoken word, the living *logos*. It is apparent that the word "therefore" in 2:1 calls for a response to this message in chapter 1.

The challenge is stated as a warning to struggling Christians. Three key terms in verses 1 and 3 are "pay . . . attention," "drift" and "ignore." The problem addressed is that of lukewarmness, half-heartedness, indifference and apathy. Evidently, those who received this book had heard the word of God and had professed their faith. However, they were on the brink of disaster as they drifted past the harbor of faith and neglected God's salvation. That was happening because they were drifting from the word (the message about Christ) and, therefore, from the Word Himself.

A closer look at the terms mentioned above reveals the urgency of the message. The words translated "pay . . . attention" and "drift" are nautical terms. *Prosechein* (pay . . . attention) relates to docking a boat or mooring a ship. *Pararrein* (drift) refers to a ship that has slipped past the safe harbor because the pilot has not compensated for the tide or wind or current.

The term *ameleo* (ignore) refers to neglect. The pilot does not deliberately drift by the safety of the harbor. Through neglect and failure to pay attention, the ship slips by the safety of the harbor into dangerous seas.

As a result of failing to pay attention and drifting by the harbor, there is negligence with catastrophic results. Ultimately, salvation is neglected because one fails to give proper attention to what he has heard. He has failed to pay attention to the word which reveals the living Word.

For the majority of Christians, the prob-

lem has not diminished. We are not threatened spiritually with a desire to charge headlong into disaster. Our temptation is to drift away from the word and into sin. Few Christians turn one hundred and eighty degrees from the word overnight. Sadly, through neglect, we may drift from God as we float under the influence of powerful currents and tides in life.

In chapter 6, the writer develops the surety of God's promises. Through His promises (contained in His word) we have hope. That hope is the anchor of our souls (Heb. 6:19). Our only hope of security in the harbor is to anchor ourselves with the word of God. Without it we will inevitably drift.

The point is, men seldom complete a bold

about-face in a dramatic split with God. When one abdicates salvation, it is frequently a slow, initially imperceptible drift that begins with neglecting the word.

To prevent terminal drifting, we must continue to focus on the word of God as it reveals the will of God. However, we must never grow complacent or fail to be moved by the word. We must never forget that God's message was revealed in the eternal Word. The message directed both to our heart and intellect directs us to the harbor where we may anchor in safety.

[Ron Newberry preaches for the Friendly Ave. church of Christ. Write him at 5101 W. Friendly Ave., Greensboro, NC 27410.]

Don't Doubt the Word

Heb. 3:7-4:13

by Jim Mullican

One of the most fascinating studies in the world is human nature. People may dress differently and speak different languages, but human nature is much the same in every nation and culture. Nor has human nature changed much throughout history. In the garden of Eden, Adam and Eve had every blessing, but they were still greedy for more. After falling into sin, Adam refused to recognize his own fault. Instead, he blamed Eve and God, who gave him Eve, for his sin (Gen. 3:12). Eve in turn "passed the buck" to the serpent (Gen. 3:13). Nobody was willing to accept responsibility for what had happened. After at least six thousand years, very little has really changed.

Ambition, greed, materialism, pride, alcohol abuse, immorality, and divorce are some of the sins which confront Christians today. They are also the same sins which the Old Testament prophets denounced. Man has made tremendous strides in technology. He can control the power of the atom, and he can control a spacecraft as it hurtles past the outer planets of the solar system; but he has not made much progress in dealing with his own emotions and feelings. That is why the Bible is relevant in every age.

The writer of Hebrews, recognizing this common element in the lives of all men at all times, uses it to stress an important lesson for the Jewish Christians to whom he wrote. In chapters 3 and 4, he warns them repeatedly not to make the same mistake their ancestors had made fourteen centuries before. He begins by saying in Hebrews 3:7-9, "Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, 'Today, when you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness, where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for forty years.' " He restates this warning in 3:15 and 4:7, amplifying the warning with other admonitions throughout these two

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chapters.

While the Israelites hardened their hearts in rebellion against God numerous times during the exodus from Egypt, the specific incident in the mind of the writer seems to be the refusal of the Israelites to invade Canaan after the twelve spies made their report in Numbers 13. The people decided that going back to slavery in Egypt was easier than fighting the Canaanites. In making that choice, they were rebelling against God and hardening their hearts to His pleading and His loving care already demonstrated by the manna, the parting of the Red Sea, and in many other ways. The result of their rebellion was not what they expected, however. They wandered forty years in the Sinai wilderness, and one by one they all died. The little children whom they had feared would fall prey to the wild animals and foreign nations then went in to capture the promised land.

The Hebrews writer introduces this particular incident into his letter because the Hebrew Christians were apparently in danger of making the same mistake. Finding themselves persecuted as Christians, they may have been tempted to return to the Jewish religion as an easier way of life, but he wants them to understand that such a decision would be a serious rebellion against God's call to them through the gospel. They will gain nothing and will lose everything in hardening their hearts to the leading of God.

This exhortation has applications to the modern Christian as well. Some still find real Christianity too demanding and seek an easier way. Many years ago a lady abandoned Biblical Christianity for a denomination usually filled with "high society" people. When asked the reason, she responded by saying, "The church of Christ won't let me drink, but the _____ will, and I want to drink." The visitor pointed out that the real question is not what the church allows, but what God allows. Faithfulness to God demands that His people be willing to follow Him in everything rather than taking the broad and easy way which the world accepts (Matt. 7:13, 14).

Some still harden their hearts to the word of God on anything that would inconvenience them. Their attitude is, "Yes, I'll be

present for worship . . . unless I have company, or it rains, or I go on vacation, or I need to do something else. I'll give to the Lord's work, as long as I don't have to give up anything I want in order to do it." Many give only grudgingly, and never sacrificially. In almost any congregation, families with an income of \$40,000 or \$50,000 per year are giving twenty dollars per week, while the lost are dying and missionaries are crying for support to take them the gospel. "Do not harden your hearts" is still relevant.

In any city, there are usually as many former members or unfaithful Christians as there are active and faithful Christians. The blame is generally placed on someone else. Someone hurt their feelings, Christians were not friendly, some were hypocrites, or the church was always wanting money. No one likes to accept responsibility for making a decision to abandon God. It is easier to blame others, but the writer of Hebrews points out the truth of the matter when he says, "Take care, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called 'today,' that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. 3:12, 13). People abandon God and the church not because of something someone else has done, but because their own hearts are lacking in faith and are set on sin.

The doubter and the hard-hearted person can never be happy in the church or out of it. The solution, then, is to cultivate faith in God and love for His way of life. The person who does that will be happy here and now as well as saved in eternity. On the other hand, one who has "once been enlightened" (Heb. 6:4) and then turns away from Christ has only guilt and unhappiness as prospects in this life and eternal punishment and separation from God as prospects in the life to come. Let us, then, guard the attitude of our hearts very carefully.

[Jim Mullican preaches for the Central Haywood church. You may write him at Rt. 4, Box 30-A, Clyde, NC 28721.]

Don't Be Lazy Toward the Word

Heb. 5:11-6:20

by Dennis Conner

What happens when a church takes lightly the values of its religion? Very simply, it places itself in a dangerous position. Witness these Hebrew Christians. The author (or preacher) had been discussing the high priesthood of Jesus, which in turn led him to a treatment of the Melchizedekian nature of Jesus' priesthood. The purpose for this discussion was to encourage a group of tired believers to hang on so that they might enter the rest God had prepared for them through the high priestly ministry of Jesus. Then suddenly, the discussion is broken off. His readers are not ready for such "meat." The author's ensuing remarks reveal that there are two options available to these believers — peril or promise. They may expose themselves to the danger of rejection by closing their ears to God, or they may find blessing by listening to the voice of God as expressed

in His word. Perhaps we would do well to note that the same options are available to the modern church.

In 5:11-6:8 we note the danger of spiritual immaturity, especially an immaturity that is self-willed. The author begins with a rebuke of his readers. It is important to note that these believers had already endured many things for their faith. Many of them had been Christians for a long while. It appears that they were simply growing tired of the struggle. Their strength to go on was nearly depleted. Their faith was lagging and they were spiritually sluggish. In the language of the rebuke we find another evidence of their sluggishness. They had become "dull of hearing" (vs. 11, NASV). The word translated "dull" was often used for a lazy student who refused to develop his mind. The Hebrews had closed their ears and minds to

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God, and the suggestion here is that they had done so deliberately. Their dullness toward the message from God was self-imposed. They did not want to hear about the implications of Jesus' high priesthood. It would be easier just to drag along, traveling the path of least resistance.

The consequence of their spiritual dullness was a self-willed immaturity. Rather than being at a point where they would be capable of giving instruction, they had chosen instead to be instructed in matters that should have been left behind long ago. In the modern church we often hear complaints that what we need are more first principle sermons. Perhaps so, in the case of those who are beginning the Christian walk. It is a different matter, however, when believers simply refuse to exercise their minds and are content with a self-imposed immaturity. The author of Hebrews complained that his readers were stuck on the first principles. To paraphrase his rebuke in 5:12-13, a rebuke laced with sarcasm, the writer was saying, "You people are acting like a bunch of babies who would choke on anything stronger than milk. It's time to grow up."

The rebuke of 5:11-14 is followed by a warning in 6:1-8. The sluggish believers were told, "You cannot stand still. You must move forward in your understanding. You must assume the responsibilities of your faith." If they failed to do this, they would be exposed to a most serious danger. What danger? The danger of exposing Christ to public shame. The scenario of 6:4-6 should be understood as a warning of what might happen to them by taking lightly the privileges and responsibilities of their faith. The words "crucify to themselves the Son of God and put him to open shame" refer to a believer who has repudiated Christ and now profanes the holy, despising the salvation and hope he or she had once known. It is impossible to renew such a person to repentance because this kind of person would not want to repent. Spiritual immaturity, dullness toward the voice of God, can potentially lead to the point of rejecting Christ and every spiritual blessing that the believer presently enjoys. Dullness toward the word is something that can kill.

Having warned his readers of the start-

ling possibility of repudiating Christ, the author changed his mood in 6:9-20. Rebuke is followed by exhortation, "Beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you." We find in this section a twofold exhortation. The believers were encouraged in the first place to continue to be diligent in their work and love, as they had been reminded of their past evidence of commitment (vss. 10-11). The second part of the exhortation called them to imitation. They were to imitate the faith and patience of other faithful believers, with Abraham cited as an example. They had to endure; they had to be faithful and steadfast. But upon what basis could the author make this appeal? What incentive to faithfulness could he hold up before them?

He appealed to the faithfulness of God Himself. The basis for Christian confidence and steadfastness is the reliability of God's promise. God kept His word to Abraham, and in the same way God will honor His word to all who are in covenant relationship with Him. God's promises are absolutely certain. He has sworn upon His own name. Because God's word is sure, the believer has a reason to be hopeful. Sustained and comforted by God's reliability, the Christian has a strong incentive to hold fast to his hope of heaven. That hope is not blind optimism. It is rooted in the character of God Himself and the accomplished work of Jesus Christ as our high priest. Concerning the believer's outlook, William Johnsson writes, "Hope is a scarce commodity in today's market. In an age of despair, hope seems foolish, whistling in the dark, even perverse. But again the sermon to the Hebrews confronts the thought-world of modern man, suggesting that we take the long view of reality. Because of the person and attainment of Jesus Christ . . . we may look beyond the doom and gloom of the times to the certainty of the eventual realization of the promise of God. This is hope with a new dimension, hope beyond despair." Through hope we know that we shall eventually follow Christ where He has already gone, unless we allow the noise of a self-willed despair to drown out what God is saying to us. *[Dennis Conner preaches in Yadkinville, NC and manages Carolina Christian Bookstore.]*

Don't Despise the Word

Heb. 10:26-39

by David Vaughn

"God is to us a God of deliverances . . ." was one way David expressed his confidence in Jehovah (Psa. 68:20). God has always delivered His people. Salvation, from enemies and from sin, is from God. To be with God is to be safe, but to be away from God is to be lost.

Humanity has always been in need of salvation because "all have sinned." Paul wrote, "The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). When Peter was before the Council of the Jews he said, "There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). So, it is clear — all are in need of being saved, and salvation is found only in Christ Jesus.

Believers know the difficulties in living for Jesus in a society that urges individuals to ignore Scripture and adopt the pluralistic view. We know there are many so-called gods and saviors, but "for us there is one God, the Father . . ." (1 Cor. 8:6). Even with this knowledge, believers need encouragement to remain faithful.

Perhaps no book in the Bible encourages readers to look to Jesus as does the book of Hebrews. Many Scripture references tell us that salvation is found only in Jesus. The book of Hebrews reveals WHY salvation IS through Christ. This book was written to believers who were struggling in their efforts to be faithful. Therefore, the writer stresses the promises of God which provide strength for the present and future aspects of hope. He pleads with the readers "to see Jesus" (2:8, 9). "Seeing Jesus" is necessary because the Christian hope is anchored to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. So, in difficult times, the Christian must patiently endure as did Abraham (6:13-15). For those who would not patiently endure, the writer gives a fearful warning. Let us briefly examine the warning in Hebrews 10:26-39.

A faith that does not hold to Jesus and His redemptive work is not a Bible-based faith — faith which comes from hearing the gospel (Rom. 10:13-17). The Hebrew writer makes it clear that Jesus is God (1:1-3, 8; 3:1-4), and without faith it is not possible to please God (11:6). How, then, could one hope to be saved when that one has rejected

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the Christ?

The recipients of Hebrews had received knowledge of the truth. The truth they had received was truth as opposed to error and the truth of Christianity as contrasted with the shadows of Mosaic law. The knowledge they received was "full-knowledge," **epignosis**, a stronger word than **gnosis**, the common word for knowledge. "The knowledge they had was the knowledge that apprehended the meaning of Christianity and the evidence that made it credible." With the "full-knowledge" they had of Christianity they were not ignorant of the truth. In verse 26 it is clear their sinning was "willfully," which means: "voluntary, of one's own accord, deliberate, intentional, noncompulsory" (Kittle's, **One Volume**, p. 221; A.T. Robertson, **Word Pictures of the New Testament**, Vol. 5, p. 413).

Their willful sin was after they had a full-knowledge of the truth. In 10:32 the writer calls on these same people to "remember the former days, when, after being enlightened. . . ." Therefore, their sin was not in ignorance; it was not a "slip" as in Galatians 6:1. Their eyes were open — they deliberately chose to sin! Consequently, there was no sacrifice for them. It is interesting to note that the Mosaic covenant did not offer forgiveness to the willful sinner. "But the person who does anything defiantly, whether he is native or an alien, that one is blaspheming the Lord; and that person shall be cut off from among his people. Because he has despised the word of the Lord and has broken His commandment, that person shall be completely cut off; his guilt shall be on him" (Num. 15:30, 31).

The writer of Hebrews is emphatic: ". . . without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (9:22). All the sacrifices offered by the patriarchs and by the Levite priesthood pointed to the sacrifice at Calvary because it was "impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins" (10:4). Therefore, God prepared a body for Christ to offer as a sacrifice. This act, one time for all humanity, will never need to be repeated (Heb. 10:5-10). All sin that has been forgiven, has been forgiven because of the sacrifice of Christ (Heb. 9:13-15). It was in this Calvary event that "God was in Christ,

reconciling the world unto himself" (2 Cor. 5:19). It is by the sacrifice of Christ that we have our Great High Priest "in the presence of God for us" (Heb. 9:24). It is by that sacrifice that "we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus" (Heb. 10:19).

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This was the “full-knowledge of the truth” the recipients of the book had received. How could they reject the truth concerning forgiveness, sanctification, and access to God, and have any hope of salvation? The fact is, they had no hope if they deliberately rejected the truth, and the writer gives the stern warning of the horrible consequences of this sin. The willful sinner has a future, as does the faithful believer. But, what a difference! The future of the deliberate sinner is filled with fear and judgment. Because he has rejected the truth he will face the wrath of God’s judgment against sin. He has nothing to offer as atonement for his sins. He rejected the truth concerning heaven’s offer of forgiveness; therefore, he will face the judgment of God without: the truth which gives faith (Rom. 10:17), the truth which sanctifies (John 17:17), the truth which when obeyed purifies the soul (1 Pet. 1:22), and without the mercy of God.

He was warned that his punishment would, indeed, be severe. The people who rejected the truth of the Mosaic Law died without mercy (Deut. 17:2-7). But the willful sinner has rejected the truth concerning Jesus, and the writer argues his punishment will be worse. The writer reasons from the lesser (Law of Moses) to the greater (Christ and His sacrifice).

In chapter 1 Jesus is presented as “the radiance of His glory, and the exact representation of His nature.” As Son of God, Jesus is greater than the angels. As builder of the house (God’s people), Jesus is greater than Moses, who is a servant in the house (3:1-15). “If the word spoken through angels (Moses’ Law) proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense,” the writer asks, “how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation” (the truth of Christ)? The obvious answer is no one can escape. When one knows the truth and turns from the truth, he, in so doing: tramples Christ underfoot, regards the blood of Jesus as common blood void of cleansing power, and insults the Holy Spirit! To show such disdain wounds the heart of God and says, I do not want your mercy! As Ahab and Jezebel faced the judgment of Almighty God for murdering Naboth, the willful sinner will face the wrath

of God because of rejecting God’s truth.

Israel had “full-knowledge” of God’s deliverance power, but they surrendered to unbelief. As a result God was not pleased with them. They died and were buried in the desert sand — away from the land God promised to them and the land God gave to their ancestors! Israel turned from the truth and chose to ignore the help God offered to them. The writer of Hebrews uses Israel as a powerful example of what happens when people reject the word of God! To the readers of this book, he says, Believe God and accept the help He offers, lest you also fall short of the eternal rest God has for the faithful.

In trying to prevent a departure from truth the writer urges the people to keep calling to mind the struggles they had previously faced. The reason for faithfulness is eternal, not situational. The past conduct of the believers included: being sympathetic to other persecuted Christians, being regarded as contemptible, and losing their material possessions. They had suffered for believing truth and the writer pleads with them to remain steadfast which would result in their salvation. Salvation becomes a reality to the faithful. Endurance is needed if the promises of God are to be realized. The Lord will return — faithfulness is the watchword!

[David Vaughn serves the Mebane St. church as both preacher and elder. He may be contacted at P.O. Box 1861, Burlington, N.C. 27215.]



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Don't Defy the Word

Heb. 12:18-29

by Phil Stapp

The people stood at the foot of the mountain in awe. Sinai was covered in smoke and fire. The mountain trembled violently as the thunder roared and the lightning flashed. The sound of the trumpet grew louder and the people trembled in fear. God had descended on Mt. Sinai in all of His power, glory and holiness to speak to His people Israel. But when God addressed the people, they were so afraid that they begged Moses to receive God's instructions for them.

This story from Exodus 19 and 20 is the setting behind Hebrews 12:18-29. The author uses this graphic picture to illustrate his point: the importance of listening to and obeying the word of God.

This text is a part of the concluding section of Hebrews that includes chapters 10 through 12. The author begins this section by focusing on the fact that Christians have been "made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (10:10, NIV). He then shows the effect that this perfect sacrifice should have on Christians. "Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful" (10:22, 23). Consequently we must not deliberately keep on sinning. If we do, we trample the Son of God underfoot and treat His blood as unholy and will be judged as an enemy of God (see 10:26-31).

In 10:35-11:40 the author illustrates what God meant when He said, "But my righteous one will live by faith" (Hab. 2:4). Following these great examples of faith, chapter 12 begins with this encouragement, "Since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the

cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart" (12:1-3).

Fixing our eyes on Jesus includes perseverance in times of persecution and struggle (12:4-13), living in peace with all men, living holy lives, staying away from sexual immorality and godless living (for which Esau is an example) (12:14-17). This is the faithful life that Christians must live so that they do not miss the grace of God (12:15). The author then uses the picture from Exodus 19-20 to make his final appeal for the life of faithfulness to God.

The author was writing to Jewish Christians who were wavering in their faith and considering a return to Judaism. Throughout his letter he has reminded them that Judaism has found its fulfillment in Jesus Christ. He encourages them to remain faithful to Him. He has used vivid pictures from the Old Testament to illustrate his points. Now, his final appeal returns to one of the most powerful pictures in the Old Testament: the scene at Mt. Sinai when God gave Israel the conditions of the covenant.

The description in 12:18-21 reminds his readers of the awesomeness of the scene and the holiness of God. Because God had descended on the mountain, it was holy and any man or animal that touched it was to be stoned. The holiness and awesomeness of God were too much for the Israelites and they "begged that no further word be spoken to them." Though this event was not a rejection of God's word by the people (see Ex. 24:1-4) the author sees it as foreshadowing what was to come. It was not long after this that the Israelites had Aaron make for them the golden calf. Israel's future was filled with the rejection of God's word. They refused to listen to God's written law or to His prophets. It was because of their refusal to listen to God's word that they received God's judgment (see Amos). The author does not

want his readers to make the same mistake.

In verse 22 the author begins to compare and contrast the Christian experience to that on Mt. Sinai. He reminds them that they have not come to a mountain that could not be touched, but to Mt. Zion, the very dwelling place of God. They are a part of the church of the firstborn whose names are written in heaven. Through the blood of Jesus Christ they have a new, personal relationship with God.

With this reminder the author makes his final appeal. "See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks" (12:25). The writer says, "Don't make the same mistake the Israelites made. Listen to God and obey Him." He reminds them that the final judgment is coming and that if Israel did not escape God's judgment, how can an unfaithful Christian expect to do so? He then concludes, "Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our 'God is a consuming fire' " (12:28-29).

What a powerful encouragement! The author encourages tired and wavering Christians of all ages. Through the blood of Jesus Christ we have entered into a personal relationship with God Himself. We have direct access to God through our mediator, Jesus Christ. What a great privilege! With the privilege, though, comes the responsibility. To remain in this relationship with God we must listen to and obey Him. This is what it means to be faithful.

Baruch went to Jerusalem and read to the people the words of God from the scroll of Jeremiah. Baruch was then invited by the royal officials to read the scroll to them. They responded in fear. The officials then took the scroll to King Jehoiakim and the secretary read it to him. Jehoiakim, however, reacted differently. As the scroll was read to him, Jehoiakim had the scroll cut up and thrown in the fire (see Jer. 38). He showed no fear, only disdain. Consequently God brought judgment upon Judah through Babylon and Jehoiakim was killed.

While Christians today may not actually burn their Bibles, how many of us cut up God's word and burn it in our hearts by not listening to and obeying it? How many Chris-

tians know God's will for their lives but live according to the world? How many of us know all of the arguments over the current "issues" in the brotherhood but fail to fix our eyes on Jesus Christ and live holy lives? This kind of rejection can only lead to judgment and condemnation.

Let us as Christians today realize what it means to really listen to God. "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says" (Jas. 1:22). Then we will worship Him acceptably, with reverence and awe, in everything that we do. Let us realize what Christ's sacrifice has done for us. Let us then make every effort to live holy lives, for without holiness no one will see the Lord (12:14). Let us realize what we have come to in Jesus Christ: the very presence of God. What greater encouragement do we need to remain faithful? He is our savior, our source of holiness and our strength.

The next time you feel tired or discouraged as a Christian, remember what God has done for you. Remember that through Jesus Christ you are in the very presence of God. If God is with us, who can defeat us? Fix your eyes on Jesus and find your strength in God. Remain faithful to the one who has saved you and you will receive the kingdom that cannot be shaken.

[Phil Stapp preaches for the Brewer Rd. church in Winston-Salem. He may be contacted at 2010 Brewer Rd., Winston-Salem, N.C. 27107.]

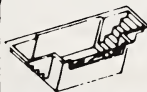
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Target Sparta 1990

by David Allgood

In the summer of 1989 the church in West Jefferson decided to try to get involved in mission work. The church here is small and is not fully self-supporting. Therefore we found ourselves limited as to how we could get more involved.

About forty miles to the northeast of West Jefferson is the town of Sparta. Sparta is the county seat of Alleghany County, which has a population of approximately 13,000. In the entire county there is no congregation of the Lord's church. We then decided to move in the direction of establishing the church in Sparta during 1990. We have designated this effort Target Sparta 1990.

Although the church in West Jefferson is small, we are blessed with talent. We are also blessed with a desire to see the church

grow in this area of North Carolina where it is so weak. In the four-county area of Ashe, Alleghany, Wilkes, and Surry, there are over 126,000 people. The church, however, in these areas is very weak in numbers. Accordingly, much work needs to be done in these areas.

In a time when world mission awareness seems to be on the rise, we must not neglect the great mission areas in our own back yard. If you would like to be involved in this work or would like to have more information regarding this effort, please call or write. The phone number is (919) 246-5615 and the address is P.O. Box 117, West Jefferson, N.C. 28694.

[David Allgood preaches for the church in West Jefferson.]

"The Faith of Our Fathers" 46th Annual Carolina Lectures

by Cleveland Reddinger

A professor of Philosophy came into the first day of class and asked his students to make a list of five things they considered worth living for. When he saw them finish that assignment, they were asked to list five things for which they would willingly stand before a firing squad at dawn the next morning. He then went on to explain that the two lists ought to be one and the same. The only things worth living for are the things worth dying for. Consider then the words to this favorite old spiritual song:

*Faith of our fathers! Living still,
In spite of dungeon, fire, and sword;
O how our hearts beat high with joy
When-e'er we hear that glorious word:
Faith of our fathers, holy faith!
We will be true to thee till death!*

Whose heart has not been stirred deeply by the thought of a faith worth living for? a faith worth dying for? And yet we look around our brotherhood in America and we

see it torn to shreds by self-will, false doctrine and worldliness!

The Eldership of the Rockingham church of Christ felt that a good deal of the problem could be corrected by taking a good look back at the faith which is Historic Christianity, the **Faith of Our** (spiritual) **Fathers**.

In choosing the topics for this Lecture-ship we tried to define, in **as practical a way as possible**, just what the faith of our fathers is. What could possibly have impelled our forefathers to cross oceans, to brave death and endure imprisonment with no real tangible rewards? Whatever it was, the brotherhood today needs to regain it and refocus our eyes upon it in order to heal the problems Satan has caused in our midst, and they are legion.

Our first Lecture speaker will be Randy Smith of Seneca, South Carolina, speaking on "**The Faith of Our Fathers Is a Bible-Based Faith.**" (Randy directed the Lectures last year on "Studies in Hebrews: **Christ . . .**

The Better Way.") We feel that this is the first topic that must be covered, for when one is separated from the word of God, slowly but surely the faith with which one began is transformed into that which is unrecognizable when compared with the original.

Other topics covered will be "**The Faith of Our Fathers Is a Practical Faith,**" by Terry Graves from Boone, North Carolina. Faith is no good if kept only in the heart. Our spiritual forefathers believed that the faith was meant to be lived out in their everyday lives and that the faith was in every way practical. Craig Hinrichs will speak on "**The Faith of Our Fathers Is a Faith That Calls for Our Very Best.**"

We feel that this is a Lectureship which can help the brotherhood of the Lord's

church. It is our sincere hope that many brethren will take the time and make the trip necessary to be benefitted by this, even if it means taking time off work. Most men and women can do this and not be hurt by it too much. The cost will be more than returned by the benefit to your spiritual life, and not just yours, but the life of your congregation will be enhanced by what will be presented here. The lessons will be given by the brethren of the two Carolinas, second to none in the nation in dedication to the **Faith of Our Fathers**. Come and enjoy the rich time together with those of like precious faith!

[Cleveland Reddinger preaches for the church in Rockingham, N.C. Contact him at P.O. Box 95, Rockingham, N.C. 28379.]

Brotherhood News

by Dennis Conner, Yadkinville, NC

Around South Carolina . . .

The LAURENS CHURCH OF CHRIST is looking for a full-time personal worker. The church has approximately 35 members. For more information contact: Jim Bailey (803) 682-3922, Cecil Ramey 984-6134, or Hobert Huffine 682-2025. . . . Haskell Yenny, Jr., is the new preacher for the IRMO-CHAPIN church in Irmo. . . . U.H. Ward has resigned as the preacher for the LAKESIDE DRIVE church in Union. His plans are to move to northern Alabama. Brother Ward is now semi-retired. He has been a diligent and tireless worker for the Lord in both North and South Carolina. Jesse Ham, Jr., formerly of Greenville, began as the new preacher on Dec. 1. Brother Ward also reports that fellowship has now been restored between the two churches in Union. . . . The CHARLOTTE AVE. congregation dedicated their new building facilities on Jan. 7. There were 306 people present for the dedication. Speakers at the service were David Pharr and Bob Bickle.

And North Carolina . . .

A new church is now meeting in Sanford. The SANFORD CHURCH OF CHRIST

first came together for worship on July 2, 1989. Families who formerly worshipped with the church in Apex and the church in Siler City form the core of the new group. Apex and Siler City both are involved in providing strong spiritual support for the Sanford church. According to the 1980 census, Sanford has a population of 15,000 with the Lee County population at 36,800. The address of the Sanford church is P.O. Box 3731, Sanford, NC 27331. . . . Rob Albright is the new preacher for the THOMASVILLE CHURCH OF CHRIST. Brother Albright has worked with churches in Ohio and Tennessee and preached for the church in Elizabeth City for his first work after graduating from college. . . . After working with the church in Cherokee for 3½ years, brother Elza Bruce has resigned, citing age, health, and family sickness as factors. Anyone interested in working with the CHEROKEE CHURCH OF CHRIST should contact brother Bruce at (704) 497-9576, or P.O. Box 1202, Cherokee, NC 28719. . . . The WEST JEFFERSON CHURCH OF CHRIST is in the process of seeking to re-establish the church in Sparta. Any churches interested in further information about this work should call David Allgood at (919) 246-5625.

Other Good Works

by David Pharr, Editor

We must not overlook the emphasis Jesus gave to the issue of benevolence when He described the coming judgment. We cannot read Matthew 25:31-46 without being impressed with the duty we have to actively care for the needs of people around us who are helpless and hurting. Our concern for following the New Testament pattern, therefore, must never forget that true Christians are charitable people and that the true church is a caring church.

Many of the reports we have received tell of local responses to persons and families in need. Often congregations maintain food and clothing pantries in order to help when needs arise. Giving groceries to one family at a time may not seem impressive compared to the millions given for Hugo relief; but for the family helped it means a lot. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

More and more we are realizing the value of opening our church buildings for worthy uses through the week. Helping programs are conducted by congregations and community service groups meet in, or operate from, some of our buildings. Organizations whose philosophies and activities do not conflict with the Scriptures often need space for meetings, or for blood drives (Red Cross), etc.

Providence Road church of Christ in Charlotte has been a leader in benevolent/mission work in Haiti. Haiti is probably the poorest country in the world. Mission schools have been a primary focus of these Charlotte brethren, assisted by others, such as Charlotte Avenue in Rock Hill, South Carolina. Providence Road coordinated one of the largest relief efforts in Jamaica after Hurricane Gilbert struck there. More than 30 tons of goods and building supplies were sent. Over forty people (mostly from the Charlotte area) went to the impoverished back country of Jamaica to help rebuild. While other congregations contributed to many of these projects, Providence Road has directed close to a million dollars to foreign

and domestic causes in the last 3-4 years. This figure does not include the value of goods shipped, which would be significant. In reporting this, they were very careful not to take credit for themselves, but to recognize the vital part of other congregations, and to give God the glory.

In response to our questionnaires Carolina congregations reported more foreign projects that they are helping than we have room to describe. Money from among us is going to such places as Belgium, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Zambia, India, Austria, South America, and many other places.

More mention was made in the reports of help to California earthquake victims than we have been able to specifically mention.

Though budget constraints have forced them to close their food pantry for now, the Morganton, NC, church has carried on a food distribution program in their area that provided almost a ton of food to local needy in each of the winter months of 1987 and 1988.

Another congregation that has over the years given literally tons of food and clothing to help needy in their area is the rural Jericho church of Christ at Mocksville, NC. Their support of AGAPE of NC is \$3,600 each year. Their monthly support for other North Carolina congregations will total \$4,800 and \$7,800 will go to needs outside the United States.

Warners Chapel at Clemmons, NC, has a long history of helping. Every December they have a special collection for AGAPE of NC which averages about \$3,000. Also supplies are collected each month for Rainbow Christian Services in Gainesville, VA. They are currently involved in a dozen or more mission projects. Warners Chapel has a Preachers' Educational Fund to help pay tuition fees for any man in the congregation who enters an approved Christian college to study to become a gospel preacher. Four men are now preaching as a result and another is expected to enter college in 1990 with the help of this fund. We especially appreciate

this sentiment expressed by their leaders: "The elders of Warners Chapel count their blessings in choosing the direction of work for the loving, caring, responsive, dedicated, and generous members who make up this congregation. They are the ones who make these programs of work a reality. God bless them."

Biltmore church in Asheville sends \$5,000 a year to Honduras mission work. Another congregation which is liberal in foreign work is Brooks Avenue in Raleigh, sending help to Mexico, the Philippines, Nigeria, Israel, and Cuba.

Separate articles tell of the work of AGAPE in North Carolina and Southeastern Children's Home in South Carolina. These child care agencies are supported almost entirely by churches of Christ in the Carolinas. Numerous reports have come to us regarding congregations which support these works. The Roosevelt Drive congregation in Jacksonville, NC, has been a special example of fund raising for child care. To stimulate interest among other congregations for

supporting AGAPE they spearheaded a special giving day for each December. In three years over \$86,000 has been contributed in this annual effort.

Brewer Road, Winston-Salem, has been supporting former members Don and Nancy Files in their work in Belgium for three years. This couple has helped in the repair of church buildings, helped erect buildings, and worked on campground facilities. They spent two months in Zambia helping with famine relief.

The list continues — Cary, NC, supports African Christian Hospital; Lexington, SC, has "Project Compassion"; Boone, NC participates in "Bread for a Hungry World"; Clyde, NC, sends clothing to orphans in India; Rock Hill, SC, remembers Spanish speaking preacher students in Texas; Henderson, NC, sent \$1,000 to Roanoke Rapids to help them purchase a building site. . . .

"Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!" (Psa. 107:8).

A Book Review

by Michael R. Mobley

Studies in the Book of Revelation, John L. Kachelman, Jr.; Quality Publications, P.O. Box 1060, Abilene, TX 79604-1060; 190 pages, paper \$6.95.

The Revelation is not an impossible book to understand; it is clear enough for anyone to understand it. The thirteen expository lessons of this study are concise and clear, Scriptural and intelligent. Each one contains practical lessons for the modern Christian. Kachelman explains the symbols without getting bogged down in the mire of interpretation. He explains the unfolding story of this vision of hope without losing track of its theme of victory: the victory of God over Satan, of the church over the world, and of the truth over evil. God wants us to have an unrelenting faith and that is what this study is designed to teach. You will especially enjoy the thirteen special studies sections. They cover such things as the mark of the beast, the 144,000, the battle of Armageddon, the

1000 year reign, the five enemies of Christ, the rapture, the Lamb of God, heaven and hell, Premillennial doctrine, etc. He defends the truth from the text. You will enjoy reading this study of the Revelation. It is excellent for individual or class study.

Becoming Persons of Integrity, Harold Hazelip and Ken Durham; Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49516; 125 pages, paper \$4.95.

Someone who has integrity is one who is whole or one who is what he claims to be. A Christian who has integrity has a healthy Christian character and is a whole Christian. The authors explain that this involves at least three elements: establishing one's system of values, being true to God and oneself (deciding who you will obey), and action (putting your words and beliefs into deeds no matter the situation or condition of your life). The lifestyle of Jesus is examined and

presented as the best example of integrity and demonstrates that He alone can meet the needs of twentieth-century Christians who want to be persons of integrity. Next, the authors apply the teaching and lessons of integrity to various situations and conditions in life. This is an excellent study book, class book, or even a personal gift.

EveryDay Strength, Randy Becton; Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49516; 157 pages, paper.

As a cancer patient, Becton has had his moments of struggle for his faith and hope for fifteen years. So, he knows the doubts, fears, anxiety, and helplessness of the disease and its treatments. This book is written by one who really knows. When the doctor told him that he had cancer, he directly turned to God and through the struggle with his body he discovered the peace and strength and hope he needed for his soul. He calls this book "a cancer patient's guide to spiritual survival." He understands the sense of depression and abandonment of a cancer patient so he writes in the spirit of compassion and helpfulness and forthrightness. This diary of 33 meditations deals with reality and truth, life and the Scriptures, your cancer and your God. Of God he writes of God's will and the sufferer's boldness to live, God's strength and his trust. The sufferer is reminded that God does care for him and he can lean on God. He reminds the sufferer that his suffering does not alter or lessen God's power and so he can believe in Him.

Becton knows the spiritual and emotional strength that is vital to coping with cancer. He sees God as a mighty friend for the sufferer, a stronghold in times of great trouble. The theme of these meditations is wellness in the midst of illness. So, he writes of dignity out of the ashes of loneliness, bitterness, and helplessness. He writes of life in the midst of pain, life, death, and time. Becton believes that there is thanksgiving in the midst of suffering because he believes that the cancer patient can be a survivor. Each meditation focuses on a specific topic and contains a simple prayer about that topic. Yes, this book is primarily about the sufferer's relationship with God. This book of meditations is a good friend for a cancer patient and would be a real gift of love from one who knows a cancer patient.

[Michael Mobley preaches for the church in Mooresville, NC. Write him at P.O. Box 312, Mooresville, NC 28115.]

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CAROLINA CHRISTIAN

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DID YOU KNOW . . .

that the heart of man's problems is the problem of man's heart?

The condition of our heart or mind determines our actions, words, and attitudes (Matt. 12:33-37; 15:18-20). The Bible warns us to watch over our heart with all diligence since our heart determines the kind of life we will live (Prov. 4:23).

If you want to change your life, you must change your heart or way of thinking. Pouring new habits into old ways of thinking will produce the same old life. Renewing your mind is the key to transforming your life (Rom. 12:2). Change comes from the inside out.

— Mike Mays
Asheboro, NC

by David Pharr



There is no cause either in logic or Scripture that necessitates a dichotomy between a sound doctrinal stance and a progressive program of work. It has, however, often been our observation that congregations tend toward emphasis on one while neglecting the other. It seems that many think a choice has to be made between programs and the pattern.

By programs we mean the good works in which a church may be involved. As we are "to be ready to every good work" (Titus 3:1), every legitimate plan for accomplishing good ought to be encouraged and applauded. The recent involvement in Hugo relief is a beautiful example. Likewise we commend benevolent activities of all types, and all other Scriptural programs that edify, educate, encourage, and reach out. Some congregations have had the vision to launch into numerous successful projects.

It happens, though, that churches of Christ which have impressive programs often tend to downgrade their emphasis on doctrine — especially those issues which mark the church as distinctive from the denominational world.

The Bible provides the pattern for acceptable religion. The existence of New Testament Christianity in our times is the result of a zealous emphasis on both the negative and the positive features of the apostolic pattern. Matters such as acceptable worship, the plan of salvation, true versus false doctrines, etc., must be understood, advocated, and defended by the plain presentation of Biblical truth.

Here, then, is the point we are making. Some congregations which are doing much by way of good works seem to be minimizing the importance of doctrinal purity. Their pulpits may teach no error; but neither do they declare truth with substance. No emphasis is given to why certain things are right in religion and other things are religiously wrong. Such churches may be growing, but new members are not only first attracted by

the programs; it's only the programs to which they have made a commitment. They have heard little about the New Testament pattern; they know little about the New Testament pattern; and they care little about the New Testament pattern: because it was the activities, the programs, that caused them to "join" the church.

Now, we are quick to caution that this does not mean that every congregation that has an impressive program of work is neglecting sound doctrinal teaching. We are persuaded that many large congregations with broad ranges of active programs continue to give due emphasis both to teaching

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CAROLINA CHRISTIAN (P.O.P.N. 091160) is published monthly by Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., at 71 S. Fairfield Road, Greenville, SC 29605. Subscription price: individual \$8.00 per year (\$15.00 for 2 years and \$22.00 for 3 years); club of five or more \$7.50 each; quantity of 15 or more in bundles or direct mailing 50¢ per copy per month. Publication number, 091160.

Second class postage paid at Greenville, SC.
POSTMASTER: Send change with Form 3579 to Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., Johnny Melton, Managing Editor, Route 2, Box 137, Conover, North Carolina 28613.

RETURN REQUESTED

Address editorial matter to David Pharr, Editor, ETSOPM, 6608 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37931. Address news items to Dennis Conner, P.O. Box 1219, Yadkinville, NC 27055.

All items to be printed in a given month's issue should reach the editor not later than the next-to-the-last Thursday of the preceding month.

Address commercial advertising inquiries to Jacobs List, Inc., Clinton, SC 29325. Address all advertising pertaining to the Church of Christ or its members (including related organizations) to the editor.

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Carolina Christian

the Biblical pattern and to abiding within it. It would be prudent, however, to ask some introspective questions. Is there as much attention to soundness as to success? Are Scriptures abundant in sermons, and are they used to delineate the distinctive features of true Christianity? Is there a balance between "first principles" and teaching regarding family, interpersonal relationships, and personal happiness? (A sister in another part of the country said she was sick of only hearing "how to be happy" Sunday after Sunday.) How long has it been since there was a plain non-apologetic lesson against instrumental music? Are class discussions a forum for iconoclastic complaints against the church, for liberal quibbles, and for uninformed opinions — with no clear and Scriptural conclusions? What is the direction — are you hearing more about the program than the pattern?

The fruit of a tree may have the most appeal, but without sound roots it will not long survive. Unless a church is rooted healthily in the word of God, its beautiful fruits will soon fail to glorify God (Matt. 5:16). "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Ps. 11:3). The Roman church, man-made denominations, and even civic clubs can do as well as the church of Christ in providing helpful programs. The only thing that makes the church unique is for it to be determined to be unique — according to the Bible pattern.

At the recent Freed-Hardeman College Lectures, the esteemed Leroy Brownlow quoted an admonition by his mother, who had left denominationalism to come to the truth: "Let's not grow into what we left." In many ways our good works have made us "acceptable" to the world. Let's be careful lest we become so enthralled by the way the world loves us that we no longer want to turn it upside down (Acts 17:6). In many places the church seems to be "growing" into the very things which were once opposed.

Here, though, we need to shift our attention to the other side of the matter. There are congregations which give great attention to the pattern, but which seem to have little concern for effective programs. No fault can be found in their doctrinal stance. They are vigilant against error. But what really are

they doing, comparatively speaking, to help the poor, to lift-up the depressed, or even to evangelize the world? It is one thing to criticize those who seem to have forgotten the pattern in their zeal for programs. But is there not also a fault when we are satisfied with saying the right things and emphasizing the right ordinances while we are doing little by way of truly unselfish good works to help hurting and lost humanity?

Jesus found a fig tree that "claimed" to be fruitful (by having leaves, being a variety that produced fruit along with leaves), but there was no fruit on it. He cursed it and it withered away (Mark 11:13-14, 21). Professing soundness without bearing fruit is hypocrisy.

Phariseism is still a deadly virus. Pharisees are strong on doctrine, but weak on service (Matt. 23:2-4). Jesus asked, "What do ye more than others?" (Matt. 5:47). Programs without regard for the importance of the pattern may be called liberalism; but it seems to this writer that pride in the pattern with no real zeal for good works can hardly be much better.

God has not shown us which has priority: sound doctrine or zealous works, the obvious reason being that there is no dichotomy between them. The Lord's will is that every congregation be loyal and zealous for the New Testament pattern and likewise "ready to every good work." May the Lord show us how to be progressive in numerous activities for the good of mankind, but as churches that never fail to emphasize the importance of the Biblical pattern.

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National Hypocrisy

by David Pharr, Editor

Politics aside, every thoughtful and decent American wants the war on drugs to succeed. Cocaine and like substances, are a curse that is destroying health, polluting morals, corrupting the nation, and damning souls. We are thankful for every legitimate effort to rid our country of this enormous evil.

Those who will honestly and fairly compare them, however, will see the almost complete kinship between illegal recreational drugs and the legalized recreational drug, alcohol. Both affect the mind and the body. Both give temporary pleasure, and both are followed by a letdown. Both are addictive. Both harm health, wreck families, weaken moral inhibitions, cause fatal accidents, encourage crime, and are promoted by love of money. Millions of dollars are spent in the treatment of each, though the alcohol scourge requires more. Yet we are a nation at war against cocaine while alcohol is generally accepted.

Consider our national hypocrisy. A tele-

vision advertisement warns against cocaine; the next one urges the drinking of beer. Politicians speak against the drug menace, then go to a cocktail party. There is a recommendation for the death penalty for cocaine barons; liquor dealers are given a license. The people have been brainwashed that "prohibition didn't work," and that "you can't legislate morality"; but we are in a war for the prohibition of cocaine and new laws are coming continually to legislate against the immorality of such drugs. The "clergy" of this country are outspoken against cocaine (because it is a popular issue); but few — too few even in churches of Christ — will take a bold stand against drinking. Parents are horrified that their youth might sniff the white powder, but they keep their own liquor cabinet well stocked. Alcoholics are innocent victims of a "disease," but other drug addicts are victims of their own foolish and evil habits.

Truly, "The legs of the lame are not equal" (Prov. 26:7).

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Doers of the Word

by Johnny Melton

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it — he will be blessed in what he does. If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless. Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world (James 1:22-27, NIV).

The emphasis in this passage is not just on mental activity. Religion is not merely a matter to which we give mental consent. Real faith, the religion of God, true Christianity involves action — obedience to the commands of Jesus — and it is a flat misrepresentation of Scripture to suggest that an emphasis on obedience makes salvation a matter of works and not of grace. Paul said, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith" (Eph. 2:8), and, "Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17). But what did James say? "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says" (v. 22). To think that one can pay lip service to Jesus, go through the outward demonstration of Christianity, but refuse to conform one's life to the will of Jesus is to deceive oneself. And it is a truism that no one is so badly deceived as he who is self-deceived. Jesus Himself challenged the spirit that merely listens but does not respond when He asked, "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?"

(Luke 6:46).

The man who reads the Scriptures, or who hears them read, but does not translate the truths he has learned into his own daily living is foolhardy. James describes him as a man who sees himself in a mirror and immediately forgets what he looks like. That is, one who by looking in a mirror realizes that he needs to wash his face or comb his hair, but then, looking away, immediately forgets to wash and comb. Looking in the mirror has been meaningless for such an individual. In the same way, the outward practice of religion that does not make one into a better person, bringing him into a closer relationship with the Lord through obedience, is meaningless.

The religious man who is blessed indeed is the man who has been helped personally by the practice of his faith, and who has, in turn, become a blessing to others.

By learning to "keep a tight rein on his tongue" the practitioner of true religion has been helped to be a better person. Also, by keeping himself from being "polluted by the world," he has been able to grow into a more meaningful relationship with Jesus. The exercise of his faith will ultimately result in the believer becoming a blessing to others. He visits "the orphans and widows in their distress." Certainly, pure and faultless religion involves more than either holding one's tongue and maintaining moral purity, or visiting orphans and widows. However, these are practical expressions of faith which serve as examples of the way true Christians seek to relate to the Lord and to help others.

Let every Christian examine his profession of faith carefully. Certainly, God will not accept empty profession. The message of James is clear: There is no faith, no real faith, without obedience; and there is no religion of value without practical application.

[Route 2, Box 137, Conover, NC 28613.]

Four Revolutions

by J.C. Townsend

The world has witnessed some remarkable changes within the last few months. People in Eastern Europe have arisen with demands for greater freedom and a greater opportunity to determine their own destinies. This reminds one of a number of revolutionary movements which have been celebrated within the last few years. These were remarkable events which brought some lasting changes to the world. These occurred between 1688 and 1789.

First, in 1688, the English Parliament, supported by the army and a large part of the English people, ousted King James II. The sister of James II, Mary, and her Protestant husband, William, were called to the throne. This movement declared itself to be supreme in English political life and it issued the momentous Bill of Rights. The 300th anniversary of what has been called the Glorious Revolution was celebrated in 1988. This certainly brought tremendous changes to the English-speaking world.

Second, the American Revolution, which took place in 1787 — we celebrated the 200th anniversary of this tremendous event in 1987. A constitution was created at Philadelphia and declared that the United States was a free and sovereign power. It attempted to create a system of popular government and to write laws that would preserve democracy and enable the people who lived under it to enjoy a free society. The first amendment to the constitution, ratified in 1789, declared that the institutions of state and church should have no formal connection. There was an attempt by the creators of this remarkable document to guarantee religious freedom and to establish the principle that no religious test should be required to hold an office in the government. This was indeed a wonderful and remarkable document that was created here in Philadelphia in 1787.

Third, the French Revolution was remembered and celebrated in 1989. There have been many efforts to compare the American Revolution with the French Revolution and to attempt to decide why they took such different directions. It is interest-

ing to note, and this is sometimes forgotten, that there was large support in America for the events taking place in France. A number of preachers spoke out in favor of the French Revolution and the hope for changes that it would bring. John Woodhull, a Presbyterian preacher in New Jersey, was supposed to preach a Thanksgiving sermon in November 1789 to celebrate the new American constitution. When he received the news of the liberation of the Bastille and the declaration of rights that had been formulated in France, he very eagerly declared that these events were the providential workings of God. He declared that the help which France gave in the American Revolution was the result of God's special intervention. Now, in order that they should be rewarded for His help, God was bringing great blessings to the people of France.

Another very noted Presbyterian preacher of the time, Samuel Miller, also expressed praise for the French Revolution. Miller preached in New York City and became a very important individual within the Presbyterian Church. He later became a professor in Princeton Theological Seminary and taught there for a long time and was a colleague of Charles Hodge, who is very well known. He declared that the events in France were the means of kindling a flame and illuminating the dark corners of the earth. He expressed a very positive attitude toward the French Revolution.

But events in France took a terrible turn and became a movement that was oppressive and cruel indeed. As a result, order and support faded in America but the question has been asked many times as to why the efforts in France turned out to be so different from the events in America and in the American Revolution. Some writers have suggested, for instance, that there was an elaborate plan to de-Christianize France. The leaders of the Revolution tried to pull off what they felt to be like the heavy hands of the church. In Paris the revolutionaries renamed 1400 streets in order to eliminate reference to saints and monarchs. The cathedral of Notre

Dame became the Temple of Reason.

Alexis de Tocqueville was a keen observer of events. He had a special love for America, and in his visit here, he found much that he liked and that he praised. He wrote about the French Revolution and said that there was no end to the efforts made to destroy Christianity or what was called Christianity, and I quote from him:

"In France the Christian religion was attacked with a sort of fury without any attempt to put another religion in its place. Ardently and continually, the effort was made to remove from the souls of men the faith that had filled them and leave them empty."

Tocqueville wrote that in America the anti-religious doctrines were never able to make much headway. In France the effort to establish a democratic society became the colleague of atheism while in America it was the handmaiden of faith. Tocqueville, in his great book, **Democracy in America**, sought to place his finger on the reasons why the French and American Revolutions took such different paths. In fact, Tocqueville spent his life in an effort to analyze and determine this. He wrote that in America he found that the spirit of religion and the spirit of freedom were intimately united and that they reigned in common over the same country. We know that men like Voltaire exercised a great deal of influence in the French Revolution and his ideas caused it to march in an opposite direction from events in America.

Fourth, the Revolution which needs to be noted and praised above all others is that

which is brought by the gospel of Christ. Paul declared in Romans 1:16 that it is the power of God unto salvation. It has wrought changes and transformations and revolutions into the hearts of countless of thousands of people. It has worked to uplift mankind and to bring salvation and hope to the souls of men. Truly it is the most marvelous and wonderful message ever to fall upon the ears of mankind.

Paul wrote to the church at Corinth in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 and reminded them of the changes which the gospel had wrought in their lives. He declared in verses 9 and 10 that fornicators, idolators, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, and extortioners would not inherit the kingdom of God. Then he made a wonderful statement in verse 11. He said, "And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified by the name of the Lord Jesus and by the spirit of our God." The revolution which the gospel can bring, and does bring, is something that should be celebrated at all times. It should be kept within our hearts and declared to a lost and dying world. It is not something that is to be remembered once per year or once every hundred years but remembered every day and appreciated by all of us every day. We can show our love for it by living in harmony with its principles and doing what we can to bring it to the lost of the earth.

[J.C. Townsend teaches at the ACSR extension in Charlotte. Write him at 60 Brit-tany Court, Charlotte, NC 28226.]

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Where Will This Road Lead?

by Jim Mullican

In almost 2,000 years of church history, the church has faced many crises and issues. The typical scenario is that errors are taught and practiced by those who want to be seen as the intellectual leaders — the “cutting edge” of the future. Wise men and women reject these ideas as unscriptural, but some who are spiritually immature and have no depth of commitment to the Scriptures are led astray, and eventually an open break in fellowship occurs when the digression from God’s word has gone so far that accepting it and those who practice it means rejecting the voice of God. Sometimes the breach can be healed later, and sometimes not.

In the early church, there were splits over the eternal existence of Christ, the centralization of power in the church at Rome, the propriety of praying to images, etc. In more recent times we have seen divisions over centralization of power in a Missionary Society, the use of instrumental music in worship, how to care for orphans, how many cups may be used in the Lord’s supper, and whether it is right to have Bible classes. Have we seen the last of these troublesome issues? I fear the answer is “No.”

Although I make no claim to be a prophet, I believe another major crisis will have to be faced within the next decade or two, and that issue will be the role of women in the church. The past few years have seen many changes in the workplace, with women gaining roles they have every right to gain. Equal pay and equal opportunity in the business world is a right inherent in our constitutional system of government and law. Personally, I do not think women should be in the military combat units, play on football teams, and do other similar things, but that may just be my personal prejudice.

However, let’s get back to the role of women in the church of the living God. The trends in society will spill over into the church. Already it is common to find women preaching in most of the denominations, and they are becoming a majority in some. One of the women who lived down the street from us several years ago was an elder in a denom-

ination named for its adherence to government by elders. That particular church also had a woman “pastor.” Even the more conservative and Bible-oriented denominations are giving in to the political pressure.

What about the churches of Christ? I believe the majority will remain faithful, but as I write I have before me a letter and three recent articles on this subject, all reporting problems which have already happened. All are written by good, well-balanced men not given to extremes and not prone to cry “wolf” when no wolf is near. I also have the personal testimony of a former member of this congregation. These are the facts presented by such reliable witnesses:

A church in Massachusetts has been using women in preaching, teaching, and other public worship roles for several years, justifying their practices by saying they want to use all the talents God has given us, and that Biblical restrictions on the role of women no longer apply.

In Houston, Texas, a congregation long known for its digressive views has now announced plans to begin using women in the public worship in such roles as the public reading of Scripture, serving communion, the leading of singing, and leading of prayer.

In Memphis, Tennessee, a Christian was shocked to find a woman teaching a Bible class of both men and women. The justification offered was that she was more qualified and knowledgeable on the topic than were any of the men in the class. Two wrongs never make a right. The men are wrong for not preparing themselves properly, but using a woman teacher in an unscriptural role is not thereby justified.

In Nashville, Tennessee, this past summer, the “Nashville Jubilee” was to be a cooperative program of Bible classes and worship among the many churches of Christ in the Nashville area. It is reported that women were used to teach classes of men and women, that a woman was asked to replace one of the preachers who was unable to come at the last minute, and that a woman stood before the entire assembly to lead a song.

Many of the Nashville churches, to their credit, have refused to support or participate in this effort because of such unscriptural practices.

What will the final outcome be? I cannot say, but I do know that the word of God is just as binding and authoritative today as it was in the first century. It still says, "Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over man" (1 Tim. 2:11-12). It also still says, "As in all the churches of the saints, the women should keep silence in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as even the law says. If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church. What! Did the word of God originate with you, or are you the only ones it has reached? If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that what I am writing to you is a command of the Lord" (1 Cor. 14:35b-37).

It appears that some in the first century Corinthian church thought such distinctions were no longer applicable in their "modern times." Paul, speaking by inspiration of God, disagrees. No doubt there were many talented women then as now, but God is still the authority for His church. So, unless God changes His word, I agree with Peter (Acts 5:29) that "We must obey God rather than men" — or women.

[Editor's note: We commend brother Mullican's article. While we generally prefer not to be specific about events which have been brought to our attention second hand as in Jim's reference to events at the Nashville Jubilee, this has been so adequately documented that we feel it is fair to make reference to it. The dangers brother Mullican names are real, and they are already widespread among us. Your response to our publication of this article is invited. Jim Mullican's address is: Central Haywood church of Christ, P.O. Box 219, Clyde, NC 28721.]

Hugo Relief at Essex Village

One report concerning Hugo relief work that we did not get into the special issue pertained to the Essex Village congregation in Charleston, SC. The following paragraphs are excerpts from a letter from their elders (D.P.).

"Within the first 48 hours, two trucks loaded with food, water and blankets arrived in Charleston from sister congregations. These were the first of what eventually became a convoy to Charleston from churches as far away as 1500 miles. (Money donations were received from throughout the nation.) Within the next few days, distribution centers were set up in five churches of Christ in the area.

"We at Essex Village received from 127 congregations and individuals for distribution: 82 tons of food (estimated); 26 tons of household items (estimated); 23 tons of clothing (estimated); one automobile; and

\$109,321.69 in cash.

"Families, totaling 1,078, were given food, clothing, etc. The automobile was given to a needy Christian, actively engaged in God's work. Cash has been provided for those who sustained losses not covered or inadequately covered by insurance, also living expenses for those that became temporarily unemployed because of the storm, and where a specific need was established. To supplement the bedding donated, an additional 60 sets of bedding (mattresses and springs) have been purchased to meet known needs.

"Following the distribution, approximately 80 percent of the recipient families have been contacted through a follow-up program. A significant number have requested Bible studies and/or enrolled in a correspondence course. Thus far, one baptism has been attributed to this effort and more are anticipated."

