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I recently read a story of a father who took his little child into the woods one Sunday afternoon for a stroll. It being a very hot day, he lay down under a beautiful shade tree. The little child ran here and there gathering flowers and blades of grass, coming to its father and saying, “pretty!” “pretty!” At last the father fell asleep. While he was sleeping the little child wandered away. When he awoke, his first thought was “WHERE IS MY CHILD?” He shouted at the top of his voice but all he heard was his echo. Running up a precipice, he saw the mangled form of his beloved child. He rushed to the spot, took up the lifeless body and held it to his bosom, accusing himself of being the murderer of his child while he was sleeping.

But what is more tragic than this is that while many parents are “sleeping” the children wander off the “precipice” into the “pit” of spiritual indifference, moral shame, and eternal damnation. NOW is the time to give your child training in Christian principles; next year may be too late!
Too often in these busy times, parents wait until their children get into trouble, then they “turn on the discipline” and are shocked when the only reaction they get is that of resentment. But why shouldn’t a child resent discipline from a parent who has completely neglected his training and spiritual development?

WAKE UP PARENTS! Don’t take or send your child(ren) to Bible study as well as other services—BRING THEM: study with them and SHOW them what it means to be “...fruitful in every good work...,” to “...seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness...” (Col. 1:10; Mat. 6:33).

It would indeed be tragic to be responsible for your child’s physical death, but it is far worse to be responsible for his spiritual destruction.

Via Kennedale Bulletin

THE CHURCH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT...

Dave Rogers

...Is Christ’s church. HE said, ...”I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail Jerusalem. “Then sent Sanballat his servant unto me in like manner the fifty time with an open letter in his hand; Wherein was written, It is reported among the heathen, and Gashmu saith it...” (Neh. 6:5-6). How many times have you heard “it is reported,” “they say,” and the like? What Gashmu said was not true. He was engaged in the sin of slander.

Because one is quoted as authority does not necessarily make him reliable! Accusing is not proving. Men of honor will not believe and repeat every rumor they read or hear. A person’s reputation is a fragile thing and is easily damaged. That which takes a lifetime to build may be destroyed in a matter of hours.

Those who follow Christ are told “...to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, To speak evil of no man, to be not brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men” (Tit. 3:1-2). When one comes to you with an evil report about another brother in Christ, ask for proof from two or more witnesses. This is the law of both the Old and New Testaments.

When our brother falls into sin, it is our duty to lift him up, not crush him down. Remember that we are all in need of Divine mercy and forgiveness. The brother is to be restored in the spirit of meekness. All the while we must be considering ourselves, lest we also be tempted (Gal. 6:1). There is enough heartache in the world without adding the sin of slander.

Miami, OK

Slander

Bobby Key

The Spirit teaches that slander is an awful sin. “Whoso privily slandereth his neighbor, him will I destroy: him that hath a high look and a proud heart will I not suffer” (Psa. 101:5). Slander is falsehood or unproven rumor maliciously told for the purpose of injuring the influence or reputation of another.

Christian people should be careful about repeating something they have heard about another. Much of our trouble in the church today is the result of this very thing. Reputations have been destroyed by slander. We are better than the buzzard that is always hungry for a carcass. The slanderer usually has bitterness and hatred in the heart and an untruth on the tongue.

It would do well to study about Gashmu in the book of Nehemiah. Slander was used in trying to stop Nehemiah from building the walls around Jerusalem. “Then sent Sanballat his servant unto me in like manner the fifty time with an open letter in his hand; Wherein was written, It is reported among the heathen, and Gashmu saith it...” (Neh. 6:5-6). How many times have you heard “it is reported,” “they say,” and the like? What Gashmu said was not true. He was engaged in the sin of slander.

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Miami, OK

‘‘THE CHURCH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT...’’

Dave Rogers

...Is Christ’s church. HE said, ...”I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail
against it” (Mat. 16:18).

...is the body of Jesus Christ, and acknowledges HIM as its Head, rather than any man or group of men. Paul wrote, “And he is the head of the body, the church...” (Col. 1:18).

...is the only place where salvation is, Acts 2:41, 47: “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls” (v. 41). “And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (v. 47).

...is under the authority of Jesus Christ. He said, ...”All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Mat. 28:18).

...is NOT a denomination, nor is it composed of many denominations. Jesus prayed that His disciples would be united, John 17:21. A denomination is larger than a congregation, but smaller than the whole church; there are NO examples of denominations in the New Testament. In 1 Corinthians 1:10-13, Paul wrote to Christians who were dividing the church and said, “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. 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?” These were making “denominations,” and Paul rebuked them for it!

...is made up of individuals, John 15:5. Jesus said to His disciples, “I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."

...is where the sins of men are forgiven, where we are redeemed from death, Ephesians 1:3-7. Paul wrote,...” In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.”

...is entered through faith (Eph. 2:5, 8), repentance of sins (2 Cor. 7:10; Acts 17:30; Mat. 21:28-29), confession of faith in Christ (Mat. 10:32-33; Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:9-10), baptism in water (which is a “burial” in water, Rom. 6:3-5) for the forgiveness of our sins (Mat. 28:19-20; Acts 2:38; 1 Pet. 3:21). These steps bring one to the place where God will add that one to His church; after that, we are responsible to “walk in the light” with Him, through His Word (1 John 1:5-10).
SYMPATHY
We extend our deepest sympathy to sister Joyce Simmons in the loss of her brother, Lee Howell, on December 31, 1994.

SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Rubin Malone, Mary Muldoon, Lucille Staples, Peggy Crowe, Thelma Loy (Jim’s mother), and Tara Thompson (Richard and Linda Parker’s granddaughter).

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 1 meets January 8, 1995
Group 2 meets January 15, 1995
Group 3 meets January 22, 1995
Please note the changes in dates.

READING/INVITATION
January 11, 1995
Reading: Allen Brazell
Invitation: Henry Born
January 18, 1995
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Hairston Brantley

MARK THESE DATES

NEW ADDRESS
Ray and Judy Peters recently placed membership at Bellview. Their address and phone number are: 1878 East Nine Mile Road, Apt. 1206, Pensacola, FL 32514; 969-1227.
Toney L. Smith

Many in the world of "religion" feel that one cannot turn away from God after he has come to salvation. Backsliding is a word that is found in the Word of God. It is found some 12 times in the Old Testament. It is found nine times in Jeremiah alone. "The LORD said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot" (Jer. 3:6). The word means "turning back or away." Israel had made a covenant with God, therefore she was referred to as being the bride of Jehovah. But from the above verse we can clearly see that she had not been faithful.

The children of God today are in the same situation as was Israel of old. The church of Christ is described as being the bride of Christ (Eph. 5:22-32). And if we turn back we are then guilty of going back or backsliding. Anytime that we as Christians join with religious error, or ungodly living we have gone back. We have become unfaithful to the bridegroom. There-
fore, we should be cautious so that we do not find ourselves in this position.

There are certain characteristics of the backslider which will help us be on guard.

1) One of the first signs of backsliding will be manifested by **Irregular Attendance**. This individual will come for a few services then he/she will miss one or two. When this attitude is present there is a lack of interest in spiritual matters. Christians should relish the idea of attending worship and find joy in being with others of like mind. The Psalmist stated: “I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord” (Psa. 122:1). The feeling of anticipation will help overcome irregular attendance.

2) Also, backsliding is evidenced when we do **not have a real spirit of love for our brethren**. It is a sad occurrence when brethren do not want to be together and have no interest in one another. The Bible speaks volumes on this subject. Notice: “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:34-35). “Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law” (Rom. 13:8). When we fulfill this law we will have overcome to a great degree the “backsliding mind-set.”

3) When we find ourselves **indulging in sinful practices** with little restraint we should know that we are drifting away from God (Isa. 59:1-2). The children of Israel were often found in this condition. They had all blessings from God, but they were pulled into the world by unbelief. We must have the courage and set of mind to reject the pleasures of the world. The Hebrew writer spoke of Moses and his rejection of pleasure, “Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season” (Heb. 11:25). We would do well to remember 1 John 2:15-17. The admonition is that we “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 pride 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 for ever.” The world will cause one to backslide.

The child of God must take stock in his relationship with God. From time to time we are encouraged to “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?” (2 Cor. 13:5).

7221 Robin Hood Lane; Ft. Worth, TX 76112

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**ALL RELIGIONS ARE NOT CHRISTIANITY**

*Kenneth McClain*

The words “religion” and “Christianity” **do not** have the same meaning. Certainly we do not deny that Christianity is a religion, but we deny that all that is done in the name of religion is Christianity. In fact, many religions are altogether contrary to the Christian religion. A casual study of the New Testament reveals that many of the rituals, practices and teachings which are done in the name of Christ are not Christianity.

**The apostle Paul’s former religion was wrong.** His former religion as a Jew, was a false religion. That religion he honestly claimed as “our religion” was a religion that the Jews had developed to suit their own inclinations. It was a religion of sectarian ambitions (Acts 26:5). The apostle spoke of his religion as the Jews’ religion and a religion he zealously followed (Gal. 1:13-14). Therefore, before Saul could become a Christian, he had to give up, renounce, the false
religion of the Pharisees.

The Athenians were religious, but wrong. When Paul, now a Christian, came to Athens, he saw religious people—so religious that they endeavored to honor all gods. Lest they should slight any, they raised an image to an unknown god. Paul refuted their vain religion and set before them the true and living God. Some would turn from the false religion to the true and living God (Acts 17:16-34).

The Hebrew people were religious, but wrong. They were zealous of their religion. Paul did not rebuke them for their religion. Paul did not rebuke them for their much zeal nor for the fact that they were religious, but because their religion was not according to the knowledge of truth. Their religion was according to their own established laws of righteousness (Rom. 10:1-3).

James 1:26 speaks of vain religion: “If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man’s religion is vain.” A man may be religious, but his religion may not count with God. Is your religion vain?

Religion based on the doctrine and commandments of men is a religion that will not please God. This religion will draw near to Christ in word, giving lip service to Him, but it is a heartless religion based on the teachings of man and not God (Mat. 15:8-9).

There is a do-nothing religion. It also is wrong. James 1:27 speaks of a “pure religion and undefiled before God...” as a religion of doing. God only approves the religion of one who...” worketh righteousness...” (Acts 10:34-35). God will never approve of a religion that will not do as He commands.

A conscience religion is not a safe guide. Many people say, “Let your conscience be your guide.” If that is so, then much time and sacrifice has been wasted by God in giving His will to man so that man might know and do the will of God. Paul, in his former religion said, “I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth” (Acts 26:9). Paul also stated, “...I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day” (Acts 23:1).

The only religion that will save your soul is the one that follows Christ. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). The way of truth leads you to live in Christ.

Man must examine his religion in the light of truth (John 17:17). Is it possible that one could be religiously wrong, deceived by false religions? The only true religion is the one that obeys the commandments of God as revealed in the holy Scriptures. A religion of conscience and feelings is not an indication that God has accepted you as His child.

Via Light For Living

BEACON MAILING LIST UPGRADE

It is necessary to occasionally upgrade our bulletin mailing list. If you want to continue receiving the bulletin, please send in your mailing label by the end of February. We do not want to remove any one’s name who wants to receive it. At the same time, with the increased cost of mailing, effective January 1, 1995, and the increase of paper prices, it is a waste of time and money to send it if you do not read it. If you are a member at Bellview, you do not need to send in the label; you’ll get the Beacon anyway.
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Rubin Malone, Mary Muldoon, Lucille Staples, Peggy Crowe, Thelma Loy (Jim’s mother), and Tara Thompson (Richard and Linda Parker’s granddaughter).

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 2 meets January 15, 1995
Group 3 meets January 22, 1995
Group 1 meets February 5, 1995

READING/INVITATION
January 18, 1995
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Hairston Brantley
January 25, 1995
Reading: Bill Cline
Invitation: Bryan Loy

MARK THESE DATES
March 19, 1995—Second Annual Teachers’ Workshop.

NEW ADDRESS
Sylvia Alexander’s address is: 20435 N. W. 21st Avenue, Miami, FL 33056. Her phone number is 305-624-5506. She would appreciate any letters, cards, or phone calls and please keep her in your prayers. Greg and Pam Lewis’ address is 7718 Leaside Court, Hanover, MD 21076. There phone number is 410-519-9758.
Should Baptists Be Baptized?

Charles L. Houser

Are there people in Baptists churches who are honest, sincere, conscientious, and deeply religious? Of course there are, and this is likewise true of many people in various other churches. But does their sincerity and honesty make them right religiously? Saul of Tarsus was just such a person, even though he still was keeping Moses’ law after it had been nailed to the cross and taken out of the way (Col. 2:14; Gal. 3:24-25); and when he was persecuting Christians (Acts 23:1; 26:9-11). After the eyes of his understanding were opened he was converted to Christ (Acts 9:3-20; 22:6-16). He later referred to himself as having been the chief of sinners (1 Tim. 1:15), and he declared that he..."obtained mercy, because he did it ignorantly in unbelief (1 Tim. 1:13). Saul of Tarsus was not an uneducated man. Even Governor Festus mentioned his “...much learning...” (Acts 26:24). Hence, although he was “a man of letters” he was woefully lacking with respect to the facts, commands, promises, and warnings of the gospel
of Christ (1 Cor. 15:1-4; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; 2 Thes. 1:7-9).

What was true of Saul before his conversion to Christ is also true of many educated religious people today. They have gone through a humanly devised form of conversion, but have not complied with the commandments of Christ which are embraced in a scripturally authorized conversion. They have been “sold a bill of goods.” They have been led to believe that they received the forgiveness of sins at the point of faith and by faith only. If this were true, which it isn’t, then sinners could obtain pardon without repenting of their sins, and not even they believe that. It is generally agreed that repentance is essential (Acts 17:30; 2 Pet. 3:9; Luke 13:3). But, if repentance is essential, then salvation is NOT by FAITH ALONE, is it?

That a confession is also involved in the process of conversion is generally accepted, for Romans 10:10 says, “...with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” And Baptists in all sincerity make a confession before their baptism, BUT WHAT IS THEIR CONFESSION? I can assure you that you would never find it mentioned even once, if you were to look for it in the Bible the remainder of your life. A Baptist preacher usually asks the candidate, “Do you believe that God for Christ’s sake has pardoned your sins?” If a person being questioned were to refuse to agree to that confession, a Baptist preacher would refuse to baptize him. But in making THAT confession, sincere religious people really disqualify themselves from being scripturally baptized. This is enough to prevent their being extended full Christian fellowship, when they express the desire to be affiliated with the churches of Christ. (To see for yourself the contrast between “the baptist confession” and the one authorized by the Bible, read Acts 8:35-38.)

When sincere Baptist people request membership among us, even though they may say, “But I am satisfied with my baptism,” they should be reminded, “You are not the one to be satisfied; the Lord is, and he is not satisfied until His will has been done.” Baptists preachers give two reasons for one’s being baptized, after he/she has become a believer, namely: (1) To declare to the world that one has already been saved, and (2) To join the church of his/her choice. One could NEVER find those reasons in the Bible. To a repentent believer, the Bible reasons are: (1) For the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), (2) To wash away sins (Acts 22:16), (3) To get into Christ (Rom. 6:3-5; Gal. 3:27), and (4) To be saved (1 Pet. 3:21).

We do not believe that the water of baptism literally washes away sins, but that is the time and place that God looks upon the obedient heart and forgives, through the blood of Christ. The water of the Jordan did not literally cleanse Naaman of his leprosy (2 Kings 5:10-15) and neither did the water of the pool of Siloam (John 9:1-11) literally open the eyes of the blind man. But Naaman would not have been cleansed of his leprosy and the blind man’s eyes would not have opened, if they had not obeyed the words of the prophet and Jesus respectively. Even so, penitent believers today do NOT receive the remission of their sins until after they have confessed Christ as Lord and Savior (Mat. 10:32) and have been baptized (immerged) to that very end.

Hence, the answer to the question, “Should Baptists be rebaptized?” is an emphatic “Yes!”

Gospel preachers and elders of churches of Christ, do an injustice to honest, sincere Baptists who claim to be satisfied with baptism, to extend to them full Christian fellowship, without their making the AUTHORIZED confession and being baptized for the reason given in the Bible. When fellowship is extended, without their correcting the errors they previously made, those souls are left believing that they were already saved, when, as a matter of fact, they have not done what one MUST DO in order to be saved.

Baptist preachers claim, whenever Acts 2:38
is called to their attention, and especially the expression, “for the remission of sins,” that the preposition “for” means “because of.” It is true that it can mean either “because of” or “in order to receive,” but it can’t mean both in the same sentence. In Acts 2:38 repentance and baptism are joined together by the conjunction “and,” hence, what “for” means as related to repentance it also means as related to baptism. If one knows how to parse or diagram a sentence, according to the rules of English grammar, then he/she could parse Acts 2:38 for himself or herself and then the facts could be easily seen.

Union City, TN Via Firm Foundation

DO YOU HAVE TIME FOR YOUR CHILDREN?

One father, after his son was beyond the time of persuasion and punishment said, “I planned to go out with my boy and be his companion...when I had time. I resolved to interest him in young people’s activities...when I had time. I promised I would talk to him like a father should to his son...when I had time. But for over twenty years for every one thought of my son I had a hundred thoughts of my business.”

Do not pity the child who does not have a bicycle or whose parents cannot afford an encyclopedia. Pity the child whose parents do not have time to live with him, to teach him, to play with him, to express their love for him in many, many ways. The child without the bicycle and other material possessions but with the warmth of parental love is far happier than the poor rich child who has everything money can buy but lacks the needed security which comes through being loved “in deed and truth.”

Some time ago a judge shared the answers he received from a young law breaker when he reminded him of his fine respected father. “I’ve often heard that my father was a fine man.” said the young man. “But I never knew him. He didn’t have time for me.”

Maybe if we stopped sometimes to consider, we would see that a little dust on the furniture, spotless floors, the multiplicity of things and the round of social activities are not nearly as important as we thought. King Solomon wisely said, “Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a fatted ox and hatred with it” (Pro. 15:17).

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DID I PLEASE GOD?

When you depart from the worship service, your question should be, “How did God like it, not how did I like it?” You are not there to attend a performance, but to conduct one. You are not the audience, God is.

The question must never be, “Did I like the preaching, the singing, etc., but did God?”

Always remember: Worship is not something you watch, but something you do!

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BEACON MAILING LIST UPGRADE

It is necessary to occasionally upgrade our bulletin mailing list. If you want to continue receiving the bulletin, please send in your mailing label by the end of February. If you have been placed on the mailing list or have sent in a change of address since October 1, 1994, you do not need to send the mailing label. We do not want to remove any one’s name who wants to receive it. At the same time, with the increased cost of mailing, effective January 1, 1995, and the increase of paper prices, it is a waste of time and money to send it if you do not read it. If you are a member at Bellview, you do not need to send in the label; you’ll get the Beacon anyway.
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Rubin Malone, Mary Muldoon, Thelma Loy (Jim’s mother), and Tara Thompson (Richard and Linda Parker’s granddaughter).

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 3 meets January 22, 1995
Group 1 meets February 5, 1995
Group 2 meets February 12, 1995

READING/INVITATION
January 25, 1995
Reading: Bill Cline
Invitation: Paul Brantley
February 1, 1995
Reading: Howard Johnson
Invitation: Jeremy Caine

MARK THESE DATES
February 19, 1995–Monthly Bible Bowl at 2:00 P.M., at Bellview. Study Romans 5-8.
**June 10-14, 1995**–Twentieth Annual Bellview Lectures, *The Doctrine Of Christ Versus The Doctrines Of Men.* Start making plans now to attend.

PROUD GRANDPARENTS AND GREAT-GRANDPARENT
Congratulations are warmly extended to Charles and Alice Williams in the birth of their grandson, Dylan James, on January 11, 1995, to Tina and Larry Robinson. Congratulations are also extended to his great-grandmother, sister Ida Williams.
WHY AREN’T WE DOING MORE TO TAKE THE GOSPEL TO A LOST WORLD?

Cliff Lyons

By reading the book of Acts we can readily see that the early church was deeply concerned about preaching the gospel to all men. That’s what our Lord had commanded (Mark 16:15-16). From Pentecost (Acts 2) onward, the church was on the march. Persecution could not stop her (Acts 4-8). Hypocrisy did not cause her to throw up her hands in bewilderment and unbelief, but caused great fear to come upon the church (Acts 5). Internal problems did not cause her to “close her doors” (Acts 15; 1 Cor. 1-16). However, we need to understand that all such problems were to be corrected in keeping with God’s will. For example, Paul wrote 1 Corinthians to instruct the brethren in Corinth on how to correct the disorders in the church and to encourage them to make corrections and be faithful. The liberalism of the first century hindered the church, but it did not stop it (Col. 1-2; 1 John. 1-5; 2 John; Jude). Indeed, there were many other problems and
difficulties which the early church faced, but she continued on her march until Paul could write that the gospel, “...was preached in all creation under heaven...” (Col. 1:23; ASV). They did it!

What about God’s people down here in the 20th century? Why aren’t we doing more? Why can’t we say what Paul said in Colossians 1? Is it not still the responsibility of the church to take the gospel to all men? Are we so limited in talent that we can’t do it? No! What about modern methods of travel and communication? Are we using our opportunities wisely? Please search your heart carefully as you ponder these questions?

Also, could it be that there is a lack of love for God, His Word and precious lost souls around the world? Do we become discouraged because so few obey the gospel in some countries (even at home)? How do you think Noah felt after building the ark-wherein, few, that is eight souls were saved? Were we lukewarm? Is there no compassion for the lost? Are we too concerned about material things instead of eternal things?

Brethren, do we really believe that people without the gospel are lost? The late brother H. A. Dixon said, “Some believe that somehow the heathen will be saved without being warned and somehow we will be saved in spite of our failure to warn.” Both thoughts are merely wishful thinking. The lost need the gospel. We are responsible for taking it to them. The New Testament teaches that no man can be saved apart from the gospel—and this includes the heathen world (2 Th. 1:7-9). All have sinned (Rom. 3:23). God’s Word teaches that...” the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death” (Rev. 21:8). Please read also 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and Galatians 5:19-21. The apostle Paul preached, “and the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained...” (Acts 17:30-31).

Yes brethren, our Lord holds us responsible for preaching the gospel to all men (Mark 16:15), but there is also a big responsibility upon the shoulders of the lost (Mark 16:16). Felix, Agrippa and many others have failed to receive and obey the wonderful gospel of Christ. Yet, we must continue to GO with the gospel. Let us so work in our Master’s vineyard that we might say with Paul, “Wherefore I testify unto you this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:26-27). Yes, let us have the faith and courage to expose the sins of our day, including the soul damaging religious error in the denominational world, and sadly, even within the church. Let us stand up and be counted as faithful soldiers of the cross and we will do more to take the precious gospel of Christ to a lost world.

“BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS”

Bill Jackson

This is, of course, Matthew 5:9, and one of that listing called the “beatitudes.” As the Sermon on the Mount introduces the entire New Testament system, the Lord, in the beatitudes, introduced the Sermon on the Mount. Here are qualities, traits, attitudes-of-being that must be in the make-up of the faithful follower of God. All are vitally important, and this one being a peacemaker is stressed as thus giving evidence that one is a child of God. But it must be noted that this particular passage has been so abused in that some have taken “peacemaker” as meaning, “never raise the voice, even against evil, wrongdoing and ungodliness.” Such is far, far from the truth of God!

If any man lived close to the Lord, abided by the Lord’s will, and pursued a faithful course to the end, it was the apostle Paul. He was, as a faithful child of God, a peacemaker. Yet Paul thoroughly rebuked the church at Corinth on
more than a dozen counts! It was Paul, the peacemaker, who commanded that the fornicator at Corinth be put from their midst (1 Cor. 5:13). It was Paul, the peacemaker who called false teachers by name, thus identifying them to the whole brotherhood of that day, and then before all for all time to come (1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 1:15). It should be obvious that some are misleading us when they shun from plain exposure of false teachers and false teaching, and justify their position by saying, “We are to be peacemakers.

The word means, simply, “a maker of peace.” Look at the faithful Christian: He has made, through obedience, his peace with God. He, by the efforts of his life, labors to cause other men to find that peace with God. In the work of restoration, he is encouraging his brethren toward peace. He gives his life to the furtherance of the gospel of peace (Eph. 6:15). In his denouncing, spotlighting, and rebuking of error, he is not violating God’s peace, but he is identifying those who HAVE VIOLATED IT, and who are causing others to do so! He, standing for the truth, and against all error, is doing exactly what God’s “peacemaker” is expected to do!

Indeed, blessed are the peacemakers! Men have been brought to God because of them. Gossip has been curtailed because of them. False teachers have been rebuked by them. Erring brethren have been restored through their efforts. All of these areas are those in which the “peacemakers” labor.

Deceased

THEM THAT OBEY HIM

Wayne Price

Who are those whom the Lord will save eternally? The Word of God answers: “...all them that obey him” (Heb. 5:9). Once, or twice, or “how much of the time?” you ask.

A look at the original language gives us an interesting insight into this matter. The original text has apokouousin (present, active, participle, dative plural, masculine). A literal rendering of this term, one which stresses the KIND of action involved, would be “the continually obeying ones.” Here the inspired writer informs us that obedience is necessary for salvation, as necessary (we might add) as is faith! In fact, James 2:17 says that faith without obedience (works) is dead.

This utterly repudiates the Calvinistic idea of “once saved—always saved” taught by the denominational world, and some in the Lord’s church. It is clear that no one act of obedience is to be viewed as having saved us, and after that point, it is assured. Salvation is dependent upon a sustained obedience. The text says that the Lord saves those who “keep on obeying him.” The apostle Paul says: “Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING” (Phil. 2:12). The writer of the Hebrew letter echoes that same thought when he says that Christ saves those “who keep on obeying him.”

Via Cloud Messenger

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Please remember in your prayers: Rubin Malone, Mary Muldoon, Marilyn Hall, Thelma Loy (Jim’s mother), and Tara Thompson (Richard and Linda Parker’s granddaughter).

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Group 3 meets February 19, 1995

READING/INVITATION
February 1, 1995
Reading: Howard Johnson
Invitation: Jeremy Caine
February 8, 1995
Reading: Chad Lightner
Invitation: Bill Crowe

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PROUD GRANDPARENTS
Congratulations are extended to Dick and Mary Cunningham in the birth of their grandson, Nicholas Baker, born on January 20, 1995.
No question about it. Jesus is our Savior. There is no other. The question is whom will Jesus save? Will He save everyone, or almost everyone? Will He save every person who is morally good, or who is religious? The answer to this question is found in His teaching, the New Testament. Jesus’ answer is succinct. “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” (Mat. 7:21). While it is true that Jesus wants every person to be saved (Luke 19:10; 1 Tim. 2:3-4), it is equally true that He will save only those who obey Him. “And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Heb. 5:9).

The next question is, what is obedience? Is it merely doing what God says do, or is there more to it? The truth is, it is possible to do what God says do without being obedient to God. We do some things God says do because we can see their importance and value to our existence as a society of people. We may
even do some things God says do in order that we may associate with a certain class of people. The Pharisees prove conclusively that we can do what God says do and be unacceptable in His sight (read Mat. 23). Obedience to God involves at least three important things. We not only must do what God says do, we must do it in the way He says it and we must do it for the purpose He tells us to do it. For an example, He tells us to be baptized (Mark 16:16).

There is no question as to the way we are to be baptized. It is by immersion (Rom. 6:3-6). Neither can there be a serious question as to the purpose of baptism. It is to wash past sins away (Acts 22:16). To obey then, we must be immersed in order to have our past sins washed away.

In Acts, chapter two, we learn that those who were immersed for the remission of past sins were saved by the Lord and added to His church. “And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:47). The obedient are the church and we learn in Ephesians 5:23 that Jesus is the Savior of the church. “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church and he is the savior of the body.” The “body” and the “church” are the same group of people (Eph. 1:22-23).

The answer to our question is clear. Jesus will save the church.

HUMAN SUFFERING

David Brown

In creating the physical world, God made a place that is complete for what He intended He never intended for it to be man’s eternal home, but an environment wherein man could prepare for heaven (Ecc. 12:13-14; Mat. 6:33; 2 Cor. 5:1-10; 1 Cor. 15:42-49; Rev. 2:10).

Because “...God is love” (1 John 4:8), He could not create man as some kind of robot without free will. In giving man a free will, He made it possible for man to make choices. However, with such ability man has made wrong decisions and choices. When man makes wrong choices he must suffer for his bad selections. Without suffering the consequences of bad choices, man does not learn to value good over bad.

Without room for much detailed discussion let us briefly note that man undergoes suffering due to:

(1) Wrong Personal Choices: Man is at fault when he murders, steals and rapes. Because God made man with freedom of choice, He does not stop the crime nor set aside the consequences of such sins (1 John 3:4; 1 Pet. 4:15).

(2) Wrong Personal Choices Made By Others: When a deranged person decides to shoot as many school children as possible, such children are not suffering from anything wrong they did, but for the wrong committed by the deranged man.

(3) Wrong Personal Choices Of Our Forefathers: Today we reap the benefits of Pasteur, Bell and Edison. At the same time, we continue to be plagued with the Communism of Marx and Lenin.

The terrible and sad condition of the world is man’s fault. In the garden of Eden before man sinned, he was free of disease, death and all the other consequences of sin (Gen. 3:22-23). But, when man sinned, the whole of creation was affected (Rom. 5:12; 8:18-22). Venereal diseases are examples of what happens to man when he violates God’s laws in the particular area of sexual relations (Rom. 1:24-27).

There is no doubt that over the thousands of years since man’s fall, many germs and viruses have mutated and, like the AIDS virus, made their appearance in the world. The natural catastrophes (floods, earthquakes, etc.) no doubt are the consequences of man’s sin. Study closely the state of the world before and after the flood (Gen. 1:6-7; 2:5-6; 6-8). Man’s sin brought forth the
flood and from it the change of the features of the earth. Hence, the so-called natural catastrophes that man suffers from today are an indirect result of our sinful ancestors.

God’s natural laws are constant, consistent and dependable. When we violate them inno-cently, ignorantly or otherwise, we suffer the consequences. How terrible it would be if man never knew whether the law of gravity was going to work or not.

Pain is an indicator for man’s good. How many serious injuries are avoided because of painful warnings. Painful suffering and other kinds of trials develop the mind with the understanding that all things in this present physical world are uncertain, fleeting and will cease altogether some day (Jas. 1:1-5). The sufferings of this present world cause the wise to prepare so they will not miss heaven (Job 3:17; Rom. 8:18).

Before Jesus gave up the form of God, He, being omniscient, knew man’s plight. Yet, knowing such, He chose to give up the form of God and take upon Himself the form of man whereby He could actually experience the pain and plight of mankind. What an amazing testimony to God’s love for mankind! No one can ever accuse the Lord of not understanding what it is like to actually suffer (Phi. 2:5-8; Heb. 5:8).