The Courage of Our Convictions

by Michael R. Mobley

Edmund G. Ross was the Republican U.S. Senator from Kansas in February 1868, while President Johnson was on trial for impeachment. When it came time to vote, he was undecided and the pressures and threats poured in on his head. His spirit was deeply troubled by his struggle. If he voted "guilty," he was sure to die of political suicide. He did not like Johnson personally or politically, but he understood what Congress was trying to do to Johnson and he believed that the whole business of impeachment was wrong. He voted "not guilty" and his political career was dead. The voters of Kansas buried him and his name in rejection in the elections that fall. He was not heard from again. It was, for all practical purposes, Ross against the nation as it was the nation against Johnson. He sacrificed himself for a man he did not even like because he was more concerned with what was right. He put aside his ambitions and personal feelings and took a stand for what he believed he had to do when so many others would not. You see, his vote broke a tie vote; otherwise it would have cost him very little or nothing.

Many historians believe that Ross made a mistake. No! Never could that be true! What Ross did was right and honorable because he would rather sacrifice his career than his own integrity, convictions, and conscience! He would not be compromised for anything or anyone to do what he believed to be right. This is what God teaches us and expects and wants us to live.

Ross is an example of the potential of the human spirit in all of us to live lives obedient to God under any circumstances. For example:

Unethical behavior because we are led to believe that it is the only way to succeed;

Spouses who are tempted to throw away the marriage rather than work through the conflicts, and fight for the marriage and their love for each other;

Children who are pressured by peers, dates, friends, even family to do something or go somewhere that will be wrong and sinful;

Christians who are tempted to throw in the towel of service because they are tired of the criticism, the work, and the heartache of caring;

Any person who has learned that what he/she has believed is not the truth of the Bible can give up the false religion or doctrine and obey the truth.

Our tendency as human beings is to carry around weights, excess baggage, that prevent us from reaching the potential in all of us to do the right thing and live the Christian life victoriously (Heb. 12:1-2). There is the weight of apathy (Acts 4:18-20). To live courageously we should want to do the right thing. We should care about being right, about God's honor and our reputation, about our own integrity and salvation.

There is also the weight of self-centeredness (Luke 9:23-25). The desire to please God can feed a courageous spirit. The most important thing to us should be to please God — more than any ambition, gain, pleasure, or popularity, even life itself (Heb. 11:35-40).

There is the weight of fear (Matt. 5:11-12). It is not always popular to do the right thing. Sometimes others will react adversely to our faithful living. Jesus encourages us to take courage from the fact that God will reward us for our holy living, will vindicate our obedience to Him. We are also encouraged to take courage from the courage of God's faithful servants in the Bible.

Finally, there is the weight of spiritual blindness (2 Pet. 1:8-11; Luke 22:33-34). So many times we intend to do right and obey God's commandments. But when we are faced with a challenge, we are blind-sided by our weaknesses. We must know those weak-

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nesses (not ignore them) and nurture the Christian character within us.

We can live holy lives if we will "go for it!" (Heb. 12:14). We can give up our sinful ways and repent. We can obey God's commandments. The taught unbeliever can believe, repent, and be baptized, and give up the false doctrines once believed. We can

change our character and conduct and the way we think. The human race does have the potential to improve its condition and make the world a better place. Every believer can live by his/her convictions of spiritual truth from God and can be loyal to Christ.

[Mobley preaches in Mooresville, NC, P.O. Box 312, 28115.]

The Family of God

by Mark Swindall

In a time when broken homes are so prevalent, the rare privilege of being a loving family is especially treasured. But no matter what our physical family is like, Christians experience the joy of being in God's spiritual family, the church. We are God's children, having been adopted as sons through Jesus Christ (1 John 3:1; Eph. 1:5).

God's word clearly states what is necessary for a family to function successfully. Not surprisingly, those same qualities are essential both in the home and in the church. A departure from any of the following attitudes in God's spiritual family will inevitably prevent the church from becoming all that God intends.

Love for one another. Even in the world, love and loyalty to family members usually take precedence over any other relationship. This same closeness and allegiance should characterize the relationships of Christians with one another. Peter stresses that we should "love as brothers" (1 Pet. 3:8). Parents are known for their ability to maintain their love and vision for children even during times of disappointment, disobedience, and rebellion. This quality is certainly needed in the church. As Peter wrote, "Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins" (1 Pet. 4:8).

High expectations and accountability. All family members have legitimate expectations of one another. Husbands are expected to work; many times the wife also works outside the home; parents are expected to provide for their children; children are expected to respect and obey parents; parents are expected to give guidance and direction to children — and all these are legitimate expect-

same love, united in spirit, intent on one purtations. If a family member does not live up to his responsibility, he should be held accountable for his neglect.

This same atmosphere should exist in our spiritual family! Our personal relationship with brothers and sisters in Christ should challenge us to be productive and fruitful Christians. The terminology used in Scripture to describe our responsibilities to one another — "rebuke, encourage, correct, submit" — imply this approach. Just as children are commanded to "obey" their parents (Eph. 6:1), Christians are commanded to "submit" to their spiritual leaders (Heb. 13:17). Leaders should set visionary goals and programs for the congregation and expect the members and other leaders to support them. Just as fathers are commanded "not to exasperate" their children (Eph. 6:4), leaders are commanded not to "lord it over" the flock (1 Pet. 5:3). Rather, leaders should be expected to set examples worthy of imitation (models). In this way God's work can be effectively accomplished.

Unity and communication. Happiness, joy and contentment abound in families which are united. Unity is produced by open, honest, and loving communication. Families which spend time together building a deep trust within their relationship remain close and united. In the church, unity results when leaders prepare God's people for "works of service," when Christians "speak the truth in love" to one another, and when each member does his part to "build up" the body in love (Eph. 4:11-16). Paul said to the Philippians, ". . . make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the

pose” (Phil. 2:2).

An outward focus. Families which share their love and resources with others experience the greatest fulfillment in their own lives. The early church in Jerusalem was an evangelistic, giving, and sharing church. Paul admonished the church to “share with God’s people who are in need” and to “practice hospitality” (Rom. 12:13). One of the greatest joys of participating in God’s spiritual family is in taking the opportunity to share it with others.

God never intended the church to be a cold institution in which people with superficial relationships occasionally meet together for worship. Instead, He wants it to be a close-knit family characterized by intimate,

life-changing relationships. This will enable us not only to enjoy the rewards of being in a loving spiritual family, but also to demonstrate the love of God to the world. A congregation which possesses this “family spirit” is sure to serve its immediate community well and accomplish great things for God.

“. . . And everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands” (1 John 5:1-2).

[Mark Swindall is now working with the Essex Village church in Charleston after eleven years in the West Palm Beach, FL, area; 736 Savage Rd., Charleston, SC 29414.]

Made From Nothing

by Paul E. Jarrett

I have just finished reading Johnny Melton’s article on “The Cosmological Argument for the Existence of God” (October 1989). Johnny stated in the introduction to this article that it was written in response to a new theory of cosmology called “The Inflationary Universe.” Alan G. Guth and Paul J. Steinhardt, who advanced this theory, have suggested that “it is tempting to . . . speculate that the universe evolved from literally nothing.”

Johnny did an excellent job of showing that if “nothing” is interpreted to exclude God, then it is impossible for something to have evolved from nothing. I certainly do not want what I’m about to suggest to be interpreted as a criticism of Johnny’s reasoning. Even more so, I would not want anyone to think I’m advocating that the origin of all things is in any way attributable to evolution, much less evolution from nothing.

I do want to suggest, however, that there may be a sense in which something did come from nothing, providing we have properly defined what we mean by the term “nothing.” Furthermore, if what I’m about to suggest is correct, it may very well be that what has been suggested by Guth and Steinhardt is more a confirmation of what the Scriptures

teach about God and creation, than it is a rejection of such.

While, no doubt, Guth and Steinhardt did not intend to confirm the Biblical account of creation when they observed that “all matter and energy in the observable universe may have emerged from almost nothing,” it would appear that they may have done just that when you compare their statement with these words from Scripture: “By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible” (Heb. 11:3).

When paraphrased, isn’t this telling us that “God made all things out of nothing”? Assuming that by “nothing” you are referring to “all matter and energy in the observable universe.”

Where Guth and Steinhardt (along with other advocates of an evolutionary process as an explanation of origin) fail is in the assumption that the only things that exist are those things that exist in the “observable universe.” Their scientific methods can only deal with that which is “seen”; therefore their theories can lead only to the reality that “the universe evolved from literally nothing.” We as Christians need not be so lim-

ited because: "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4:18).

The materialist will fail to see and know the God whose "invisible attributes" are revealed in His creation because of his unwill-

ingness to acknowledge Him as God (Rom. 1:20-21). We can rejoice in the assurance of knowing, though, that scientific truth always points to the "invisible God" who made the world and all things in it (Acts 17:23-29).

[1824 Tamworth Dr., Charlotte, NC 28210.]

Jesus Christ: Everything I Would Like to Be

by Robert Curry

Our modern times has many types of "heros." There are super heros such as Superman using amazing powers to save the populace of some fictitious city. Action heros like Rambo let the bullets fly as the oppressor is defeated. Sports heros like Michael Jordan thrill the crowds with superior athletics. The catch is that these heros are limited at best. Superman is no more than the product of a cartoonist's artistry and imagination. Rambo is the result of a Hollywood script and spectacular special effects. Michael Jordan will someday fade away to the mere memory of a former superstar.

What is needed, therefore, is a real hero, someone who will not fade away and that offers more than mere imagination and Hollywood trickery. A popular song asked the question, "Did you ever know that you're my hero, and everything I would like to be?" We need a hero to look up to, one who will give us an example of true greatness. We need Jesus Christ!

Jesus Protects the Weak

Every Hollywood hero arrives in the nick of time to protect the weak, whether it be the cavalry saving the wagon train from the hostile Indians or the clean-cut hero saving the heroine from the evil villain.

Jesus came to protect the weak. Paul wrote that "when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. 5:6). We were trapped, tied up, and in grave danger; but Jesus came to

rescue us from sin. Before, we were not a people, with no mercy. However, now we are God's people receiving the mercy that only can come from Him who called us "out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Pet. 2:9-10).

Jesus Christ is the real hero!

Jesus Saved the Day

Every Hollywood hero is up to the task. He is ready to climb, jump, and crawl his way to the place he is needed to save the victims of those more powerful. He will go wherever he needs to go and do whatever he needs to do to get the job done.

Jesus Christ did whatever was needed to save a sin-sick world from the destruction of eternal damnation. He came to the hour of His own painful death, but said, "Not my will, but thine be done" (Luke 22:42). Jesus was tried, spat upon, and beaten by those who cared for nothing but their own desires and wishes. He was humiliated and ridiculed as He was taken to be crucified by those who did not understand what He was doing for their souls. Finally, He was left to die while the mob gambled for His robe, wagging their heads as they passed and mocking Him in His seemingly helpless position. Yet, He was not helpless. He had the power to overcome any enemy, at any time. He could have called twelve legions of angels, but did not (Matt. 26:52-53). When challenged to come down off the cross (Matt. 27:42) there should be no doubt that He could have done just that,

showing all who doubted who He really was. However, He had already told them His identity (Mark 14:61-62) and had proven it with His works (Matt. 11:3-6). Why should He then succumb to their attempts to make Him prove what had already been made so clear? Would their doubtings make Him any less the Son of God? What would a Rambo have done?

Jesus Christ is the real hero!

Jesus Will Always Win

Every Hollywood hero wins in the end. He might be down for a while, trapped or imprisoned with no apparent way of escape, but somehow he fulfills his task and overcomes the villain.

The New Testament contains villains. The scribes and Pharisees loved attention when they prayed, fasted or displayed a falsely righteous attitude. Their only motive was the glory of being seen of their fellowman (Matt. 6:1-16). They loved to "devour widow's houses" in the notion of piety (Matt. 23:14), change the rules to suit themselves (Matt. 23:16-22) and lay the blame of their own errors on others (Matt. 23:29-34).

But then they met Jesus! When everyone else cowered in their presence, Jesus confronted them face to face: "Scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites" (Matt. 23). After several attempts to trick Jesus with their questions and accusations they finally could take no more: "And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions" (Matt. 22:46). The only way they ever overcame Jesus our Lord is when He allowed Himself to be taken, tried, and crucified on our behalf.

Jesus Christ is the real hero!

Conclusion

In a world where heros are few and far between, and those alleged to be heros are representatives of characteristics less than heroic, we have a real hero to look up to, pattern our lives after, and dedicate our souls to: Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ protects the weak, laid down His own life for us who were without strength, and finally, in the end, defeated evil and

won. As the song asks, "Did you ever know that you're my hero, and everything I would like to be?" Jesus Christ is the real hero and everything I would like to be. He is my example of strength, courage and wisdom. He does not save the day with guns blazing, but with love flowing. He did not come to the rescue only when there was an advantage to Himself, but gladly submitted to the will of His heavenly Father and laid down His life because I am not able to save my own.

Jesus Christ is the real hero!

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Caring and Sharing

by Rob Albright

As I sat there listening to the president of the service club speak, I was thinking that this man must have been in the audience the day before as I spoke to the congregation in Thomasville. He spoke about the service club and how it is a group of people who join together to render service — the giving of time, talent, and energy. He also made another point: "If we do not grow we will die."

I made these same two points just the day before as I spoke about the church.

The church is in the people business. If our attitude is right, and we do care about people, and are concerned with them physically and spiritually, this will attract the attention of those outside of Christ and open doors of opportunity to share the message of salvation and (guess what?) growth will happen.

No, not all will want to become disciples of Christ; but you will find good hearts who will listen and learn and respond to God's love and obey the gospel.

I am new in North Carolina, but I am learning about the area I live in and the state in general. There are a number of "smaller" congregations and not many "big" ones. But I believe that in our congregations there are members who are genuinely concerned about the growth of the church in their location.

I would encourage all of us to be generous with our time as we look for opportunities to demonstrate that we are a caring group of people and still watch for those opportune times to communicate the gospel.

Caring and sharing go together. They are attractive features of the church. They will do great things for the growth of our congregations. They are Biblical.

Now, take a few minutes and study the way of Jesus and His desire for us today. Read Acts 6:7, 10:38, 16:5, and Galatians 6:10.

[Rob Albright is the preacher for the Thomasville church of Christ, Route 4, Box 623, Thomasville, NC 27360.]

QUESTION

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Clocks and Kairometry

by Joe DeYoung

If greatness were based on having a “proclivity for precision,” I’d likely be in somebody’s hall of fame by now. I take a lot of “ribbing” and get some funny looks from people who know that I keep my digital watch set within three seconds of the correct time, according to the National Research Council in Ottawa! In some endeavors, such precision is imperative. But I do it only because I have an inexpensive gadget that allows me to do so. CBC and CTV, among others, make accuracy easy, by means of a discreet on-the-hour “beep” (on some stations).

The subject at hand is **chronometry**, “the art of measuring time accurately.” That device on my wrist is sometimes called a **chronograph**, “a device for recording the exact instant of occurrences, or for measuring small intervals of time.”

But this is not a lesson in timekeeping. The words have their basis in New Testament Greek! **Chronos** refers to time **duration**, and the word is used that way frequently. Chronometry is only of secondary importance to the Christian. But, **kairos**, a word not found in English dictionaries, is of prime importance. Some passages use this

word with the same meaning of **chronos**. But in most cases, it means “quality of time; time marked by certain features; a season; an opportune or seasonable time.” Two familiar passages are: Ephesians 5:17 — “redeeming the time”; and 2 Timothy 4:2-3 — “in season and out of season . . . time . . . when men will not endure sound doctrine.”

From the many passages which use this Greek word, we could coin a new word — **kairometry**: “the art of seeing the opportune time, and knowing how to use it.” This being then a word based on New Testament usage, could we not suggest that each Christian should be a **kairometer**?

Yes, my chronograph (or chronometer) may make me **stand out**, but in order to be **outstanding**, I should concern myself with **being a kairometer**, and with practicing **Christian kairometry**.

Keeping one’s **time** right is one thing, but keeping one’s **priorities** right is yet another. The TV station “beep” is the standard for correct **time measurement**; but the **Bible** is the standard for correct **time usage**.

[Brother DeYoung, a South Carolina native, is now preaching in Williston, ND, 508 W. 26th St., 58801.]

Jesus Christ, My Savior

by Liz Beadnell

Jesus is more than just a name. Matthew wrote, “And she will bear a son; and you shall call his name Jesus, for it is he who will save his people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21). As my Savior, He means several things.

Jesus

J is for **jewel** because Jesus is more precious than the most expensive gem on earth. Many people like to own and wear the finest jewelry. It is more important for me to be clothed with Jesus than others in sin and darkness may see Him living in me.

E is for **endurance**. It is not easy to live for Jesus in this world of trouble and despair. But with Jesus in my life, I am able to bear the burdens that come my way.

S is for **stairway**. The way to heaven is an upward climb and each step I take with Jesus puts me closer there each day.

U is for **unique**. God gave Jesus, the only one of a kind, His only Son, as a sacrifice for me. Without Him, there would be no hope of eternal life.

S is for a **song**. Many times life can be filled with sorrow and woe, but Jesus keeps me singing as I go.

Christ

C is for **cherish**. Jesus is someone that I can love, honor, and hold dear to my heart.

H is for **happiness**. I can be happy each day knowing that through Jesus my sins are taken away.

R is for **ransom**. Payment for sin must be paid, and Jesus gave His life to do exactly that.

I is for **investment**. Jesus instructs me to lay up for myself treasures in heaven and not on this earth.

S is for **strength**. It makes no difference where I am or in what condition I am because I can do all things through Jesus who strengthens me (Phil. 4:13).

T is for **teacher**. Jesus is the master teacher. He left me an example that I should follow in His steps.

My

M is for **morals**. Being associated with Jesus produces good morality in my daily life.

Y is for **yearning**. I need Jesus every hour

and have a burning desire to learn more about Him every day.

Savior

S is for **self-control**. There are no two people who are alike and oftentimes personalities will clash. With Jesus as my Lord, I am able to have better temperance in my life.

A is for **acceptance**. Jesus accepts me just as I am, and is patient as I continue to grow stronger in Him.

V is for **varnish**. Jesus is a shining example to me of how a Christian is supposed to live.

I is for **indebtedness**. All that I am and ever expect to be, I owe to Jesus who loves me and gave Himself for me.

O is for **opportunity**. Jesus was a man who always went about doing good and, therefore, I am obligated to do the same.

R is for **rejoice**. Just as the eunuch went on his way rejoicing after he was baptized, with Jesus in my life, I can be full of joy also.

Yes, this is Jesus Christ, my Savior.

Diseases Which Afflict Some Christians

by Bob MacDonald

Listlessness

Occurs at night when you can't list several cases where you encouraged and helped someone.

Eye Trouble

Occurs when too many of your sentences start with "I."

Newsbjectitis

Occurs when you don't pursue the subject your friend is on, but turn the subject to yourself and your activities; it can deteriorate into serious "I Trouble" (#2 item).

Hellohowitis

Occurs when the extent of your conversation is: "Hello, how are you?"

Cliqueitis

Occurs when you always converse only with your own close friends — ignoring visitors and newcomers and church members who are not in your "inner circle."

Notmeitis

Occurs when you automatically and always expect others to respond to pleas for involvement — "but not me, why me?"

Blowitis

Occurs when you puff up and noisily agree that someone in need is a worthy person — but all you do is blow the call.

Are there other diseases troubling some Christians?

[Hendersonville, NC.]

Friday Evening and Those Cold Winter Nights

by Charles R. Lambert

I am reminded of cold winter nights as I drive towards home this evening. The heater is slow to warm the car and the windows are all fogged up; but I know what is waiting for me at home — coming in from the cold for a glorious two days off, a weekend at home. Waiting for me at home is a nice warm fireplace crackling loud and smelling of oak wood.

I slump down in my favorite chair by the fire. The man of the house is on his throne. Mulling over the last week, I recall the rain-storm we had and the car that splashed water all over my slacks and shoes. Smiling a little, I remember the joke the boss told us. He said, "By the time a man finds greener pastures, he is too old to climb the fence." Recalling those two events, I slide deeper into the chair and get closer to the fireplace on this cold winter night.

It is a comfortable feeling to come in out of the cold; but this same feeling can be had with God, when you are in His protection.

I recollect a night in Mark 14:36-42 as Jesus was about to be betrayed. The last hours of His life on earth were at hand. He was with His disciples and He stopped in the

garden called Gethsemane to pray. He went just a few feet away from His disciples and fell on His face. He prayed to His Father to let the cup pass from Him.

It was a cold, dark night when Jesus went three times to pray to God for His life. All during this time His disciples were too tired to stay awake, and Jesus faced this cruel night alone. When Jesus came back the second time from praying, He saw them sleeping. He prayed the last time and came back to His disciples. "Sleep on," He told them, "for the hour has come for the son of man to be betrayed." He was alone on this cold, dark night, while His disciples lay at His feet.

Our bodies are protected by our homes and warm fireplaces, but our souls must be guarded by the warmth and love of our Heavenly Father, and the fellowship we have with other Christians. We started this story with the experience of a cold winter Friday evening. To be warm, comfortable, and secure is joy indeed. Spiritually, such warmth and security is found in a right relationship with God.

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Brotherhood News

by Dennis Conner

Around North Carolina . . .

The WARNER'S CHAPEL church of Christ in Clemmons is the second oldest congregation in North Carolina. JACK SIMONS, who now preaches for the church, has just recently completed six years of work there. He reports that 1989 was one of the greatest years of growth in the history of the church with 17 baptisms and 12 restorations. . . . The SOUTH STOKES church in King will have its Homecoming on April 15. The Homecoming will mark the beginning of a gospel meeting that will continue through April 19. Preaching will be ROBERT GOFF of Goldsboro, NC. Brother Goff will also be coming home to the South Stokes congregation in that he has preached for the church in the past. . . . The YADKINVILLE church of Christ will host its fourth annual Small Church Workshop May 10-11. This year's theme will be "Preaching to the Small Church." . . . AGAPE of NC, Inc., is asking churches across the state to set aside April 29 as a day of prayer for our families and the work being done by Agape.

And South Carolina . . .

After nearly four years of work with the Augusta Rd. church in Greenville, JESSE HAM, JR., has moved to Union to work with the LAKESIDE church of Christ. His new address is Rt. 7, Box 382, Union, SC 29379. . . . The SIGSBEE church in Spartanburg has enjoyed five baptisms the first six weeks of 1990. SAMUEL MEANS is the preacher. . . . DAVID CLAYTON, who preaches for the CENTRAL church in Spartanburg, has been asked to serve as the Key-Man Coordinator of South Carolina for the ONE NATION UNDER GOD evangelistic campaign. David will be contacting churches in the state to give details of this national campaign. The campaign is overseen by the SYCAMORE church of Christ in Cookeville, TN.

And the World . . .

On January 4, 1990, the Hong Kong Bible Institute opened with 22 students enrolled in the first classes. . . . In 1984 the government gave a prime five-acre tract to the church in Nairobi, Kenya. American churches contributed approximately \$1.3 million for the construction of a meeting place and training school. On January 1, 1989, the Eastleigh church began meeting with a charter membership of 44. Before the year was over 672 baptisms had been reported and the church now enjoys attendance of up to 725. . . . In the village of Garikuka, Ghana, the entire adult population of 86 villagers were baptized all on one day. . . . The deterioration of Communism in Eastern Europe offers exciting possibilities for world evangelism. Doors are wide open, but churches of Christ currently have in the field the smallest mission force in nearly 20 years. We do a lot of talking about evangelizing the world, with little action to back it up. American churches must be mindful of our responsibility to the world. Because of our material blessings we are in a unique position to have an impact on world history through the power of the gospel. The first-century church would have risen to the challenge. Will we?

Carolinas Calendar

March 26 — Preacher's Workshop, Providence Rd. church of Christ in Charlotte, NC. Begins at 10:00 a.m.

April 2-5 — 46th Annual Carolina Lectures, Rockingham church of Christ, Rockingham, NC. Theme: "Faith of Our Fathers."

April 8-12 — Gospel meeting, N. Main church of Christ, Mocksville, NC. Speaker: David Pharr.

April 20-22 — Gospel meeting, Warners Chapel church of Christ, Clemmons, NC. Speaker: Clois Cecil.

April 22-26 — Gospel meeting, Linville Forest church of Christ, Kernersville, NC. Speaker: Virgil Trout.

April 28 — Ladies' Day, Friendly Ave. church of Christ, Greensboro, NC.

April 29-May 2 — Revival, Wendover Ave. church of Christ, Greensboro, NC. Speaker: Dennis Conner.

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CAROLINA CHRISTIAN

VOL. 32, NO. 4, APRIL 1990



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Reexamining the Fundamentals, XIII

by David Pharr, Editor

After several months of omission we are resuming our series on "Reexamining the Fundamentals." We fear that many are being "tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine" (Eph. 4:14), and that, therefore, there is an urgent need to review, examine, and (wherein we are right) defend the basic tenets which distinguish churches of Christ. Many are being sold the notion that much of our faith and practice is mere tradition. Some are ready to compromise almost any Biblical principle; far more have become so indifferent that they have no zeal for the old paths. The fundamentals need to be taught and studied.

Both the lack of numerical growth and the lack of strength within the church are directly related to the fact that few among us are actively involved in trying to convert our religious neighbors. As a people we are apparently now less convinced than we once were that they need to be converted. We are not seeing the distinctions between the New Testament system and the systems of men as clearly as we once saw them. It appears that many are content to let the church be just another church among the churches.

Is the church of Christ a denomination?

This question can be answered from at least three perspectives. First there is the answer of the world. Then there is the perspective of those who are uninformed, or misinformed, within the church. But it is the perspective of Christ Himself that should be our foremost concern.

What is a denomination?

A denomination exists because it exhibits one or more of certain unscriptural features. These features might be described as: (1) the assumption that division of the body of Christ is acceptable; (2) the use of a name to denominate themselves from others they regard as also being Christians; (3) an organizational structure which to some degree maintains the group as a distinctive organism; (4) doctrines or practices which are contrary to Bible teaching; (5) a sectarian spirit which fosters unnecessary division; (6) or compromise with digression from the New Testament pattern.

It should be kept in mind that all of the

Continued on page 4



editorial

by David Pharr

We are preparing a new directory of churches of Christ in the Carolinas. Later this year a special issue of **Carolina Christian** will provide a listing of the congregations. By including the information in the magazine we will provide all subscribers with a directory.

A directory is valuable in many ways. It assists those who travel; it helps congregations contact each other; and it provides a view of the mission needs in the Carolinas.

In the past it has always been difficult to get accurate information from several places. We are appealing for 100% cooperation. Those who have received questionnaires are urged to respond promptly. Those who may not have received a questionnaire are urged to write for one. Any helpful information anyone sends will be appreciated.

Criticizing Paul

Many good things are being said about the need for brotherly love; why we need to avoid being harsh in our criticism of one another; and how we need to lay aside petty disputes and get on with the great work of the kingdom of God. "And above all things [emphasis mine, D.P.] have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins" (1 Pet. 4:8).

In addition to the immediate shame of it, perhaps the worst thing about an ugly spirit in brotherhood disputes is the extreme reaction of many who feel revulsion against it. Decent and tenderhearted brethren are sometimes so offended by what they see as unnecessary and quarrelsome controversies that they have determined to avoid all controversies. They do not want to hear or read about any problems that disturb the church. When even honorable and fair men seek to call attention to dangers that threaten the brotherhood they may summarily dismiss the warnings without even considering the evidence. Their justification seems legitimate to them — they don't like brotherhood quarrels.

This thinking has encouraged teaching

with an emphasis on love and tolerance that is not at all bad — if it does not get out of balance. When, however, the impression is left that there is never a time for taking a firm stand for truth and for boldly opposing error, one has gone too far.

Will we come to where we would criticize Paul, the other apostles, the prophets of old, and even the Lord Himself? Was Paul unloving when he wrote so many negative things in his epistles? Was he "majoring in minors" when he insisted on compliance with the apostolic pattern? Was Paul mean-spirited when he named the names of false teachers and warned against

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CAROLINA CHRISTIAN (P.O.P.N. 091160) is published monthly by Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., at 71 S. Fairfield Road, Greenville, SC 29605. Subscription price: individual \$8.00 per year (\$15.00 for 2 years and \$22.00 for 3 years); club of five or more \$7.50 each; quantity of 15 or more in bundles or direct mailing 50¢ per copy per month. Publication number, 091160.

Second class postage paid at Greenville, SC. POSTMASTER: Send change with Form 3579 to Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., Johnny Melton, Managing Editor, Route 2, Box 137, Conover, North Carolina 28613.

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Address editorial matter to David Pharr, Editor, ETSOPM, 6608 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37931. Address news items to Dennis Conner, P.O. Box 1219, Yadkinville, NC 27055.

All items to be printed in a given month's issue should reach the editor not later than the next-to-the-last Thursday of the preceding month.

Address commercial advertising inquiries to Jacobs List, Inc., Clinton, SC 29325. Address all advertising pertaining to the Church of Christ or its members (including related organizations) to the editor.

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Carolina Christian

them? Was he divisive when he drew the line against things he could not accept? Was he missing the real meaning of the gospel when he gave so much emphasis to correctness in doctrine and practice?

I am persuaded that many good men have not thought through the implications of a one-sided obsession with love and peace. The Bible says, "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Rom. 12:18). It is not, however, always "possible." And sometimes it is not possible because duty demands that error be opposed. An emphasis that leaves this out, and that creates the impression that fighting against what is wrong is not Christian, is an emphasis that will not only belittle the integrity of all who today stand firmly for the truth; but also will by implication be critical of the apostle Paul.

But Paul is not alone in the Biblical record. The other apostles, the prophets, and even Jesus Himself were all outspoken against every false way.

Brethren, we must not ignore the great principles of kindness, compassion, peace, and love; but neither can we ignore the reality that "many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1); that "of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:30), and that since "their mouths must be stopped" (Titus 1:11), it is imperative that we "mark [beware of] them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Rom. 16:17). It is never unloving, unchristian, to heed what these passages tell us.

More on Hugo

We have published several reports regarding relief efforts following the devastation caused by hurricane Hugo last September. Though major portions of the story have already been told, we believe it is important for us to continue to chronicle significant information. A report on activities through March 21 has been compiled by the following congregations regarding their participation: Azalea Drive, Charleston; Essex Village, Charleston; North Charleston;

Berkeley; Folly Road, Charleston; and Summerville. Two hundred sixty vehicles delivered food, water, and supplies of all kinds for distribution by the churches of Christ. About 20,000 families have been helped in Charleston and outlying communities. To date, funds sent for use by the Charleston area churches total \$1,096,363. Contacts made during relief work have resulted in personal Bible studies, correspondence studies, and four baptisms.

Publication for Children

Apologetics Press, Inc., a service operated by faithful brethren, has produced "A Monthly Paper of Bible and Science for Kids," called **Discovery**. Edited by Brad Bromling, it is attractive, readable, interesting and informative in the field of Christian evidences.

Bert Thompson, a Co-Director of Apologetics Press, wrote in a recent letter: "Our children are pressed on every side in this day and age with false information. They are constantly taught evolution in school and in their textbooks. They are bombarded with the idea that no "smart" person believes in God any more. They are at times ridiculed by teachers or peers for their belief that the Bible really is the inspired Word of God. And this onslaught does not show any signs of lessening.

"We think our children deserve better. We think they need to hear and see 'the rest of the story.' And that is what our new paper for kids, **Discovery**, is all about. We think they need to see the evidences for God's existence, the evidences refuting evolution and proving creation, the evidences for the Inspiration of the Bible, and the evidences for the Sonship of Christ."

Discovery needs to be put into the hands of our youth. Churches may want to consider providing it. The price is \$8.00 per year. (**Discovery**, 230 Landmark Dr., Montgomery, AL 36117-2752.)

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Reexamining the Fundamentals, *continued from page 1*

above points do not apply equally to all denominations. Still, any who exhibit to any degree any or all of these features are to that degree denominational. Since these features are themselves contrary to Scripture, it must follow that any who have these features are thereby also contrary to Scripture.

Or, to define matters more broadly and simply: a denomination is any religious group which cannot be identified with the essential characteristics of the church in the New Testament. The "essential" characteristics are those made essential by the New Testament itself. This answers silly quibbles such as "We do not wear the same kind of clothes . . . We do not have the same modes of travel"; etc.

Division

It is commonly assumed by denominations that division within the body of Christ is acceptable. The usual theory is that each denomination is simply a unit of the overall body of Christ. It is said that while there is one spiritual body of Christ, the denominations are merely various fellowships within that body. This is the assumption that argues that "one church is as good as another," and that "one should join the church of his choice." Even when some in denominations realize that division is wrong, they usually are content with a solution that only provides for some cooperation, not for actual unity in faith and practice.

The Bible is clear on this point. Jesus built one church, His church (Matt. 16:18). Clearly the identity of His church must be ascertained by apostolic guidelines. This is shown in the immediate context as He speaks of Peter binding and loosing according to heavenly authority (v. 19). The same statement is applied to all the apostles in Matthew 18:18. The force of this is that in relation to Christ's church there would be a plan, a pattern, which would include certain things and exclude other things, and that these things would be made known by the apostles. That the practical result of this would be one true church is confirmed by the way Jesus prayed

for unity. He prayed for believers to be "one" (John 17:20-21). But he was specific as to the kind of believers in view. It would be those who believe on me **through their word**" (v. 20, emphasis mine, D.P.). This demonstrates the authority of the apostles to declare the basis for faith. What the apostles made essential is therefore essential. The only acceptable unity is unity based on "their word." These passages, in harmony with all others, demonstrate that Jesus never intended a diversity of churches with a variety of doctrines. Instead he intended one church, a church identified with the apostolic model.

Any tendency toward division into parties (sects, factions, denominations) is forcefully condemned by Paul in 1 Corinthians 1:10-13. Verse 10 is the strongest possible admonition that there be no divisions. Verses 11 and 12 give an illustration of the sin of forming into separate groups. Then by means of convincing rhetorical questions the apostle shows that such divides Christ. "Is Christ divided?" (1 Cor. 1:13).

The Church of Christ

From the perspective of the world, the church of Christ is a denomination. They see a group that is independent from other groups, so they assume it is merely another of the many groups in the denominational system. It is true, of course, that the church of Christ is a separate people; but the church of Christ is not a division of the body of Christ. **It is the body of Christ.**

Those who are uninformed may not understand this, and are in need of teaching and study. There are also some among us whose intellectual sophistication and desire for worldly acceptance would make them gag on the assertion that the church of Christ is the body of Christ. They prefer a more liberal definition. But what could possibly be wrong with saying what the Bible says?

The Bible says that every saved person is added by the Lord (Acts 2:47). The same baptism that pertains to the remission of sins (Acts 2:38, 41) also admits one into the one body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). This body is

the church (Eph. 1:22-23); and this church is the body (Col. 1:18). There is one body (Eph. 4:4) and all who are reconciled to God are in the one body (Eph. 2:16).

But some will argue that the people who are known as churches of Christ today have formed a denomination. That this is true of some is hardly to be doubted, for there seems to be no limit to what some known as churches of Christ might do. However, does the aberration of some nullify the principle and indict the faithful? Is it not possible to be what the Lord teaches us to be? When a group of people have believed and obeyed to be added by the Lord, are they not in the church of Christ? When they have set themselves to follow the Bible only are they sectarian for refusing to fellowship that which the Bible does not allow? To follow the New Testament is not denominational. As we will discuss later, one of the essentials for being undenominational is that we keep ourselves separate from denominations.

Ephesians 4:3-6

An argument is being made by some that there is no need for being united beyond agreement on the seven points named in Ephesians 4:4-6: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God. . . ." It is argued that when a group accepts these things we cannot separate ourselves from them just because they are in error regarding other doctrines and practices. These seven ones are thereby made the only requisites for religious unity.

There are at least three fallacies in this use of the Ephesian text. First, it fails to recognize all that is comprehended by "one faith." Surely any thoughtful person would see that everything the Bible makes a matter of faith is included in the one faith.

Secondly, Paul himself did not make such an application. For example, two things he names as apostate doctrines in 1 Timothy 4:1-3 — forbidding marriage and commanding to abstain from meats — hardly fall under such a narrow view of the seven ones in Ephesians 4.

The basic error of the argument, however, is in its failure to recognize the point April 1990

about unity Paul was making. He was not trying to get the Ephesians to accept the truth about these seven things. These were things they already accepted. His point was that because they already were united on these things they ought also to be united in other things. An argument that says that we can overlook other serious errors as long as we agree on the seven ones is a perversion of the purpose of the inspired writer.

Names

While the word has acquired a broader usage, the root idea of the word denomination suggests the use of a name to **denominate** a group as being separate from others. The problem is not only with the name itself, but also in the purpose of using the name. In other words, the name may seem Scriptural, but be used in an unscriptural way.

When denominations denominate themselves it is for the purpose of distinguishing themselves from others that they regard as also being in the body of Christ. This is the foremost error of using denominational names. This point is critical. To be persuaded that other denominations are acceptable to God, but at the same time to wear a name that implies a separate fellowship is clearly contrary to the will of God. What Paul condemned at Corinth was an incipient form of this aspect of denominationalism. "Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Cor. 1:12-13).

The comparison should be obvious. The Corinthians all professed to be followers of Christ; but they were divided into parties and were distinguishing themselves from other parties by the names of men. The theory behind denominationalism follows the same

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pattern on a larger and more formal scale. Thus saying, "He is a Methodist Christian; but I am a Baptist Christian," may sound to some like a charitable spirit; but in reality it is evidence of the very kind of sectarianism that Paul so clearly condemned. Such a use of names, for the purpose of differentiating one group of "Christians" from another group of "Christians," is a direct affront to the will of God, whether the names used are unscriptural or not.

The fact is, however, that many denominational names are without Scriptural authority regardless of how they are used. We do not find them in the Bible. It should be obvious that God has provided us with sufficient terms to designate His people. When we can be "Christians," what need have we for names such as Lutheran, Presbyterian, Baptist, etc.?

Some will protest, however, that when we speak of the "church of Christ" we are using a Scriptural term in a denominational way. This would certainly be the perception of the world because they refuse to recognize the possibility of undenominational Christianity; and they are unwilling to admit that the New Testament church exists visibly in the world today. They must insist that the church of Christ is a denomination to save face as regards their own practice.

It happens, though, that among us there is too often a tendency toward denominational phraseology. We have heard brethren speak of an individual: "He is a Church of Christ" just as one might say of another, "He is a Baptist." We have heard others say: "He is a Church of Christ Christian." Such betrays a lack of understanding of undenominational Christianity and is both grammatically and Scripturally improper.

There are also liberals who are deliberately trying to make the church a denomination. They speak of "our fellowship," or "our communion," just as denominations use the same expressions, as though the church is simply a separate fellowship among the several fellowships of denominations. These expressions should, of course, always be considered as to context and purpose. We should not assume that every use of such expressions means that the user is trying to make a denomination out of the church. Still

there is a tendency in such nomenclature that needs to be avoided.

Restoration Movement

Historically there was a "Restoration Movement" and the restoration of the ancient order continues as the truth continues to be preached. But there are dangerous implications in the way some use the term "Restoration Movement" (meaning certain historical developments and theological ideas) as synonymous with the church. The church of Christ existed before those events of history and certainly can exist without that history. To speak of the church as though it were only an American "movement" is to acquiesce to how the world wants to view the church.

This does not mean that our history is unimportant, nor does it mean that we are not in circumstances that came through historical developments. We owe much to those who have led us to return to New Testament Christianity; but it was not their purpose nor ours to establish a tradition different from the New Testament. This is evident in the fact that we intend to hold no tenet on the basis of any such tradition, only on the basis of its being found in the word of God.

Campbellites

Uninformed and prejudiced people sometimes refer to the church as the "Campbellite Church." This implies that the church was established by or adheres to the teaching of Alexander Campbell. Campbell was an effective teacher of the past century; but there is not one doctrine or practice found among us which originated with Alexander Campbell. Any similarity between Campbell's position and ours can only be explained by the fact that we share with him the same Divine source of authority, the word of God.

Our connection with Campbell is not the same as, for example, the Lutheran connection with Martin Luther. The Lutheran Church can trace significant aspects of its theology back to Martin Luther. It is reasonable, therefore, for them to be called Lutherans. Such, however, is not the case between the church of Christ and Alexander Campbell. For emphasis let us repeat it: Not one

item of faith and practice among churches of Christ can be traced back to Campbell as the source. The source is the authority of Christ. Thus we are Christians, not Campbellites.

Returning now more specifically to the proper names, what names should we wear? It hardly needs to be stated, but certainly any name approved by the Bible is acceptable. No doubt more emphasis should be given to the truth that **all** Scriptural names should be recognized. We are aware of the confusion that arises over the fact that some denominations have appropriated to themselves Scriptural names (i.e. "Church of God"), and we need to avoid and prevent confusion; but at the same time misuse by denominations ought not intimidate us from recognizing the Scriptural propriety of all the terms used in the New Testament. "Church of Christ" is not the only approved way to describe the church.

Obviously we make a more frequent use of "church of Christ." Some have charged, therefore, that we have made this an exclusive name. Practically speaking, this may indeed often be the case, and the suggestions made above regarding the need for more clear teaching on this is apparent. It must be insisted, however, that the Scripturalness of using an authorized name is not contingent upon the ratio of how often it is used in comparison to other Scriptural names. In other words, "church of Christ" is not made less Scriptural by the frequency of its use.

Arrogance

But someone will ask, "Does not the regular use of 'church of Christ' become the same thing you have already condemned in denominationalism — the use of a name to denominate the group?" No. Denominations name themselves to distinguish themselves as separate groups among the several groups which they regard as being equally in God's family. The proper use of "church of Christ" does not designate a separate group of Christians. As discussed above, the church is the body of Christ; it includes all Christians. A correct concept of the church of Christ understands that every saved person is a member of the church. Remember that

there is a perspective of the church that the world has; there is a mistaken perspective Christians sometimes hold; but our concern should be to understand the church from the Lord's perspective. The Lord's perspective is that every saved person is a member of Christ's church.

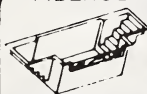
But is it not arrogant and bigoted to claim that the Lord's people are only those who are in the church of Christ? If it is, let the Lord be so charged, because all we are trying to say is what the Lord says. We refuse to let the world's perception of the church force us to abandon New Testament principles. The church of Christ described in the New Testament is undenominational. Though our human foibles often keep us from being what we aim to be, we are not at all ashamed or embarrassed that we have determined to be no more and no less than the undenominational church we read about in the Bible.

(To be continued.)

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The New Name

by Darryl Tripp

In the early 1800's a great religious movement swept across this country. That movement, which came to be known as the Restoration Movement, was trying to restore New Testament Christianity. One of the greatest moments in the history of the Restoration Movement occurred during a meeting which was held to discuss the possibility of achieving unity between two groups who had very similar goals regarding the restoration of the church. In that meeting Raccoon John Smith made a now famous speech in which he passionately pled that men would drop all party names, which were a source of division, and simply call themselves Christians.

Those who still cling to the restoration principle have continued to demand that "Christian" is a proper and acceptable name. This conclusion is based largely on Acts 11:26, "And the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch." To further support this conclusion many suggest that Acts 11:26 is the fulfillment of Isaiah 62:1-2, "You shall be called by a new name which the mouth of the Lord will name."

The purpose of this article is not to discuss whether or not the name "Christian" is an acceptable name; but to examine Isaiah 62:2 in its relationship to Acts 11:26.

Universal Agreement

While not all commentators agree regarding what the "new name" is, there are two things that almost all agree upon.

All agree that it is not surprising that Israel would undergo a name change. They also agree that whatever the "new name" is it will be reflective of a new character.

"God names this people in accordance with what they are, namely righteous and holy. Intimations of this change of name had already occurred when God gave new names to the patriarchs Abraham and Jacob." (Edward J. Young **The New International Commentary, Isaiah**).

The Interpreter's Bible concurs, "As Israel's progenitors Abram and Jacob re-

ceived the new names of Abraham and Israel to correspond to their new status, so Zion will receive a new name in the coming age" (George Buttrick, **The Interpreter's Bible**).

The New Character

In the passage under consideration Zion is pictured in a glorious state, more glorious than ever before.

"According to the Ancients, the name contains within it the interior character and being of the people; a new name means a new people" (Buttrick, **Ibid.**). With this understanding we can see that being given a new name would have great meaning to the people of Isaiah's day.

The new name would represent a new time in the history of Israel, a time when the people were turned with their whole hearts to God and a time when God would bestow his richest blessings upon his people.

What Is The Name?

Now we address ourselves to the problem of just what the "new name" is. It must be stated at the outset that while several interpretations are given by various authors, few make an effort to defend their interpretations.

One of the most frequently suggested interpretations is found within the text of Isaiah 62. One author in attacking the position that the interpretation of the new name is Christian stated, "If the Campbellites would merely read a couple of verses further in Isaiah 62, they would see that the name was not 'Christian' but Hephzibah."

The Wycliffe Commentary suggests, "In the 'latter day' she will display Christ's righteousness and thereupon receive a new name: Hephzibah, My delight is in her."

Barnes believed that Hephzibah was the "new name" because it was expressive of the favoured condition which Zion was to enjoy. Clarke believed that the name was either "Christian" or "Hephzibah."

There are other commentators who hold

the same position. Interestingly, they, like the above cited authors, make very little attempt to explain or defend their reasoning for their position other than the fact that God would once again delight in Zion, and that "My Delight is in her" would express that thought.

There are, however, several factors that would seem to indicate that the "new name" is not Hephzibah.

First, as we look at the overall flow of the passage it doesn't seem that Hephzibah is given as the fulfillment of the new name, but rather it appears to be just one of a number of blessings which Zion was to enjoy.

Verse one foretells the coming salvation. Verse two tells us that all people will see that righteousness and the Lord will give a "new name" to Zion. Verse three tells of the exalted status of Zion. Verse four tells of the fact that Zion will no longer be called forsaken or desolate. In a positive way Zion will be called Hephzibah. Verses 5-12 continue announcing the various blessings that shall come upon Zion.

With all of this in mind it would seem unnatural to force verse four to be the fulfillment of verse two.

Another factor that seems to stand opposed to Hephzibah as the interpretation is that if one is to choose a name from the immediate context there are at least four other names in chapter 62. "In fact, about twenty times in Isaiah mention is made of something the people of God would, or would not, be called. Hephzibah is just one of them" (Bobby Duncan, **Difficult Texts of The Old Testament Explained**).

A third factor that must also be considered is that Hephzibah was not a new name at all since it is already found in 2 Kings 20:21; 21:1. We are not to conclude that since Isaiah mentioned this name in the context, it is therefore the name prophesied.

There is another theory regarding the new name that suggests that the name is not yet revealed and is known only by God. Furthermore this new glory calls for a new name . . . But this can be announced only by the eternal God, since the name is mysterious and known only to God (65:15; Rev. 2:17; 3:12)" (Ross Price, **Beacon Hill Commentary**).

The Interpreter's Bible agrees with this

theory and adds that the identification of the name ". . . may be hinted at in the names in verses 4 and 12, but is not necessarily any of these. He who makes his people glorious alone can say what Zion's nature will be."

Isaiah 65:15 does seem to refer back to Isaiah 62:2; however, there is nothing in the passage to indicate that the new name is one that is mysterious and known only to God.

In Revelation 2:17 and 3:12 we once again find mention of a new name. Revelation 2:17 in particular indicates that this new name that will be given will be known only by those who receive it.

For this to be the new name of Isaiah 62:2 one must assume that Isaiah's time table points to the **end** of time rather than some point **in** time. This is so because the two passages in the Revelation are referring to a name that will be given "after" the faithful have overcome sin and Satan in their lifetime.

The question we must then ask is this: Is Isaiah referring to the end of time when the saints will enter into their heavenly abode or is he referring to some point in history when Zion shall have a changed relationship and status with God?

Many commentators think that Isaiah 62 points to the church. This would indicate that the "new name" is not something that will be given in heaven, but rather it was to be given when the church was established.

The Name Christian

We now come full circle back to the name Christian. There are not many commentators outside of our brotherhood who believe that the name Christian is a fulfillment of Isaiah 62:2. One notable exception is Clarke who, as already mentioned, held that the new name was either Christian or Hephzibah.

Burton Coffman in his commentary on Acts gives a good summary of all the elements that were to surround the giving of the new name.

"God promised that He Himself would give His people a new name. He promised that it would be given at a time when the Gentiles and Kings had seen His righteousness (Isa. 62:2) . . . God said, "I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off" (Isa. 56:6). It was not to be a name

which would arise beyond the fellowship of God's people; but, as the Lord said, "Even unto them will I give in my house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters" (Isa. 56:5) . . . Moreover, it was to be a new name (Isa. 62:2) and a name which the mouth of the Lord would name."

As we look at Acts 11:26, where the disciples were first called Christians, we immediately see many of the key elements that relate to Isaiah 62:2.

First, Christian was indeed a "new name." The passage tells us plainly that this was the first time the name Christian was applied to those who were followers of Christ.

Second, we see that the name was given in the house of God. This is the case because the house of God is the church (1 Tim. 3:15).

Third, we see that the name was given after the Gentiles saw the righteousness of God. This can be seen by examining the context of Acts 11:26. In the preceding chapter we have the first Gentile converts to Christ. The significance of this conversion was obvious to the apostle Peter when he said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him" (Acts 10:34f). It was at this particular time and place that disciples were first called Christians. The significance appears

to be that Christian is the name referred to in Isaiah 62:2.

There is one argument that has been used against the idea that Christian is the new name referred to in Isaiah 62:2. The argument states that the name Christian was given not by God, but rather by enemies of the disciples, and that the name Christian was meant to be derogatory. If that were the case, it would seem to destroy the validity of the claim that the name Christian is the name referred to in Isaiah 62:2 because it is clearly stated that the new name will be given "by the mouth of the Lord."

The Pulpit Commentary on Acts says of the name Christian: "We may be sure that Christians, i.e. followers of Messiah; is not a name likely to have been given by Jews. There is no evidence either of its having been given in derision." **The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge** states that "There is no historical foundation for the statement often made that it was a 'nickname.'"

Aside from these remarks negating the idea that the name Christian was given in derision there is also evidence as to who actually gave the name. In a 1988 article in **Carolina Christian**, David Pharr wrote: "There is strong evidence that the lord provided the name. The word rendered 'were called' is used eight other times in the New

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Testament and in each case except one it obviously refers to action on God's part — 'being warned of God,' 'revealed,' etc. (Matt. 2:12; 2:22; Luke 2:26; Acts 10:22; Heb. 8:5; 11:7; 12:25). In Romans 7:3, the other passage, it seems probable to have the same idea. . . . Since, therefore, in all other places where the word translated 'were called' is used it refers to action on God's part, it is reasonable to assume the same implication in Acts 11:26. This means that they 'were called' Christians by divine authority."

Moses E. Lard took the view that Paul and Barnabas were the ones who called the disciples Christians. In his *Quarterly*, Lard, based upon his study of the Greek, thought that Acts 11:26 should be translated: "Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to seek Saul; and finding him, he brought him to Antioch. And it happened that for a whole year they were brought together in the church, and taught a large crowd, and called the disciples Christians first at Antioch."

It is interesting, however, that Lard was not altogether certain that the linguistic ev-

idence proved that just because Paul and Barnabas gave the name, that the name had been given by divine authority. However, it does seem highly unlikely that men of such stature would give a name without authority. Add to that the fact that Peter told his readers to glorify God in the name Christian (1 Pet. 4:16) and it becomes even more doubtful that the name Christian did not have divine authority.

It is not likely that all will be convinced either way regarding how the new name prophecy is fulfilled. It is certain, however, that the name Christian was a new name given to God's people. The beautiful promises of Isaiah 62 point to a time of glorious blessings for God's people. There are no blessings greater than the blessings in Christ, and no people more blessed than those who are called Christians.

[P. O. Box 52, Blackwater, MO 65322. Daryll is a native Carolinian. His father, Roger Tripp, works with the church in Fairfield, NC.]

The Providence of God?

by B.J. Barr

"I know that thou canst do all things, and that no purpose of thine can be restrained" (Job 42:2). As I reflect on my life and realize that it is by and according to the laws and forces of nature and providence that allots us our fortunes and conditions in this world, I am awed and humbled. I, as a black child, was raised in Williamsburg County, South Carolina, during the fifties and sixties in a totally segregated community. This is evident to me because to this date I do not know one white person my age in the county where I spent my entire childhood. No doubt the same is true the other way around.

Both my parents were school teachers, and my father also farmed the land which has been a part of our family for over 100 years. For me life was not very easy around home. I remember working very hard plowing the fields during the spring and summer

months. I also remember putting in tobacco, picking cotton, slopping the hogs, gathering hay, and all the other chores that were common to farming. At times I worked so hard I thought my father was trying to kill me!

Our family were traditional churchgoers. Each Sunday was spent in Sunday School, except for the third Sunday of each month, when we had full worship services. I remember times when my father would speak in the absence of the minister. I felt he was only attending church because of tradition. Church life was a part of rural family life. My mother, on the other hand, took her religion more seriously. When I was about twelve, I remember that each week the Jehovah Witnesses came to our home for Bible study. During that time we learned a lot about the Scriptures. As time progressed in our studies, Mother became more excited about their teachings. After a number of months,

she decided to become a part of their group. I recall the night when she told my father that she wanted to become a member as though it was yesterday. He opposed the idea very strongly and issued her an ultimatum that if she became a Jehovah's Witness, then she could no longer be allowed to remain in our home. This was more than she could bear. She was shattered, and ran from the house on to the lawn sobbing frantically. Our immediate family also took issue with her and expressed their opposition to her request, especially her brother who was a Baptist preacher. From this time on things seemed to calm down and the Jehovah Witnesses were no longer a factor in our home. My mother went along with the family religion, but her heart was not in it.

As time elapsed, my mother was secretly pursuing another religious group. She had discovered an ad in a magazine. Through correspondence courses she was being persuaded that she had found truth like no other. She earnestly yearned for this new way and her desire would not be thwarted by obnoxious threats of subordination. Though she knew that my father would be unreasonable about her decision, she was still driven by her longing to cease association with the family's United Methodist Church, a group that failed to provide for her spiritual needs. Secretly she was baptized into the Worldwide Church of God, whose president and founder was Herbert W. Armstrong.

Soon after her private entrance into this group, the news was made known, and religion had risen to the forefront of our family once again. For years our home was a religious battlefield. Going to church was a silent journey without Mother. She now worshipped on Saturdays, and we continued going on Sundays with my father. In the course of future events, my entire life would be changed by the providence of God, and my mother would be exposed to truth in no uncertain terms.

After I graduated from high school, I enrolled at Benedict College in Columbia, South Carolina. While there, I met Evelyn Harris, a very bright, intelligent, and God-fearing young lady. I occasionally went with her to the church of Christ. Soon I found that I was highly impressed with the

preachers' knowledge of the Bible; and the people were so attentive that they were taking notes and were following along in their Bibles. I had never seen anything like this before! Because this behavior was so foreign to me, I found myself picking up the Bible voluntarily for the first time. As my love for Evelyn grew, so did my interest in the church. I was later baptized, and then married. My next five years were typical of a new convert — questions, excitement, settling in, and an incubation period for me. The more truth I learned, the more I realized the spiritual deprivation of my people. I saw a lack somewhere between the preaching of the word and the results that were being achieved. I thought this doctrine was just too powerful to just be affecting handfuls of people. I had many questions and often challenged ministers with whom I came in contact. One piercing memorable response was, "Why don't you do something about it?"

This restless spirit within me led me to the East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions in Knoxville, Tennessee. I studied to prepare myself for the task of reaching many lost people, people who inherited religions unfounded in the word of God. I remember how my mother had searched for truth for many years. She fought for it, and had many sleepless nights about what she desired. Now, the very thing that she had prayed for was to be right before her in the presence of her children. I was able to encourage my youngest brother, who is now a minister of the gospel, Joseph V. Barr, Jr. God's Providence continues to unfold as the life and heart of a young boy is changed by his mother's love and reverence for truth. My mother is not a member of the Lord's body; but I believe with all my heart that if someone had reached her in her search for truth, she would be a member of the body today. My ministry is dedicated to finding those who are searching for a better way, the only way. I do not want what happened to my mother religiously to happen to anyone else. I want the Lord's Church to be there for those who are searching.

I grew up not knowing about the church of Christ, nor did my family and friends. For the past ten years I have been working in this area helping the Lord's church become

known. Thus far I have been involved in the establishment of five congregations in this area. We have a far reaching radio broadcast that is spreading the word. I believe that we are making some impact with the Good News about Jesus Christ. However, there is still much to be done, and I'm determined to do my part, to include teaching my five children to be mission minded. We have a massive job to do within and without the body. I know a hidden light cannot shine so we must illuminate where we are!

“And we know that all things work together for good to those that love God, who are called according to his purpose” (Rom. 8:28). God has a purpose for each life, and we are trusting Him to fulfill His work in us. I believe that my work is truly related to the two most important ladies in my life. My mother gave me the zeal and desire to know. My wife has provided the vehicle by which

this longing could be fulfilled. The story goes on, the work goes on, and the need still remains. Are you willing to help us do something that God ordained for this community years ago? I am on a mission for God, aided by those who love God and the souls of men.

Through the providence of God, more than 32 years ago, the impression my mother made on me, her oldest son, is being carried out. Today, I am a missionary to an integrated society of, in a sense, still segregated people. My people have been neglected religiously, as well as educationally, and economically. My goal is to share truth and love so that lives may be changed. I know God has opened the door to us in South Carolina. **Won't you come in with us?**

[5 Cedarwood Circle, Sumter, SC 29150. Brother Barr is among the most zealous and foresighted missionaries in the Carolinas.]

Lord of the Sabbath

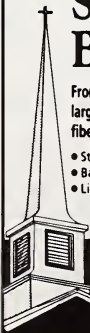
by Mike Mayes

Can man break God's laws without sinning when there is adequate cause, or if it serves human needs? Advocates of situation ethics would answer in the affirmative. Some within the church have thought that such is taught in Matthew 12:1-8 when Jesus' disciples picked and ate grain on the Sabbath. But is this what these verses teach us?