After days of prayer and fasting King David’s child died. David did not continue mourning, but arose; and in his answer to those who questioned why, with the child’s death, he did not continue mourning, he revealed the inner strength that has always characterized the faithful: “...can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me” (2 Sam. 12:23).

We in this life can never understand all that is involved in suffering because we do not know the whole design of God for man (Rom. 11:33-34). But we do know enough to realize that life is God’s classroom, the Bible God’s textbook, and, as God has designed this world and the people who live in it, a great many tests try all of us. As the apostle John said: we know that “...the whole world lieth in wickedness” (1 John 5:19). No matter what the situation, however, a man’s duty is to do God’s will; and thereby we will be abundantly sustained (1 Cor. 15:58; Rev. 2:10; 4:11).

25403 Lancewood; Spring, TX 77373

BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

During 1994, there were 55 people enrolled in the Bible Correspondence Course in Nigeria. Twenty-nine people completed the eight-lesson course and nine people completed the 30-lesson course. We commend brother and sister Maxey, who have been administering the course for the past several years, in the job that they are doing.

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February 8, 1995
Reading: Chad Lightner
Invitation: Bill Crowe
February 15, 1995
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Tim Lamb

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April 15, 1995–Golden Agers’ Banquet, at 6:00 P.M.
Start making plans now to attend.
Trying to win a friend or loved one to Christ can be one of the most difficult and frustrating tasks in all the world. But, it can be so rewarding if we succeed! Proverbs 11:30 states, “The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.” All Christians should seek to win souls. The Great Commission commands Christians to so do—“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). Fulfilling this commission included teaching those in our own families and among our personal friends.

There are good and bad ways to go about this task. Sometimes a Christian is so close to the one he or she is trying to win to Christ that the proper perspective is lost, and more harm is done than good. There are some things we need to keep in mind which will help us in trying to win a lost loved one to Jesus. Consider the following thoughts—
1. Your Christian example and influence are important. Always set a Christian example consistently (Mat. 5:14; Phi. 2:15). If you are easily persuaded to forsake Bible study and worship, you ruin your opportunity to save this soul.

2. Be willing to call on the elders or preacher for assistance in teaching this one. These men often have had more experience and success at winning souls privately than you may know. They are not your enemies, but are your best friends in this work. Sometimes the prospect objects to discussing the Bible with the preacher because of a deep fear of his objections being answered, and he will be called upon to make a decision. Not seeking their counsel could set your efforts back, especially if you are not experienced, or haven’t yet succeeded.

3. Don’t be critical of the church, its work, the brethren, the preaching or Bible classes in front of this prospect. Such behavior will discourage this one from obeying and he or she may use these negative comments as tools of Satan to avoid ever obeying the gospel. Besides, to talk in such a way is sin (Eph. 4:29,31).

4. Don’t be so anxious to see this person baptized that you would be willing to by-pass the process of the necessary steps and length of time needed for the Seed (the Word) to be properly planted in this person’s heart and begin to germinate. He or she needs to have time (Rom. 10:17). Sometimes we become impatient and expect instant results. Such is not realistic, nor is it promised by the Lord (Luke 8:11-18; 1 Cor. 3:5-9). Obeying the gospel requires faith, commitment and self-sacrifice (Rom. 12:1-2; Luke 9:23-24).

5. Expect your friend or loved one to become angry or cry, on occasion, when the conscience is pricked. This is a normal reaction by many. It means they are thinking; he or she is giving serious consideration to what is being taught. God’s Word is working in them. This is no time to apologize for the truth, but to reinforce it (John 8:32; Acts 7:51-54; 2:37-38, 41). Putting the old man of sin to death is a painful matter, and pain is to be expected.

6. Do not be offended on behalf of this one and do not compromise the truth he or she hears. Occasionally a non-Christian would not think to be offended if a weak brother or sister had not suggested it to them! To do such a thing is to betray Christ and the gospel. Let the Word of God (the gospel) run and have free course in their heart. Let them wrestle with themselves and the truth. Don’t try to stifle it (2 The. 3:1). After all, if they are EVER saved, it will be by the truth of the gospel, and by nothing else (Rom. 1:16).

7. Remember, that often, one who argues and fights the most may be closer to obeying the truth than you may realize. In sales, a prospect who has no reaction to the salesman usually does not buy. It is the prospect who objects and argues most who is closest to giving in and making a purchase. Don’t YOU give in at this point and ruin the sale (the conversion of this precious soul).

8. Pray for this one to have a heart open and receptive to the truth (1 The. 2:13).

9. Follow Peter’s inspired commands on this subject (1 Pet. 3:1-7).

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SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

A man was walking down a little hill in the woods when he stepped on a little twig. The twig rolled and he fell down. As he got up and went on his way, he thought to himself, “If that had been a big log, I would have seen it and climbed over it. There would have been no danger of falling, for I would have been aware of the danger.” The fact that the twig was small was what made it dangerous.

In our spiritual pathway, the devil places little temptations to defeat us. His little traps or ob-
structions are more effective than the big ones, partly because if people do notice them they may think they are too small to make a difference.

Beware of little things!! It was only a “tittle thing”—a bit of forbidden fruit—that brought sin and its curse into the world.

Via The Cordell Christian

OUR PARTNERSHIPS
Robin W. Haley

That Christians are in and not of this world is a very clear Bible teaching (John 17:11,14; 1 Cor. 5:9-10). To act otherwise is to fall prey to the devil and incur the displeasure of God. “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers...” (2 Cor. 6:14).

Within the next few verses Paul asks a series of questions making the following contrasts: “righteousness (those justified/saved)—unrighteousness (the lost); light (children of God, Eph. 5:8)—darkness (children of the devil); Christ—Belial (“worthless one”); believer—infidel (unbeliever); temple of God (Christian/church)—idols.” Note the words he uses to describe the foolish and faulty relationships misguided Christians form with the ungodly: “fellowship (partnership); communion (participation); concord (from “symphony”—no “music” to be made with such); part (portion means “share in the division”); agreement (“vote with consent”). You see, brethren, when we conform to and go along with the world, we are practitioners with them in their evil; we become “dividers of the spoil” who cast their vote in agreeing to sin.” In other words, we become the very seeds of division and denominationalism which we are to oppose and hopefully convert to the truth: that there is but one church of our Lord!

Far too many of our brethren of late have become just such: seedlings of apostasy. They are teaching such nonsense as “we are not the only Christians...we must have fellowship with “other”

Christians in the religious world...to claim that one baptism is better than any other is narrow-minded.” Please do not forget that it was the Lord who spoke of one baptism, what it is, what it is for, and who may partake in it.

Paul then turns to the positive in chapter seven, saying “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Cor. 7:1). The promises refer to what was said in verses 17 and 18 of chapter six: that God will receive us, be our Father and we would be His sons and daughters! Imagine, the Almighty wants us to be His own children. He will dwell with us and do all that a loving Father ought to do. These are indeed special promises. Let us live in such a way that we do not lose them. Let us cleanse all such influences of the world off of us. Let us be pure and holy, blameless in His sight until the coming of His Son Jesus (Phi. 2:15).

972 East Teresa Sapulpa, OK 74066

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Group 1 meets March 5, 1995

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Invitation: Tim Lamb
February 22, 1995
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Ray Foshee

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SEVEN “MUSTS” MENTIONED IN SCRIPTURE

Jesse Whitlock

Many times we find the word “must” in God’s Word. Many more times that word is implied in certain references. Vine defines this Greek word, dei, as “an impersonal verb, signifying ‘it is necessary’ or ‘one must,’ ‘one ought.’” Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, page 775. Let us note the thrust of this little word in seven powerful passages of Holy Writ:

John 3:14, “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so MUST the son of man be lifted up.” If the serpent had not been lifted up in the wilderness the people would have had no cure for the deadly snakebite. Likewise, if God had not allowed His only begotten Son to be lifted up on the cross, we would be without a cure for the deadly problem that confronts all mankind, i.e., sin. Note John 3:15, “that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.”
Acts 4:12, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we MUST be saved.” Every person who is saved must be saved by obedience to the authority of Christ our Lord. Christ is “the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Heb. 5:9b).

Hebrews 11:6, “But without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God MUST believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” Trust is a Must! We cannot be pleasing to God without belief. Recall the words of a hymn we sing on occasion: “Trust and obey, there is no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.” Don’t forget the definition of the word “must,” i.e., “it is necessary”—“one must”—“one ought.”

Acts 16:30, “And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what MUST I do to be saved?” There is no greater question that any man can ask. Remember the imperative force and thrust of that little word, MUST. Watch this: (v. 31) “they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shall be saved” (v. 33) “and was baptized, he and all his” (v. 34) “and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.” They had to hear the Word of the Lord and obey the Lord’s Word. So MUST man today!

John 3:7, “Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye MUST be born again.” This is the Lord’s instruction to Nicodemus. In the context of John 3 we note that one cannot enter into the kingdom of God unless that one is born again. Christ stated in John 3:3, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” The new birth, being born anew, i.e., New Testament baptism. This “MUST” is just as imperative today as it was when first commanded.

John 4:24, “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him MUST worship him in spirit and in truth.” We must worship God with the right attitude and with the right authority (dare we say, pattern?)—yee, verily! Our worship then, MUST conform to the powerful and precious truth of God!

2 Corinthians 5:10, “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 or bad.” All mankind will stand before the judgment seat of Christ and ALL of us will be judged. Quicker than you can say “O.J. Simpson,” the whole world will be judged by God. Your destiny and mine will be based upon our obedience or disobedience to God’s will. (Heb. 9:27; Ecc. 12:13-14; Mat. 7:21-23; Rom. 14:12).

BE HAPPY IN CHRIST

Cliff Lyons

The book of Philippians has been called “the epistle of joy.” Paul wrote in chapter four, verse four, “Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say Rejoice.” Also, in Philippians 4:11-13, Paul wrote, “Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound... can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” How could Paul write about joy, happiness and contentment when he, himself was in prison? Also, the church at Philippi had begun in the face of persecution (Acts 16:11-40; 1 The. 2:1-2). Paul understood how man could be happy and find contentment, even under adverse circumstances by being “in Christ” and giving Him the first place in his life (Gal. 2:20; Eph. 1:3-7; Phi. 1:3-11, 21, 24; 2:2; 3:7-8, 13-14). Life was not easy for Paul, but he found “peace” and happiness “in Christ.”

It is indeed sad that so many people in the world today are unhappy. Also, these unhappy people often contribute to the unhappiness of others. Of course, many, instead of following Paul’s recipe for happiness, look to the pleasures.
of this world (Heb. 11:24-26; 1 John 2:15-17). However, we must distinguish between pleasure sensation and happiness. Also, some people have the idea that Christians are not supposed to be happy. But God wants us to find peace and happiness “in Christ.” Let us now notice some things that will help bring true happiness into our lives.

Man needs to obey the gospel and live a faithful life before God. The eunuch obeyed and went on his way rejoicing (Acts 8). Christians have a source of strength, understanding and contentment that unbelievers and the disobedient do not have. We understand that God created heaven and earth and man (Gen. 1:1,26-27). We understand, if we read and believe the Bible, what the purpose of life is and our responsibilities before God (Gen.-Rev.). Also, we know that one day we must face God in judgment and that we will be either in heaven or hell (Heb. 9:27; Mat. 25:46; Luke 16:19-31; Rev. 20:11-15). Thus we treasure the Bible as God’s inspired Word (2 Tim. 3:16-17) and as we obey Him, we live in hope, finding peace and happiness in Christ (Heb. 5:8-9; 6:18-19; Phi. 3:13-14).

As Christians we should treasure the opportunity to assemble with other saints to worship God in spirit and truth (John 4:24; Heb. 10:25; Psal. 122:1; 95:1; Col. 3:16; 1 Cor. 11:23-26; 16:1-2; Acts 20:7; 2:42). In scriptural worship we give glory to God and find peace and happiness for ourselves.

Christians are to be active in the Lord’s work (1 Cor. 15:58; Mat. 7:21-29; Jas. 2:22-26; Mark 16:15-16). Don’t be guilty of idleness, lukewarmness or indifference (Rev. 3:14-22). Be an active servant in the Lord’s vineyard. Don’t compromise the truth, but contend earnestly for the faith (Jude 3). Yes, be deeply concerned, let your conscience (based upon truth) make you miserable: if you have not been baptized into Christ for remission of sins (Acts 2:38); if you are living an immoral life (Gal. 5:19-21); if you are unfaithful in assembling with the saints (Heb. 10:25); if you are compromising or perverting the gospel (Gal. 1:6-9; Rom. 1:16); if you are inactive and lukewarm in respect to the Lord’s work (Rev. 3:14-22); etc. Repent of all sin, make your life right with God and the church and “be happy.”

Real happiness depends upon a right relationship with God. Trust Him and obey Him! Paul lived and died a happy, joyous Christian (Phi. 1:3-5; 4:4-7, 11-13; 2 Tim. 4:6-8). We can, too. Become a Christian, run the race, live the life and be happy in Christ.

Please don’t allow past failures to hinder you from being happy and serving God in a faithful way now. With Paul, let us “press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phi. 3:14). What will you do with your life? How will you use this new year God has given you? Let us learn from the past and be even more determined to give God the first place in our life (Mat. 6:33). Be faithful, be happy and help expand the borders of our Lord’s kingdom.

415 Belmont Muskogee, OK 74403

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BAPTIZED

Leon and Fran Waters were baptized on February 7, 1995. This was a direct result of the door-knocking campaign conducted during the gospel meeting in which they requested the Bible Correspondence Course. Their address and phone number are: 9232 Bell Ridge Drive; Pensacola, FL 32526; 944-1955. Please keep them in your prayers.

SICK AND SHUT-IN

Please remember in your prayers: Rubin Malone, Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters Tara Thompson (Richard and Linda Parker’s granddaughter).

VISITATION GROUPS

Group 3 meets February 19, 1995
Group 1 meets March 5, 1995
Group 2 meets March 19, 1995

READING/INVITATION

February 22, 1995
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Ray Foshee

March 1, 1995
Reading: Harold Maxey
Invitation: Bill Gallaher

MARK THESE DATES

February 19, 1995–Monthly Bible Bowl at 2:00 P.M., at Bellview. Study Romans 5-8.
February 19, 1995–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., at the building.
April 8, 1995–Golden Agers’ Banquet, at 6:00 P.M.
NEW BIBLE CLASSES BEGINNING

New Bible Classes for all age groups (youth and adults) will begin March 1, 1995 for the Wednesday evening classes and March 5, 1995 for the Sunday morning classes.

WEDNESDAY SCHEDULE

ADULT I—I Samuel, Fred Stancliff, room 1.
ADULT II—We Can Rest Assured, Ray Foshee, room 7.
ADULT III—Typology, Michael Hatcher, room 5.
NEW CONVERTS—Christian Doctrine, Bill Gallaher, room 18.

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

ADULT I—Plan of Redemption II, Louis Herrington, room 1
ADULT II—Changes In The Church Of Christ, Paul Brantley, room 7.
NEW CONVERTS—Christian Doctrine, Bill Gallaher, room 18.
AN EXAMINATION
Robin W. Haley

An important question comes to mind to which all Christians must give attention from time to time. That question is: “How shall we live?” It comes from the prophet Ezekiel while he was reflecting upon the sins of Israel and the consequences of such. He was told to say to the house of Israel, “Therefore, O thou son of man, speak unto the house of Israel: Thus ye speak, saying, If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, HOW SHOULD WE THEN LIVE?” (Eze. 33:10). The point there was this: if we are living in sin, there is no way that we will be able to “get away with it” and live.

Happily, the Lord’s attitude is one of forgiveness and mercy. As He went on to say to Ezekiel, “Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, TURN YE FROM YOUR EVIL WAYS; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?” (Eze. 33:11). The obvious answer to the question regarding whether we can live while being in sin is: REPENT! Otherwise we will have no life abiding in us. We will be lost!

The title of our article comes from 2 Corinthians 13:5, where Paul wrote, “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves.” In light of this self-examination and the question of our living apart from sin (ongoing, habitual, continual practice of sin), we ask ourselves: “Shall we live in view of tomorrow?” The Bible answer is NO! As James would write, “Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow” (Jas. 4:13-14). Jesus taught us not to count on tomorrow, but to take care of today’s worries: “Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof (Mat. 6:31-34).

Shall we live in view of yesterday? The Bible answer is NO! Listen to Paul, “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing” (Phi. 3:13-16). This is Paul’s “rule to live by.”

Brethren, let us live for today, yet not as the heathen or hedonists who say, “let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die” (1 Cor. 15:32). Rather, let us live with our eyes upon eternity (Acts 24:25; Tit. 2:12; 1 Tim. 4:8), seeking always to be found in Christ when He returns. EXAMINE YOURSELVES!

972 E. Teresa Sapulpa, OK 74066

BELLVIEW LECTURES

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Twenty-six men will be speaking: Garry Barnes, Howell Bigham, Tom Bright, Garry Brantley, David Brown, J.E. Choate, Ken Chumbley, Darrell Conley, Mac Deaver, Roy Deaver, Daniel Denham, Buster Dobbs, Guss Eoff, Joe Gilmore, Noah Hackworth, Robin Haley, Burt Jones, Bobby Liddell, Dub McClish,
Keith Mosher, Clifford Newell, Stanley Ryan, John Shannon, Paul Vaughn, Stephen Waller, and Eddie Whitten.


If you haven’t done so already, please put on your calendar these dates and make plans to attend. Further information can be obtained by contacting the office.

SPEAKING IN TONGUES

A clinical psychologist, Dr. John P. Kildahl, has authored a book published by Harper and Row, entitled *The Psychology of Speaking in Tongues*. The book is the result of two major research projects and ten years of intensive independent research by the author. His information was gathered from coast to coast and tongue-speakers from every educational level. They tape recorded and interviewed dozens of tongue-speakers who also filled out detailed questionnaires.

In order to make a valid comparison, their investigation included non-tongue speaking prayer groups which otherwise were equivalent in every possible way to those who were tongue-speakers. Extensive psychological testing was done with both groups, using standardized tests.

Some very interesting conclusions came from this study. Significantly, more than 85% of the tongue-speakers had experienced personal crises preceding their “gift” of tongues. Anxieties caused by marriage problems, loneliness, illness, financial pressures, and guilt figured prominently in these crises. In the non-speaking groups, only 30% expressed similar concerns. “We believe,” says Kildahl, “anxiety is a prerequisite for developing the ability to speak in tongues.”

The researchers also observed great differences between the interpretations given to the tongue-speaking, when tapes submitted to those claiming interpretation, yielded widely differing interpretations. When confronted with this, the tongue-speakers sincerely defended the varying interpretations as having equal validity. One man who was raised in Africa (the son of a missionary) attended a tongue-speaking meeting, at which he arose and spoke the Lord’s Prayer in African dialect. It was immediately interpreted as a message about the “imminent second coming of Christ.”

This study, and many others like it, should lead us to see tongue-speaking for what it really is, a psychological abnormality which has no kinship with the Holy Spirit.

Copied

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SYMPATHY
We wish to express our deepest sympathy
to sister Inez Brantley in the loss of her
brother, Gene Simmons, on February 18,
1995. Please remember that family in your
prayers.

SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Rubin
Malone, Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, and
Tara Thompson (Richard and Linda Parker’s
granddaughter). Jim Roddy has been
diagnosed with cancer. Tim Lamb will have
surgery on March 1.

VISITATION GROUPS
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Group 2 meets March 12, 1995
Group 3 meets March 19, 1995

READING/INVITATION
March 1, 1995
Reading: Harold Maxey
Invitation: Bill Gailaher
March 8, 1995
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MARK THESE DATES
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on Sunday and 7:00 P.M. Monday-
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April 8, 1995—Golden Agers’ Banquet, at
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ATTENTION ALL TEACHERS!
SECOND ANNUAL TEACHERS’ WORKSHOP
MARCH 12, 1995
AT
3:00 - 5:40 P.M.
THE TEN BLESSINGS OF BIBLE STUDY
Holger Neubauer

Few spiritual blessings are realized in such an immediate way as the blessing one receives from a study of the Bible. The Psalmist pronounced a blessing upon the man whose “delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night” (Psalm 1:2). A special blessing is extended to those reading the prophecy of the Revelation of John (Rev. 1:3). The blessings of Bible study ought never be underestimated, neither its immediate benefit or the far reaching benefit of eternal life.

Jesus identified His own words as “spirit, and they are life” (John 6:63). Spiritual life is granted through the words of Scripture as we are drawn to God and hear and learn of the Father (John 6:64-65). Through a knowledge of the Bible we come to Jesus, as the Lord invites all to take His easy yoke upon their shoulders (Mat. 11:28-30).

The blessings from Bible study are immediate because the Bible helps us see ourselves as we really are. James compares a man who reads the Scripture and then fails to make application to a man “beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was” (James 1:23-24). To not make application of the Scripture in our lives is like noticing a dirt mark on our faces while we look into a mirror and then forget to wash. James goes on to say in the next verse that if proper application is made that man “shall be blessed in his deed” (James 1:25). Bible study affords us all the constant benefit of analyzing our own lives and proving our own selves, as Paul said, “whether ye be in the faith” (2 Cor. 13:5).

The benefits of Bible study will be finally realized in eternity. The “sound speech, that cannot be condemned” (Titus 2:8) will come as a result to those who know the truth and have hope of eternal life (Titus 1:1-2). Wise is the servant indeed who makes Bible study part of regular and daily devotion to God. Realizing these benefits, no child of God should keep himself from the public meetings of the church in which God’s Word is studied.

Jesus asked one lawyer “how readest thou?” (Luke 10:26), so too, public studies can assist us in seeing if our conclusions are valid and sure. We can also assist others as did Ezra in Nehemiah 8:8, which says, “So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.”

The next time the church assembles to study the Bible, my prayer is that every member of the church will take this grand opportunity and realize in their own life the blessing afforded them.

DOES VISITATION MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Which of two congregations would be more likely to grow, one in which the members are active visitors, or one in which the members never took the time to visit the sick, shut-ins, people in need, delinquents, lost, etc.? It sounds like a silly question, does it not? Almost anyone would answer, “The congregation that visits.” Why? Because everyone knows in reality that visiting does make a difference. Think about the impact made by some of the visits (Temporary stays) mentioned in the Bible:

**God’s Visit to Egypt** (Exo. 12:12, 29-31).
When God visited Egypt and slew the firstborn of Pharaoh and others, Pharaoh was moved to release the Israelites as God had commanded, and God’s people were freed from servitude and idolatry.

**Nathan’s Visit to David** (1 Sam. 12:1-23).
When Nathan courageously told David that he had sinned against God, David was moved to repentance.

**Jonah’s Visit to Nineveh** (Jonah 1-2).
When Jonah preached the message of repentance to the
people of Nineveh, they repented and were spared by God.

**Paul’s Visits to Several Cities** (Acts 13–26). When Paul and his company of co-workers went from city to city, they preached the gospel of Jesus Christ, converting the lost and strengthening the brethren.

**Jesus’ Visit to Earth** (2 Cor. 8:9; Phi. 2:5-11). Is there any doubt that the brief stay of Jesus on earth has made a dramatic difference, not only in the world, but also in our hope of eternal salvation?

Visiting does make a difference. Let’s commit ourselves to this avenue of service to God, helping others and influencing them for good.

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Group 3 meets March 19, 1995

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March 1, 1995
  Reading: Harold Maxey
  Invitation: Bill Gallaher
  March 8, 1995
  Reading: Ray Williams
  Invitation: Louis Herrington

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April 8, 1995—Golden Agers’ Banquet, at 6:00 P.M.

NEW LIBRARY BOOKS
The following books have been added to the library: The Temple: Its Ministry and Services by Alfred Eddersheim, Responses to 101 Questions on the Dead Sea Scrolls by Joseph A. Fitzmyer, Circles of Truth by William C. Hatcher, and God at a Distance by Kerry Duke. All of these books are available for check-out.
ATTENTION ALL TEACHERS!
SECOND ANNUAL TEACHERS’ WORKSHOP
MARCH 12, 1995
AT
3:00 - 5:40 P.M.
Repentance is a sometimes misunderstood concept in that many well-meaning people think that being sorry for an action is repentance. Others may conclude that when one “comes forward” to ask the prayers of a congregation, this is repentance. Neither of these alone is repentance. They may be a part of the action of repentance (depending upon the circumstance and/or sin being repented of), but alone they do not constitute this biblical necessity.

Generally, Christians look to 2 Corinthians for a good definition of this topic. And we find here an excellent definition—if correctly applied. The text reads, “I now rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye were made sorry unto repentance; for ye were made sorry after a godly sort, that ye might suffer loss by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, a repentance which bringeth no regret: but the sorrow of the world worketh death” (2 Cor. 7:9-10). Please note: sorrow alone is not repentance. Rather, this must be a godly sorrow, or sorry that we have sinned against God, and will now try to please Him. This “godly sorrow” leads UNTO repentance. Without this sorrow, one will not truly repent.

Godly sorrow “worketh” repentance. Compare what James wrote regarding trials: “knowing that the proving of your faith worketh patience” (James 1:3). That is, patience comes as a result of our faith facing trials (a proving test). Thus, repentance comes or is the fruit of our sorrow being turned toward God and His will. The result of this repentance is salvation, Paul is not saying here that salvation is solely dependent upon repentance only, no more than it is dependent upon faith or confession or baptism only. But he is saying that unless one repents, that one cannot be saved regardless of how “sorry” he is for his sins. This is especially important to know when dealing with those who teach and believe that they may divorce and remarry for various reasons, then say they are sorry, yet keep the present “mate.” Such an arrangement is adulterous.

Coming forward at an assembly for worship is not repentance, but repentance may include this action. It is possible for one to have repented (changed their mind regarding an action/attitude, and thus their actions for the future), but not yet ask for forgiveness. Thus, “coming forward” is a fruit of repentance, or a part of the “asking for forgiveness” duty. Not all sins require one to come forward before the church. Some sins are personal and private between the Lord and the Christian. Some sins require repentance and the asking and granting of forgiveness between brethren. Yet, sometimes a sin that has brought reproach and shame or ridicule from the world upon the church will require a public acknowledgment of sin and request for forgiveness. These are the fruits of the repentance of the guilty party.

Brethren, we repent (change our minds and actions) when we refuse to be fashioned according to this world (Rom. 12:1-2), or when we change our minds about an action or attitude which is wrong, cease such actions and ask the forgiveness of those against whom we may have sinned. When such is worked in our lives, it leads unto salvation.

912 East Teresa Sapulpa, OK 74066

WHO ARE THE “RADICAL RIGHT”? Dub McClish

We have a strange, self-contradictory element in the Lord’s church today. They pretend to despise what they describe as “labels” and those who are “guilty” (as they view it) of “labeling” their brethren. They say that such labels as “liberal” and “conservative” unfairly categorize and polarize brethren. They further say that such lab-
els create unnecessary prejudices against brethren. I am willing to grant that such is true if a label is incorrectly applied. However, if a descriptive or identifying term (Webster’s definition of “label”) is correctly applied we fail to see what is wrong with using it.

The argument is often offered that we do not have the terms “liberal” and “conservative” in the Bible and we therefore ought not to use them. It is true that these specific words may not be found in the sense that they are commonly used today to identify one’s doctrinal or moral stance. However, the ideas inherent in these words are most definitely in the New Testament. When Paul wrote that we should “learn not to go beyond the things which are written” (1 Cor. 4:6), he was in effect saying, “Do not take liberties with the written Word, rather conserve the things taught in it.” Likewise, 1 Thessalonians 5:21, 1 Timothy 1:3, 2 Timothy 2:2, Galatians 1:6 and many other passages teach us to conserve the revealed Truth and to oppose any liberal handling of it. I am not the least bit ashamed to be called “conservative” in this biblical sense. In fact, I would be ashamed to be given any other label. A liberal and loose handling of Divine law is always condemned in Scripture. It is worthy of note that conservative brethren don’t mind being so labeled. It is almost always those who are of the liberal bent toward Scripture and doctrine who prate against “labeling.” I don’t blame them! Knowing what the Word says about such an attitude, I would not want it noiseed abroad that I possessed it, either. If brethren don’t want to be called “liberals,” let them leave their liberalism and it will make the Lord and all 1 other conservatives happy!

The liberals are really great labelers themselves. Their favorite label at present for those who are determined to stand fast in the faith is “those of the radical right.” That sounds rather bad. The ironic thing about it is that some of those who are using this term to damage others were themselves 10 to 15 years ago right where those of whom it is used are now! In fact, what some doctrinally soft brethren are now calling the “reactionary and radical right” is where all but a tiny handful of liberal mis-fits were 20 years ago. Just where was that? Right on the solid rock of Truth! Would to God that all who have left it would come back.

908 Imperial Drive Denton, TX 76201

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Further information will be printed in future issues of the Beacon or can be obtained by contacting the office.
RESTORED
Jim Roddy and Nancy Wright were restored on 3-1-95. Remember them in your daily prayers.

NEW MEMBER
Nancy Wright has placed membership with the Bellview congregation. Her address and telephone number are 6336 Cotton Street, Pensacola, FL 32526; 944-3204. Please update your directory.

SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Rubin Malone, Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Tim Lamb, Madeline Quinn (Diana Brazell’s mother), and Tara Thompson (Richard and Linda Parker’s granddaughter). Ida Williams will have surgery on March 13 and Ray Williams will have surgery on March 14.

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Group 1 meets April 2, 1995

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   Invitation: Louis Herrington
March 15, 1995
   Reading: Elward Brantley
   Invitation: Tony Liddell

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FALLING FROM GRACE

Allen Webster

The subject of falling from grace comes up often in religious discussions. Some think that once one becomes a child of God that there is nothing he could ever do that would cause him to fall away so as to be lost. Others who might have argued at one time against the “once-saved-always-saved” doctrine, have now let it happen to them.

IS IT POSSIBLE TO FALL FROM GRACE?

On almost every page of the Bible it is implied that a Christian can fall from God’s grace. There are constant warnings to live righteously and faithfully (e.g., 1 Cor. 10:12; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; Mat. 13:41; Heb. 3:12; Rev. 2:10). Apostasy is the constant battle which all saints face (2 Cor. 13:5). The solemn words of Jesus remind us, “And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch” (Mark 13:37).

God’s Word shows that nations (1 Kin. 12:26-33), angels (2 Peter 2:4), Satan (Rev. 12:7-9), and individuals have fallen (Acts 8:9-24). The entire book of Hebrews was written to stem the tide of Christians who were drifting from Christ back to the out-dated Jewish religion. Saul (1 Sam. 15:11), Solomon
(1 Kings 11:1-10, though he seems to have returned at the end of his life, Ecc. 12:14), Amaziah (2 Chr. 25:14-16), Judas (Mat. 26:14-16), Hymaneus and Philetus (2 Tim. 2:17-18) and Demas (2 Tim. 4:10) all fell from grace. Paul wrote to some in Galatia who had just fallen, “Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are [would be, ASV] justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace” (Gal. 5:4). Peter wrote, “For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them to not have to know the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them” (2 Peter 2:20-21).

WHAT CAUSES ONE TO FALL FROM GRACE
Obviously, Satan is behind every lost soul (Luke 22:31), but other specific factors are involved. False teachers destroy the faith of some (Acts 20:29-30), while others pervert (2 Tim. 4:3-4) and wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction (2 Peter 3:16). Persecution gets some quickly (Mat. 13:21), while unbelief slowly creeps in on others (Heb. 4:9-11). Some allow a love for the world, physical enjoyments, and personal comforts to lure them away from the cross (2 Tim. 4:10; 1 John 2:15-16). Some suffer from a sin-sick hardened heart (Acts 7:54,57) and/or spiritual eyes that cannot see (Acts 28:25-27). They thus leave the Great Physician.

HOW CAN ONE KEEP FROM FALLING?
With feet firmly planted upon the strong foundation of God’s Word, one will never fall (John 10:28-29). The Bible is our complete spiritual guide (2 Peter 1:3) and is able to make us spiritually perfect (complete) (2 Tim. 3:16-17). It serves as our armor against the fiery darts of the wicked (Eph. 6:16), helps us grow strong (Acts 4:13-16), and gives us faith (Rom. 10:17).

By being grounded in the faith (Eph. 4:13-16), indoctrinated in righteousness (Acts 20:29-31), and spiritually perceptive (Heb. 5:12-14), we need never fall.

While we abide in Christ, the vine (John 15:6), we will not fall. The Lord’s Supper is given in part to help keep us close to Christ and His cross (1 Cor. 10:16). We must keep our bodies in subjection with its fleshly lusts and desires (1 Cor. 9:27), add the Christian graces (2 Peter 1:5-8), and trust in the Lord as our Protector (Psalm 121:1-4). Practically speaking, attending all Bible classes and worship services, communing daily with God in prayer, study, and song will keep the fires burning. We should also cultivate Christian friendships which will help us keep our mind on heaven and its glory (Heb. 10:25).

If you are presently drifting, why not resolve to return? Once you start slipping, the longer you wait the harder it will be to set things right. If you have completely quit running the Christian race, we plead with you to return to our loving God (Luke 15:20). The cure for backsliding is making a decision to change (Acts 17:30), repenting and praying for forgiveness (Acts 8:22), and confession of public wrong in a public way (1 John 1:9; James 5:16).

Yes, it is possible for one to fall from grace and be eternally lost, but please don’t go out and prove the proposition by your own actions.

Route 1, Box 38, Tiplersville, MS 38674

A GOOD CHRISTIAN?
Dalton Key

I have a good friend. She doesn’t drink alcohol or abuse her body with tobacco. She doesn’t destroy her mind and life through illicit drugs. I’ve never heard her gossip or tell a single lie. She doesn’t waste her time in night clubs or dance halls. I can’t recall ever hearing her speak with profanity or vulgarity. And she’s never
cheated a soul in a business deal. Many people would call my friend a "good Christian." And yet, you ought to know that I have been describing my dog, Paisley.

We must learn that being a Christian involves more than merely not doing evil. Being a Christian concerns submission to Christ, living by faith, and doing good as well.

Christ taught, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23). Complete and total submission to Christ is essential if we would be called by his name.

The world holds many good and honest souls who are not maliciously engaged in the blackest of evils. Many of these good, moral citizens are our neighbors, our friends, our relatives. They may, in some cases, be more moral than some nominal members of the church. They are not, however, by virtue of their upstanding life-styles, to be confused with "good Christians." Not until one comes to Christ and obeys the Gospel is he a Christian. No man can live a pure enough life to save himself, and there is still no other name to save us but the name of Christ (Acts 4:12).

Remember, there is a world of difference between my dog and a "good Christian."

Amarillo, TX

NEW ARRIVAL

Kelly and Jimmy Kimmons are the proud parents of a baby boy, Justin Mathew, born on March 9, 1995. The equally proud grandparents are Jerry and Sharon Caine and the great-grandparents are Harold and Lucille Staples. Congratulations to all of them.

THANK YOU

The Bellview congregation wishes to express our thanks to all of those individuals who sent in a contribution for the printing and mailing of the Beacon. Subscription to the Beacon is free, however, any contributions are greatly appreciated and will be used to further the teachings of Christ. THANKS!

BELLVIEW LECTURES

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Twenty-six men will be speaking: Garry Barnes, Howell Bigham, Tom Bright, Garry Brantley, David Brown, J.E. Choate, Ken Chumbiey, Darrell Conley, Mac Deaver, Roy Deaver, Daniel Denham, Buster Dobbs, Guss Eoff, Joe Gilmore, Noah Hackworth, Robin Haley, Burt Jones, Bobby Liddell, Dub McClish, Keith Mosher, Clifford Newell, Stanley Ryan, John Shannon, Paul Vaughn, Stephen Waller, and Eddie Whitten.


Further information will be printed in future issues of the Beacon or can be obtained by contacting the office.
**BAPTIZED**

**Debra Mowery** was baptized on 3-13-95. Keep her in your prayers. Her address and telephone number are: 718 Carondelay Drive, Pensacola, FL 32506; 457-4351. Please update your directory.

**SICK AND SHUT-IN**

Please remember in your prayers: Rubin Malone, Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Madeline Quinn (Diana Brazell’s mother) Ida Williams, Ray Williams, and Tara Thompson (the Parker’s granddaughter).

**VISITATION GROUPS**

Group 3 meets March 19, 1995
Group 1 meets April 2, 1995
Group 2 meets April 9, 1995

**READING/INVITATION**

March 15, 1995
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Tony Liddell
March 22, 1995
Reading: Allen Brazell
Invitation: Jerry Lindesmith

**MARK THESE DATES**

March 19, 1995–Deacons’ meeting at the building, at 5:00 P.M.
March 19-24, 1995–Gospel Meeting at the Jay Church of Christ, Jay, FL. Brother Bobby Liddell will be speaking. Services are Sunday: 9:30 and 10:30 A.M/ 7:00 P.M.and Monday-Friday at 7:00 P.M.
March 26, 1995–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at the building, at 5:00 P.M.
March 29, 1995–Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 P.M.
April 8, 1995–Golden Agers’ Banquet, at 5:00 P.M.
A number of years ago brother G. K. Wallace commented to this writer concerning the looseness of some congregations. He remarked, “There has to be a garbage dump in every town.” We greatly fear that some churches have gone so quantity crazy that quality has been forgotten. If growth means accepting brethren like Ananias and Sapphira then may God help us to be smaller in number. We cannot fathom churches wanting a membership comprised of those who “lie to the Holy Ghost.”

If churches want the Judas Iscariots of our day, then their spiritual makeup is warped and twisted. Such will always do as Judas did. There is something terribly wrong when churches are so starved for numbers that they rejoice to have in their midst “Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence” (3 John 9).

What has happened to the Lord’s body when we not only tolerate but welcome people like Hymenaeus and
Alexander, blasphemers who have shipwrecked their faith (2 Tim 2:17-18)? Do we really want members like “Demas” who “hath forsaken me, having loved this present world” (2 Tim 4:10)?

Are we so goal crazy that we would welcome “them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans,” (Rev 2:15)? Brethren, do we want our Lord saying to us, “Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth” (Rev 2:16)?

Beloved are we so determined to overflow our buildings that we will tolerate “such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles” (1 Cor 5:1-2)?

We do not want such persons in the Lord’s body! With Paul we say, “Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump” (1 Cor 5:6-7). How horrible it is when churches want to keep “the old leaven” rather than purge it out.

Our Bible describes God’s people as “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people” (1 Peter 2:9). Our aim whether we number five or five thousand, is to so love and preach that the purity of the Lord’s church in life and doctrine will radiate throughout the community, magnifying our Lord’s name.

God’s people must be separate from the world in order to be a holy nation. “Wherefore come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord” (2 Cor 6:17-18). God give us the strength that we will fight for a pure church with all the ability and power within us.

If we want “Ananias and Sapphira,” “Judas Iscariot,” “Diotrephes,” “Damas,” “the Nicolaitans,” “fornicators,” “Hymenaeus and Alexander,” and others of like corruptness to fill our buildings, then the church has indeed become a garbage dump. Assuredly the sins of the Laodiceans and those of Thyatira (Rev 2:20-23; 3:17) make for the church of the garbage dump and not the church of Christ.

25403 Lancewood; Spring, TX 77373

WIMMIN

What on earth in Heaven’s name is “Wimmin”? I checked the dictionary and the word “wimmin” doesn’t appear there. I even checked the Greek and Hebrew and it doesn’t appear there either. It really sounds like a word originating from the vocabulary of Elmer Fudd or Donald Duck.

The truth of the matter is, the word “WIMMIN” is a new spelling (by the feminist movement) for the word “WOMAN” found in Genesis 2:23. Here Moses wrote: “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.”

Little by little the feminists, along with humanists, take their toll with society as they propagate their damnable doctrine in the world. And, more and more we lose our identity with God. This is not only true among nonreligious people, but true among Christians. Some of our sisters in Christ deplore seeing the abbreviation “Miss” proceeding their names. They prefer “Ms.,” another step toward the feminist view.

Sad as it may be, most feminists hold some of the same views as the humanists, and this doctrine is our greatest threat to the free world. In the January/February 1983 Humanists magazine, the mouthpiece of the AHA (American Humanist Association), states: “the battle for mankind’s future must be waged and won in the public school classroom by teachers who correctly perceive their role as the proselytizer of a new faith—a religion of humanity...utilizing a classroom instead of a pulpit to convey humanistic values in whatever subject they teach.” Among their strong beliefs are Evolution, Self-Authority (Individual Autonomy), Situation Ethics, Distorted Religion,
Sexual Permissiveness, Anti-Free Enterprise, one-World Government, and Death Education. (There is no hope of existence beyond the grave—no heaven or hell. Euthanasia and suicide are endorsed.)

Our plea is a return to calling Bible things by Bible names. People do not have “affairs.” They commit adultery. People do not “live together” before marriage, or “swing” as one minister put it, they commit fornication. Women are women, not WIMMIN, because God approved of Adam’s choice of words.

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Further information will be printed in future issues of the Beacon and the Defender, or it can be obtained by contacting the office by telephone or mail.

BOOK REPRINTED

Franklin Camp’s book The Work Of The Holy Spirit In Redemption is available again after being out of print for more than a decade. This book contains the fruits of many years of study by one of the keenest minds of the 20th Century. Even those who may differ with brother Camp’s conclusions on such things as the gift of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:38, will nevertheless reap great profit from reading this book.

This edition has an index listing the page number on which various Bible verses are discussed. It is a “must” for every serious Bible student.

Copies of this book may be purchased by contacting Brothers, Inc.; 4207 Adamsville Parkway; Adamsville, AL 35505; phone (205) 674-8273. The price is $14.95, plus $2.00 for shipping. Alabama residents add 5% sales tax. Checks should be made payable to Brothers, Inc. All profits from the sale of the book will be contributed to the Franklin Camp Preachers Scholarship Fund.

TIME CHANGE

It’s that time of the year again to spring ahead. The time changes on April 2, so set your clocks ahead one hour prior to going to sleep the night before.
RESTORED
Champ Hollowell was restored on 3-19-95. Please keep Champ in your prayers.

SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Rubin Malone, Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters. Jennette Nall is ill with pneumonia.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 1 meets April 2, 1995
Group 2 meets April 9, 1995
Group 3 meets April 16, 1995

READING/INVITATION
March 22, 1995
Reading: Allen Brazell
Invitation: Jerry Lindesmith
March 29, 1995
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Fred Stancliff

MARK THESE DATES
March 26, 1995–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at the building, at 5:00 P.M.
March 29, 1995–Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 P.M.
April 2-6, 1995–Gospel meeting at Foley Church of Christ, Foley, AL. Brother Flavil Nichols will be speaking. Sunday services are: 9:30 and 10:30 A.M. and 6:00 P.M. Monday-Thursday services are at 7:30 P.M.
April 8, 1995–Golden Agers’ Banquet, at 6:00 P.M. All members of the congregation who are 65 years of age and older are invited to attend the banquet. Brother Michael Hatcher will be the guest speaker. The young people of the congregation will be serving the meal. Start making plans now to attend.
No one should doubt that we Christians are a race which cares for the needy. James said, “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.” (James 1:27). Everywhere the gospel has gone, the widows have been cared for, the orphans taken in, the hungry fed, and the needs of all met the best possible way.

Yet more requires to be said than this. Should this be the emphasis of the church, and how far should the church go in meeting the needs of man? Are we really to minister to the whole man? This article may answer those questions, but its design is to reprove and negate the so called “social gospel.”

DEFINITIONS
Strictly speaking, the “social gospel” was a liberal theological movement whose leaders no longer believed that the purpose of religion was to deliver the soul from spiritual death. Rather it was to elevate people physically and promote social well-being. In the United States it was centered in the Divinity School at the University of Chicago.

More generally, in the church, it is now a term which is used to describe the philosophy of brethren
whose emphasis in the church is on the ills of this present life rather than life beyond the grave. I believe that when a church builds gyms, calls off worship on Super-Bowl night, has psychology films shown on Wednesday evening, and hires a pediatrician to speak to the young married couples, that church is right in the thick of the social gospel.

Those who are affected by the social gospel tend to de-emphasize certain things. They minimize, for example, truth. We hear “It is better to be righteous than right.” Now, how can you be righteous and wrong? They de-emphasize the blood of the covenant. The use of the word “blood” is most inelegant. Such liberals, in their usual urbane way, accuse conservatives of having a “slaughterhouse religion.” “Unto him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by his blood” is not heard much from social gospel quarters. They are too genteel and sophisticated for all that.

There is a de-emphasis of the resurrection. First, the resurrection involves miracles, and they have a “sanctified” anti-supernatural bias. Second, to them, our resurrection is “pie in the sky by and by.” Peter was not as smart and suave as they, because he spoke of getting a “living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Peter 1:3). One brother told me we were not given the great commission because the world was lost without it; we received it so that we could reach out to give them a better life here on earth!

**EMPHASIS OF THE SOCIAL GOSPEL**

What is the social gospel emphasis on? It is on psychology, interpersonal communication, physical health, social needs, the environment, fun and entertainment, and (with great relish) politics. They are interested in poverty more than purity, health rather than seeing God, education rather than Christian edification, South Africa instead of Jerusalem, the peace movement more than fighting the good fight (2 Tim. 4:7). Notice the biblical emphasis: “If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth. For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory” (Col. 3:1-4).

If such has its way in the church, there will be a church of Christ little league team, a church of Christ boy scout troop, church of Christ fishing tourneys and tennis matches. There is a work of the church which is clearly specified in the Bible, and it doesn’t include any of these. Individual Christians as individuals may engage in these and many other good things, including politics. But these are not the work of the church. The church’s work is to evangelize (Mat. 28:18-20), edify (Acts 20:32), and care for the needy (Gal. 6:10).

**SIN AND THE SOCIAL GOSPEL**

According to the social gospel, there is a sickness but little sin, mental disease rather than wickedness. A criminal act and a broken leg are about the same. Delinquencies are misfortunes, not faults. Homosexuality can’t be helped. There are no rank sinners; there are only victims of circumstances. I tell you, brethren, there is such a thing as being sick, but there is also such a thing as wickedness—and the two are not the same! Paul said, “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hinder the truth in unrighteousness” (Rom. 1:18).

Where will it all end? The emphasis is fun and games, the social, the physical. Shall we have gyms and fireplaces, and big cathedrals? Shall we have minister of jogging, minister of swimming, minister of firewood, a tape by a denomination-alist, a film by Dobson, a young people’s class in Karate, auto mechanics for women, a ladies’ class on how to recycle old sweat shirts?! When I see all this I almost could wish that I myself were a legalist, and with a little persuasion they would fail make me a Pharisee!

**THE EMPHASIS IN RELIGION**

Preparing a meal for Jesus, Martha’s attitude
was like the poem:

Lord of all pots and pans and things,
Since I’ve no time to be
A saint by doing lovely things,
Or watching late with Thee,
Or dreaming in the dawnlight.
Or storming heaven’s gates,
Make me a saint by getting meals,
And washing up the plates.

Mary wanted to give attention to the words of the Lord. So Jesus said, “Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: for Mary hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her” (Luke 10:41-42).

It seems Martha didn’t understand Jesus had “meat to eat” that she knew not of. The sad fact is, the emphasis on the physical can get in the way of the “good part.” Giving in to the items of the social gospel can send the wrong message to saint and sinner. As we get used to one thing, it breaks the ground for the next. And Jesus was so radical that He said to Martha, “One thing is necessary.”

Alas, some in the church see “the good part” as social and they crave entertainment. And when it is not forthcoming, godly elders are abused by the words, “You’re not meeting my needs.”

Jesus walked on the water after feeding the multitudes. On the morrow the multitudes found Him again and He said to them “Ye seek me, not because ye saw signs, but because ye ate of the loaves, and were filled. Work not for the food which perisheth, but for the food which abideth unto eternal life” (John 6:26-27). Yes, the natural pangs, even, are nothing when compared to spiritual needs, how much less entertainment programs. Indeed, this life is as nothing when compared to eternity.

The apostles knew where the emphasis should be. The Grecian Jews murmured against the Hebrews that the Grecian widows were neglected in the daily ministration. The apostles wanted others to see to the distribution. They said, It is not fit that we should forsake the word of God, and serve tables...But we will continue stedfastly in prayer, and in the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:2-4).

In this life, churches are going to have to make some hard decisions. To keep the church pure and sound and with the proper emphasis, a congregation may have to witness a large drop in contribution and see up to 50 percent of its members leave. Yet priorities must be ordered (Luke 14:26-33), and first things put first (Mat. 6:33). Brethren must learn to deny themselves (Mark 8:34) and put up with persecution (Mat. 5:10-11). We must all fairly weigh this life against the next. When we reach the point where redemption is no longer our absorbing theme on earth, we forfeit it as our song in glory. We are no longer a congregation of the Lord; we have become a glorified social club, merely a close-knit, fun-loving bunch. May all elders arise! Awake! or be forever fallen.

PO Box 1275 Portland, TX 78374-1275

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SICK AND SHUT-IN

Please remember in your prayers: Rubin Malone, Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters. Jim Roddy is recovering from cancer surgery and Charles Garrett is recovering from knee surgery. Ray Dodd is in Sacred Heart Hospital after suffering a blood clot in his leg. He is in Room 315 and would appreciate your visits.

VISITATION GROUPS

Group 1 meets April 2, 1995
Group 2 meets April 9, 1995
Group 3 meets April 16, 1995

READING/INVITATION

April 5, 1995
Reading: Bill Cline
Invitation: Corey Bittner

April 12, 1995
Reading: Howard Johnson
Invitation: Henry Born

MARK THESE DATES

April 2-6, 1995—Gospel meeting at Foley Church of Christ, Foley, AL. Brother Flavil Nichols will be speaking. Sunday services are: 9:30 and 10:30 A.M. and 6:00 P.M. Monday-Thursday services are at 7:30 P.M.

April 8, 1995—Golden Agers’ Banquet, at 6:00 P.M. All members of the congregation who are 65 years of age and older are invited to attend the banquet. Brother Michael Hatcher will be the guest speaker. The young people of the congregation will be serving the meal. Start making plans now to attend.

May 7, 1995—Dinner on the Grounds and Singing will be held after the morning worship service.
PROPER REGARD FOR WORSHIP

Robin W. Haley

Worship! What a privilege and an honor to come before the Almighty in the precious name of His Son and worship in spirit and truth! Not just anybody may do this. Although every accountable person is amenable to the Law of Christ which includes worship, not all are yet qualified to do so. But we, brethren, have been qualified (made meet) to be His children and to come before Him with the worship He has prescribed for us to accomplish. Paul would tell the Colossians to, “[give] thanks unto the Father, who made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light” (Col. 1:12)

From the several Greek words translated “worship” from the New Testament, it is clear that our worship is a prescribed action. God has given us what He desires from us as a means of honoring and exalting His name with our lips and actions. Central to this prescribed action of worship certainly would be Jesus, the subject of our worship. He is, after all, glorified in our singing, remembered in the Lord’s Supper, reflected in our giving, proclaimed in our preaching and utilized in our
prayers to God, the object of our worship. We all recognize that when even a single avenue of this prescribed worship is missing, the true and spiritual, as God desires for the first day assembly, has not been accomplished. This is one of the reasons we are able to show our non-Christian friends that their worship is not acceptable to God. Some of these things are missing. But brethren, how are we any different from them if the thing missing in worship IS US? No, this article is not addressing attendance at worship, but rather attendance through ALL of worship.

It seems that lately there are some brethren who seem to think that God is content with their worship if they stay just long enough to eat the Lord’s Supper. Where did they get such an idea? Is the Supper “the most important item” in worship? If so, please show the passage which teaches this. To think that one has worshipped just because they were present for part of the worship assembly is a big mistake! If worship consists of five avenues, and I practice only three or four, have I worshiped? Am I really any different than the denominations and their faulty worship? ABSOLUTELY NOT! To walk out just before the sermon robs the worshipper of what it takes to build faith (Rom. 10:17), and shows very little respect for what God has prescribed. There are no reasons for doing this sort of thing, only excuses. Arrange your schedules so that you may worship God fully as He prescribes.

SOME COMPARISONS

1. “Thrice was I beaten with rods, once I was stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep” (Paul—2 Cor. 11:25). “Maybe we had better not go to church this morning. Looks like it might rain.”

2. “And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit” (Acts.7:59). “I don’t believe I’ll go to church this morning; I kind a have a headache.”

3. “Be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58). “I’ve been to services once this week. I don’t think it’s necessary to go every time.”

4. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). “I guess I’ll have to start going to church sometime. A person really should, I suppose.”

Sunday: Missed services because—company came, raining, slight cold, overslept, no new clothes, touch of headache, car wouldn’t start, or any of a hundred other like flimsy fabrications.

Monday: On the job at 8:00 a.m. in spite of any or all of the above excuses.

Questions: Do the above comparisons suggest anything to you? Do the implications fit anyone you know? Where were you last Lord’s day? Last Wednesday evening? During the recent meeting? The Lord knows and is keeping a record. Final examination is coming!

Author Unknown

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The Doctrine Of Christ Versus The Doctrines Of Men
Twentieth Annual Bellview Lectures
June 10-14, 1995

Saturday, June 10
7:00 PM It Makes a Difference in Doctrine
Garry Barnes
8:00 PM The Doctrine of Christ Is Understandable
Clifford Newell, Jr.

Sunday, June 11
9:00 AM Unity and Fellowship
Eddie Whitten
10:00 AM Morals
Paul Vaughn
Lunch Break
2:00 PM New Hermeneutic Versus Christ’s Doctrine
Buster Dobbs
3:00 PM Divorce and Remarriage
Noah Hackworth
4:00 PM Jehovah’s Witnesses Versus Christ’s Doctrine
Joe Gillmore, Jr.
Dinner Break
7:00 PM Pentecostalism Versus Christ’s Doctrine
Stephen P. Waller
8:00 PM Why the Church Is Not a Denomination
Stanley Ryan

Monday, June 12
9:00 AM Methodism Versus Christ’s Doctrine
Bobby Liddell
10:00 AM Determining Christ’s Doctrine
Roy Deaver
11:00 AM Premillennialism Versus Christ’s Doctrine
Howell Bigham
Lunch Break
2:00 PM History of Man’s Doctrine
J. E. Choate
3:00 PM Emotionalism Versus Proper Emotions
Dub McClish
3:45 PM Open Forum Discussion on Emotionalism
Dinner Break
7:00 PM Evolution Versus Christ’s Doctrine
Garry Brantley
8:00 PM Modesty
Robin Haley

Tuesday, June 13
9:00 AM Independent Christian Church Versus Christ’s Doctrine
Ken Chumbley
10:00 AM Determining Christ’s Doctrine
Roy Deaver
11:00 AM Christ’s Doctrine of Knowledge Versus Agnosticism
Mac Deaver
Lunch Break
2:00 PM History of Man’s Doctrine
J. E. Choate
3:00 PM The Holy Spirit
Tom Bright
3:45 PM Open Forum Discussion on The Holy Spirit
Dinner Break
7:00 PM Feminism Versus Christ’s Doctrine
Burt Jones
8:00 PM Catholicism Versus Christ’s Doctrine
John Shannon

Wednesday, June 14
9:00 AM Presbyterianism Versus Christ’s Doctrine
Keith Mosher, Sr.
10:00 AM Determining Christ’s Doctrine
Roy Deaver
11:00 AM Calvinism Versus Christ’s Doctrine
Daniel Denham
Lunch Break
2:00 PM History of Man’s Doctrine
J. E. Choate
3:00 PM The Divided Assembly
David P. Brown
3:45 PM Open Forum Discussion on The Divided Assembly
Dinner Break
7:00 PM The Doctrine of Christ
Darrell Conley
8:00 PM Baptism
Guss Eoff
SICK AND SHUT-IN

Please remember in your prayers: Rubin Malone, Mary Muldoon, Charles Garrett, Jim Roddy, and Angela Fletcher. Ray Dodd is in Sacred Heart Hospital, room 315.

VISITATION GROUPS

Group 2 meets April 9, 1995
Group 3 meets April 23, 1995
Group 1 meets May 7, 1995

READING/INVITATION

April 12, 1995
Reading: Howard Johnson
Invitation: Henry Born
April 19, 1995
Reading: Chad Lightner
Invitation: Hairston Brantley

MARK THESE DATES

April 16, 1995–Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 P.M., at the building.
April 23, 1995–Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 P.M., at the building.
May 7, 1995–Dinner on the Grounds and Singing will be held after the morning worship service. Invite your friends and neighbors to attend.

OUTSTANDING BIBLE CLASS STUDENTS

Congratulations are extended to 5th and 6th grade Bible Class students; Devon Bittner, Autumn Johnson, and Daniel Hatcher. They were daily Bible Readers for the month of March and completed their memory verse work.
“I’m a young person, can you help me?”

Allen Webster

“I am at a difficult time in my life. You see, I struggle to be independent without being rebellious. I want to do the right thing, but it is not always clear what that is. I long to be a good example to my friends, but I also want to fit in with my peers. I enjoy Christianity, but the world’s pull is strong.”

As a young person I need for you to...

“Encourage me.” You may not remember what it was like to be a teenager, but it is a discouraging time. Teenagers are very hard on themselves. When I make a mistake, I tend to make too much out of it. What I need is for the adults whom I respect to speak words of cheer and give me a pat on the back for the things I do well. I need to know that all people make mistakes.

“Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be...
weary; and they shall walk, and not faint” (Isa. 40:30-31). Paul wrote, “Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged” (Col. 3:21).

“TEACH ME.” Yes, even though I sometimes act like I know everything, I realize that I am still learning! The greatest need I have is to learn the Bible. The basic truths which you have known for years, I still do not know. I want to know about Jesus and the love He has shown for me. I yearn to be free from sin’s guilt. I want to know when I will be old enough to be baptized. I long to know what Christ wants me to do with my life. How does He expect me to act? What is right and what is wrong?

WHEREWITHAL shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word. With my whole heart have I sought thee: 0 let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee” (Psa. 119:9-11). Solomon wrote the Proverbs, in part, to give young men “knowledge and discretion” (Pro. 1:4).

“SHOW ME.” I appreciate your instructions, but I find it easier to follow your example. Your life is a better teacher than your lips. What I really want are role models. When I see adults adorning the Gospel of Christ, it is easier to understand what the precepts mean. When I see the importance you place on worshipping God and studying His Word it motivates me to be interested. When you sacrifice to live right it does not bother me so much when you ask me to sacrifice.

“My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways” (Pro. 23:26). Jesus faced a young man who asked, “what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me” (Mat. 19:20-21). Jesus taught the lesson on priorities and exemplified how it applied.

“CORRECT ME.” You did not expect to see this one, did you!? I act as if discipline were the curse of my life, but it is important to me. It shows that you care about me. I need boundaries set. I must know the difference between right and wrong, truth and error, good and bad. I will test you here. I am curious and want to know what lies outside the boundaries you have set for me. If you remain steadfast in your restrictions, then I will understand your conviction and see it as love for me.

The Proverbs say, “Withhold not correction from the child” (23:13); “Foolishness is bound in the heart of the child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him” (22:15); “He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes’ (13:24).

Thank you for blessing my life and helping me through this difficult time.

Route 1, Box 38: Tiplersville, MS 38674

BELLVIEW LECTURES

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The Doctrine Of Christ Versus The Doctrines Of Men
Twentieth Annual Bellview Lectures
June 10-14, 1995

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11:00 AM  Premillennialism Versus Christ's Doctrine  Howell Bigham
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SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Rubin Malone, Mary Muldoon, Ray Dodd, Jim Roddy, Angela Fletcher, Herbert Watts (Martha Wilcoxson’s brother), and George Dodd (Ray’s brother).

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 3 meets April 23, 1995
Group 1 meets May 7, 1995
Group 2 meets May 2, 1995

READING/INVITATION
April 19, 1995
Reading: Chad Lightner
Invitation: Hairston Brantley
April 26, 1995
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Paul Brantley

MARK THESE DATES
April 16, 1995–Deacons’ meeting, at 5:00 P.M., at the building.
April 23, 1995–Elders/Deacons’ meeting, at 5:00 P.M., at the building.
May 7, 1995–Dinner on the Grounds and Singing will be held after the morning worship service. Invite your friends and neighbors to attend.

OUTSTANDING BIBLE CLASS STUDENTS
Congratulations are extended to 5th and 6th grade Bible Class students; Devon Bittner, Autumn Johnson, and Daniel Hatcher. They were daily Bible Readers for the month of March and completed their memory verse work.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS
Bill and Iris Gallaher’s new address and phone number are: 7130 Beulah Road, Pensacola, FL 32526; 941-1578. Please update your directory.
One of the most pressing desires of Christians is to see the church grow. We want to see the Lord’s church spread throughout the world; and we certainly want to see our local congregation flourish. We believe this is not wrong, for the nature of all living things is to grow, and we firmly believe that the body of Christ is to be a living body.

In emphasizing our need for growth, we are often pointed to the Jerusalem church. They began with 3,000 (Acts 2:41), grew to 5,000 men (Acts 4:4), then multitudes were added (Acts 5:14), after which they began to multiply (Acts 6:7). These are valid illustrations. We have used them ourselves, but sometimes they create impressions which are not true at all.

1. It is implied that numerical growth is always associated with faithful congregations. The Scripture teaches no such thing. When, because of persecution (Acts 8:1), the Jerusalem church was reduced from maybe 50,000 to 12 in a single year, there was nothing at all wrong with the church. It was just as true and
loyal and mission-minded as it had ever been before.