The text says, because they were hungry, Jesus' disciples were picking and eating the wheat or barley in late spring. The Pharisees, holding Jesus responsible for the actions of his disciples, charged them with doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath. In order to properly understand Jesus' response to the Pharisees, we must understand that the Lord declared them to be innocent, not guilty of breaking the Sabbath law in any shape, form, or fashion (verse 7). The problem is not that they had disobeyed any law of God, but that they had violated the traditions or oral laws of the Jews. According to the Pharisees, the gathering and shelling out of grain constituted reaping and threshing. The rabbis had formulated 39 types of activity that they classified as violations of the Sabbath law,

including reaping and threshing. Such man-made laws Jesus declared to be vain (Matt. 15:9). The disciples were not guilty of breaking God's law, only man's. When we accept the truth that no violation of the Law of Moses had taken place, the statements of Jesus can be better understood.


The purpose of Jesus in His response to the Pharisees was not to show that the law of God can be set aside when human need



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calls for it; but to demonstrate the inconsistency of His critics. Three arguments are made by Jesus followed by a declaration of His right to address such matters pertaining to the Law.

Jesus first appeals to the occasion when David and his men were given the showbread (KJV), or "bread of the Presence" to eat by the priest Ahimelech (1 Sam. 21:1-6). The Law of Moses specified that only Aaron, his sons, and their descendants were to be allowed to eat this consecrated bread (Lev. 22:10; 24:5-9). Some maintain that the hunger of David and his men justified ignoring this part of God's Will. Actually the opposite is true. Jesus is showing the inconsistency of the Pharisees. They would not have argued that David had sinned, as an examination of the Mishnah will reveal (Mena-both 95b). The Pharisees were inconsistent in condemning the disciples of Jesus, who were innocent, and justifying David, who was guilty. God has never approved of anyone disobeying Him just because hardship is involved. In the words of J.W. McGarvey, "If Christians may violate law when its observance would involve hardship or suffering, then there is an end to suffering for the name of Christ, and an end, even, of self-denial."

The second argument is based on the work done by the priests in carrying out their service in the temple on the Sabbath (verse 5). The Sabbath law prohibited work on that day (Ex. 20:10; Lev. 23:3; Deut. 5:14). However, the Law of Moses made an exception for the priests in allowing them to offer sacrifices, administer circumcision, and perform other duties required of them on the Sabbath (John 7:22, 23). The general law regarding not working on the Sabbath was modified by the specific law concerning the duties of the priests on the Sabbath. This example proves that the Law did approve certain types of work being done on the Sabbath.

If the Pharisees had been consistent, they would have condemned the priests for doing work on the Sabbath that God permitted them to do. In the verses that immediately follow our text, Jesus again shows the inconsistency of their actions. They would remove their sheep out of the pit on the Sabbath, but deny that it is lawful to heal on the Sabbath

(Matt. 12:9-14). Jesus makes it clear that the Law did not prohibit doing good on the Sabbath (Matt. 12:12). The problem comes in the fact that the Pharisees were binding where God had never bound, making laws where God had never legislated.

The phrase "something greater than the temple" has been applied by some to Jesus. However, in the Greek text the gender is neuter, not masculine. The "something greater than the temple" could be the work the disciples were doing in preaching that the kingdom was at hand, or it could refer to the authority of Jesus.

The third argument employed by Jesus in exposing the inconsistency of His opponents consisted of a quotation from Hosea 6:6, "I desire compassion, and not sacrifice" (NASB). Mercy or compassion, which Jesus said the Pharisees lacked (Matt. 23:23), was the more important of the two. Jesus was not saying that sacrifices were not essential; but that the sacrifices should be accompanied by a compassionate, merciful heart. The sacrifices meant nothing if their hearts were not right before God. If their hearts had been right, the Pharisees would have felt compassion for the hungry disciples. The real problem was not in Christ or His disciples, but in the hearts of the Pharisees.

Jesus never minimized the importance of compliance with the ceremonial aspects of the Law of Moses. In fact, He required those he healed to carry out the ceremonial and sacrificial requirements of the Law (Matt. 8:2-4). When the Scriptures tell us Jesus fulfilled the Law of Moses, that included keep-

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ing the ceremonial and sacrificial demands of God's will (Matt. 5:17). In Matthew 5:19 the Lord taught that no commandment of the Law was to be declared nonessential and disobeyed.

Mark adds the statement: "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" (2:27). God's will for man has always been for his good (Psa. 84:11). The laws of the Pharisees had made the Sabbath a burden rather than a blessing to men. The Pharisees bound more and heavier burdens on men than God had bound (Matt. 23:4). The problem was not the Sabbath law, but the abuse and misapplications of that law by the Pharisees.

Jesus then declared Himself to be Lord of the Sabbath. The phrase "Son of Man" is applied by Jesus to Himself (Matt. 8:20; 9:16; 11:19). To make man the Lord of the Sabbath is to give him a position he is not

qualified to fill. As Jeremiah reminds us, man is not capable of directing his own steps (Jer. 10:23). James 4:11-12 teaches that we are not to be judges of the law, only doers of the law; there is only one Lawgiver.

In asserting His Lordship over the Sabbath, Jesus was taking the question out of the realm of argument, and moving it into the area of authority. As Lord of the Sabbath, Jesus is condemning the perversions of the Sabbath law by the Pharisees. On the basis of His authority, Jesus is qualified to know the real intent of the Sabbath law as well as what kind of activity is permitted on the Sabbath. Jesus claims authority beyond which there could be no appeal.

The conclusion can rightly be drawn that no man is ever authorized to prescribe circumstances when God's law can be broken. Jesus alone is "Lord of the Sabbath."

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Why Do People Reject Christ?

by Cleo Reddinger

Several years ago there was a movie about a crime boss called "The Godfather." This movie made famous the phrase, "I'm gonna make you an offer you can't refuse." Of course, everybody knew what that meant in the context of the movie. However, there was only one offer ever made that one really could not afford to refuse. That was 2,000 years ago on Calvary outside of Jerusalem. Jesus offered us pardon for our sins and cleansing for our guilty consciences in return for a contrite and obedient heart. Now that is an offer you cannot refuse! And yet, every day there are millions of people who refuse the offer of pardon and peace through Christ. They turn their backs on their only hope. Why, in the name of all that is good and right, would they do such a thing?

One of the reasons is given to us in the parable of the sower (Matt. 13:3-9; 18-23). Concerning the seed which fell by the wayside Jesus said, "When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received the seed by the way

side." This person had no entrance for the seed of the gospel because of **the hardness of his heart.**

The Bible tells us that we may become hardened by the deceitfulness of sin (Heb. 3:12). We are also told of those who have "their conscience seared with a hot iron" (1 Tim. 4:2) meaning that by reason of persistence in sin they no longer feel guilt at wrongdoing. Having been deceived by sin they were then hardened by it. A guilty conscience having been eliminated by hardening keeps one from desiring a better life than that of sin, and the gospel has no allure to such a soul.

Some people reject Christ simply because sin has so hardened their hearts that the gospel of Christ and all He has done for them and for mankind simply has nothing to grab onto in their lives.

Another reason that people reject the offer of Christ is that **they love the darkness more than they love the light.** We are told about these people in John 3:19, 20, "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world and men loved darkness rather

than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved." These are not the same people mentioned under hardness of heart because those people felt no pangs of guilt. These people may experience great pangs of guilt and be pushed by it into despair like the Psalmist described in Psalm 32:3, "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long." However, because they love sin more than they love righteousness, they refuse the cure for their despair. If they continue in this condition of refusing the pardon of grace, they will eventually become those with a hard heart.

Here is where those of us who have already come to the Lord in love and obedience need to take special heed to 1 Corinthians 10:12, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." This process can begin in anyone with any sin, no matter how seemingly small. When we excuse our "little pet sin" in light of all the "big" sins we mightily struggle against, we face the danger that when victory over the "big" sin is finally ours, we no longer recognize the "little sin" as sin. The fight against sin must be approached as a war in which no quarter is given. How many faithful Christians have been started down the road that led to their complete and total destruction by skipping assembling with the saints just once?

A third reason people use for rejecting Christ is the **inconsistent lives of those who profess to already follow Christ**. Many times we are told in the New Testament to, "Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (Eph. 4:1); "Walk worthy of the Lord" (Col. 1:10); "As ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more" (1 Thes. 4:1)? And yet, sadly, year after year

one of the most prevalent excuses for rejecting Christ is the people who are already Christian.

One of the things that gives Christianity real power in attracting people to Christ is the way it transforms the lives of those who are faithful followers of Jesus. They can truly say, "I am not where I could be, and fall short of what I ought to be but thank heaven I'm not what I used to be!" Who has not marveled at the progress of a person who has truly given "their own selves to the Lord" (2 Cor. 8:5)? Therefore when one becomes a Christian in name only, not allowing the doctrine of Christ to influence the way he lives, exactly the opposite effect is achieved. People are repulsed instead of attracted.

There is no way that we can speak of reasons people reject Christ without mentioning **pride**. We are told in the Scriptures that one of the reasons the chief priests delivered Jesus to Pilate was envy (Matt. 27:18). They saw His popularity and it hurt their pride, so they had Him killed. They also expected a ruling, conquering king instead of a servant as the Messiah. Many people think that Christianity is a religion for wimps and weaklings. Note Ted Turner's recent comments in the Dallas Morning News, "Christianity is a religion for losers." He continued, referring to the death of Christ on the cross for the sins of mankind, "I don't want anybody to die for me. I've had a few drinks and a few girlfriends and if that's gonna put me in hell, then so be it." Mr. Turner is not alone. Many look on Christianity as a crutch for those who can not stand on their own two feet. However, they show a fundamental ignorance of the process of standing on one's own two feet. You see, no matter how strong the legs may be or how hale the health, one cannot stand where there is no solid ground upon which

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to stand. Christianity is not a crutch but rather the bedrock upon which to build a life which will never be shaken nor destroyed (Matt. 7:24-29). It is the only place where a man really can stand on his own two feet.

Last, but not least, people reject Christ on the basis of **false teaching**. The apostle John said in 1 John 4:1, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." Paul told Timothy to "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (1 Tim. 4:16). If it is true that sound doctrine can save people's souls, and it is; then it must also be true that false doctrine will damn people's souls by leading them to reject their only hope.

Some people reject Christ on the basis of the belief that it teaches babies are born lost and any baby who has the misfortune to die is irretrievably doomed. This is nowhere taught in the Scriptures and yet many men, who claim to be Christians, do teach just that. Instead the Bible teaches that "the soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek.16:4). This doctrine, original sin, and other false doctrines are seen by most people of common sense and good will as ridiculous and mon-

strous. It is no wonder that many refuse to submit to a Christ whom they have been told teaches such crazy things!

Others reject their only hope on the basis of the **mistaken belief that they have already accepted it**. They have been taught, wrongly that mere faith places them in a saving relationship with Christ, though the Bible says no such thing. However, we do see verses which teach us obedience to the divine word, and that Christ is the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:9). How many multiplied millions believe they are already saved because of false teaching of this sort!

And, of course, we can not pass over **idolatry**. If anything is false teaching, this is it! Paul describes it in Romans 1:18-32. Anytime men worship the creature rather than the Creator they set themselves up for disaster.

And so we have seen some of the reasons people reject Christ. All of them are trivial to the Father. He has given us plenty of reasons to accept and serve His Son. A man or woman can hear Jesus, obey Him, and live the best of all possible lives — all without sacrificing one thing that is truly good or dear to their hearts.

[P.O. Box 95, Rockingham, NC 28379.]

Word Pictures With a Message

by Gary G. Payne

Let us try a little experiment. Have you ever heard of word association? It is one of the tests psychologists use. The way it goes is this: The therapist says a word and you write down or say the first word that comes to your mind. I am not planning on doing a psychological test on you. But I think it would be interesting to see what picture comes to your mind when I say this one particular word: "church."

Maybe some of you thought of the Hollywood stereotype. Steeples. Stained glass. Choirs. A minister dressed in a robe. Or, maybe you thought of the facilities where you attend. Maybe some of you thought about the TV evangelists, the hype, the show,

the begging for money. Maybe you thought about denominationalism, the hundreds of different brands of Christianity. Maybe you thought about the slogan: "Go to the church of your choice" — as if picking a church required about as much thought and taste as picking which brand of cereal you want.

Maybe one of the Biblical pictures came to mind. The church is a body (Eph. 1:22-23; 4:11-16): living, growing, functioning, producing. Jesus is the head directing us. Christians are the members making up the muscles, bones, and ligaments. We are busy serving one another and others.

The church is a temple (Eph. 2:19-22). The temple in Jerusalem was magnificent. It

took 10,000 men 46 years to build this impressive building. The temple was made of enormous stone (70 feet long, 12 feet high, and 18 feet in breadth). The temple had an inner room called the Holy of Holies, or the Most Holy Place. There was a curtain at the opening of this room so no one would enter. Symbolically, this is where God was present. Well, that was then. Now there is no curtain to keep people out. Now Christians make up God's temple. Can you imagine that?

The church is the Bride of Christ (Eph. 5:22-23). Have you ever heard someone say, "I have never seen an ugly bride"? At least I have never seen a bride who did not look her best. Most put a lot into it. The dress has to be just right. Her hair is fixed. Her makeup is perfected. There is a radiance about her like an angel. She is about to enter a relationship. It is a relationship where both are giving. It is not a one-night-stand

kind of love. It is a lasting love. The relationship is so special that the two become one. Being in the church is a relationship.

The church is an army (Eph. 6:10-19). The battle dress uniform consists of armor, shield, helmet, and sword. But the description in the Bible has virtually no protection for the back. That is because Christians do not run. They face the battle head on. Christians are not afraid to stand for Jesus. They do not pick a fight. They are soldiers of peace. Their lives take a stand for all that is right and good. "Onward Christian soldier!"

Body, temple, bride, army; one word combines these words: church. The church is a fellowship, a commitment, and a relationship.

[907 Courtland Ave., Reidsville, NC 27320.]

Change Your Tastes for Life

by Bruce Green

The heart pumps. The heart rests. The cycle can go on almost endlessly. Or it can be drastically altered by something as seemingly insignificant as a change of diet.

A bad diet causes the heart to work harder to achieve the same output of blood as before. Its owner might notice a shortness of breath, chest pains, or that he tires easily. If unchecked, this can lead to a heart attack — the leading cause of death in America — and all from a bad diet. That is why one of the posters put out by the American Heart Association has as its motto, "Change Your Tastes For Life." It seems that you are what you eat.

Your spiritual heart can also be affected by diet. You cannot live off a diet of GOP (Geraldo, Oprah and Phil), "As The Stomach Churns," and "The National Dirt-Finder" with a Bible verse sprinkled in every once in a while to kid the conscience. You will find yourself short of breath, pained and tiring easily.

Do not kid yourself — these are warning signals. If left unchecked, they can kill. Sowing to the flesh produces deeds of the

flesh and leads to destruction (Gal. 5:19-21, 6:8). The mind set on the Spirit is "life and peace" (Rom. 8:9). It allows the Spirit to produce its fruit with the result of eternal life (Gal. 5:22-23, 6:8). "If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit" (Gal. 5:25). Change your tastes for life!

"So then brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh — for if you are living according to the flesh you must die but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live" (Rom. 8:12-13).

[Bruce Green works with the Plaza church, P.O. Box 1385, Sumter, SC 29151.]

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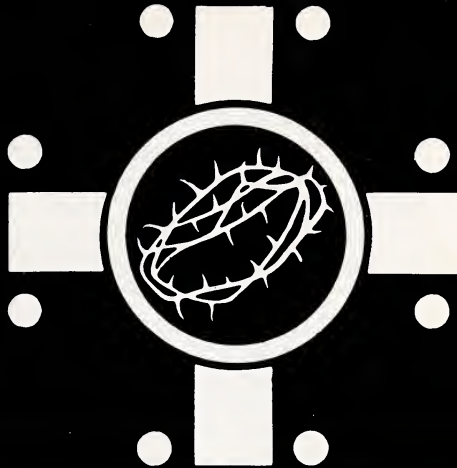
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CAROLINA CHRISTIAN

VOL. 32, NO. 5, MAY 1990



C287.21 / C292

On Being Thankful

As an old man, Matthew Henry, author of an highly-represented commentary on the Bible, was once robbed. That night the elderly scholar entered the following in his diary:

Let me be thankful: First, because I was never robbed before; second, because although they took my purse, they did not take my life; third, because they took my all, it was not much; and fourth, because it was I who was robbed, not I who robbed.

In adversity all of us have much more to be thankful for than we sometimes think. The old song holds good,

*Count your blessings, Name them one by one,
And it will surprise you, What the Lord hath done.*



editorial

by David Pharr

In driving through various parts of the Carolinas we are amazed at the number of Baptist churches. One does not need census figures to realize that Baptists are numerous and growing. We have especially noticed the proliferation of small "mission" Baptist groups. They are in store buildings, small frame structures, converted dwellings, prefabricated portable type units, etc.

It is likely that many of these new congregations are the result of factions which became unhappy with larger churches. In some cases they may have been established to create a "pastorate" for a preacher who could not make it with the big churches. Certainly some are sincere mission efforts. Our point is not to try to understand all the possible reasons, but simply to observe that there are new Baptist churches popping up everywhere.

Twenty to thirty years ago there was a strong emphasis in churches of Christ in the Carolinas for establishing new congregations. In North Wilkesboro, we started in an American Legion building. In Boone, the church met for a time in a small room in the courthouse. In Lenoir, it was at a motel. All who were in the Carolinas then can remember many like situations. The point is that churches were being started regardless of where they had to meet.

We continue to insist that good judgment should be applied before a new work is started. Members of a congregation should seek the cooperation and goodwill of the church where they are before launching out in a new work. Starting prematurely and subsequently failing can be a disaster. On the other hand, however, we can be so cautious and wait so long for the right time that nothing is ever done.

A handful of Carolina brethren are still engaged in starting new works. A few congregations are supportive of such endeavors. There is little that seems spectacular about these new works; but the important thing is that churches of Christ now are meeting

in communities where they did not meet before.

The thing Baptists and others have learned is that people are more likely to attend services in their own proximity. Neighborhood churches are more likely to attract the people near them. People already committed to New Testament Christianity will travel some distance to worship; but the uninformed will be more easily attracted to churches near their homes.

We are in favor of large congregations. "Large" is, of course, a relative term. But congregations which grow to several hundred

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CAROLINA CHRISTIAN (P.O.P.N. 091160) is published monthly by Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., at 71 S. Fairfield Road, Greenville, SC 29605. Subscription price: individual \$8.00 per year (\$15.00 for 2 years and \$22.00 for 3 years); club of five or more \$7.50 each; quantity of 15 or more in bundles or direct mailing 50¢ per copy per month. Publication number, 091160.

Second class postage paid at Greenville, SC.
POSTMASTER: Send change with Form 3579 to Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., Johnny Melton, Managing Editor, Route 2, Box 137, Conover, North Carolina 28613.

RETURN REQUESTED

Address editorial matter to David Pharr, Editor, ETSOPM, 6608 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37931. Address news items to Dennis Conner, P.O. Box 1219, Yadkinville, NC 27055.

All items to be printed in a given month's issue should reach the editor not later than the next-to-the-last Thursday of the preceding month.

Address commercial advertising inquiries to Jacobs List, Inc., Clinton, SC 29325. Address all advertising pertaining to the Church of Christ or its members (including related organizations) to the editor.

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can have the resources to accomplish tremendous good. Largeness should not, however, be an end in itself. And one of the good works every large congregation should be doing is starting and assisting new churches in every community.

In the Carolinas there are several large Baptist churches in every town. There are also little Baptist churches in almost every village, neighborhood, and crossroads. In most of the Carolinas communities, most people are within walking distance of a Baptist congregation. Our point is not to commend the Baptists; but to impress ourselves with the need for establishing churches of Christ in every community. There can be little doubt that even a very small congregation (if it has a loving, zealous, and Scriptural purpose) could reach people who might not otherwise be reached.

The thing that is probably most to blame for the hesitancy in starting new works is the fact that so many of them never seem to become self-sufficient. Too many are still needing outside support after five, ten, even twenty years. Part of the blame may be in the practice of providing a fulltime preacher who does little more than "hold services"; or a congregation that is satisfied to stay as they are. Knowing that some areas are extremely hard, we dare not point the finger of criticism at a man just because he isn't baptizing several. Still, the reality is that too many small groups are suffering with a terminal illness of introversion. They become absorbed with petty internal issues, or at least are satisfied just to meet regularly.

Preachers are desperately needed who will give themselves to the mission fields. But there is a need which we think is even greater. That need is for families who love the Lord so much that they will be the nucleus for beginning and building the cause of Christ in their own community. The method is simple and effective — a Christian example with sincere, loving outreach. The message is powerful — the gospel of Christ.

"Say not, ye, there are yet four months, and then cometh the harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for your are white already to harvest" (John 4:35).

Directory Update

Many have already responded to our questionnaire requesting updated information for a new directory of churches of Christ in the Carolinas. It would be most helpful if others would respond as soon as possible. Any congregation which did not receive a questionnaire should contact me at my Knoxville address.

Remember that the Directory will be included in an upcoming issue of the magazine. This means that every subscriber will get a copy. Additional copies will also be available.

Brother Jarrett's Response

In our March issue we published an article by Jim Mullican ("Where Will This Road Lead?") which expressed concern over certain trends which are in violation of biblical teaching regarding the roles of women in the church. We borrowed the article from Jim's local bulletin because we felt it needed a wider circulation.

In this issue we are printing a response to Mullican's article, which is by Paul Jarrett. Paul did not put a title on his article, but I have listed it as "A Response." This title is not to be interpreted as a refutation, but only as some thoughts which need to be considered. We hope readers will receive it in the spirit of concern and inquiry that brother Jarrett intended.

Having said the above, and having high regard for brother Jarrett, I want to respond briefly to some of his points.

That there are inconsistencies in how we have sometimes addressed the women issue is hardly to be doubted. We must, however, not allow past inconsistency to be an excuse for further unscripturalness. Brother Jarrett does not advocate this, of course; but it is a fallacy with which others might flirt.

Brother Jarrett mentions the need for addressing what constitutes "cultural concessions, in which the Scriptures have to say about the woman's role." Certainly this is a valid observation. There are some people, however, who are ready to explain the most obvious of New Testament doctrine as being merely reflections of the ancient cultural situation. This is a typical excuse for ignor-

ing the force of 1 Timothy 2:8-15. Again, I want to emphasize that this is not what brother Jarrett said; but I fear that some might take what he said as justification for their own assumptions. (We plan to deal with the cultural aspect in a later article; but suffice it to say now that all the evidence points to the fact that Paul's instructions about women reflect an attitude that was directly opposite the prevailing culture of his day. It is ridiculous, therefore, to say he wrote 1 Timothy 2:8-15 because of his cultural bias.)

Brother Jarrett does not elaborate on his reference to 1 Corinthians 11 — women praying and prophesying. We should, however, be very careful lest we read into this text something that contradicts other plain passages. Certainly it does not authorize women to do what they are elsewhere forbidden to do.

Managing Editor's Column

Glory in the Church

by Johnny Melton

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will — to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace (Eph. 1:3-7). There are three concepts in this passage that deserve attention: spiritual blessings, adoption, and redemption.

Spiritual Blessings

Ephesians 1:3 declares that God has blessed us with all spiritual blessings "in the heavenly realms . . . in Christ." When the phrase "in the heavenly realms" is modified by the expression "in Christ" in Ephesians,

We agree completely with brother Jarrett's concern for wanting adequate information about particular incidents before drawing a conclusion. In our note at the end of brother Mullican's article we indicated our hesitancy about mentioning specific places and events. In fact the only clearly identified situation was the Nashville Jubilee. While brother Jarrett may not have the facts himself, the documentation from reliable people is too overwhelming and the facts too widely known for us to be timid about mentioning them. If there are explanations and evidence to the contrary, we will be more than pleased to be corrected.

Paul Jarrett is a good man and he serves us well by making us think through the stands we take. Still, however, we believe the concerns written by brother Mullican are important.

it has reference to the church. Therefore, all spiritual blessings are in the church. That is a premise that is not widely acknowledged by religious teachers today.

The teaching that is prevalent in the religious world tends to relegate the church to a position of little consequence. Individuals are taught that they can be saved merely by "faith only" and that afterwards they may "join the church of your choice." Such teaching is foreign to the word of God. The church is not something that is merely nice if one wishes to join, which might have some advantages, but which ultimately has nothing to do with one's salvation. To the contrary, the church is the body of Christ. Ephesians 1:22, 23 is plain: "And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him, who fills everything in every way."

Since the church is the body of Christ, to be in the church is to be in Christ. Paul

affirms that all spiritual blessings are in Christ and, consequently, there are no spiritual blessings outside Christ. Certainly there is no greater spiritual gift than salvation from sin. If salvation from sin is a spiritual blessing (and it is), and if all spiritual blessings are in Christ (and they are), and if to be in Christ is to be in the church (and it is), then there can be no salvation outside the church.

Adoption

By God's grace, He has predestined that all who are saved should become His sons by adoption (vs. 5). This predestination does not mean that each individual that will ever be saved has already been predetermined by God. Rather, God has predestined that all who are saved, whoever they may be, will be adopted into His spiritual family. This is one of many illustrations used in Scripture to describe what salvation is like. There is one sense in which we are born into God's family (cf., John 3:3-5; Rom. 6:3, 4; 1 Pet. 1:22, 23). There is also this sense in which we are adopted into God's family. It should be appreciated that regardless which illustration is used, whether birth or adoption, the principle holds true: God has no children outside His family. To suggest that a man has children outside his family is an insult. To suggest that God has children outside His family is equally insulting. All God's children are in His family. To be adopted into God's family is to be in the church. Paul told Timothy, "Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:14, 15). The phrase, "God's household," means God's family. God's family is the church. Since God has no illegitimate children, all His children are in His family, and since the church is God's family, He has no children outside the church.

Redemption

In verse 7, Paul declared "in him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace." Redemption is in Christ. Forgiveness

is in Christ. To be in Christ is to be in His body. To be in His body is to be in the church. Therefore, redemption and forgiveness of sins are both in the church.

Redemption is "through his blood." The old song asks, "What can wash away my sin?" And the answer comes back, "nothing but the blood of Jesus." The washing away of sin is accomplished in baptism. That is why Peter's response to the question, "Brothers, what shall we do?" was "Repent and be baptized, everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins" (Acts 2:38). It is in the baptism that the blood of Jesus is reached, and so baptism is the means to redemption and forgiveness of sins. Baptism is also the means by which one gets into Christ (cf., Gal. 3:26, 27).

Conclusion

The church is made up of individuals who have been adopted into God's family, redeemed by the blood of Jesus, forgiven of their sins and granted all spiritual blessings. No wonder Paul ascribes to God "glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen" (Eph. 3:21).

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A Response

by Paul Jarrett

In the March issue of **Carolina Christian** you asked for responses to an article by Jim Mullican ("Where Will This Road Lead?"). This article is being submitted in response to that request, with a degree of hesitation. That hesitation has to do with my sincere desire to not appear to be taking issue with what brother Mullican wrote. To a great extent I share his concern over the practices to which he made reference. To an even greater extent I agree that there exists the potential for a major crisis in the church over the issue of the role of women in the church.

It is my concern over this latter threat that has led me to write this article. It is my feeling that the issue of the woman's role in the church cannot be ignored. I would hope, however, that it could be faced in a manner that would not lead to strife and division. For that reason this article is not aimed primarily at addressing the issue at hand (i.e. the woman's role), so much as to set forth some thoughts that may help us to avoid the kind of turmoil that seems to accompany every "issue" that surfaces in the brotherhood.

The first point I want to make pertains to the question posed in the title of brother Mullican's article — "Where will this road lead?" The question raised by this title is a valid one. It is one that must be taken into consideration before undertaking any course of action, or assuming any doctrinal position. However, it is a question that has also been much abused in recent years.

How many times have we heard someone say "I'm not opposed to what you are doing, or saying, but we have to be careful about where it may lead." The question thus becomes a barrier to exploring new methods, and searching for a more perfect knowledge of God's words. It becomes the means of maintaining the status quo, and allows for the entrenchment of traditional views and methods.

While it is fair to ask "where this road may lead" in respect to the issue of the woman's role in the church, it should not

be asked as a means of elevating traditional views and practices to the point of doctrine. Furthermore, we need to realize that any practice, or teaching, can be carried to an extreme.

We should already know this about the issue of the woman's role in the church. While the extreme addressed by brother Mullican represents movement in the direction of extending too much voice to women, we should not forget that the church has suffered in the past by going too far in the other direction in respect to the woman's place in the church. Many churches have imposed absolute silence on women, and most (if not all) churches have denied themselves the full use of the talents of our ladies, who are our co-heirs in the kingdom.

It would seem to me that if we are going to address the role women are to play in the church, we must be willing to deal with each situation openly and honestly. Perhaps even more importantly, we need to acknowledge the inconsistencies that exist in the church as a result of our failure to address the question of what constitutes doctrinal, and what constitutes cultural concessions, in what the Scriptures have to say about the woman's role.

Regarding our inconsistencies we need only note the fact that in the very issue of **Carolina Christian** which contained brother Mullican's article, there was also an article written by a woman. I mention this to simply note that while we do not allow women to preach to men in an assembly, we do allow them to write teaching articles which men read, and we listen to tapes of sermons they have preached at Ladies Day services, etc. Also, we have ladies teaching at our Christian colleges. While to my knowledge, none teach courses in Bible, they do teach classes in psychology, public speaking, etc. These classes are taken by men being trained to preach.

I've mentioned these "inconsistencies," not because I necessarily feel they are inconsistent with the teaching of Scripture. Rather,

I mentioned them to simply show how important it is for us to proceed cautiously and patiently in our discussion of this issue. This is especially important in respect to the citing of situations such as was done in brother Mullican's article. While each incident noted may prove to have been a violation of New Testament teaching, we need to be careful not to move too quickly in coming to that conclusion.

For example, regarding the use of women to read Scripture, serve communion, and lead singing, one may ask if this is any more a matter of usurping authority than having a woman make comments in Bible class, or serve on an educational committee? Also, regarding "leading prayer" one might, by implication, conclude that a woman can pray (and even "prophesy") so long as she does so with her head covered (i.e. under the man's authority), since Paul only commands that she refrain from doing so with her head "uncovered" (see 1 Cor. 11:5).

Regarding the woman teaching the Bible class in Memphis, and teaching classes of men and women at the Nashville Jubilee,

I would like more information before drawing a conclusion. In light of what I said earlier about women teaching at our Christian colleges, I would like to know what these classes were. This is especially pertinent in light of the fact that in many churches, and in workshops such as the Nashville Jubilee, you have a variety of class offerings that are not Bible classes in the strictest definition of the term, and certainly are not preaching services. For example, might a course such as Faulkner and Breechen on the family be taught by a woman with their same credentials as family counselors?

I want to conclude by noting again that it is not my purpose in writing this to take issue with the concerns raised by brother Mullican. I'm only concerned that we proceed cautiously, and in a good spirit in our study of the Scriptures regarding the woman's role in the church, and in our assessments of what constitutes a violation of sound doctrine, and what simply runs contrary to our traditions.

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Second Anniversary of Howard Winters' Death

by David Pharr, Editor

On May 11, 1988, two years ago, Howard Winters went to be with the Lord. He had served faithfully as a Christian, a preacher, and as the editor of this magazine for almost eighteen years. The anniversary of his death rekindles our memories and stirs again our sense of loss.

Howard was too humble to seek fame; but he believed in his work and worked so well that he will not be forgotten. Especially through his writings, like Abel of old, "he being dead yet speaketh." Each time I write an article I find myself asking, "I wonder how Howard would have liked this?" Such is my personal respect for the wisdom and ability that characterized brother Winters.

During this month of the anniversary of his death we are reprinting an article Howard wrote for the May 1975 issue of this magazine. It is not only still timely in its content, but it is also a reminder of the meaningful way he thought and wrote.

In memory of brother Winters and with a desire to give his writings wider circulation, Carolina Christian Bookstore is making a special offer this month on all of his published works. Be sure to see the back page ad. At these special prices you can make excellent additions to your own library and/or provide valuable gifts for others. At the same time your purchases will help **Carolina Christian**, a work that brother Winters dearly loved.

We want to add a brief word to sister Winters and the family. Only you really know how hard it has been to go on without him. Our expressions of sympathy are never adequate; but we love you, pray for you, and in our own small way share in missing one of God's finest men.

A Tribute To a Library Producer

by Al Simmons

Shortly after I committed my life to the ministry of the Lord, He began to bless my life with provisions that extended even beyond my imagination. The East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions was one of such blessings. I was privileged to attend when seemingly the odds (including financial) were very much stacked against me. God revealed to me how weak and powerless I am without Him, yet how powerful I am with Him. Truly God is able to do above all that we ask or think.

My schooling enabled me to know how much of God's word I really did not know, thus how much I had to learn. I had a lot of reading and meditating to do. I wanted to be the very best that I could be for the Lord, so I realized the necessity of a library. But how could a preacher student fund a library? I came to realize that many congregations of the Lord's people were not informed enough to realize the importance of such, and many individual members had been abused by self-seekers so that they were now prepared to reject anyone who asked for this kind of assistance. So I took it to

the Lord in prayer. He blessed my life with Howard Winters.

Howard was the editor of the **Carolina Christian** and the pulpit minister for the West Jefferson, NC, congregation. He also owned and operated Win-More Publications, which as I now know was operated more charitably than entrepreneurially. This wise man was more interested in getting valuable and useful books into the libraries of young ministers of the precious gospel than he was in buying a new pair of shoes. Although years have passed since Howard first scribbled my name on one of his note pads, I still recognize that I have been blessed with a library because God used him as His instrument.

Howard passed this life May 11, 1988; yet he lives because every time I lift a book from my shelf, there he stands encouraging me to read, learn, apply and share with others. Thank God for the blessings of this unique and special man of God — the library producer.

[1223 Chicorie Way, Charleston, SC 29412.]

God's Cure for Fear

by Howard Winters

Deceased (Repeated from May 1975)

We live in a fearful time! Paul wrote, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (2 Tim. 3:1-5). In the New Testament the usual connotation of the expression "the last days" is that of the Christian age, the period of time between Pentecost and the second coming of Christ,

but here it seems to indicate that the end of that period will be characterized by perilous times. Whether we are living in the days which Paul described or not is not the point here. Our point is that Paul gives a good description of the perilous days in which we live, regardless of whether they are "the last days" or not. The condition of the present world is fearful to contemplate.

It is generally understood that there are enough nuclear bombs stockpiled by the United States and Russia alone to completely destroy civilization as we know it. Such a holocaust of war and misery could conceivably be started by a series of malfunctions or by the orders of one man (who may care

nothing for human life or whose burdens may have strained his sanity). But that is not all: at the present time there is looming over all nations the possibility of a worldwide economic depression, the like of which may never have been experienced. In fact, some tell us that it has already struck its terror in some places. And here we are growing callous to the news and pictures of starving missions in the underdeveloped countries. But perhaps more fearful than these is the spread of selfishness and materialism, such as was described by Paul. We go to all extremes to get all we can for as little as we can, regardless of what it does to others and the world in which we live. We are like children who are always seeking new toys with which to play. Our philosophy is each man for himself and to the devil with the rest. And it is this very attitude that is causing man and the society in which he lives to fall to pieces. Men who have no anchor in God, men who have no hope beyond this world, have many reasons to live in fear. For "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (2 Tim. 3:13). It is truly fearful times.

What Is Fear?

Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary (unabridged, second edition) defines fear, in its first two usages (the only ones we are concerned with in this study), "1. to feel painful apprehension of, as some impending evil; to be afraid of; to dread. 2. to feel reverence for; to have a reverential awe of; to venerate." It should be seen from this that fear *per se* is not wrong. In the sense of the first definition one should fear a poisonous snake or a speeding car. He should fear a burning house or a raging storm. The fear of the consequences of war helps prevent war. Jesus taught that one should fear the devil because he has power to destroy the soul in hell (Luke 12:4, 5). In the sense of the second definition, the Bible commands fear. Solomon said, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Prov. 9:10). Again, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Eccl. 12:13). Peter told the household

of Cornelius, ". . . Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34, 35).

No one should be foolhearted: he should fear that which it is sensible to fear. But there is an abnormal fear — fear of things for which one should have no fear. This is being constantly terrified at what might be; unreasonable apprehension of things over which we have no control. John calls such fear torment (1 John 4:18). This kind of fear is prohibited in the Bible (John 14:27; Rev. 21:8). And it is this kind of fear for which God has a cure.

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Causes of Fear

There are many causes of abnormal fear, some physical in nature, some psychological, and some mysterious (by "mysterious" we mean only that the cause is not known or cannot be determined). The very nature of creation and the chances we have to take to live are often causes of fear. This makes the subject much too broad to cover in a single study. We must therefore limit ourselves to a few illustrations of the many causes of fear. When we have found the causes, and then show how God provides the remedy to remove the causes, we will then have shown how God cures this terrifying and dreadfully destructive disease.

1. **Fear of the unknown.** A child screams out in the night, not because of what he knows is there, but because of the unknown that he thinks may be lurking in the darkness. Fear of the unknown has given rise to all kinds of superstition and false belief, one of which is the rise and popularity of occultism, the belief in the mystic, such as spiritualism, black magic, alchemy, astrology and such like. The occult, with its supposed mystic communications with the unknown, may calm fear for a while, but by its very nature it leaves too many questions unanswered and thus generates more fear in the long run. Even the disciples of the Lord feared ghosts. One night while they were sailing on a troubled sea, "In the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid" (Matt. 14:25-27). How many people live in constant terror because of their abnormal fear of the unknown? And some who do not believe in spiritualism, astrology and so forth remind me of my nephew who used to say, "I don't believe in ghosts, but I am afraid of them anyway."

How can we overcome abnormal fear of the unknown? It can be done by realizing that God is the Creator of all things. He is in control of His world, the known as well as the unknown, the darkness as well as the light. God is in the storm just as much as

He is in the calm. Thus if we follow God's directions we have no need to fear. Walk with God and fear not!

2. **Fear of the future.** For some strange reason many people seem to be more concerned with the future, in which they may not live, than they are with the present, in which they do live. Since no one, to whom God has not revealed it, can know the future, not even a minute ahead of time, walking into the unknown becomes a necessary part of all our lives. What does the future hold — war, famine, prosperity, adversity, happiness, health, misfortune, death, etc.? No one really knows. And this is why the future is such a fearful thing to face. It is like taking a leap into the dark.

But the future need hold no fear for those who know and serve Him who holds the future. Paul could face the future with supreme confidence because of his trust in God (2 Tim. 4:6-8). He trusted the One who holds the future (2 Tim. 1:12). The peace that Paul enjoyed can belong to anyone who follows the same plan.

3. **Fear of the end of time.** This fear could be healthy if it led one to prepare for the Lord's coming, but too many people fear without heeding their fears. They go on in their torment, hoping "that the end is not yet." But every strange occurrence, every inexplicable event, every unusual sight in the sky is interpreted to mean that the end of the world is coming. Then add to this the fact that false prognosticators professing to be preachers of prophecy fan the flames by setting dates and boldly proclaiming the soon coming of Jesus, and you have a recipe fit to keep any fearful mind constantly terrified.

Make no mistake about it: Jesus is coming back again and the world will end (1 Thess. 4:16, 17; 2 Pet. 3:10), but the fear, of that glorious event can be overcome by preparing for it, by looking forward with delight to the day in which the Lord will reward every man according to his work. Christians, rather than fearing, can love the coming of the Lord (2 Tim. 4:8). It will be a time of rejoicing for them (1 Pet. 4:13). It is a blessed hope (Titus 2:13) for them to look forward to rather than a dreadful fear.

4. **Fear of death.** Death has been called "the king of terror." And no right-thinking

person questions the fact that "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31). But many have such an abnormal fear of death that it makes life almost unbearable. The very thought of death strikes terror to their souls. They can find no relief because the graying hair, the growing population of the cemeteries, accidents, hurricanes, earthquakes, war, etc., are constant reminders that death is certain. There is no escape. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27). Every minute one lives he moves closer to that inevitable fate. We are all marching to the grave. And our fear does not change the fact.

But for those who will accept Him, Christ came to deliver them from all the horrors connected with death. The Lord told Martha, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John 11:25, 26). Of course a Christian must experience physical death, but Christ has removed all the horrors so that he can now shout, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where

is thy victory?" (1 Cor. 15:55). Christ delivers those "who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2:14, 15). Why live in fear when we can live for Christ?

5. Fear of judgment. Every man must stand before God, as He judges the world through Jesus Christ His Son (Acts 17:31), and be judged by the deeds done in his body. The Bible says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good of bad" (2 Cor. 5:10; see also Rom. 14:10). Judgment becomes a fearful thought when we consider the fact that imperfect man will be judged by a perfect God using a perfect standard (John 12:48), and that nothing we have thought, done, or said will escape from His sight. "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Eccl. 12:14). Every idle word will be a part of justification or condemnation (Matt. 12:36). "All things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:13).

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6. The fear of hell. We must not be deceived: hell is real. The Bible presents man as an eternal being, one who must continue forever in one of two destinies. For the righteous, there is heaven, a place of supreme joy, peace, and rest; for the wicked, there is hell. As the Bible depicts it, hell is the most terrifying reality ever to confront the mind of man, so horrifying in fact that one cannot long retain his rationality and dwell in thought of the prospects of going there. It is described as eternal punishment (Matt. 25:46), everlasting destruction (2 Thess. 1:9), outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matt. 8:12; 22:13), a lake of fire (Rev. 19:20; 20:15) where "their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:44), a place of never ending torment (Rev. 20:10), and the second death (Rev. 20:14; 21:8). In hell there is no rest (Rev. 14:11), no relief (Luke 16:24-26), no hope (Luke 16:26). What a fearful and horrible place to contemplate! No wonder men fear it.

But no one needs to live in fear of hell. God has a divine plan by which it can be escaped. We are all going into eternity to reap the rewards of this life. But Jesus promised to go prepare a place for His people and return again for them (John 14:1-6). Those who are prepared for His return have no reason to fear. As Paul said, "I know whom

I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Tim. 1:12). So why should one fear when he can prepare? "Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel" (Amos 4:12).

There are many other causes of fear, but the six we have named and discussed are basic ones. They may well represent every cause. The same plan by which these can be overcome will work when applied to any cause of fear. The plan, God's plan (as far as the individual is concerned), can be summed up in four short statements:

1. A strong faith in God. Fear and faith cannot dominate the same heart. One will drive the other out. We have understood from the day we became Christians that faith is a necessary part of God's plan to save (John 3:16; 8:24; Heb. 11:6). But the true function of faith does not end when one becomes a Christian. It is to permeate every aspect of the Christian's life and conduct. As it is written, "The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:17). This means that we must believe in God enough to let Him handle His affairs. Let God be God and believe His word. Believe Him when He makes a promise. "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb. 13:5, 6). There is no doubt about it, a considerable amount of fear is experienced by people who have little or no faith. If one's faith in God is strong enough, what is there to fear?

2. A sure trust in the providence of God. God provides for His people! Jesus taught that we are never to be anxious about the necessities of life. God provides for the fowls

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of the air and the lilies of the field. Will He not therefore provide for man who is of infinite more worth than the fowls and lilies? (See Matt. 6:25-32.) Jesus concluded His discussion of these matters by saying, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). But the providence of God is not limited to the necessities of life alone. Paul emphatically states (Rom. 8:28) that all things work together for the good of those who love God. God uses everything for the benefit of His people — the people who love Him and desire with their whole being to do His will. This even includes the causes of fear. The unknown, the future, the end of time, death, judgment, and even hell (we mean the fact of it, not one going there) are all used by God for the good of those who put Him first in their lives. How could one fear that which works for his good?

3. An abiding love for God's will. To do God's will is the Christian's primary reason for being. Whatever comes in his life, regardless of the situation he finds himself in, he should desire with his whole heart, his whole being, to do the will of God. If this is one's attitude, every situation will present a challenge, a challenge to find and do what God would have one do. This presupposes that in every situation, whether it be life or death, things present or things to come, there is something that can be done that will please God. If we love the will of God, and see a challenge in every cause of fear to do His will, the very causes of fear will be a challenge — an awful thing perhaps but not a frightening thing. Thus there is no reason to fear when we can know and do God's will.

4. A lively hope in God's promises. The Psalmist sang, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me" (Ps. 23:4). He could say this because he had hope in God. But if one could have such supreme confidence in God under the Old Testament system, where life beyond the grave had not been fully revealed, how much more should we have this side of the resurrection of Christ. Christ died, went into the grave, con-

quered and broke the power of death, and rose victoriously to give us hope — to take the question mark off the grave. So we can now exclaim with Peter, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Pet. 1:3). Christ has therefore cleared the way for us. He says in essence, "There is nothing to fear. I have made the way safe. Follow me." Hope thus removes fear. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace and believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 15:13).

Fear, therefore, can be overcome. God has given a plan for its cure.

Conclusion

The problem of fear is the problem of balance. There are some things we should fear, some things we must fear (if we are to please God), and some things we have no need to fear. Normal fear (things we should fear) does not torment us — it appears to help us meet emergencies. The fear of God (the things we must fear) should permeate the whole of life — reverential awe for the Creator that leads us to respect and obey the will and law of God. Abnormal fear (the fear we have no need of) is the problem — it is an overly amount of painful apprehension for that which there is no need to fear. It is the kind of fear for which God offers a cure, such as the fear of the unknown, the fear of the future, the fear of the end of time, etc. Christians can live above this; they can live in peace and tranquility. How? By having a strong faith in God, a sure trust in His providence, an abiding love for His will, and a lively hope in His promises. Robert Herrick expressed this thought well when he said:

*Lord, I am like the mistletoe,
Which has no root and cannot grow
Or prosper, but by that same tree
It clings about: so I by Thee.
What need I then to fear at all
So long as I about Thee crawl?
But if that tree should fall and die,
Tumble shall heaven, and so down will I.*

Christians have nothing to fear. As long as heaven is secure, so are they.

Reexamining the Fundamentals

by David Pharr, Editor

In the previous installment we began considering the question, "Is the church of Christ a denomination?" We observed that there are at least three perspectives regarding this question — the view of the world, the view of uninformed or misinformed members of the church, and the perspective of the Lord Himself.

A general definition of what a denomination is includes these features: 1. the assumption that division in the body of Christ is acceptable; 2. the use of a name to denominate themselves from others they regard as also being Christians; 3. an organizational structure which to some degree maintains the group as a distinctive organism; 4. doctrines or practices which are contrary to Bible teaching; 5. a sectarian spirit which fosters unnecessary division; or 6. compromise with digression from the New Testament pattern. Remember that any single denomination may not obviously exhibit all of these features; but any who exhibit any of them to any degree are to that degree denominational.

In the previous article we dealt with the first two features named above. Since that installment was written I have listened to a lecture given in Tulsa, Oklahoma, by a popular young preacher in which he makes some strange affirmations about Jesus's meaning in John 17:20-21, where the Lord prayed "for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one. . . ." The speaker argued that this meant that we must be "one" with everyone who professes to believe in Jesus. He insisted that we must be one with such believers whether they have obeyed the gospel or not; regardless of whether they are in the church, regardless of what false doctrines they hold. Tragically, by their applause, many in the audience seemed to be agreeing with this abuse of the Lord's words.

Oneness is not enjoined with those who merely believe in Jesus, but with those who believe "through their [apostles] words. Millions profess faith in Christ; but such pro-

fession falls short if it does not respect apostolic teaching. It would seem that even casual students of the New Testament would realize that the apostles did not consider themselves as "one" with false teachers and sinful practitioners, regardless of how much such professed to believe in Jesus. (It is sad that so many in the brotherhood are willing to overlook such blatant misuse of Scripture and to continue to use and endorse such preachers. Maybe we have forgotten that Romans 16:17-18 is in the Bible!)

Organization

The third feature of denominations is their organizational structure. This varies from almost no hierarchy, on to conventional control, and ultimately to a truly monarchical system of rigid control. Most denominations have an earthly headquarters. The headquarters of Christ's church is in heaven (Eph.



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1:20-23). In earlier articles in this Reexamining series we dealt with the proper organization of the church, so we will not repeat it here. Suffice it to say that from the governmental standpoint the church of Christ cannot be a denomination because it has absolutely no organizational structure beyond the autonomous local congregations modeled in the New Testament (Phil. 1:1).

Doctrines and Practices

Nothing is more obviously characteristic of every denomination than that they all have doctrines and practices which are contrary to New Testament teaching. Most denominations have formulated creedal statements and have defined guidelines for the operation of their churches. They do, of course, claim Scriptural sanctions for the things in their manuals, disciplines, confessions of faith, etc.; but much of it is sanctioned only by the opinions of men.

The Bible is an inspired (God given), authoritative and sufficient guide (2 Tim. 3:16-17). No men have the ability to guide themselves (Jer. 10:23), and when blind leaders lead the blind — you know the outcome (Matt. 15:14). No presumption is so vain as to think that mere men could improve on the plan of God (Rom. 11:33-34).

Yet every denomination has doctrines which cannot be found in the Bible. In fact they contradict the Bible. Likewise their unscriptural innovations are multiplied — holy days, instrumental music, changes in the Lord's Supper, infant baptism, clergy system, etc. There is not a single denomination in the world which does not have doctrines and practices which are without Scriptural authority.

What About Church of Christ?

From the beginning there have been individuals in Christ's church who did not abide in the Lord's will (Acts 5:1ff). Preachers or teachers who departed from the truth were likewise an embarrassment to the apostolic church (2 Pet. 2:1ff). Whole congregations sometimes moved away from the Lord's way (Rev. 2 & 3).

It is not surprising, therefore, that congregations among us today, and individuals,

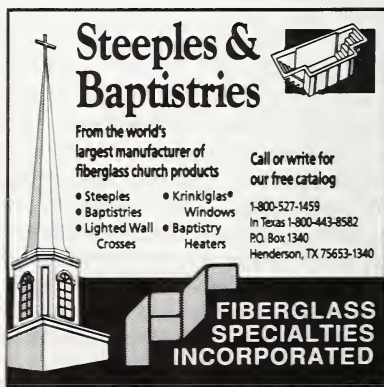
might depart from the faith (1 Tim. 4:1). It would be naive to imagine otherwise; and the fact is that some seem to be rushing swiftly into full-fledged denominationalism.

In faithful churches of Christ, however, there is no system which would provide for the imposition of unscriptural doctrines and practices on all the congregations. As long as there is just one congregation, or even one person, that is faithful to the New Testament, the undenominational New Testament church will exist. In reality, however, there are thousands of congregations which are loyal to the truth. We may be mistaken on many difficult details of interpretation — there are "some things hard to be understood" (2 Pet. 3:15) — but on the doctrines and practices made essential by the New Testament we stand together on the truth.

Certainly the denominational world denies this. Worldly-minded and liberal-leaning brethren would be embarrassed to say it. But let any who think our doctrines and practices are unscriptural show us the Scriptures we have missed or misused. When all has been proven (tested), let us hold fast to that which is good (1 Thess. 5:21).

Sectarian Spirit

Probably nothing is more a threat to the continued faithfulness of the church than a sectarian spirit. Denominations came into being largely because men sought prominence above peace. In the Lutheran reformation the protestations against Romanism had hardly begun before the followers of



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Luther were wrangling among themselves. Luther's strongest ally, Philipp Melancthon, said just prior to his death in 1560 that he was glad to die so that he could escape the fury of the theologians. Others, such as John Calvin were so harshly sectarian that they even had opponents killed for holding divergent views.

Today such extremes are not likely. Still the sectarian spirit rules and ruins wherever people place personal ambition, a spirit of pride, above their desire to do what is right. Though there is much talk in denominational circles that sounds like they are not sectarian in their attitudes, the fact is still that they are unwilling to give up their denominations and accept simple New Testament Christianity. Any spirit within any man that keeps him from surrendering his sect and submitting to the plan of the Scriptures is a sectarian spirit. And all the smiles, sweet cliches, unity forums, and ecumenical pronouncements will not make it otherwise.

Sectarianism Within Christ's Church

We all know that Christ forbids a sectarian spirit. This is the kind of spirit Paul calls "Carnal" in 1 Corinthians 3:3. Undenominational Christianity has no room for carnal sectarianism. Remember that the Lord has a perspective of the church and His perspective is that the church is not to be under the evil strife of party division.

The various denominations came into being because of sectarian strife. They may correctly, therefore, be labeled as being sec-

tarian organizations. Within the church of Christ, however, there may be individuals and cliques which are just as sectarian in their attitudes as any in the denominations. One may be right in his teaching, but grievously wrong in his attitude. Paul warned of those who are "proud, knowing nothing, but dotting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings (suspicions), perverse disputings . . ." (1 Tim. 6:4-5). Honorable controversy is a necessary duty for faithful men of God, but we would all do well to consider the above warning every time we get involved in a controversial issue. The point is that one might be in the undenominational, non-sectarian church; but still sectarian in his own heart.

The fact, however, that some may betray a sectarian spirit within the church does not make the church itself sectarian. The Jerusalem church had members who were covetous (Ananias and Sapphira); but this did not make the church of Christ at Jerusalem a covetous organization.

We have a continuing need to guard against even seeming sectarian. On the other hand, we must not be so fearful of seeming sectarian that our fear of it drives us into compromise. It is not sectarian to lovingly and boldly stand for the truth.

Compromise

A few years ago when Communism was seen as an ever present enemy, reference was frequently made to certain ones as "fellow

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travellers." This term was applied to persons who may not have actually belonged to the Communist party, but who gave Communism their sympathy and support. Though not in the organization they were **fellows** who were **travelling** in the same direction.

We have included the sixth feature of denominationism — compromise with digression from the New Testament pattern — because we believe a warning needs to be stated regarding the direction some are headed. They may not be in the classic denominational structures, but they appear more and more to be "fellow travellers."

When is a "church of Christ" no longer a church of Christ? Let the Lord decide when to remove the candlestick (Rev. 2:5; et al.), but some are looking less and less like the New Testament church and more and more like the denominations of men.

Is Undenominational Christianity Possible?

Yielding to the frustrations of trying to maintain an undenominational status in a

denominational world, some have decided that it really is not possible to remain undenominational. It would seem, though, that this question can be very simply resolved by asking another question — **Does the Lord ask for undenominational religion?** One can hardly consider all the Bible teaches on oneness and think otherwise. If then Christ expects His church to be undenominational, surely such is possible.

We are too easily affected by the world's mindset. The fact that the majority of religionists cannot conceive of a church that is not a denomination; that they do not see a need for religion modeled after the Bible pattern; that they are unwilling to admit that the original church still exists in the world today; that they think it is sectarian to refuse to cooperate with and fellowship those whose faith and practice is not Biblical; these facts should never dissuade us from trusting that the Bible is right, and that to follow the Bible is to be the undenominational church that Jesus built (Matt. 16:18).

Carolina Bible Camp and Retreat Center Under Construction

Construction is underway on the new Carolina Bible Camp and Retreat Center, located on a 68 acre tract near Mocksville, N.C. The facility will serve as the permanent home of Carolina Bible Camp and will also be used for retreats and other events when camp is not in session.

Clearing of the land began over a year ago, followed by the construction of a lake and a road. Last summer a large shelter was built for the purpose of worship and other assemblies. The remainder of the construction will be done in two phases. Phase 1 calls for the construction of six cabins designed to house 20 people each, and the dining hall. Athletic facilities will also be built. Phase 2 will see the construction of an additional six cabins and any other facilities that may be necessary. Approximately 12 North Caro-

lina congregations have already committed to underwrite the construction costs of the cabins. The target date for the opening of the new facility is the summer of 1991.

When CBC is not in session, the facility will be available to churches and other groups for retreats and other activities, making the CBC and Retreat Center a great tool for the growth and edification of the church in the Carolinas. Support for this concept has been not only well-received, but enthusiastic as well. Carolina Bible Camp, which has been a powerful instrument of God among our young people for over 30 years, will finally have a permanent home and the churches of the Carolinas will have a retreat center they can call their own!

Brotherhood News

by Dennis Conner

Around the Carolinas . . .

The **Rockingham Church of Christ** in Rockingham, N.C., gets high marks for the fine way in which it hosted the 46th Annual Carolina Lectures last month. Copies of the lectureship book are available from the church for only \$2.00. This year's theme was "Faith of Our Fathers." The Carolina Lectures will be hosted next year by the **Charlotte Ave.** church in Rock Hill, South Carolina. . . . Many Carolinians may remember brother **Charles Isenberg**, who preached for the Jericho church in Mocksville, North Carolina, in the late 70's. Brother Isenberg suffered a heart attack last March 27. We are sure that a card bearing a word of encouragement would mean a great deal to him. The address is: Charles Isenberg, P.O. Box 268, Edmonton, Kentucky, 42129. Charles presently preaches for the church in Edmonton. . . . Our apologies to the **Rocky Mount** congregation in Rocky Mount, N.C. Last month we failed to mention the **Fifth Annual Rocky Mount Lectureship** that was conducted May 4-5 with Garland Elkins as the featured speaker. The theme was "The Cross of Christ." **Jack Tittle** is the preacher in Rock Mount. We commend this good church for its work.

And Other Places . . .

The **World Bible Translation Center** recently mailed 17,000 of its Easy-To-Read Russian New Testaments to citizens of the Soviet Union. The Translation Center has also reached an agreement with a Russian publisher to publish 100,000 New Testaments inside the Soviet Union, where they will then be distributed through bookstores. Who would have dared to dream of such a thing one year ago? . . . Along with the startling changes that have taken place in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in recent months have come some equally startling revelations. For instance, it has come to light that it appears a small group of New Testament Christians have been secretly meeting

for 20 years across the street from the Kremlin! . . . **Milton R. Sewell** has been named as the new President of Freed-Hardeman University, succeeding the retiring **E. Claude Gardner**. This appointment will be effective May 31, 1990. Prior to his appointment as President of F-HU, brother Sewell was president of Mars Hill Bible School in Florence, Alabama. . . . In the poverty stricken nation of Bangladesh there are 30 churches of Christ that worship illegally. Three national preachers are currently under prison sentence for proclaiming their faith. Bangladesh is an Islamic nation. . . . In San Salvador last November the month long offensive of the Salvadorian Guerilla movement, FMLN, inflicted considerable suffering among many of the 10,000 Christians there. Two Christian women were killed by bombs and many families saw their homes destroyed. Three Christians were wounded, including one preacher who was severely burned. There was one particularly interesting development. After a low of 50 in attendance on the first Sunday of the fighting, the 500 member Central Church of Christ in San Salvador was experiencing record highs in attendance by the third week of the fighting.