2. It is implied that people are responsible for the increase, when God has never placed that burden on us. The implication is that if we just do the right things, great growth will automatically follow. Yet, the Bible teaches that God gives the increase (1 Cor. 3:6). Our job is to plant and water. It is a relief to know we are not commanded to convert the world or even our next-door neighbor, but we are commanded to preach the gospel to him. If we do that faithfully and lovingly, we are not responsible for the results.

3. It is implied that great growth is an indication of God’s approval when the very reverse may be true. Mystic sects have gained millions of followers. Billy Graham appeals to the masses by standing for nothing doctrinally. Some of the fastest going congregations among us fill pulpits with 20-minute “after dinner” speeches that would be acceptable in any denomination in town.

4. It is implied that something must be wrong with a congregation that has a declining membership when it may be stronger and more godly than it has ever been. You let someone leave the church and go back into the world or rush off after some social club type of program, and people begin to wonder what’s wrong with the church. We need to understand that neither a faithful congregation nor a faithful Christian can be legitimately blamed for anyone who turns their back on the way of truth. If every one of us left, it is no reflection on the church. The fault is with the person who leaves.

There are many things that affect church growth. There are things connected with economy, housing patterns, politics and world conditions. We must face them all realistically; and keep our faith strong that God will never let His Word return void (Isa. 56:11). If we do our part well, growth will come; but we must not be so passionate for growth that we forget what should be our chief concerns.

We are not defending smallness or easing our conscience because we have not grown rapidly. We are refocusing on priorities. We must be more concerned about being right than in being popular—about Christ being with us than whether we draw large crowds.

We want to grow, but it is not our first priority. We are in sales. God is still in management. We had rather be “mean and lean” than to sell His approval for growth.

Via Lee & Walnut Bulletin

**BELLVIEW LECTURES**

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RESTORED
Chris Dukes was restored on April 5, 1995. Keep Chris in your prayers.

SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Rubin Malone, Mary Muldoon, Ray Dodd, Jim Roddy, Angela Fletcher, Herbert Watts (Martha Wilcoxson’s brother).

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 1 meets May 7, 1995
Group 2 meets May 2, 1995
Group 3 meets May 21, 1995

READING/INVITATION
April 126, 1995
  Reading: Bryan Loy
  Invitation: Paul Brantley
May 3, 1995
  Reading: Jim Loy
  Invitation: Jeremy Caine

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PROUD GRANDPARENTS
Richard and Linda Parker are the proud grandparents of Magan Dana Thompson, born on April 4, 1995. Parents are Steve and LeeAnn Thompson. Congratulations to everyone.
The Bible’s message can be summarized: Someone is coming, Someone has come and Someone is coming again! The Bible often reminds us that Christ is coming again (i.e., Mat. 16:27; Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26; 1 The. 5:2; etc.). But, no man on earth knows the exact time of our Lord’s final advent! How can we be so certain? Listen—Matthew 24:36, “But of that day and hour knoweth no one, not the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only.” If you can see through a barrel with both ends knocked out of it, then you can see this truth! Truth is often found between two extreme errors. We see this in the perversion of Matthew 24. One group teaches that Matthew 24 all relates to the final coming of Christ. Another group insists that Matthew 24 all relates to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. The truth is found between these two extremes. Study Matthew 23:37-24:3, and you will realize that Christ deals first, with the destruction of Jerusalem (Mat. 24:4-35). Then our Lord focuses on His final coming (Mat. 24:36-25:46).

Let your fingers do the walkin’ and let the Bible do the talkin’...Recall 24:3, “tell us, when shall these
things be?" Now, note 24:34, "This generation shall not pass away, till all these things be accomplished." Watch for the plural usage in Matthew 24:19,22,29, "in those days... except those days had been shortened...those days shall be shortened...the tribulation of those days.

Note the plurals!

Now, watch this! In Matthew 24:36,42,44,50, "but of that day and hour...for ye know not on what day...in an hour that ye think not...shall come in a day when he expecteth not, and in an hour that he knoweth not." Did you catch it? Prior to Matthew 24:35, Christ used the plural (those days—these things)—but after 24:35, it is singular (that day and hour—an hour). Not the singular!

It is crystal clear that our Lord discusses two distinct events in Matthew 24. You would need professional help to misunderstand this truth. The destruction of Jerusalem is spoken of in the plural because of the five months siege needed and the final return of Christ is spoken of in the singular language. See also John 5:28-29, "Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth." Have you never studied about the Last Day? You ought to! Study John 6:39-40,44,54; 7:37; 11:24; and 12:48. When you are able to know the difference between plural and singular word(s), then you will know that Christ dealt with more than one event in Matthew 24.

DO WE REALLY MEAN WHAT WE SING

The singing of a hymn should be a great experience for Christians. A hymn can be a prayer, a testimony, praise, or an invitation to others. How seriously do we take the words we sing?

Do we sing "Sweet Hour of Prayer" and pray only a few minutes each day?

Do we sing "Onward Christian Soldiers" and wait to be drafted?

Do we sing "Oh, For A Thousand Tongues To Sing" and don’t use the ones we have to speak for Christ?

Do we sing "Blest Be The Tie" and let the slightest offense sever it?

Do we sing "I Love To Tell The Story" and seldom mention Jesus to anybody?

Do we sing "Serve The Lord With Gladness" and gripe about all we have to do?

Do we sing "Cast My Burden On The Lord" and then worry ourselves into a nervous breakdown?

Do we sing "The Whole Wide World For Jesus" and never invite our next door neighbor to church service?

"I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also" (1 Cor. 14:15ff).

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# The Doctrine Of Christ Versus The Doctrines Of Men

**Twentieth Annual Bellview Lectures**  
**June 10-14, 1995**

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May 3, 1995
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Jeremy Caine
May 10, 1995
Reading: Harold Maxey
Invitation: Bill Crowe

MARK THESE DATES
May 7, 1995—Dinner on the Grounds and Singing will be held after the morning worship service. Invite your friends and neighbors to attend.
May 31, 1995—Fifth Wednesday Singing.

THINK ABOUT IT!
Paul got the defeat of his life—not at Lystra, where he was stoned, for he built a church there; not at Thessalonica, where he was mobbed, for he planted a church there; not at Philippi, where he was beaten with rods and put into the stocks, for he built a church there; not at Corinth and Ephesus, where he was persecuted, for he successfully defended the cause of truth there; but at Athens, where no violence was shown, but where they were indifferent!

Via Eastside Bulletin; Columbia, TN
Throughout Matthew 12, Jesus was having an enormous conflict with the Pharisees. The Pharisees accused Jesus of transgressing the law of Moses when He picked corn to eat and later healed a man’s withered hand, all on the sabbath. But each time Jesus proved to the Pharisees that His actions were righteous, all the Pharisees could do was to become angry and seek how they might destroy Him (Mat. 12:14). Jesus spoke out in defense of the truth!

Later in Matthew 12, we behold Jesus healing one possessed with a devil, and it was not long when the Pharisees came storming up accusing Jesus again of wrong doing. The Pharisees cried, “This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils” (Mat. 12:24). Jesus replied to their accusation and made them look very foolish, “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?” (Mat.
12:25-26). The Pharisees’ conclusion was totally unreasonable and illogical. Jesus points out that any kingdom, whether physical, spiritual, evil, or good, cannot and “shall not” stand; it will fall, it will be brought to nothing, if it fights against itself. Jesus verbally opposed that which was in error!

Jesus further instructs these Pharisees by declaring “He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad” (Mat. 12:30). In the great conflict between good and evil, righteousness and sin, the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan, there can be no fence-straddling. Jesus also proclaimed, “No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Mat. 6:24).

One of the greatest problems facing the church today is the unwillingness of many of its members to take a stand for truth! Too many are choosing to ride the fence for fear of hurting someone’s feelings, or for fear of losing their popularity! Whenever we choose to straddle the fence in Christianity, we are aligning ourselves with Satan and therefore are forfeiting our place in heaven.

One way that many have become fence-straddling Christians is by their vow of silence. Many in the church know that certain things being done in the brotherhood in various congregations are without biblical authority, but instead of speaking out in protest, they bite their tongues and say nothing. The evil, yea even the sin, of silence is very clearly seen in the book of Obadiah. God, through the prophet Obadiah, was condemning Edom for the terrible things that they had done. “For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever” (Oba. 10). What terrible evil had they committed? “In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou wast as one of them” (Oba. 11). Why was Edom as one of those who had destroyed Jerusalem? Because they simply stood back and did nothing nor said anything! Many in the day of judgment are going to be sorrowfully surprised when they have to suffer the eternal consequences of their silence.

O, that we all would be like Jeremiah, when he cried, “Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay” (Jer. 20:9). Isaiah was no fence-straddler, for he declared, “For Zion’s sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth” (Isa. 62:1). May we all remember that silence is sometimes golden, but sometimes it is also yellow and sinful. Remember: “Evil prevails when good men are silent.”

309 North Victor Comanche, TX 76442

BELLVIEW LECTURES

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The Doctrine Of Christ Versus The Doctrines Of Men
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8:00 PM  The Doctrine of Christ Is Understandable  Clifford Newell, Jr.

Sunday, June 11
9:00 AM  Unity and Fellowship  Eddie Whitten
10:00 AM  Morals  Paul Vaughn

Lunch Break
2:00 PM  New Hermeneutic Versus Christ’s Doctrine  Buster Dobbs
3:00 PM  Divorce and Remarriage  Noah Hackworth
4:00 PM  Jehovah’s Witnesses Versus Christ’s Doctrine  Joe Gillmore, Jr.
Dinner Break
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Lunch Break
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7:00 PM  The Doctrine of Christ  Darrell Conley
8:00 PM  Baptism  Guss Eoff
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Rubin Malone, Mary Muldoon, Jim Roddy, Nancy Wright, Herbert Watts (Martha Wilcoxson’s brother), and Fred Baker (Judy Peters’ father).

PLACED MEMBERSHIP
Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter) placed membership on April 30, 1995. Her address and phone numbers are: 916 South “I” Street, Apt. 13, Pensacola, FL 32501; 432-5915. Mike Dobbs also placed membership on April 30, 1995. His address and phone number are: 7591 Highway 98 West, Apt. 414, Pensacola, FL 32506; 457-8399. Please make them feel welcome.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 1 meets May 7, 1995
Group 2 meets May 14, 1995
Group 3 meets May 21, 1995

READING/INVITATION
May 10, 1995
Reading: Harold Maxey
Invitation: Bill Crowe
May 17, 1995
Reading: Ray Williams
Invitation: Ray Dodd

MARK THESE DATES
May 21, 1995–Deacon’s meeting, at 5:00 P.M., at the building.
May 28, 1995–Elders/Deacons’ meeting, at 5:00 P.M., at the building.
May 31, 1995–Fifth Wednesday Singing.
We Must Obey God Rather Than Men

AI Brown

There is so much confusion in the religious world. One group says all we have to do is believe in Christ, and we will be saved. Yet, Jesus Himself said, in no uncertain terms, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord [that is, profess to believe in me—claim that Christ is Lord of his life], shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven” (Mat. 7:21). Who are we to believe, what mere men tell us or the Savior of men?

What Jesus said becomes even more imperative when we consider His words in the next two verses: “Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Mat. 7:22-23).

These are religious people who have tragically learned that they do not have eternal life after all. They have spent their lives doing religious things, but it has all been wasted. The reason Christ gives for their rejection: He never knew them; they were workers of
iniquity. In other words, their profession of faith in Christ was not enough; they had failed to do the will of God. If one asks what the will of God is, the answer is easy. It is what God has told men to do as revealed in Scripture.

The Jews of Jesus’ day had replaced the Law of Moses (God’s will or law for Jews) with traditions (opinions) devised by their religious teachers. Jesus said to them: “Ye have made void the word of God because of your tradition. Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, This people honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men” (Mat. 15:6-9). This is the same thing the denominational world has done today. They have replaced the revealed will of God with the opinions of mere men (theologians). Anything in the New Testament (God’s will for man today) they do not want to believe or do, they simply ignore it or explain it away and replace it with what they think (their opinions). This is why Jesus’ words four verses after He condemned the Jews for following the opinions of men should spread great fear in the hearts of people today who are doing the same thing: “Every plant [religious group] which my heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up” (Mat. 15: 13). This is why Jesus said what He did in Matthew 7:21-23.

*Via The Better Way*

**DRESS CODE AND RESPECT**

*Lewis G. Hale*

“No shoes, no shirts, no court appearance.” That is the policy of Garfield County (OK) court officials according to *The Daily Oklahoman*, Friday, June 10, 1994, page 11. Actually the sign in the courthouse reads, “Proper dress required for court appearances. No shorts, tank tops, hats, etc., allowed. Shoes required.” The court clerk said she hopes the dress code will “bring with it more respect for the judges and the law.” Court Clerk Sharon Melrose said,

“Some people showed up all but undressed. I’ve even had jurors come in shorts.” Most hospitals now have signs saying “Shoes Required” and “No Shorts Allowed.”

I was recently informed that an area church of Christ sometimes has men wearing shorts while waiting on the Lord’s Table. This is not to say that such dress is always inappropriate, but *at the Lord’s Table*, or, by anyone in a place of worship?

I am reminded of the fable about the camel who told his master that he was cold and could he just stick his nose inside the master’s tent? Eventually the whole camel was inside the tent! It is the old story of “give an inch, take a mile.”

There is a difference between being a prude and demanding respect. God is holy. “Holy and reverend is his name” (Psalm 111:9). We should come into His presence with awe. If people think of a church gathering as a pep rally, it is no wonder they dress as they do. We do enjoy each other’s fellowship. A worship assembly does have a social aspect. However, our primary reason for meeting together is worship, [*upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread*] (Acts 20:7).

When people of the world (courts and hospitals) see a relationship between respect and the way we dress, a devout worshipper should have no problem seeing it.

*Quit man & Center Streets Church of Christ*

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          Clifford Newell, Jr.

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10:00 AM  Morals
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Lunch Break

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Dinner Break

7:00 PM  Pentecostalism Versus Christ’s Doctrine
          Stephen P. Waller
8:00 PM  Why the Church Is Not a Denomination
          Stanley Ryan

Monday, June 12
9:00 AM  Methodism Versus Christ’s Doctrine
          Bobby Liddell
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8:00 PM  Baptism
          Guss Eoff
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Rubin Malone, Mary Muldoon (scheduled for heart pace-maker surgery this month), Marilyn Hall, Jim Roddy, and Nathan Liddell (Tony’s brother).

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 2 meets May 14, 1995
Group 3 meets May 21, 1995
Group 1 meets June 4, 1995

READING/INVITATION
May 17, 1995
Reading: Ray Williams
Invitation: Ray Dodd
May 24, 1995
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Ray Foshee

MARK THESE DATES
May 21, 1995–Deacon’s meeting, at 5:00 P.M., at the building.
May 28, 1995–Elders/Deacons’ meeting, at 5:00 P.M., at the building.
May 31, 1995–Fifth Wednesday Singing.

THE NEVER FAILING GOD
God’s treasures never fail–Luke 12:33
God’s Word never fails–Josh. 21:45
God’s promises never fail–Josh. 23:14
God’s love never fails–1 Cor. 13:8
God’s compassion never fail–Lam. 3:22
God’s faithfulness never fails–Psalm 89:33
God Himself never fails–Zeph. 3:5

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WHAT’S IN A NAME?

Dalton Key

In attempting to defend their denominational labels, many will argue that there is nothing in a name. One preacher declared, “The name one wears in religion has nothing to do with his salvation.” Others have suggested that one’s religious title has little or nothing to do with what he is religiously or what he believes. Is this true? Is there nothing in a name? Read on.

I understand Alexander the Great once offered the Ephesians all the spoils of his eastern campaign if they would inscribe his name on the temple of Artemis. The Ephesians flatly refused. The reason? The temple had been dedicated to the goddess Artemis. They regarded it as her temple, thus they would allow no human name to deface or desecrate it, no matter how great the name. Though steeped in idolatry, the people of Ephesus were wise enough to see that there was something in a name. What a rebuke to those today who attach human names and titles to that which they regard as belonging to God!

God has always seen something in a name. He changed Abram’s name to Abraham and Sarai’s name to Sarah (Gen. 17:5,15). He changed Jacob’s name to
Israel (Gen. 32:28). Our Lord spoke to Simon Peter saying, “Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone” (John 1:42). Saul, the converted persecutor, began to be known as Paul after the conversion of Sergius Paulus, the Gentile ruler (Acts 13:9). Each of these name changes were deemed important by God, else He would not have included them within the Sacred Volume.

Name suggests ownership. A church built by and founded upon some man will naturally wear the name of that man. The church built by and founded upon the Son of God will wear His name, and His name alone. Those comprising the church of Christ will wear only the name of Christ.

Name suggests allegiance. Those committed to a man or to a method will adopt and wear the name of the man or method to which they have given themselves. Christ declared, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). He demands that His disciples deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Him (Mat. 16:24). When we freely give Christ (and Christ only) our full allegiance, we will gladly denounce all human names and wear His name only.

“The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch” (Acts 11:26). Note they were called “Christians” first, and not “First Christians.” The former designation is non-denominational; the latter is denominational. By wearing the name of Christ, we wear the name of our Savior (Heb. 5:9; Acts 4:12), our Redeemer (Acts 20:28; Eph. 1:7), and our Owner and Master (1 Cor. 3:23). His name is “above every name” (Phi. 2:9). Why should we deface and desecrate His holy name by attaching the names of men or methods to it? Are we not as wise as the Ephesian heathens of Alexander’s day?

Yes, there is something in a name. It matters to you very much that you be called an American and not a Communist. It concerns you a great deal that you be called by your correct given name and not by someone else’s name; and it should matter to you that you wear only the name of Christ, and be a member of His church, the church of Christ (Rom. 16:16). Think it over.

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**Brother Jim Roddy**  
**Passes From This Life**

Our brother in Christ, Jim Roddy passed from this life to be with the Lord on Saturday, May 13, 1995.

Physically Jim’s heart gave out. Yet, all who knew Jim knows that spiritually his heart never gave out. Even though not feeling well, Jim could be depended upon to be at services. You could depend upon him to be encouraging others not just thinking about himself. Jim will be missed here at Bellview. However, we know there is a victory to those in Christ. John writes that those in the Lord are blessed in death (Rev. 14:13). Jim has gone on to his reward, which we believe to be with the Lord which is far better (Phi. 1:21-23). We look to a day in which we also can go to be with Christ and forever be with the Lord.

*MH*

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7:00 PM The Doctrine of Christ  Darrell Conley
8:00 PM Baptism  Guss Eoff
SYMPATHY
Our deepest sympathy is extended to sister Iris Gallaher in the loss of her brother-in-law James Stephen on May 11, 1995. Brother Stephen was an elder with the General De Gaulle Street Church of Christ in New Orleans. Please remember them in your prayers.

SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Rubin Malone, Mary Muldoon (scheduled for heart pace-maker surgery this month), and Leon Waters.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 3 meets May 21, 1995
Group 1 meets June 4, 1995
Group 2 meets June 18, 1995

READING/INVITATION
May 24, 1995
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Ray Foshee
May 31, 1995
Reading: Allen Brazell
Invitation: Bill Gallaher

MARK THESE DATES
May 21, 1995–Monthly Bible Bowl at Bay Minnette, at 2:00 P.M. Study 1 Corinthians 1-4.
May 21, 1995–Deacon’s meeting, at 5:00 P.M., at the building.
May 28, 1995–Elders/Deacons’ meeting, at 5:00 P.M., at the building.
May 31, 1995–Fifth Wednesday Singing.
NEW BIBLE CLASSES BEGINNING

New Bible Classes for all age groups (youth and adults) will begin June 4, 1995, for the Sunday morning classes and June 7, 1995, for the Wednesday evening classes.

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

YOUNG ADULTS—Current Crises Challenging The Church, Jim Loy, room 18.

ADULTS I—Studying Sin Seriously II, Michael Hatcher, room 1.

ADULTS II—Plan of Redemption II, Louis Herrington, room 7.

ADULTS III—Changes In The Church Of Christ, Paul Brantley, room 5.

NEW CONVERTS—Christian Doctrine, Bill Gallaher, room 17.

WEDNESDAY SCHEDULE

YOUNG ADULTS—Current Crises Challenging The Church, Jim Loy, room 18.

ADULTS I—We Can Rest Assured, Ray Foshee, room 1.

ADULTS II—Typology, Michael Hatcher, room 7.

ADULTS III—2 Samuel, Fred Stancliff, room 5.

NEW CONVERTS—Christian Doctrine, Bill Gallaher, room 17.
QUALITIES OF THE EFFECTIVE TEACHER

**Teachability.** An effective teacher is willing to learn. He seeks all the information, tries new methods, and continues to grow in his personal spiritual life.

**Example.** An effective teacher, especially in the Bible school, must be a worthy example of what he/she is teaching. One who is fully aware of the truth of Jesus’ statement, “‘Can the blind guide the blind? shall they not both fall into the pit? The disciple is not above his teacher; but everyone when he is perfected shall be as his teacher” (Luke 6:39-40). The teacher models the process of Christian growth. He can say with Paul, “For yourselves know how you ought to follow us” (2 Thes. 3:7).

**Attitude.** An effective teacher is positive. He believes in his students. He believes that he is doing God’s work. He desires to teach because it is a privilege!

**Commitment.** An effective teacher is committed first to the Lord Jesus Christ, to His Word, the Bible, and to teaching others the Word of God. He is committed even in the face of difficulties that he will most certainly encounter.

**Sense of humor.** An effective teacher possesses a healthy sense of humor. Although one need not be an extremely witty person, he appreciates the humor of his students and circumstances.

**Enthusiasm.** An effective teacher has a zest for living, a joy in the Christian life, and the enthusiasm to share his joy with the individuals who make up his class.

**Good relationships with people.** An effective teacher understands that his goal is to help others to know the Lord. Therefore, he loves people and builds personal relationships with them. He is interested in people and is sensitive to their needs. He never forgets that his message is to and for people.

THINGS HAPPEN WHEN YOU COME TO JESUS CHRIST

**Your sins are all forgiven.** “Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood” (Rev. 1:5).

**Your old nature is changed.** “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor. 5:17).

**The power of Satan is broken.** “To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God” (Acts 26:18).

**Your fear of death is removed.** “And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb. 2:15).

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| **Wednesday, June 14** | 9:00 AM | Presbyterianism Versus Christ’s Doctrine | Keith Mosher, Sr. |
| | 10:00 AM | Determining Christ’s Doctrine | Roy Deaver |
| | 11:00 AM | Calvinism Versus Christ's Doctrine | Daniel Denham |
| | **Lunch Break** | | |
| | 2:00 PM | History of Man's Doctrine | J. E. Choate |
| | 3:00 PM | The Divided Assembly | David P. Brown |
| | 3:45 PM | Open Forum Discussion on The Divided Assembly | |
| | **Dinner Break** | | |
| | 7:00 PM | The Doctrine of Christ | Darrell Conley |
| | 8:00 PM | Baptism | Guss Eoff |
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Rubin Malone, Mary Muldoon, and Leon Waters.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 1 meets June 4, 1995
Group 2 meets June 18, 1995
Group 3 meets June 25, 1995

READING/INVITATION
May 31, 1995
Reading: Allen Brazell
Invitation: Bill Gallaher
June 7, 1995
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Louis Herrington

MARK THESE DATES
May 28, 1995–Elders/Deacons’ meeting, at 5:00 P.M., at the building.
May 31, 1995–Fifth Wednesday Singing.
June 18, 1995–Monthly Bible Bowl at Jay. Study First Corinthians 5-8.
June 25-30, 1995–Indian Creek Youth Camp (Teen Week with Jerry Martin), at Oakman, AL.

CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES
Tony Liddell
Pine Forest High School
§
Rachel Garrett
University of North Alabama
B.S. RN
NEW BIBLE CLASSES BEGINNING

New Bible Classes for all age groups (youth and adults) will begin June 4, 1995, for the Sunday morning classes and June 7, 1995, for the Wednesday evening classes.

SUNDAY SCHEDULE
YOUNG ADULTS—Current Crises Challenging The Church, Jim Loy, room 18.
ADULTS I—Studying Sin Seriously II, Michael Hatcher, room 1.
ADULTS III—Changes In The Church Of Christ, Paul Brantley, room 5.
NEW CONVERTS—Christian Doctrine, Bill Gallaher, room 17.

WEDNESDAY SCHEDULE
YOUNG ADULTS—Current Crises Challenging The Church, Jim Loy, room 18.
ADULTS I—We Can Rest Assured, Ray Foshee, room 1.
ADULTS II—Typology, Michael Hatcher, room 7.
ADULTS III—2 Samuel, Fred Stancliff, room 5.
NEW CONVERTS—Christian Doctrine, Bill Gallaher, room 17.

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

YOUNG ADULTS—Current Crises Challenging The Church, Jim Loy, room 18.
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ADULTS III—2 Samuel, Fred Stancliff, room 5.
NEW CONVERTS—Christian Doctrine, Bill Gallaher, room 17.
GOD WANTS US TO...

Give Readily: “Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have” (2 Cor. 8:11).

Give Willingly: “For if there be first a willing mind” (2 Cor. 8: 12).

Give Purposefully; “Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give: not grudgingly, or of necessity” (1 Cor. 9:7).

Give Cheerfully: “God loveth a cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:7).

Give Liberally: “they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men” (2 Cor. 9: 13).

Give Proportionally: “It is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not” (2 Cor. 8:12).

Give Timely: “Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him” (1 Cor. 16:2). And, “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal. 6:10).

Jesus said, “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and there thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Mat. 6:19-21).

HEAR AND DO

Tim Ayers

At the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus told His audience that they should not only hear God’s will, but they should also obey it. “Every one therefore that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon the rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and if fell not: for it was founded upon the rock. And every one that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and smote upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall thereof (Mat. 7:24-27).

Today it seems many are willing to listen to the teachings of the Bible, but few will obey. The apostle Paul spoke to the men of Athens in Acts 17. They listened only because they were curious about ANY new ideas that came along. Paul told them about the one true God, and what they must do to receive salvation. Some of them thought Paul was teaching foolishness, while others were curious and wanted to hear more. But a third group believed what Paul said (Acts 17:16-34). Later, Paul went to Corinth, and “many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized” (Acts 18:8).

Which of these people will you imitate? Will you listen to God’s will and then reject it? Will you learn it only because you are curious, but never obey? Or will you learn and obey God’s will to receive eternal life? God inspired James to write, “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves” (Jam. 1:22).

P.O. Box 1255 Taylor, TX 76574

BELLVIEW LECTURES

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The Doctrine Of Christ Versus The Doctrines Of Men
Twentieth Annual Bellview Lectures
June 10-14, 1995

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8:00 PM  The Doctrine of Christ Is Understandable  Clifford Newell, Jr.

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Lunch Break
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4:00 PM  Jehovah's Witnesses Versus Christ's Doctrine  Joe Gillmore, Jr.
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8:00 PM  Why the Church Is Not a Denomination  Stanley Ryan

Monday, June 12
9:00 AM  Methodism Versus Christ's Doctrine  Bobby Liddell
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Invitation: Louis Herrington
June 21, 1995
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Invitation: Tim Lamb

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NEW LIBRARY BOOK
A new book, *Creation Compromises* by Bert Thompson, has recently been added to the library. If you are interested in checking out this book, or any of the others, contact the secretary. The library is there for your benefit. As the Bible states, “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” (2 Tim. 2:15).
Most everyone is aware that the Bible outlines qualifications for a man (not a woman) to be an elder (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:5-9). Not everyone follows them, but surely, at least they are aware of them. However, not everyone may be aware of the total work in which elders are involved nor appreciate them for the work they do and responsibility they carry. Let’s mention some things to give you a better understanding and appreciation of elders.

An elder is a man who must bear the greatest responsibility on earth, that of overseeing the church of God (Acts 20:28).

An elder is a man who has many critics, many who think they are smarter than he, but not only are they unqualified, they are unwilling to assume his responsibilities.

An elder is a man who is responsible for the souls of the flock, but often resented by the wayward sheep for showing his concern.

An elder is a man who spends many sleepless nights over problems that are not of his making.

An elder is a man who rightly deserves honor and praise for the office he holds and work he performs in the Lord’s service, but seldom receives either (1 Tim. 5:17).
An elder is a man who should find his work a joy and delight, but often finds discouragement and heartache (Heb. 13:17).

An elder is a man who is as fallible as any man but expected to be perfect in his judgments.

An elder is a man who is “the most qualified man for the office” when appointed, but often considered the “least qualified” after only a few months.

An elder is a man who must please God, who needs to be understood, loved, appreciated, respected, and remembered always in prayer.

Brethren, thank God for our elders and always remember to pray for them!

DEACONS

Durwood Weatherford

Paul addresses the church at Philippi in these words, “Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus that are at Philippi, with the bishops [elders] and deacons” (Phi. 1:1). In this verse it is evident that the organization of the New Testament church included men called deacons. The qualifications of deacons as given in First Timothy 3:8-13 tells us the kind of character God wants those men who serve as deacons to possess. Acts 6:1-6 shows us the need of special servants to serve in the Lord’s church and serves as an example how men are to be selected to both the work of elders and deacons. I believe the implication is clear that the complete organization of a local congregation includes both elders and deacons, thus making up the scriptural organization of the body of Christ.

But what is the work of deacons? First, let’s note some things they are not: They are not elders or even junior elders. They are not the overseers. Their authority is limited to the authority delegated to them by the elders. And deacons are not apprentice elders. They may one day qualify and serve as elders, but deacons are not in an apprenticeship for elders. Neither are they the overseers of the physical while the elders are overseers of the spiritual. Elders are overseers of both the physical and spiritual for they are the overseers of the whole congregation. But they are official servants of the church. They are outstanding men who meet the qualifications given by the Holy Spirit and are thus appointed by Him. Appointed to serve under the oversight of the elders in whatever capacity the elders give them, that is scriptural. They are due the love and respect of the congregation.

The most common mistake made in regard to the deacons is a failure to use their talents to the fullest degree. Elders have the responsibility and opportunity to make sure that deacons serve to the fullest. And the congregation has the responsibility to work with them in doing the great work of the Lord. Thank God for godly men to serve as deacons and congregations who recognize and use their talents.