Preacher Wanted

The church in Newberry, SC is seeking a full-time preacher. For information contact Virgil Miller, P.O. Box 515, Newberry, SC 29108. Telephone (803) 276-1953.

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Brother Howard Winters recognized the power of the written word in the ministry of preaching and sought to reach as many people as possible through his writing. With this in mind, **Carolina Christian** is offering the following works at special prices in the hope that even more people may benefit from the work of this great Christian writer.

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CAROLINA CHRISTIAN

VOL. 32, NO. 6, JUNE 1990



Something Is Wrong!

Au Moulin de la Galette by Renoir brought seventy-eight million, second highest price ever for a painting.

“**Portrait of Dr. Gatchet**,” by Van Gogh, was purchased by a Japanese art gallery, for \$82.5 million. If it weren’t for the snob appeal, most of us wouldn’t pay more than \$82.50 for Van Gogh’s **Gloomy Gus**, and not even that much unless it had a pretty frame!

I agree with Ashley Cooper who wrote, “Billions are spent on armaments. Athletes and rock singers make millions of dollars a year. And a second-hand painting by a batty Dutchman, whose name is mispronounced by almost everybody and who once cut off his own ear, sells for enough money to feed a million starving people for a month.”

When will the world get its priorities straight?

Something is wrong!

“And I have seen that every labor and every skill which is done is the result of rivalry between a man and his neighbor. This too is vanity and striving after the wind” (Eccl. 4:4).

— Mark Swindall
Charleston, SC



Haiti

Through contacts with Tim Mastenbrook, who is one of the elders at Providence Road church in Charlotte, I have some acquaintance with the work being done by Carolina brethren in the country of Haiti. Sad indeed is the plight of the people of that poverty-stricken and troubled nation. Into that seemingly hopeless land a few Christians have been sending aid and going in person to give comfort and hope.

As this is being written, a group of Christian medical personnel and helpers are preparing for a trip to provide health care for as many as possible. Several Carolina congregations are involved in this endeavor. My list of participating congregations may not be complete, but the following are involved: South Fork, Winston-Salem; Wilmington; Rock Hill, SC; and Providence Road.

A few years ago the Providence Road church became convinced that education was the long-range solution for bringing Haitians out of both material and spiritual poverty. Schools for children have been established to teach them basic educational skills as well as the word of God. With help from others, a plan is being carried forward to provide the barest of facilities and simple teaching supplies. (Even a pencil is a treasure for a Haitian child.)

Brother Mastenbrook is seeking a **Gestetner duplicator** to send to workers in Haiti. The reason for this specific brand is that it is the only one for which supplies and parts can be obtained within Haiti. If anyone can provide this, contact should be made with the Providence Road church of Christ (704-364-0748).

Directory

Special thanks is due those who have helped us gather information for the new **Carolina Directory**. We are aiming for 100% accuracy in listing every congregation in North and South Carolina. The Directory

will be published as part of a special issue of the magazine in September. If you can contribute information, please write to me as soon as possible.

Worth Repeating

In the May issue of **Bible Herald**, Editor Gene West, in his always effective style, makes some observations we believe are worth repeating.

"In farming country one is very likely to find fences that have been built in times past simply because the farmer wanted to use a field for two different reasons. Some-

EDITORIAL AND PUBLICATION STAFF

David Pharr, Editor; Johnny Melton, Managing Editor; Dennis Conner, News Editor.

CAROLINA CHRISTIAN (P.O.P.N. 091160) is published monthly by Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., at 71 S. Fairfield Road, Greenville, SC 29605. Subscription price: individual \$8.00 per year (\$15.00 for 2 years and \$22.00 for 3 years); club of five or more \$7.50 each; quantity of 15 or more in bundles or direct mailing 50¢ per copy per month. Publication number, 091160.

Second class postage paid at Greenville, SC.

POSTMASTER: Send change with Form 3579 to Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., Johnny Melton, Managing Editor, Route 2, Box 137, Conover, North Carolina 28613.

RETURN REQUESTED

Address editorial matter to David Pharr, Editor, ETSOPM, 6608 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37931. Address news items to Dennis Conner, P.O. Box 1219, Yadkinville, NC 27055.

All items to be printed in a given month's issue should reach the editor not later than the next-to-the-last Thursday of the preceding month.

Address commercial advertising inquiries to Jacobs List, Inc., Clinton, SC 29325. Address all advertising pertaining to the Church of Christ or its members (including related organizations) to the editor.

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times, however, the fences are line fences and cannot be torn down for very good reasons. We should never tear down fences until we have learned why they were built. To assume that we know why all the traditions exist among us is to assume an omniscience. None but God is omniscient. Consequently, we should give a very serious and careful study to what we wish to designate as mere traditions, for these things may be divine traditions, and not just the notions of men.

“It should be noted that one cannot remove an old tradition without putting something in its place. What do we put in the place of an old tradition? A new one! It may have no greater value or expediency than the old one. We have seen brethren fuss about changing things, and when the changes were made they were of such a nature as to destroy what had formerly been effective. We fully realize that each generation is anxious to do things their own way, but one should,

in spiritual matters, make sure that he is doing things God’s way. That is what clinging to the Bible is all about.”

Lewis Karkosky

Lewis Karkosky, who worked with the Long Creek congregation in Columbia, SC, until last October is now working in Auburn, IN. In a recent letter he reported encouraging progress about the work; but very distressing news about his own health. He underwent surgery for colon cancer on April 26. Early prognosis was not encouraging; but Lewis is now taking chemotherapy and the doctors are much more optimistic.

Lewis writes that when, after weeks of only discouraging news, the medical reports at last were good, they rejoiced in God’s care. “I was confused about His will, but not His faithfulness and grace. . . . My dependence on God reached 100%.” (110 McIntyre, Auburn, IN 46706.)

Managing Editor’s Column

Anticipating the Second Coming

by Johnny Melton

The Second Coming of Jesus is one of the most popular Bible subjects being discussed today. The political upheaval in Europe, the continued agitation in the Mid-East, and the decadence of our society provide the religious prognosticators of our day with grist for their mills as they fill the airways with their interpretations of prophecy. Unfortunately, there is a great deal of misinterpretation, misapplication, and outright misrepresentation of the Scriptures being dispensed on this subject.

Jesus addressed this issue in Matthew 24:2. Referring to the temple in Jerusalem, He asked, “Do you see all these things (i.e., the temple, the walls, the courts, JRM)? . . . I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.” That statement arrested the apostles’ attention. They questioned Jesus, “Tell us, . . . when will this happen, and what will

be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” (vs. 3). There are only two questions here as a careful examination of both the Greek and the English texts will demonstrate. The first is “When will this happen?” That is, when will the temple and everything associated with it be destroyed? The second, likely prompted by the consideration of such a catastrophic event as the destruction of the temple, was “What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” The apostles’ question involved one sign which would signify two simultaneous events: the sign of (1) the Lord’s coming and (2) the end of the age.

Jesus answered the first question in verses 4-35. He identified signs that would foretell the coming destruction of the temple. Those signs were revealed and the temple was razed to the ground by Titus, the leader of Rome’s forces, in A.D. 70. Beginning at verse 36,

Jesus turned His attention to the apostles' second question.

Regarding His Second Coming, Jesus said, "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." Again, in verses 42-44, Jesus said, "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you also must be ready because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him." From these verses in Matthew 24, it is obvious that Jesus taught that there would be no signs of His Second Coming. There would be no way to calculate when the Lord would appear. No one knows, except God (vs. 36). That being the case, those who claim to know — those who suggest that they have discovered a key to understanding the Scriptures so that they can identify the time of the Lord's return — have, by their very claim to such knowledge, revealed themselves to be charlatans and frauds of the rankest sort.

The fact of Jesus' Second Coming is certain. Scripture reveals that He is coming to take His saints to glory (1 Thess. 4:13-18). At the same time He is coming to "punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel . . ." (2 Thess. 1:8). The fact is certain, but the time is uncertain. No one knows when the Lord shall appear.

While we are taught to pray, "Come, Lord Jesus" and saints everywhere look forward to the Lord's return; it is comforting to know that it is the longsuffering of God that has delayed His coming. "The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). This truth is not only set forth by Peter but Paul also wrote concerning it: "Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him" (2 Pet. 3:15).

Because we know that the Lord will return, we should prepare to meet Him. Because we do not know when He is coming,

we should make every effort to be prepared at all times. Certainly the warning that the day of the Lord will come unexpectedly "like a thief in the night," or "as labor pains on a pregnant woman" will not go unheeded by "sons of the light and sons of the day" (1 Thess. 4:2, 3, 5). Because of our relationship with God through Christ we are called to "be alert and self-controlled" as we anticipate the Lord's return (1 Thess. 4:6). In calling others to preparation in anticipation of the Lord's return, warning of the dangers of being unprepared must be tempered with assurances of divine provisions for those who are in Christ. "But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. Therefore, encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing" (1 Thess. 4:8-11).

God help us to "encourage one another and build each other up" in anticipation of the glorious return of our Lord.

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Reexamining the Fundamentals XV

by David Pharr, Editor

In the two previous installments we considered the issue of whether the church of Christ is a denomination. The very simple truth is that our Lord intends for the church to be undenominational, and that when we abide in His teaching we are His undenominational church. Conversely, denominations are not the Lord's church because the very things that create denominations are things which are contrary to the will of God.

In this article we want to examine whether we should take an adversarial stance against the sects. Should the church of Christ actively expose the errors of denominationalism, and seek to convince people to leave their denominations? Or, to state the question in other words: Should we seek to merely coexist peacefully with denominations and possible even enter into fellowship with them?

In the Past

There was a time when there seemed to be little doubt regarding this issue. In his **The Search of the Ancient Order**, Volume I, Earl West tells of the preaching done by Jacob Creath, Jr. and John T. Johnson. In the year 1835 they preached in one town and baptized a hundred and forty. "For the next three years they preached continuously until the sects became alarmed for fear that the whole country was going to the 'Campbellites' " (p. 121). (Campbellites" was an uncomplimentary name enemies applied to the church.)

In more recent times, G.K. Wallace recorded in his autobiography how strong gospel preaching often led entire congregations out of denominationalism. "As a young preacher in a little town in Oklahoma, I baptized all the members of the Methodist Church, save nine. The Methodist preacher stood on the bank of the pond and wept while I baptized his organist." (**Autobiography and Retirement Sermons**, p. 157.)

Our own lamented Howard Winters (late Editor of **Carolina Christian**) was in his youth preaching for a Pentecostal denomination. A gospel preacher was invited to preach in a five-night series at the little denominational church. On the second night every member present, except one, responded to obey the gospel, including brother Winters. Thus the whole Pentecostal congregation was converted to the truth.

My own immediate family was affiliated with the Methodists during my youth. By the patient instruction of V.C. Walter, we were led to see the errors of denominationalism and obeyed the truth. Multiplied thousands are in the church today because brethren saw that error needed to be exposed and opposed. They preached and taught in ways that caused us to see that the churches of men are not the church of Christ.

A Changing Trend

Though we are hopeful that most of the brotherhood remains loyal to the truth, we continue to hear more and more of trends which indicate acceptance of the sects. Some congregations are openly cooperating with denominations. We hear of preachers swapping pulpits with denominational preachers. Some have formed singing groups and call it their "ministry" to perform in cooperation with denominational programs. A few preachers fully affiliate with the local ministerial alliances, and in some cases have served as the president.

I was told of one prominent brother who suggested that the churches of Christ in a city should buy advertising space in the newspapers to apologize for past aggressiveness against the denominations.

A popular young preacher recently insisted that we must be "one" with all who profess to believe in Jesus whether they have obeyed the gospel or not, and regardless of their affiliations.

Even more alarming, however, is the obvious indifference so many of us have regarding the need to win people from the errors of denominationalism. It is not that our pulpits are endorsing denominationalism; they're just not saying much to convert people from them. And on the personal level this seems to be the same story.

The point to be realized is that there is apparently much less conviction that people need to be shown that their sects are not of God. Doubtless an additional consequence is the declining number who have zeal to preach, and to be missionaries. As brethren have tended toward compromise and unconcern, the truth has lost its urgency.

Not Manners or Methods

Some thoughts need to be expressed about manners and methods. It cannot be denied that brethren have not always exhibited a Christ-like spirit in their manner of dealing with people who are in error. Neither should we ignore the reality that changing circumstances may require different methods.

In earlier times people were accustomed to more blunt speech from all sides of religious questions. Wit and repartee were expected and appreciated. Today, to use the President's words, we live in a "kinder, gentler" society. What once may have seemed an acceptable manner of teaching may now come across as harsh and unkind.

Regardless, however, of the attitudes of society, we are taught: "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man" (Col. 4:6). We are also instructed that when we give answers we are to do it "with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. 3:15). The truth must be taught in love (Eph. 4:15); love is kind (1 Cor. 13:4); and our teaching not only should be from a loving heart, but also couched in loving terms.

As regards the need for changing methods to meet changing circumstances, the example of Paul is our authority. "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (1 Cor. 9:22). Public debates are not only more rare, they might not prove as effective. (This does not mean I dis-

approve of such debates. I am only making an observation.) The doctrinal issues of the past are no less important now than in the past; but people generally are not as interested. There was a time when most of our contacts were with people who already held religious convictions. Now our encounters are more likely to be with people who have a secular mindset. The same gospel is needed by all; but obviously adjustments must be made in how we attract people's interest.

In urging, therefore, that the church should continue to be militant in its opposition to denominationalism we are not saying that we must imitate a harshness that may, or may not, have been suitable in the past. Neither can we fail to recognize the need for changes in methods. Reforms in manners and adjustments in methods, however, should not change our position or purpose — to expose and oppose every system and institution that is contrary to the truth of God.

The New Testament Stance

The modern denominational system did not exist in New Testament times. There is, however, much attention given to the problems of false teaching, heretical parties, and how to oppose them. Much of Paul's attention was occupied by the Judaizers, which he opposed on every front. The Judaizers were a movement among the early Christians. They professed to believe in Christ; but they taught their own unscriptural ideas. Concerning these, Paul declared that he would not compromise with them even for an hour (Gal. 2:5). Though not as prominent as the Judaizer sect, there were also other systems the apostles were compelled to oppose.

The texts that show our duty to oppose error are numerous. We must beware of



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those who cause division by their smooth but false speeches (Rom. 16:17-18). Mouths of such must be stopped (Titus 1:11). By the text of truth teachers should be tried (Rev. 2:2; 1 John 4:1). If we are not even to bid "God speed" to those who teach error, how could we imagine that God would be pleased with any compromise with them (2 John 9-11)?

During Jesus' personal ministry, the two main denominations among the Jews were the Sadducees and the Pharisees. These were the mainline churches. No student of the gospel narrative can overlook the plain and uncompromising stance Jesus took against their errors. He called their teachers "blind leaders" (Matt. 15:14). He said plainly that they erred because of their ignorance of the Scriptures (Matt. 22:29). Their religion was based on traditions which they had substituted for the commands of God (Mark 7:9). Concerning such institutions Jesus said, "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up" (Matt. 15:13). The times and specifics may be different; but the fundamental fallacies of those ancient denominations are little different from denominations of today.

But someone may protest that many in modern denominations, even among their leaders are sincere in what they believe, and

that they do much good. It happens, though, that the New Testament has given us an example of just such a case. In Acts 18:24-28 we learn of Apollos. All that is said about him commends him, except for the fact that he was in error regarding baptism. Aquila and Priscilla, a couple who knew the truth, took him aside to teach him "the way of God more perfectly." Because he was sincere he changed when he learned he had been wrong. It might be useful to ask, however, what would have happened if those who knew the truth had been unconcerned about teaching him? Or, what if he had refused to accept the teaching they gave?

Surely the right way is the New Testament way. If we are to imitate Jesus in His kindness, should we not also follow His example in denouncing the doctrines and commandments of men (Matt. 15:9)? If the love for souls seen in Paul's missionary endeavors is commendable, can we not likewise see how important it was for him to fight against every error that might divert any from obedience to God (2 Cor. 10:4-5)? Unless a significant portion of the New Testament is meaningless, the church has a duty to oppose every system of religion, every denomination, in every doctrine and practice that is contrary to the will of God.

Lord, Give Us Men Who Will Preach the Word

by Edwin S. Jones

Jesus once spoke of a plentiful harvest of souls placed in jeopardy by too small a number of laborers (Matt. 9:37). Today, the harvest remains plentiful, the laborers, however, are not only few in number, they are rapidly decreasing. Every study done among us over the past several years speaks clearly to the point that preaching the gospel is a work fewer and fewer people are willing to take up. To further compound the problem, those who preach are laying down their swords in ever increasing numbers. Who, like the mighty prophet Isaiah, will respond to the Lord of the harvest and say, "Here am

I, send me" (Isa. 6:8)?

We need men who will preach. Men who will allow God to kindle a fire in their bones that cannot easily be quenched (Jer. 20:9). We need men who will understand and treasure the power of the word to save the lost. Lord, give us men who will preach the word!

We need men who will place a value on a life of preaching that will far exceed anything sacrificed to secure the privilege to preach (Phil. 3:4-7). We do not need hirelings who preach because they see it as a last hope of getting a job. We do not need men who will use preaching to hide their laziness and

mask their mediocrity. We need men who will preach the word because they love God and are dedicated to His cause.

On every hand the enemies of Christ are drawn up in dread array. Humanism captures the minds of the masses. Liberalism has become bold in its assertions. Cherished truths are being trampled underfoot by the fair speech of those who have traded God's wisdom for the false wisdom of worldly sophistication. Legalism still stifles the gospel's power with man-made systems of false righteousness. Who will stand in the breaches and preach the word of God (Ezek. 13:15)?

Who will give back the nobility that is due to the great work of preaching the gospel? When will Christian mothers and fathers once again encourage their capable young sons to give their lives to the ministry of the word? When will position and power be replaced by spiritual values as the ideal that calls life's tune? Lord, give us men who will lay aside earthly goals and aims for the higher calling of preaching the word.

Perhaps you are a person who has given serious consideration to a life spent in preaching. Maybe you have been able to come up with good reasons to justify another decision. If that is the case, think again. In a world that teems with rapidly increasing millions, even billions, a more plentiful harvest than ever awaits, while Christians are becoming less involved in preaching the word. Can you answer the call of the Lord to go out into the harvest? Will you?

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Our prayer to the Father is that He will send us men who will preach the word. Perhaps you are someone who could be an answer to our prayers. Men are needed for the harvest. Will you answer the call? Could we help you?

If you want to be challenged as never before, if you want a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for two years of study in a strong, supportive Christian environment, if you are determined to preach the word, give us a chance to be of assistance. We share your dreams.

[Ed Jones is Academic Dean for East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions at 6608 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, Tennessee 37931.]

Preventing the Empty Nest Syndrome

by Peggy Pharr

In 1957 when I got married, the term "Empty Nest" had never been mentioned. It is a phrase coined in recent years by a society looking for answers within itself rather than from the word of God.

Preventing the "Empty Nest Syndrome"

begins the day you marry. God tells us to leave father and mother and cleave to our mates (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:5).

When we marry we are very much "in love" with our husbands. As we live together as husband and wife, we begin to love each

other even more. Read Ephesians 5:22-23 and you will see that this is God's plan for us. Notice that children are not mentioned in these verses. **God never intended that children be the glue that holds a marriage together.**

Too many times our husbands are first in our lives until the arrival of the first child. Then he is relegated to second place. With each child he is moved further back in importance as the mother becomes absorbed with her children. As the mother becomes more and more involved with her children, her husband is pushed further and further back. Eventually he develops his own interests and on the surface things appear to be well. When the day comes that the last child leaves home, the parents are faced with the fact that they have become strangers to each other and without their children have no interests in common.

This should not be. God "loans" us our children for a short number of years but gives us our husbands for life. There are of necessity times when the children must have our primary attention, such as sickness, etc.; but for the most part putting our husbands first insures us of a healthy, long-lasting relationship — one approved by God.

We should never allow the parental relationship to become stronger than the marriage relationship. The best gift parents can give their children is a mother and father who truly love God and each other and put the other's welfare first.

Insecure parents who find in their children the companionship they should have with their mates are doing their children an

injustice and they will have a hard time letting their children grow and go. Often times a parent becomes so dependent on the children that it creates a relationship that neither the child nor the parent can break. God is not pleased with such. We need to give our children the freedom to become the people God intended for them to be.

Every once in a while I hear parents say, "We never go anywhere without the children. If they are not included in the invitation we stay home." I want to run up to these people and say, "Hurry, it is not too late to change. Give your marriage and your children some freedom." Just as the husband and wife need time away from the children, so do the children need time away from the parents. They need time to stretch and grow and discover they can do things on their own.

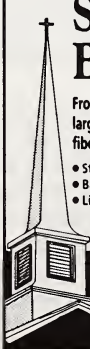
Send your children to Bible camp every summer and plan a special time for you and your husband while they are away. You do not have to leave town during this time, it can simply be quiet evenings at home, maybe even a candlelit dinner for two. Plan at least one evening with no television and take the phone off the hook for a while. Look forward to special sharing times with him while the children are with friends their own age in a Christian environment.

Our children went to the same Bible camp over a period of about 15 years. Children from all over North and South Carolina were there. The friendships they made there were renewed at youth get-togethers and carried over when they went to college. Many of the same children that they knew at Palmetto Bible Camp were with them at Freed-Harde-

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man College. In fact, the day we enrolled our daughter at FHC, we had to hunt for her in order to say good-bye because she was so busy saying hello to all her old friends.

When all our children were off in school someone asked if I did not worry about them. I asked what they meant. They explained that I did not know where my children were or what they were doing. Also did I not worry about them having an accident as they drove back and forth across the states. My reply was that first of all we had tried to the best of our ability to teach our children what God expected of them and to make them responsible people. Secondly, all the worrying I could do would not prevent an accident from happening. And finally, the only thing parents could do after their children leave home is trust in the Lord. We need to be like Job and pray for our children continually (Job 1:4-5). After that we can trust in the Lord with all our heart and lean not on our own understanding (Prov. 3:5).

Understandably, our days are full when we have children. God meant for us to spend time with them even to the point of putting some of our desires and activities on "hold" so to speak. But when they are gone, a whole new world opens up. Some things we can do are:

Fix up one of the empty bedrooms as a "study" for you. Build a library of good books and spend some time each day in study and prayer.

Find an older couple who need help with grocery shopping or doctor visits and volunteer your services on a weekly basis.

Seek out a young mother with small children and offer to babysit occasionally.

Befriend a teenager. It is amazing what influence you will have when you are not the "mother."

Start a "Little Sisters" class at church and teach the younger girls how to pray, how to study, how to stand up in front of each other and give short talks, how to lead a song. Take them to visit a nursing home. Teach them to make cookies and share with shut-ins. Teach them to write thank you notes to the elders, preachers, deacons, teachers, and song leaders.

There are so many people out there who

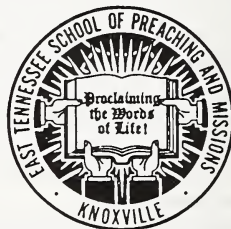
would love to have someone come by and visit for a while. So many lost souls who would accept the gospel if there were only someone with enough time to reach out and teach them.

Above all, we must trust the Lord always. "Let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy because thou defendest them" (Psa. 5:11).

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding" (Prov. 3:5).

[Peggy is the wife of the editor. Employed also at East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions, she speaks at a few ladies programs each year.]

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No Man Cares for My Soul

by Bob Bickle

It was a particularly trying time for David. Anointed to be king, yet he was fleeing for his life. David was hiding in a cave trying to escape the insane Saul. In the depths of despair, David wrote Psalm 142. "I cried unto the Lord with my voice; with my voice unto the Lord did I make my supplication. I poured out my complaint before him; I shewed before him my trouble. When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path. In the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me. I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me; no man cared for my soul" (Psalm 142:1-4).

Have you ever thought the same thoughts as David? Has there ever been a time in your life when it seemed that you were deserted by all, even those who were the closest to you? It really doesn't matter whether your thoughts were true or not. You thought them, believed them, and felt them.

It is true that our thoughts produce feelings, and from our feelings come behavior. "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7).

It is during times such as these that we need someone to turn to, to talk to, to pray with us and for us. God has designed his family to be a loving and caring family. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (Jas. 5:16).

Of course during a time of great despondency, we must turn to our Lord for help.

"Casting all your care upon him: for he careth for you" (1 Pet. 4:7). James tells us that if we draw nigh to God, He will draw nigh to us (Jas. 4:8).

Another aspect that we must consider is the person who is outside God's family. To whom are they going to turn when things are going badly in their lives? Worldly friends, family, and neighbors can help some; but we know that this help is only temporary at best. Perhaps this person who is hurting so badly is saying to himself, "No one cares for my soul!" Christians, when we are aware of such a person let us go to him and share the one person who can truly lift him up — our Lord Jesus Christ!

Jeremiah was in deep despondency over the fall of his country and the carrying away of his brethren. He looked at the devastation around him and said, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger" (Lam. 1:12). Jeremiah asks the haunting question, "Is it nothing to you all ye that pass by?" There are people all around us in every community who are asking the same question. Will we let them know that, "Yes, there is somebody who cares for your soul"?

"But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you" (1 Pet. 5:10).

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A Study in Discipleship

by J.C. Townsend

The events recorded in John 12:1-9 took place in the little town of Bethany located about one and one-half miles from Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives. The individuals involved were Mary, Martha, Lazarus and Jesus. Our Lord often visited in this home. Evidently he found in these people kindred spirits and a ready and warm welcome. Friendship and hospitality are wonderful characteristics and both are exhibited in this story.

Jesus came here often probably because it was like an oasis in the middle of the desert. He could rest and could find warm and wonderful love exhibited by these individuals. They made Jesus a supper and the Bible says in verse 2 that Martha served but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with Him.

There are a number of points that are made in this story.

First, it is an interesting study in discipleship. Both Mary and Judas were disciples but they were far apart in their devotion. Mary represents the very best, while Judas the worst. Mary represents the highest devotion, while the acts of Judas made a mockery of the word. Mary was loyal and self-sacrificing, while Judas was selfish and covetous. Mary brought a costly gift, while Judas engaged in sarcasm and doubt as to the appropriateness of this act. Mary fell at the feet of Jesus in devotion, while Judas stood by and could offer nothing more than criticism.

It seems that Mary, Martha, and Lazarus maintained a close association with Jesus throughout His personal ministry. Judas likewise continued with the Lord until the time of His betrayal. Now, this enables us to see that both of these individuals, Mary and Judas, were in the company of Jesus frequently. Mary served as a close and dear friend while Judas was supposed to carry out the duties and obligations of an apostle.

Second, what can be said about the events recorded in this chapter? What comments can be made about the act of Mary

in breaking an alabaster box? Does it manifest characteristics that can be imitated by the Lord's people in 1990? It seems that a close examination of these passages enables us to obtain a clear view of what discipleship should be. It enables us to see in action an individual who represents the highest kind of discipleship and at the same time, we can see the very lowest form.

There are several things that can be said about the service of Mary on this occasion.

First, it was a very beautiful and humble act. People in the first century reclined at meals. They stretched out on a couch, propped up the head with one hand, and ate with the other. During the meal which was served, Mary entered bearing a flask of alabaster which contained the costliest perfume in antiquity. She came in behind the guests as they reclined, opened the seal and poured some of the spikenard on the head of Jesus. The Scriptures inform us in John 12, verse 3, that "Mary took a pound of ointment, of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment." After doing this she knelt at his feet, broke the alabaster box and allowed the perfume to cover him. Then she dried his feet with her hair, an act truly of devotion and humble service.

It can be said that the true disciple is always at the feet of Jesus. This is where the disciple belongs. This is the place where one can function and where one can truly exhibit the characteristic of discipleship. One is not to place himself in the position of a leader, but that of being behind the Lord and open to His will.

James presents a clear view of this aspect of discipleship in James 4:8-10. He says, "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts ye double-minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."

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Also in Matthew 20, Jesus declared that one would follow Him and be His disciple must become the servant of all.

Second, this act on the part of Mary was characterized by a deep understanding. Our Lord was approaching the cross; the storm of persecution was raging all around Him. Mary looked into the heart of our Lord and saw the sorrow and the anguish that was there. Her keen intuition saw what he was going through. The alabaster box was her way of letting Jesus know that she understood. Jesus knew this and no doubt was filled with a deep appreciation for Mary's act of devotion.

Today true discipleship involves an understanding of the trials, tribulations, and needs of others. The Bible has a number of exhortations along this line.

The apostle Paul spoke of the concern that we are to have for others in Romans 12, verse 10 and verse 15. He says, "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another; Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep."

You and I are not to draw into a shell and manifest no interest in the needs and the problems of others. When we partake of the spirit of Christ and when we imitate the kind of discipleship that Mary manifested, we'll be understanding and we will be interested in the needs of our fellowman. We will more readily enter into their problems and offer our help to them.

Third, this was an act of heartfelt grat-

itude. Mary knew that she had much for which to be grateful. Jesus had meant everything to her and her family. He had brought the joy of His presence and the knowledge of salvation to this household. In addition, He had raised Lazarus from the dead. What could she do to show her gratitude? The answer lay in the breaking of this alabaster box and in the love which this act demonstrated.

Do we sometimes find it hard to be faithful to the Lord? If so, we need to develop the grace of gratitude. Then every command will be an opportunity to show our love and appreciation for what Jesus has done. Do we sometimes find it difficult to attend the services of the church like we should? If so, we need to remember that Jesus went to the cross for us. He, who was at one time rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich. We can manifest one of the most important aspects of discipleship by being grateful to God for what He has done and demonstrating that gratitude by a faithful life. Judas stood by and grumbled. He said that this was a waste and that it should have been sold and the money used to help the poor. Our Lord answered by saying that the poor we have with us always and that she had performed this act against the day of His burial. So the study of John 12 enables us to see the best and the worst of discipleship and to note some of the things that are involved in being a faithful disciple of our Lord.

[60 Brittany Court, Charlotte, NC 28226]

STRESS — What Is the Problem?

by W.H. "Smitty" Smith, Jr.

"When stressed, no one should say, 'God is stressing me.' For God cannot be stressed, nor does He stress anyone; but each one is stressed when, by improper attitude, he is negative in his response to existing circumstances. Then after these responses conceive, they give birth to stress; and stress, when it is full grown, gives birth to death, or at least a peptic ulcer" (my own verses, W.H.S.).

Let us face it, you and I live in a stress-filled world. There is no way we can totally

avoid the myriad pressures we confront daily. But we can do something about the source of our stress — ourselves.

That is right, we, or more precisely, the ways that we perceive ourselves and the world around us, are the causes of our own stress.

"Contrary to popular belief," explains Donald A. Tubesing in **Kicking Your Stress Habits**, "stress is not the pressure(s) from the outside. . . . Those are **stressors**. Your

response to those situations constitutes **stress.**”

I am not saying that we should be able to take anything that comes our way and show no stress. The Creator did not make us with nerves of steel. Neither did He intend for us to live in a society that overtaxes our physical, rational and emotional resources.

Nevertheless — with doctors linking stress to ailments ranging from heart disease to allergies — most of us can greatly benefit by responding to stressors with as little stress as possible.

Stressors can range from infrequent major tragedies — the death of a loved one, divorce, the loss of employment — to the minor daily irritants that can slowly wear us down over time.

How we interpret stressors determines whether we find them distressful. And “we learn to interpret our experiences very early in life . . . from our parents, our teachers, our peers,” says Dr. Tubesing. These perceptions become largely automatic, habitual.

If our stressful reaction to life is a habit, what can we do about it?

Robert S. Eliot makes the answer clear in **Is It Worth Dying For?**: “Stress is only a burden when you respond to it with the feeling that you have lost control.” The stress prone see stressors as threats to their control over life.

I would like for us to consider some of the more common reasons we become stressed and steps we can take to modify your stress-producing reactions:

Perfectionism: The perfectionist sees ordinary happenings as a threat to control and therefore must be sure he has left nothing to chance. Some researchers believe that perfectionism begins in childhood when children are rewarded for perfect performance, but punished when it is less than perfect. This leads to the idea that mistakes mean loss of love and acceptance and that his value lies in a job flawlessly done.

To overcome perfectionism we must be able to see that things are not always either perfect, or totally unacceptable. This is not to suggest that we as Christians should consider compromising the truth, but rather that we expect weakness in ourselves and others.

Next, start being less fussy. Choose a few

minor tasks and perform them quickly, without the normal attention to detail. Make a few quick decisions about some minor matters.

I believe you will find from this that you are capable of doing things quickly with good results.

Try to have spontaneity in your life without becoming negligent or careless. At the same time remember to be tolerant.

Unrealistic self-image: Do you believe that there is no job too tough for you to handle? Can you successfully accomplish anything?

People who are experts at everything are only in the movies. We must learn to say no to things that we do not have the ability to perform. Yes, as Christians, we need “to be ready unto every good work,” but if someone asks me to perform brain surgery I’ll have to say no. I’m just not qualified. The apostle Paul tells us that “God loves a cheerful giver,” therefore, whatever we give, we should not give grudgingly. If we are unable to give cheerfully, then we should say no.

Unwillingness to delegate: Some subscribe to the old adage, “If you want something done right, do it yourself.” If you are one of those, you are setting yourself up for stress. Do not try to do it all yourself. Give part of the work to others. They may not do it exactly as you would, but the results will probably be acceptable.

Excessive need for approval: If you believe that people will be disappointed even when you do a great job, that is a heavy burden no one can carry without burning out. The Bible tells us that the children of Israel were disappointed with God on a number of occasions; but He did not give up. Neither did Jesus become depressed when His followers deserted Him (John 6:66). Nor should you be torn apart when people are disappointed in you.

Disorganization: When you set goals that you can achieve, delegate some of the work, and still find that lack of time is a stressor, it may be because you are disorganized. “Personal management skills,” further states Dr. Tubesing “can reduce your stress by helping you learn to spend your time and energy more efficiently.”

Sort and prioritize your tasks in order of importance. Make sure to put God's priorities first. Then just cross them off as you complete them. This will help you see what you are accomplishing.

Wanting to handle it alone: You cannot handle it alone. "Increasing evidence supports the thesis that friends . . . play a vital role in keeping us healthy," say Patricia Wuertzer and Lucinda May in **Relax, Recover**.

The theme throughout the New Testament is that of bearing one another's burdens. "Blessed is the man that bares his soul to God while bearing Christ's cross and the burdens of others" (My own verse, WHS). It is unfortunate that so many Christians have learned how to bless others, but have never learned the art of letting others bless them.

Pursuing happiness: "Happiness," writes Robert L. Woolfolk and Frank C. Richardson in **Stress, Sanity, & Survival**, cannot be achieved when pursued as a goal."

Happiness does not originate in circumstances, but in the inner person. King Solomon tried to find happiness in this way. He said, "Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them . . . And indeed all was vanity and grasping for the wind" (Eccl. 2:10, 11). A reading of Matthew 5:1-12 would indicate to anyone that happiness, as do stress and sin, originates inside.

Worrying about the future: I believe that all should plan for the future, but to worry about it is a waste of time and energy. Jesus taught, "Which of you by worrying can add

one cubit to his stature? . . . Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble" (Matt. 6:27, 34).

Believing only in oneself: Stress-prone people have the idea that they should be able to control anything that can affect them. That is just not true. In fact we control very little by ourselves.

We must learn to accept what we cannot control. We must realize that there is a wise and loving, all-powerful God on whom we can depend in time of need. This will counter stress-creating responses.

Paul wrote: "All things," even those bad things that we perceive will lead to hurt and disaster, "work together for good to those who love God" (Rom. 8:28).

Jesus said this to those who would rely on God, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

I have quoted from several sources in this article and they are very good. I recommend them, but I recommend even more that you read the Bible. In the Bible you will find the release from stress that may lengthen your life here on earth, but more importantly you will find the release from sin that will give you eternal life in heaven. Only in that knowledge can true peace and happiness be found.

[*"Smitty" is now preaching at Monroe, NC. Home address: 9927-A Oak Brook Dr., Charlotte, NC 28210.*]

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Humility

by Charles R. Lambert

I started shining shoes for my father and myself, every Saturday night. It was my job to get our shoes shined before we went to church each Sunday morning. I did not know at the time that shoe shining was a poor man's vocation. Anyway it would not have bothered me because I was poor already.

I took a step up when I went to the golf course to work. My duties were operating the cash register, sweeping the floors each day, keeping the golf carts ready at all times, and shining shoes for my employer. I never thought that shining shoes was degrading until other kids teased me at school. Shining shoes to me was an honorable profession and I really got into it when I entered the service. Every day and night I had to shine my own shoes. That's when I got tired of shining shoes.

When you are out in public the first thing someone may notice about you is whether you are neatly dressed, or whether you have your shoes shined. The way you present yourself today may give you the opportunity to teach someone the gospel tomorrow. Men and women who represent the church should be shining from head to toe.

Two thousand years ago in Christ's time no one wore shoes, instead people wore sandals. If you were going into someone's house a servant took your sandals off and washed your feet. In Luke 7:38, Christ went into the house of a Pharisee and ate with him. At this time a woman of the city brought a box of ointment and poured it on His head. Then she took off His sandals and washed His feet with the tears of her eyes and dried

them with the hair of her head. If humility is the act of being humble, not arrogant or assertive, then surely this was a humble act on the woman's part.

Remember John the Baptist, who was a cousin of Jesus, said on the day of Jesus' baptism, that he was not worthy to stoop down and release the latchet of Jesus' sandals. Surely this was humility.

Jesus Christ was humble and He proved it when He washed His disciples' feet (John 13:5-6). Peter did not like the idea of Jesus washing his feet, but Jesus told Peter later on he would understand the reason for it. In this act Jesus was teaching His disciples humility.

When you get tired of the job you have, or just everyday life, and at the same time you feel depressed, just think on these acts of humility. We all suffer from the arrogance of others from time to time. I know you have a method for fighting the blues, and so do I. I go into the garage and get out my old shoe shine kit and polish some shoes, remembering how it used to be when I was down on my knees shining shoes for profit. Then I say a little prayer asking God that I never forget that I had to shine shoes when I was a boy. Now I am doing it to remind myself to be humble, just as the Lord taught His disciples to be humble. You probably do not care about shining shoes; but I hope you care about having a heart that is truly humble before God and man.

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Faith and Fortune

by Gary G. Payne

Jim Bakker and the P.T.L. scandal have been front page news. Some still follow him. Former followers are bitter. The entire scandal leaves a bad taste in our mouths. The media and the public are revelling in his downfall. After all, the Bible says you reap what you sow.

Yet, are only Mr. Bakker and his leading associates considered guilty? What about their followers? Apparently many donated \$1,000 to the P.T.L. ministry for a promised lifetime benefit — free three-day annual lodging at the Heritage U.S.A. resort. What was the motivation for giving? Was it sacrifice for Christian ministry? or was it buying a share in resort property?

I once saw a car with two bumper stickers on the back bumper. They read: "A woman's place is in the mall," and, "Christ is Love." Is this the kind of faith to which Jesus has called us? A faith that mixes materialism and marriage to Christ? A faith that combines pleasure and piety? A faith that adds self-gratification to devotion?

One reason Judas may have betrayed Jesus is greed. Most of us have a certain amount of it. Wants have become necessities. The only difference with Judas is that he had the opportunity to let his thinking reach its ultimate conclusion. No court in our land will put Mr. Bakker's former followers on trial. We all have a different judge.

Mr. Bakker got caught in his own trap. Others got caught in the trap because he gave the people what they wanted. He gave them what most of us want: leisure, pleasure, and an easy religion. Whatever happened to Jesus' call to deny self? "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16:24-26, NKJV.)

[907 Courtland Ave., Reidsville, NC 27320.]

The Dog and the Rabbit

by Gary G. Payne

Once upon a time there was a family who owned a beautiful German Shepherd. It was a good dog, except for one thing — it always gave the neighbor's pet rabbit the evil eye.

Then, one day the inevitable happened. Looking across the fence they saw their dog with its teeth clamped around the lifeless body of the bunny, shaking it back and forth for all its' worth.

It just so happened that the neighbors were gone for vacation. So, the owners of the German Shepherd devised a plan. They took the rabbit and gave it a bath. They washed all the blood and dirt off its white coat. For the finishing touch they blow-dried its fur. Then, they stuck it back in its cage.

The next day the rabbit's owner and dog's owner were out in their yards. The

rabbit's owner said to the other, "You know, the strangest thing happened to our rabbit." "Oh?" came the reply. "Yeah. Our rabbit died before we left. We buried him. And for the life of us we can't figure out how he got back in his cage."

We are taught to make every effort to add the grace of virtue (2 Pet. 1:5). Virtue means moral courage. It involves honesty and integrity, especially when it would be easier to tell a white lie or make excuses.

The Christian life demands such character. God is seeking to build better people out of us. Wouldn't it be great if everyone had such character?

[Gary G. Payne, Sunnycrest Church of Christ, 1583 Freeway Drive, Reidsville, NC 27320.]

Brotherhood News

by Dennis Conner

Around the Carolinas . . .

The LEXINGTON CHURCH OF CHRIST has been collecting shoes to send to the needy in Guyana. . . . MIKE HINRICHS is now preaching for the TWIN CITY church that presently meets in Leesville. Mike's duties with the church began May 1. He had formerly preached for the St. Andrews Road church of Christ in Columbia. . . . 1990 has been a year of growth for the KINGSBURY ROAD church in Sumter. Through the end of April 15 people had been baptized into Christ. The church has set a goal of 50 baptisms for 1990. Current plans include construction of a classroom facility. ROBERT BOWERS is the preacher.

And North Carolina . . .

DALE McCORKLE is the new youth minister for the BROOKS AVE. church in Raleigh. Dale is a graduate of Harding University. ROBERT and AMY WARNER, who worship at Brooks Ave., will be spending their summer in Honduras working with Christians there and conducting Bible studies. . . . CHRIS TOWNSEND will be returning to the BOONE CHURCH OF CHRIST as campus minister in July. Chris is a recent graduate of the Institute for Christian Studies in Austin, Texas. He and his wife, Angela, worshipped in Boone before moving to Austin. . . . The 14th Annual N.C. Lectures will be hosted this year by the LINVILLE FOREST CHURCH OF CHRIST in Kernersville, Sept. 10-14. The theme will be "Preparing for the 21st Century." Linville Forest was responsible for establishing the N.C. Lectures in 1977. . . . The 4th Annual Small Church Workshop hosted by the YADKINVILLE CHURCH OF CHRIST was viewed by all participants as a great success. A record attendance was enjoyed as speakers developed the theme "Building Through Preaching." Tapes of the workshop are available and may be ordered by writing to the church at Rt. 6, Box 697, Yadkinville, NC 27055.

And Other Places . . .

As the Iron Curtain continues to crumble, God continues to open doors for the advancement of the gospel. For example, the World Bible Translation Center is opening a Bible study and distribution center in Moscow in the Soviet Union. "This is such an historic opportunity," said Dale Randolph, World Bible Translation Center President. "We will be able to conduct Bible studies, distribute Bibles and New Testaments and do other things that will help teach people about the Lord." The Bible study and distribution center was scheduled to begin operation June 15 in facilities leased from the cultural Center in Moscow.

The Answer Book

by Jack D. Anthony

*Constantly bothered by doubts and fears?
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In the pages of the right Book.*

*Between its covers you'll find comfort and
ease,*

*and answers to all your soul's deep pleas;
The story of how He created this earth,
And the account of our dear Savior's birth.*

*So many examples of faith and love,
And all the commandments that come from
above:*

*We'll find all we need to live with each other,
How to love and be loved each by his brother.*

*From its pages much can always be gleaned;
The plan of salvation is easily seen;
The wrongs of our lives that we need to
mend;*

So a home in heaven we'll have in the end.

*Man finds it easy, God's word to muddy;
But it's so clear if we'll only study.*

*So study your Bible all of your days
And you'll be rewarded in so many ways.*

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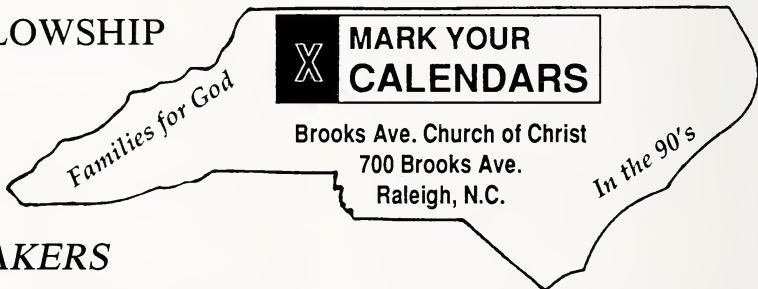
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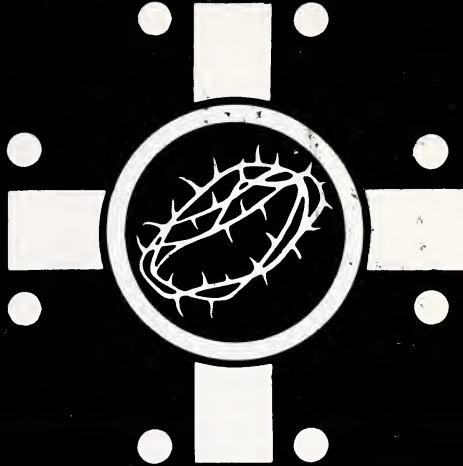


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Friends

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a theologian and a minister in Germany. He got into trouble when the Nazis of World War II suspected him of being involved with an organization aimed at overthrowing Hitler. Bonhoeffer was in prison two years. He never received a formal trial. He was executed on April 9, 1945, just before Germany's defeat.

Times of trouble make one reflect. Distress has a way of making us sort out priorities. Dietrich Bonhoeffer was one whose circumstances forced him to remember things that are sometimes forgotten. The following lines come from one of his letters from prison:

"It's remarkable how we think at such times about the people that we should not like to live without, and almost or entirely forget about ourselves. It is only then that we feel how closely our own lives are bound up with other people's and in fact how the center of our own lives is outside ourselves, and how little we are separate entities. The 'as though it were a part of me' is perfectly true, as I have often felt after hearing that one of my colleagues or pupils had been killed. I think it is a literal fact of nature that human life extends far beyond our physical existence. Probably a mother feels this more strongly than anyone else."

Friends are special. Jesus is your friend. He told His disciples: "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command" (John 15:13-14). Then Jesus laid down His life. He did it for you and me.

— Gary G. Payne
Reidsville, NC



editorial

In the July **Reader's Digest** there is an article by a noted film critic: "Does Hollywood Hate Religion?" Michael Medved's profession is reviewing movies. His article candidly shows how the movie industry is deliberately seeking to be offensive toward people who hold sincere religious convictions. Thoughtful Christians have perceived this for a long time. What makes the **Reader's Digest** article significant is that it comes from someone deeply involved with the entertainment industry.

Mr. Medved cites various examples of the sordid and insulting way that recent movies have treated religious themes. One particular example is "The Last Temptation of Christ," a film which by any standard was designed to be blasphemous. This critic, however, observed that it was also tedious, not even interesting from an artistic point of view. It is clear that the only excuse for it being made is that Hollywood is hostile to religion.

As one who keeps abreast of the movie industry, the critic further proves his point by showing that movies which have been so clearly anti-Christian have been failures at the box office. They have lost millions of dollars, in spite of tremendous promotional campaigns. Why do movie producers continue to make films that are anti-religious when it is increasingly certain that they will probably fail financially? Medved explains: "It is hard to escape the conclusion that, for many of the most powerful people in the entertainment business, hostility to traditional religion goes so deep and burns so intensely that they insist on expressing that hostility, even at the risk of commercial disaster."

Writers and directors use almost any opportunity to present something uncomplimentary about religion. By using the skills of a storyteller and by controlling scenes, it is possible to put the most holy things in an unfavorable light. Many in the industry seem to feel they have an important duty

not only to entertain, but also to shape the values and morals of society. They seem to feel brave and proud when they can make religion seem foolish, hypocritical, and even vile.

There is an expression used in the article that to me is both realistic and frightening. He speaks of Hollywood as "the mighty engine of popular culture." The movies are a mighty force which does much to mold the attitudes and conduct of society. Mr. Medved is doubtless correct when he observes that many people are turning away from the movies because they see their own

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David Pharr, Editor; Johnny Melton, Managing Editor; Dennis Conner, News Editor.

CAROLINA CHRISTIAN (P.O.P.N. 091160) is published monthly by Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., at 71 S. Fairfield Road, Greenville, SC 29605. Subscription price: individual \$8.00 per year (\$15.00 for 2 years and \$22.00 for 3 years); club of five or more \$7.50 each; quantity of 15 or more in bundles or direct mailing 50¢ per copy per month. Publication number, 091160.

Second class postage paid at Greenville, SC.

POSTMASTER: Send change with Form 3579 to Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., Johnny Melton, Managing Editor, Route 2, Box 137, Conover, North Carolina 28613.

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Address editorial matter to David Pharr, Editor, ETSOPM, 6608 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37931. Address news items to Dennis Conner, P.O. Box 1219, Yadkinville, NC 27055.

All items to be printed in a given month's issue should reach the editor not later than the next-to-the-last Thursday of the preceding month.

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deepest values being ignored and insulted. But at the same time it cannot be denied that Hollywood continues to exert tremendous influence for evil on the minds of American

Managing Editor's Column

people. "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2 Tim. 2:13).

Interpretation and Application

by Johnny Melton

Second Timothy 2:15 contains Paul's timeless challenge, "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth." Correctly handling the word is an ideal toward which all serious students of Scripture aspire. It is a principle that must also be understood. The King James translation rendered the phrase, "rightly dividing the word of truth." It has been properly inferred from this text that Scripture can be mishandled or wrongly divided. Obviously, this verse has to do with the subject of interpretation. Interpretation of Scripture is a vital topic that is receiving a great deal of attention from all quarters. It is irresponsibly naive to deny that Scripture is to be interpreted. (This is true despite the fact that 2 Peter 1:20 is sometimes misunderstood to support such a contention.) To read Scripture is to interpret it. The only point at issue is whether our interpretation is sound or unsound, valid or invalid. Our use of Scripture must always be circumspect.

There have been times when Scripture has been read carelessly or exegeted poorly. On the other hand, there are passages dealing with fundamental doctrines where careful exegesis has been employed and the nuggets of spiritual truth have been successfully mined. The fact that significant passages have been carefully studied does not permit us to take a casual attitude toward those passages that we consider to contain less significant material. However, at times there has been a tendency to lift statements from such contexts and to use them in a way that is foreign to their context.

As an example, consider Colossians 2:20-22. "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why,

as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?" From time to time, it is not unusual to find verse 21, "Touch not; taste not; handle not," lifted out of context and urged as the Christian's attitude toward worldly things and the "commandments and doctrines of men."

A careful reading of the text will demonstrate that "Touch not; taste not; handle not" were ascetic slogans that urged the "neglecting of the body" (vs. 23), and that such "ordinances" constituted "the commandments and doctrines of men" (vs. 22). It is not the case that Paul was commending these concepts to the Colossians — he was condemning them!

It is not my purpose to argue that Christians can indulge their fleshly appetites with impunity. The Scriptures are replete with warnings against sins of every stripe. In Colossians 3 Paul called upon the brethren to guard their lives from sin by putting to death and putting off sinful practices and attitudes (vss. 5-10) and by putting on attitudes and actions that are noble and virtuous (vss. 11-17).

It is my purpose to warn against making human laws (even ones that appear to be useful) and imposing them on the consciences of others. This danger exists whenever biblical teaching is reduced to slogans (such as, "Touch not; taste not; handle not"). The fact that the human law can be couched in biblical language does not make it right. Further, it is my purpose to urge every Bible student to read Scripture carefully, study it diligently, and apply its language appropriately.

[Route 2, Box 137, Conover, NC 28613.]

The Ruins of Tyre

by J.C. Townsend

The prophecies of the Bible are far different from the vague and obscure predictions made at such places as Delphi in Greece and Siwah in Egypt. The shrine at Delphi was often visited and held a rather mysterious power over the whole Hellenic world during various periods. Those places in the ancient world that claimed the ability to make known the future were created and operated through the contrivance of designing men and fraudulent deception.

The prophecies of the Scriptures contain details and statements that can be checked and verified. Christianity is vastly different from other religions in that definite evidences can be produced that prove it to be true. It would be most difficult to engage in a study of evidences for such religions as Muhammadanism, Buddhism, or Confucianism.

These religions are not based on historical facts which can be examined. If people decide to follow one of these, they do so on some basis other than **evidence** or **verifiable fact**. Christianity is a religious system which is based on fact and for which evidence can be produced to establish its truthfulness.

Men are called to believe in a God who, in a thousand ways, has presented proof of the reality of His being and the truthfulness of that cause which Jesus came into the world to establish. Luke wrote in Acts 1:3 that Jesus showed Himself alive by many infallible proofs. The Lord has set forth the evidence which is needed to produce faith in the heart.

The Bible contains hundreds of prophecies which need to be examined because they are a major source of evidence for the inspiration of the Scriptures. What does the average unbeliever think about these? Most of them have never taken the time to examine them. Many are totally ignorant of the fact that the Bible contains such wonderful material. They are well acquainted with the supposed discrepancies or contradictions; but they seem almost completely unaware of the great proofs for the Bible's inspiration.

A look at what the prophet Ezekiel had

to say about Tyre in Ezekiel 26 is a powerful support for the divine origin of the Bible. Tyre was already an old city at the time that Jeremiah and Ezekiel lived. It went back to 2700 B.C. and for many centuries was one of the great cities of the world. Tyre grew in importance until she became the mistress of the sea and the commercial center of the world.

When Tyre was at the height of its glory and power, Ezekiel predicted that it would be destroyed. He said nations would attack it and come against it like the waves of the sea. Its walls would be torn down and the dust would be scraped from it and cast into the midst of the sea.

Nebuchadnezzar invaded Phoenicia, Syria, and eventually threw his army against the mighty city of Tyre. He concentrated his efforts against that part which was built on the mainland and for thirteen years, from 585 to 573 B.C., he besieged it and tried to tear down its walls.

After thirteen years, the war engines of Nebuchadnezzar succeeded in breaching the walls and the old city on the mainland was captured. This did not mark the end of Tyre because her people had taken the precaution to construct a new city on an island just a half mile from shore. This new city was not touched, but continued to prosper and became more and more important. They built a wall, one hundred and fifty feet high, to

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protect the new city.

Nebuchadnezzar went back to Babylon and eventually died. The new city of Tyre continued to prosper, while on the mainland, the remains of the old walls stood, its stones and timbers scattered everywhere.

What about Ezekiel's prophecy? Part of it was fulfilled in the attack of Nebuchadnezzar. Ezekiel lived and died, other prophets lived and died, and the centuries rolled onward. For two hundred and fifty years, this proud city continued to expand its influence and commercial ties throughout the Mediterranean world. It might have seemed to some that Ezekiel uttered empty words when he predicted its downfall.

The word of God predicted that its stones, timbers and dust would be cast into the sea and would be scraped clean like a rock. It would become a place for the spreading of nets. How could anything like that happen to a mighty city like Tyre? The people of Tyre probably thought no one could defeat them.

But a new power made its appearance on the world scene. That great military genius, Alexander the Great, led his mighty Macedonian phalanx across the Hellespont in the spring of 334 B.C., and proceeded to conquer western Asia. He defeated Darius at the battle of Issus in 333 B.C. and then marched southward towards Egypt.

Alexander called upon the cities of Phoenicia to surrender and most of them did. Sidon opened its gates and then Alexander sent envoys to Tyre to negotiate their surrender. But Tyre was contemptuous of Alexander's army and murdered the envoys which were sent to demand their submission.

The great Persian fleet was a threat to Alexander so he decided to seal off the port cities along the coast of Asia Minor and deny their use to the Persian navy. An ancient fleet was helpless if all its ports were closed and they were not able to get into any of them. So Alexander conquered them one by one until finally only Tyre remained. Confident and feeling absolutely secure in their rock ribbed island bastion, they laughed at Alexander.

This made him furious and he resolved to conquer it. He and his brilliant engineer, Diades, decided to fill the deep channel and

build a causeway all the way out to the island city. It was a tremendous undertaking but one they were willing to attempt. They started this operation in January of 332 B.C.

Thousands of inhabitants from the neighboring villages were pressed into service and they began to drag everything they could find and cast it into the sea. The old city was leveled, the walls that still stood were torn down, and all the rocks were thrown into the channel. Then they gathered the sand and the dirt into large sacks and cast these into the sea. They literally scraped the dust of the city until it was clean, just as the prophet Ezekiel predicted.

Logs were brought out of the forests of Lebanon and rock quarries were dug in the surrounding hills to provide materials for this highway to Tyre. It is said that Alexander the Great carried stones on his back to help make this operation a success.

Compare all this with what the prophet Ezekiel said in Ezekiel 26:12, "And they shall make a spoil of thy riches, and make a prey of thy merchandise; and they shall break down thy walls, and destroy thy pleasant houses; and they shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the waters."

Two and a half centuries after the prophecy was uttered by God's spokesman, it was literally and completely fulfilled. After many difficulties, Alexander stormed the city in July of 332 B.C. and it was conquered. He killed all the male inhabitants and sold the women and children into slavery.

But note something else that the prophet said: "It will be built no more." This also has been fulfilled as it remains today nothing more than a small village where fishermen spread their nets. About 2,500 years have come and gone and the old city of Tyre is still virtually uninhabited.

What a testimony to the inspiration of the Bible! It stands forth as the Book of books, the word of the true and living God.

[4900 Providence Rd., Charlotte, NC 28205.]

Winning Souls to Jesus Christ

by Robert Curry

The New Testament is full of souls being won for Jesus Christ. Peter proclaimed the truth to the multitudes at Pentecost and 3,000 were added to the Lord's church that day (Acts 2). Paul spoke to a group of Stoics and Epicureans on Mars Hill where some "clave unto him," including one of the philosophers (Acts 17). Men like these exemplify that the winning of souls to Christ should be the goal of every New Testament Christian.

How is this to be done? What methods are best? Just as we read of the command to evangelize within the pages of the New Testament, we also are given the tools by which we might be successful as well.

A Knowledge of God's Word

The Bible is very clear in stressing how the first-century church sought a keen understanding of the Bible, which is one reason they were successful in winning souls to Christ. Paul emphasized the vital place God's word has within the Christian's armor by instructing the Ephesian brethren to "take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:17). Peter wrote to a church scattered through persecution, telling them, in part, to continue evangelizing those around them, offering as his last piece of advice, "But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18).

However, one essential point never to be forgotten is that such knowledge should be coupled with fervent prayer. Recall that Paul's advice to Ephesus on the Christian armor did not end with the various devices of battle, for he told them also to pray "always with all prayer and supplication" (v. 18).

Like the first-century church our success in winning souls to Christ will come about if we seek an ever-increasing understanding of God's word, praying that we might use such knowledge to teach only truth. There are many who have knowledge, but do not teach the truth. The Jewish leaders had a

knowledge of the Old Law, but failed to teach and recognize the fulfillment of that law in the coming of Jesus Christ, diverting others away from the truth (Matt. 23). Felix had a "more perfect knowledge" of the resurrection, yet waited for a more convenient season to obey (Acts 26:22, 25). Our ability to convert souls to Jesus Christ will come when we seek a greater knowledge of truth coupled with fervent prayer that this knowledge may be used wisely.

A Confrontation of Sin

Another reason the first-century church was successful in winning souls was that in their presentation of the truth they confronted the people with their situation. Peter, after speaking of the prophecies of Joel and the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, told the multitudes: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). While on Mars Hill Paul declared, "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you" (Acts 17:22,

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23). As the Ethiopian treasurer read from the book of Isaiah, Philip approached the chariot and asked, "Understandest thou what thou readeſt?" (Acts 8:30).

Our success in winning souls to Christ will greatly improve if we will confront the sinner with the truth. Our approach is not to be in a tactless or heartless manner, but with love and concern for uninstructed and apathetic souls. This was Paul's attitude to Corinth. Having spoken to them quite clearly, but harshly in his first letter, he insisted in his second that it all was done "out of much affliction and anguish of heart . . . that ye might know the love which I have abundantly unto you" (2 Cor. 2:4).

Remember God's Part

A final reason the first-century church was successful in winning souls is they also remembered that it was not their duty to baptize, but to plant and water the seed of truth. Until we understand this we will become very disappointed and discouraged. So many, believing their success is only seen in the number of baptisms, teach fervently, encouraging the alien sinner to renounce sin and obey Christ in baptism, only to never see the reality of that goal. They feel they have failed, that they are not effective, being totally useless to the cause of Christ.

Paul understood his duty to the proclamation of the truth. He told Corinth, "I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase" (1 Cor. 3:6), being thankful he had baptized only Crispus, Gaius and the household of Stephanus (1:14, 16). He feared that his name would be associated with the baptisms making the cross of Christ "of

none effect" (v. 17).

Our desire should be that those we teach and encourage will accept their Lord in baptism (Matt. 28:19). However, our responsibility does not include another's acceptance of the truth. Jesus realized that some would not accept sound teaching and instructed His disciples, "And whosoever shall not receive you, or hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake the dust off your feet" (Matt. 10:14).

If successful Christianity is based on vast numbers then the New Testament is full of those who failed. The 3,000 added to the Lord's church at Pentecost surely represented only a small fraction of the multitudes gathered there (Acts 2). Paul was forced to flee several cities on his missionary journeys due to their rejection of his preaching (Acts 8:22-25; 14:19; 19:23-28). Even Jesus did not persuade His own countrymen (Matt. 13:53-58). Oh, my friend, how fortunate we are that the almighty God does not consider our faithfulness and success based on mere numbers.

Conclusion

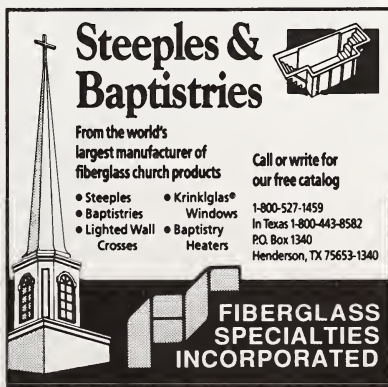
Our ability to win souls to Christ is greatly enhanced when we understand how to best do it and what better advice can be given than by those who served and taught fervently within the first-century church.

By having a prayerful understanding of God's word, a willingness to confront the sinner with his situation, and by leaving God's part to God, we will be successful in our proclamation of the truth.

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Winners by Faith

by Jim McCutchen

Hebrews 11 is about the winners — just common, ordinary people who discovered that the secret of staying on top is not talent, status, or prestige; it is faith in God.

The Bible says, "And this is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4). The people named in Hebrews 11 are recorded in this great faith chapter because they trusted God to work through them to accomplish great things. The men and women of Hebrews 11 were distinguished, not by their names or titles, but by their faith. They all trusted God and God used them to change the world.

The climax of Hebrews is Hebrews 12:1-3, and there the patriarchs are remembered as dedicated athletes who reached their goal and won their prize because they had faith in God and obeyed the rules of the game. They were no quitters.

The believers to whom the book of Hebrews was written needed a message of real encouragement. They were experiencing opposition, persecution, and discouragement (Heb. 10:32-39). They were in danger of giving up and turning back. Some of the members had been arrested and put in prison (Heb. 13:3). And others were having to bear reproach as Christians (Heb. 13:13). The writer urges them to "Press on to maturity" (Heb. 6:1). "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Heb. 12:1).

A Message for Us!

Do we need this kind of message today? We certainly do! As we run the race of faith, we will face obstacles and distractions. Tough times demand tough faith and the more we trust God the stronger our "faith muscles" become.

If you and I are going to win the race, and if we are going to build a growing congregation where we worship, then we must understand what it means to have faith.

What kind of faith did the "runners" in Hebrews 11 have? It was faith that acted. It was not just mental assent (intellectual faith); it involved obedience to God's word. In Hebrews 11, Abel offered a sacrifice, Noah prepared an ark, Abraham offered up Isaac, Moses left Egypt, and so on. If we are going to be victorious we cannot sit still and compromise. Anything that goes uphill — must be pushed.

Lack of commitment, lukewarmness, and nominal dedication is faithlessness. Let us be truly faithfully committed to God's will for our lives.

According to the Bible, true faith is obeying God in spite of feelings, circumstance, or consequence.

So join in and run with the winners!

[P.O. Box 76, Troy, Missouri 63379. Jim was the nightly speaker at the recent Carolina Lectures in Rockingham, NC.]

That Is All I Know About It

by David Pharr, Editor

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. 2:9-11).

This passage brings us to the sobering reality that we can know absolutely nothing about the personality, the plans, or the purposes of God except what has been revealed through Spirit-guided men. What has not been revealed must remain a mystery. Until it was revealed in the gospel, God's plan for salvation was not known by the prophets (1 Peter 1:10), nor by angels (1 Pet. 1:11), nor by "the princes of this world" (1 Cor. 2:8), nor by "the sons of men" (Eph. 3:5).

God has chosen to keep some things secret and to reveal what we need to know (Deut. 29:29).

Religious discussions may frequently prompt speculative questions: "What if . . . Don't you think . . . Do you think God would . . . Is it possible . . . ?" etc. Questions which seek a biblical answer are legitimate; but those which call for opinion and speculation are useless and may even cause harm. (Cf. 1 Tim. 6:4; 2 Tim. 2:23; Titus 3:9.)

Those who want to appear "scholarly" may be tempted to answer unanswerable questions. A faithful minister of the word, however, will be satisfied to point to the Scriptures and say, "That is all I know about it."

For example, numerous questions arise over divorce and remarriage. Admittedly, problems exist which are difficult, and prudent men will be slow to advise. But when all the "What if's" and "It seems like's" have been stated, the fact remains that what

the Bible says is all I know about it.

So also in discussions about the plan of salvation. Questions arise about the honest seeker who dies without obeying the gospel. Arguments may be made on the basis of both reason and emotion. But when I have read the promises and warnings of the Bible, that is all I know about it.

There is ever a tendency for men to think of themselves "above that which is written" (1 Cor. 4:6). There is much emphasis on education, intelligence, and ability. These factors may help in the study of the word; but it must be remembered that all spiritual knowledge must still start and end at the same place — in the Book.

I may be able to know (or think I know) a great many things about the material world. Such may be learned from numerous sources. But the only spiritual truth I can ever know this side of eternity will be what I learn from the Bible. The bottom line is "Here is what the Bible says. That is all I know about it!"

A Good Example? Even So . . . A Bad Example? Even So . . .

by Joe DeYoung

The usual purpose we ascribe to a "good example" is that it will have a "good influence" on those who see it. Yet as important as it is, it is not a "cure all" — it does not always "take," at least not in the sense of "turning someone's life around." Even so, its importance cannot be minimized, for it accomplishes at least two worthwhile purposes:

First, the Christian's personal example reaffirms the credibility of Christianity. Many people are apathetic toward religion, yet they are quick to notice the least flaw in a believer's life and use that as evidence against Christianity and/or use it as an excuse not to become a Christian. (He has other excuses already, but finding fault with a believer is a convenient way to make himself look better — to justify himself.) Even though such a judgment is flawed, the Chris-

tian should see his good example's value in that it does not provide "an opportunity for the enemies of the Lord to ridicule" (2 Sam. 12:14, MLB).

Secondly, it makes it easier for the observer to go in the right direction — in those many cases where he is impressionable. The Bible speaks of making sure our actions do not cause the "stumbling" of a "little child" or a "weak brother." In these cases, our example may be the deciding factor in the way a person chooses to go. This seems to be the thrust of most of what is written about example/influence. The epitaph of a young woman said: "It was easier to be good when she was around."

On the other hand, we could also assert that good can come from a bad example. In other words, some people are courageous enough to overlook bad examples and

choose the right way anyway! We would certainly be ill advised to form our value system only on the example of others. It is certainly discouraging for others to "let us down" by their poor example. Yet a casual reading of Scripture tells us that it is our individual responsibility to do the right thing, no matter what others — even the majority — might be doing. Most Christians hold this conviction as a matter of course.

Some, though, have a real struggle with this, namely because they are surrounded by poor examples among their peers, parents, teachers, etc. Though most are swept away by it, a few rare individuals choose to opt for higher values. Especially crucial among young people, anyone who has this kind of courage is to be admired, and is worthy of our encouragement!

[508 W. 26th St., Williston, ND 58801.]

Principles

By David Vaughn

"It is always easier to fight for one's principles than to live up to them" — Alfred Alder.

It is never enough to just know right principles. Principles are to be practiced in daily activities, and not reserved as words on a plaque. However, we know that there are times when our principles stand in the way of our desires. Our principles may also be in conflict with what may be expedient. But that is what principles are about. Every courageous and faithful life has been fashioned by principles.

From the Scriptures we get the principle of forgiveness. How often? Man-made rules said "seven times." God said as often as needed. Our principles should aid us in being more consistent. Jesus said: "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much (Luke 16:10). Faithfulness is not dependent on the activity, on how large or how small the effort, on what personal gain may be realized; but it is the governing principle of life.

I have always enjoyed the game of football. Some twenty years ago, I became a fan of the University of Michigan football team. The reason? Their new coach was Bo Schembechler. Before his retirement in early 1990, he was coach of one of the most successful athletic programs in the country for twenty years. Bo was recognized by his peers, players, and staff as a hard-working, honest man. My wife gave me a copy of the 1989 publication, *Bo*. In the book he tells of growing up in Barberton, Ohio, as the son of a

fireman. His father was one of two men selected to take the civil service exam for Fire Chief. One evening when the family was at home the phone rang and Bo's dad answered. After a few minutes he said, "No, no, never." The other candidate for Fire Chief had a copy of the test questions and Mr. Schembechler's friends offered a copy of the questions to him. Bo said he learned a lesson from his father that evening that served him throughout his coaching career. In the highly competitive recruiting battles for top athletes, where cheating was common, he often remembered the lesson learned from his father. The lesson: **Do Not Bend Your Principles.**

Isn't that the "bottom line" of one's re-

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lationship with the Lord? Do not bend your principles. Be steadfast, unmovable; do not be conformed to this world; on and on and on! If we do bend our principles, they will eventually break and the world has gained control. God has called us to sacrifice whatever is necessary; but sacrifice does not ever call on us to break right principles. With every temptation God will provide a way of escape so we do not have to surrender our principles.

On Preaching Doctrine

by Ernie Thigpen

Even though I've only been at it a few short years, I can assuredly say this: Preaching is a misunderstood profession.

One writer asks, "How tough can it be? All preachers have to do is make a speech once or twice a week and they got this really big book to go by."

A friend told me when I began to preach that there were three keys to effective preaching:

1. Make them laugh.
2. Make them cry.
3. Make them feel religious.

Unfortunately, many American preachers have made a career of doing just that. Some claim, "Do not worry about doctrine; just show love." Ephesians 4:15, "speaking the truth in love," clearly shows that doctrine without love is neither. And real love will always involve true doctrine.

We must teach the principles of doctrine as we exhort people about duty. One can always tell emotional stories, but people would eventually forget what they have heard. Because, when the principles are gone, the motive to perform the duty is gone.

For example, why do we limit our driving speed to 55 or 65 miles an hour? Is it just because it is safer? No, it is because we know the law and the penalty of the law. If you do not believe that, go to Europe and try to ride on those highways with unlimited speed zones, at 65 mph. You will get blown off the road.

Regardless of what we see happening in society, we must remember who we are. We are children of God; men and women of faith; people in the process of being transformed; heirs of heaven! As we continually feed our souls on the spiritual food of God we will continue to develop as the people of God. Have a great week!

[Brother Vaughn works with the Mebane St. church, Burlington, NC, P.O. Box 1861, 27216-1861.]

Also, do you write a check to the IRS every April just because you want to show your appreciation for all they do for you? No, we do it because of government regulation.

The Christian life is lived in a similar manner. Unless we know the reason, it is difficult for us to commit to the duty. That is why preachers must teach doctrine. Otherwise, we become nothing more than cheerleaders.

Preachers should not be interested in intimidating people to get them to conform either legalistically or emotionally. Our responsibility is to teach the word and let it have God's desired effect (Isa. 55:11). Doctrine is the key to Christian living.

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The Urgency of Right Living

by David Pharr, Editor

It has been said that dedicated men are haunted by the shortness of time. The more urgent and important one sees his life's goals to be, the more he fears running out of time. The older he gets in years, the more keenly he feels the urgency to get on with what he wants to accomplish. This kind of concern is behind the admonitions of the text. Time is running out. It is urgent that we concentrate on righteousness.

"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Rom. 13:11-14).

Three Pressing Realities

In three forceful statements the apostle shows the pressing realities which are forced upon us by the passing of time. In each he measures time from a spiritual perspective. Like Moses, he wants us to learn "to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" (Psa. 90:12).

1. **The urgency of the age** — "And that knowing the time . . . it is high time. . . ." Practically, this applies to every age. To know the conditions of a world drained of godliness and filled with carnality should show us how pressing the need is for people who will live and serve as lights in the world. (See Phil. 2:15.)

2. **The urgency of redemption** — "For now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." Salvation may be viewed in three senses. We were saved from our past sins when we were born again (Mark 16:16). We are saved from sins we confess (1 John 1:7-9). And we will be saved eternally (Rom. 5:9). "Believed" is used in the comprehensive sense of gospel obedience. The point be-

ing made is that every second brings us closer to the time when our faith will receive its eternal reward. Now we continue in time of probation. Both the fact of present redemption and the anticipation of eternal redemption make right living a pressing urgency.

3. **The urgency of opportunity** — "The night is far spent, the day is at hand." Some assume this refers to Christ's coming. The more natural interpretation seems to be simply that the time for sleep (inactivity) is past. As day dawns one must enter into the duties of the day. This is much like the figure Jesus used: "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work" (John 9:4).

Six Pressing Exhortations

In view of the realities of the swift passing of time, life, and opportunities, Paul urges attention to several aspects of Christian living — positive and negative — which we might classify as follows:

1. **A time to be alert and diligent** — "Awake out of sleep." Spiritual indolence causes spiritual poverty and ruin. A spiritual application can be given to Ecclesiastes 10:18. "By much slothfulness the building decayeth: and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through." There never was a time when it was more urgent that the church and every member be awakened to the dangers, challenges, and opportunities before us.

2. **A time to be properly dressed** — "Let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light." It is frequently necessary to call attention to the need for being modest in how one dresses. Both extravagance and indecency in apparel are immodest for Christians (1 Tim. 2:9-10). This text, however, touches a deeper need — proper clothing for the heart, for the character. If our souls wear the fashions of godliness, we will hardly be tempted by the fashions of the world.

3. **A time for respectability** — "Let us walk honestly, as in the day." The day (day-

light) suggests being out in the open, where one can be seen. Hypocrites hide their true character in darkness. Walking (continuous course of life) honestly means more than just business integrity; it suggests being honorable, respectable. The same emphasis is echoed in Ephesians 5:8-13 and 1 Thessalonians 5:4-8. A Christian should always live so that he has **nothing to hide, no one to avoid, no excuses to make.**

4. A time to avoid all forms of reprobation. Verse 13 gives three couplets to describe a reprobate life.

“Not in rioting and drunkenness.” Rioting is carousing. It is connected to drunkenness because they naturally go together. Intoxicants reduce inhibitions (Prov. 23:29-35, especially v. 33). I agree with Howard Winters: “There can be no drunkenness without drinking and there can be no drinking (of beverage alcohol) without drunkenness to one degree or another” (**Commentary on Romans**). Drunkenness is not only a close kin of carousing, but one would be hard pressed to name any moral evil that has not shared the bed with intoxication.

“Not in chambering and wantonness.” Chambering is a euphemism for fornication, and wantonness is the lascivious mind and manners that led to it. The humor, conversation, entertainment, and fashions of the world are filled with immoral suggestiveness. We are told to “Flee fornication” (1 Cor. 6:18). The warning against wantonness forbids the flirtations and titillations that even vaguely suggest immoral conduct.

“Not in strife and envying.” It is significant that the Holy Spirit placed these sins in the same list as the obviously immoral things named above. On the other hand, it is ironic that so many otherwise decent people do not see quarreling and jealousy as serious sins. I once knew a man who died of a heart attack immediately following a quarrel at the church building, with a brother, over a petty dispute. No doubt many have died spiritually over the same kinds of things.

5. A time for imitating Christ — “Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.” This is not the putting on of Christ at baptism (Gal. 3:27), but the continued pursuit of a Christ-

like character. Formal religious exercises are relatively easy compared to learning to think, to speak, to act, to be like Jesus.

This is the kind of admonition that we tend to take for granted, but fail to take seriously. Every church member knows we are supposed to follow Christ’s example. It is, though, the easier course to just be as we are, satisfied to be much less than the Master wanted to make us.

6. A time for self-control — “Make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.” The flesh (our earthly nature) left unrestrained is going to seek its own gratification. This admonition does not pertain to the natural instincts for the welfare of the physical body. False asceticism is contrary to Scripture and reason. But both the natural and unnatural urges of the body may become Satan’s door of entry (Jas. 1:14-15).

To make provision suggests forethought and preparation. Ungodly men arrange circumstances that will facilitate sinful deeds. The point of this warning is that we should not go anywhere, be with anybody, seek anything, or do anything that would make it easier to accept fleshly enticements.

The Urgency of Right Living

A simple summary of the text tells us: Time is running out! It is urgent, therefore, that we live right in regard to all things! And urgency means that we must do right, right now!

Warren W. Wiersbe gives these pointed conclusions: “Wake up!” “Clean up!” “Grow up!”

A forgotten poet said it well:

’Tis just one life,
’Twill soon be past,
And only what’s done for
Christ will last.

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An Old Proverb

by Ralph J. Jones

There is an old proverb that says, "Man proposes, but God disposes," which suggests that God sometimes interferes with the plans and purposes of men; that men are unable to carry out their schemes sometimes because of divine interference. Without questioning the truthfulness of this old proverb, allow me to suggest that the opposite, "God proposes, but man disposes," sometimes is the way it is. This is not sacrilegious, nor is it limiting the power of God. Man has freedom of will and because of this freedom can and often does reject the teaching of God, and by rejecting God's teaching thwarts, or defeats God's purpose. God has so designed the scheme of things so as to give man a part in many of the affairs of the universe. Paul wrote Christians at Corinth, "We are God's fellow workers" (1 Cor. 3:9). Where God's plans do not include the purposes and actions of men, they are always carried out to the letter; but where His purposes depend upon

man in any way, they sometimes are perverted by men and are prevented from being fulfilled as God designed that they should be.

God had a high and holy purpose for the human race, but man introduced sin into the world. The "preacher" expressed it this way: "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions" (Eccl. 7:29).

The history of man upon the earth has been, to a great extent, a history of evil inventions. With the means that God has given for betterment of humanity, men have devised means for the destruction of humanity. Jesus said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets and stoneth them that are sent unto her! How often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen her chickens under her wings and ye would not" (Matt. 3:37).

Differences

by Ray Hawk

Why am I a member of the church of Christ rather than in some other faith? At one time I was a preacher in a very large denomination. They had a better salary structure as well as a ministerial retirement plan which churches of Christ do not have. Why change? If one denomination is as good as another, why switch?

Not Because Of . . .

I did not change because members of the churches of Christ live better lives than folks in other churches. Jesus had His Judas and we have a few in the twentieth century. Paul wrote that Demas has "forsaken me, having loved this present world," and things have not changed much in nineteen hundred and twenty-five years (2 Tim. 4:10). John was burdened with his Diotrefes and we have not been successful in diminishing this sin

in our day (3 John 9, 10). Christians sin (Acts 8:18-24). Folks still forsake the Lord (Heb. 10:25-29). Some fall from God's grace (Gal. 5:4). It is a fact that has not changed. If I had been looking for a sinlessly perfect people, I did not find them in the churches of Christ. If I had, they would not have wanted me!

I did not change because the churches of Christ have folks who are more friendly, give more, work more, have no problems, have better reputations, and get along better than any other faith. Church problems have existed since Corinth (1 Cor. 1:10-13). Lukewarmness was found in Laodicea (Rev. 3:14-17). Indifference cropped up in Hebrew congregations (Heb. 4:11). Although we strive for faithfulness in the churches of Christ, we have never reached sinless perfection and never will. Sinless perfection is not

our goal. Faithfulness is, and many congregations have attained it. However, I would have become a member of the church of Christ even if the only congregation I had been familiar with had been like Corinth, or as bad as Laodicea.

But Due To . . .

I became a member of the church of Christ because Jesus Himself teaches that I must be immersed to be saved (Mark 16:16). At the age of 11 I had been immersed to "show that God, for Christ's sake, had already remitted my sins." The church of Christ is the only church that does what Jesus taught in Mark 16:16. Therefore, on May 9, 1957, I was immersed to be saved by Jesus.

I became a member of the church of Christ because my former church taught that it was non-essential to my salvation. It taught that I could be a Christian, live out my life, die and go to heaven without being a member of it. The Lord teaches that His church is essential to my salvation because He purchased it with His own blood (Acts 20:28). He calls it His body (Eph. 1:22, 23). To be in His church is to be a member of His body and have Him as my head (1 Cor. 12:27; Col. 1:18, 24). I wanted to be in His church. Therefore, I was immersed into Christ in 1957 (Gal. 3:27).

I became a member of the church of Christ because I can be just a Christian without putting a denominational, man-made name before it (1 Pet. 4:16). I can call the church by those descriptive names given by God in His word rather than using divisive, man-made ones (Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 1:2). I can preach from the Bible without being restricted by a denominational manual, discipline, minutes, or catechism (1 Pet. 4:11; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 2 Pet. 1:3). I can serve in my priesthood as a preacher without being elevated into unscriptural positions or being referred to by non-biblical titles.

I became a member of the church of Christ because the membership demands book, chapter, and verse preaching. If it is opinion, tradition, or feelings, it means nothing. If it is a "thus saith the Lord," we are obligated to follow it. The Bible is our only guide. God speaks to us through its in-

struction. If a practice is not authorized by God's word, we must not practice it.

Conclusion

Although my brethren sometimes disappoint me, I will never leave the Lord nor His body, the church. Although I may sometimes disappoint my brethren, I trust they will never leave the Lord nor His church. If the Lord's church is important to Him, it must be to us.

[Ray works with the Campbell Street church in Jackson, TN, 1490 Campbell Street, 38305.]

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Death and the Christian

by Bruce Green

Although there is much pain involved with every death (who could minimize that?), there are also some profound truths taught by death and it would be wrong for us not to learn them.

1. Death is a part of life. Expectedly or unexpectedly, death will come to you and to me. Perhaps we have never contemplated death in personal terms, but we should. With the notable exceptions of Enoch, Elijah and those living when Jesus returns, death will come to us all. We need to think of our lives in terms of our mortality — what it will be like when we are gone. Then we will know how we should have lived.

2. Death is the beginning, not the end of life. To the Christian, death is a servant. In many cases it means the end of slowly declining health or the end of great pain and suffering. But death is best thought of, not as an end, but as a beginning, because it delivers us into the loving arms of our heavenly

Father. Therefore, death should not be looked upon with fear or dread, but as a servant come to take us home.

3. People are what is important, not things. People are here today and gone tomorrow. People are standing on the brink of eternity. Our call is to love them, serve them, and to show them Jesus; to hold up the hands of those who hurt and mourn; to encourage each other to heaven.

Heaven! Too good to be true? No, too good not to be true. Do you fear that eternity will somehow be “boring”? That you will not “fit in” with endless song services and prayer meetings? (Where do we get those ideas anyway?) Do not worry; whatever heaven will be, you can trust that it is worth living for on earth. After all, we have got our Father’s word on it.

[P.O. Box 1385, Sumter, SC 29151. Bruce works with the Plaza church of Christ.]

Give Them Encouragement

by Gary G. Payne

Barnabas was a man who would stand up for you. He would accept you for who you were. He would help you become what you could be.

On one occasion Barnabas and Paul were about to embark on a missionary journey. Barnabas wanted to take Mark with them, but Paul did not think it was very wise to bring him. Mark had deserted them on a previous trip. Barnabas and Paul disagreed so sharply that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark to Cyprus. Paul took Silas and went through Syria (Acts 15:36-41).

We do not know why Mark left Barnabas and Paul before. But whatever it was, Paul did not have much confidence in him. I do not know that Paul did this, but have you ever met someone who would write other people off? “Well, that boy is no account. I would not trust him with anything. Why, one time he . . .”

But Barnabas gave Mark a chance. Even Barnabas’ name meant “Son of Encouragement.” Barnabas took Mark in and worked with him. Sometimes we need to give people a lot of our time and effort. Someone is fighting alcohol. A young girl has a baby and no husband. Or, there are those like Mark who just do not meet up to someone else’s high expectations.

Whatever happened to Mark? He became an effective evangelist. Later Paul saw the progress in Mark. He told the church at Colosse, “If he comes to you, welcome him” (Col. 4:10). Paul might look back and give us this advice: “Be like Barnabas. Be patient. Work with people. Give them time to grow. Give them time to change. Give them encouragement.”

[907 Courtland Avenue, Reidsville, NC 27320.]

People Power

by Mark Swindall

PEOPLE! Life boils down to people. Our basic mistakes are people mistakes. Life is one great adventure in human relations.

Some value money over people. This shows up in the way we treat people. A man's worth to us is judged by his bank account. Whether we admit it or not this shows up at church. We want people to be assets — not liabilities. We respect/admire the successful; we look down upon the "losers." Success too often has too much "I say" down at church.

Some value themselves over people. This means people are only important to us when serving us. People seldom realize their opinion of others is even more a confession of their own character. Paul tells us to count others as more important than ourselves (Phil. 2). He repeatedly warns of "thinking too highly of ourselves."

If we value people we will be valued: if we do not, we will not. If we want to be loved we must love others. What we give is what we get. What we use, develops; what we do not use, dies. True greatness is spelled S-E-R-V-I-C-E! Jesus was a servant; Christianity is servanthood, serving others.

1. Value people above everything except God.

2. Give to people above everything except God.

3. Make cooperation, courtesy, thoughtfulness a way of life.

4. Serve those you would lead.

Good leadership is not so much a matter of demanding performance as it is inspiring enthusiasm. PEOPLE POWER!

[2721 Cordwainer Ct., Charleston, SC 29414.]

A Book Review

by Michael R. Mobley

Questions of Today, Raymond T. Exum; Exum Press, 885 Coventry Lane, Crystal Lake, IL 60014; paper.

This series of tracts, designed for personal evangelism use, contains four titles, each based on an important question. "Are You Looking for a Church?" 16 pages, suggests a three-part criteria for how to choose a church: name, creed, and organization. From the Scriptures, it confronts the reader with the search for which church has this criteria correctly. "Should You Be Baptized?" 16 pages, examines the example of the apostle Paul and asks some very practical questions: What did not save Paul? What did bring about Paul's salvation? What is God's plan for salvation? It also deals with the issue of when to be baptized. "Will All People Be Saved?" 16 pages, gives biblical and modern examples to show that some will be lost and why. It then deals with the concepts of our responsibility to accept

God's salvation and of God's judgment. Finally, "Could This Be the Last Day of Your Life?" 16 pages, deals with the responsibility that dying places on us, that is, the decisions we make and how we should live. Each one of these tracts is illustrative, Scriptural, and friendly. Mr. Exum taught English for ten years before becoming a preacher, and he writes in a clear and appealing style. We recommend this entire series for every congregation.



Brotherhood News

by Dennis Conner

Around North Carolina . . .

The MEADOWBROOK ROAD church in Asheboro enjoyed a record Sunday morning attendance on June 3 of 137. Mike Mays is the preacher at Meadowbrook Road. The occasion was the dedication of their new building addition. . . . The ALBEMARLE CHURCH OF CHRIST, which averages about 50 for Sunday morning worship, had an average attendance of 104 for their recent Vacation Bible School. . . . PHIL KINZER is the new preacher for the PROVIDENCE ROAD CHURCH OF CHRIST in Charlotte. . . . The NORTH WAKE CHURCH OF CHRIST had their first worship service on June 24. This is a new church planting by the Brooks Avenue church in Raleigh. . . . BRUCE CURD is now preaching for the RED OAK church in Weaverville. Bruce is a native of Marion, NC, and is returning

to the Carolinas after preaching for churches in other parts of the country.

And South Carolina . . .

The CHARLOTTE AVENUE CHURCH OF CHRIST in Rock Hill now has JEFF PERCER working with them as an associate minister.

And Other Places . . .

V.E. HOWARD recently completed 55 years of radio ministry. Howard is the speaker for the International Gospel Hour. Over three million copies of his sermons have been printed and mailed. . . . A campaign last March in Belize City and neighboring towns of the small nation of Belize resulted in 30 baptisms.

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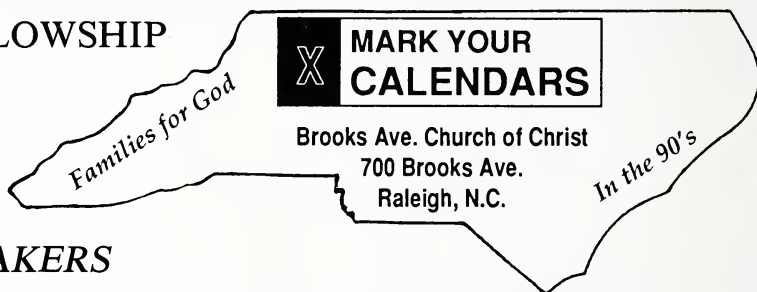
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CAROLINA CHRISTIAN

VOL. 32, NO. 8, AUGUST 1990



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NEW!

Want to catch an extremist? Here's what you do. Place the adjective "new" in front of some program or teaching, and sit back and listen. The amazing thing about this method is that it will catch both known types of extremists — liberals and ultra-conservatives. The liberals will immediately declare their support of this "new" thing, and the ultra-conservatives will just as quickly sound their opposition to it because it's "new."

The preceding paragraph was written somewhat with tongue-in-cheek; but it does describe two extremes that existed at the time the New Testament was penned, and continue to exist to this very day. I'm referring to those like the liberal Athenians who set around the Aeropagus waiting to hear something "new" (Acts 17:19-21), and those like the ultra-conservative Jews of Christ's day who rejected the "new wine" He brought, saying "the old is good enough" (Luke 5:39).

It is important for us to reject both extremes in responding to new programs and new insights. We should not **accept** them just because they are new, but neither should we **reject** them just because they are new. We need to keep in mind how that "every scribe who has become a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a head of a household, who brings forth out of his treasure things new and old" (Matt. 13:52).

Let's not **run after** every preacher who claims to have something new to offer, but let's not **run off** every teacher who may be able to provide us with some insight that we have formerly lacked. Rather, let's give a fair hearing to each one and then let's "search the Scriptures to see whether these [new] things are so" (see Acts 17:11).

— Paul E. Jarrett



editorial

by David Pharr, Editor

Dennis L. Moss of Clovis, New Mexico, wrote recently regarding the current advertising campaign of the Mormons in which they are promoting **The Book of Mormon** as "the **other** testament of Jesus Christ." Brother Moss sent a copy of the Mormons' recent ad in **Reader's Digest**. We have seen the same propaganda in their spot television ads.

While we have kind and respectful feelings toward the people who are members of the Mormon religion, we are dismayed and disgusted with every feature of Mormonism that distinguishes it from New Testament Christianity. Freedom of religion provides for the Mormons' right to advocate their beliefs as much as anyone else. It is nonetheless nauseating, however, to see and hear them advancing the deception that **The Book of Mormon** is in any way connected with Christ and Christianity.

It is especially sad that so many people will likely be deceived by the Mormon propaganda. Generally people know so little about the Bible that they will not readily recognize that the Mormon books are false and anti-Christian. Mormon history and Mormon teaching are unsavory to the core, but the Mormons' zealous programs of proselytizing, which include Madison Avenue advertising techniques, have made Mormonism respectable in the eyes of many.

One striking contradiction between Mormonism and Christianity is that Mormons do not believe in the same Christ that we believe in. In recent times the Mormon church has carefully hidden many of their historic statements about Jesus, but their belief is in a Christ who was born of a **fleshly** union between God and Mary, and that Jesus was Himself a polygamist and the father of fleshly children. Such is only a sample of Mormon blasphemy.

The Mormon cult is growing. This is due to at least three factors: (1) They are zealous; (2) The public is woefully uninformed and easy prey to the Mormon line of "good words and fair speeches"; (3) Those who

know the truth and could successfully meet the Mormon challenge are too busy with programs or too passive about doctrine to be very bold in answering them. Many people will be pulled into the Mormon cult simply because no one ever showed them the truth. Brother Moss writes, "Should we allow such as this to go unanswered?"

In this issue of **Carolina Christian** we are reprinting an article by James D. Bales on "Mormons and the Family," which was taken from the **Firm Foundation**, May 27, 1980. This article documents some of the actual theology of the Mormon religion.

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CAROLINA CHRISTIAN (P.O.P.N. 091160) is published monthly by Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., at 71 S. Fairfield Road, Greenville, SC 29605. Subscription price: individual \$8.00 per year (\$15.00 for 2 years and \$22.00 for 3 years); club of five or more \$7.50 each; quantity of 15 or more in bundles or direct mailing 50¢ per copy per month. Publication number, 091160.

Second class postage paid at Greenville, SC.
POSTMASTER: Send change with Form 3579 to Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., Johnny Melton, Managing Editor, Route 2, Box 137, Conover, North Carolina 28613.

RETURN REQUESTED

Address editorial matter to David Pharr, Editor, ETSOPM, 6608 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37931. Address news items to Dennis Conner, P.O. Box 1219, Yadkinville, NC 27055.

All items to be printed in a given month's issue should reach the editor not later than the next-to-the-last Thursday of the preceding month.

Address commercial advertising inquiries to Jacobs List, Inc., Clinton, SC 29325. Address all advertising pertaining to the Church of Christ or its members (including related organizations) to the editor.

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The Power of the Tongue

by Johnny Melton

Someone has well said, "By examining the tongue, physicians find out the diseases of the body; and philosophers, the diseases of the mind and heart." What we say reveals our heart. Jesus declared, "Out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks" (Matt. 12:34). Misuse of the tongue is sometimes excused on the basis that the tongue is in a dark, wet, slippery place. However, rather than that being an excuse for failure, it should be the basis for vigilance.

James understood the tendency of people to say things they ought not. Consider his thoughts and heed his admonition: "Someone who does not trip up in speech has reached perfection and is able to keep the whole body on a tight rein. Once we put a bit in the horse's mouth, to make it do what we want, we have the whole animal under control. Or think of ships: no matter how big they are, even if a gale is driving them, they are directed by a tiny rudder wherever the helmsman decides. So the tongue is only a tiny part of the body, but its boasts are great. Think how small a flame can set fire to a huge forest; the tongue is a flame too. Among all the parts of the body, the tongue is a whole wicked world: it infects the whole body; catching fire itself from hell, it sets fire to the whole wheel of creation. Wild animals and birds, reptiles and fish of every kind can all be tamed, and have been tamed, by humans; but nobody can tame the tongue — it is a pest that will not keep still, full of deadly poison. We use it to bless the Lord and Father, but we also use it to curse people who are made in God's image: the blessings and curse come out of the same mouth. My brothers, this must be wrong — does any water supply give a flow of fresh water and salt water out of the same pipe? Can a fig tree yield olives, my brothers, or a vine yield figs? No more can sea water yield fresh water" (Jas. 3:2b-12, NJB).

Solomon's collection of wise sayings includes many concerning the tongue. F. La-

Gard Smith, in his **Narrated Bible** (an edition of the New International Version), catalogs the proverbs by theme. Under "Control of the Tongue," Smith lists eleven subheadings and fifty-six proverbs. Among them are the following:

Wise and foolish talk "A wise man's heart guides his mouth, and his lips promote instruction" (16:23). "A fool's lips bring him strife, and his mouth invites a beating. A fool's mouth is his undoing, and his lips are a snare to his soul" (18:6-7).

Righteous and wicked talk "The mouth of the righteous brings forth wisdom, but a perverse tongue will be cut out. The lips of the righteous know what is fitting, but the mouth of the wicked only what is perverse" (10:31-32).

Appropriate speech "Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones" (16:24). "A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver" (25:11).

Maintaining silence "Even a fool is thought wise if he keeps silent, and discerning if he holds his tongue" (17:28). "He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from calamity" (21:23).

Controlled speech "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger" (15:1).

Flattery "A lying tongue hates those it hurts, and a flattering mouth works ruin" (26:28).

Slander and gossip "He who covers over an offense promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends" (17:9).

Hurtful talk "A man who lacks judgment derides his neighbor, but a man of understanding holds his tongue" (11:12).

Quarreling "It is to a man's honor to avoid strife, but every fool is quick to quarrel" (20:3).

Lying "The LORD detests lying lips, but he delights in men who are truthful"

(12:22).

Power of tongue "From the fruit of his mouth a man's stomach is filled; with the harvest from his lips he is satisfied. The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit" (18:20-21).

The Revised English Bible renders Proverbs 21:23: "Keep a guard over your lips and tongue and you keep yourself out of trouble." Indeed, the Christian's tongue should be kept. It should be kept for God's use and kept away from evil. It should be kept gentle, not perverse or harsh. "The tongue that soothes is a tree of life; the perverse tongue, a breaker of hearts" (15:4, NJB). It should also be kept kind. In the famous acrostic poem that concludes the book of Proverbs, "a wife of noble character" is described as one who "When she opens her mouth, she

does so wisely; on her tongue is kindly instruction" (31:26, NJB). But, most importantly, the tongue must be kept bridled. We must make every effort to keep cruel and irritable words from leaping from our lips. "If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless" (Jas. 1:26). Maintaining a tight rein on the tongue can be a mark of Christian love. Hugo McCord translates 1 Corinthians 13:7a like this: Love "throws a cloak of silence over what is displeasing in another person."

Keeping one's tongue in check is a sign not only of emotional and social maturity, but of spiritual maturity as well. God help us to recognize the power of our tongues and to use that power constructively and never destructively.

Mormons and the Family

by James D. Bales

What is happening to the family should be of concern to all religious people. The Latter-Day Saints, or Mormons, are emphasizing in national advertisements the importance of the family. There are some who may not realize that this is a bit strange for a church whose founder created trouble with his first wife by marrying other women. In fact, Smith got a revelation which threatened damnation to anyone who rejected the plurality of wives. Among other things, the heading of Section 132 of **Doctrine and Covenants** (SLC, Utah: The Church of Jesus Christ of LDS, 1968) says: "Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Nauvoo, Illinois, recorded July 12, 1843, relating to the new and everlasting covenant, including the eternity of the marriage covenant, as also plurality of wives" (239).

"And as pertaining to the new and everlasting covenant, it was instituted for the fullness of my glory; and he that receiveth a fullness thereof must and shall abide the law, or he shall be damned, saith the Lord God" (132:6).

"Verily I say unto you: A commandment I give unto mine handmaid, Emma Smith,

your wife, whom I have given unto you, that she stay herself and partake not of that which I commanded you to offer unto her; for I did it, saith the Lord, to prove you all, as I did Abraham, and that I might require an offering at your hand, by covenant and sacrifice.

"And let mine handmaid, Emma Smith, receive all those that have been given unto my servant Joseph, and who are virtuous and pure before me; and those who are not pure, and have said they were pure, shall be destroyed, saith the Lord God.

"For I am the Lord thy God, and ye shall obey my voice; and I give unto my servant Joseph that he shall be made ruler over many things; for he hath been faithful over a few things, and from henceforth I will strengthen him.

"And I command mine handmaid, Emma Smith, to abide and cleave unto my servant Joseph, and to none else. But if she will not abide this commandment she shall be destroyed, saith the Lord; for I am the Lord thy God, and will destroy her if she abide not in my law.

"But if she will not abide this command-

ment, then shall my servant Joseph do all things for her, even as he hath said; and I will bless him and multiply him and give unto him an hundred-fold in this world, of fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, houses and lands, wives and children, and crowns of eternal lives in the eternal worlds.

“And again, verily I say, let mine handmaid forgive my servant Joseph his trespasses; and then shall she be forgiven her trespasses, wherein she has trespassed against me; and I, the Lord thy God, will bless her, and multiply her, and make her heart to rejoice” (132:51-56).

The fact that anyone who rejected the revelation would be condemned, and that Emma Smith is instructed to continue with Smith, indicates that she was not happy about plural marriages. William Clayton said: “Two or three days after the revelation was written, Joseph related to me and several others that Emma had so teased, and urgently entreated him for the privilege of destroying it, that he became so weary of her teasing, and to get rid of her annoyance, he told her she might destroy it and she had done so, but he had consented to her wish in this matter to pacify her, realizing that he knew the revelation perfectly, and could rewrite it at any time if necessary” (B.H. Roberts, **A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints**, Provo, Utah: Published by the Church, Brigham Young University Press, 1965, Vol. II, p. 107).

In order to understand the full meaning of the Latter-Day Saints' attitude toward the family one must know something about their doctrine of God. The tempter told Eve, “Ye shall be as God” if you partake of the forbidden fruit (Gen. 3:4-5). Joseph Smith, Jr., the founder and prophet of the Latter-Day Saint movement, taught that we can become Gods. As Lorenzo Snow summed it up: “As man now is, God once was; as God now is, man may become” (**Improvement Era**, Jan. 1909, p. 174). Joseph Smith, Jr., said: “God himself was once as we are now, and is exalted man and sits enthroned in yonder heavens” (Joseph Fielding Smith, compiler, **Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith**, p. 345)! He also said: “You have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves, and to be kings

and priests to God, the same as all Gods have done before you, namely, by going from one small degree to another . . .” (346-347).

One becomes a God by having many wives and in eternity having many offspring until he becomes God over his offspring. Brigham Young, who was President of their church after Smith's death, said that “You will be polygamists at least in your faith, or you will come short of enjoying the salvation and the glory which Abraham has obtained” (**Journal of Discourses**, Vol. XI, pp. 268-269). “The only men who become Gods, even the Sons of God, are those who enter into polygamy” (269). He promised mothers that “you will see the time when you will have millions of children around you” (Vol. I, p. 208).

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints does not sanction polygamy for this earth, but people can marry for eternity in this life and rear children in eternity. They become Gods, and I assume the women become Goddesses. There are some small groups who have split with the main church who reason about polygamy as follows: Eventually (in heaven), why not now (on earth)?

Apostle Orson Hyde once said: “They may break us up, and rout us from one place to another, but by and by we shall come to a point where we will have all the women, and they will have none. You may think I am joking about this, but I can bring you to the truth of God to demonstrate it to you” (**Journal of Discourses**, Vol. II, p. 83).

Orson Hyde, an apostle and a President, at the General Conference in Salt Lake City, October 6, 1854, said: “Gentlemen, that is as plain as the translators, or different councils over this Scripture, dare allow it to go to the world, but the thing is there; it is told; Jesus was the bridegroom at the marriage

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of Cana of Galilee, and he told them what to do.

“Now there was actually a marriage; and if Jesus was not the bridegroom on that occasion, please tell us who was. If any man can show this, and prove that it was not the Savior of the world, then I will acknowledge I am in error. We say it was Jesus Christ who was married, to be brought into the relation whereby he could see his seed, before he was crucified” (*Journal of Discourses*, (Liverpool: Published by F.D. Richards,

1855, Vol. II, p. 82).

There is a lot more to the Mormon doctrine of the family than meets the eye, and Mormons, including their missionaries, need to be asked about it. They certainly do not have the same concept of the family as is set forth in the New Testament. Some who at first may find their message attractive may change their minds when they know some of these things.

[Firm Foundation — May 27, 1980.]

Reexamining the Fundamentals, XVI

by David Pharr, Editor

Among “those things which are most surely believed among us” is the expectation of the return of Christ. Acts 1 records that as the eleven watched Jesus ascend, “two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven” (10-11).

Christians happily embrace the sweet promise of Jesus: “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:3). Thus, we are “looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13), because “we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2).

The magnitude and magnificence of Jesus’ return will be more than human imagination can grasp. It would be folly to suppose that we could understand all that is involved. The splendor and power of His holy advent will be more than earth’s languages can convey and more than human hearts can conceive. Yet God has seen fit to reveal some things of His plans, and from the Bible we can be sure of certain doctrines of the Lord’s return and the end of the world.

Eschatology is the theologians’ term for the study of the end of the world, especially

centered on the advent of Christ. These matters have always been abused by foolish speculations, and many false doctrines and their resulting sects have arisen from these speculations. In both of his epistles to them Paul found it necessary to especially caution the Thessalonians against errors regarding Christ’s return. Guided by the Spirit, this apostle found it necessary to give the names of two false teachers — Hymenaeus and Philetus — who “erred, saying the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some” (2 Tim. 2:17-18).

In later articles we plan to notice some of the currently popular errors. In particular we will look at premillennialism — the “secret rapture,” the thousand-year reign, etc. We will also notice what is known as Max Kingism. This is a speculation that the prophecies of Christ’s return were all fulfilled in A.D. 70. Like the infamous and cankerous error of Hymenaeus and Philetus, these heresies “overthrow the faith of some.” In this installment, however, we simply want to outline the fundamental truths regarding this important subject.

1. Clearly the Bible promises that Jesus is coming (Acts 1:9-11; Phil. 3:20; 1 Thess. 1:10; 4:16; Heb. 9:28; Rev. 1:7; et al.). Peter recognized that there would be a time lapse between the death of “the fathers” (first generation Christians) and the Lord’s coming which would cause scoffers to deny the promise (2 Pet. 3:3-4), but Peter shows that the apparent delay is only because of the

longsuffering of God, and that the day of the Lord indeed will come (2 Pet. 3:8-10).

2. No one knows when Jesus is coming, not even angels, not even Jesus Himself (at least during His earth ministry); only God (Matt. 24:42-44; Mark 13:32-33; 1 Thess. 5:1-3; et al.). It is nothing short of astounding that people have attempted to foretell the date. All such efforts have been foolish and vain. Only God knows the day He has appointed (Acts 17:31).

3. All of the dead will be raised. "There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust" (Acts 24:15) — one resurrection day for all men, good and bad. Jesus made this absolutely plain in John 5:28-29. When Jesus comes the dead in Christ will be raised and then with the righteous who are alive (who will be changed) will be caught up to meet the Lord (1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-54). At the same time sinners will face Christ for judgment (2 Thess. 1:7-10). All the dead will come before the "great white throne" at the same time (Rev. 20:11-13), and the judgment of all nations will be "When the Son of man shall come in his glory . . ." (Matt. 25:31ff). Thus, the wicked "shall wail" because of His coming (Rev. 1:7), but the people of God will be glad with "exceeding joy" (1 Pet. 4:13).

4. The universe will be destroyed (2 Pet. 10ff; Rev. 21:1). There will be a "new heav-

ens and a new earth," but it will not be here. Instead, the new dwelling place of God's people will be the place Jesus went to prepare (John 14:1-3). Then we will be where Jesus is now.

5. The reign of Christ over the earthly manifestation of His kingdom will end. Christ established His kingdom, which is the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God, on Pentecost. He had foretold that the kingdom would come within that generation (Mark 9:1). In the same text He said it would come with power. The power was to come when the Holy Spirit came on the apostles (Acts 1:8) and that happened in Acts 2. Thus Peter affirms that Jesus was raised up "to sit on his throne," where He will reign until all His enemies are His footstool (Acts 2:31, 34-35). Paul shows the significance of this in 1 Corinthians 15:23-26. The last enemy to be destroyed is death, which will be accomplished in the resurrection. "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God."

The earthly manifestation of the kingdom is the church. Jesus used the terms interchangeably (Matt. 16:18-19). Jesus is the King of the kingdom and the Head of the church. Citizens in the kingdom are the same people who are saints in the church (Col. 1:13; 1:2; 1 Cor. 1:2).

(To be continued)

Parental Discipline

by David R. Powell

Mr. Sweat, the Chief of Police in Winston-Salem, was recently interviewed concerning the violence and drug trade which is currently taking place in the housing projects of the city. On Sunday, June 17, of this year, segments of this interview were printed in the **Winston-Salem Journal**. Chief Sweat stated:

"Right now, the climate on the east side, and the way drugs are dealt there, is making living impossible . . . part of the problem is clearly the breakup of families and a failure by parents to take responsibility for their children. . . . People call the police to be

parents now, and we can't be parents. We can go and break up a fight; we can go tell a child, 'You shouldn't do that.' But as soon as we're gone, what kind of parenting is there?"

This situation reminds me of the words of Dr. James Dobson in his bestseller **Dare to Discipline**:

"Children thrive best in an atmosphere of genuine love undergirded by reasonable, consistent discipline. In a day of widespread drug usage, immorality, civil disobedience, vandalism and violence, we must not depend upon hope and luck to raise our children."

Both Chief Sweat and Dr. Dobson are communicating a biblical truth. Solomon writes:

"He who spares his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him promptly" (Prov. 13:24). "Do not withhold correction from a child . . ." (Prov. 23:13). "The rod

and reproof give wisdom, But a child left to himself brings shame to his mother" (Prov. 29:15).

[*David works with the North Main church, P.O. Box 321, Mocksville, NC 27028.*]

"I Want a Church That Meets My Needs"

by **Ronnie Missildine**

The statement made in the title is not only the desire of many in the religious world, but is becoming the philosophy of many Christians, because many of us are seeking a religion that "meets our needs." The phrase itself has virtually become a new religious term. Many people praise (or blame) a particular congregation because it is (or is not) "meeting my needs."

Let me hasten to say that if the phrase means that we need to satisfy spiritual hunger then it is a good expression. For surely everyone ought to be in a Christian community where his/her deepest spiritual longings are being addressed. The voice of God needs to be heard through spiritual teaching, and we need opportunities to serve, love, and be called to repentance.

But being a part of the church to some means reaching for goals of "self-actualization." So if the church does not fulfill certain expectations, wants, and preferences, then they must move on to another emotional department store with different merchandise more appealing to their "taste."

Sadly, and probably without realizing it, many congregations have gotten into the thinking that "We have to do all things and plan all the activities to meet people's needs so they will not leave." Consequently, well-meaning leaders have turned God's church into a merchandising institution. So we promote this program and that program for this group and that group.

But in my judgment the system has become turned upside down from the way God intended it to be. Whatever happened in the

attitude in a Christian's heart of "I would like to be a part of this congregation because of what I can do to meet its needs"? When are we most fulfilled? When are our needs met? Or how can we meet the needs of God's church on this earth? We ought to be a part of a congregation not so that our needs can be met, but rather so that we may best meet the needs of God's work.

Christians need to recall the truth of the Scriptures. The Bible says that personal fulfillment is a great spiritual paradox. We are most filled when we empty ourselves and serve others. Jesus taught us, ". . . whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister [servant] . . . even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister [serve]" (Matt. 20:26, 28). Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who

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loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). And again, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1). "Reasonable service" is not being served (having your needs met), but serving (meeting the needs of others). We need to relearn the axiom, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

Let us not demand that God's church be

a place where people (leadership or membership) cater to our desires and preferences. Let us ask for and work to make the church a place where we can serve, practice humility and sacrifice ourselves in His name, because we are here to help others! Let us turn it rightside up again and be a part of a congregation, not for what it can do for us, but for what we can do for it!

[Ronnie lives in Pensacola, FL. He is a son of the late beloved Ariel Missildine, one-time minister in Asheboro, NC.]

A Lesson From the Boll Weevil

by Rudy Senn

In Enterprise, Alabama, there is a monument honoring the boll weevil. Before 1915 cotton was king in the South. Farmers depended on cotton to survive. It was their money crop. Then along came this destructive little creature, the boll weevil, and it destroyed the cotton crop. Farmers were in danger of losing everything so they began to raise peanuts instead. Within three years they were more prosperous than ever.

If the boll weevil had not come along they would never have discovered the peanut and prosperity. So they built a monument to this destructive little creature.

Many of our greatest blessings are dis-

guised as tragedies. When Christ died on the cross the disciples were heartbroken. They thought that all was lost, the Redeemer had failed. The **tragedy** of His death set the stage for the **joy** of His resurrection.

When the boll weevils of life move in and threaten to destroy us, let us remember that "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that you may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10:13). The cross is a monument to the world's darkest hour and yet it is the hope of our greatest blessings (Gal. 6:14; Phil. 3:7-8).

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Do We Fail in Remembrance?

by Bob MacDonald

Paul and Luke record that Jesus said, “. . . do this in remembrance of me” (1 Cor. 11:24-25; Luke 22:19).

“Do this in remembrance of me” is written on the communion table, and on each Lord’s Day the message is on our minds.

But, do some of our congregations fail Jesus? What did Jesus ask us to remember? His death? No, He did not say such; He asked for **more**: He asked us to be in remembrance of **Him**!

If all we remember is His death (and pain), we fail. We thus are not in remembrance of **Him**. What **should** we remember about **Him**? Our remembrance should be fivefold:

Remembrance One

Yes, we should hear the traditional message that He died a cruel death on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins. But our remembrance is too frequently totally in sorrow for His agony and death.

Remembrance Two

We should remember **more**: we should remember that He did it, and **for us!** (“He could have called 10,000 angels” — but did not, and **for us!**) This shows that our remembrance needs more than just sorrow; it also needs a strong remembrance of **appreciation**, and **adoration**, and **love** — because He did not **avoid** the cross, because He was willing to die for **us**. These loving, positive emotions should predominate over the traditional negative emotion of “sorrow only.”

Remembrance Three

The bread: “This [bread] is my body, which is for you” (1 Cor. 11:24). We meditate on the bread; it represents His body, which is for us. “For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself” (1 Cor. 11:29). Jesus is the bread — the “living bread”: “I am the living bread that

comes down from heaven. If a man eats of this bread, he will live forever” (John 6:51). Let us remember that at the table. Let us talk about it at the table. When we have taken the bread, we frequently mention that it represents His “broken body.” We emphasize **death**. Let us start emphasizing His **victory** over death — His resurrection and ascension. Let us remember that Jesus told us that it represents His body coming down from heaven, that if we partake of **Him** we will have eternal life. Let us thank Him from the table for the promise of eternal life through Him. Let us show appreciation, a more proper remembrance than “sorrow only.” Let us show loving adoration.

Remembrance Four

The cup: “This cup is the new covenant in my blood . . .” (1 Cor. 11:25). We always talk about His shed blood. But He said that the cup is the **new covenant!** Why don’t we remember, and talk about, God’s new covenant when we take the cup? Jesus talked about it! He specified that we be in remembrance of it! Yet, in some congregations the discussion is only about His shed blood, with no remembrance of His having come to us to bring us God’s new covenant. Why not? Let us be in remembrance of God’s new covenant, as Jesus asked. Let us express our commitment to live under God’s new covenant that Jesus brought us.

Remembrance Five

Our Savior: If we are going to be in remembrance of **Jesus** (not just His death), let us remember with joy that He was **victor** over death (Heb. 11:2), and on each Sunday let us speak of His miraculous resurrection from the grave and ascension back to heaven at the side of God in order to intercede with God on our account, and to stand ready to receive and save all of us who come to God through **Him**. **That is** being “in remembrance.”

(Continued on page 12)

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Joy in Remembrance

If we change our remembrance from "sorrow only" to sorrow, appreciation, adoration and love, we will bring joy into our remembrance. Joy is what Jesus spoke of. John 16:20 says: "You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy." "Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy" (John 16:22). "I [will] drink [the cup] anew with you in my Father's kingdom" (Matt. 26:29). "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus . . . who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame and sat down at the right hand side of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:2). "I have come that they might have life, and have it to the fullest" (John 10:10).