ABSENT TOO

MANY TIMES

The boss called me in, looked me squarely in the eye and said, “You are not interested in working for me. You don’t really want this job, do you?” “Oh yes sir, I do. I need the job. It is very important to me and my family.” “But one thing and another interfered and I missed some more. Finally the boss called me in and he said, “You’re fired!! You were absent once too often.” I walked out of his office, down a long flight of stairs, out the door...into HELL. You see, my boss has been God. I had been employed as a Christian. Absences were from the worship and work of the church. God was right—I hadn’t really wanted the job. I didn’t really want to go to Heaven. SO I DIDN’T.
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Group 2 meets June 18, 1995
Group 3 meets June 25, 1995
Group 1 meets July 2, 1995

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June 21, 1995
Reading: Bill Cline
Invitation: Tim Lamb
June 28, 1995
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WHY I ATTEND EVERY SERVICE OF THE CHURCH  
Curtis A. Gates

Often the question is asked, “Must I attend every service of the Lord’s church?” Some feel that attending one worship assembly each week meets the criterion of faithful membership. But, the problem is one of the heart. The question should be: “How much do I love God; how much do I love the brotherhood; how much do I love my soul and the crown of life awaiting the faithful?” The Christian, therefore, will reason thus:

One, I will assemble regularly, for to praise God demonstrates and proves my love for Him and my gratitude for the marvelous sacrifice of Christ (John 14:15). To the Christian who lives in great anticipation of serving God day and night in His presence in Heaven, the privilege of serving and praising Him in the assembly cannot come often enough (Rev. 5:9-14). To have to miss the Bible study/worship brings deepest regret. Why, the Christian will die for Christ; certainly he will assemble faithfully in His presence with the brethren.

Two, I will assemble regularly, for this helps me to be my brother’s keeper (Gen. 4:9). It helps to
**strengthen my marriage** (Song of Sol. 8:6; Mat. 19:6-9; Heb. 13:4), **helps me bring up my children** in “the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4), **helps me lead the lost to Christ** (Mat. 28:19-20; Rom. 7:4), **helps me restore the erring** (Jam. 5:19-20), **helps me love the brotherhood** (Heb. 13:1), and **helps me bear fruit** (John 15:1ff), without which I shall be cut down (Luke 13:6-9).

Three, I will assemble regularly, for this **helps me to be faithful unto death** (Rev. 2:10). I do not wish to be lost; my spiritual carcass must not litter the path of life. I attend, for it **brings edification and encouragement, fortification and conviction**. The knowledge gained and associations experienced enable me to overcome temptation. Studying at home, though vital, cannot substitute for the strength derived from sharing the like precious faith with my brethren. That “tie that binds” is strengthened and my resolve is enhanced. I am human; I require the encouragement and brotherhood of others. I can then bear fruit and win the lost. I realize I am not alone; others are working for the Lord, as well.

Four, I will assemble regularly, for this **enables me to function as a priest** (Rev. 1:6). I realize how unbecoming it is for a priest not to have a sacrifice. Thus, I will give Him the sacrifice of praise on every possible occasion (Heb. 13:15), for I am a part of that “royal priesthood,” the church which was purchased by the precious blood of Christ (1 Pet. 2:9; Acts 20:28). I am not my own, for I have been purchased and redeemed (1 Cor. 6:19-20); I will thus glorify God. My privilege is great, for I can, being a priest, “therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4:16).

Five, I will assemble regularly, for this **helps me put the kingdom first** (Mat. 6:33). It shows steadfastness (1 Cor. 15:58), offering my body as a living sacrifice (Heb. 12:12). I hunger and thirst after righteousness (Mat. 5:6); it will help me be filled. My presence tells the preacher, “Your study and sacrifices are much appreciated; I will give heed to the oracles of God” (1 Pet. 4:11). It tells elders, “You certainly can count on me in the work of the church; I love you for watching in behalf of my soul” (Heb. 13:17). It tells the Bible class teachers, “Your time of preparation will do me good” (2 Tim. 2:2). I will show appreciation for the regular feeding time established by the shepherds in the local church, who rule under the chief Shepherd, Christ (1 Pet. 5:4; Heb. 13:7; Acts 20:28). I attend the services because it is a command, but that is not my main reason for doing so. It is certainly true that I am commanded not to forsake the assembling (Heb. 10:25). But, I attend out of love for God and for the good it does for me. God will continue to be God, whether I worship Him or not. Note Psalm 50:12, where God observes, “If I were hungry, I would not tell thee; For the world is mine, and the fulness thereof.” Yes, my attendance helps the cause of Christ, but it especially helps me. Indeed, whether or not I attend every service has never been a subject of debate—I will be present; if at all possible!

4400 Knight Arnold Road Memphis, TN38118

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**CLOCK WATCHERS**

Frank Chesser

Brief sermons are in great demand. If one could package and sell twenty-minute sermons with “pre-heat and serve” instructions, he would become an instant Forbes celebrity. The “hurry up and get this over with” philosophy has found a home in the church.

“If a man cannot strike oil in twenty minutes, he is drilling with a dull bit” may provide a chuckle, but not from the spiritual mind intent on drinking deep from the well of living water. Sunday’s high noon sounds the gun for the Indianapolis 500 to the local restaurants; beating the Baptists to the drumstick has become a sporting event.

One brother said, “When the sermon goes overtime, I turn it off.” Rest assured he never said that about his favorite television program. One
can easily discern Sunday’s time of day by taking note of the activity in the pew. Proceeding past the “allotted time” is like scraping the top off an ant bed. Overtime is no man’s land where preachers void of stout hearts fear to tread.

Some attempt to justify this disturbing lack of interest in God, worship and the gospel by pointing to man’s diminutive attention span. This is insane. The application of this point is always limited to small children or adults in a worship assembly. The truth is, the capacity of one’s concentration is dependent upon his sense of priority and interest. One lack in spirituality can devote rapt attention for several hours to some entertainment medium, while experiencing a severe shortage of mental vigilance under the sound of gospel preaching.

Missionaries tell of people who walk for miles to sit for hours on backless boards in thatched huts and scorching heat to feast on the treasures of the gospel. It is indeed tragic when one’s interest in spiritual things can be exhausted during the course of a thirty minute sermon.

WHAT ABOUT BIBLE TRUTH?

Jerry Joseph

What is Bible Truth? Can we know Bible Truth? Is it important that we know Bible Truth? The answers to these questions and other questions about Bible Truth are contained within God’s Word.

BIBLE TRUTH IS ABSOLUTE

Some have the idea that Bible Truth is relative. That is, truth to one person is not necessarily truth to another. What this philosophy says is that you can basically do, teach, and practice whatever you desire, and God will accept it, since there is no absolute truth. If Bible Truth is relative, there can be no false belief, teaching nor practice.

If Bible Truth is relative, why did Jesus say, “Beware of false prophets” (Mat. 7:15)? How can we “try the spirits” (1 John 4:1) if Bible Truth is relative? How can we “all speak the same thing” (1 Cor. 1:10) if Bible Truth is relative? These verses cannot be obeyed without believing and understanding that Bible Truth is ABSOLUTE.

BIBLE TRUTH IS ATTAINABLE

Can we know the truth? In John 8:32, Jesus said, “And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.” Yes, truth can be known. Not only can we know it, we must know it in order to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4).

If we cannot know the truth, why are we told to study (2 Tim. 2:15); search the Scriptures (John 5:39; Acts 17:11) and meditate upon the Scriptures (Psa. 1:1 -2)? Yes, Bible Truth can be known, that is, it is ATTAINABLE.

BIBLE TRUTH IS ALL-IMPORTANT

In John 8:32, Jesus said, “And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.” It is by knowing the truth that we are made free. In knowing and obeying Bible Truth we have freedom from sin (Rom. 6:23). We will keep ourselves from the vengeance of the Lord by knowing and obeying the truth (2 Th. 1:7-9). If we want to prepare ourselves for a home in Heaven, we must know and obey the truth (Mat. 7:21-23). Bible Truth is ALL-IMPORTANT.

BIBLE TRUTH IS AUTHORITATIVE

How can we know what is right or wrong, what is truth or error? The answer is not found in politicians, preachers, popularity, power, position, pleasing ourselves or pleasing others. But, it is found only in the Bible. We must have Bible authority for all we believe, teach and practice (Col. 3:17; 1 Th. 5:21; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). Bible Truth is AUTHORITATIVE.

BIBLE TRUTH MUST BE ACCEPTED

It is not enough just to know that Bible Truth is ABSOLUTE, ATTAINABLE, ALL-IMPORTANT and AUTHORITATIVE, it must, from the heart, be ACCEPTED (Rom. 6:17-18; Jam. 1:21-22; Heb. 5:8-9; 1 Pet. 1:22; Mark 16:16).
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Please remember in your prayers: Rubin Malone, Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Ida Williams, and Angela Fletcher.

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TELL ME WHY?
If a lawyer finds a flaw in the title to property, and does not warn about it, he has not done his duty.
If a physician discovers a disease in our bodies and does not properly prescribe medicine for it, we think he is a quack.
If a bank examiner knows of discrepancies and does not report them, he loses his position.
But, if the preacher sees flaws in our title to a home in heaven and warns about it; if he discovers conditions dangerous to spiritual welfare and reports it; if he finds a diseased condition in our spiritual body, and he tells of his diagnosis; if he finds discrepancies in our spiritual accounts and reports on it; many will think he is just meddling and trying to find fault.
IMMODESTY... What’s The Problem?

Wade Lee Webster

“In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array;...But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works” (1 Tim. 2:9-10). It never ceases to amaze me when I see a child of God wearing immodest apparel. A few years ago you could pick a member of the Lord’s church out of a crowd by their dress. Sadly, today you cannot. Whenever I see someone who is supposed to be a Christian (a follower of Christ) wearing that which is immodest, I think to myself, “They know the truth, what’s the problem?”

First and foremost, the problem is that they do not respect the Word of God. I do not believe that many children of God enter into this sin ignorantly. The Bible is filled with commands and principles dealing with the subject of modesty. As early as the book of Genesis, guidelines for modesty are being taught.

In the third chapter of Genesis we read of the terrible transgression of Adam and Eve. Immediately after they ate of the forbidden tree we read: “And the
eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons” (Gen. 3:7). Adam and Eve made aprons of fig leaves to cover themselves, yet they still were not modestly adorned. The Hebrew word for “aprons” has reference to a brief loin garment or belt (possibly similar to a swimsuit). God was not satisfied with this attire and made “coats of skins, and clothed them” (Gen. 3:21). The original term for “coats” denoted a long shirt-like garment. God wanted them and still wants His children today to be modest.

Instruction concerning modesty was also given to the Old Testament priests. Moses wrote: “Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon” (Exo. 20:26). This command seems to have been given because of the loose garments commonly worn by the priests. The lower part of the garment was similar to a loose skirt. God did not want their nakedness to be exposed to those who might be standing at the base of the altar. Today, Christians, as the New Testament priesthood, must be careful not to expose their nakedness (1 Pet. 2:9). Later, Moses, through inspiration, devotes nearly a full chapter to the sin of nakedness (Lev. 18:1-19).

In the New Testament, Paul and Peter both give instructions concerning modesty (1 Tim. 2:9; 1 Pet. 3:16). The problem today is not a lack of knowledge on the subject, it is a lack of respect and love for God and His Word. Christ said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). Modesty is a command of God. It is taught both by direct statement (1 Tim. 2:9; 1 Pet. 3:1-6) and by Biblical principles (Gen. 3:7, 21; Exo. 20:26; Lev. 18). Since modesty is a command, and since those who love God keep His commands, we can safely say that those who fail to dress modestly do not love God.

Second, the problem is that they have lost their ability to blush or to be ashamed. One of the saddest statements in all of the Old Testament was recorded by the weeping prophet Jeremiah concerning his people. He wrote, “Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush” (Jer. 6:15). He also wrote concerning these same people that they “refused to be ashamed” (Jer. 3:3). Those of Jeremiah’s day, much like those of our day, had lost their sense of shame.

We have seen so much nudity on our television sets and on our streets that we have lost our ability to blush. Modern fashions do not seem all that bad to us because we have grown accustomed to it. We need to regain our sense of shame at sin. In the Bible, nakedness and immodesty are connected with shame. In Exodus 32 we read the record of the idolatrous and immodest conduct of the children of Israel at the foot of Mt. Sinai. The Bible records: “And when Moses saw that the people were naked; (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies;) Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the Lord’s side? let him come unto me” (Exo. 32:25-26). Shame was upon the Israelites because of their idolatrous, immoral, and immodest behavior on this occasion.

It should be remembered that “naked” as used in the Bible does not always mean that a person was absolutely nude. An individual who was only clothed in their undergarments was considered “naked.” For instance, concerning Peter, John records: “Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher’s coat unto him (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea” (John 21:7). Peter had on only his undergarment, yet John records that he was naked. It is interesting that Peter did not want his Lord to see him in this way.

The Bible uses the shame connected with physical nakedness to express the shame connected with spiritual nakedness as well. Jesus said concerning Laodicea: “Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire,
that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye salve, that thou mayest see" (Rev. 3:17-18). Later, John writes: “Behold I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame” (Rev. 16:15). Although these verses have reference to spiritual nakedness they are based upon the shame of physical nakedness. Immodesty is a problem today because many have lost their sense of shame. They wear clothing which leaves little or nothing to the imagination and feel no shame while doing so. Many have had “their conscience seared with a hot iron “until they can no longer feel shame over sin (1 Tim. 4:2).

Third, the problem is that parents are not teaching their children to be modest. A generation is now upon us that was not taught nor trained modesty in the home. Sadly, unless taught, the children of these parents will not be any more, and probably less, concerned about modesty then their parents. Parents have a God-given responsibility to “bring them up the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4). Many parents give in to the pressures of their children to wear the immodest fashions of the day and to participate in the immodest recreations of the day. More and more of our youth are seen at the public pool, dances, and as cheerleaders or majorettes. What has happened? What are parents thinking when they let their children undress before the world? Why are they remaining silent while their children march down that broad way “that leadeth to destruction” (Mat. 7:13). One has to wonder how much fathers really love their wives and daughters when they allow them to dress in such a way as to excite lust. Certainly not all the blame is to be laid at the feet of fathers and mothers, but certainly those who are failing to instruct their children in this vital area are at fault.

Fourth, the problem is that they are not concerned about their brother’s soul. Immodesty is not a sin which affects just one soul, it affects many souls. Bathsheba’s immodesty did not only affect her own soul, but also the soul of King David as he strolled upon his rooftop (2 Sam. 11:1-5). Likewise, women who dress immodestly today affect not only their own soul, but also the souls of those whom they entice to look upon them.

It is no accident that Paul directed his instruction primarily to women. Science tells us that the sexual desires in men are six times stronger than in women. Women must be extremely careful not to entice or excite lust. Christ warned, “But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Mat. 5:28). The man who looks on a woman “to lust after her” certainly sins, but so does the women who is dressed in such a way as to entice that lust. Many women argue that no matter how they dress, some men are going to lust. That may very well be true. The Bible records those who have “eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin “ (2 Pet. 2:14). If a Christian sister is dressed modestly she is not a partaker in that man’s sin (1 Tim. 5:22). However, if she is dressed immodestly, she would be a partaker in his sin and bear a part in the responsibility of the sin.

Christ said, “Woe unto the world because of offences [occasions of stumbling, ASV 1901]! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh” (Mat. 18:7). It simply cannot be stressed enough how Christian women are to dress so as not to entice or excite lust.

“Immodesty—What’s the problem?” The problem is not that God has not given us instruction concerning modesty, but rather that many are ignoring and rebelling against what He has said. “In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works” (1 Tim. 2:9-10).

Via Church of Christ Olathe, KS 66051
SICK AND SHUT-IN

Please remember in your prayers: Rubin Malone, Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Ida Williams, and Angela Fletcher.

VISITATION GROUPS

Group 3 meets June 25, 1995
Group 1 meets July 2, 1995
Group 2 meets July 9, 1995

READING/INVITATION

June 28, 1995
Reading: Mike Dobbs
Invitation: Tony Liddell
July 5, 1995
Reading: Harold Cozad
Invitation: Jerry Lindesmith

MARK THESE DATES

June 25-30, 1995-Indian Creek Youth Camp (Teen Week with Jerry Martin), at Oakman, AL.
July 9-14, 1995-Indian Creek Youth Camp (Ronnie Hayes Week), at Oakman, AL.
July 24-28, 1995-Family Bible School with Clifford Newell from Pine Street Church of Christ in Bay Minette, AL teaching the adult class.

GOD’S PLAN OF SALVATION

Men must hear the saving gospel (Rom. 10:17).
Men must believe in Christ (John 8:24; 20:31).
Men must repent of their sins (Luke 13:3).
Men must confess faith in Christ (Mat. 10:32).
Men must be immersed, baptized (Acts 2:38).
Men must live faithfully (1 Cor. 15:58).

HAVE YOU OBEYED THE GOSPEL? (2 Th. 1:8-9)
A HAPPY HOME
Kenneth McClain

There is no place like a happy home. God is the designer of the home and He wants the husbands, wives, fathers, mothers and children to fulfill their God-ordained roles and responsibilities in the home. How can we have a happy home?

WE CAN HAVE A HAPPY HOME WHEN IT IS BIBLE-BASED

The reason most families have not experienced the joys of a happy family life is because it is not a Bible-based family life. A significant number of families have suffered because of the modern humanistic attack and bombardment of all that is sacred in the home. Our modern society has influenced the husband’s and father’s position as loving leader of the family, the wife’s and mother’s role and the children’s place of honor and obedience to their parents.

A home that is not Bible-based will collapse and family life will be in hopeless disarray.

WE CAN HAVE A HAPPY HOME WHEN IT IS NOT BASED ON SELFISHNESS

We are influenced in our modern society to “do your own thing.” It is not uncommon in our day to hear
a mother or father say, “I need to do something for myself.” Philippians 2:4 says, “Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.” We are blessed when we do for others. We read in Acts 20:35 that we are to “remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

WE CAN HAVE A HAPPY HOME
IF THERE IS LOVE AND RESPECT

The apostle Paul wrote, “Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church. For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife and they two shall be one flesh” (Eph. 5:21-31).

The universe of God is one of good order, and men and women are happiest and most effective when they find and conform to that order. The home is a divine institution in which God has ordained that man should take the place of responsibility and headship.

When we build our homes around love for God and love for each other we will have a happy home. Let us say with Joshua of old, “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

2842 Shelby Street Indianapolis, IN 46203

TIMELY TEACHING
FOR TODAY’S TEENS

Jeff Blanton

Teens, how often do you think about the judgment? Do you think of it as something far off in the future? Many times young people think that they still have many years to live on this earth, but there is no guarantee that one will live to be aged. With this in mind, let us consider some things concerning judgment?

What is the judgment? Judgment is the time appointed by God when all will be judged according to the Word of God (John 12:48). Christ will return in the clouds to judge all (Rev. 1:7), and the decision will be made where each person will spend eternity. Teens, how many times in your daily routines do you think on this subject?

When will the judgment come? No one on this earth knows when the judgment will come, even though it has been predicted many times (1 Th. 5:2; Mat. 24:42). Realizing this ought to cause us to make our “calling and election sure” (2 Pet. 1:10).

What will happen at the judgment? The dead will be raised (1 Cor. 15:52), and the earth and all that is in it will be destroyed (2 Pet. 3:10). All earthly things will pass away such as cars, money, houses, businesses, etc. The only thing that will last is the treasures that have been laid up in heaven (Mat. 6:19-20). Christ, who has been given the authority to judge (John 5:22, 27), will make the final decision where each one will live (throughout) eternity—in heaven or hell.

Who will be judged? Everyone will be
judged according to the deeds done in this life (2 Cor. 5:10). Many excuses will be offered at the judgment for sins that people have committed. As teenagers, what will your excuses be? “Sports were so important to me that I could not go to worship on Wednesday nights,” or “I was more worried about being in the ‘in’ crowd than serving God,” or “I went swimming, fishing, hunting, out with my friends, etc., instead of studying the Bible or going to worship.”

Christian teenagers should strive to live their lives in such a way that the judgment can be faced without fear. Teenagers, don’t wait until another day to lay up treasures in heaven, for another day may never come.

Via Coldwater Church of Christ bulletin
P.O. Box321 Coldwater, MS 38618

FOR PARENTS ONLY

Thinking that three hours at a movie is harmless for the child, but two hours in Bible study are too much for the nervous system, is just bad thinking.

Giving him/her a nickel for the collection and $1.50 for the movies not only shows our sense of value, but is not likely to produce a cheerful giver.

Letting him listen to several hours of radio and television thrillers a day with no time for one short prayer and a few Bible verses is criminal unbalance.

Being careful that Junior has his week-day school lessons, and caring not that he doesn’t know his Bible lessons, makes for spiritual illiteracy.

Saying a child must make his/her own decisions as to whether or not he/she should go to church, or to which church, is shirking parental responsibility.

When father spends Sunday morning mowing the lawn, washing the car, or fishing, golfing or just resting at home, his children are left to walk alone!

Wise are the parents who consider their duty to their children and put the Lord first in their lives, so that the Lord may be first in their children’s lives.

The most essential element in any home is GOD. Remember, what you sow, you will reap. Read about it in Galatians 6:7-9.

Via The World Evangelist

STUDENTS GRADUATE

The Memphis School of Preaching in Memphis, TN, held graduation ceremonies on June 18, 1995. Three of the graduating students, Dusty Wiikes, Preston Silcox, and Damon Lundy, were from the Bellview congregation.

Dusty, Sandy, Michael, Tiffany, Joshua, and Ashley will be heading for the Chimala Mission and Hospital in Tanzania, East Africa, in August. They are still in need of financial support. If you can assist in the support of Dusty and his family, contributions may be sent to the Seagoville Church of Christ in Seagoville, TX.

Preston and Tanya Silcox will be doing local work in Martin, TN with the Bethel Church of Christ.

Damon and Vaydra Lundy will also be doing local work in Greer, SC, with the Greer Church of Christ. The Greer Church of Christ is still looking for additional support for the Lundy’s. If you can assist with monthly support, contact Greer Church of Christ.

We extend our warmest congratulation to them and pray that the work that they will begin will be spiritually rewarding and fruitful and in accordance with the Word of God.

Via The World Evangelist
RESTORED

Daniel Barker was restored on June 25, 1995. Please keep him in your prayers.

SICK AND SHUT-IN

Please remember in your prayers: Rubin Malone, Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Ida Williams, and Angela Fletcher.

VISITATION GROUPS

Group 1 meets July 2, 1995
Group 2 meets July 9, 1995
Group 3 meets July 16, 1995

READING/INVITATION

July 5, 1995
Reading: Harold Cozad
Invitation: Jerry Lindesmith
July 32, 1995
Reading: Howard Johnson
Invitation: Fred Stancliff

MARK THESE DATES

July 9-14, 1995–Indian Creek Youth Camp
(Ronnie Hayes Week), at Oakman, AL.
July 24-28, 1995–Family Bible School:
Clifford Newell from Pine Street Church of Christ in Bay Minette, AL, will be teaching the adult class.

NEW LIBRARY BOOKS

The following books have recently been added to the library: The Trials Of The Ancient Order by Earl Irvin West, “What Do You Know About The Holy Spirit?” edited by Windell-Winkler, 20 Years of the Problem Page (Vols. 1 & 2) by Roy H. Lanier, Sr., DeHoffs Bible Handbook by George W. DeHoff, Doctrinal Discourses by Robertson L. Whiteside. Paley’s Evidences Of Christianity edited by Richard Whately, and The Case of D. M. Canright by Norman F. Douty. These books and others are available for checking out. Please make use of this excellent source of knowledge.
If the Sermon on the Mount (Mat. 5-7), is the heart of the Gospel, then the following four verses from that sermon must be the soul of Christianity. “For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.” “For ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Mat. 5:20; 46-48). Summed up in one statement, the spirit of Christ, the mark of Christian living is Jesus’ question, “What do you do more than others?”

“What do you do” Jesus asked. Is there any quality to your religion? Many would take the word “do” out of the Bible, if they could, but God has put it there to stay. Later in His famous sermon, Jesus declared, “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...Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock” (Mat. 7:21, 24). In John 15:14, Jesus plainly stated, “Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.” The writer James paraphrased the Lord’s teaching in these words, “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” (Jam. 1:22). Brethren, what are you doing for the Lord and for His kingdom, the church?

“What do you do more” Jesus further queried. With His use of the superlative “more,” Jesus spoke of quantity. Quality is very important, but so is quantity. If the parable of the ten virgins (Mat. 25:1-13) teaches anything, it instructs us that quantity is important to God. The five foolish virgins had made some preparation, but not enough preparation. They were lacking in quantity, not quality. The parable of the talents (Mat. 25:14-19), indicates that God expects no more of us than our individual abilities allow, but He does expect us to use what we do have. “Use it or lose it,” as the old maxim says. As we think about the great blessings that are ours, we are reminded of Luke 12:48, “For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.” Brethren, are you doing enough for the Lord?

“What do you do more than others” is the complete question Jesus asked. The modifier, “than others,” suggests that disciples of Christ should live better and do more than worldly folks. Being a Christian should make us more loving. “Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you” (Mat. 5:43-44). Being a Christian should make us better fathers, mothers, husbands, wives, sons, daughters, neighbors, employers, and employees. It should make us more honest, more compassionate, more benevolent, more forgiving, more congenial and more peaceful. Brethren, are you doing any more than your worldly neighbors, or religious friends are doing, in order to serve the Lord?

Jesus puts us to the test. Be honest in your self-evaluation. Does your religion have any real heart or soul to it? Are you doing only enough to squeak by, or are you doing as much as you can? The difference could be the difference between eternal life and eternal death!

Via The Broadway Bulletin
P.O. Box 749; Gainesville, TX

IT IS “GOD’S” HOUSE

Shan Jackson

Feel the hurt in David’s cry as he faces Jerusalem and longs for the love and comfort of God’s sanctuary. “My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord” (Psa. 84:2). He even longed to be as the little birds that nested in and about the temple. He could even wish himself with them as we “The sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King, and my God. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house” (Psa. 84:3-4).

Today the church is the spiritual home for God’s children. Not the temple in Jerusalem, but the church supplies the source of comfort for His chosen. But still David’s words ring true, “Blessed are they that dwell in thy house.” Blessings attend our dwelling together in God’s house. The
joy can be so precious. The feelings so warm. Joining together with others “of like precious faith” to worship the Father. Assembling with Christ to remember His purpose. Assembling with Christ to remember His cause. Realizing that we are His children and therefore, belong to His family. What can bring a greater joy?

But this joy does not come without obligation. No feeling comes without debt. These emotions come from knowing God and doing His will, and, a knowledge of this truth will “make us free” (John 8:32). The very fact that God has an earthly home for His children convinces us that He is pained when any prodigal refuses to dwell therein. The very fact that God has built His church on the earth teaches us that He wants His people in it. God loves the church. “The LORD loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob” (Psa. 87:2). “For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nouriseth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church” (Eph. 5:29). My brethren, if God so loved and cherished the church, His church, can anyone afford to be found outside its numbers? God loves the church and wants His children in it. Furthermore, His blessings are for those in it as well. “Blessed are they that dwell in thy house.”

However, these blessings also run parallel with one’s attitude of reception. One should neither expect home-blessings when there is not a home nor when he is not home. Dwelling in the house of God, having a home in Zion, one must put himself in the attitude to receive the blessings of God’s spiritual house. Likewise, some of these blessings are further manifested in the comfort afforded in the church.

What a sadness fills our hearts when we hear of a man without a home. There is no sickness more bitter than home-sickness. Thus complicating the restlessness and uneasiness of a soul without God’s home. The need is to be at home. This is the natural way. And we all have but one home. This means that we have no home if we absent ourselves from the assembly. To have a home means we live there, we serve there, we do all for its best. Home and devotion run hand in hand. Church and Christians cannot exist apart.

We also find comfort in the church as a feeding place for our souls. It is God’s truth that nourishes, it is God’s will that sustains. Without it our souls well-being soon withers and dies. Our souls need the church as our bodies need life’s bread. And a Christian who neglects the spiritual nourishment thus to be obtained must inevitably become weak in faith, cold in love, and sick in spirit. Such comfort can be only found in God’s sanctuary. It serves as God’s supply-house of sustenance by which we grow spiritually strong.

But a third point of spiritual comfort that the church affords is in the area of sympathy, comfort, and help. God intends that not only the brotherhood but also the congregations serve as buffer against the evils and discouragements of the world. A place to laugh with those laughing and to “weep with them that weep” (Rom. 12:15). God calls His church a family, the blessed family of the Almighty. A family where love, sympathy, and help are only a heartbeat away. And let us not forget that there is a sympathy and love, and encouragement and help, found in the church that is not found elsewhere in the world. The church, by means of individuals, may have faults and shortcomings, but the church of our Lord is perfect in design, in purpose, and in effectiveness in carrying on until the Lord’s return. Blessed, very blessed indeed, are all that dwell in God’s house.

P.O. Box 904 Palacios, TX 77465
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Rubin Malone, Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Ida Williams, and Angela Fletcher.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 2 meets July 9, 1995
Group 3 meets July 16, 1995
Group 1 meets August 6, 1995

READING/INVITATION
July 12, 1995
Reading: Howard Johnson
Invitation: Fred Stancliff
July 19, 1995
Reading: Chad Lightner
Invitation: Corey Bittner

MARK THESE DATES
July 9-14, 1995–Indian Creek Youth Camp (Ronnie Hayes Week), at Oakman, AL.
July 24-28, 1995–Family Bible School with Clifford Newell from Pine Street Church of Christ in Bay Minette, AL teaching the adult class. There will be classes for young people, as well as for the adults. Start making plans to attend and bring your relatives, friends, and neighbors with you.

GOD’S PLAN OF SALVATION
Men must hear the saving gospel (Rom. 10:17).
Men must believe in Christ (John 8:24; 20:31).
Men must repent of their sins (Luke 13:3).
Men must confess faith in Christ (Mat. 10:32).
Men must be immersed, baptized (Acts 2:38).
Men must live faithfully (1 Cor. 15:58).
HAVE YOU OBEYED THE GOSPEL?
TRY TO HARMONIZE THE BIBLE WITH THEORY?

Curtis A. Gates

The folly of attempting to “redefine” the Scriptures in attempts to harmonize the very Word of God with hypotheses of men, especially in the realm of “science” and the age of the earth and of man, should have been abandoned long ago. Evolution, the geologic time table, and accompanying dogmas are but unscientific, unproven, and unprovable speculation. The Bible is Truth, the inerrant and plenary revelation of the Creator. Some, even in the Lord’s church, have attempted to argue for the Day/Age Theory, which postulates that the days of creation were long epochs of time—millions, perhaps billions of years. Certain questions are in order.

First, is the Genesis creation account so mysterious that we cannot understand not only who created but also how and when? Could not such a view of the Bible also deny the virgin birth or the bodily resurrection of Christ?
Second, if Genesis One is but legend, myth, and fable, where do the real Bible history, people, and events begin? Was Adam the first human being, created before Eve (Rom. 5:14; 1 Cor. 15:21-22; 1 Tim. 2:13)? Is Genesis Three accurate; that is, was Eve the first to sin (1 Tim. 2:14)? Was Enoch the seventh from Adam (Jude 14)? Was there an actual universal flood (Gen. 6-8)? Is any of the Bible factual, if Genesis One or Genesis 1-11 is not? Who was the first real person in Christ’s ancestry (Luke 3:23-38)?

Third, if the Creation days were not twenty-four hours in length, how long did it rain in the flood (forty days and nights) (Gen. 7:12), or how long was Jonah in the fish’s belly (Jonah 1:17), or how long was Christ’s body in the tomb (Mat. 12:40)? Prove those were literal twenty-four hour days if those in Genesis One were not.