Scriptures vs. Tradition

Shall we change? Can we change? Shall we follow tradition, or Scriptures? Shall we continue remembering only that He was crucified for forgiveness of our sins? Or, shall we start remembering that **He allowed** that crucifixion to happen — for us?

Shall we remember this gift:

— with sorrow only?

— or also with appreciation, admiration, adoration and love?

Shall we be joyous Christians looking forward to someday being with our victorious Savior?

[Brother MacDonald is a member of the Hendersonville, NC, congregation. Write to him at: 2730 Holly Hill Dr., Hendersonville, NC 28739.]

Uriah the Hittite

by J.C. Townsend

The 11th chapter of 2 Samuel tells of David's victory over the children of Ammon, and then recounts how David was overcome with lust and committed adultery with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite. David seemed well able to contend with the enemies of Israel, but he was not nearly as successful in dealing with himself.

The mention of Uriah the Hittite arouses the curiosity of the serious Bible student and leads one to make an attempt to find out who the Hittites were. For many years, critics of the Bible had a veritable field day feeling much satisfaction as they challenged Bible believers to produce some proof of the actual existence of this nation.

For a long time, there was no proof outside the Bible that there ever was such a people. This led many unbelievers to deny categorically that the Hittites were a real historical entity. This caused them to make various assertions about the Bible being nothing more than a collection of fairy tales and that its historical statements could not be trusted.

The Bible contains a number of references to the Hittite people. The first is found in Genesis 15 where they are mentioned

among the inhabitants of the promised land. Abraham bought the cave of Machpelah from Ephron the Hittite (Gen. 23:3-18). When the spies examined Canaan, they found "the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites" dwelling "in the mountains" (Num. 13:29). When the Hebrew people were in the process of settling in Canaan, the Hittites were among the national groups living in the land.

But who were these people? Sabatino Moscati, in his book, **The Face of the Ancient Orient**, traces the origin of this nation back into the third millennium B.C. It seems that, as a distinct people, the Hittites originated when an Indo-European element was superimposed on the native people of Anatolia. They evidently came from a great migration of people out of Europe into this area and which reached as far as India. They found a people called the "Hatti" already living there and they just took over the name.

Archaeological research has shown that they began to assert themselves around 1500 B.C. and remained a powerful people in the Near East at least until 1200 B.C. Even after their power waned, they remained a dis-

tinct national group for several centuries thereafter. It was in Asia Minor that they built their great civilization which was known as the "land of Anatolia."

In 1902 a Norwegian scholar by the name of J.A. Knudtzon showed by his studies that the inscriptions found on rocks and tablets all over the part of the world now known as Turkey were similar to Indo-European languages.

In 1915 Friedrich Hrozný gave a lecture to the Near Eastern Society of Berlin in which he revealed to the world his great work in deciphering the Hittite language. There came to light the existence of a people that had been completely forgotten and opened up great areas of knowledge that had been hid from the world. In addition, in a very wonderful way, the Bible has been shown to be completely accurate in all its statements.

Uriah, a soldier in the army of David, belonged to the Hittite nation, and stands out in the Bible as a very interesting individual. His life exhibited a number of wonderful qualities which need to be found in the lives of Christians.

A Mighty Man

First, it is interesting to note in 2 Samuel 23 a list of 37 men who are called "the mighty men whom David had," and that Uriah was among that number (2 Sam. 23:39). It is rather significant, isn't it, that among the men who were the leaders in David's government and army, a foreigner, a Hittite, is listed among them?

A Faithful Husband

In the second place, from what is said in the biblical text, there is every reason to believe that Uriah was a faithful husband. Bathsheba was his wife, and even though he was caught up in the turmoil of war with its bad effects on the morals of a people, it seems that Uriah had remained faithful to her.

When a man and a woman marry, God intends them to face the rigors of life together. Difficult world situations, financial reverses, family feuds, personality clashes, or general boredom with one's situation do

not constitute legitimate excuses for marital infidelity.

Perhaps Uriah could have reasoned that the troublesome times and the uncertainty of tomorrow gave him a license to be as immoral as he wished. But it didn't then and it doesn't today. Instead of letting down his guard, it seems that this noble character was faithful all the way. He steadfastly pursued the course that was honorable and stands as an example and an encouragement to us. David's unfaithfulness stands in stark contrast to the faithfulness of Uriah.

Man of Courage

After David's sin with Bathsheba and she was found to be with child, David had to devise a plan to cover his wrongdoing. He sent a letter to Joab and told him to place Uriah in the "forefront of the hottest battle" (2 Sam. 11:15).

There is nothing in the inspired record to indicate that he protested or flinched when placed in this dangerous situation. He was in the front lines where the battle was hot and the danger great, but he seemed to take his place there willingly. Joab even placed Uriah where he would face the most valiant men in the army of the enemy. It might have been that Uriah felt it an honor to be chosen to stand in the place where the greatest skill, courage, and steadfastness were needed.

This story should cause us to pause and examine our own willingness to stand for the Lord. There is a great need for soldiers in the Lord's army today to stand willingly on the front lines and faithfully fight for the greatest of all causes. It is unthinkable and inexcusable for God's people to retire behind the lines and forget all about the battle.

May we go AWOL? May we rest in our house by the side of the road and let the world go on in sin and error? Regardless of what attitude or action we take, the battle against false doctrines, false philosophies, and false moral systems is being waged all around. Uriah was willing to stand on the front lines where the battle was hot and the danger great. What about those of us in the Lord's church today?

Identified With God's Cause

Fourth, Uriah completely identified himself with Israel's cause which is the same as saying that he identified with God's cause. David called Uriah in from the war and told him to go home and spend some time with his wife. Uriah did not do as the king commanded and David called him to account for his failure to obey. His answer to David was, "The ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in booths; and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open field; shall I then go into my house, to eat

and drink, and to lie with my wife? As thou livest, and as thy soul livest, I will not do this thing."

We who have the honor of being called the people of God, can we say that we have so identified with the Lord's cause as to place ourselves and our pleasures last? Have we so identified with the Lord's cause that we consider duty, faithfulness, and service to be first and foremost in our lives? Uriah thought first of his duties as a soldier and our first thoughts should be of the Lord and His church.

It Is All Needed — Acts 2:42

by Bob Bickle

Out of the multitude of those who heard the first gospel sermon, 3,000 responded and were baptized for the remission of their sins. In Acts 2:42 we read, "And they continued steadfastly in the apostle's teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and the prayers."

These early Christians grew in the same way that new Christians can grow today: Bible study, fellowship with other Christians, worship, and prayers. I am convinced that if even one of these four is left out, spiritual growth will be negligible.

Peter reminds us that "as newborn babes, long for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation" (1 Pet. 2:2, ASV). We cannot know what sin is nor what the Lord's will is for us without regular and continuous Bible study. In 2 Timothy 2:15 we are encouraged to "Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth." Bible study takes work and desire, but without it one will spiritually starve to death.

Fellowship with the family of God is extremely important. Remember that we are reminded in 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 that we have no fellowship with the unbeliever. Fellowship is a joint participation. How can one jointly participate in fellowship with one in whom there is no common ground? "Take

heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God: but exhort one another day by day, so long as it is called Today; lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. 3:12-13). The early church is characterized as a church that loved each other. "And day by day continuing stedfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart" (Acts 2:46). Without fellowship, a Christian cannot grow in Christ.

The third ingredient that is necessary for spiritual growth is worship. Our Lord does not **need** us to assemble and worship Him; He knows that **we need** to assemble with other Christians and worship. In Hebrews 10:24-25 we read, "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works; not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh." As we assemble together, and sing together, and partake of the Lord's Supper, and are exhorted and encouraged through the preaching of God's word, and have an opportunity to give as we have been prospered, one cannot help but grow spiritually.

Finally one must learn how important it is to have a strong and healthy prayer life. The apostle Paul exhorted Christians to

“pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17). Christians are also encouraged, “In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:6-7).

The early church was a church that knew God’s word, were together at every opportunity, assembled regularly and worshipped God together, and took everything to God in prayer. Was the early church a growing church? Let the Scriptures give the answer. “And the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved” (Acts 2:47). “But many of them that heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand” (Acts 4:3-4). “And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women” (Acts 5:14).

How about it? Are you desiring to have more spiritual growth? Do you know that you are growing day after day? Do you want to have a guarantee, in writing from God’s word, that you will never fall from the grace of God? Please read 2 Peter 1:5-11 for this guarantee. After Peter wrote that we should add various Christian virtues to our lives, he wrote, “Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never stumble: for thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (vv. 10-11). Remember, to grow spiritually, you must study God’s word, be in fellowship with other Christians, do not forsake the worship of God with fellow Christians, and be diligent in your prayer life. It is all needed!

“Let Your Conscience Be Your Guide”

by Charles R. Lambert

I was ten years old when I remember first hearing the phrase: “Let your conscience be your guide.” It came from my father’s lips so I know it was the truth. I never had any reason to doubt him because I knew he was the most truthful man I had ever known.

My father did a lot of fishing when he was able, and one day we stopped at a boat dock to check on a boat he saw dry docked. Being the kid I was, I ran over to where some boxes were piled up. I started to play in the boxes when I saw something green. I picked it up and saw it was a two dollar bill. My heart jumped into my throat and I could not breathe.

I had the money safe in my pocket when my father and I got into the truck and we started home. We rode along and I began to stutter and tell my father what I found. He was greatly surprised because he did not believe there was such a thing as a two dollar bill. Quickly my father drove to the bank and asked the teller if the two dollar bill was real. They said the bill was good, and I was two dollars richer.

I bought all the candy I could eat, and

then my father called me to one side. He said, “You know you were very lucky because we did not have anybody to return the money to.” We did not even know a possible owner of the money. So my father said, “In situations like this, ‘Let your conscience be your guide.’ ”

Two years later I found another large bill in a feed store. I was with my father when we went into the store to buy feed for our chickens. There were three or four people in the store and everyone was talking.

While the manager and my father were talking, the manager’s wife left the store in a hurry. I was wandering around the store and looking down when I saw a bill lying on the wooden floor. I picked up the bill and put it in my pocket, all the time checking to see if anyone was watching me; then I left the store.

I had my hand on the money as I made a mad dash for the truck and sanctuary. I took the bill out of my pocket and gave it a good going over. I could not believe it was actually twenty American dollars. I was rich beyond belief! I thought of the first thing

I wanted to buy, a shiny Western Flyer bicycle.

I was just visualizing riding that bicycle when the bottom fell out of my dreams. The manager's wife was coming back to the store and she looked mighty worried. I put two and two together and I left my haven in the truck. I walked very slowly to the store and the lady met me at the door. She asked, "Did you find a twenty dollar bill?" I said, "Yes ma'am." I gave her the twenty dollar bill. She said, "It was my grocery money." She went to the Coke machine and gave me a free Coke in exchange for the twenty dollar bill.

My father was watching all through my character trial. He came over to me and said,

"You did the right thing; always 'let your conscience be your guide.'" I was swollen with pride that I had done the right thing, but I was too young to understand that my conscience led me in this direction for one reason only. I had been taught right from wrong.

If we let God be our guide and use our consciences like God intended we would be much better Christians. Hebrews 13:18 says: "Pray for us; for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly."

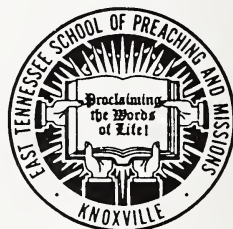
My father gave me good advice when I was young, but as we get older, the only really good advice is found in the Holy Bible.

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Confidence in the Text of the Bible

by Richard T. McWilliams

There is no lack of critics who try to raise doubts about the integrity of the text of the Bible. If serious doubt is cast upon the concept that the Bible, as we have it today, is essentially as it was written, then its authority as God's word is undermined. Thus it is important that we have good reason to have confidence in the text of the Bible.

Yet some in all honesty do not understand how a book written over a period of some fifteen hundred years, completed almost two thousand years ago, and only reproduced by being hand copied until some five hundred years ago, can be relied upon as being now what it started out to be. After all, what we currently have are copies of copies and not the original autograph works which we understand were inspired by God.

Fortunately, the Bible is not the only ancient document to come to us through this process. And there are men who have devoted their lives to the study of ancient documents and their transmission. They have learned the kinds of things that happen in copying such documents that might alter the text. This enables them to restore the original text from the copies of it that survive. For example, in copying the work of another, words may be misspelled, copied twice, omitted, have synonyms substituted, etc. If several people make copies of the same document, these inadvertent changes can be identified since all do not make the same mistakes, and thus the original text can be restored. Deliberate changes are even more obvious and can also be corrected.

Though there are a number of ancient documents that have been handed down to our age, there are none that are attested to like the Bible. For example, F.F. Bruce points out in *The New Testament Docu-*

ments: Are They Reliable? that the work, *Caesar's Gallic Wars*, was composed 50-58 B.C. and survives in only nine or ten good manuscripts, none earlier than the ninth century. From this rather late and sparse evidence, scholars have no real doubts but that the text of Julius Caesar's work is intact. Other ancient works are often preserved in fewer and more recent manuscripts (than *Caesar's Gallic Wars*). In contrast, the New Testament, composed A.D. 50-100 survives in over five thousand Greek manuscripts. From the period of the second to fourth centuries, there are over seventy papyrus manuscripts containing major parts of the New Testament. From the fourth to eighth centuries over 250 uncial manuscripts survive. From the ninth to fifteenth century over 4700 minuscule manuscripts survive. Overall, these manuscripts are essentially the same. Those who have studied such materials report that almost every variation that has appeared is due to the hand copying process. In addition to the Greek manuscripts of the text, there are ancient translations of the New Testament dating from the second century, and quotations in writings of church leaders dating from the first century. This enormous quantity of evidence continues to be evaluated by many people. Yet their conclusion remains, that the text has survived without essential change throughout its time of being hand copied.

For those who have an interest in looking at those variants, there are at least two sources to check. Some modern speech translations list these in the margins (the original King James Version also listed these, but later editions dropped them). The American Standard Version, Revised Standard Version, New American Standard Bible and oth-

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ers do list what the translators judged to be some of the more significant variations. Bruce Metzger's **A Textual Commentary of the Greek New Testament** goes into much greater detail.

You may have noted that we have said almost nothing about the Old Testament text. There are two reasons for this. First, the New Testament affirms the Old Testament to be God's word as it existed at the time the New Testament was being written. Thus if we have confirmed the New Testament text, and believe it to be God's word, we can accept and rely on its divine approval of the Old Testament text.

But there is a second reason. There is much less textual material of the Hebrew Old Testament that has survived. In the first half of the twentieth century, the oldest known copy of the Hebrew Bible dated from the tenth century A.D. Older information was available only in the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible made during the two or

three centuries before Christ and passed down as part of the Christians' Greek Bible. However, in 1948 some ancient copies of the Hebrew Bible were found in some caves around the Dead Sea. Some of these date from the first and second centuries before Christ. The amazing thing these ancient documents showed was the great care and accuracy with which the Old Testament text had been copied for the thousand years between the Dead Sea Scrolls and the tenth century A.D. manuscripts.

Therefore we may safely conclude that there is no serious doubt that the text of the Bible as we have it today is essentially as it was given long ages ago. God has providentially protected His word so that we may believe and obey the gospel of Christ unto eternal life.

[Brother McWilliams preaches for the North Charleston church, 6337 Rivers Ave., Charleston, SC 29418.]

Brotherhood News

by Dennis Conner

Around North Carolina . . .

Brother ZANE WEST has been preaching for the church in Lenoir for a little over a year. He is a native of that city and is back home preaching after graduating from Sunset School of Preaching. In the time brother West has been back in Lenoir, there have been 17 people baptized into Christ, including Zane's father. He emphasizes that the growth of the church in Lenoir has been a "team effort." The average Sunday morning attendance has grown from 85 to 105. . . . Six baptisms were the result of a gospel meeting at the SHALLOTTE CHURCH OF CHRIST June 10-12. JERRY BELL is the preacher for the Shallotte church. Shallotte is located between Myrtle Beach, S.C., and Wilmington, N.C. Brother Bell is supported financially by the Westside church in Charlotte. . . . The THOMASVILLE CHURCH OF CHRIST set a new average attendance record during June. For the month the Sunday morning attendance averaged 96. The church will have MAC LYNN speaking there

October 5-7 on the subject "The Church in the 21st Century." . . . During the first week of August three teenagers from the BREWER ROAD CHURCH OF CHRIST in Winston-Salem worked with the Inner City Church of Christ in Nashville. They passed out food and clothes, helped with door knocking and assisted in teaching Bible studies.

And South Carolina . . .

The SUMMERVILLE CHURCH OF CHRIST has also shown itself to be a mission minded church. During July 20-30 eight young people from Summerville participated in a mission trip to Haiti.

And Elsewhere . . .

Brother MELVIN WISE, who preached for 61 years, died on June 28 following a lengthy illness. Wise was well known and highly respected as a preacher and author. . . . On May 17 the National Commission on Culture for the African nation

of Ghana announced that 903 religious groups had filed for official recognition. Of these, only 64 had been approved. The first religious body to be officially recognized was the church of Christ. The church was recognized first because of its "pioneering work

in medical missions and well drilling. . . . There are about 450 congregations in Ghana. . . . An evangelistic effort last March in the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico resulted in 85 baptisms.

A Book Review

by Michael R. Mobley

Obscure Voices From the Past, Sylvia L. Camp; Quality Publications, P.O. Box 1060, Abilene, TX 79604; 60 pages, paper \$3.95.

Thirteen historical lessons, all on women of the Bible, blended together to create a fresh and interesting focus on many themes of modern living, remind us that God still speaks to us today as His word speaks to us. The Bible is a timeless book as this study demonstrates. These lessons are an easy blend of Old and New Testament teaching, of biblical record and historical setting. They are practical, challenging, and personal. Each lesson begins with the story, is followed by an outline of the major messages of the story, and concludes with a set of discussion questions.

Comforted of God, Alice Ivy Cravens; Quality Publications, P.O. Box 1060, Abilene, TX 79604; 57 pages, paper \$3.50.

Life is difficult at best. This study brings us back to the comfort God gives His children so that we can be a comfort to others. With this book, the author is sharing with us the Scriptures that she has used to console and heal her aching heart through past years. One of the richest features of this book is its heartfelt stories and illustrations. It covers several circumstances in life: God's help with loss, temptation, joy in the Lord's labors, power to grow, and the bright, eternal light of hope. Each lesson is intertwined with God's intimacy and understanding for us and His acceptance of us. We recommend it for ladies Bible class and private study.

Leadership Through Church Growth, J.J. Turner; Quality Publications, P.O. Box

1060, Abilene, TX 79604; 104 pages, paper \$5.50.

This book is a revision of a study originally published in 1976. The standard line is "growth through leadership" but this study reverses it. The focus of this book is that leadership is developed within the congregation and through a growing congregation. Its concern is not simply elders but that every man in the congregation develop as a leader because all are leaders in one form or another, whether in the home or in the church. It is practical and well outlined. This book contains several self-evaluation exercises. It deals with character, motives, goals, personal qualities, evangelism, business meetings, and other areas as well. It will be excellent for self-study and class discussion.

Gifts of Power, Anna B. Counts; Quality Publications, P.O. Box 1060, Abilene, TX 79604; 126 pages, paper \$5.50.

Among the blessings that God entrusts to His children are the powers He gives us to live. Whatever our station or condition of life, God enables us to live with the power to keep life in order, the power of love, faith, and the Holy Spirit, the power of making decisions, of self-control, of discernment, as well as six others. It also discusses the source of these powers, the grace of our God. The discussion questions probe deeply and provide a challenge for serious students. This book will be a good study for a ladies Bible class or individual study.

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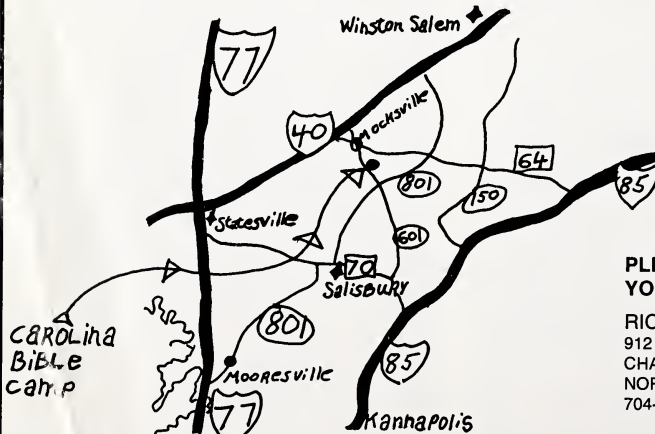
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The Friend Who Stands Beside

“Jackie Robinson was the first black to play major league baseball. While breaking baseball’s ‘color barrier,’ he faced jeering crowds in every stadium. While playing one day in his home stadium in Brooklyn, he committed an error. His own fans began to ridicule him. He stood at second base, humiliated, while the fans jeered.

“Then shortstop ‘Pee Wee’ Reese came over and stood next to him. He put his arm around Jackie Robinson and faced the crowd. The fans grew quiet. Robinson later said that arm around his shoulder saved his career” (Larry Wise).

What a great story! We’ve all been there, I suppose — standing in need of someone to face our problems with us. And I also believe we’ve all been there for that one who needed the encouraging arm around the shoulder. That is very much like what our Lord has done for each of us. We were humiliated and ready to give up because of our sin. He came to our side and became our deliverer and friend. I hope we’re as grateful to Him as we should be. Our eternal security rests on that friend’s encouragement and constant support even now. He did not leave us on the field of life, but goes with us even through the storms and dark places. I need Him so much!!!

There are those who need us!!! Paul said, “Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another’s burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:1, 2). Those caught in sins or weaknesses need us and we need one another. Our Father is depending on us to provide the loving arm around the shoulder which says, “You can do it, with the help of Christ” (Phil. 4:13). Will you reach out to someone this very day? There is someone standing on second base, needing a friend.

— Jerry Senn
Hendersoville, NC



by David Pharr

In reading brotherhood bulletins and periodicals we find much attention given to the possibility of the church of Christ in our time falling into apostasy. In some cases writers are saying that a large portion of the brotherhood is already sliding swiftly into digression. Others may not be that pessimistic, but nonetheless see critical dangers in many areas. At the same time there are actual articles and speeches from some men among us which show that they have already given up some of the fundamental principles of New Testament Christianity, even though they continue to work with churches of Christ, and in some cases are widely acclaimed over the brotherhood.

No normal person enjoys pessimism. We much prefer a positive outlook. An inordinate emphasis on negative things has caused many to turn a deaf ear to all warnings, especially warnings that the church might be headed into apostasy. Those who raise a voice of protest against liberal trends are thought to be alarmists. In the minds of many, to speak against unscriptural innovations, especially to call attention to specific persons and places involved, is to exhibit a mean and ugly spirit. This writer shares an abhorrence of "a false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren" (Prov. 6:16-19), but at the same time we must all recognize that there is a place and need for warnings against anything that would draw the church away from the faith and practice of the word of God.

Perhaps we are forgetting that our emphasis must be that **the Bible is right**; not that **the "church of Christ" is right**. This needs particular attention when many seem to think that if the church is doing a certain thing in other places, it must be acceptable. What is acceptable to the brotherhood becomes the norm. We have, for example, heard teenagers plead for an innovation "because that's what they're doing at _____, and that's a church of Christ." The same reasoning may be more subtly in the at-

titudes of some adults. Innovators may make use of this to get across their agendas. Perhaps no lesson is more needed today than the simple truth that we are to be guided by what the Scriptures teach, not by what the brethren elsewhere are doing.

We want to keep our balance. The truth is between extremes. We know that to cry "wolf" when the threat is only imaginary can be as harmful as to keep silent when "wolves" are really there. Righteousness is not served by exaggerated or false charges. On the other hand, however, everyone who discerns danger is duty bound to be a "watchman unto the house of Israel." (Read

EDITORIAL AND PUBLICATION STAFF

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CAROLINA CHRISTIAN (P.O.P.N. 091160) is published monthly by Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., at 71 S. Fairfield Road, Greenville, SC 29605. Subscription price: individual \$8.00 per year (\$15.00 for 2 years and \$22.00 for 3 years); club of five or more \$7.50 each; quantity of 15 or more in bundles or direct mailing 50¢ per copy per month. Publication number, 091160.

Second class postage paid at Greenville, SC.

POSTMASTER: Send change with Form 3579 to Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., Johnny Melton, Managing Editor, Route 2, Box 137, Conover, North Carolina 28613.

RETURN REQUESTED

Address editorial matter to David Pharr, Editor, ETSOPM, 6608 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37931. Address news items to Dennis Conner, P.O. Box 1219, Yadkinville, NC 27055.

All items to be printed in a given month's issue should reach the editor not later than the next-to-the-last Thursday of the preceding month.

Address commercial advertising inquiries to Jacobs List, Inc., Clinton, SC 29325. Address all advertising pertaining to the Church of Christ or its members (including related organizations) to the editor.

Order books and literature from Carolina Christian Bookstore, P.O. Box 1219, Yadkinville, NC 27055 (1-800-343-1081, Mon.-Fri., 9:00-5:00).

New Carolina Directory

For several months we have been gathering information for a new **Directory of Churches of Christ in the Carolinas**. Every effort is being made to make it accurate and useful. The **Directory** is scheduled to be published as a special issue of the magazine in December. Regular subscribers will receive it at no extra cost.

Extra copies ordered in advance will be available in bundles (10 minimum) at \$1.00 each.

In addition to the obvious advantages of having a directory, a directory of Carolina congregations can be a good tool for persuading congregations in other parts of the country that there are many mission needs in the Carolinas. Those who want to promote interest in the Carolinas should consider ordering a good supply of the **Directory**. (In addition to the listing of the churches there will be articles regarding the progress and needs of the Carolinas.)

Congregations and others may want to advertise in this special issue. The advertising rates are more than the regular charge because the **Directory** will have a larger circulation and will be used frequently for many months. Congregations may want to use advertising space to list times of worship, special events, special activities, etc. (The **Directory** itself will have addresses, phone numbers, etc., but times of services are not being included in the regular listing because some congregations make seasonal changes.) Advertising orders must be received before November 1.

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Ezekiel 3:17-18 and consider carefully the implications of the principle involved.)

With these background thoughts in mind, we want to consider the question: Is it possible for the church in our time to apostatize, to so digress from the truth that it is no longer really the church of Christ, the New Testament church? We doubt that many would dispute the facts we will state, but at the same time we fear there are many who choose to be oblivious to the dangers. Perhaps a simple rehearsal of some Scriptures and history will help us to have a more cautious perspective. Even in the calmest seas, we need to be alert. In dangerous waters, we need to be alarmed.

Old Testament History

Those familiar with the Jule Miller filmstrips will remember that the fifth film repeatedly emphasizes the fact that "men often depart from God's way." No student of the Old Testament can fail to see this tragic reality repeated over and over. The disastrous consequences of Israel's apostasies are vividly demonstrated in the book of Judges, in the Assyrian Captivity, the Babylonian Captivity, and in numerous other periods of ruinous chastisement. Old Testament students should recall the emphasis on a faithful remnant in the periods when the majority of the Jewish "church" departed from the God.

Though he was himself a faithful man, Daniel confessed the apostasy of his people. "We have sinned . . . by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments: neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets . . ." (Dan. 9:5-6). The people wanted their prophets to speak only "smooth things," a positive message (Isa. 30:10). Men like Jeremiah tried to warn of the consequences of apostasy, but the popular preachers "healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace" (Jer. 6:14).

New Testament Warnings

Both Jesus and the apostles warned against false teachers. Citing the Old Testament as an example, Peter writes that "there

were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you" (2 Pet. 2:12). The apostles were continuously aware of the danger of false teachers and of how they would seek to introduce their errors "privily," "unawares," as "wolves" "in sheep's clothing" (2 Pet. 2:1; Jude 4; Gal. 2:4; Matt. 7:15). Obviously, false teaching leads to false faith and false practices.

More to the point, however, are the several New Testament prophecies that warn of widespread departures from God's way. "Some shall depart from the faith" (1 Tim. 4:1). Paul said to elders, who as leaders would have considerable influence on others, that from their own ranks there would arise those who would draw away disciples to themselves (Acts 15:29-31). A "falling away" is foretold in 2 Thessalonians 2:3. Inspiration also told of a time coming when people would not endure sound doctrine, but would choose instead to have teachers that pleased their ears (2 Tim. 4:3-4).

New Testament history shows that digressive tendencies were at work on the heels of apostolic evangelism. As busy as was Paul and the others in preaching the **good news** about Jesus, they had to deal also with the **bad news** of the churches being subverted by the teachers of error. They never chose to ignore the problems. They never said they were going to just preach a positive, loving message, and avoid getting involved in brotherhood issues. They knew that apostasy could come, indeed that it would come, but they would not fail to resist it as long as they lived.

New Testament attention to the problem of error and the possibility of God's church departing from the faith is not a minor subject. The very fact that the Scriptures give extensive attention to these matters should provoke our attention. With the possible exception of the one-chapter epistle to Philemon, not a single New Testament book fails to deal with these "negative" issues. No preacher could cover any New Testament book expositively without attention to the problems of error and the dangers of digression. This makes us wonder how men can claim to be teaching "all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27) and manage to always

preach what they define as only "positive" sermons.

Early Church History

The history of Christianity in the years following the apostolic age fully confirms the prophetic warnings of the New Testament. By the second century digression was widespread. In A.D. 325 the Council of Nicaea, under the oversight of Constantine (who had not even been baptized), presumed to formulate a creed to be bound on the churches. The added irony was that there was more truth expressed in that creed than many who voted for it were willing to accept.

The multiplied examples of apostasy in early and middle church history are more than we can begin to enumerate in this article. It is enough simply to state what every history student knows: What was supposed to be the church of Christ eventually abandoned every vestige of apostolic Christianity.

As we reflect on this, it is important to remember that good intentions and noble purposes were always claimed. Each step away from the Biblical pattern was rationalized and defended. Faithful men who argued for the truth were sometimes ignored, sometimes defamed, and sometimes destroyed.

The Protestant Reformation

The Reformation efforts which broke with the papacy, beginning in the sixteenth century, had a noble purpose in trying to make religion more like the Bible requires. We realize that in many ways the Reformation fell short of being truly a return to primitive faith and practice. Still, there was much

that was noble and worthy about it. So also would be our appreciation of many of the purposes of John Wesley, and even of some others who founded reform movements.

Consider, though, how far Protestantism has drifted from its original intentions. In spite of many shortcomings, in the beginning there was at least a resolution to respect the Scriptures as the word of God and to abide by its precepts. Generally, however, among most denominations with a Reformation heritage there is now as much (if not more) infidelity in their theology as there is faith. The New Testament pattern is not even an issue to be considered in most mainline denominations. What started out as a movement to correct apostasy has itself apostatized.

A Hundred Years Ago

In the early years of the nineteenth century restoration movement, one would hardly have guessed that a movement so dedicated to going back to the Bible would ever be shattered by departures from the faith. Never since the days of the apostles had there been such concern for the authority of Christ. Every principle and practice was tested and upheld by book, chapter, and verse. Even their controversies demonstrated their keen respect for Biblical authority.

Many responded to the plea to restore the New Testament church, and for a time no religious movement in America was growing faster. Brethren rejoiced in success, and society took note. It was not long, however, until some in the church began to be dissatisfied with the simplicity of the New Testament way. Innovations began to be sug-

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gested, then accepted, and finally defended. Protests were frequent and strong. (In fact, there was far more negative writing and preaching in those days than anything the brotherhood is reading or hearing today.) But “progressives” (liberals) continued to promote their new ideas, and “moderates” either remained silent or pleaded for compromise. Godly men who perceived the dangers and boldly spoke the truth were looked upon as being gloomy and cranky.

Three significant errors advanced were: the organization of congregations into a missionary society, the introduction of instrumental music, and women preaching. The more subtle influence at work, however, was a move toward modernism (rejection of Biblical inspiration and authority) among many preachers and educators. They had a new way of looking at the Bible. For several years efforts were made to correct these errors and to return to the Biblical pattern. Men who would not compromise, but who nonetheless loved their erring brethren and prayed for unity, struggled to keep the church from dividing. Eventually, however, digression became so widespread the church was divided. A majority went with the apostasy. Churches of Christ determined to hold to the New Testament pattern. Through nine decades of the

twentieth century there has been a gradual growth among churches of Christ. We have grown, in numbers at least, to where the church of Christ today in many parts of the country enjoys considerable respectability. Regardless of how we may interpret the present significance of this growth, the point to be remembered is that it involved in many respects a starting over of the restoration movement after much of the earlier efforts had been lost to digression.

Is Another Digression Possible?

We have not addressed this question because we think anyone would deny the possibility. Even brethren who might be least concerned about it would certainly admit that apostasy is always possible. Our purpose has been instead to remind that there is never a time when we can afford not to be vigilant. Our purpose also has been to cause thoughtful people to take a close look at some of the trends among us. Where will they take us? Will rationalization and popularity be allowed to take the place of Bible authority? Will there be changes here and there until the church loses its New Testament identity? Where do you stand? What will you say?

Managing Editor's Column

On Righteousness and Mercy

by Johnny Melton

“Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly” (Matt. 1:19). Mary was pregnant. Joseph knew that he was not the father. Her pregnancy provided *prima facie* evidence that would stand in any court that Mary’s chastity had been compromised. Joseph’s honor had been violated. He had his rights. He had legal recourse. Deuteronomy 22 gave crystal clear legislation concerning such matters. Righteousness — justice — would demand that the law be carried out promptly and publicly. At least, according to the way we tend to think about righteous-

ness and justice, that would be the case. We tend to think of justice as blind (i.e., purely, cold-heartedly, objective). To most of us, righteousness is a rigorous commitment to what is right. And that means a commitment to the letter of the law. As a matter of fact, the NIV Study Bible comments on the word righteous in Matthew 1:19: “To the Jews this meant being zealous in keeping the law.” However, that is not the way I read this text.

I do not believe that Joseph’s unwillingness to expose Mary to public disgrace was inconsistent with the description of him as a righteous, or just (KJV), man. It was be-

cause he was a righteous man that he was compassionate toward Mary.

The relationship between righteousness and mercy is established in the Old Testament. Jaap van Klinken, in his book, **DIAKONIA: Mutual Helping With Justice and Compassion** (Eerdmans, 1989), states, "In Israel, justice and compassion are interchangeable, which is logical, since the original Hebrew word for both is *tsedaqa*. Compassion stays indissolubly connected with justice, and vice versa. There is no justice without compassion, love, and loyalty. Justice is transcended by compassion. Psalm 112, speaking of the God-fearing person, demonstrates this close connection: 'Righteousness shall be his forever. He is gracious, compassionate, good. . . .' The same is true of Micah 6: 'God has told you what is good; and what is it that the Lord asks of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God' " (pp. 14, 15).

Compassion, mercy, and loving kindness are not discussed in sermons and articles nearly as often as error, digression and false doctrine. We do not have to make an either/or choice regarding the concepts listed above. Indeed, mercy without justice is as unbiblical as righteousness without compassion. What must concern us is that in our zeal for truth — in our efforts to maintain the purity of the church — we may be in danger of developing a "take it or leave it," "let the chips fall where they may" attitude. Such an attitude is foreign to the character of God, and it is contrary to the example of Jesus.

The fundamental characteristic of God is His mercy — His loving kindness. The Hebrew word is *chesed*. In the article "Mercy" in **Synonyms of the Old Testament** (Eerdmans reprint, 1986), Robert B. Girdlestone declares, "In a word, mercy is the main characteristic of God's dealings with man, and hence it is to be looked for as the distinguishing mark of every child of God" (p. 113). In the article "Mercy" in **The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, Vol. 2** (Zondervan, 1986), it is noted that the Greek word *eleos* (compassion, mercy, pity) normally translates *chesed* in the Septuagint (LXX). However, *eleemosyne*, a form of *eleos*, sometimes translates *tsedaqa*, which is normally translated *dikaio-*

syne (righteousness) in the LXX. *Chesed* "means proper covenant behaviour, the solidarity which partners in the covenant owe one another. . . . So the connotations of *eleos* meaning [*chesed*] may stretch from loyalty to a covenant to kindness, mercy, pity. . . . Because of Yahweh's superiority as the partner in the covenant who remains faithful, his *eleos* was understood for the most part as a gracious gift. He promised it at the making of the covenant, and he constantly renewed it. Hence Israel might request *eleos* from him including the mercy of forgiveness, when it had broken the covenant (e.g., Exod. 34:9; Num. 14:19; Jer. 3:12). When God acts like this and also when man acts similarly the stress is not on the basic attitude in *eleos* but on its manifestation in acts" (pp. 394-95). The translation of *tsedaqa* with *eleemosyne* is explained, "'since the judgment in which God's [*tsedaqa*] is active will be in favour of His people . . . we can understand the rendering *eleemosyne*' (R. Bultmann, *TDNT* II 486; cf. e.g. Isa. 1:27). Just as Yahweh enforces his covenant law mercifully, so *eleemosyne* may also be used for human kindness, charity and even alms . . . when these conform to the pattern of this law" (p. 595).

Since we are called to God-likeness, and since mercy and compassion are characteristic traits of the covenant relationship God

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shares with His people, we are also called to deal mercifully and compassionately with those with whom we share covenant with God. Jesus condemned many of the religious people of His day for their failure to deal mercifully and compassionately while at the same time being zealous for the letter of the law. He urged that attention be given to the weightier matters of the law — “justice, mercy and good faith” (see Matt. 23:23).

Failure to deal graciously with one another, even those guilty of sin, is contrary to the example of Jesus. In the story of the woman taken in adultery (John 8:1-11), Jesus showed mercy and compassion. Was the woman guilty? There can be no doubt. In His treatment of her, Jesus did not minimize the fact of her sin, but He did remind her accusers of their own sinfulness (“If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her” [vs. 7]). There has been much speculation about what Jesus wrote on the ground. If I were to speculate, it would not be on what Jesus wrote, but why He wrote. I agree with the commentary

the King James translators placed in the text of verse 6. The phrase “as though he heard them not” is supplied as an explanation for Jesus’ writing on the ground. Jesus refused to take delight in the sensational accusations that were being made (this woman had been “taken in adultery, in the very act” [KJV]). Jesus was not willing to exact the full weight of the law. He was not willing to participate in the public disgrace and humiliation of this woman. His statement to the accusers revealed their character and set the episode in context. He did not condone sin while dealing mercifully with the sinner. He urged that the sin be abandoned, while giving her a second chance: “Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more” (vs. 11).

We must not dismiss compassion and mercy when we make a stand for righteousness and justice. The concepts are not mutually exclusive. Compassion and mercy do not constitute compromise and complicity. When forced to deal with a brother or sister in either moral sin or doctrinal error, let us refuse to expose them to public disgrace.

Slowness

by Jim Mullican

In our modern age, we sometimes want things to be done quickly. Where our ancestors took many months — even years — to cross the country, we can drive across it in a few days or fly across it in a few hours. Foods that once required hours to prepare can often be cooked in a few minutes today, thanks to the microwave oven.

Sometimes the church and its leaders are criticized for being slow about instituting change or taking action. I’m not sure slowness is bad in this case. God Himself seems to move slowly on important matters. He waited thousands of years to send Jesus into the world, doing so only “when the time had fully come” (Gal. 4:4). To some, He seems slow about bringing the world to an end, but there is a reason for that apparent slowness (2 Pet. 3: 8, 9), and we benefit from it.

God ordained elders to lead and guide each local church (Acts 14:23; 20:28; Titus 1:5; 1 Tim. 3:5). With age and experience,

we generally learn to be slower in drawing conclusions, and to wait until we have all the evidence. When we are younger, sometimes we are in a hurry, and we do not always think before we act or speak. We may jump to **conclusions, and sometimes we may jump to contusions**. Remember the mistake made by young King Rehoboam when he rejected the advice of his older counselors for that of his young companions (2 Chron. 10). His hasty and ill-thought-out decision resulted in a divided kingdom.

Proverbs 29:20 says, “Do you see a man who is hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.” So, although the wheels may turn slowly at times in the sphere of church leadership and congregational change, the retrospective view usually finds that to have been a blessing rather than a curse.

[P.O. Box 219, Clyde, NC 28721.]

Hard Decisions

by David Dailey

It had happened again. There we were, three university-educated adults, sitting in my car at the exit of my apartment complex parking lot.

"Where do you want to eat?" Just the uttering of the phrase is an invitation to mumbled vagaries.

"I don't care. Anywhere is fine." Moments pass, measured by the deep rumblings of three empty stomachs, then a barely audible suggestion.

"How about El Chicos?"

Quickly comes the reply, "We don't want to eat there again."

Why is it that we have so much difficulty in making decisions, even in a trivial matter like choosing a restaurant? The issue goes beyond the idiosyncrasies of three people. It is symptomatic of a national trend. The problem is not one of recognition. We see the goal very clearly. What is at issue is an unwillingness to accept responsibility for making a decision. An unwillingness based on a fear of rejection and/or criticism of the decision. Which, when boiled down, comes out to be a rejection and/or criticism of me.


Consider two problems currently plaguing the United States. The Congress and the President have been wrangling over budget deficits for years now. The accusations have flown, the fingers pointed and the rhetoric flowed, but the budget deficit continues to mount. Everyone wants a balanced budget, but no one is willing to accept the responsibility for making the hard decisions needed to achieve that goal. There is no question that some very difficult choices will have to be made on social programs, defense spending, and taxation. But to make those kinds of decisions, or to cooperate in the making of those decisions, could be politically suicidal, so the deficit continues to mount.

The national, truly the international, problem of AIDS is another example of our unwillingness to make the hard decision necessary to solve the problem. The threat and


the consequences of AIDS are real. The increasing death tally and the public outcry over AIDS are testimony to the seriousness of the problem. The solution to the spread of the disease comes down to three options: abstinence for unmarried individuals; moral sex for married individuals; or so-called "safe sex." Rather than make the hard decision to promote abstinence among unmarried people and moral sex for marrieds, our nation has gone by default to "safe sex." "Safe sex" is the modern term for **immoral** sex, only with protection against unwanted side effects such as AIDS and pregnancy. The world's emphasis is on protection, not on moral behavior. Meanwhile, AIDS continues to spread, and people die.

Jesus is found to be in sharp contrast to the indecisiveness of today. Consider this statement by Jesus in Mark 9:43: "If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out." Jesus is saying that there are times when the only way to solve a problem is by making the hard decision. And as He did in everything else, He set an example for us by making the hard decision in Gethsemane, when He chose the cross by saying, "Thy will be done."

Could it be that most of the problems Christians have in living as Jesus did can be traced to an unwillingness to make the hard



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decision? Our goal, since the day we became Christians, is to be like Jesus. The sins that would keep us from that goal are not unknown to us. Neither is the lifestyle of our Lord a mystery. The faintness of Jesus' image in us is directly attributable to our unwillingness to make the hard decision.

Fortunately, the decisions we must make in following Jesus are not always as drastic as cutting off a hand. For some, it will be a decision to be obedient in the small things of life — like the speed limit. Because it is called a small thing does not mean that the decision to follow Christ is any less difficult. The commitment to follow Jesus by obeying the posted speed limits might require a major reworking of a person's style of living.

We would have to consider changes in planning departure and arrival times based on the speed restrictions, the discipline now required to stick to the new schedule, and the constant temptation of seeing other drivers fly by in total disregard for the law. No, we cannot equate small with easy when it comes to making changes in our lives. For some, the decisions that must be faced are of greater magnitude. The Christian life is a decisive life. We know to whom we belong, and we recognize what is needed for us to be like Him. Filled with His courage, sheltered by His grace, let this be the year we were not afraid of making the hard decision.

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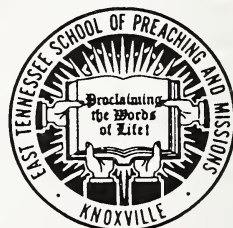
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Reexamining the Fundamentals, XVII

by David Pharr, Editor

Last month we gave a brief summary of facts pertaining to the return of Christ. Many errors could be avoided and many speculations refuted, if we would keep certain truths firmly before us: Christ is coming; no one knows when; all of the dead will be raised at once; this universe will be destroyed; and Christ will deliver the kingdom back to the Father. Scriptures which confirm these observations were in the previous installment.

Most confusion about the coming of Christ arises over various speculations regarding only a few verses found in the symbolism of Revelation, chapter 20. In verses 2-7 there are six references to "a thousand years." In no other place in the Bible is there any reference to this thousand year period seen in John's vision. Men have chosen to call this period the **Millennium** because the term literally means a thousand years. In spite, however, of the fact that this is mentioned only in this one chapter, and that it is a symbolic description of things in a book that is designed to be symbolic, men have speculated without end regarding the Millennium, to the point where they even have been willing to give their speculations precedence over the plainest of non-symbolic teaching in other portions of Scripture.

Views regarding the meaning of the thousand years of Revelation 20 are generally classified as: **Postmillennialism**, **Amillennialism**, and **Premillennialism**.

Postmillennialism

Postmillennialism is the view that Christ will come after ("post") the Millennium. It is believed that as a result of the conversion of most, if not all, people over the world, there will be a long period of peace, righteousness, and happiness. This long period is the Millennium, which they believe will take place before Christ returns.

There were capable brethren in the nineteenth century who held to forms of the Post-

millennial view. For the most part, however, their concepts were vague, and they did not seek to reshape the entire theology of the Bible to fit these notions. In the church of Christ today there seems to be few problems caused by Postmillennialism.

Postmillennialism is not especially popular now among most denominations. It does appeal to some brands of Calvinists in particular, however, who see not only the preaching of the gospel, but also the direct work of the Holy Spirit as the means by which the world will be Christianized.

Amillennialism

The prefix **A-** implies a rejection of the idea of a Millennium. This is not to deny that a "thousand years" is named in Revelation 20. Rather, this view recognizes Revelation as being a book of symbols. This means that the descriptions are not always to be understood literally. They are representative of other truths. While we would as soon not be stuck with a theological label, what is generally intended by the term Amillennial is what is held by this writer and brethren in general. The paramount reason for holding the view that the thousand years and the related things in Revelation are not to be understood literally is that there is then no need to twist or ignore the many texts that teach plainly on the coming of Christ. In our last article (August), we listed five certain points regarding the advent of Jesus, and gave the Scriptures to prove each one. Understanding Revelation 20:1-7 as being symbolic in its reference to a millennium does not contradict a single one of those passages.

Premillennialism

It is astounding how many in the denominational world (with a handful in the church of Christ) have accepted the Premillennial line. As indicated by the prefix Pre-, this is

the view that Christ will come back **before** ("pre-") the thousand years, and that He will then set up His kingdom on earth, and that He will reign on earth for a thousand years.

In early church history there were some who held to similar views. These were called Chiliasts, after the Greek word for a thousand. (Millennium comes from Latin.) The widespread popularity of Premillennialism today, however, can be traced to the nineteenth century writings of J.N. Darby, whose theories have been widely circulated in the notes of the **Scofield Reference Bible**. (Note that it is not the Scripture itself in the **Scofield Reference Bible** that makes it different and dangerous, but the erroneous notes and misleading cross references that have been added to the Bible text. We have encountered people who seemed to have as much, or more, confidence in the Scofield notes as in the Bible text itself.)

There are variations in Premillennialism. The Darby/Scofield position, the most popular one, is called **Dispensational Premillennialism**. This comes from their idea that all of the history of mankind is divided into seven dispensations. (This is not to be confused with the fact that the Bible does indeed teach what is called the Patriarchal,

Mosaic, and Christian dispensations.) A particular difference between Dispensationalism and other Premillennialism is that Dispensationalists say that Christ will come to "rapture" up the saints out of the world **before** a seven-year "tribulation." They hold that after the "tribulation" Christ will return and rule on earth, with His throne in Jerusalem for a thousand years.

While Premillennialists vary in their views, and even the Dispensationalists can't come to an overall consensus, it is not an exaggeration to say that there is hardly a doctrine of the Bible, rarely a chapter, that they have not twisted or denied in order to accommodate their theories. Premillennialists are fond of saying that they take the Bible literally. The truth is that about the only thing pertaining to the issues involved that they do take literally is a part of the symbolic twentieth chapter of Revelation. Their determination to make everything else fit their millennium notions has resulted in numerous obvious denials of what the Bible actually says. Thus, while professing to be a position that takes the Bible seriously, Premillennialism has in reality become more a system of infidelity. In our next installment, the Lord willing, we will list some of their more infamous errors.

With Only an Ox Goad

by Robert Ball

The book of Judges is one of encouragement, containing many lessons for our modern age. It shows how God can take unskilled men with little means and do great things. The book illustrates the truth of 1 Samuel 17:47: "The Lord saveth not with sword and spear." David knew that God could defeat a giant with one small stone and his sling. In Judges 15:15, Samson slew a thousand men with the jawbone of an ass. In Judges 7:20, God gave Gideon victory over the Midianites through the use of trumpets and pitchers. In Judges 3:31, Shamgar slew six hundred Philistines with an ox goad.

Shamgar's deed was the introduction to God's plan through Deborah. If one farmer could slay six hundred with an ox goad, what

could a nation do? The brief account of Shamgar is an encouraging lesson for all times.

One lesson we can learn from Shamgar is that it doesn't matter how weak the weapon if God provides the strength, whether it be the jawbone of an ass, a small stone and sling, or an ox goad. Visualize plowing in a field and hundreds of soldiers come upon you; what are you going to do? The normal response would be to flee; after all, what could one unarmed man do against so many armed soldiers? Remember Exodus 4:2? God asked Moses, "What is that in thy hand? And he said, A rod." But in reality it was Israel's deliverance.

Fear was the greatest enemy of Moses.

Shamgar was brave, neither did he flee nor try to reason, but stood and fought. The Scriptures show us that fear often blocks progress (Lev. 26:36-37; Josh. 7:5; 1 Sam. 17:11). Fear results from two things: (1) a lack of trust in God, and (2) focusing on personal weaknesses. The wise man said, "The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion" (Prov. 28:1). Paul said, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might" (Eph. 6:10). "For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb. 13:5-6).

What do we have in our hands? Whatever we have the opportunity to do, we need to give it our best effort. It is not just those with great talents that God can use (cf. Mark 12:41-44). Shamgar didn't look around for someone who could do it better. Shamgar put forth his greatest effort to do the best he could with what he had.

What does God expect of us? To put forth our greatest effort to do the best we

can with what we have. He doesn't require more than we can be or do, He just requires our best efforts. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might" (Eccl. 9:10).

Because of Shamgar's courage and efforts, God delivered His people. God has always used man to accomplish His purposes with other men. When Israel repented of evil, God chose and used a deliverer. Today, God wants to use us to deliver people from sin. "Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city" (Acts 18:9-10). There is no salvation apart from the preaching of God's word (Rom. 10:13-15). May God help each of us to put forth our greatest effort to preach the good news about Jesus Christ to a lost and dying world.

[Brother Ball preached at N. Main Church of Christ in Mocksville, NC, before going to his present work. Address: 407 Jones St., Old Hickory, TN 37138.]

Why Is Fornication the Exception?

by Kerry Duke

God's regulations on divorce and remarriage are specific. Fornication is the sole reason for divorce and remarriage, and remarriages following divorces for other reasons are adulterous (Matt. 5:32; 19:9). The phrase "except it be for fornication" has inclusive and exclusive force. It includes as authorized remarriages those which occur following a divorce for fornication; it excludes remarriage following a divorce for other reasons. Fornication is the one cause in this dispensation for Scriptural divorce and remarriage. It is distinct from all other reasons for divorce so that God allows the dissolution of a marriage which He initially sanctified. In the sight of men, drunkenness, violence, desertion, and unhappiness may seem to be sufficient grounds for divorce and remarriage, but in the eyes of God only the sin of for-

nication is an acceptable ground. This sin is so contrary and disruptive to the marriage relationship that God permits the innocent party to divorce the mate guilty of fornication and marry another. What is it about this sin that separates it from all other reasons for divorce? Why is fornication the single Scriptural reason for divorce and remarriage?

Fornication is a violation of the one-flesh

The Laurens, S.C. Church of Christ is looking for an active full-time personal worker to work with a congregation of approximately 35 members. Limited pulpit responsibilities. For more information contact Jim Bailey (803) 682-3922, Cecil Ramey (803) 984-6134, or Hobert Huffline (803) 682-2025.

covenant of marriage. In marriage the two are joined together by God and become one flesh (Matt. 19:5-6). Marriage is a relationship which is confined to this life (Matt. 22:30), involving the desires of the physical body and the resultant sexual union. It is a covenant (Mal. 2:14) in which the two promise to keep themselves to each other. The adulterous woman forsakes "the covenant of her God" (Prov. 2:17). Fornication contradicts the sexual aspect of the marriage covenant. It strikes at this fundamental part of marriage in a way that other marital difficulties do not.

Fornication also destroys the uniqueness of the sexual relationship in marriage. A husband and wife share many experiences and feelings with each other which they also share with others. They work, talk, and laugh with others as well as with each other. But the sexual union and the intimacies connected with it are shared only by the husband and wife. This area of marriage is the private possession of the two. It is the one thing they share in common with no one else. The sexual relationship in marriage provides a special bond, and it is interesting that the Bible uses the word "know" to refer to this union (Gen. 4:1; Matt. 1:25). The husband and wife in the sexual union know each other in a unique way. When the sexual union occurs outside the marriage, the uniqueness of the relationship is destroyed.

Since the sexual aspect of the marriage covenant is both binding and unique, it is apparent that fornication undermines the trust that is so important in the relationship. Trust is vital in securing peace in the marriage. The sin of fornication causes this trust to be replaced by suspicion, fear, and insecurity which may eat at the bond which once held the two together until nothing is left. One earns the trust of another by his life and character, and the married fornicator shows himself to be untrustworthy by his deeds. The adulterer usually lies to his mate to cover his sin. But he soon finds that he must tell other lies to cover the previous ones. It is not the physical act of fornication alone that is so destructive to the marriage, but the dishonesty and disloyalty from which it proceeds. The adulterer destroys in a few moments the trust which may have taken

years to build. The offended mate may, in time, recover from the hurt caused by this sin, but trust in the guilty party may never be restored. As a result, God does not require the innocent party to continue to live with such a mate.

Fornication also removes respect from the marriage. The Scriptures enjoin mutual respect in marriage (1 Pet. 3:1-7; Eph. 5:22-23), and lasting intimacy must be built upon respect. Even worldly men do not respect a woman who is "easy." Respect is a fundamental aspect of marriage in that it sets the stage for how the couple perceive and treat each other. The fornicator loses respect in the eyes of men: his honor will be given to others (Prov. 5:10). He loses respect from God (Heb. 13:4). In fact, he shows that he has no respect for himself. But in particular, he loses respect from the mate he has offended and finds disgust in its place.

Fornication is particularly vile in that it defeats a divine purpose of marriage. Paul wrote, "It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband" (1 Cor. 7:1b-2). The American Standard Version in verse 2 has **because of fornications**. Marriage is the relationship in which physical desires can be expressed and fulfilled (1 Cor. 7:3-5). A Scriptural marriage is the only divinely authorized situation in which sexual union may occur. God permits one to have a mate in order to prevent fornication, but the married fornicator despises this plan by committing the very sin which the institution of marriage is designed to restrain. He rejects the purity of marriage and shows himself to be unworthy of the privilege of this divine institution.

God's attitude toward sexual immorality is indicated in several ways in Scripture. Unfaithful Israel is often portrayed as an adulterous woman (Hos. 1; Ezek. 16). Adultery, under the law of Moses, was punishable by death (Lev. 20:10). Under the gospel of Christ, the married fornicator forfeits his right to a mate, and a lifetime of celibacy may (depending on the decision of the innocent party) be the penalty with which he has to live if he desires to please God. Since

the severity of the penalty shows the heinousness of the sin, the displeasure of God toward the sin of fornication is evident. Fornication affects the marriage relationship in a way that no other violation of the marital covenant does. It so completely contradicts the very nature of marriage that God allows divorce and remarriage for this reason. In a soap-opera society where adultery is glam-

orized, Bible teaching on this subject should be the incentive to esteem the institution of marriage with the dignity and honor it deserves.

[Brother Duke preaches for the Germany Church of Christ, P.O. Box 185, Tompkinsville, KY 42167. He also teaches at Tennessee Bible College.]

Confess Your Faults

by Paul Jarrett

There is some disagreement over whether James' instruction to "confess your faults" (James 5:16) should be rendered "faults" as it is in the KJV, or "sins" as it is in a number of other translations. I personally like the word "fault" as opposed to "sin" because of the message conveyed in the English language by the idea of a fault.

While the word "sin" is immediately associated with a deed that has been committed, the term "fault" (though it can refer to a specific error) suggests the idea of a moral weakness which can precipitate an error. The concept of a fault lends itself to the acknowledgment of areas of potential error even before the actual commission of a sin as a means of avoiding the sin.

The point I am attempting to make can be illustrated from a geological standpoint. In geology a "fault" refers to a weakness in the earth's crust which can potentially be the site of an earthquake. By being aware of these fault lines in the earth's crust, we can take steps to minimize the damage should an earthquake occur.

In similar fashion when we acknowledge our faults to one another we can take steps to minimize, if not actually prevent, the "earthquakes" of sin that can destroy us. It seems rather unfortunate to me that prayer often is used primarily by Christians only after a sin has been committed, and solely for the sake of asking God's forgiveness. While this is a legitimate use of prayer, it is not the only use to which prayer needs to be put in the Christian's efforts to overcome sin.

Jesus did not teach us just to pray, "Forgive us our debts" (Matt. 6:12). Instead, He also taught us to pray, "Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil" (Matt. 6:13). It seems to me that a step in this direction would be for us to not just "confess our sins" after the fact, but also to "confess our faults" as a means of overcoming those areas of weakness that exist in all of our lives.

[1824 Tamworth Drive, Charlotte, NC 28210.]

A Modern Abuse and Misuse of First Corinthians

by Bill Heinselmann

It is amazing that some brethren have unscrupulously used the great book of First Corinthians, written by the inspired Paul, in the following manner:

It is suggested that since there were many errors in the Corinthian congregation, and that since Paul nevertheless referred to them as the church of God (1 Cor. 1:2) and saints

(1 Cor. 1:2), and that they had fellowship with the Lord (1 Cor. 1:9), then it is permissible for a congregation today to be somewhat "off base" or in some error, or in some way differ from the "mainstream" church of the Lord, and still be the "church of God" and "saints" and "in fellowship with the Lord."

In answer to this we submit the following:

1. It is indeed the case that there were errors at Corinth.

- A. Divisions. Chapters 1-3.
- B. They tolerated immorality. Chapter 5.
- C. Some apparently went to law with brethren on matters that could have been decided by the church. Chapter 6.
- D. They had failed to understand marriage matters. Chapter 7.
- E. They disregarded the conscience of the weak concerning meats offered to idols. Chapter 8.
- F. They unjustly questioned Paul's apostleship. Chapter 9.
- G. They were even confused about idolatry. Chapter 10.
- H. They disregarded local customs. Chapter 11.
- I. They had desecrated the Lord's Supper. Chapter 11.
- J. They were lacking in understanding about spiritual gifts and their use and place in the church. Chapters 12, 13, 14.
- K. And some did not even believe in the resurrection! Chapter 15.

2. It is the case that in spite of these problems in the Corinthian congregation, Paul did refer to them in such language as mentioned above.

3. But it is also the case that there is a great deal of difference between the situation of the churches in the 20th century and the church at Corinth.

- A. We have, and have had, the complete revelation of God's will in the New Testament for many, many years.
- B. The church at Corinth did not have the complete revelation. They had some spiritual gifts; they "knew in part" (1 Cor. 13:9-13).
- C. Nowhere did Paul indicate that they could continue in these errors and

maintain their identity as the "church of God" and "saints"!

D. It is the case that the Scriptures teach that those who depart from God's way **will, indeed**, lose their identity if they continue in sin!

- 1. John wrote that they went out from us that they might be made manifest that they were not of us (1 John 2:19).
- 2. The Lord said that some at Ephesus had left their first love (Rev. 2:4). He told them to "remember" and "repent" or else He would come quickly and "remove thy candlestick out of his place."
- 3. The Lord warned the church at Pergamos that they had some there that held to false doctrine. He said, "Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly and fight against them . . ." (Rev. 2:15-16).
- 4. The Lord told the church at Laodicea that because they were "lukewarm" He would spue them out of His mouth (Rev. 3:16)!

E. It is true that the Lord is longsuffering not wanting any to be lost (2 Pet. 3:9).

F. Since we know the Lord is going to deal sternly with those who depart from His way — even though we do not know how long He will suffer with them before they lose their identity as "saints" and as the "church of God," how dare we suggest that it will be all right for some to use instrumental music in worship, believe the premillennial doctrine, and follow other man-made theories without incurring the wrath of God? Brethren who do so should read again Romans 11:22.

[Bill Heinselman is with the church in Cary, NC. P.O. Box 279, 27512.]

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Brotherhood News

Around the Carolinas . . .

The SOUTH CAROLINA LECTURES will be hosted this year by the DUNCAN CHURCH OF CHRIST in Duncan, SC. The dates are Nov. 3-5. . . . The NORTH WAKE CHURCH OF CHRIST in Raleigh, a planting of the Brooks Ave. church, is experiencing a good start. Since its beginning in June, the church is averaging approximately 80 in attendance with two baptisms and several others placing membership. DAVID LEACH of Hendersonville, Tenn., is the preacher. . . . The NORTH ELKIN church in Elkin, NC, has a new preacher. He is JOE PETTIT and comes to Elkin from Atlanta, Ga. STOKES VOGLER had been preaching for the church for more than two years. Brother Vogler was for many years a member of the Linville Forest church in Kernersville, NC. Following his retirement, brother Vogler and his wife moved to Elkin for the purpose of helping and strengthening the church. . . . The NORTH CAROLINA LECTURES, to be hosted this year by the LINVILLE FOREST CHURCH OF CHRIST in Kernersville, NC, have been postponed. The lectureship was scheduled for Sept. 10-14. A new date has not been announced.

And Elsewhere . . .

An article in the August, 1990, edition of *Christian Chronicle* reports that on July 28 the elders of the CROSSROADS CHURCH OF CHRIST in Gainesville, Fla., confessed error and requested restoration with churches of Christ worldwide. The Crossroads church was the center of the "Crossroads Movement" and has been embroiled in controversy since the mid-1970's over disciplining methodology and church structure. A statement prepared and signed by the elders of the Crossroads church, Dick Whitehead and Bob Hogle, was read by Whitehead at the Spiritual Growth Workshop in Orlando, Fla. The statement said in part, "Over the years many things have been attributed to the Crossroads congrega-

tion as a body growing out of the abuses by some Christians which caused others to hurt. And though we did not approve of these abuses, we are sorry that they occurred and ask your forgiveness for these sins." Whitehead also said, in speaking for the elders, "We all hope that this will bring about the love and restore the fellowship and unity for which Christ prayed in John 17." Initial nationwide response to the statement has been positive and hopeful. . . . The most recent issue engaging the church is that of the "new hermeneutic," which purports the need for a new approach to Biblical interpretation. Hermeneutics, the study of interpretation of the Bible, was the topic of the 10th annual Christian Scholars Conference, conducted July 19-21 at Abilene Christian University. Typically, the issue has been emotionally charged and has begotten extreme views on the left and the right. Based on excerpts from papers presented at the conference, it appears that cooler heads prevailed at the ACU meeting. Dr. Cecil May, Jr., of Magnolia Bible College stressed that "command, example, and necessary inference should not become a formalized hermeneutic but should be conceived of as principles in the hermeneutic process. They should function in the role of 'applied common sense.'" Proponents of the need for another method of Biblical interpretation have been critical of the stress upon "divine command, approved example, and necessary inference." In a closing paper Dr. Ian Fair stressed three concerns.

"First, we should always remember that we are a people of deep Biblical commitment and that careful Biblical exegesis should always be the foundation of Biblical interpretation. Second, we do not need a new hermeneutic, only a broad holistic one that clearly understands the rich nature of Biblical literature. . . . Third, in order for the restoration movement to remain committed to unity, we will have to provide a tolerant environment in which open dialogue can take place. This environment should include humility before the word of God, humility

toward our restoration tradition, and humility before our brothers in Christ who might differ with us." Approximately 200 people attended the conference. . . . TENNESSEE BIBLE COLLEGE and the GATLINBURG CHURCH OF CHRIST

announce the annual Fall Great Smoky Mountain Lectureship. This year's dates are **Oct. 19-21** with the theme "God Is." For more information you may call David Hill at (615) 526-2616.

A Book Review

by Michael R. Mobley

14,000 Quips & Quotes, F.C. McKenzie; Baker Book House, Box 6287, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49516; 581 pages, paper \$19.95.

This book is an excellent resource for anyone who speaks publicly or writes, including editors and school teachers. It covers 495 topics from ability to zeal, America to worship, righteousness to TV commercials. Some are humorous and some are sobering. Some will cut to the bone while others will soothe the spirit. All of them are challenging. This book will make a great resource for any preacher's desk or Bible class teacher's desk. For the rest, this book is enjoyable reading. We recommend it for any home or church library.

Don't Shoot! We May Be on the Same Side, Marvin Phillips; College Press, P.O. Box 1132, Joplin, MO 64802; 202 pages, paper.

Phillips has given us a defense and explanation of the Restoration Open Forums that have been conducted since 1984 and with which the author is involved. This is not a rehash of the forums, but a statement of the purpose of the forums which he believes has been misunderstood. Phillips explains that the purpose or work of the forums is not to merge the Independent Christian church and the churches of Christ. He defends his contention that the Independent Christian church and the churches of Christ are two groups of the Lord's one body separated by the walls of division. He does not advocate a compromise of the truth for the sake of unity. In fact, he states that the instrumental music issue may never be resolved. He pleads for a restoration of the two groups into the

one true body of Christ on the basis of truth. Yet, he believes that both groups have been guilty of building this wall of division. Another purpose of this book is to encourage the two groups to put aside animosity and continue to strive for the restoration of the two in the truth. He believes that this is part of the restoration movement that the two groups cling to so hopefully.

There are several themes that are woven throughout this book: truth, authority, unity, love, fellowship, church and restoration. Phillips speaks out against the partisan spirit that he believes exists in both groups. He believes that the root of this trouble is in the approach each group takes to the authority of the Scriptures. He develops these two perspectives in a clear and concise manner. He is concerned about the lines of fellowship this generates.

This work is written passionately, clearly, and thoughtfully. It is challenging to both sides of the issue of the forums and the hindrances to restoration. No matter what side of the debate you are on, this book will be helpful to your study.

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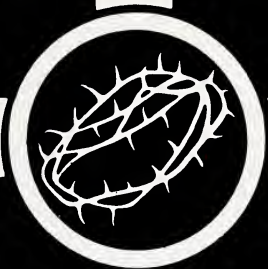


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VOL. 32, NO. 10, OCTOBER 1990



C284.71 / C292

The Name "Christian"

Henry Ward Beecher: *"Let me speak in the language of heaven and call you Christians."*

Albert Barnes: *"These divisions should be merged into the holy name Christian."*

Martin Luther: *"I pray you leave my name alone. Do not call yourselves Lutherans, but Christians."*

John Wesley: *"I wish the name Methodist might never be mentioned again, but lost in eternal oblivion."*

Charles Spurgeon: *"I say of the Baptist name, let it perish, but let Christ's name last forever. I look forward with pleasure to the day when there will not be a Baptist living."*

Peter, the apostle: *"Yet, if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this name" (1 Peter 4:16).*

Paul, the apostle: *"Now, this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Corinthians 1:12-13).*

Luke, the writer of Acts: *" . . . And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (Acts 11:26).*

Via South Fork News
Winston-Salem, NC



by David Pharr, Editor

A few weeks ago Tom Jackson of Wil-
liston, South Carolina, called me regarding
the data we are collecting for the new direc-
tory. We talked of the need for up-to-date
information regarding the needs of the
church in the Carolinas, South Carolina in
particular. The need for a better picture of
the current status is obvious. With a few no-
table exceptions, little aggressive evangelism
is taking place in most areas of the Carolinas.

If my own observations are correct, con-
gregations in other states where the church
is better established seem to be losing inter-
est in the Carolinas as a mission opportu-
nity. Several things may contribute to this.
For one thing, too many congregations over
the brotherhood have a declining interest in
supporting missions. Another thing is that
much money has been poured into some
Carolina areas over the years with seemingly
little results. Then there is the fact that Caro-
lina brethren themselves have too rarely
taken responsibility for evangelizing their
own communities, much less adjoining towns
and counties. We don't want to sound harsh,
but we all (I'm still a Carolinian at heart)
need to examine our own priorities regard-
ing the spread of the kingdom from Mur-
phy to Manteo, from Beaufort to Boone,
and from Aiken to Eden.

Another factor which should burden our
hearts is the wasted energy and shameful
conduct involved in division. We are not re-
ferring to the necessity of breaking fellow-
ship with what is obviously rebellion against
God. Certainly we can't fellowship digres-
sion (Eph. 5:11). Now, I recognize that such
is the excuse for most every division. ("They
sinned; they were teaching error.") But un-
biased observation would have to conclude
that most of the time the roots of the prob-
lems are personality clashes over petty issues.
Biting and devouring one another is eating
up the strength of the church from the in-
side out (Gal. 5:15). There is little doubt that
some real repentance could make some real
changes in the church. Then maybe we could

work on getting the world to repent.

But these are not the matters brothe-
r Jackson and I discussed. He was getting
ready for the annual South Carolina Evan-
gelism Seminar at the St. Andrews Road
church in Columbia. Information needs to
be compiled on the needs of the Carolinas
and then it needs to be kept in front of us
until we awaken to do something. The new
Carolina Directory will give a listing of the
churches, where they are, and their size.
There is a further need, however, for con-
cerned people all over both states to keep
on crying, "Come over and help us." Caro

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ing Editor; Dennis Conner, News Editor.

CAROLINA CHRISTIAN (P.O.P.N. 091160) is
published monthly by Carolina Christian Pub-
lications, Inc., at 71 S. Fairfield Road, Greenville,
SC 29605. Subscription price: individual \$8.00 per
year (\$15.00 for 2 years and \$22.00 for 3 years);
club of five or more \$7.50 each; quantity of 15
or more in bundles or direct mailing 50¢ per copy
per month. Publication number, 091160.

Second class postage paid at Greenville, SC
POSTMASTER: Send change with Form 3579
to Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., Johnny
Melton, Managing Editor, Route 2, Box 137
Conover, North Carolina 28613.

RETURN REQUESTED

Address editorial matter to David Pharr, Ed-
itor, ETSOPM, 6608 Beaver Ridge Road, Knox
ville, TN 37931. Address news items to Denni
Conner, P.O. Box 1219, Yadkinville, NC 27055

All items to be printed in a given month's is-
sue should reach the editor not later than the next
to-the-last Thursday of the preceding month.

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lina Christian will welcome informative articles about the needs of any areas in the Carolinas.

Designated Driver

The alcoholic beverage industry (racket) and its sympathizers have been promoting the idea of having a **designated driver** at drinking parties. The idea is that when people gather to drink there should be one person who abstains and who will be sober and able to drive the others home.

The horrible tragedy of alcohol-related manslaughter on the highways has reached such enormity that there is a national cry that something has to be done. The booze barons themselves, chafing because of the ugly pictures of booze and blood being mixed on the highways, have joined the plea that people "drink responsibly" — whatever that means. A part of their public relations effort has involved the designated driver plan.

Certainly we favor any plan that would keep drunk drivers off the road. There are, however, implications behind the designated driver plan that underscores the inherent evil of intoxicating beverages. Obviously a person who is drinking is not responsible enough to safely drive a car. But if a person drinking is not responsible enough to drive, can he be responsible enough to do other things, such as making moral decisions? Sometimes even brethren foolishly argue that to drink "in moderation" is not to be guilty of drunkenness. Yet even the world, including the people who sell intoxicants, urges that there be a designated driver that totally abstains. Why? The obvious answer is that they know

that just one drink can affect one's judgment and control.

Christians are concerned with controlling much more than just an automobile. The book of Proverbs shows that one of the results of intoxication is the removal of inhibitions. "Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thy heart shall utter perverse things" (Prov. 23:33). How could a person possibly be spiritually minded while under the influence of drink? A drinking man can't even guide a car on the highway. How could he possibly guide himself on the highway of holiness? But someone may object: "I can be just as spiritually minded after a few drinks." My friend, that very statement shows unwillingness to recognize what even the alcoholic beverage industry admits. Drinking affects the senses. It is folly to think it would not equally affect spiritual sensitivity. Truly, "whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Prov. 20:1).

What really is the designated driver idea? It is a plan which keeps one person sober so that his friends can get drunk. He is expected to protect them and to protect others from them. Imagine a car with five people in it. One is sober; he is the designated driver. The other four are to some degree drunk. They may exhibit blurred vision, poor coordination, slurred speech, and distorted judgment. One may be in a stupor; another may be boisterous. One may be passed out; another may be vomiting sick. Maybe the designated driver plan prevents some wrecks of cars; but it actually provides for the wreck of human beings.

Managing Editor's Column

Preaching to Encourage

by Johnny Melton

In the 1984 Summer Olympics, in Los Angeles, a Swiss marathoner struggled to finish her race. Gabriela Andersen-Schiess became dehydrated as she ran, and when she entered the stadium she was dragging her leg, her hands were hanging limp at her side, and she had a glassy stare in her eyes. The

crowd in the stadium cheered as she limped along. Her coach could not touch her (she would have been disqualified), but he shouted words of encouragement to her. Finally, after what seemed forever, Andersen-Schiess crossed the finish line. She did not win the race, but she won her race. She was

one of the heroines of those summer games.

The Christian life is often compared to a race in Scripture. The preacher of Hebrews, after describing the heroes and heroines of faith of a previous day, encouraged his audience, "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us" (Heb. 12:1). The Christians addressed in Hebrews were facing hardships and trials. They were becoming discouraged. They were reminded, "In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: 'My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those whom he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.' Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father?" (Heb. 12:4-7). After a word on the value of discipline, the preacher declared, "Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. Make level paths for your feet, so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed" (vs. 12). Feeble arms and weak knees aptly describe the picture of Gabriela Andersen-Schiess as she struggled to finish her race — her arms limp at her side and her legs wobbling beneath her. What Andersen-Schiess experienced physically, many running the Christian race experience spiritually.

When Andersen-Schiess struggled into the stadium in 1984 she was not greeted with boos and jeers. She was not criticized and condemned by her coach. Her teammates did not hang their heads in embarrassment. She was not condemned for failing to train properly. No one asked what she had done or failed to do that brought this calamity upon her. She was not put down for failing to win first place. Instead, she was cheered by the crowd, affirmed by her teammates, lauded by her coach, and praised for having the commitment to finish the race when she could have so easily given up.

The runners of the Christian race who have developed feeble arms and weak knees

spiritually very often are not treated as graciously. Fault-finders and critics work their mischief, and runners give up the race, rather than persevering to the end, thinking that because they cannot perform without flaw, there is no point to performing at all. What runners with feeble arms and weak knees need is encouragement, not criticism. This is where preaching enters the discussion.

I do not believe in negative preaching. I believe that the modern preacher should take his cue from the Hebrews preacher whose message was a "word of exhortation" (Heb. 13:22). Because of the tendency to be negative, in a destructive way, even the word "preach" has fallen into disrepute. People regularly say, "Don't preach to me," when they mean, "Don't talk down to me," or "Don't speak harshly to me." Preaching, too often, becomes pontificating. Rules and regulations are stressed and every deviation therefrom is "reproved" and "rebuked."

A defense of negative preaching is sometimes made with an appeal to 2 Timothy 4:2, "Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage — with great patience and careful instruction." It has been noted that preaching the Word involves correcting (or, reproofing [KJV]), rebuking, and encouraging (exhorting [KJV]). Of these three terms, two are negative, consequently, preaching should be two-thirds negative and only one-third positive. However, the apostle is not providing a mathematical formula for determining the number of positive sermons as opposed to the number of negative sermons a preacher should deliver in a set period of time. In preaching the Word, the faithful servant of God, will "correct, rebuke and encourage," but he will do it positively — "with great patience and careful instruction." To be opposed to negative preaching is not to be opposed to the condemnation of sin; neither is it to be opposed to correcting misconceptions and misbehavior. Negative preaching, as I have encountered it, and as I have been guilty of it, is preaching that is perceived as swift to condemn sin without compassion for the sinner; or preaching that is perceived as refuting false doctrine without upholding healthy, wholesome doctrine.

All preaching should be encouraging, and

from that perspective, all preaching should be positive. Preaching to convert is encouragement to turn from sin and Satan to Jesus and a life of righteousness. Preaching to convince is encouragement to understand and accept the truth. Preaching to convict is encouragement to apply personally the truth to one's own heart. Preaching to motivate is encouragement to action. Preaching to remind is encouragement to recall previous knowledge and prior commitments. Preaching should be a biblical word of encouragement.

This article began with an illustration of the principle of encouragement taught in Hebrews 12. I believe Hebrews is an example of first-century preaching. The point I am trying to make regarding positive preaching is illustrated in several places in Hebrews. One of the most striking is Hebrews 10:32-39. Hebrews 10:26-31 contains some of the most severe language in the whole sermon. For that matter, those verses contain some of the most severe language in the New Testament regarding the condemnation of sin. Positive preaching does not refuse to confront sin — it just doesn't stop with confronting and condemning. Notice that the preacher reminded his audience of their past accomplishments. "Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of suffering. Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. You sympathized with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions." There were some who were on the verge of giving up their faith, but rather

than dwelling on the sin that would result in such a case, the preacher made an appeal to continued faithfulness based on their previous faithfulness. Earlier, in another place where the preacher was warning against unfaithfulness, after painting a dire picture of the consequences of backsliding (Heb. 5:11-6:8), he declared, "Even though we speak like this, dear friends, we are confident of better things in your case — things that accompany salvation" (Heb. 6:9). Congregations, like children and employees, tend to either live up to or down to the expectations placed on them. The Hebrews preacher expected his audience to overcome the temptations to unfaithfulness and to maintain their commitment to the Lord. He urged, "So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded" (Heb. 10:35). He then spoke confidently of them, "But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved" (vs. 39). This preacher dealt with a congregation that was in very real jeopardy of apostasy by (1) warning them of the consequences of unfaithfulness, (2) reminding them of their past accomplishments, (3) assuring them of his confidence in them and their own confidence of faith, and (4) expecting the best of them. This is a model of positive preaching, it is truly a "word of exhortation."



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Religious Revival of the Third Millennium

by Marshall Swindall

When **Megatrends** was published seven years ago, the **Washington Post** called it, "a field guide for the future." **Megatrends** was a prophetic work. It predicted an information society and global economy. They are now reality.

John Naisbitt has now written **Megatrends 2000**. He discusses ten new forces which are now transforming our world. One of these is the **religious revival of the third millennium**.

Midway into 1990 we are at the dawn of the third millennium. The year 2000 is coming and there are unmistakable signs of a worldwide religious revival. American baby boomers who rejected organized religion in the 1970's are returning to church with their children in tow or joining the New Age Movement. Mormons celebrated the "best" year in their 158-year history in 1987, when they gained a record 274,000 new adherents. The worldwide charismatic movement has tripled in the last decade to nearly 300 million. These happenings were unforeseen by forecasters 25 years ago, who predicted that religion would wither away because of modernity. Not only has it not withered, religion is stronger than ever.

Religious belief is intensifying worldwide under the gravitational pull of the year 2000.

When people are buffeted about by chance, the need for spiritual belief intensifies. Most seek reassurance in one of two ways: either through inner-directed, "trust the feeling inside," movements or through out-directed, "this is the way it is," authoritarian religions. Both are flourishing.

People have been trying to predict the second coming of Christ since Jesus ascended back to the Father. This second coming is supposed to mark the beginning of a golden age in human history. These and other predictions are based upon the false teaching of premillennialism.

According to premillennialism, Christ and His saints are supposed to reign supreme

on earth in peace and joy for 1000 years. But it can only come after Christ's second coming and apocalyptic victory over His final enemy, the Antichrist.

This millennium fervor will rise to a fever pitch before the year 2000. Already the predictions are arriving: Jesus will either come in the year 2000 or the year 2030.

How does this affect us, you ask? Profoundly! People will be seeking out their creator, as they become more religious minded. They will be seeking a church, or maybe something religious, or maybe just seeking.

Will we be ready? Will we be listening? Will we be trying to teach them?

One thousand years ago, in the 990's before the last millennium, the "Christians" of Europe's Dark Ages believed the end of the world was at hand. During the Middle Ages, bands of peasants led by charismatic preachers, expected the millennium at any moment. In the late 1800's and early in this century, predictions concerning the second coming of Christ were rampant. Interestingly, the end of the 19th century saw the creation of several major made-in-America religions — Mormons, Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Christian Scientists.

As we approach the year 2000, new groups are again forming. When people believe "the time is at hand," they typically cluster into small groups around colorful, eccentric leaders. Echoing past movements, millions today are attracted to the unorthodox ends of the religious spectrum: from New Age "channelers," to "speaking in tongues charismatics," to scandal-prone TV preachers, known as "televangelists."

The bond we share today with the people of past millennial eras is the sense of living in a time of enormous change. During occasions of transition, people head either for fundamentalism, or for their own personal spiritual experience.

This is the key: People are looking for a link between their everyday lives and the

transcendent. A conservative Bible-believing church, such as we are, offers people a simple religion with clear-cut values. The challenge for us is to help people see the connection between their lives and Jesus who died so that they might enjoy eternal life.

What does this mean to us? Every visit we make counts. Every worship assembly is important. Every sermon is valuable. Every Bible class teacher must be well prepared. Benevolence and counseling are two

very important areas. People are searching. In conservative churches (such as the churches of Christ) our most visible strength is our caring. We must be a "high touch" church. To a local community, a church which demonstrates its love by serving the needs of the people, is the church that will reach the lost. Never have the words "reach out and touch someone" meant so much!

[Mark preaches at the Essex Village congregation, Charleston, SC.]

The Wisdom of God

by Jim Mullican

In the middle 1800's, the churches of Christ were the fastest-growing religious body in the United States, but there were those who thought it could grow faster with a centralized organization. The American Christian Missionary Society was formed in 1849 to enable the churches to cooperate in mission work more efficiently. However, it soon sought to be a policy-making body for the churches, and particularly alienated the southern churches by passing resolutions in favor of the Union during the Civil War. Most southern churches were trying to remain uninvolved in that tragic conflict, as were many northern churches.

After the war, the spread of instrumental music in worship eventually led to further strain and eventually to a separation of the so-called "Progressives" and "Conservatives."

During the 1960's, the "Progressives," now known as the Disciples of Christ (Christian Church), went through a period of restructuring to organize as a "denomination among denominations." About half of their churches refused to go along, and are known today as independent Christian Churches.

The centralizing of authority and restructuring did not accomplish its goal. The two branches of the Christian Church today are about twice as large as they were 80 years ago, meaning they have not even kept up with the nation's rate of population increase. The churches of Christ have increased 1000% or tenfold during the same time.

The value of each congregation being in-

dependent and autonomous is that if false teaching gains a foothold somewhere — as it occasionally does — it is much less likely to spread throughout the other churches. This is perhaps why God commanded that each congregation is governed by its own elders rather than by a centralized organization. It is really the best way. As Paul said, "the foolishness of God is wiser than men . . ." (1 Cor. 1:25).

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Reexamining the Fundamentals, XVIII

by David Pharr, Editor

Premillennialism is basically a notion that when Christ returns He will set up His kingdom on earth and rule over a worldwide earthly kingdom for a thousand years. In the previous article of this series we noticed the various major viewpoints regarding the "thousand years" mentioned in Revelation 20. The premillennial view is without doubt the most popular among denominations.

While Revelation 20:1-7, misunderstood and misapplied, is the starting place of premillennialism, the fact is that hardly a doctrine of the Bible has not been corrupted by the efforts of extreme premillennialists to make everything fit into their theory of the meaning of Revelation 20. In fact, so many portions of Scripture have been perverted by premillennial thinking that it literally takes a study of almost every chapter of the Bible to answer the errors. It is not possible, therefore, in a brief article to do more than cite some of the more obvious false doctrines of premillennialism.

The Book of Revelation

Premillennialism ignores the nature of the book of Revelation. Teachers of premillennialism like to claim that they accept the Bible as being literally true. Thus they insist that such things as the "thousand years" of Revelation 20 is to be understood literally. Every Bible student realizes, however, that the Bible contains figures of speech and symbolic language. To say that a figure or symbol is used is not to deny that the idea it teaches is literally true. Literal truth is often expressed in symbolic language.

The book of Revelation is written in symbols. Verse 1 of the book shows this when it says the Revelation was "signified" to John. Look at the word "signified." It means that the message was given in signs. This is evident as one goes through the book, and chapter 20 is no exception. For example, is Satan (a spiritual being) bound by a literal (material) chain (Rev. 20:1-2)? Is the pit (v. 3) literally "bottomless"? If so, how is it a pit?

When premillennialists stake their theory on what they argue is literally found in Revelation 20:1-7, they make a fatal mistake, because none of the essential elements of their theory are even mentioned in these verses. Notice the following facts:

(1) The theory of premillennialism argues that the thousand-year reign will begin when Christ returns; but a careful reading of Revelation 20:1-7 will show that **this text does not even mention the second appearing of Christ.**

(2) They claim that the passage proves that the righteous dead will be raised first — before the rest of the dead. But the passage says **nothing at all about a bodily resurrection.** The "first resurrection" applies to "souls," not bodies. Remember that premillennialists insist that all this is to be understood literally. Accordingly, they need to observe their own rules and not see bodies where the Bible says souls.

(3) They use this passage to teach that Christ will reign on earth for a thousand years. Again, however, **we search in vain for reference to any reign on earth whatsoever.** The text simply does not say the "thrones" (plural) of the souls are on earth, and to claim that they are is to add to the Scriptures. (See Rev. 22:18-19.)

(4) In the development of the elaborate confusion known as premillennialism, one tenet is that Christ's thousand-year reign will be on **David's restored throne in Jerusalem.** Here again Revelation 20 fails to support their contention, because not one word is said about **David's throne, or Jerusalem, or any throne on earth whatsoever.**

(5) What is even more astounding is that premillennialism claims that all the righteous (including all living even now) will be with Christ in their thousand-year imaginary reign of Christ on earth. Any student should be able to see, however, that the **only** ones under consideration were those that "were **beheaded** for the witness of Jesus" (v. 5). These are the only ones included in "the first resurrection." It is plainly stated that the

rest of the dead (all except those who were beheaded) "lived not again until the thousand years were finished." **Literally**, therefore, these things can only be applied to those who are **literally beheaded** as martyrs for Christ.

Old Testament Prophecies

Premillennialism denies the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies. This is especially the case regarding fleshly Israel and the land of Palestine. Premillennialism insists that fleshly Israel is to be restored to the land promised to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Some premillennialists even argue that the temple is to be rebuilt, and that the Jewish priesthood and animal sacrifices are to be restored. This is why premillennialists get excited over every situation that develops in the Middle East. Some of them try to make every news headline a fulfillment of some prophecy. And what they claim to know for sure one month is contradicted when the headlines change the next month.

Four basic mistakes are made. First, they refuse to recognize that many of the prophecies they use **have already been fulfilled** during the Old Testament period. Second, they fail to acknowledge that many of the promises were **conditional**. As regards some prophecies, God never intended to keep the promises unless the people met the conditions given. When they rebelled against the requirements, God took back the promise. In the third place, premillennialism fails to recognize that prophecy is often stated in **symbolic language**, and that to look for the fulfillment to be exactly as the symbols describe is to expect something never intended. Finally, they fail to recognize that one of the figures often employed is to use **fleshly Israel to represent the spiritual Israel** of the New Testament. This brings us to yet another fundamental error.

The True Israel

Premillennialism refuses to accept the New Testament doctrine that there is no longer any distinction of fleshly Israel, and that the true "Israel of God" is the church (Gal. 6:15-16; 1:1-2). This truth is so firmly affirmed in so many passages that it would

seem that no reader of the Bible could miss it. One paragraph from Galatians 3 ought to suffice.

In a context that has shown the removal of the old law, the law which made a distinction between Jews and Gentiles, verses 26 and 27 say **all** (Jews and Gentiles) are the children of God by faith, inasmuch as they are baptized into Christ. The force of this is to remove forever the notion that "the children of God" are such by virtue of fleshly lineage.

But the apostle goes on. Verse 28 says, "There is neither Jew nor Greek . . . for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Could truth be more plainly stated? Under the gospel system fleshly racial differences have been abolished.

Then verse 29 drives the final nail. "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." What promise? The promise made to Abraham. Who are the heirs of the promise? Abraham's seed. Who are Abraham's seed? Those who are Christ's. Are Christ's people, the children of God, those who are of fleshly Israel? No, they are Christ's by faith, and in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek. What then is the blessing promised to Abraham? The Galatian passage shows in verse 24 that it is justification by faith; but a statement by Peter in Acts 3:25-26 provides a commentary. The blessing promised in the covenant made with Abraham was received when God sent Jesus "to bless you, in turning away everyone of you from his iniquities."

In spite, however, of the unanswerable gospel evidence, premillennialism still holds to the notion that fleshly Israel, not spiritual Israel, is God's peculiar people. This is nothing less than a denial of the gospel system, and, while unintentional, makes premillennialism a kind of infidelity.

The Resurrection

Premillennialism denies the general resurrection of the dead. This arises from the mistaken view that the symbolic "first resurrection" of Revelation 20 is the bodily resurrection of the righteous, which will be followed at a later time by a resurrection of the wicked. This is tied to a mistaken view

of what is meant in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 which says that "the dead in Christ shall rise first."

The Bible, however, teaches "a resurrection of the dead, **both of the just and unjust**" (Acts 24:15; emphasis mine, D.P.). Jesus Himself settles the issue. "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; emphasis mine, D.P.). Can words be more plain? All are to be raised in the same hour. Jesus is very specific: Both good and evil people will be raised in the same hour. To read this and still claim that there will be more than one day of resurrection is to deny the very words of Jesus. And to interpret the symbolism of Revelation 20 so as to contradict the plain statement of Jesus is to reduce the Bible to a jumble of confusion.

But what is meant in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 when it says "the dead in Christ shall rise first"? The context shows this to be in answer to a problem in the minds of the Thessalonian Christians. They had feared that their loved ones who had died in the Lord would miss the glorious advent of Christ (vv. 13-15). Paul assures them that the living will "in no wise precede" (v. 15, ASV) those who were dead. Thus the use of the word "first" in verse 16 is to explain that dead Christians would be raised first (before) the living saints went to meet the Lord in the air. The word "first" is not used in relationship to when the wicked would be raised. When the wicked would be raised is not under consideration at all in these verses. The righteous dead will be raised first (before) the ascen-

sion of the living.

This can also be seen by a comparison of the great resurrection chapter, 1 Corinthians 15, where verse 22 shows that just as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive (resurrected). Verse 26 says that "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." Verse 54 shows that death will be swallowed up in victory when the resurrection has taken place. Now, we recognize that this chapter was written to give hope to Christians, and that its purpose was not to explain the resurrection of the wicked (though verses 21-22 plainly include it). Still we must not overlook the fact that Paul is describing the **ultimate and absolute victory** over death, which could not be complete until **all** the dead are raised.

With this in mind, then, notice the parallels between 1 Thessalonians 4:16 and 1 Corinthians 15:52 which gives a connecting link. Both passages indicate that the event will occur "at the last trump"; when the trumpet sounds; "with the trump of God." Now, we must not miss that 1 Corinthians 15:52 is talking about exactly the same thing as 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17. And the context of 1 Corinthians covers the resurrection of all the dead, so that it can be truly said, "Death is swallowed up in victory." Until all the dead are raised, the victory over death will not be complete. But Paul says that it will be complete "at the last trump," and it is when that trumpet sounds that the dead in Christ will be raised first: that is, before the living ascend to meet the Lord in the air.

Premillennialism, therefore, contradicts what the Bible teaches about the resurrection of all the dead, which will occur at the coming of Jesus.

(To be continued)

No Rest for the Weary

by Gary G. Payne

"No rest for the weary." Are you familiar with that saying? Sometimes we are more familiar with it than we would like to be. Problems in life can be overbearing. There is another saying: "When it rains, it pours." Sometimes we get about as much,

or more, as we think we can take. We feel like giving up. We get a careless attitude.

Weariness is really one of the big issues with euthanasia. A loved one is helpless — a "vegetable." The family's nerves are frayed. They hurt for the person they love.

On the TV show "20/20" there was a mother who had a small child almost drown in the family swimming pool. The child lived; but there was extensive brain damage. It was pitiful. The mother commented, "There are worse things than death." I hoped I would never have to face what she did.

On a less extreme note, other things can eat at us — for example, child-rearing. It is not easy to discipline a child. You spank him and five minutes later the kid gets back up and goes right back to what he was doing before. You get tired of giving spankings. Some parents just stop. They give up.

It happens in the Christian life too. Satan tries to wear you down. He throws everything at you he can. After a while, you get tired. You feel like throwing in the towel. It is more than you can take.

I'm talking about spiritual weariness. Inner conflicts will do it. In other words, you know you are not what you ought to be. A brother in Christ holds a grudge against another in the congregation. He knows he is wrong. He hates himself for it. Yet grudges are hard to shake off. He thinks, "How can I go to worship like that? I feel like a hypocrite." Unless he does something about it, he will grow weary and probably quit coming. Or, when guilt eats at us, we may question our salvation. We need encouragement. You think you should get it at the worship services; but sometimes you don't.

It is possible to be religious, dedicated, and busy; yet still be spiritually weary. Some have "stick-shift faith." When you first learn to drive a stick-shift car, you are very cautious. You don't want to grind the gears. But later, after you learn how, you don't think much about it. Shifting gears becomes a matter of instinct. But we cannot rely on our instincts to get us through our spiritual lives. Satan is too busy! We cannot allow ourselves to lapse into a faith that only goes

through the motions.

How can you tell if you are spiritually weary or not? Consider your devotional life. I am not asking if you pray often or not. Sometimes praying can become a ritual too. I am asking if you deeply love God. Do you sometimes just break out and praise Him? Or sing because you feel close to Him? Another tell-tale sign is this: giving until it hurts — and liking it. Is there a fire within you which cannot be put out? If not, even if you are being religious, you may be spiritually weary.

Spiritual weariness is the reason God had the book of Hebrews written. Some things never change. Christians then grew tired like Christians do now. The Hebrews writer encourages us: "Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess. . . . Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast" (Heb. 3:1-6).

Here is our message: "spiritual stick-to-itiveness." Don't give up. God never promised an easy road for Christians. In this life, there is no rest for the weary. But when this life is over, if you have "spiritual stick-to-itiveness," there is a rest. "There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, . . ." (Heb. 4:9-11).

We will live with God forever, in His presence at the throne. Whatever concerns you have now will vanish. Worries will be meaningless. All that will matter is being with our God. Stick to Jesus. Be determined to allow God to have all of your life: service, attitudes, emotions — everything.

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Teaching Children in a Small Congregation

by Gloria W. Smith

When my husband and I came to Hartsville five years ago, there was no church of Christ meeting in Darlington County. The few people living here who were members of the Lord's church had been traveling to cities in other counties in South Carolina to worship.

After a few months, we had several children attending and, therefore, found a need for a children's Bible class. This class often had five or six children in it, and (with different ages) we used many techniques of teaching.

Our children want to read and we feel we are helping them to strengthen their reading skills by encouraging them to do so in class. Some of our students read below their school grade levels; but, of course, we give them opportunities just like the others. We keep children's books on the bookshelf and some read before and after services when they arrive early or stay late (waiting for transportation home). Reading is good for everyone. We all need to read. Being addicted to reading is one of the better habits one can have.

We provide transportation for some of the children in one of our families who attend with us and we keep magazines in our car so they can look at pictures and read. My husband teaches church songs in the car and plays church singing tapes at different times.

Proverbs 22:6 tells us to "train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it." Basic Christian principles are being taught in our classes. My husband also teaches a children's class before the Sunday evening service begins. These classes are full of lessons that are designed to help the children learn about what God expects us to do in our lives and with the choices we will have to make.

2 Timothy 2:15 teaches us to study to show ourselves approved by God. We need to keep alert and be ready to teach.

One of the most important things in teaching children is the example we set. We should always be on time, always be prepared to teach the lessons we have studied, and always be showing love to our Lord.

Teaching these last few years has been interesting and uplifting for me. It has been a good way for me to study the Bible. I have learned that classes have to be interesting and pleasurable or some children will cause problems for others in the class. Teachers have to find out what works best for them. Using different activities, puzzles, games, and forms of competition are good. Repetition is excellent with the information being given several different ways and questions asked over and over.

I have found that ladies in other congregations are quite willing to share ideas and information. I suggest that teachers and anyone interested in teaching take advantage of

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U.S. Post Office			
No. Publication Title			
Periodicity of Issue			
Date of Issue			
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Caroline Christian	Monthly	9-1-80	9-28-90
5. Number of Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date	6. Total Number of Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date	7. Total Number of Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date	8. Total Number of Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
71 S-Parfield Rd., Greenville, S.C. 29605 (Greenville County)	12	12	18.00
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9. Full Name and Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Business Office (Do Not Leave Blank)			
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10. Full Name and Complete Mailing Address of Owner or Editor			
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teachers' workshops and lectureships sponsored by many of our brotherhood congregations. Read books and magazines on teaching ideas. Always remember to ask questions anytime from those who have taught for a long time.

Evaluating and reassessing your congregation's class needs must be done periodically. It is helpful, in a small congregation where teachers may have to teach two classes a week, to change class age groups about once a year. It is helpful to both teach-

ers and students.

It encourages me when I have children in class ask me for class to continue when the time is over. Their bright eyes are just begging to see stories of Jesus unfold in front of them.

If it is the Lord's will, I will always be ready to teach children. May many who read this article share my zeal and desire.

[Sister Smith is the wife of Claude Smith who preaches in Hartsville, SC, P.O. Box 2262, 29550.]

A New Start

by Rob Albright

Since moving to Thomasville, my family and I have found several new things. We started shopping at a new grocery store. Our children have started new schools. We live in a new house. We have made new friends, and the children have new playmates. It has been a new start for us in many ways.

A new start involves many changes, and difficulties to overcome. To help in these changes we have the love of a new family in Thomasville. The church has been a great encouragement and help in this new start. We are truly blessed.

When a man or woman is baptized, a new start is made. There are some new things to get used to and some difficulties to overcome. Living for Jesus involves a new aim in life. This new aim means a new attitude, direction, friends, responsibilities, and blessings.

This new life in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17) is helped by other family members (church) who have experienced similar problems and feelings. New start problems can be minimized by the mutual responsibility we have with one another. We are encouraged to:

- love one another (John 13:34-35);
- not judge one another (Rom. 14:13);
- accept each other (Rom. 15:7);
- bear one another's burdens (Gal. 6:2);
- be kind to each other (Eph. 4:32);
- comfort one another (1 Thes. 4:18);
- be hospitable (1 Pet. 4:9).

Being a friend (Prov. 27:17) and being


a good example (1 Cor. 11:1) go far in maturing new Christians. With a new start, new Christians need assurances and fellowship. Our worship services, Bible classes and other activities, should all convey to the one who has made a new start that they are not alone. With time, patience, and love, the new Christian will become a man or woman greatly used by God and ready to help others as they experience "a new start."

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“Phebe Our Sister”

by David Pharr, Editor

Paul recognized the importance of women in the work of the church. The Holy Spirit guided Paul to show that there are certain things women are not permitted to do (1 Tim. 2:8, 11-12; 1 Cor. 14:34). But the Holy Spirit also guided him to write commendations regarding “those women who labored with me in the gospel” (Phil. 4:3). The sixteenth chapter of Romans especially demonstrates the apostle’s respect and love for his sisters in Christ. In this one chapter Paul refers to nine women for whom he held special esteem.

Phebe is the subject of Romans 16:1-2. Paul writes: “I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.” This is all the Bible tells us about this lady, but from these few words we can find some useful observations.

Phebe was a sister. Kinship in Christ is the closest of all human relationships. Jesus responded to attention to His fleshly family by saying, “For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother” (Matt. 12:47-50).

Brothers and sisters in Christ are blood kin — Christ’s blood. There are no strangers in the true family of God.

Calling Phebe a sister suggests equality. There is racial equality. Phebe is a Greek name. Here then was Paul, a **Jew**, writing to **Roman** people about a woman who was a **Greek**.

Likewise there is sexual equality. She was a sister, an equal in the same family. Her realm of service was different, but she was nonetheless Paul’s equal.

Galatians 3:28 declares the “Emancipation Proclamation” of Jesus Christ: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”

Phebe was a sister who had a letter of recommendation. She was travelling from Cenchrea near Corinth to the distant city of Rome. Her purpose was some kind of business. Her first appointment, however, was with the church. We have known of “members” who moved to a city and made no contact with the church for months. Others — God bless them — contacted the church before looking for a place to live. Phebe’s first business in Rome was to become associated with the church.

Many scholars think Phebe may have carried Paul’s epistle to the Romans. Whether this was the case or not, the letter included a recommendation of her. Perhaps we have feared the denominational abuse of having a “church letter,” moving it from place to place; but we ought to restore the New Testament practice of providing letters of recommendation for those who go to different places.

Phebe was a sister who served. Being a servant has little appeal for fleshly minds. But Jesus shows us that service is the only way to greatness (Matt. 20:26-28). The “mind of Christ” seeks to serve (Phil. 2:4-6). John 13:1-17 shows that menial service is meaningful service. Christians should be clothed with humility as if it were the apron of a slave (1 Pet. 5:5).

Winston Churchill observed: “There are two sorts of people: Those who want to do something, and those who want to be somebody.” In this context, it matters little who you are; what matters is what you do. I recall once hearing Marshall Keeble say something like this: “The race problem will be solved when all races start to serve one another.”

Phebe was a servant; she dedicated herself to serving. Was she a “deaconess”? The word translated “servant” is the word which in other contexts is translated “deacon.” It is not, however, used here in any official sense of “deaconess,” and to so render the word is only to cause confusion. Nothing more is intended by Paul than that she wa

a servant.

It is fashionable in some circles for arguments to be made for an office of deaconess. It seems to this writer, however, that the whole issue can be made moot by asking one simple question: What single act of service could a woman perform as a "deaconess" which she cannot perform equally well without being so designated?

Phebe was a sister who served in the church. Women probably carry the larger load of responsibility in most volunteer community projects. Many organizations, civic and charitable, would probably shut down if women quit volunteering. Such service may be honorable and philanthropic. But it is in the church that service glorifies God. "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus . . ." (Eph. 3:20). Energies used in society projects can better be used in service in the church. Phebe's work was such that Paul described her as "a servant of the church."

On the issue of women's role in the church, our stance seems often to have been more reaction than action. We have properly shown that women are prohibited from certain ministries. We fail sometimes, however, to positively promote the service women can and should be giving.

For example, there is a divinely ordained ministry that has older (mature) women teaching younger women (Ti. 2:3-5). When circumstances call for it, what would be wrong with a qualified woman being supported by the church in this kind of work, and other works which are within biblical perimeters?

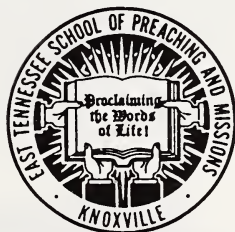
A few women attend Christian colleges to major in Bible. Occasionally a woman enrolls full time in a school like East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions. But such are rare, and may be looked upon as oddities. Why, though, should our sisters be any less knowledgeable in the Scriptures? Women ought to be encouraged to prepare themselves to serve as counselors to other women, to teach privately, or to help in missions at home and abroad. There are ways women can work full time for the church besides just being secretaries.

Phebe was a sister who was personally involved in service. It is one thing to serve

by proxy; it is another thing to serve personally. Phebe was a "succourer" of many, including Paul. The word means a helper, an assistant. The masculine form in the Greek means a "patron." This has suggested to some that she was a person of financial means, who used what she had to assist others. Alexander Maclaren observes: "There is a whole world of unmentioned kindnesses and a life of self-devotion hidden away under these few words."

If she was a woman of wealth, she fell under the holy charge made to all Christians who are rich: "Instruct those that are rich in this present world . . . to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share" (1 Tim. 6:18-19, NASV).

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In today's society many Christian widows are financially secure. Likewise there are Christian women who choose not to marry and who successfully provide for themselves in their chosen careers. Though not expedient for all, some of these sisters could move to mission areas where the church especially needs their help. The brotherhood at present may not be as ready as it ought to be to support women in mission work. Women who are in a position to do so, however, should consider going to places where their service is needed.

Phebe was a sister who deserved the help of the church. Paul urged that they "assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you." We do not know the nature of the business Phebe had at Rome — whether it was church business, or personal business. As one who had been a helper of many, however, she deserved whatever help she needed. It should be kept in mind that this was not a benevolence case. Instead it was a case of helping one who helped others.

Men have leadership responsibility in the church. When this is applied as God intended, it is certainly the only workable system. There is sometimes a tendency, however, for the men to overlook their duty to assist the sisters who serve. We all know, for example, how important is the service of those sisters who teach children in our classes. How often, though, have their needs

for equipment and materials been overlooked? How often, indeed, have their repeated requests for such been "put on the back burner"?

It would be good if the leadership in every congregation would take a thoughtful look at what is being done by their sisters, and ask sincerely what might be done to assist each of them in the service they give.

Phebe was a sister whose name is recorded forever. It is not likely that Phebe imagined that her name would be remembered wherever the Bible is read. Few persons are remembered for more than a few brief generations. Even stone monuments weather away. But Phebe's memory is engraved in the word that never dies.

Our sisters who serve today will not, of course, have their names recorded in the Scriptures. Few names, even of the best, will be remembered for long when their work is finished. In this connection, there is an interesting statement in Philippians 4:3. Paul there leaves unnamed some of his beloved fellowlaborers — he does not tell us their names. But he reminds that their "names are in the book of life." Sisters, your service may be unnoticed by many, and your name may never be engraved on paper or stone; but if it is written in heaven, what more could one want for her service? (See Luke 10:20.)

Saddam Hussein and Nebuchadnezzar

by Bob Bickle

Modern-day Iraq is ancient Babylon. Although thousands of years separate Saddam Hussein and Nebuchadnezzar, there are many similarities between the two.

Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, was the king that carried Judah into captivity. In 2 Chronicles 36:6 we read of Nebuchadnezzar binding Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and carrying him away to Babylon.

We learn more about Nebuchadnezzar in the book of Daniel. In his dream that was

interpreted by Daniel, it was revealed that he was the head of gold on the statue (Dan. 2:38). In Daniel 3 we read of the size of the king's ego. He had an image of gold ninety feet in height constructed. When the music was sounded, the people were to fall down and worship the image. Because Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to worship this image, they were thrown into, but delivered from the fiery furnace.

In Daniel 4 we read of Nebuchadnezzar

walking in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. He said, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?" While the word was in the king's mouth, a voice from heaven said, "O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee. And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will" (Dan. 4:31-32).

The proud king was driven from men and ate grass as oxen and his body was wet from dew. His hair grew like eagle's feathers and his nails were like bird's claws. When he was restored to sanity, he had learned his lesson well. He said that he lifted up his eyes unto heaven and blessed the most High and praised and honored Him that lives forever and ever whose dominion is an everlasting dominion and His kingdom is from generation to generation (Dan. 4:32). In Daniel 4:37 we read, "Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase." He had learned his lesson well, but only through much pain.

What about Saddam Hussein? In an article in *The Jerusalem Post*, "What Makes Saddam Run?" N.B. Argaman wrote some interesting and frightening tales about the king of Iraq. He was an activist in his early 20's and cold-bloodedly cut the throat of one of his uncles over a political argument — in the uncle's home.

In 1979 it is said that he shot those who suggested that the heir ought to be elected by the parties' executive committee. He ordered their bodies be covered with a carpet and had a leisurely walk over their bodies. A few days later, Saddam announced at a mass rally that twenty-one plotters against the regime had been tried and executed.

During the eight-year war with Iran, a high ranking general remarked at a meeting that a certain order given by Saddam might result in an inordinate number of casualties. Saddam quietly asked the general to come

with him to an adjoining room to elaborate. Minutes passed, a shot was heard, and Saddam emerged replacing his pistol.

Who are Saddam's heroes? He ordered the rebuilding of the ancient city of Babylon. As late as last year, he offered a generous prize to anyone who can reconstruct the intricate chain of irrigation systems which made possible Babylon's hanging gardens known as one of the seven wonders of the world. The names of Hammurabi and Asurbanipal are exalted in official Iraq's rhetoric as models for Saddam's leadership.

Saladdin, one who defeated the Crusaders and liberated Jerusalem in a famous battle at Hittin, is another hero. Saddam wants to perform a similar feat against what the Arabs consider the Crusaders today.

One cannot help wondering whether Hussein will not be humbled as Nebuchadnezzar before he will recognize the God of heaven. Does Hussein know what happened to Nebuchadnezzar? When will men like Nebuchadnezzar and Saddam Hussein learn the meaning of what Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth" and, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God"? (Matt. 5:5, 9).

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A Meaningful Life

by David Vaughn

"We are beginning to see that a full garage, a full pocketbook and a full stomach can add up to an empty life." These were the truthful and powerful words spoken by Dwight Stevenson some years ago. Indeed, there is more to life than "things." In warning against greed, Jesus said, "for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions" (Luke 12:15).

"Things" have meaning only as we assign meaning. We must have certain "things" to function in this world. However, those things cannot be the foundation of life. At least, not according to Scripture. Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone." Agur said, "Two things I asked of Thee. Do not refuse me before I die: Keep deception and lies far from me. Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is my portion, lest I be full and deny Thee and say, 'Who is the Lord?' Or lest I be in want and steal, and profane the name of my God" (Prov. 30:7-9).

If we have the "why" to live, the "things" and "how" of life become secondary. Jesus gave some very simple, yet fundamental counsel in Matthew 7:24-27. The way God would have His people live is amazingly simple, but our selfishness complicates the choices before us. If we carefully study

Jesus' powerful sermon recorded in Matthew 5-7, we soon realize it is easily understood. This great body of teaching is compounded, however, as we try to arrange it into our already chosen life-style. This approach toward our Lord's teaching never works; it will never result in a transformed life. We must be willing to yield our wills to the commands of Scripture.

Peter said that God "has granted to us his precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust" (2 Pet. 1:4). Then, he argues, we are for this reason to do certain things in our growth as children of God. What God requires will guide and help us to have a meaningful life. What He requires has nothing to do with material possessions, but with what we believe and want to become. Such is what life is about, and what is necessary for us to live in eternity with God.

Assign value to the things God regards as valuable: the golden rule, fellowship, evangelism, unity, purity, truth, honesty, bearing burdens, strengthening family ties, and exalting Jesus as Lord.

[P.O. Box 1861, Burlington, NC 27216-1861.]

True Emotion

by Paul Jarrett

I've been to numerous funerals where I witnessed families shedding tears of emotion over the loss of a loved one. I've also seen a number of movies over the years where audiences wept at the death of one of the characters in the story. In both of these situations the tears were a true reflection of very similar emotions. However, in one instance the situations themselves were true, whereas in the other the emotions were manipulated.

I mention these two examples as illustra-

tions of two different approaches to the matter of emotion in our worship services. I truly believe we need to have more emotion expressed in our services. However, I'm equally

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convinced that it needs to be true emotion, and not the manipulated kind you can experience at any movie theater.

I can enjoy a sad movie as much as anyone, but I do not wish to see our worship services reduced to cheap theatrics in order to promote an appearance of real emotion. Rather, I believe we need to see true emotion being expressed by those who are deeply stirred by an awareness of their own sins, and the greatness of God's grace in sending Jesus to die on the cross for us.

This difference between true emotion and

the kind produced by theatrics may be described like this. True emotion is what **prompts us** to sing, whereas the theatrical equivalent is what we feel when the singing **around us** stirs our emotions. An easy way to gauge which kind of emotion you are seeking in the assembly is to ask yourself if you go to church because you **are glad**, the way David did (Ps. 122:1); or do you go looking for those around you to say or do something to make you **feel glad**?

[P.O. Box 24102, Charlotte, NC 28224.]

Brotherhood News

by Dennis Conner

Around South Carolina . . .

The 1991 Carolina Lectures will be hosted by the CHARLOTTE AVENUE church in Rock Hill. The theme will be "The Word of God" and will be based on Psalm 119. C.W. BRADLEY will be speaking each evening and DAVID PHARR will be speaking each day on the subject "The Interpretation of God's Word." The dates will be April 8-11.

And North Carolina . . .

The elders of the COLE MILL ROAD church in Durham have announced that DAVID HOLCOMB will be their Campus Ministry Intern on the UNC campus for the 1990-91 school year. UNC-Chapel Hill has an enrollment of approximately 24,000 students. . . . The second annual Carolina Celebration will be held November 3 at the Reynold's High School Auditorium in Winston-Salem. The speaker this year will be JOHNNY MELTON and the theme will be "Love One Another." Last year's Celebration attracted over 900 Christians from the Piedmont area. There were 17 congregations represented. . . . JOHN THURMAN, SR., a resident of Asheville, is looking for Christians to help him produce a video lesson designed for use in the teaching of non-Christians. If you would be interested in learning more about this project, you may call brother Thurman at (704) 298-9333. . . .

VIRGIL TROUT is the new preacher for the LINVILLE FOREST CHURCH OF CHRIST in Kernersville. . . . A campaign group from the Old Hickory church of Christ near Nashville, Tennessee, assisted the WESTSIDE CHURCH OF CHRIST in Rocky Mount in an outreach effort last July 27-29. The church in Rocky Mount averages about 60 in Sunday morning attendance, but on July 29 there were 104 present for worship, breaking all previous records. The theme for the campaign was "A Celebration of God's Love." BRUCE THWEATT is the preacher for the Rocky Mount church.

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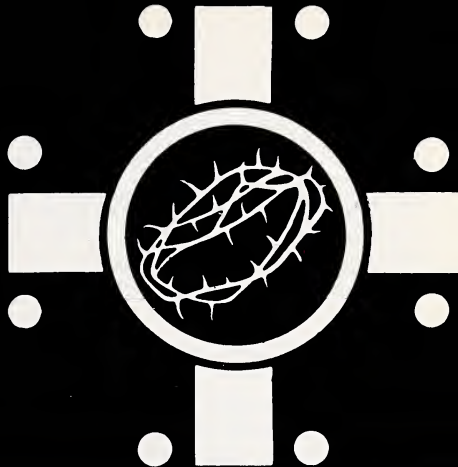
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CAROLINA CHRISTIAN

VOL. 32, NO. 11, NOVEMBER 1990



C289.21 / C292

King Khufu's Treasures

by Rudy Senn

King Khufu, king of Egypt, spent his life gathering priceless treasure to fill a room in his burial tomb. He amassed 3 million stones and sacrificed the lives and labor of thousands of slaves to build a pyramid that still stands today. The room once filled with his wonderful treasure, though, is now empty. All has been stolen. All the king's plans and dreams have come to nothing.

We are reminded of Jesus' teaching, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on the earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break through and steal" (Matt. 6:19). Why should we lose our souls in the vain attempt to lay up treasure on earth? King Khufu is an example of how futile and impossible it is.

Paul tells us, "For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out" (1 Tim. 6:7). Yet we seem to find a deep sense of security in gathering and storing up life's "treasures" and building our own "pyramids." This approach to life robs us of eternal life. "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:21). What we leave behind will be a monument and a testimony to our faith. If our faith has been placed in worldly treasures, we will be like King Khufu; we will have no treasure in earth, or in heaven. The only secure place to store our treasure is in heaven.



by David Pharr, Editor

What is right and wrong with the churches?