Fourth, how did the plants (created on day three) live through the millions of years of darkness/light, the Yucca plant reproduce millions of years before the proumba moth appeared, Adam and Eve live through the remaining millions of years of the sixth day (eon of time) and the millions of years of the seventh eon? Was Adam in day/age theory terms, say, 10,000,930 years old when he died (Gen. 5:4)?

Five, the attempt is made to harmonize man’s guesswork with clear Bible affirmation by saying Adam’s age is counted from when he sinned, that he had actually been in the garden millions of years. Question: 1. Would man’s archenemy, Satan, have waited millions of years to try to destroy God’s offspring, Adam and Eve? 2. Would the perfect couple (physically and spiritually) have refrained from sexual relations for millions of years (Did they have the modern birth control devices)? 3. How long would God have permitted them to disobey His command, given the sixth day, before they sinned, to fill the earth with offspring (Gen. 2:18)? Millions of years?

Six, were Adam and Eve really created at the beginning of creation, as Christ said (Mat. 19:4; Mark 10:6)? When was the beginning of creation (Gen. 1:1)?

Seven, how long were the days of Genesis One? The word “day” can be a long period of time, as can the Hebrew yom, as in Abraham’s day or grandfather’s day, etc. However, “day” (yom) always means a twenty-four hour period when preceded by a numeral, as in “first day,” “second day,” etc., in Genesis One. Note also such clear indications of, references to a twenty-four hour day as evening and morning, Day and Night, light and dark, etc. What more could God have done to indicate a twenty-four hour day?

Eight, will any affirm that God could raise Christ the third day but did not have the power to create in six?

Ninth, when God set up the Israelite week, He paralleled the six solar days and Sabbath day with creation week (Exo. 20:9-11). Did the Israelites know Hebrew? Why did not someone call Moses’ hand, exposing him for using eons of time to parallel twenty-four days?

Tenth, the existence of coal, oil, fossils, strata, et al., is explained by the universal flood (See these areas discussed in the author’s book, The Noahic Flood.), that the earth is billions of years old harmonizes neither with true science nor with the Bible. It is folly to abandon truth to support theories of men!

4400 Knight Arnold Road Memphis, TN 38118

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

Garry Stanton

“These were more noble than those in Thesalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11). What a wonderful tribute to the Bereans by the inspired writer Luke. How wonderful if
such a tribute could be paid to us today. Nobility is not always determined by blood lines and family trees, here the nobility of the Bereans was determined by their diligence to learn what God’s will was for them. The nobility of people today could also be a reality if we will do the same today. Let’s study together this passage to learn the things that the Bereans did to make them so noble.

First, we see that “they received the word with all readiness of mind.” They were receptive to the Word of God being taught and preached. It is too bad that not all people have this same reaction to the Word of God. Some are like the “Rich Young Ruler” who, when he was told what he must do, became sad and “he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions (Mat. 19:22). He had too many investments in worldly things to follow Jesus. Others are like unto those to whom Stephen preached in Acts Seven. They became mad at the preaching of the Word of God. “When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth” (Acts 7: 54). Thankfully there are those who are a true joy because they are not sad nor mad at the preaching of God’s Word but are glad! “And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed” (Acts 13:48).

Secondly, the nobility of the Bereans can be seen in that they “searched the scriptures daily.” In our world of “fast food” restaurants, “microwavable” T.V. dinners, and a whole host of “instant” whatever, we have grown accustomed to hurried eating. Some try to carry this over into the realm of our spiritual diet, but the “fast food” approach to Bible knowledge will not work! God said that His people “are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (Hos. 4:6) and therefore, the apostle Paul exhorts us to “study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15). It only seems reasonable that since God wants us to talk to Him daily in prayer that we ought to be willing to listen to Him daily by studying His holy inspired Word, the Bible.

Thirdly, the nobility of the Bereans is demonstrated in the fact that their searching the scriptures daily was to see “whether those things were so.” It is not that we should not be trusting, but God has given us a mind capable of reasoning for ourselves. When it comes to matters of such importance as our soul we should not take the word of man but turn to the true source, the Word of God.

True nobility with God is receiving the Word with all readiness of mind and searching the Scriptures daily to learn for ourselves God’s will for mankind.

2707 Mt. Holly Road Camden, AR 71701

FINALLY AWAKE, BUT TOO LATE TO GET UP!
The old man had recently suffered a paralytic stroke and was now bedfast. When the preacher came to see him, they talked about the church, its blessings and its problems.

The old man’s eyes misted over he said, “Preacher, I’d give anything if I was able to come to church services. But I know that I’m never going to be able to get out of this bed.”

Smiling and somewhat embarrassed, he went on, “There was a time when I could have come to church services regularly, but I preferred to stay in bed.”

Isn’t it ironic how our sense of values can change? Happily is the man who wakes up in time to enjoy the work and worship in the household of God.

Copied
SYMPATHY
We extend our deepest sympathy to brother Jerry Lindesmith in the loss of his daughter Deanna Lindesmith Thompson from Maurepas, LA, on July 2, 1995. Due to last week's Beacon being printed early, this announcement was not published earlier.

SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Rubin Malone, Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Ida Williams.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 3 meets July 16, 1995
Group 1 meets August 6, 1995
Group 2 meets August 13, 1995

READING/INVITATION
July 19, 1995
Reading: Chad Lightner
Invitation: Corey Birtner
July 26, 1995
Family Bible School

MARK THESE DATES
July 24-28, 1995--Family Bible School, 7:00 P.M. to 8:30 P.M. The theme for the adult class, with Clifford Newell from the Pine Street Church of Christ in Bay Minette, AL teaching, will be “The Home.” There will be classes for young people, as well. Start making plans to attend and bring your relatives, friends, and neighbors with you.
Mrs. William S. Cline has the pleasure of announcing the marriage of her daughter Catherine Jean to Mr. Larry Paul Lightfoot son of Mrs. P. W. Lightfoot on Saturday the fifth of August One thousand nine hundred and ninety-five. We are thankful for your prayers and well wishes as we celebrate this new beginning. The ceremony will take place in Houston, Texas.
SINS OF THE TONGUE
Ken Chumbley

“If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man’s religion is vain” (Jam. 1:26).

Modern man is prone to dismiss impure, improper and inconsiderate speech as a trivial matter. However, Jesus warned, “But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment” (Mat. 12:36). James adds, “And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell” (Jam. 3:6). The Word of God clearly does not treat lightly the misuse of the tongue nor does it seek to minimize the consequences of such misuse. Let us note some of the kinds of tongue trouble we are to avoid.

We are to avoid having a malicious tongue. Some use their tongue to tear others to pieces with their harsh words or their cutting, judgmental or sarcastic remarks. They speak evil of others. They are “quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath” (Tit. 2:1-2). They are “evil speakers, slanderers, hateful, abusive and evil tasters. The Bible teaches, “be ye kind one to another” (Eph. 4:32). The malicious tongue is far from being kind.

The deceitful tongue is also to be avoided. “A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall not escape” (Pro. 19:5). Today, we hear many speaking laughingly of “small fibs,” “little white lies” and “tiny deceptions,” as though they were nothing at all to be concerned about, God, however, does not take the matter lightly. He warns, “all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone” (Rev. 21:8).

We live today in an age when profanity is a part of everyday life. Modern speech is often coarse, lewd and rude. It has, it seems become fashionable to have a foul mouth! Far too many programs on television and far too many movies seem to feature foul mouthed individuals who are trying to outdo one another with the filth that spews forth. The Bible teaches, “Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain” (Exo. 20:7). Using God’s name thoughtlessly, sacrilegiously, or flipantly is no small thing! “For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned” (Mat. 12:37).

James calls the tongue an “unruly evil, full of deadly poison” (Jam. 3:8). In the heat of the moment we all say things that we later regret. Words that are spoken in haste can, and often do cause great damage. Pythagoras said, “A wound from the tongue is worse that a wound from the sword. The latter affects only the body; the former the spirit.”

Have you been guilty of these “sins of the tongue”?

P. O. Box 177 St. Albans, WV 25177

DON’T RUIN THE INVITATION
Bubba Phillips

Most preachers would agree that one of the most important parts of the sermon is the invitation. In fact, most Christians would probably agree with this.

Do we ruin the invitation??? Have we developed habits that affect souls who may need to respond to the Lord’s invitation? We need to take a close look at self!

Don’t ruin the invitation by failing to sing the invitation song. The song is for the purpose of causing self examination. Each Christian should sing the invitation song with enthusiasm and sincerity. After all, the Bible does teach that we “teach and admonish one another” when we sing (Col. 3:16).

Don’t ruin the invitation by talking. This
surely demonstrates a lack of respect for God and all present. The invitation song is not the time to visit with your neighbor.

**Don’t ruin the invitation by taking a restroom break.** Surely there are emergencies that arise, but this should be the only time—an emergency—when someone walks off to go to the restroom.

**Don’t ruin the invitation by getting out the song book before it’s time to sing.** Why not leave the book beside you or hold it in your lap. We should not be “Quick Draw McGraw” when it comes to getting the song book too early.

**Don’t ruin the invitation by leaving and walking the halls or moving around in the foyer.** It demonstrates a lack of concern for those who might be thinking about walking one of the aisles in response to the message.

Let’s be sure that we do not ruin the invitation. Souls are at stake. Our conduct will encourage or discourage individuals who may need to make things right with God!

1155 Corinth Road Jacksonville, TX 75766

WHERE IS LIFE?

Not in unbelief...
Voltaire was an infidel of the most pronounced type. He wrote: “I wish I had never been born.” Not in pleasure...
Lord Byron lived a life of pleasure, if anyone did. He wrote: “The worm, the canker, and the grief are mine alone.” Not in money...
Jay Gould, the American millionaire, had plenty of that. When dying he said: “I suppose I am the most miserable man on earth.” Not in position and fame...
Lord Beaconsfield enjoyed more than his share of both. He wrote: “Youth is a mistake; manhood, a struggle; old age, a regret.” Not in military glory...
Alexander the Great conquered the known world in his day. Having done so, he wept in his tent, because he said, “There are no more worlds to conquer.” Where, then, is happiness found? The answer is simple: In Christ alone. He said, “I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.” “Life with Christ is an endless hope; without Him it is a hopeless end.”
Via The East Willo Evangelist

PLAN NOW TO ATTEND OUR FAMILY BIBLE SCHOOL

This is the time set aside for our 1995 Family Bible School. We believe that a well-planned FBS with a Bible-centered curriculum is a great way to help us grow spiritually and a proven outreach to our community.

Plan now to attend and invite your friends. Our theme this year is Because Jesus Died For Me. Studies for the young peoples classes will be:

**Because Jesus Died For Me...**
- I Want To Learn His Word
- I Want to Stand Up For Jesus
- I Want To Respect All Authority
- I Want To Forgive Others
- I Want To Be A Worker For Jesus

Studies for the adult class taught by Clifford Newell, preacher with the Pine Street Church of Christ in Bay Minette, AL, will be:

**The Home**
- What Have They Seen In Thy House
- Husband—Father Role
- Wife—Mother Role
- Parent—Child Role

**The Home And Its’ Destiny**

Family Bible School is a great outreach to those who may not come to our regular services. Come and invite others. Let’s all pray and work together to have a great FBS.
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Rubin Malone, Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, and Ida Williams. Tim Lamb is in Sacred Heart Hospital, room 318. Diana Brazell is scheduled for medical tests. William Weekley is also scheduled for medical tests.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 1 meets August 6, 1995
Group 2 meets August 13, 1995
Group 3 meets August 20, 1995

READING/INVITATION
July 26, 1995
Family Bible School
August 2, 1995
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Henry Born

MARK THESE DATES
July 24-28, 1995—Family Bible School, 7:00 P.M. to 8:30 P.M. with Clifford Newell from the Pine Street Church of Christ in Bay Minette, AL.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned meat

GOSPEL MEETING
Jay Church of Christ in Jay, FL will be conducting a gospel meeting August 6-11, 1995, at 7:30 P.M. David Hester, from Tuscumbia, AL, will be speaking. Brother Hester is the author of Among The Scholars. Contact the Jay Church of Christ at (904) 675-6443 for further information.
Mrs. William S. Cline has the pleasure of announcing the marriage of her daughter Catherine Jean to Mr. Larry Paul Lightfoot, son of Mrs. P. W. Lightfoot, on Saturday the fifth of August, One thousand nine hundred and ninety-five.

We are thankful for your prayers and well wishes as we celebrate this new beginning.

The ceremony will take place in Houston, Texas.
WHAT ABOUT AN ATTENDED NURSERY?

David P. Brown

To set up an assembly that runs parallel to any assembly of exhortation is to act without New Testament authority (Col. 3:17). From time to time all infants and children must be taken out of the assemblies of exhortation to take care of needs peculiar to them. Of course, for personal reasons every person, regardless of age, has had to leave the assemblies of the saints. However, common sense dictates that when the need that took one out of the assembly has been alleviated, one should return to the assembly. If not, why not?

Please be patient with me while I engage in the ridiculous in order to make my point on this matter clearer. Rest rooms are provided for obvious reasons. Should adults be allowed to congregate in rest rooms simply because necessity (“felt needs”) demanded they leave the assembly to use them? Surely, if we can understand that when a rest room has fulfilled its purpose that we are then to return to the assembly, we should be able to understand the same regarding leaving the assembly to take care of infants and children.

Children need to learn how they should behave themselves in the assemblies. But, they never will, if they are not taught and disciplined to do so. In fact, for a number of years little discipline of any kind has been employed to train infants and children how to properly conduct themselves in such assemblies (for that matter just about anywhere) as are herein discussed.

Over and over again we have watched parents train their children to leave the assemblies rather than to remain within them. The scenario goes something like the following one. The child frets, fusses, and squirms. The parent threatens (sometimes this does not happen) the child with dire consequences if it does not cease its disruptive conduct. The child continues. After several exchanges of like nature between parent and child, the parent acquiesces to the child’s demands and takes it out of the assembly to the nursery where it can just about do what it wants to. When such has been repeated a few times the parents have done nothing less than train the child to fret, fuss and squirm (or worse) until it gets its way. If the first time the child tried to “show out,” the parents would make its visit outside the assembly a most unpleasant one, it would take but few trips outside before the child would enjoy the surroundings of the assembly better than the “great outdoors.” But, alas, the situation that prevails today is more like adolescents attempting to bring up infants, rather than mature adults bringing “them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4). If the elders would make it clear to the young parents that the “cry room” is to be used with the same discretion as the rest rooms are, the assemblies of exhortation would be respected, reverence would exist therein, and children would learn how to properly conduct themselves within them.

25403 Lancewood Spring, TX 77373

Editor’s Note: The above article is an excerpt from brother Brown’s manuscript entitled The Divided Assembly written for the 1995 Bellview Lectureship book “The Doctrine Of Christ Versus The Doctrines Of Men.”

THE COLLECTION FOR THE SAINTS

Guy N. Woods

First Corinthians 16:1-4 and Second Corinthians 8-9 set forth Paul’s inspired commands relating to the collection. The first day of the week is the designated time for such collection. One is to give as God has prospered him. As to attitude, a willing mind (eager disposition) is to characterize every giver. Giving is a planned act, that is, it is according to a previous purpose, not a last-minute hastily-conceived matter. It is to be
done cheerfully; not grudgingly, nor of necessity, but with pleasure and joy. It is a personal act ("Let each one of you"). And, it is an act of worship (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 16:2; Acts 20:7).

Paul set forth principles in Second Corinthians 8:16-23 to ensure that the collection would be carried out in a manner that is above suspicion. Only the most discreet and trustworthy men were selected to gather and handle the offering.

The high motives to which Paul appealed in encouraging brethren to raise the offering should be our motivation in giving beyond our power today. What should motivate us to give generously and cheerfully?

1. Jesus’ example (2 Cor. 8:9).
2. We shall reap as we have sown (2 Cor. 9:6).
3. God’s grace will care for us (2 Cor. 9:8).
4. Those in need will receive help and God will be thanked (2 Cor. 9:11-12).
5. God is glorified because of the giver’s subjection to God in this (2 Cor. 9:13).
6. Those who are helped will pray for those who have given (2 Cor. 9:14).
7. An abundant harvest is promised to the cheerful liberal giver (2 Cor. 9:6-11).

It is the custom of my wife and I to stand at the back of the building greeting visitors and members of the congregation as they leave each service. A little six-year old boy stopped in front of me. I bent down with outstretched hand and the little boy thrust out a puzzle and with a terse tone said, “It’s wrong!” My wife took the puzzle from the child and I shook the child’s hand assuring him that we would see what the trouble was with the puzzle.

Upon examination of the puzzle we found that the puzzle was a verse from the Bible that had been jumbled up and was to then be found in the puzzle. The person doing the puzzle had to look up the verse, write the verse down and then unjumble the words. A simple and straightforward method of learning for a young or old mind.

This is an example of how easy it is to understand the Bible and what it says. A six-year old could easily see the following things:

1. The puzzle and the Bible verse did not match and it prompted him to correctly conclude, “It’s wrong!”
2. He then was able to understand that someone had made a mistake because it did not match what the Bible said...and he concluded, “It’s wrong!”

That got me to thinking. How wonderful it would be if all would have the ease of understanding that this six-year old boy possessed. He was able to compare the work of man with God’s Word and tell if it was right or wrong. He was not encumbered by other information that would bring him to a predetermined assumption about the verse. He was not burdened by the force of family that would sway him to reject Bible truth because a member of his family was not a Christian. He was able to see the truth as it was written. Plus, he had established in his mind that the Bible was right and if something did not match with the Bible, he would reject whatever did not match with the Bible. In fact, he was already understanding such Scriptures as Second Timothy 2:15; 3:16-17; Matthew 15:9; Galatians 1:7f; just to cite a few.

This six-year old is on the right track in life. We that are teaching him ought to think of the great impact we have already made by teaching him the Bible truths. This ought to spur us on to “not be weary in well doing” (Gal. 6:9f). Yes, our efforts with children do make a difference and will pay off now and in the future.
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Rubin Malone, Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Louise Cline, Marilyn Hall and Tim Lamb. William Weekley is scheduled for medical tests. Bill Coss, a former member of this congregation, had surgery last week and is recovering in a nursing home. His address is: Fairview Nursing Home; 1028 Bessemer Road; Birmingham, AL 35228.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 1 meets August 6, 1995
Group 2 meets August 13, 1995
Group 3 meets August 20, 1995

READING/INVITATION
August 2, 1995
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Henry Born
August 9, 1995
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Hairston Brantley

MARK THESE DATES
August 20, 1955-Monthly Bible Bowl at Foley. Study 1 Corinthians 13-16.
September 10, 1995—Attendance Drive and Dinner on the Grounds.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned meat

GOSPEL MEETING
Jay Church of Christ in Jay, FL will be conducting a gospel meeting August 6-11, 1995, at 7:30 P.M. David Hester, from Tuscumbia, AL, will be speaking. Brother Hester is the author of Among The Scholars. Contact the Jay Church of Christ at (904) 675-6443 for further information.
IS IT NOTHING TO YOU ALL YE THAT PASS BY?
LAMENTATION 1:12 WHY IS IT HAPPENING?
WHY AREN’T MORE PEOPLE SPEAKING UP?
DO YOU CARE?
O. B. Porterfield

We have seen the onslaught of false doctrine flooding the Lord’s church for some time now. We heard about it in Texas and then in Tennessee, etc. Now, though, it is closer to home. Yet, so many who should speak up loudly and strongly in opposition to this error have chosen to be silent rather than defend the Truth.

The following, in my opinion, are reasons some may use. Please consider these and help get these attitudes corrected.

1. Some are quite because, quite simply, they are afraid to speak up and disagree with those who would bring these damnable things into the Lord’s
church. Remember that the fearful “shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone” (Rev. 21:8).

2. They are afraid of losing their jobs!
3. They are afraid of losing some of their membership!
4. They are afraid of losing some of the baby boomers and some of their young people!
5. They are afraid of losing their teaching jobs in brotherhood schools!
6. They have family involved in liberal congregations and they want to keep everybody in the family happy!
7. They just don’t want to “rock the boat.” If the boat can’t stand the Truth, though, it needs more than rocking—it needs sinking?
8. They want to be in with the “in crowd.”
9. Some congregations want to keep the crowd together to pay for the huge indebtedness that they have incurred.
10. They have no courage to stand for God’s Word.
11. They want to be sure that they are invited to speak in certain gospel meetings and lectureships.
12. Some have children who are involved in liberal congregations and may even be preaching the liberal agenda so they stay quiet!
13. They have elders without Bible qualifications and are not willing and/or able to defend the truth!

14. Hosea says, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (Hos. 4.6). Some have not bothered to find out what’s going on. It used to be said that the average member of the Lord’s church knew the Book—not so today!
15. Some can’t oppose false doctrine because they make their living by selling it!

And strange sounds are heard; it’s TIME TO SPEAK UP!

It’s time that the average person quits sitting in the pew wondering and shows the courage to help bring correction before it goes any further. It’s already later than many think it is.

Via McCloud Messenger

AND THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE

Robin W. Haley

A good reminder of the virtues of love is First Corinthians 13. The last verse of chapter 12 speaks of “a most excellent way.” That way, of course, is love. The title of this article is also taken from First Corinthians 13. These are the last seven words of that chapter. Please allow this present article to remind of all that—love is a command. Jesus said, “If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments” (John 14:15). His command was, “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you” (John 13:34).

We also must remember—love is service. Paul wrote to remind the Christians in the region of Galatia that, “ye, brethren, were called for freedom; only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another” (Gal. 5:13). But also, love is the motive for this service. Lee made this point as well when he told us that Paul wrote these words, “Let all that ye do be done in love” (1 Cor. 16:14).

We dare not give up in our service, for love is steadfast. Consider these words from inspiration, regarding those who had believed in Laodicea, “that their hearts may be comforted, they being knit together in love” (Col. 2:2). The steadfast nature of this love is seen in that love is encouraging. Read Paul’s instruction in his first epistle written, “Wherefore exhort one another, and build each other up, even as also ye do...And we exhort
you, brethren, admonish the disorderly, encourage the fainthearted, support the weak, be longsuffering toward all” (1 Th. 5:14).

**Love is instructive and considerate.** One of the greatest admonitions for us is: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God” (Col. 3:16). This is done as we “consider one another to provoke unto love and good works” (Heb. 10:24) as we assemble, “not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another” (Heb. 10:25).

Brethren, let us love—purely, deeply and devotedly. In this way we will obey the Master, demonstrate to the world and enjoy the blessings and benefits of such a wonderful fellowship.

912 East Teresa; Sapulpa, OK 74066

**HOW STRONG IS OUR FAITH?**

*Al Macias*

Have you ever wondered how strong your faith is and how much you would be able to endure? Many times I have noticed that we have a misconception as to how strong we really are in the faith. We normally think that we are stronger than we really are; and, therefore, when temptation or trials come our way, we easily fall. We have the case of the apostle Peter who said to the Lord that he would never deny Him when the Lord told him specifically that he would deny Him three times before the cock would crow (Mat. 26:31-35). In this passage of Scripture, we find a person who is very much like the average person today, who thought that he was stronger than he really was. Peter told the Lord that he would die with the Lord rather than deny Him. Well, we all know the rest of the story of how Peter did deny the Lord three times before the cock crowed.

Such is not always the case. There are some among us who do have a very strong faith in God and who would be able to endure whatever came their way without giving up on God. In Genesis 22, we find the case of Abraham, who was asked by God to do something that would require extreme faith on his part. The Lord asked Abraham to take his son, his only son Isaac whom he loved, and to offer him as a sacrifice unto the Lord. What did Abraham do when asked to do such a difficult thing? He simply did it. He took his son Isaac to the place designated by the Lord and prepared everything in order to offer Isaac as a sacrifice. There are some questions which we might ask ourselves concerning Abraham which would help us learn the great lessons we find here in regard to how much we can take. One question that I would ask myself is, “How was Abraham able to bear what the Lord was asking him to do?” What makes a person so strong that he would even be able to bear such a terrible tragedy? The answer would be faith in God. Abraham had total faith and trust in God and all God had promised him.

Abraham must have remembered all the things that the Lord had done for him in the past. Also, Abraham must have remembered how the Lord had promised that he would have many descendants through his son Isaac; therefore, if the Lord wanted Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, he must have reasoned that somehow the Lord would resurrect Isaac from the dead. At the point that Abraham was getting ready to sacrifice Isaac, the Lord told Abraham to stop. Abraham could not have known this would happen, but what he believed about God would give him the way to escape so that he would be able to bear it (1 Cor. 10:13). How much we are willing to endure for the Lord’s sake will depend upon the strength of our faith in God.

*Via The Southwesterner*
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Rubin Malone, Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, and Tim Lamb. Diana Brazell is scheduled for back surgery on September 11.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 1 meets August 6, 1995
Group 2 meets August 13, 1995
Group 3 meets August 20, 1995

READING/INVITATION
August 9, 1995
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Hairston Brantley
August 16, 1995
Reading: Harold Maxey
Invitation: Paul Brantley

MARK THESE DATES
August 20, 1995–Monthly Bible Bowl at Foley. Study 1 Corinthians 13-16.
September 10, 1995–Attendance Drive and Dinner on the Grounds.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned meat

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Baker Church of Christ in Baker, FL, will be conducting a gospel meeting August 6-11, 1995, at 7:30 P.M. Flavil Nichols from Jasper, AL, will be speaking.
DOES BEING RELIGIOUS = SALVATION?

Al Brown

When Paul was allowed to speak to the Athenian philosophers, he began his discourse with these words: “Ye men of Athens, in all things, I perceive that ye are very religious” (Acts 17:22). They may have been religious, but clearly, they were not saved; they were heathens. This inspired statement should impress on us the truth that salvation requires more than just being religious.

Jesus applied the same principle when He said: “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 who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Mat. 7:21-23).

Just being religious will not result in eternal salvation because in the process, men ignore the will of God and practice a humanly-devised religion. The
Lord assures us such people are practicing a vain religion—one that is repulsive to God. Jesus repeated this timeless principle again when He said: “ye have made void the word of God because of your tradition. Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, This people honoreth me with their lips; But their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, Teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men” (Mat. 15:6-9).

It is extremely dangerous to assume God will accept whatever man chooses to believe, yet all of “Christendom” is based on this devil’s lie. The Lord insists that every facet of religion be based on the revealed will of God (Col. 3:17). All will be judged at the last Day by the Scriptures (John 12:48), not by men’s opinions. In fact, Jesus said, in reference to humanly-devised religion: “Every plant which my heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up” (Mat. 15: 13). It is amazing that most refuse to believe this God-given truth and go on their merry way believing and doing that which is an abomination to God. Paul assures us: “at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus: who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might” (2 Th. 1:7-9). Don’t risk eternal life. Believe and obey the gospel (the Word of God)!

Via The Better Way
P.O. Box 39; Spring, TX 77383

HOW DO YOU RESPOND?

Dub McClish

Some have accused Gospel preachers of a past generation of appealing only to man’s ability to reason correctly. Such accusers claim that these good men taught only the facts of the gospel in their “concordance,” book-chapter-verse sermons. They raised the cry some years ago that men needed to be appealed to more on their emotional level. Back in the early 1960s there was a lively discussion in the brotherhood papers arguing whether we should preach “the Man” (Christ) or “the Plan” (the facts of the Gospel).

If ever it were true that men were being appealed to strictly on a logical rather than on an emotional basis in the past, it certainly is not so now. A generation of people has entered the church under much of the “new wave” of preaching that has been woefully light on what the Bible says and woefully heavy on appeals to emotion. We have large numbers in the church (some of them are now deacons and even elders) who are products of “friendship evangelism” more than products of the Gospel of Christ. Another way of saying this is to say that many have become Christians only on an emotional level. Consequently, their response to any sort of subject of controversy or problem in the church is an emotional response.

When the subject of marriage, divorce and remarriage is faithfully proclaimed from the Bible, the emotional respondent rejects what the Bible says because he “feels” that it is unfair or too narrow. When Christian moral behavior is the subject and the worldly practices of drinking alcoholic beverages (any amount), dancing, wearing immodest apparel, smoking, abortion, etc., are labeled as “sinful” from God’s Word, the emotional respondent will laugh at such preaching as the preacher’s opinion. When it becomes necessary to withdraw fellowship from a brother or sister, the emotional respondent will take the impenitent one to dinner that very day.

The one thing (besides an utter reliance upon feeling or emotion) that all of the cases above have in common is an utter refusal to apply any God-given powers of reason to the subjects considered. There is no weighing of evidence from
the Word of God, with a decision based on the evidence. Far too many Christians today decide matters of morals and doctrine on the basis of what their friend, family, favorite preacher or the majority is doing or saying. To such the Truth means nothing but one who appeals to sympathy, regardless of how wicked his life or how heretical his doctrine, will sweep them away. Emotion has its place in religion, but it must be controlled by reason. The reverse spells disaster!

908 Imperial Drive Demon, TX 76200

GAINING WEIGHT
Jay Winter

Gaining weight is something that generally gets to be a problem as the years go by. We are told to watch our diets and exercise properly or probably pay the consequences. Spiritually speaking though, we all should try to gain weight. Here we cannot afford to be underfed. We will experience eternal problems if we are found to be “lightweights.” As we place ourselves on spiritual scales how much do we weigh? Are we lightweights or heavyweights?

Every Christian can and should desire to become a heavyweight. We can add the weight of knowledge. Some have died because they lacked this essential ingredient (Isa. 5:13). The Jews had zeal but were starving for knowledge (Rom. 10:1-2). We can add the weight of faith. Some have but “little faith” (Mat. 8:26), though the Lord would have ours to be a “great faith” (Mat. 8:10). For our diet to be balanced we need to add works (Jam. 2:26), because faith without works is dead. We also ought to be fed with kindness, compassion, and love toward our brethren (Eph. 4:32; 1 Pet. 3:8), because we are a family in Christ. It is simply not possible to be spiritually overfed. The scales should find us “always abounding in the work of the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58); growing in grace and in knowledge (2 Pet. 3:18); and abounding in the faith (Col. 2:7).

And finally, don’t forget the exercise that will enable us to discern between good and evil (Heb. 5:14). Each and every day of our lives we can feast upon the riches of the Word of God without any fear of being overfed. Daily, let us be “Gaining Weight.”