Chapters 2 and 3 of Revelation give the Lord's evaluation of what was right and what was wrong with seven churches in Asia. Except for the church at Smyrna, and perhaps the one at Philadelphia, Jesus found more to criticize than to commend.

Many studies have been made of these letters to the churches. Often our classes have devoted time to examining the good and bad features of each. One thing especially ought to stand out from our study, however; and that is that the Lord does not see things the way we may see them.

I believe that the seven churches of Asia may serve as a microcosm of the varying conditions of the church throughout the ages. Think about it. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Writers

Faithful Christians are always welcome to submit articles to **Carolina Christian**. We cannot, of course, use everything that might be submitted, but everything will be considered. We especially appreciate articles from Carolinians.

Year-End Gifts

Income tax laws provide for deductions for charitable contributions. About this time of year some Christians begin to consider whether giving away additional money might actually save them money in reduced taxes. Most of us, I am sure, would like to pay less taxes. When there is a choice between voluntarily giving money to a worthy cause or being required to pay it to the I.R.S., I think

most of us would choose to give. There are many worthy causes which can use financial help — local congregations, mission work, Christian schools, etc. It is good stewardship to plan how we can do the most good with the money God puts into our hands.

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David Pharr, Editor; Johnny Melton, Managing Editor; Dennis Conner, News Editor.

CAROLINA CHRISTIAN (P.O.P.N. 091160) is published monthly by Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., at 71 S. Fairfield Road, Greenville, SC 29605. Subscription price: individual \$8.00 per year (\$15.00 for 2 years and \$22.00 for 3 years); club of five or more \$7.50 each; quantity of 15 or more in bundles or direct mailing 50¢ per copy per month. Publication number, 091160.

Second class postage paid at Greenville, SC.
POSTMASTER: Send change with Form 3579 to Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., Johnny Melton, Managing Editor, Route 2, Box 137, Conover, North Carolina 28613.

RETURN REQUESTED

Address editorial matter to David Pharr, Editor, ETSOPM, 6608 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37931. Address news items to Dennis Conner, P.O. Box 1219, Yadkinville, NC 27055.

All items to be printed in a given month's issue should reach the editor not later than the next-to-the-last Thursday of the preceding month.

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The Eucharist

by Johnny Melton

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread, and, after he had given thanks, broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "This is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes (1 Cor. 11:23-26).

This is the earliest written account of the institution of the Lord's Supper in the New Testament. Paul was careful to pass on to the Corinthians (and through them to us) what he had received from the Lord regarding this very significant part of the church's worship. Even though he was not present on the occasion of the Last Supper, when the Lord's Supper was instituted, Paul had

received "from the Lord" the necessary details to properly instruct others regarding it.

The Lord's Supper is sometimes called the Eucharist. The term comes from the Greek word for thanksgiving. The thanksgiving aspect of the Lord's Supper is vital to our proper understanding of it.

In an excellent article, "Passover, Last Supper, and Lord's Supper *Jewish Elements for Christian Reclamation*," in *Leaven* (Winter 1990, 15-20), Randy Chestnut discussed the relationship of the Lord's Supper to the Jewish Passover. Among other interesting points of correlation, Chestnut observed, "One further feature of the ancient Passover celebration which should be noted because it provided much of the ambiance of the Last Supper is bound up in the word 'celebration' itself. Passover was not a somber occasion but a very festive one. While frivolity and levity were considered inappropriate — the

Directory Issue

The December issue of **Carolina Christian** will contain a **Directory** of churches of Christ in the Carolinas.

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Mishnah warns against after-dinner revelry in particular — the predominant mood was one of joyous celebration. Such joy was considered a natural corollary of the sense of deliverance from bondage that each participant was encouraged to experience afresh. In the case of the Lord's Supper, solemn remembrance and sober reflection are, of course, crucial — as at Passover — but such a reflective atmosphere need not be melancholic. It may be suggested, in fact, that a genuine sense of redemption from sin through Christ cannot help but issue in joyful celebration not unlike that which typified Passover."

Chestnut concluded his article with the following counsel, "In celebrating the Lord's Supper today, the church would do well to ask whether it does justice not merely to the outward aspects of the rite but also to the atmosphere of memory and hope, the spirit of thanksgiving and praise, the sense of personal redemption and corporate solidarity, and the mood of joy and celebration."

Jurgen Moltmann, a contemporary religious thinker, has written pointedly regarding this thanksgiving aspect of the Lord's Supper: "In the presence of Christ the Lord's supper joins the past and the future, history and eschatology in a unique way, and becomes a token of liberating grace. For the participants this means that in this meal they *remember* the death of Christ, through which God reconciled the world once for all; *acknowledge* the presence of the risen Lord in their midst; and *hope* with joy for the coming of his kingdom in glory. Whenever they do this they are responding through their own free gratitude to the grace that frees them. . . . Through the fellowship of Christ which the Lord's supper mediates, God the Father is glorified in thanksgiving, praise, delight and joy. The meal becomes a feast when this gratitude is expressed not only in official liturgies but in the free utterance of those who meet at the table and

their spontaneous joy" (**The Church in the Presence of the Holy Spirit**, Harper and Row, 1977, 256-257).

The fourth Thursday in November is "Thanksgiving Day" in America. It is the season for the expression of thanksgiving. I appreciate the fact that we have such a holiday in our country. However, I am concerned by certain aspects of the seasonal approach to Thanksgiving. On a national level there has been a secularization of the holiday. To say "thank you" implies that there is someone to thank. The Pilgrims celebrated the first Thanksgiving out of profound gratitude to the providential hand of God. In many instances modern Americans celebrate Thanksgiving, not in gratitude to God (because in our pluralistic society that is deemed inappropriate), but in gratitude to the Pilgrims for their hard work and industry in the face of severe hardships. But it is not just this secularization of Thanksgiving that troubles me.

I am concerned by the tendency to make thanksgiving the theme of a sermon either on the Sunday before or after the fourth Thursday in November, and letting that suffice for the year. "The Attitude of Gratitude" must be more than the catchy title for a trite sermon.

Thanksgiving is not seasonal to Christianity — it is fundamental. The joy, the gratitude, the festive atmosphere — all the things associated with the holiday — should be characteristic of our services every Sunday as we gather to eat the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is a celebration. It is a festival of joy. It is a reminder of the redemption purchased with the blood of Jesus. It is a participation in the presence of Jesus. It is an anticipation of the ultimate fellowship with Him when He comes to claim His own.

Maybe we ought to refer to the Lord's Supper as the Eucharist more often.

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Re-Examining the Fundamentals, XIX

by David Pharr, Editor

We have observed that there is hardly a Bible doctrine that has not been perverted by the efforts of premillennialists. Their erroneous interpretation of Revelation 20 so dominates their theology that they assume all other texts must be made to fit the theory.

Among fundamentalist denominations premillennialism is generally accepted. A few in churches of Christ have also embraced these views, though sometimes with modifications. In the early part of this century a popular preacher in the church named R. H. Boll became a forceful advocate. For a while his influence was somewhat significant; but brethren soon began to awaken to the seriousness of his errors, and brethren such as H. Leo Boles and Foy Wallace, Jr., came to the front to answer his errors and to uphold the truth. As a result only a few congregations were led away into the premillennial error.

Still, premillennialism is a problem within the church, primarily because members are being continually exposed to it. Religious neighbors speak of facets of the theory as if everyone surely believed it. Radio and television preachers mix it into most of their messages. Even bumper stickers tell of "the rapture."

Our purpose in this series is only to highlight the issues involved. In the last installment we cited how premillennialism misunderstands the book of Revelation; misapplies Old Testament prophecies; refuses to recognize the true Israel of God; and denies the general resurrection of the dead. We will continue with some other notable errors of this unscriptural theory.

The Rapture

Much is said by premillennial teachers about "the rapture." The term refers to the saints being taken up out of this world. The reference to our being "caught up" to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4:16-17) is the passage cited. Certainly the Bible does teach

that the saints will go up to meet the Lord. Premillennialism, however, adds some things.

They teach that it will be a **secret rapture**, and they teach that it will be a **temporary rapture**. Both notions are false. In the first place the text itself answers them. Read verse 16. Do "a shout," "the voice of the archangel," and the "trump of God" suggest something secret? Of course not! As G. K. Wallace once observed: "This is the noisiest verse in the Bible."

Further, the text provides for no return of the saints to earth after seven years, or at any other time. We will be caught up from the earth, "and so shall we ever be with the Lord." Read the beautiful promise of John 14:1-3. When Jesus comes for us it will be to take us to where he is now. Foolish indeed is the notion that he will take us to heaven (or anywhere else) and then bring us back to earth.

The so-called "rapture" of premillennial theories may have appeal for those who enjoy complicated and sensational scenarios; but it will not fit the plain promises of the Lord that he is coming to take us to our eternal home.

The King and His Kingdom

Simply stated, premillennialism teaches that Christ's intention when he came into the world was to set up a thousand year earthly kingdom ruling from the restored throne of David in Jerusalem. They argue that the Jews' rejection of Christ caused the kingdom to be postponed, and that it will, therefore, be so established when he returns. The ramifications of this seem endless. Perhaps the best way to refute it, therefore, is to simply list some of the more obvious ways this notion contradicts the Bible.

1. Premillennialism denies that Christ is now on David's throne. The inspired apostle Peter cited the prophecy of David that Christ would be raised up to sit on his

(David's) throne (Acts 2:30). In the next verse (v. 31) Peter plainly says this raising up referred to Christ's resurrection, which had taken place (v. 32). Peter's Holy Spirit guided conclusion, therefore, was that the prophecy (that Christ was to be raised to sit on David's throne) has been fulfilled and that Christ occupies that throne at the right hand of God, where he will stay until his foes are his footstool (vv. 33-35). The Bible is clear: Christ is now on the throne prophesied by David. Premillennialists may not like the idea of David's earthly throne being only symbolic of Christ's heavenly throne, but such is exactly what Peter teaches.

2. Premillennialism contradicts the prophecy of Jeremiah 22:30. Coniah was the last king in the fleshly ancestry of Jesus to occupy the throne in Jerusalem. A check of cross references, or any Bible dictionary, will show that Coniah is another name for Jeconias (Matt. 1:12) who is listed in the Davidic ancestry of Jesus. (He is also named Jechoiachin.) In Jeremiah 22:30 it is foretold that none of his seed (lineage) would sit "upon the throne of David," and rule "in Judah" (which included Jerusalem). The Bible does not contradict itself. Christ would sit on David's throne, but **not in Judah (Jerusalem)**.

3. Premillennialism refuses to recognize the present reign of Christ and the existence of his kingdom. Jesus had frequently announced that the kingdom was "at hand." He said it would come "with power" during the lifetime of people who heard him (Mark 9:1). The "power" came on Pentecost (Acts 1:8; Acts 2:1ff). As noted above Christ is now reigning. Is he a King without a kingdom? Certainly not. Further, the Bible shows us that the Lord's New Testament people are in the kingdom (Col. 1:13; Rev. 1:9).

4. Premillennialism reverses the Biblical order, making the return of Christ the beginning of his reign and kingdom instead of the end. They say he will set up his kingdom when he appears again (second coming), that then will be the beginning of his kingdom. The great resurrection chapter (1 Cor. 15), however, declares otherwise. Verse 23 shows that the resurrection will occur when Christ

comes. The resurrection of the dead will be the defeat of Christ's last enemy, which is death (v. 26). His reign is to last until the last enemy is put down (v. 25). Thus, as verse 24 shows, the end (not the beginning) will come when Christ comes to raise the dead. And at that point he will deliver up (not receive) the kingdom to God (v. 24).

5. Premillennialism refuses to believe the great prophecy of Daniel 2. The second chapter of Daniel tells of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, and Daniel's interpretation. Simply stated, the message foresaw four world empires — the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Greek, and the Roman. Daniel declared that "in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed" (Dan. 2:44). The establishment of God's kingdom was to be within the time span covered in Daniel's prophecy — that is, before the end of the last (Roman) of the predicted empires. The New Testament shows the fulfillment of this prophecy during the very time Daniel indicated, for Rome was in power when Christ took his Kingly place, and the kingdom was thereby established (Acts 2). Premillennialists would place the beginning of God's kingdom centuries later, yet in the future. They imagine all kinds of fanciful solutions to this contradiction, such as a restored Roman empire, but the simple fact is that their doctrine is contrary to the Bible.

7. Premillennialism ignores Christ's joint office of Priest and King. Zechariah prophesied that "The BRANCH [Christ] shall build the temple of the Lord...and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne..." (Zech. 6:12-13). Give careful attention to the fact that Christ is to be a priest **at the same time** that he is ruling upon his throne. Christ is now our high priest. This is the primary argument of the book of Hebrews. Further, Hebrews declares that he could not be a priest on earth (8:4). It must follow, therefore, that he is now our priest and is at the same time ruling on his throne. Again, premillennialism suffers a fatal blow, because the theory would make Christ our priest now, but king later; whereas Zechariah shows that both offices are held at the same time.

8. The root of all of premillennialism's

misconceptions of the kingdom begins with their idea of a fleshly kingdom instead of a spiritual kingdom. One verse from Jesus ought to make them abandon their theory completely: "My kingdom is not of this world...but now is my kingdom not from hence" (John 18:36). Jesus never intended to establish an earthly kingdom, and he never will. It is a silly theology indeed which would think that the progress of the Divine scheme would be from that which is now spiritual back to that which would be fleshly, that a citizenship that is heavenly should be replaced by citizenship in a kingdom of this world.

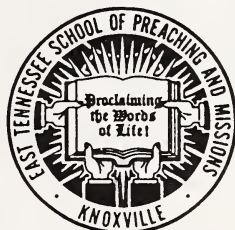
The End of the World

Premillennialism ignores the plain prophecies of the destruction of the universe at the coming of Christ. A simple reading of 2 Peter 3:3-13 will establish this. Consider also the other places where we read of the end of the world — Matthew 24:35; 28:20; Hebrews 1:11; 12:27; etc. The new heavens and the new earth will not be this present universe. Instead God's people will have a new universe. It is where Jesus is now preparing us a place (John 14:1-3). He will come to take us there. This universe will not be left for any habitation. Everything in it will be destroyed. When premillennialism claims that Christ will return to set up a thousand year kingdom on this earth, it ignores every Bible declaration about the end of the world.

In these articles we have briefly examined some of the more prominent errors of premillennialism. As stated earlier, there is hardly a Bible truth that adherents of this

theory have not abused and denied. Among people who profess to believe the Bible (as contrasted with atheists, modernists, etc.), churches of Christ are generally alone in their refusal to swallow the premillennial line. It must not be forgotten, however, that more is involved than merely a difference in the way certain prophecies are interpreted. Whether intentional or not, the whole premillennial fabrication has the effect of absolutely contradicting the teaching of the Bible.

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Clifton Inman and the Perfect Church

by Bill Heinselman

Clifton Inman, a gospel preacher of good report in the Ohio Valley, passed from this life Saturday, October 6, 1990, at the age of 74. Brother Inman was for many years editor of the **Bible Herald** and also worked with Ohio Valley College in Parkersburg, West Virginia, from its beginning until his retirement just a few years ago.

Clifton Inman was a good friend of mine from the very beginning of my preaching career. Many anecdotes could be told, but one in particular has stayed with me through 35 years of gospel preaching. In the first five years of my ministry, I think I changed locations three times. Clifton was concerned for me. I remember that while I was confiding some of my problems to him one day, he said to me: "Bill, you will never find a perfect church. And if you did, they would not want you!" This was good for a chuckle for both of us, since it was said in good humor. But at the same time, I knew that a very sharp point had been made.

Brother Inman knew that the church is both a human and divine institution. Inasmuch as God has given us the divine pattern for the organization of the church, the work and worship of the church, and the plan of entrance into the church, these things are the perfect side of the church and must not be changed. On the other hand, the church is made up of human beings. This part of the church is imperfect and will always be changing, hopefully for the better.

The purpose of preaching is to change things. But preachers must be careful to try to change **only** that which lacks perfection (humans in the church) and not that which is already perfect (the divine pattern).

Clifton Inman has now found the perfect church (Heb. 12:23; Rev. 21:2; 1 Thess. 4:14). Let us all so live that one day we, too, may find the perfect church for which we are called.

[P.O. Box 279, Cary, NC 27512.]

Can We Talk?

by Johnny Melton

May we have a word with you about finances? Subscriptions are inadequate to fund a magazine like **Carolina Christian**. Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., consists of a bookstore division and a magazine division. The bookstore is operated in order to subsidize the magazine division. However, the cost of operating the bookstore and the very competitive nature of the publishing business has kept the bookstore from being able to help the magazine in any significant way. (The bookstore's ability to help underwrite the magazine would be greatly enhanced if more Carolina churches would order literature and supplies from us.)

A service that **Carolina Christian** has

rendered to the brotherhood is the periodic publication of a directory of Carolina churches of Christ. We are ready to publish a new directory. This directory will be different from previous ones in that it will be done as an issue of the magazine. Every subscriber to the magazine will automatically receive a copy. Churches can advertise in this special issue. Revenue from such advertisements would be a boon to us at the paper. (Ads need to be sent to Johnny Melton, Route 2, Box 137, Conover, NC 28613 immediately.) Extra copies of the directory will be available at \$1 per copy (a minimum order of 10 copies is required) before December 5, 1990. After that they will be \$2 each.

Another thing that we have done to subsidize the magazine is to publish books. We have published four books, all by our late, lamented editor, Howard Winters: three commentaries (Romans, First Corinthians, and Revelation) and **Up to Bethany**, a discussion of the Restoration Plea. These are excellent books and have all sold well. We have made money from the sale of **Up to Bethany** (the cost of publication was underwritten by the Harper family) and from the sale of Romans. But we have not sold enough of First Corinthians and Revelation to recoup the initial cost of printing.

What can you do to help? If you believe in the work of **Carolina Christian**, there are several ways you can help support the paper. (1) You can send subscriptions as gifts this holiday season. (A one-year subscription is \$8.00.) (2) You can give copies of brother

Winters' books as gifts. We will offer six books (the three commentaries, **Up to Bethany**, **The Work of the Holy Spirit** and **The Bible and Strong Drink**) for \$22.00 — a 40% savings on the retail price of \$36.70. (3) You can order a bundle of the directory issue and pass them out to brethren who travel across region. (4) You can make a contribution to our work. **Carolina Christian Publications, Inc.**, is a non-profit organization that was formed to promote the churches of Christ in the Carolinas. Contributions to **Carolina Christian** are tax deductible.

No one associated with **Carolina Christian** is paid for his services. We contribute both time and money to this enterprise because we believe in the work that is being done. As we enter a new year, we would like to do so with the support of our readers.

Just Because He Loved Us!

by Peggy Pharr

I was recently asked to speak to a ladies class on the subject "Just Because He Loved Us."

What a great theme! There are so many ways to explore it.

"Just because He loved us," He was willing to be ridiculed, to be spat upon, and ultimately to die on the cross that we might be free and have eternal life.


In response, "just because He loved us," we should study, pray without ceasing, etc.

A most sublime thought, however, is that "just because He loved us," we can love with a Christ-like love.


The world's view of love has an emotional and/or sexual connotation (and there is a proper time and place for that kind of love). The kind of love I want us to reflect upon, however, is our mirroring of God's love and Christ's love. God's view of love is one of solid commitment — not a passing emotion. It is a commitment to do something for someone else. Now, we could expand this to taking the gospel to the lost. That is definitely a great need and one in which we all need to be involved. And if we really understand Christ's love we will want to share it

with others that all can have hope of eternal life.

For this lesson, however, I want us to think about our love for each other. We have become very busy, and understandably so. We have families, jobs, classes to teach, classes to attend, shopping, cooking, cleaning — the list never ends. I sometimes wonder if we have not almost scheduled Christianity right out of our lives. I do not mean to sound harsh, but I sometimes worry that we have become content just to be



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“church members.” As church members we do not have to spend a lot of time thinking about “just because He loved us.” But as children of God we have to understand that his love compels us to love one another.

Paul uses the phrase “being knit together with love” (Col. 2:2). Have you ever tried to follow the individual threads in a knit sweater? You cannot; they are too intertwined. That is how we as Christians should be. Christian love is such that we care for one another so much that when one person hurts, we all hurt.

Biblical love is love in action — showing a kindness to another; writing a check to help someone in need; providing a ride for someone who does not have one; babysitting so a young mother can have a few minutes to herself; cooking a meal for a shut-in; turning off the TV to talk on the phone to someone who needs a friend; giving an encouraging word, a hug, a smile. “Just because He loved us,” we can have a tender spirit, a willing attitude, and loving concern for one another.

The Bible is full of this kind of love. In John 13:35 we read, “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye also love one another.” (Why, Lord?) “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” 1 John 4:10 tells us what that love is and why we should have that love. “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins.” 1 Corinthians 13:3 tells us that no matter what we do, without love it has no value whatsoever. Paul says, “And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing.”

The most beautiful example of love is the Lord Jesus Christ. The ultimate act of love was Christ’s death for us. He gave His life that we might live forever. The reason He wants us to show our love for one another is that the world, seeing His love reflected in us, will ultimately be drawn to His love, which secures our eternal destiny.

Peter writes in 1 Peter 1:22, “Seeing ye have purified your souls by obeying the truth through the spirit unto unfeigned [genuine, sincere] love of the brethren, see that ye love

one another with a pure heart fervently.” Fervently means marked by a great warmth of feeling, exhibiting deep, sincere emotion. The power of this kind of love does not come from a self-disciplined determination to love. You just cannot fake love. The power for unselfish love comes from Jesus Christ and the realization of His love for us. Peter tells us how we can be filled with that love in 1 Peter 2:1-2: “Wherefore laying aside all wickedness, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby unto salvation.”

John writes in 1 John 3:11, 16-17, “For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.... Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” This is God’s definition of the love — because Christ laid down His life for us, we should be willing to lay down our lives for each other. (Lord, I have never had a chance to lay my life down for anyone, but I might if I had the chance. Wait! There is more!) He goes on to say: “But whoso hath this world’s goods, and see his brother hath need....” (But wait, Lord, I just told you I am willing to lay down my life for my brethren, but now you are asking for my time, my money, and my emotions. I just do not know if I can handle that.) “But whoso hath this world’s goods and see his

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brother hath need and closes his heart, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, or in tongue, but in deed and in truth."

Jesus says more about this in John 15:9-12, 17. "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love." How can we do this? "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." What is the result of all this? "These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full." The way to make the Lord happy and in turn have great happiness within ourselves is to keep the Lord's commandments. What are these com-

mandments? "This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you." Again in verse 17, he repeats, "These things I command you, that ye love one another."

We need to make sure that our love is a selfless love rather than a selfish love. Doing something for somebody who cannot possibly repay us expands our souls, gives us unspeakable joy, and the serenity we all long for. As we realize Christ's love in our lives we will soon realize that Christianity is what we think, how we feel, and how we react to every situation in our lives. Christianity is not something we do from time to time. It is our way of life.

[Peggy is the editor's wife.]

Hong Kong Campaign 1990

by Chuck Forsythe

On September 18, five Americans descended on Hong Kong. These five; Merle Alberts, William Baker, Janette Corns, and Teresa Alberts of the Millersburg, Ohio, church of Christ, and Ted Blackwood of the North Canton, Ohio, church of Christ, spent the next two weeks helping the Wanchai church conduct Hong Kong's third campaign. Ed Short, of radio station KNLS, joined us on September 25. This was, by far, the most successful campaign effort to date.

We targeted a different area of Hong Kong for work each day. Siu Ka Ming, the campaign workers, and I spent each day going from "house to house" placing literature in the doors. We worked several evenings so that Wanchai members could join the effort. Wanchai members helped on Saturdays, and Ruby Chan helped on two weekdays. One evening, nine Wanchai members and the campaign workers traveled to Wah Fu to help Peter Cheung and the Wah Fu church distribute tracts. We also mailed over 2,000 letters to former and present WBS student inviting them for personal Bible studies and to attend our gospel meeting.

Ted taught five excellent classes on personal evangelism for Wanchai. On consecutive Sundays, Merle visited the Wah Fu and

November 1990

Tsuen Wan churches of Christ to preach for them. Ted, Merle, Ed and I concluded the campaign with a gospel meeting. Its theme was "The Offices of Jesus." Siu did a heroic effort translating! The highlight of the meeting was Ed's sermon, "Jesus — The King." Ed, who spent thirteen years in Taiwan, speaks Mandarin and reads and writes Chinese. He drew excellent lessons from the formation of the characters. While writing several characters on the white board, he

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complimented Siu's choice of a character to explain a point. The humor of a Westerner complimenting a Chinese brother on his knowledge of Chinese was not lost on the audience!

During the campaign, we distributed about 150,000 pieces of literature. If only two people read each tract, 5% of Hong Kong's population was given the opportunity to learn about Jesus! So far, nearly 60 people have responded. Several asked for English classes, which I teach using the Bible as a textbook. Others responded asking for Mandarin classes which Stephen Chan teaches using the Bible as his text. Still others wrote asking for Bible literature. A school asked Melinda Forsythe to teach English. Melinda will teach vocabulary and flannel-graph Bible stories to primary grade two children four hours a week. The school is close

to our flat, which gives us an opportunity to reach out in our own neighborhood! Best of all, several asked for personal Bible studies, which Siu is teaching. One man is attending Bible class and worship services.

In the two weeks since the campaign ended, we have received responses almost daily. We are thankful for the six brothers and sisters and the churches who sacrificed so much so that the people of Hong Kong could have an opportunity to learn about Jesus! We thank God for this great opportunity. We ask you to pray for the people of Hong Kong who are searching for truth.

[Several Carolina congregations financially support the work in Hong Kong. Chuck Forsythe is a graduate of East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions. His address is: 1/F, 221 Jaffe Rd., Wanchai, Hong Kong.]

The States That We Live In

by Robert Curry

One of the beautiful aspects of the Bible is its complete openness with the human condition and its ability to remedy any problem with a viable solution. The Bible anticipates the rejection of the sinner, the arrogance of the proud and the hopelessness of the distraught. There is nothing that we can face that the Bible has not dealt with. As Solomon wrote, "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun" (Eccl. 1:9).

Mankind has many problems for which a remedy must be found — various flaws and requirements that need the Master's touch. For our purposes in this article, let us call them "states." They are the unnecessary characteristics, unspiritual attitudes and bad habits that need to be done away with. However, they are too often the states that we live in.

The State of "Almost, But Not Yet"

The New Testament records two events that depict this "state," both centering

around the work of the apostle Paul. In Acts 24, Paul was preaching to Felix "concerning the faith in Christ" (v. 24). Felix responded to Paul's exhortation: "When I have a more convenient season, I will call for thee" (v. 25). Felix lived in the state of "not yet."

In Acts 26 Paul again was preaching, but now stood before Agrippa. Paul had made an answer to his accusers (v. 2) and made a plea for the teaching of Christ, knowing that Agrippa understood and believed (vv. 26-27). Yet, Agrippa told Paul that he was almost persuaded to become a Christian (v. 28).

Too often we live in the state of "almost, but not yet." We are almost ready to serve the Lord, but too many things still stand in our way. We cannot bring ourselves to do what we should for the cause of Christ because we are laying up for ourselves treasures on earth, rather than in heaven (Matt. 6:19-21). Like Felix, we say "not yet" because there are so many other things we desire to do. We cannot find the readiness of

the three thousand on Pentecost (Acts 2:37), or the eagerness of the Ethiopian treasurer who wondered what hindered him from doing what he should (Acts 8:36).

Too many still live in the state of "Almost, but not yet."

The State of "No, Not Me"

There are those who are more than willing to allow others to do the work of the Lord, yet will relish the victories and accomplishments of the laborers. They are like the bench-warmer on a championship team, never playing a second of the game, yet willing still to wear the ring and carry the trophy.

God warned the Israelites of such an attitude. He reminded them that he had brought them into a land where they did not build the houses, dig the wells, fill the storage rooms, or plant the vineyards (Deut. 6:10-11). He then warned: "Then beware lest thou forget the Lord, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage" (v. 12).

We should never allow the work that is to be done to fall into the hands of others. We should never forget the salvation of our souls (Rom. 6:8-11). Jesus did not die for the sins of mankind only for us to live in the state of "No, not me."

The State of Inquiry

If any of us live in the state of "Almost, but not yet," or in the state of "No, not me," we need to move to the state of "Inquiry." Consider the before-mentioned three thousand on Pentecost (Acts 2). When they heard the evidence of their sin and the hopelessness of their situation, they inquired what they should do (v. 37). They did not **almost** come to obedience, or merely believe such salvation was for someone else. They saw their need, the remedy of the Lord, and immediately inquired as to the solution.

We need to live in the state of inquiry, being unafraid of the answer. David was unafraid, asking God to do whatever was necessary to remove the sin of adultery (Psa. 51). Living in this state we ask how we can do more, where we go next, and how we can

do better.

After Peter and John had been released from the custody of the Jewish council (Acts 4) they "went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them" (v. 23). Upon hearing the account "they all lifted up their voice to God with one accord" (v. 24). In that prayer they requested that the Lord grant unto them the boldness to speak the word and that signs and wonders would be done by the name of Jesus (v. 29-30). They did not live in the state of "Almost, but not yet," wishing to put off any further involvement until later. Neither did they plead for someone else to put their safety on the line, shouting, "No, not me!" They inquired of the Lord how they could continue doing what they had begun, asking how they could do more, and how they could do it better.

Conclusion

These may be states that we live in, but need to move out of. Maybe there are some states that we have never lived in, but need to move into. We need, therefore, to live in the state of inquiry, asking what else we can do for the Lord and how we can do it better. We need to know where we need to go and how we can get there faster.

The Bible has the answer to our dilemmas and the solutions to our problems. The Bible can help us pack up all excess baggage, taking it out of the way, and move us into a better state: from the state of unrighteousness to the state of righteousness.

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“The Word of God But Not the Inerrant Word of God”?

by Benny R. Yost

Recently, some Christians told me that the Bible is the word of God, but not the **inerrant** word of God. I was told that the Bible is not the inerrant word of God because it contains errors and contradictions.

According to Webster, the word inerrant is defined in the following manner: “Not erring; making no mistakes; infallible.” Thus, in saying the Bible is not the inerrant word of God, one is saying the Bible fails to be the infallible word of God. How can something have errors and contradictions and be infallible?

Since the word of God (Bible) is a Holy Spirit product (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21), it follows that the word of God is not merely a human product. If it is merely a human product, then it is not a Holy Spirit product, for the Holy Spirit is one with God (John 15:26). If it were merely a human product, it would be a fallible product, for human beings are fallible. Since, however, the Bible is a Holy Spirit product, it follows that it is an infallible product, since the Holy Spirit and God are infallible.

If the Bible is not infallible, how can it be the word of God? Being the word of God, it is infallible, or else it is not the word of God. How can fallibility and God’s word harmonize, since God and the Holy Spirit are infallible? To say they can is to say that imperfection and perfection harmonize.

The Bible claims that **all** of it is infallible because it is from God (2 Tim. 3:16). “All” includes every bit of it; no part is excluded. But if it is not **all** infallible, how can I trust any of it, when it claims otherwise?

That which is fallible contains errors and contradictions. That which contains errors and contradictions cannot be relied upon as an objective standard to follow, since I am unable to determine what is reliable. So I am left with subjectivity, since I am unable to know what is of God. But subjectivity results in being like a ship without a rudder, which means one is vulnerable to whatever direction the wind blows. Such is the foolishness of one who says he follows the Bible, but thinks it is not the infallible word of God.

When I hear Christians make such statements about the Bible, I want to crawl under a rock. I expect such from worldly people. But from Christians? Surely not.

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Fighting in the Shade

by Mark Swindall

When Xerxes led his troops into Greece, he found the pass at Thermopylae blocked by Leonidas and a small band of Spartans. Surprised by such temerity, Xerxes sent a letter demanding surrender, "Or else our soldiers will send such a shower of arrows as will darken the sky." The Spartan reply rings through history: "**Good! We will fight in the shade.**"

Leonidas' band died at Thermopylae. But they took such a fearful toll that afterward "every battle was to Xerxes another Thermopylae, and every general another Leonidas." The Persian invasion sputtered and died.

The spirit of Leonidas is that which every Christian must have, if he would remain faithful to God. If Satan sends from his hosts

a volley that darkens life's sky, the victorious Christian will fight in the shade. Having the shield of faith, he can quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. God is with us.

The basis of the Greek army was the **hoplite**, a soldier who was armored from head to foot (the word means **armored one**). It survives in the English in the word **panoply**, which means **all armor**. And the hymn exhorts us to take the **panoply of God**, that is, all God's armor, that we may be prepared for the battle. (See Ephesians 6:11.)

The Christian will still be standing when the fighting is all done. Unlike the Greeks who lost the battle, the saints in all this glorious war shall conquer though they die. Fight on, brother, **even in the shade!**

Small Town With Big News

by Jack McNeil

In April 1990 a new congregation of Christians began meeting in Ridgeland, South Carolina. This decision was made following seven weeks of Bible studies in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Aiken Habersha which had resulted in many visitors attending and four baptisms. This is the only congregation of the churches of Christ in Jasper County, South Carolina.

Jack McNeil, formerly the minister for the Berkeley church of Christ in Moncks Corner, SC, and Roosevelt Johnson, of the Liberty City church of Christ in Savannah, GA, together with many others spear-headed this work in Ridgeland.

There have been eight baptisms since the work began in Ridgeland. One of these new converts was a denominational preacher. There are twenty-four members attending the assemblies of the Ridgeland church and the future is bright for this young work.

The Ridgeland church is holding services in a small, rented building which leaves much to be desired. The church plans to purchase

land and erect an adequate meetinghouse. However, in order for these plans to be realized, this infant church needs financial assistance. Jack McNeil is being supported by an outside source to minister to this church. The church has located a two and one-half acre lot that would be suitable for the church's needs. The congregation is excited and has a vision of its future, but its resources are quite limited.

The Ridgeland church of Christ needs your help. For more information concerning this work, contact Ray Hawkins, an elder in the Providence Road church of Christ, 4900 Providence Road, Charlotte, NC 28226; or Jack McNeil, Ridgeland church of Christ, Post Office Box 695, Ridgeland, SC 29936. For quicker information Ray Hawkins may be reached by telephone at (704) 598-0426 or 594-1250; and Jack McNeil may be reached at (803) 899-2398 or 726-4718. Contributions may be sent to: Ridgeland Church of Christ Building Fund, Post Office Box 695, Ridgeland, SC 29936.

You Cannot Live in Fantasyland

by Paul E. Jarrett

“Here in the Real World” is the title of a country and western song which expresses the thought that life in the real world is not like it is in the movies. It is a message that many people in our day need to take to heart. Even Christians sometimes need to be reminded that you cannot live in fantasyland.

Those who spend countless hours with their hearts and minds being fed by the fantasies seen on movie and television screens and described in magazines and novels may especially need a healthy dose of reality. However, even those who never watch TV, nor go to the movies, and read only non-fiction material may still need to be reminded of the danger of living in fantasyland.

We need to understand what it means to live in fantasyland. It is not just watching a movie or television show, or reading a romance novel which you know to be a fantasy. In fact a visit to fantasyland may be healthy if you are aware you cannot live there. We are starting to live in fantasyland, however, when we lose track of the reality of our own existence.

When we actually begin to believe that we can exercise control over people and circumstances in accordance with our own fantasies is when we are starting to take up residence in fantasyland. The fantasyland I am describing has three neighborhoods. These three neighborhoods are the past, the present, and the future.

The fantasyland of the **past** is a neighborhood filled with greener pastures. Entrance into this land is gained by use of the phrase “if only.” With the utterance of these magic words we can begin to fantasize about how much better our lives would be “if only” we had: “never married”; “not had children”; “taken that job”; “gone on to school”; etc. So, on and on we go fantasizing about how our lives would have been changed for the better if we had only taken the other turn at the various crossroads of life.

What is forgotten in the fantasyland of the past is the reality of life. The reality is

that every decision we make brings with it both benefits and consequences. When I am tempted by the fantasyland of the past I remind myself of all the blessings I would not possess if I had not made the decisions I did make. I also think of all the problems I may have been spared because I did not take those other turns.

The neighborhood of the **present** in fantasyland is where the ruler over fantasyland lives. He is a super hero named “EGO.” Those who attempt to escape to fantasyland do so as “EGO, the super hero.” As the ruler of fantasyland they expect every person and every circumstance of life to yield to their control. Members of the opposite sex find them irresistible. Everyone looks up to them and respects their wisdom and their multiplied talents. Any infringement of reality in the form of unruly subjects, or disruptive circumstances, can send them into either

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rage or depression.

As a super hero, "EGO" is impervious to pain. The decisions made by "EGO" never have consequences, only benefits. Even if the conduct engaged in is immoral, illegal, or simply fattening, no one gets hurt, especially not "EGO." Should consequences befall others they are easily ignored, or blame is assigned to someone else, because, while this super hero wants to rule, he does not want the responsibility that comes with authority.

The final realm of fantasyland, the future, is marked by a two-sided street whose sides are total opposites. One side is characterized by crime, filth, and all the evils of darkness. The other side is marked by sweetness, light, and celebration. The side of the street upon which the fantasizer lives is determined by his temperament because these two sides represent the two different ways people fantasize about the future.

Those who are inclined towards pessimism live in a fantasyland of impending doom when it comes to the future. Those who possess a high level of unwarranted op-

timism — the schemers and dreamers — live in a fantasyland peopled by future lottery winners, of which they are the biggest winner of all.

Though vastly different in their outlook, both pessimists and optimists living in the fantasyland of the future are quite similar in their conduct. Both are waiting on life to happen to them, while neither are making any attempt to prepare themselves for life. Both are awaiting a knockout — the pessimist is expecting to be knocked out and the optimist expects to score a knockout. However, neither one is learning how to box!

The future is indeed one of two vastly different neighborhoods called heaven and hell which are separated by a great gulf. In light of this great reality we cannot afford to live our lives in fantasyland. Rather, like the apostle Paul, we must forget the fantasyland of the past; reach out to the realities of the future; and press on in the real world (Phil. 3:13,14).

[1824 Tamsworth Dr., Charlotte, NC 28210.]

Spiritual Exercise

by J. C. Townsend

The well-trained, well-conditioned, muscular athlete is the object of great admiration in the world of 1990. The people of the ancient world, especially the Greeks, had a high regard for the athlete and his physical strength. The Greeks established the Olympic games about 776 B.C. as an encouragement for the development of athletic abilities.

Paul recognized the value of both physical and spiritual exercise, but he declared the spiritual to be far superior. One needs physical health and strength to make the most of life, but he must also have spiritual strength in order to fight life's battles and prepare for the life to come.

The Bible describes several forms of spiritual exercise which will enable one to become "strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might" (Eph. 6:10). Paul's

evaluation of physical exercise was that it has value, but cannot be regarded as the all important principle of life. Paul gave Timothy advice which needs to be followed today: "But refuse profane and old wives' fables and exercise thyself unto godliness: For bodily exercise is profitable for a little; but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. 4:7-8).

The value of constant, well-planned exercise to physical health is known and appreciated today. It seems, though, that very few people realize the significance of spiritual exercise. Spiritual exercise leads to spiritual development and the maintenance of a vigorous, wholesome, godly life. This helps one to grow, develop, and become an example to the world of the power and worth of godliness. Consider several forms of spiri-

tual exercise which will help you to become spiritually strong.

Unto Fruitbearing

The Lord wants His people to exercise unto fruitbearing. It requires much care, work, pruning, and feeding to bring a tree to the place where it will bear fruit. The Bible teaches that God is glorified when Christians grow and become fruitbearers. Paul exhorted Christians to bear "fruit in every good work" (Col. 1:10). And after telling how to become a new creature in Christ Jesus in Romans 6:1-4, 17-18, the apostle gave immediate instructions about fruitbearing. The new convert is not to wait until some far off day in the future to bear fruit. Paul describes what is to happen after one has buried the old man of sin. "But now being made free from sin and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end eternal life" (Rom. 6:22).

Unto Fullness of Discernment

Vigorous exercise is essential when one is in the process of choosing between right and wrong, truth and error. Christians are constantly being bombarded with materials which require the finest and sharpest discernment. What will help one when he is called upon to make decisions which have to do with where he will spend eternity? One of the most helpful and powerful instruments available to one is senses which have been exercised to the place where they can help one make spiritual decisions.

The writer of the book of Hebrews emphasized the importance of this kind of exercise. In Hebrews 5:14 he wrote, "But solid food is for full-grown men, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil."

The Holy Spirit admonishes Christians in Romans 12:21 to "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." He also told Timothy to flee youthful lusts and to "follow after righteousness, faith, love, peace." Obedience to these commands involve spiritual exercise, the kind that will make one well pleasing unto God. These re-

quire the exercise of the senses which in turn produces spiritual strength and gives one balance and stability in this topsy-turvy world.

Unto Light Bearing

One important form of spiritual exercise is that of light bearing. Christians are the light of the world and the salt of the earth (Matt. 5:14-16). It requires years of study, prayer, and growth for one to develop the kind of character that will make him a light for the Lord Jesus Christ. By faithfully following the Lord and yielding to the dictate of His will, one can grow into the likeness of Jesus Christ and shine as a beacon to help men find their way to the Saviour. Children of God need to give serious thought to Paul's admonitions in Philippians 2:14-15, "Do a things without murmurings and questionings: that ye may become blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye are seen as lights in the world."

Unto Walking

The exercise of walking will help the child of God to grow and develop. Heart specialists tell us that walking will help one develop a strong and healthy heart. Armies are sent on long marches to strengthen their legs and increase endurance.

Walking is excellent exercise for the Christian. Paul told the Ephesians to walk worthily of their calling and to be careful how they walk. Soldiers in the Lord's army need to buckle on the whole armor of God and mount a great offensive for Him. It is not enough for us to fight a holding action. Instead each congregation, having grown strong and healthy through constant exercise, needs to send out soldiers to destroy the evil and plant the Lord's cause throughout the world.

The Pendulum of Extremism

by Jim McCutchen

The pendulum of extremism seems to always be in motion. A biblical mentality is the key to proper balance in our walk with the Savior. When Moses sent messengers to the king of Edom asking for the King's permission for Israel to pass through his territory, the messenger of Moses said in Numbers 21:17: "We will travel along the King's highway and not turn to the right or the left...." In the same manner, followers of Jesus must keep their eyes firmly fixed on the Scriptures and not turn to the right or to the left. Improper extremism is a result of failing to focus our eyes clearly on our Lord and Savior. No doubt, there are areas where mankind has taken a "hands off," tolerant, approach, though the Lord would have dealt with a similar situation in a radical manner. There may be other times when we are driven to the extreme of dogmatism on a certain situation or issue, while our Lord would have dealt with the same issue or situation in a more tolerable manner.

Preconceived ideas, or a theology based on "what I have always been taught" rather than on thorough and careful study of Scripture, will nearly always result in extremism. The only manner in which we can strike a proper balance is to emphasize what God wants emphasized, and to react in the same fashion as our Savior. We must be careful not to conclude that to be balanced always means to take a "middle of the road" approach. The "middle of the road" approach may be nothing more than to "straddle the fence," evade the issue, and ultimately to do nothing. Perhaps the only time the "middle of the road approach" should be considered is after much prayer and investigation of Scriptures, and when we are convinced that to react by doing nothing is what the Lord would have us to do.

Proper Balance

An understanding of Bible doctrines demands proper balance or else erroneous

teaching will be the result. Proper balance in areas such as Faith-Works, Doctrine-Evangelism, One-Body versus Denominations, Liberalism versus Legalism, etc., are essential in having the proper "Bible" perspective of each of these issues.

Keys to Proper Balance

Several steps must be taken to help insure proper balance:

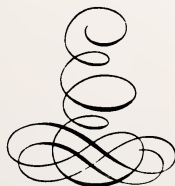
1. Pray — Invite God's counsel and guidance in your quest for understanding.

2. Have a biblical mentality — Above all, investigate the Scriptures by examining the text carefully. Remember you want to know "what the Bible says." Examine all passages related to the subject (2 Tim. 2:15).

3. Study the life of Jesus — How did He react in certain situations? Was He tolerant in certain situations and very straightforward in others?

4. Finally, do not be afraid or ashamed of the truth — If it is the truth it will set you free (John 8:32). Also if it is the truth, it is the truth regardless of who believes it, or embraces it. Brethren, the pendulum of extremism will be kept in proper balance depending upon our willingness to follow a "Thus saith the Lord."

[P.O. Box 76, Troy, MO 63779. Jim has preached in meetings in North Carolina.]



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CAROLINA CHRISTIAN

VOL. 32, NO. 12, DECEMBER 1990



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1990 Directory

of Churches of Christ

in the Carolinas

Volume 13

Special Edition

\$2.00

1990 Directory

of Churches of Christ

in the Carolinas

This issue contains a listing of churches of Christ in the Carolinas. Extensive effort has made to make this **Directory** as complete and accurate as possible. We realize, however, that there may be omissions and mistakes. Any corrections that are sent to us will be printed in future issues of **Carolina Christian**.

This **Directory** has two purposes. First, it is intended as a guide to locating the congregations in the various places. Secondly, it will provide an overview of the growth of the church in the Carolinas. The **Directory** is not intended to indicate anything relative to the faithfulness or soundness of the congregations listed. Neither should it be assumed that congregations were omitted because the editor considered them to be unsound. It is not the purpose of a directory to judge the soundness of congregations. We included all the information we were able to gather.

This represents the thirteenth **Directory** published by **Carolina Christian**. (The last one was in 1987.) Bill G. Smith compiled most, if not all, of the prior editions. The work involved in gathering the information for this edition has shown what a difficult task this has been for Bill, and his work on this over the years is truly appreciated.

Though regular subscribers will receive this special issue at no additional cost, we will be charging \$2.00 each for additional copies. The postage and telephone calls involved in gathering information has made this an expensive issue. **Order from: Carolina Christian Bookstore, P.O. Box 1219,**

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CAROLINA CHRISTIAN (P.O.P.N. 091160) is published monthly by Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., at 71 S. Fairfield Road, Greenville, SC 29605. Subscription price: individual \$8.00 per year (\$15.00 for 2 years and \$22.00 for 3 years); club of five or more \$7.50 each; quantity of 15 or more in bundles or direct mailing 50¢ per copy per month. Publication number, 091160.

Second class postage paid at Greenville, SC.

POSTMASTER: Send change with Form 3579 to Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., Johnny Melton, Managing Editor, Route 2, Box 137, Conover, North Carolina 28613.

RETURN REQUESTED

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*Indicates that the information came from a third source.

Pr. indicates preacher(s).

S.S. indicates self-supporting.

O.S. indicates outside support.

The **number** indicates approximate average attendance.

Contact indicates someone in the congregation who can be contacted.

In some cases directions to the building are given in addition to the street address.

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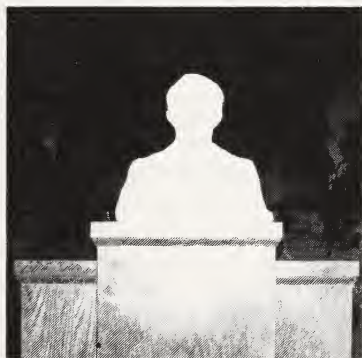
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- FAYETTEVILLE, 28304 (Cumberland), Cape Fear Church, 3808 Village Dr., (919) 425-1108. Pr. B. G. Langston, (919) 484-6281. S.S.; 145. Elders: J. D. Mandel; B. G. Langston.
- FOREST CITY, 28043 (Rutherford), 403 Clay St., P.O. Box 1206; (704) 245-2720. Pr. Wayman Love, (704) 248-1239. O.S.; 35.
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- GREENSBORO, 27408 (Guilford), 811 West Wendover Avenue; (919) 272-3741. Pr. Ed Harris, (919) 288-3692. S.S.; 48.
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*HENDERSON, 27536 (Vance), Hughes Street Church, P.O. Box 1034. O.S.

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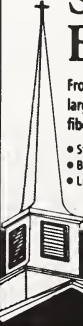
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BAMBERG, 29003 (Bamberg). (Congregation not meeting when Directory compiled; preacher needed.) Contact: J. C. Satterfield, 12 Cherry St., Barnwell, SC 29812; (803) 259-3286.

BARNWELL, 29812 (Barnwell), Dunbarton Boulevard, P.O. Box 285. Pr. Jack E. Cooper, (803) 259-2534. S.S.; 60. Contact: J. C. Satterfield, (803) 259-3286; Rick Patterson, (803) 259-2745; Claude Bearden, (803) 259-2905.

BATESBURG, 29006 (Lexington), Twin City Church, Mitchell & Highland Streets, P.O. Box 411. Pr. Mike Hinrichs. S.S.; 21. Contact: Ralph J. Jones, (803) 772-9441. Temporarily meeting in American Legion Bldg., Leesville, SC.

*BEAUFORT, 29902 (Beaufort), 2101 King Street, P.O. Box 4; (803) 524-4400.

BEAUFORT/BURTON, 29902 (Beaufort), Highway 170, c/o Ralph Padgett, Summer Pl., Rt. 2, Burton, SC 29902; (803) 524-4281. Pr. Stephen P. Willis, (803) 525-0104. S.S. 30-35. Contact: Ralph Padgett, (803) 525-1483.

BEECH ISLAND, 29841 (Aiken), Old Williston Hwy., P.O. Box 218; (803) 827-1408. (Intersection of Hwy. 125 & 278.) Pr. Glenn R. Nichols, (803) 827-1408. O.S.; 35-45.

BELVEDERE, 29841, (Aiken), 535 Clearwater Road. Pr. Tommy Stacks, (404) 855-5071. O.S.; 22. Contact: Leslie Culpepper, (803) 278-2175.

BENNETTSVILLE, 29512 (Marlboro), Hamlet Hwy. & Oakwood St., Box 366; (803) 479-7901. Pr. Thomas R. Curtis, (803) 479-4479. O.S., 33. Contact: Richard Young, (803) 479-8978; Jim Dockray, (803) 623-6186.

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CAMDEN, 29020 (Kershaw), 402 King Street, (803) 432-9011. Pr. Arthur Walden, Jr. O.S.; 35.

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CHARLESTON, 29415 (Charleston), 3950 Azalea Drive, P.O. Box 70519; (803) 744-1082. Pr. Frank N. McElveen, (803) 556-6170. S.S.; 550.

CHARLESTON, 29414 (Charleston), Essex Village Church, 736 Savage Road, (803) 556-1792. S.S.; 230. Pr. Mark Swindall, (803) 556-0418.

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- CHARLESTON, 29407 (Charleston), West Charleston Church, 710 DuPont Road, P.O. Box 32083. S.S.; 18. Contact: Howard Streets, (803) 766-7727.
- CHESTER, 29706 (Chester), 135 Saluda St. Pr. Grady Mickle, (803) 377-8323. O.S.; 10-15.
- CLEMSON, 29633 (Pickens), 167 Old Greenville Hwy, P.O. Box 333, (803) 654-3583. Pr. Steve Ashworth, (803) 639-2532. S.S.; 45. Elders: Bill Hare, John Diehl, Dan Schmitton. Contact: Bill Hare, (803) 654-4417.
- CLINTON, 29325 (Laurens), 603 N. Broad St.; (803) 833-2919. Pr. Raymond H. Climer, (803) 833-2490. O.S.; 35.
- *COLUMBIA, 29204 (Richland), 5889 Ames Road; (803) 786-5925.
- COLUMBIA, 29223 (Richland), Long Creek Church, 720 Longtown Road, (803) 788-7997. Pr. Ron Adams, (803) 788-9268. S.S.; 132.
- *COLUMBIA, 29201 (Richland), 2701 Park St.; (803) 765-1194. Pr. John Cooper, (803) 788-5488.
- COLUMBIA, 29223 (Richland), Windsor Lake Church, 238 Windsor Pt. Rd.; (803) 788-1611. S.S.; 65.
- *COLUMBIA, (Richland), North Columbia Church, Meadowlake Park Recreational Center, 1000 Beckman Rd. (Mail to: 2802 Woodland Hills East, Columbia, SC 29210.) Pr. Dennis Johnson, (803) 798-4823. (I-20 exit 71, north 1/2 mile, bldg. on right.)
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- DILLON, 29536 (Dillon), Hwy. 30, 501 South, P.O. Box 981; (803) 774-7802. Pr. Carl E. (Eddy) Dickey, (803) 752-7907. O.S.; 20. Contact: Ken Kennedy, (803) 774-3496; James Osborne, (803) 774-4534.
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- *GAFFNEY, 29340 (Cherokee), W. Buford St. (Not meeting when Directory compiled; members going to other congregations.)
- GAFFNEY, 29340 (Cherokee), Building at 616 W. Marion Avenue. (Send mail to 401 W. Race St.) Pr. Edward Hughes, (803) 489-2866. S.S.; 40. Contact: King Littlejohn, (803) 489-7028.
- GEORGETOWN, 29442 (Georgetown), Duncan Church, P.O. Box 523, (803) 546-0610. Pr. Halbert L. Tucker, (803) 546-0831; Braker Carter, Jr., (803) 527-3577. S.S.; 70.
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277-3857.
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W. Kennedy, (803) 271-0246. S.S., 400.
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54. Pr. Hosie Byrd, Jr. (803) 374-7889., O.S.; 25.
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- JACKSON, 29831 (Aiken), 101 Third St., P.O. Box 87, (803) 471-3343. Pr. Jerry Hicks, (803) 471-3343. S.S.; 8.
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*PAGELAND, 29728 (Chesterfield), P.O. Box 652.

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PORT ROYAL, 29935 (Beaufort); P.O. Box 156. Temporarily meeting at Pt. Royal Elementary School. (Land for building has been purchased.) O.S.; 50. Contact: George W. Twiddy, (803) 838-5231.

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ROCK HILL, 29730 (York), Charlotte Avenue Church; 339 Charlotte Avenue; (803) 327-7853. Pr. Bob Bickle, (803) 327-5570, Jeff Percer, (803) 327-0171. S.S.; 275. Elders: D. C. Trotter, Jim Hix, Jim Waters.

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In 1971 Howard Winters became the editor. His illustrious work in this position continued until just before his death in May of 1988.

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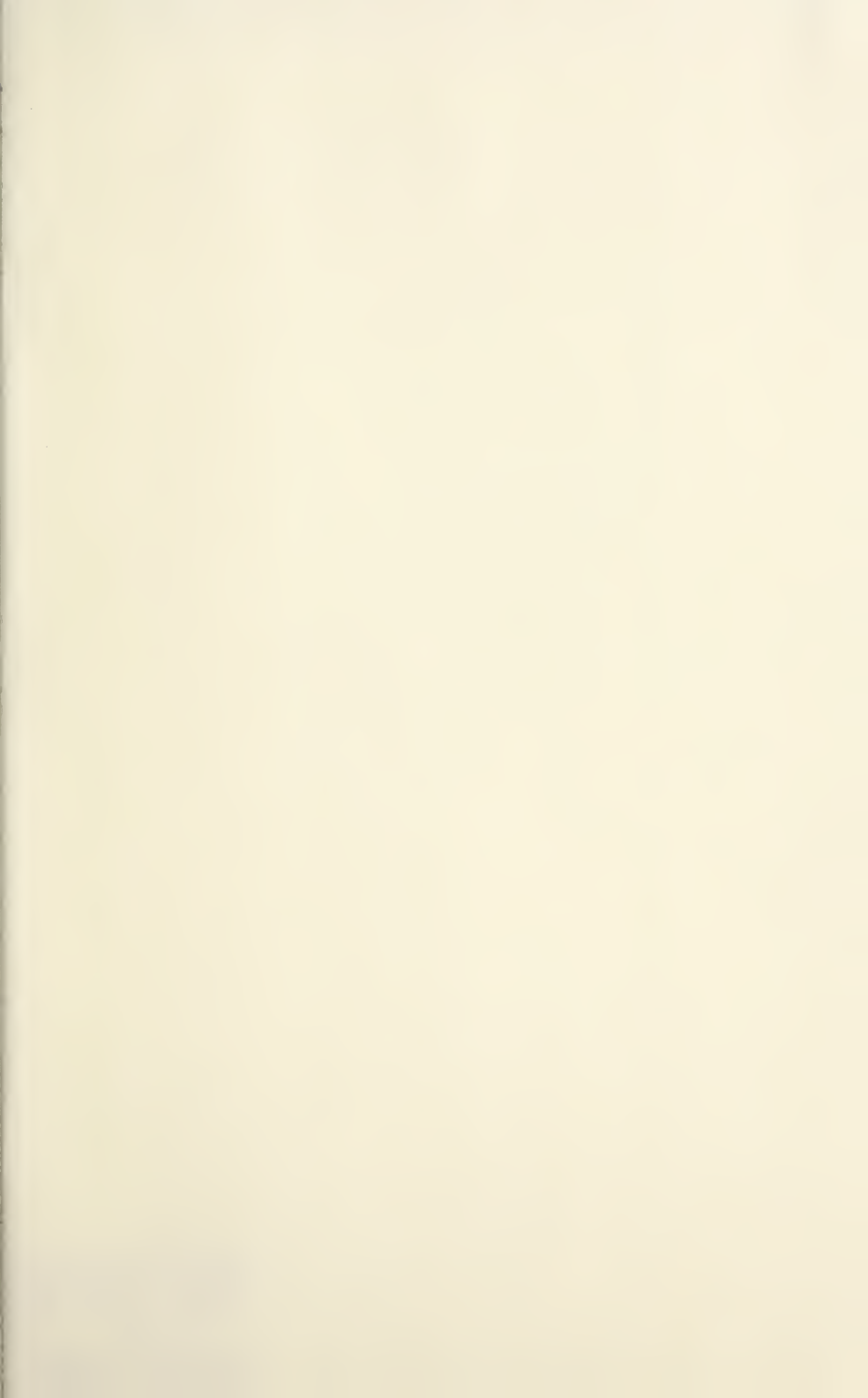
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