YOU AND WORSHIP
David Lusk

The story goes that one day the famous orator, Henry Ward Beecher, had to be absent from the Plymouth church where he usually preached. His brother was invited to speak for him. The auditorium was crowded, but when it became evident that the eloquent Henry Ward Beecher was not going to appear, many started to leave the building. The brother of Beecher was not disturbed. He stood up before the murmuring crowd, called for silence and said, “All who came this morning to worship Henry W. Beecher may leave now. The rest will remain to worship God.” No one left after that. It seems to be a constant oversight on the part of some visitors to the worship just what we are there for. Some, like the Athenians, come only to hear the preacher say “something new” (Acts 17:21). “Is it relevant?” “Is it positive?” These are the mental guidelines used in judging sermons. The same is true with some who attend to judge the singing, the prayers, or the friendliness of the congregation. These go away with a host of criticisms, but the thing forgotten here has been worship. What are we in worship for? Granted, some are simply there to “get it over with for a week,” to “get their ticket validated once more.” But those who are there because they need the strength in carrying their crosses, know the value in truly worshipping God. Worship has nothing to do with the song leader or the talent of the preacher. It has to do with you and your God. Let people do what they will to please themselves. “The rest will remain to worship God.”
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Rubin Malone, Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters. Diana Brazell is scheduled for back surgery on September 11.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 1 meets August 13, 1995
Group 2 meets August 13, 1995
Group 3 meets August 20, 1995

READING/INVITATION
August 16, 1995
Reading: Harold Maxey
Invitation: Paul Brantley
August 23, 1995
Reading: Ray Williams
Invitation: Jeremy Caine

MARK THESE DATES
August 20, 1995–Monthly Bible Bowl at Foley. Study 1 Corinthians 13-16.
September 10, 1995–Attendance Drive and Dinner on the Grounds.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned meat

ADDRESS CHANGE
Angela Fletcher’s new address is: 2357 Crosby Avenue #A; Pensacola, FL 32507. Please update your directory.

NEW GRANDMOTHER
Congratulations are extended to Marilyn Hall in the birth of her grandson, Michael Hatcher Nelson Hall, on August 2, 1995, to Johnny and Ellen Hall.
THE CULT OF THE
JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES

Bill Lockwood

The Watchtower Organization, better known as the Jehovah’s Witnesses, like communism, pursues a World Government. The proposed order entails a tightly controlled body of dictatorial religious thought spawned by its headquarters and demanding members to goose-step to its deceitful direction.

Such is the candid judgment of William J. Schnell who wrote of his bondage in Thirty Years a Watchtower Slave, published in 1956. As one who worked his way into prominent leadership among the Witnesses in Judge Rutherford’s days, Schnell exposes the inner circle of power among them to unmask their cultish practices.

Not only does the Watchtower, as all cults, deny most of the principle biblical truths, including the trinity, the physical resurrection of Christ, and the physical return of Christ, but it stretcheds out a vicious network of population control. Note the following characteristics of the cult: First, the Watchtower organizes all of its Witnesses’ time very tightly. “Disatisfaction” is less likely to arise among individuals
whose schedules are strictly regimented. Fundamental among cults is a second telltale mark of the Witnesses. This involves an elaborate, highly efficient “spy system” to “watch over” one another. This is not based upon a brotherly concern for one’s fellow as much as the desire to control the members. Dossiers are therefore maintained on most, much like the FBI utilizes records to prosecute individuals when necessary. Thus, everyone in this system is controlled to a “minute degree.”

Third, those on the inside who question the practices or teaching of the Watchtower are quickly purged. Think not that this can be found among the Lord’s church by Bible discipline, for the idea is far different. Schnell observes that during the period between 1919 and 1931, seventy-five percent of all “Bible students” were eliminated “for failure to come around to Watch Tower leadership.” Once again, instructions come from the central directorate, based upon careful records of each member. Purging is not a local matter. Realizing that information is the key to escape, the central control among the Witnesses also regulates all printed material circulated among its followers. This is a fourth insignia of a cult. Opposing views are rarely allowed to be considered. Open debate is discouraged. A closed circuit of information from the top is the primary tool enforcing the voluntary enslavement. Fifth, a cult normally “feigns” its purposes. The Witnesses are not an exception. For example, Schnell relates how that upon many occasions he was directed to “pick a fight” in a local community “like any common political agitator...against whom I had absolutely no grievance.” Local ordinances were studied prior to working a city and when local codes could be violated to bring attention to the Witnesses’ cause, Schnell was directed by the central command to stir up trouble. In Atlantic City, New Jersey, in 1938, Schnell and others began preaching on the sidewalks without a permit. Ostensibly, they were merely teaching, but he had come to “create an issue” which soon arose when they received a desist order from the mayor. By their arrest, the Witnesses gained the appearance of being “persecuted” by which sympathy was aroused among citizens. Growth ensued.

In another city, the local ordinance refused door to door salesmen on Sunday, requiring citizens to honor the “Christian sabbath.” This provided a gateway for the Witnesses’ cause, whose ultimate goal was to gain public attention by persecution. Watchtower cadets thus ardently campaigned door to door on Sunday.

A sixth characteristic of cults is the practices of duplicity by the organization itself. The Watchtower Society is a political organization conspiring for a New World Order. Religion is merely the method by which this power is maneuvered. “I want you to know,” warns Schnell, “that the Watch Tower Society was like any other organization bent for power. Their claim to preach the gospel of the kingdom, while sincerely believed by many, was actually made to cover up the real purpose for forming so powerful a religious organization. Today it claims America as its background, tomorrow it will claim the world, and it hopes to give tone and direction to the world society of nations for a thousand years to come. In anticipation of that total victory it already calls itself ‘The New World Society.’”

Organizational sophistry does not stop here, however. The actual purpose of the door to door campaigns is to garner revenue from books. Yet, when arrested for peddling without a license they “claim they are preaching!” In turn, leadership at the Watchtower is largely based upon how many “sales” a member can make.

For another illustration, note that the Witnesses make continual charges against “organized denominations,” charging them with being evil because of the “organization” of the denomination itself. But the key is that the Witnesses, behind the scene, duplicate the denominational systems. Thus attacks on American religion are not carried out due to a genuine conviction that
religious hierarchies are evil, but to advance an identical system of their own. **How Christians Should Guard Against the Watchtower**

Foremost, Christians must learn the Bible. Schnell relates that the biblical ignorance of most denominational people including ministers is appalling. We need to be aware of the fact that the Watchtower has published its own Bible and the neighborhood workers know thoroughly a few trails through the Bible, as a child may learn to follow a footpath through the woods. But once off the trail into the woods, or the rest of the Bible, the Witness is normally lost. Unfortunately, too many Christians do not know the Witnesses’ trail of argumentation, nor how to find his own way through the woods.

Second, confrontational preaching is the key. Even ministers of the gospel who know the Bible, according to Schnell, make a serious mistake when dealing with the Witnesses in general. “Instead of standing up to each and every one of them as they invaded...homes, and detonating their practices...these ministers allowed them to continue unmolested. They could have stopped the Society in its tracks.” Unchallenged, this is the assessment of one who spent many years in the enemy camp. Of course in today’s pulpit and upon societies’ streets, the cry is for non-confrontational approaches and many of our folk lap this up like a thirsty animal. In consequence the Watchtower is one of the fastest growing “religious organizations” in the world. The modernist revulsion to spiritual warfare is the prime cause for Satan’s rapid advancement in America.

Third, do not purchase materials from Witnesses. Monies from well-wishers support the Watchtower cause to entrap others on another day. Besides this, the Witnesses merely consider successful sales as “despoiling the Egyptians.” Lastly, when studying in your home, lay ground rules at the beginning for the course of study. For instance, keep a timer on hand and follow it strictly, allowing equal amount of time for yourself as the Witness. And, by all means, keep a single study on a single topic. Skeedaddling around through different subjects brings little gain. Select a topic, verse yourself in it, stay with it, and demand the same from the Witness.

**211 North 5th Street; Marlow, OK 73055**

**USE YOUR TIME WISELY!**

What I do today is important because I am paying a day of my life for it. What I accomplish must be worthwhile because the price is high! “Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise. Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is”(Eph. 5:14-17).

**CHRISTIANITY IS FULL-TIME**

*Al Brown*

It is easy to be a Christian while we are in the church building. We are among fellow saints who, for the most part, think and want to practice righteousness as we do. We sing songs, pray, take the Lord’s supper, and preach to one another in order to encourage and strengthen us to live successfully for Christ in the coming week. Fellowship with our brethren in worship and other activities is very enjoyable.

The time comes, however, when we must face a world hostile to the teaching and moral standard our Lord expects of us. Are we a guiding light to those groping in darkness? Are we meek and longsuffering when the cruel, uncalled-for taunts and jeers are hurled? This is the real test of our religion.

*P.O. Box 39; Spring, TX 77383*
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Rubin Malone, Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters. Diana Brazell is scheduled for back surgery on September 11.

REQUESTED PRAYERS
Dwellie Hill, who is on the mailing list for the Beacon, has requested prayers in his behalf. Please remember him in your daily prayers.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 3 meets August 20, 1995
Group 1 meets September 3, 1995
Group 2 meets September 10, 1995

READING/INVITATION
August 23, 1995
Reading: Ray Williams
Invitation: Jeremy Caine
August 30, 1995
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Bill Crowe

MARK THESE DATES
August 20, 1995–Monthly Bible Bowl at Foley. Study 1 Corinthians 13-16.
August 20, 1995–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., at the building.
August 27, 1995–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., at the building.
August 30, 1995–Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 P.M.
September 10, 1995–Attendance Drive and Dinner on the Grounds.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned meat
Mrs. Karen Hoffay has the pleasure of announcing the marriage of her daughter Lanet Taylor to Mr. Paul McManaman on Saturday the twenty-sixth of August One thousand nine hundred and ninety-five.

The ceremony will take place in Watertown, New York.
“NOTHING” IS VERY IMPORTANT IN THE BIBLE!
Robin W. Haley

Now, please do not be shocked by this title. Take notice of the quotes around the word “nothing.” By this I mean that when God used the word “nothing” in the Bible, something very important is being said! The Bible says quite a lot about “nothing.” In fact, “nothing” is essential for proper understanding of God and His will for mankind.

First, the Bible says “nothing” about God’s power. “For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast” (Psa. 33:9), and “For no word from God shall be void of power” (Luke 1:37).

Next, the Bible says “nothing” about God’s creation. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1), “He stretcheth out the north over empty space, And hangeth the earth upon nothing” (Job 26:7), and “By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible” (Heb. 11:3; NKJV).

Again, the Scriptures speak “nothing” about the doctrine of Christ, “and how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house” (Acts 20:20), “Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come” (Acts 26:22).

What does the Bible say about false doctrines and their practice? You guessed it: NOTHING! Isn’t it curious how folks will try to place the blame for their sins upon someone else rather than admitting and repenting of their sins? Notice:

1. Adam tried to blame Eve, and Eve tried to blame the serpent (Gen. 3:12-13).
2. Aaron sought to put the blame of his sin on the people and the fire (Exo. 32:22-24).
3. Some today say, “When I was a little boy they made me go to church all of the time; so Moses spake nothing concerning priests” (Heb. 7:14), “Who hath fashioned a god, or molten an image that is profitable for nothing?” (Isa. 44:10), and “Behold, I Paul say unto you, that, if ye receive circumcision, Christ will profit you nothing” (Gal. 5:2).

Finally, God has said “nothing” about our hope and salvation. “And this is the will of him that sent me, that of all that which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day” (John 6:39), “It is the spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, are are life” (John 6:63), “not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit” (Tit. 3:5), and “for by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, that no man should glory. (Eph. 2:8-9).

You can see the importance of “nothing” in the Bible. Let us be sure to settle for and be satisfied with “nothing” even as God has ordained within His Word. Let us believe and practice “nothing” more nor less than what the Bible teaches we must. In this, we will be pleasing to God.

972 East Teresa Sapulpa, OK 74066

“LOOK WHAT YOU MADE ME DO!”

Isn’t it curious how folks will try to place the blame for their sins upon someone else rather than admitting and repenting of their sins? Notice:

1. Adam tried to blame Eve, and Eve tried to blame the serpent (Gen. 3:12-13).
2. Aaron sought to put the blame of his sin on the people and the fire (Exo. 32:22-24).
3. Some today say, “When I was a little boy they made me go to church all of the time; so
when I got older I quit the church...look what they made me do!” They also made him comb his hair and take a bath; I guess he quit that also. He ought to be grateful for such parents (Eph. 6:4).

4. A song leader was told by an elder that they would like for another to lead singing that day, and he became angry and quit the church. "The elders caused me to quit" was his response when asked why. Did they really? Or was it his own vain pride?

5. “I was sick and they didn’t come to visit me, so I quit! See what they made me do!” When asked, “Did you call anyone to let them know you were sick?” the response is usually, “No.” The Bible says call the elders (Jam. 5:14).

6. "They weren’t friendly, so I quit the church; see what they made me do!” The Bible says if you have friends you must first be a friend (Pro. 18:24). We assemble to worship God, not just to be friendly (John 4:23-24).

7. “They asked for money all of the time so I quit; see what they made me do!” We are commanded to give (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 9:7). If all truly gave as they had been prospered, the church wouldn’t have to ask for money; we would have a hard time figuring out how to spend it all.

8. “They wouldn’t call on me enough, so I quit; look what they made me do!” Why are we going to worship, to be seen of men or to praise God?

9. Some young people become worldly and quit the church and they say, “There wasn’t anything interesting to do there.” Their parents say, “I don’t blame them, because the church didn’t have recreation or entertainment for them...see what the church made them do!” The church is not in the business of entertaining anyone’s children. That is simply not the purpose of the church (Luke 19:10; Mat. 28:19-20). God gave parents to carry out those activities. The mission of the church is to seek and save the lost with the saving gospel (Rom. 1:16). All Christians, including young people, are commanded to teach the

lost. If they were doing that, they would not have the time to be bored and they would find true purpose for their lives.

10. “The preacher preached at me, so I’m not going back any more; see what he made me do!” What is a preacher to do? Isn’t he to preach against sin? “Oh yes, just not about any of mine!” (2 Tim. 4:1-4). The truth is no one can make you do anything you don’t want to do; no matter what anyone else does to you, you must not desert God. No matter who we blame or whose fault it is, if you desert God, you can look forward to eternal punishment (Heb. 10:24, 30). We will individually answer for our actions to God, without excuse (Rom. 14:11-12; 2 Cor. 5:10-11).

 Via The Messenger Murfreesboro, TN

ONE WAY TO GOD

Malcolm Hill

We have forever had those among us who say there is more than one way to heaven. They are all about us today. All these different plans and yet they lead us to heaven? The sectarians have always preached that one way is just as good as another. But it does not stop with them nowadays. We have supposed members of the church of Christ teaching that there are saved people in denominations. I wonder why this crowd stays with the church of Christ? Why don’t they leave the church of Christ and go join a denominational body? Why bother the body of Christ? Why call themselves members of the church of Christ?

The true church of Christ follows the Bible and the Bible only (Mat. 16:19; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). The true church of Christ preaches the Bible on salvation being in the church of Christ alone. Not all members of the church of Christ are going to be saved. But those saved will be in the church for which Jesus died. There is not a single saved person on earth outside the church of Christ. We are not rude when we teach this. If so, then God is rude for He gave us the Word and it teaches this.

Copied
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Rubin Malone, Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters. Ida Williams will have eye laser surgery on August 23 and Charles Williams will have back surgery on August 23. Diana Brazell is scheduled for back surgery on September 11.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 1 meets September 3, 1995
Group 2 meets September 10, 1995
Group 3 meets September 17, 1995

READING/INVITATION
August 30, 1995
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Bill Crowe
September 6, 1995
Reading: Allen Brazell
Invitation: Ray Dodd

MARK THESE DATES
August 27, 1995–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., at the building.
August 30, 1995–Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 P.M.
September 10, 1995–Attendance Drive and Dinner on the Grounds.
September 12, 1995–Wedding shower for Ieva Peters, at 7:00 P.M., in the general purpose building. Contact Nancy Loy for details.

NEW MEMBER
Ieva Peters, the wife of Michael Peters, has placed membership with the Bellview congregation. Ieva has recently arrived from Riga, Latvia. Please welcome her, if you haven’t done so already. They will be living with his parents, Ray and Judy Peters.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned meat
BELLVIEW CHURCH OF CHRIST
4850 Saufley Road
Pensacola, FL 32526
(904) 455-7595

MINISTER
Michael Hatcher

BISHOPS
Hairston Brantley, Paul Brantley,
Bill Gallaher, Fred Stancliff

DEACONS
Henry Born, Elward Brantley,
Jerry Caine, Bill Crowe, Charles Garrett,
Louis Herrington, James Loy,
Harold Maxey, Richard Parker

MISSIONARY
Ira Y. Rice, Jr.

MEETING TIMES
SUNDAY:
9:00 A.M. BIBLE CLASSES
10:00 A.M., 6:00 P.M. WORSHIP
5:00 P.M. LADIES’ BIBLE CLASS

NEW BIBLE CLASSES
BEGINNING

New Bible Classes for all age groups (youth and adults) will begin September 3, 1995, for the Sunday morning classes and September 6, 1995, for the Wednesday evening classes.

SUNDAY SCHEDULE
ADULTS I—The Eternal Kingdom, Paul Brantley,
room 7.
ADULTS II—Studying Sin Seriously II, Michael Hatcher, room 1.
NEW CONVERTS—Christian Doctrine, Bill Gallaher, room 17.

WEDNESDAY SCHEDULE
ADULTS I—Typology, Michael Hatcher, room 7.
ADULTS II—I Samuel, Fred Stancliff, room 1.
ADULTS III—The Doctrine Of Christ Versus The Doctrines Of Men, Ray Foshee, room 5.
NEW CONVERTS—Christian Doctrine, Bill Gallaher, room 17.

The Adults I and II classes will be changing class rooms. Please note the changes.
GOD SAID!
Robin W. Haley

Many in this congregation, and many others who may read this article in other places, have by this time read or have begun to read brother Goebel Music’s newest book dealing with the so-called “Easy To Read Version” of the Bible. As with so many other “new versions” there is a foundational problem with even calling this product a Bible. The Bible, the Book of God, is not something that the Lord has allowed men to revamp as they please. Yet, this is exactly what some do (or try to do) with the Holy Text. This article wants to briefly look at what God has said to man, then make the application that if God said something, how DARE men change it to make it what they call “more readable or understandable.”

It never ceases to amaze me how shocked people are when they learn that what they always “knew” IS NOT what God has said. Some are being lead to believe that what God has said is not even all that important. Rather they are told that “since truth is not absolutely knowable, it is only the PURSUIT of the truth that God wants from us.” This is altogether untrue! God said, “Buy the truth, and sell it not; Yea, wisdom, and instruction, and understanding” (Pro. 23:23). Jesus said, “and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). We must know what God said in order to live eternally with Him in heaven.

“God Said” is the basis for all there is and all that we are or can be. Ten times in Genesis chapter one the Bible reads, “God said...and it was so.” Our time and seasons exist because of what God has said. “And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years” (Gen. 1:14). Remember, “For he spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast” (Psa. 33:9).

“God Said” is the beginning of every institution on earth, the first of which is marriage. “And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him” (Gen. 2:18).

“God Said” is the foundation of our faith, “But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Mat.4:4). And again, “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17).

Finally, what God has said is what will judge and save us. “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John 12:48). Several times the prophets would write, “For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it,” If what God has said is so important, and indeed it is if we wish to live forever, then how can we accept anything less than “Thus saith the Lord” in our Bibles, our Bible classes and our preaching? Demand the best! Demand the word of God!

912 East Teresa Sapulpa, OK 74066

MISSIONARY TRIP TO MURMANSK, RUSSIA

Paul Brantley, an elder with the Bellview congregation, will be leaving on his third missionary trip to Murmansk, Russia, on September 4. Tanya and Preston Silcox, Paul’s daughter and son-in-law, will be with him on this trip. Preston is a recent graduate of the Memphis School of Preaching and works with the Bethel Church of Christ in Martin, TN.

Our prayers are with Paul, Preston, and Tanya for a safe trip and a successful effort in reaching souls with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
ATTENDANCE DRIVE
AND
DINNER ON
THE GROUNDS

SEPTEMBER 10, 1995

Dinner on the grounds will follow
the morning service.
Bring someone with you to
Bible class and worship.
This is always a great
time to introduce visitors
to the true Gospel of Christ
and to the Bellview Church.
The Bellview members will be
providing the food and drinks.
RESTORED
Champ Hollowell was restored on August 27, 1995. Please remember him in your prayers.

SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Rubin Malone, Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Ida Williams, Charles Williams, Inez Brantley, and Tim Lamb. Ray Dodd is in Baptist Hospital. Diana Brazell is scheduled for back surgery on September 11.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 1 meets September 3, 1995
Group 2 meets September 10, 1995
Group 3 meets September 17, 1995

READING/INVITATION
September 6, 1995
Reading: Allen Brazell
Invitation: Ray Dodd
September 13, 1995
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Ray Foshee

MARK THESE DATES
September 10, 1995–Attendance Drive and Dinner on the Grounds.
September 12, 1995–Wedding shower for Ieva Peters, at 7:00 P.M., in the general purpose building. Contact Nancy Loy for details.
September 17, 1995–Monthly Bible Bowl at Fairhope, at 2:00 P.M. Study 1 Corinthians 16 to 2 Corinthians 4.
October 17, 1995–Annual Teacher’s Meeting.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned fruit
Hairston Brantley Retires

Last Wednesday evening (August 30) at the close of services our hearts were saddened at hearing that brother Brantley had decided to retire from the eldership. He had previously indicated that he would be retiring in a few months, but because of health reasons deemed it best to go ahead and retire at this time.

The Bible teaches that we are to give honor to those to whom it is deserved. “Render therefore to all their dues:...honour to whom honour” (Rom. 13:7). Brother Brantley deserves honor. He was greatly instrumental in beginning the church in Bellview. He served as the first preacher of the Bellview congregation when it was on then Millview Road, now renamed as Blue Angel Parkway and preached the first sermon in this building. He, along with brother Bill Gallaher, were appointed to serve as its first elders in 1965. Brother Brantley has continued to faithfully serve this congregation since. Although only being here a year, I have learned to love and appreciate brother Brantley. He has a great love for preachers, as is evidenced by his support and promotion of the Preacher Training School that was once here and the annual lectureship. He also has a great love for people, often calling and going by to visit people who were in need. While brother Brantley is having to retire from the eldership, we know that he will continue to work and serve with us in the furtherance of the Lord’s church, both here and elsewhere. 

MH
CAUSE FOR CONCERN

Bubba Phillips

In the last several years, more than a few brethren have indicated that the pulpit preaching they are hearing was less than desirable. After listening to these brethren carefully, I immediately began to understand what they meant.

Some brethren said, “We have not heard a sermon on the judgement in over seven years.” So some gospel preachers believe that everyone is ready for judgment? Matthew 25:31-46, Romans 14:11-12, 2 Corinthians 5:10 and Hebrews 9:27 still need to be preached today!

Several brethren stated, “Our preacher has not told anyone how to become a Christian in the last five years.” Brethren, this is pathetic! There is no excuse for such negligence in the Lord’s church! How can a man call himself a gospel preacher and not inform an audience how to become a Christian during his sermon? It is very evident that preachers guilty of this negligence need to repent or get out of the Lord’s pulpit.

A few others said, “Our preacher doesn’t even extend the invitation.” I guess some reason that it is “old hat” to some, but it is worthwhile and necessary during worship, if we are going to reach people present who need to respond to the Lord’s invitation.

More than a few told me, “Our preacher doesn’t use any, or uses very little Scripture in his sermons.” I assume such “sermons” are filled with Norman Vincent Pealeism, jokes and quotes from many other non-inspired writers. First Peter 4:11 still applies today, “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.” Very little or “no Scripture sermons” are for the birds—they are worthless! Such “sermons” do not please God or even attempt to offer the spiritual solutions to the sins of mankind.

Some admitted, “Our preacher won’t preach anything that will rock the boat.” Brethren, we have a lot of boats that “need rocking” in the brotherhood, do we not? With ignorance, indifference, liberalism and immorality abounding in our Lord’s church, preachers better start speaking the truth, and if boats are “rocked,” so be it! It is better to stir the waters than to be lost for not preaching what needs to be heard, yea what must be heard.

Preachers better get back to the book—the Bible. Pulpit time is valuable, soul reaching time! No preacher has the authority to attempt to make the pulpit time a “Saturday afternoon chat.” He is to preach all the Word, and only the Word and he better do just that! (Acts 20:20,27; 2 Tim. 4:2-6).

HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN SINCE YOU...

Took time to go see someone who lives alone?
Wrote a letter to someone who crossed your mind?
Read the Bible to someone too ill to read for themselves?
Encouraged someone who was having a hard time being a Christian?
Prayed earnestly for someone who was faltering?
Told a teen that you were proud of their efforts to live for Christ?
Informed your family of your love and appreciation of them?
Every Christian can do something?

Copied
ATTENDANCE DRIVE AND DINNER ON THE GROUNDS

SEPTEMBER 10, 1995

Dinner on the grounds will follow the morning service. Bring someone with you to Bible class and worship. This is always a great time to introduce visitors to the true Gospel of Christ and to the Bellview Church. The Bellview members will be providing the food and drinks.
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Rubin Malone, Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Charles Williams, Inez Brantley, Tim Lamb, and Ray Dodd. Diana Brazell is scheduled for back surgery on September 11.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 1 meets September 10, 1995
Group 2 meets September 17, 1995
Group 3 meets September 24, 1995

READING/INVITATION
September 13, 1995
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Ray Foshee
September 20, 1995
Reading: Bill Cline
Invitation: Bill Gallaher

MARK THESE DATES
September 10, 1995–Attendance Drive and Dinner on the Grounds.
September 10-13, 1995–Gospel meeting at Pine Street Church of Christ in Bay Minette, AL, with Billy Lambert speaking. Services start at 7:30 P.M. nightly.
September 12, 1995–Wedding shower for Leva Peters, at 7:00 P.M., in the general purpose building. Contact Nancy Loy for details.
September 17, 1995–Monthly Bible Bowl at Fairhope, at 2:00 P.M. Study 1 Corinthians 16 to 2 Corinthians 4.
October 17, 1995–Annual Teacher’s Meeting.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned fruit
The last several years our nation has moved increasingly closer to becoming a “welfare state.” Surely, no one objects to helping the truly helpless. Americans consistently prove their deep compassion for such. However, something is wrong when people who simply refuse to work are rewarded with support equal to or surpassing what one would earn if he or she worked.

Numerous scandals have rocked the welfare system in recent years. A woman and her children were put up in a plush New York hotel for several days at taxpayers expense. In Chicago a woman using over a dozen aliases was caught drawing welfare payments from various offices and living like royalty. In Carlsbad, New Mexico two cases of theft occurred in which large quantities of food stamps and considerable sums of cash were stolen from the same purse! Many of us have watched people in the supermarket checkout line who produced food stamps for their food and then paid for their wine, beer, and tobacco with a roll of money. God has not repealed His law that says, “If any will not work, neither let him eat” (2 Thes. 3:10). Easy and uncontrolled social welfare is sapping the initiative of our great nation!

The “spiritual welfare” seen in the church is just as sad. Some saints never have time to become involved in the visiting, teaching, or the
physical work necessary to keeping the property attractive. They have money to spend on everything but the Lord's work. They will not even worship regularly.

In spite of all their laziness and unconcern, they still want to be waited on hand and foot. Let one of these "welfare" folk get sick or have a death in the family that is not immediately announced (because it was not known) and he/she will loudly complain of "neglect" and "unconcern." When there is a death or a marriage in such a family, the church is expected to furnish a building, singers, a preacher (and with a wedding, at least one shower), all taken for granted as "their due." If the name of a family with a perfect three year record of forsaking the assembly is deleted from the new church directory you may hear them holler in the next county. Such folk are operating on a "spiritual welfare" basis. They want all of the benefits while accepting none of the responsibilities of spiritual citizenship. Ironically, some who might prate the loudest against social welfare are the very ones who practice "spiritual welfare." Does not "If any will not work, neither let him eat" apply to spiritual matters as well as to physical? Indeed, both of these welfare systems are contrary to God's will.

PASS THE NAIL CLIPPERS

"Why is the church of Christ so rowdy?" asked a recent convert from denominationalism. "What do you mean?" I replied, "Why, the people in the assembly talk and move around right up until the last moment, and then they turn on their worship. One lady in there tonight leaned across me and asked the lady sitting beside me if she could borrow her nail clippers when she finished. Later, she had the nerve to ask me to pass the nail clippers, upon observing the lady had finished clipping her nails."

If you think this is an isolated, never-to-happen-again case, you are wrong. After having preached in twenty-five states and several foreign countries, I can recall incident after incident of this kind. Incidents that were very distracting as one sought to worship God in the assembly. In our attempts to escape the formalism of denominationalism we have, in some cases, gone to the other extreme. In worship service to the living God one may be distracted by one or more of the following:

The clipping of finger nails. This sounds like a hammer hitting an anvil.

Passing notes. Some spend their time in the worship service playing Postman.

Daydreaming. From time to time this person has to be nudged to pass the communion trays or plates.

Sleeping. This certainly distracts; especially when the person snores.

Whispering. This interferes with the listening comprehension of those next to you.

Kicking the pews. This sounds like a drummer sending a signal to a distant land.

A screaming child. If not soon quieted, can disturb the whole congregation.

The smacking of chewing gum. I have even seen some blow bubbles during worship services.

The shuffling and playing with songbooks is very distracting during prayer or communion.

Sitting on the end of the pew. This person hinders by preventing persons from getting in or out. You have to "climb" over some to occupy a seat.

Needless walking in and out of the services. In some congregations there is a constant "Parade" in the services.

Going to the front to adjust the thermostat. In one congregation I saw a man and a woman take turns during the service going to the front to
check or adjust the setting.

Continually slapping a child on the leg. (i.e., just enough to make the child mad).

Tearing and wadding of paper. (I have seen boys shoot spitballs).

The child that crawls in the aisle or under the pews is very distracting, too.

Playing with children (i.e., winking or waving at them).

Winding a watch. For some unknown reason many wait until worship services to wind their “Big Ben.”

Filing fingernails is another very distracting thing.

There are those who will respond to these observations by saying, “Oh, don’t be petty. None of these things bother me.” While this may well be the case for some rare persons, how about the scores who are distracted during worship? As children of God we must be interested in building up one another. To do this we must do things “decently and in order.” We must be considerate of one another; not doing anything that will offend or distract. May we forget that the flesh is weak. Therefore, let us work on being more reverent in worship.

ALL THINGS ARE YOURS

Robin W. Haley

“Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours” (1 Cor. 3:21). These words of Paul remind us of the blessings, both physical and spiritual that can be ours by living a pure, Christian life. In chapter one of this letter Paul writes that God’s wisdom is revealed in the Gospel of His Son. In chapter two he tells us that God’s mystery is revealed by the Holy Spirit through the apostles and their preaching this Gospel. In this chapter, he sums up: the church is God’s temple, and all that God has prepared is now ours if we are faithful members thereof.

He negates the folly of some who attempt to glory (boast) in men or even in themselves, They were not to glory in Paul, Apollos or Cephas, but in Christ. This kind of “glorying” is exactly what brings division (1:10) and resulting denominationalism. Thus, we too are to learn not to glory in men. The church does not belong to the preacher nor the elders nor any other “leader” save Christ alone. These leaders have their place and their duties which must be respected. But they are not the “owners” nor are we to conclude that they are without fault. Let us imitate the faith of our elders “as” they imitate and follow Christ (1 Cor. 11:1; Heb. 13:7, 17).

What then is ours? The apostles and their teaching (Acts 2:42); the preachers and elders and deacons and teachers (Eph. 4:11-12; 1 Cor. 12:28); the world (although temporary) is our home for now, its use is for us, we labor in it as a vineyard and it serves as our grave (Heb. 11:10, 16; John 9:4; Mark 16:15; Gen. 3:19). As Paul would go on to say, “life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s” (1 Cor. 3:22-23).

Life can be bad or good; it can beat us or we can win. We must decide which it shall be. Moses said to the Old Testament people of God, “I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life” (Deu. 30:19). Just so, Paul reminds us that “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), and “in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us” (Rom. 8:37). Let us determine to be “crucified with Christ” (Gal. 2:20), that we may live eternally and receive not only these earthly, temporal blessings, but those laid up for us in eternity.
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Rubin Malone, Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters. Inez Brantley, Tim Lamb, Ray Dodd, and Diana Brazell.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 2 meets September 17, 1995
Group 3 meets September 24, 1995
Group 1 meets October 1, 1995

READING/INVITATION
September 20, 1995
Reading: Bill Cline
Invitation: Bill Gallaher
September 27, 1995
Reading: Harold Cozad
Invitation: Louis Herrington

MARK THESE DATES
October 17, 1995–Annual Teacher’s Meeting. All teachers who are presently teaching Bible classes as well as those past and future teachers, and any other members who are interested in the Bible class program at Bellview are invited to attend.
November 5-10, 1995–Bellview Church of Christ gospel meeting with Tony Tarole from Tequesta, FL.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned fruit

NEW ADDRESS
Lanet and Paul McManaman’s new address is 2036 Coral Street; Pensacola, FL 32506. Their phone number is 453-1895. Please update your directory.
HOW TO HELP THE CHURCH GROW
(Part 1)
Bob Berard

Undoubtedly there are many sincere brethren who want to do what they can to advance the cause of Christ. It is equally evident that much erroneous information about church growth is being provided to such sincere souls. Specifically in mind are the “new” techniques for a broader appeal such as: avoiding controversial Bible doctrines, extending the role of women to include their leadership in worship, hand clapping, spontaneous worship programs, where one speaks out or sings out at will, singing with the Lord’s Supper, choirs, ministering to the whole man, i.e., more body recreation and less Bible education, etc. The unhappy outcome of all this is that a lot of folks are busy doing something, some of whom are knowingly leading the church into the formation of a new denomination, others who are mindlessly just having a good time, and still others who are pursuing their good intentions to no good end. It reminds one of the bus driver’s candid response to a passenger’s question about the progress of their journey. He said, “Well, I’m really not certain if we’re going in the right direction, but we sure are making good time.”

It is no laughing matter, of course, when time, money, and energy needed to do right things is being squandered on wrong things and especially sad is the fact that many souls are being weakened and destroyed rather than being strengthened and saved.
Consider then, for this introductory article, just two fundamental certainties about how you and I can help the church grow. First, we can start with and stick with the basics from God’s Book and, second, we can stay clear of the unauthorized innovations and additions of men.  

Box 38; Spring, TX 77383

WHAT IS YOUR LIFE?  
Cliff Lyons

Life is a very prized possession. Yet, so many people have the wrong concept regarding our sojourn upon this earth. What does the word “future” bring to your mind? Does it cause you to think of your plans to get married, begin a family, have a beautiful house or a new car and plenty of money? Or, do you find yourself thinking in terms of spiritual matters? God? Christ? Heaven? The church?

James raises the question, “What is your life?” (Jam. 4:14). The context shows that James was calling attention to the fact that some were leaving God out of their plans. Instead of putting God first in their lives, they were making plans with little or no dependance upon God. They were assuming that LIFE, HEALTH, PROSPERITY and other circumstances of life were certain. Thus, James wrote, “ye know not what shall be on the morrow. What is your life? For ye are a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall both live, and do this or that” (Jam. 4:14-15). Don’t be overly certain about the length of life upon this earth, but be sure to give God first place. At best life is short when we consider that there is an eternity beyond. Thus, don’t live in the past, nor in the future. “Boast not thyself of tomorrow; For thou knowest not what a day may bring forth” (Pro. 27:1). You are personally responsible for what you make of your life because you are free to choose your path in life. Thus, since life is short and uncertain, be sure to include God in all your plans (Mat. 7:13-14).

Solomon said, “This is the end of the matter; all hath been heard: fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every work into judgment, with every hidden thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Ecc. 12:13-14). Life is the time to make our salvation sure by obeying from the heart the will of God. It is the time for us to walk in the steps of Jesus as best we can with the understanding that He loved us and gave Himself for us and that we must one day stand before Him in judgment (Rom. 6:17-18; 1 Pet. 2; John 3:16; Rev. 2:10; Acts 17:30-31). The Bible clearly teaches that our life upon this earth is the only time we have to make preparation for eternity (Heb. 9:27). Now is the time for us to trust and obey the will of God.

2141 Kingston; Muscogee, OK 74403

MAKING SERVICE EASIER  
Charles Cosgrove

Once there was an irate guest who was staying at a rather expensive hotel. “I’m not going to stay in this place a minute longer,” she protested to the manager, “unless that piano player next door moves. What a racket he makes.”

“Madam,” interrupted the manager, “I hope you can put up with it for a few more days. You see, the pianist is the great Paderewski, and he is practicing for his next concert.”

“Paderewski!” Now the woman invited her friends to her room. “You don’t want to miss this,” she said. “A famous concert pianist is staying in the room next to mine. You can hear every note he plays!”

What was the difference? The room? The hotel? The music? No! The only thing that really changed was the woman’s attitude. Before, she
was irritated and annoyed; now she was thrilled.

Oftentimes our own attitude needs some serious revising. If Christian service seems tedious, just stop and think about whom you are serving. What a privilege it is to know Jesus and to be His co-worker.

A love for the Lord takes the dead weight out of service and puts wings to it. Love makes Christ much easier.

“Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy” (Psa. 16:11).

The great Redeemer! What a privilege to be close to Him!

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THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH

Michael Hatcher

In the monumental work by Edward Gibbon titled *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Mr. Gibbon dealt with the church of the first century. In dealing with this area he commented concerning the rapid growth of the church (see volume 1, Chapter 15, page 382ff). Gibbon gave five reasons why he believed (as a historian) the church grew at such an amazing pace during that time. I believe a study of these five reasons will be profitable for us today. As we study these points let us realize that Mr. Gibbon was not inspired as he wrote, instead he wrote as an historian.

Some might wonder why we would or why we should pay attention to the points Mr. Gibbon made. Certainly Mr. Gibbon might be right or wrong concerning his assessment of the situation. However, as we notice these, I believe there are biblical principles involved. Mr. Gibbon, as an historian studying the situation, saw these principles exhibited by them. Then, we need to learn these principles and apply them to ourselves. Then, when we apply these principles to ourselves, we will grow, as the first century church did.

Then, realizing Mr. Gibbon is writing as a historian, if he is correct in what he writes, we should use it as a learning device. History is a learning device. The Bible sets this fact forth in passages such as Romans 15:4. “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning.” Also First Corinthians 10:11, “Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition.” While I recognize that these passages refer specifically to the Old Testament Scriptures and events, it rests upon the principle that we are to learn from history, so we will not repeat their mistakes and we will do those things that are successful and God approved.

The five reasons given by Gibbon are: (all quotes taken from Gibbon, p. 383.)

1. **Inflexible and intolerable zeal.** “The inflexible, and, if we may use the expression, the intolerant zeal of the Christians, derived, it is true, from the Jewish religion, but purified from the narrow and unsocial spirit which, instead of inviting, had deterred the Gentiles from embracing the law of Moses.”

2. **Emphasis on last things.** “The doctrine of a future life, improved by every additional circumstance which could give weight and efficacy to that important truth.”

3. **The miraculous elements.** “The miraculous powers ascribed to the primitive church.”

4. **Pure and austere morals.** “The pure and austere morals of the Christians.”

5. **Union and discipline of the church.** “The union and discipline of the Christian republic, which gradually formed an independent and increasing state in the heart of the Roman empire.”

Over the next few weeks in the articles that follow, I want us to take an in depth look at each one of these areas.

4850 Saufley Road, Pensacola, FL 32526
SYMPATHY
We extend our deepest sympathy to the family of Bill Coss, who passed from this life on September 16, 1995. Brother Coss was a faithful gospel preacher and a friend of the Bellview congregation.

SICK AND SHUT-IN

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 3 meets September 24, 1995
Group 1 meets October 1, 1995
Group 2 meets October 8, 1995

READING/INVITATION
September 27, 1995
Reading: Harold Cozad
Invitation: Louis Herrington
October 4, 1995
Reading: Mike Dobbs
Invitation: Tim Lamb

MARK THESE DATES
October 17, 1995–Annual Teacher’s Meeting. All teachers who are presently teaching Bible classes as well as those past and future teachers, and any other members who are interested in the Bible class program at Bellview are invited to attend.
November 5-10, 1995–Bellview Church of Christ gospel meeting with Tony Tarole from Tequesta, FL.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned fruit
Two basics for helping the church grow, a positive and a negative, were given in our last discussion—1) Start with and stick with the basics from God’s Book and 2) stay clear of the unauthorized innovations and additions of men.

From the garden of Eden forward man has been charged to adhere to God’s will in every facet of his life. Certainly the rule obtains in the matter of God’s own spiritual kingdom and its progress (Gen. 2:15-17; Col. 3:17). Jeremiah told Israel of old, “Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls” (Jer. 6:16a). It should be no surprise, however, that many today spurn this inspired counsel, since the verse goes on to say, “But they said, We will not walk therein” (Jer. 6:16b). Of course Scripture repeatedly tells the sorrowful end of rebellious men and such should motivate us to careful compliance in every matter, and particularly, church growth (Lev. 10:1-2).

The growth rightly sought includes both individual spiritual advancement and an increase in the number of those converted to Christ (1 Pet. 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:18; Mark 16:15-16). The process employed in both cases invariably involves the serious, honest, careful, respectful,
and resolute consideration of what the Bible has to say (Acts 2:14-37; 17:11; Eph. 3:3-4). Moreover, this consideration must be coupled with our compliance with the Word (Jam. 1:22). Failing to have for ourselves the determination to learn and do God’s will and/or failing to convey this determination to those we seek to convert is a guarantee of failing to grow as God would have us grow (Luke 11:28). How is this determination to learn and do the Lord’s will conveyed or not conveyed?

INFLEXIBLE AND INTOLERABLE ZEAL

Michael Hatcher

This is the first reason that Gibbon listed as why the church grew so fast in the first century. What did Mr. Gibbon mean when he said this concerning the first century church? He had reference that these people were very intolerant in what they believed. They refused to compromise in their beliefs. They believed in only one way, only one church, only one way of being saved, etc. This did not coincide with the thinking of that day. The thinking of the people (both religiously and governmental) was that of tolerance. They were taught to accept anything that anybody believed, this was true even of those that were distasteful and hateful to them personally.

It seems that our day is similar to the first century in this and many other ways. We are told over and over that as long as a person is sincere that he will be saved, and that we must accept everyone. This is one of the reasons many are now embracing the ecumenical movement. The only thing that people today are intolerant about is being intolerant. This is the same attitude expressed in the first century, and Gibbon said that one of the five reasons the church grew so fast is because they refused to go along with this type of thinking. They did not tolerate any other way. I ask the question, if we are intolerant and inflexible under the same circumstances will we not grow? I believe the question answers itself.

Is this a scriptural attitude? This is really the most important question. Does the Bible teach we should be tolerant of other ways and other teachings or should we be intolerant? As we study the Bible we see that it is the Bible way. Jesus taught that He was the way, not a way. His Word is truth, not part of the truth or one of many truths. He also taught that everyone who is of the truth hears Him, not just some of the ones who are of the truth. See for example, John 8:32; 14:6; 18:37. Peter taught to the leaders of the Jews that Jesus was the only one in whom salvation comes; Acts 4:12. He did not teach that Jesus was one of many ways of salvation. Is this not narrow and intolerant of other ways? Paul taught that Jesus was the only mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5-6). What about all the other mediators between God and man? Do you think that other religions who claimed another way and another mediator might be offended? Those who taught false doctrine or another way, were labeled as heretics, and the anathema of God placed upon them (see Rom. 16:17-18; Tit. 3:10; Gal. 1:8-9; 2 John 9-11).

Neither can we allow ourselves to become tolerant of other ways. We must remember that there is still only one way, truth, mediator, etc. Those who change or alter the way, must not be tolerated. When denominational groups (or some liberal churches today) change God’s plan of salvation (faith only or grace only salvation, baptism is not necessary for salvation, etc.), change the
worship of the church (adding instrumental music, failing to partake of the Lord’s Supper every Sunday, etc.), change the work of the church (entertainment, recreation, social injustices, etc.), change the organization of the church (earthly headquarters, popes, preacher rule, etc.), or any other change of God’s Word, WE MUST NOT TOLERATE THEM!!!. We must withdraw our fellowship from them, avoid them (see passages above), recognizing their lost condition.

4850 Saufley Road; Pensacola, FL 32526

ABRAHAM:
A FRIEND OF GOD
Garry Stanton

Abraham is called a friend of God. Friendship with God is a worthy and admirable position. Our being able to go to heaven one day relies on our not becoming God’s enemy but His friend like Abraham. Let’s notice the qualities of Abraham’s life that made him a friend of God with the intent of instilling the same qualities in our lives.

Abraham was the friend of God because he was not a friend of God’s enemy. What kind of friendship exists between two when one is a friend of the other’s enemy? At best the relationship is going to be strained. Total fellowship between friends is going to be impossible (Amos 3:3). The world is God’s enemy (Jam. 4:4). Abraham had not become so attached to his city, family, and friends that he would not leave them when God told him to (Gen. 12:1). Abraham was willing to give up all this and go live in the wilderness. It would have been easy for Abraham to have been so attached to his world that he refused to leave it. But Abraham was a friend of God not a friend of God’s enemy! God has commanded us to separate ourselves from the world around us (1 John 2:15; 2 Cor. 6:16-18). Our friendship with God is inversely proportional to our friendship with the world, the more our friendship with the world the less our friendship with God.

Abraham was the friend of God because he trusted God. God had promised Abraham that in his seed all the families of the earth would be blessed (Gen. 12:2-3). Abraham demonstrated his reliance upon God when he took Isaac, his son of promise, and was going to offer him as a sacrifice to God as God had told him to do (Jam. 2:23). Abraham would have offered up Isaac but God stayed him from doing so, and so it was accounted to Abraham for righteousness. Biblical faith, faith that comes from God’s Word (Rom. 10:17), means a complete reliance upon what God says (2 Cor. 5:7). Biblical faith is an obedient faith (Rom. 1:5; 16:26). If we are to be God’s friend today we must possess the same truth.

Abraham was the friend of God because he obeyed God. Abraham’s response to his faith was that he obeyed what God said to do (Heb. 11:8-10). Abraham’s obedience is an example unto us because of the many New Testament references to him. The lack of obedience is because of the lack of faith. Abraham was truly God’s friend because he truly trusted God, and because he trusted God, he did exactly what God said to do.

Do we want to be God’s friend? Friendship does not come without some effort. If we want to be God’s friend we must learn from Abraham’s example. We cannot be God’s friend if we are friends with the world. We must trust God, and we must complete our friendship by doing what God has told us to do.

3039 Cherokee; Camden, AR 71701
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Rubin Malone, Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Inez Brantley, and Diana Brazell, and Fred Stancliff.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 1 meets October 1, 1995
Group 2 meets October 8, 1995
Group 3 meets October 15, 1995

READING/INVITATION
October 4, 1995
Reading: Mike Dobbs
Invitation: Tim Lamb
October 11, 1995
Reading: Howard Johnson
Invitation: Tony Liddell

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November 5-10, 1995–Bellview Church of Christ gospel meeting. Tony Tarole, who works with the Jupiter-Tequesta Church of Christ in Tequesta, FL, will be speaking. The theme of the meeting is “Searching For The Truth.” Make plans to attend and invite your relatives, friends, and neighbors.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned fruit
HOW TO HELP THE CHURCH GROW (PART 3)
Bob Berard

Desiring to convey to others our determination to know and do God’s will in our evangelistic efforts, we here consider how to make a wise choice of methods (Luke 11:28).

The Bible does authorize expeditious means for accomplishing God’s mandates. Therefore, efforts to accomplish our obligation to teach may include methods of a type not explicitly mentioned in the Bible. As Noah undoubtedly used tools which were apparently not specifically enumerated by God to build the Divinely designed ark, we too may use “tools” to build-up the church of Christ.

However, the method chosen must be advantageous to the accomplishment of the God-given obligation. Noah would have been wrong to use a tool which would contribute more to ark destruction than to ark construction. So too, we err if we use methods which are silly or senseless. For example, an advertising method is hardly advantageous if the approach used suggests that the church is more concerned with fun, games, and gimmicks than with righteousness, temperance and judgment to come? (Acts 24:25). God has given us a most serious charge and though we may at times employ humor in connection with our evangelistic work, surely humor or the trivial should never become the salient feature of our efforts. Methods which are aimed at the heart of man, methods which show man’s greatest need, i.e.,
spiritual, methods which are permeated with a balanced presentation of the facts, conditions, and promises of the Bible will be advantageous methods and will convey to all who honestly assess them as the product of those with a determination to know and do the Lord’s will.

Box 38, Spring, TX 77838

“WHO IS YOUR FATHER?”

Wayne Price

We are not speaking of your literal father in the flesh, for the answer to that is readily apparent, at least in most cases. We speak of our earthly “father” as seen in Hebrews 12:7. Of course, those who belong to Christ have God as their spiritual “Father” (Heb. 12:9).

In John 8:41, when the Jews claimed that they “had one Father, even God,” “Jesus responded by stating that God was not their Father” (v. 42), since they did not love the Son (Himself) who came from God. Then He bombarded them with the charge that their father was the devil (v. 44), due to the attitude they had toward the truth, and their behavior.

Now, knowing this, we again ask: “Who is your Father?” Surely every person is within one family or the other, either God’s or Satan’s, excepting, of course, infants and those who are mentally deficient. However, when reaching the age of accountability, and being tempted to sin, we exercise our freedom of choice as free will agents. Some CHOOSE to stay with the devil, and continue in sin, thus the devil becomes their father. However, by an obedient faith we become children of God (Gal. 3:27), and are ushered into God’s family by means of the new birth (John 3:3-5). Babies and young children are neither in God’s family nor the devil’s, because that is determined by choice. They are not “saved” since they have never sinned, but rather they are “safe.”

The devil is one’s father before he is baptized, due to the fact that he (or she) has sinned. Before having chosen to sin, that person is not a child of the devil at all, thus only the time between his sin and his obeying the gospel is he considered the devil’s child. Romans 6:16 puts it this way: “Know ye not, that to whom YE YIELD yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey.” Who then is your father — well, it’s your choice!

Via Eastside Edifier

EMPHASIS ON LAST THINGS

Michael Hatcher

The second item which Mr. Gibbon gives as the reason that the church grew with such speed during the first century is that of the doctrine of a future life. He speaks of the first century church as having a deep seeded faith in the afterlife. They believed all men everywhere would live again. They had a belief that if they lived faithful to the commands of God, they would have an eternal bliss with God in the resurrection. They also knew that those who did not live in accordance with those commands would be eternally punished. He says concerning them, “The primitive church...delivered over, without hesitation, to eternal torture the far greater part of the human species.” They believed most would be
Jesus taught, “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Mat. 7:13-14). As a result of this faith, notice what Gibbon continues to say about them. “There were many who felt a sincere compassion for the danger of their friends and countrymen, and who exerted the most benevolent zeal to save them from the impending destruction.” This knowledge of man’s destruction caused them to make known to man what they needed to do to be saved.

Do we really believed that the majority of the world is going “to eternal torture”? Do we believe those in the denominational world, Baptist, Methodist, Lutherans, Catholics, etc., are lost and going to spend an eternal torment separated from God? Do we believe that those morally good people who do not attend any religious group are lost and going to eternal torture? They are lost. They will be separated from God in a devil’s hell where they will be tormented eternally in fire and brimstone. When we truly believe this, will we not have that same, “benevolent zeal” to tell the world about the saving grace of Christ? Sad to say, I think that many in the church today believe that somehow everyone is going to be saved. It appears some believe that God will find some way to save those people or that God really is “too good” to send anyone to hell. When we come to realize that these people, our friends, neighbors, work associates, etc., are going to hell, then we will have the “benevolent zeal” to teach them the truth. Surely, our compassion toward these people would be enough to teach them. Remember that God is only going to save those who are obedient to Him (Heb. 5:8-9). Let us also remember that those who do not obey Him are going to eternal torture (2 Th. 1:6-9). This should provide ample motivation for us to preach the gospel to them.

4850 Saufley Road; Pensacola, FL 32526

Gospel Meeting with Tony Tarole
from Tequesta, Florida
November 5 - 10, 1995
Sunday morning at 9:00 and 10:00 A.M.
Sunday - Friday evenings at 7:30 P.M.
“Searching For The Truth”
Sunday Bible Study: “My Search For The Truth”
Sunday Worship: “Six Reasons Why You Should Be A Christian”
Sunday Evening: “What Think Ye Of Christ?”
Monday: “Preaching Jesus”
Tuesday: “Are You Sure Of Your Salvation?”
Wednesday: “Jewels Or Mud?”
Thursday: “Their Blood Is On Your Hands”
Friday: “That Coming Day”
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Rubin Malone, Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Inez Brantley, Diana Brazell, Fred Stancliff, and Marilyn Hall.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 1 meets October 1, 1995
Group 2 meets October 8, 1995
Group 3 meets October 15, 1995

READING/INVITATION
October 11, 1995
Reading: Howard Johnson
Invitation: Tony Liddell
October 18, 1995
Reading: Chad Lightner
Invitation: Jerry Lindesmith

MARK THESE DATES
October 15, 1995–Monthly Bible Bowl at
Bay Minette. Study 2 Corinthians 5-9.
October 19, 1995–Annual Teacher’s Meeting. All teachers who are presently teaching Bible classes as well as those past and future teachers, and any other members who are interested in the Bible class program at Bellview are invited to attend.
November 5–10, 1995–Bellview Church of Christ gospel meeting. Tony Tarole, who works with the Jupiter-Tequesta Church of Christ in Tequesta, FL, will be speaking. The theme of the meeting is “Searching For The Truth.” Make plans to attend and invite your relatives, friends, and neighbors.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned fruit
MEETING TIMES
SUNDAY:
9:00 A.M. BIBLE CLASSES
10:00 A.M., 6:00 P.M. WORSHIP
5:00 P.M. LADIES’ BIBLE CLASS
WEDNESDAY: 7:00 P.M.

BISHOPS: Paul Brantley, Bill Gallaher, Fred Stancliff
MINISTER: Michael Hatcher
MISSIONARY: Ira Y. Rice, Jr.

HOW TO HELP THE CHURCH GROW
(PART 4)
Bob Berard

If the message and methods we employ in our evangelistic efforts are those which are: 1) directed at the heart of men, 2) concerned with man’s greatest need (spiritual), and 3) permeated with a balanced presentation of the facts, conditions, and promises of the Bible we will be making a God-approved contribution to church growth.

However, we must never forget that church growth depends too upon our personal growth and that personal growth requires constant attention (1 Pet. 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:18). Again, the basics include sticking with God’s Book and staying clear of man’s additions.

Complying with the former, we will follow the biblical examples and admonitions: to be a student of Heaven’s directions (Acts 17:11; 2 Tim. 2:15; Mat. 4:4; 6:33), to be prayerful (Luke 18:1; 1 The. 5:17), to examine ourselves in light of the truth and make needed corrections (2 Cor. 13:5; 1 John 1:9; John 8:31-32), to work, worship, watch, and wait (John 9:4; 4:23-24; Mat. 24:42ff; 1 The. 1:10), to be wary of and to resist the devil (1 Pet. 5:8; Jam. 4:7), and to trust God so that we enjoy the peace which passeth all understanding (Pro. 3:5-6; Phi. 4:4-13). The list can be and should be expanded to the breadth of the Bible’s revelation of man’s obligations. Such is a most
challenging way of life, but the challenge is one which no man can successfully evade and one essential if we are to glorify God, save our souls and live the best and only blessed life possible both now and eternally (Mat. 7:13-14; 1 Cor. 10:31; 1 Tim. 4:8).

Next in this series we will consider some Bible-based guidelines for avoiding man’s additions.

MIRACULOUS ELEMENT

Michael Hatcher

The third item that Gibbon listed as to reasons that the church grew so fast in the first century is the miraculous or spiritual gifts. They were able to perform wonders and signs. The miracles were undeniable and not questioned by the people of that day. These miracles not only produced amazement in the people but also served to provide an audience for the Word to be proclaimed. It also made people realize that they were seeing something from God, and this attested to or confirmed the Word which they spoke (cf., Mark 16:16-20; Heb. 2:1-3).

We need to recognize that today all miracles have ceased. We do not have biblical miracles today. As evidence of this just look at the purpose of miracles. First, to reveal God’s mind to man (1 Cor. 2:7-16). We have the revelation of God’s mind and will today in the Bible. Second, to confirm the spoken Word (Mark 16:15-20; Heb. 2:3-4). We have the confirmed Word of God in the Bible. The third purpose of miracles is that of edification (Eph. 4:11-12; 1 Cor. 12-14). Today we are edified through the Scripture (Acts 20:32; 1 Tim. 3:16-17). When the purpose of miracles has been fulfilled, there is no more need for the miracles. The purpose of miracles has been fulfilled in the completed New Testament. Therefore, we do not have any need for miracles and they have ceased.

We know miracles have ceased because Paul said they would when we had the completed Word (1 Cor. 13:8-13; Eph. 4:11-14). Additionally, there is no way for anyone to receive the ability to work miracles today. A consideration of Acts 8 and the fact that only an apostle of Christ could pass that ability on to someone else shows miracles have ceased. When you compare the so-called modern miracles with the miracles of the first century you find a great deal of difference. Thus, they (miracles of today) are not true miracles. All miracles have ceased. While we realize that miracles have ceased, we can still draw men’s attention to miracles, the miracles of the Bible. These miracles are recorded for us to use.

All the miracles of Christ point to His deity (John 20:30-31). The greatest of these miracles is the resurrection of Christ from the dead. We need to be drawing men’s attention to that miracle, for it gives us assurance that Jesus is the Son of God (Rom. 1:4). It also gives us assurance of our resurrection, of a judgment, and of an eternal life either with God in heaven or with the Devil in hell (Acts 17:30-31). It is the foundation for the Christian life. That miracle needs to be proclaimed to all men. Let us use the miracles of the Bible as evidence of the existence of God and to bring men to Christ by point them to the empty tomb.

ADOPTION

Dave Rogers

Since the subject has been much on my mind of late, we note that the word adoption appears five times in the New Testament, both in Greek and in English. The original word is a compound, huiotes, from two words which literally mean “a son” and “to place.” The idea, both in the Scriptures and in ancient Greek profane usage, is that of placing a son where it does not naturally.
belong. In the New Testament, adoption connotes the privilege of sonship which God bestows on all who give themselves to Christ. Only Paul uses the word, to describe our relationship to God. The word adoption in the New Testament’s usage refers to a legal act which puts an adopted son in the same position as a son by birth, regarding the one who adopted him. The adopted child possessed the same rights, and owed the same obligations, as a son by birth.

Christians thus, as “adopted children” (Eph. 1:5), are able to enjoy the same blessings and privileges of access to the Father, and a heavenly home with Him in eternity, as does the “natural” Son, Jesus Christ. This is made possible only through the blood of Jesus, and only by adoption can we be “joint-heirs” with Him (Rom. 8:17).

JUST WHO ARE THE UNDERDOGS?

Robert Moss

One term that has become familiar to so many people is the term “underdog.” The word underdog means, “the one that is losing as in a contest; one that is handicapped, underprivileged, un-favored, etc.” Often we find use of this word in connection with athletic events. One team may be seen as the underdog while the other team is favored to win. However, it seems that there has been a gross misapplication of these thoughts. Some seem to look upon Christians as the underdogs in life. Such thinking is far from true. The following favors the Christian.

The strength of Christ. Paul noted, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Phi. 4:13). We are told, “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly” (Rom. 5:6). God gave Jesus, “power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him” (John 17:2). Man indeed left to himself is given that Jesus has promised this strength to all who will seek and obey Him.

The power of God. David spoke this truth concerning God, “thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great; and to give strength unto all” (1 Chr. 29:12). Jesus stated, “with God all things are possible” (Mat. 19:26). The Christian has the promise that “God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Phi. 4:19). God’s power reigns supreme and Christians have that power working for them.

The force of the Word as given through the Spirit. The Bible is the inspired Word of God given through the Holy Spirit, “That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:17), “Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Pet. 1:21). The Gospel is “the power of God unto salvation” (Rom. 1:16). The psalmist noted, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path” (Psa. 119:105). The Christian’s desire-with-expectation is firmly implanted in the truth of God’s Word.

Christians may be a minority population wise, but as one can plainly observe from these facts, the Christian is nowhere near being the “underdog” in this life.

Branson Church of Christ
307 South 7th St; Branson, MO 65616

Annual Teachers’ Meeting
Thursday, October 19,1995
at 6:00 P.M. at Ryan’s Family Steak House.
All present teachers, future teachers and past teachers are encouraged to attend.
Contact the office for further information.
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Rubin Malone, Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Inez Brantley, Diana Brazell, Fred Stancliff, and Marilyn Hall.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 3 meets October 15, 1995
Group 1 meets November 1, 1995
Group 2 meets November 19, 1995

READING/INVITATION
October 18, 1995
Reading: Chad Lightner
Invitation: Jerry Lindesmith
October 25, 1995
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Fred Stancliff

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November 5-10, 1995–Bellview Church of Christ gospel meeting. Tony Tarole, who works with the Jupiter-Tequesta Church of Christ in Tequesta, FL, will be speaking. The theme of the meeting is “Searching For The Truth.” Make plans to attend and invite your relatives, friends, and neighbors.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned soup
MEETING TIMES

SUNDAY:
9:00 A.M. BIBLE CLASSES
10:00 A.M., 6:00 P.M. WORSHIP
5:00 P.M. LADIES’ BIBLE CLASS

WEDNESDAY: 7:00 P.M.

BISHOPS: Paul Brantley, Bill Gallaher, Fred Stancliff
MINISTER: Michael Hatcher
MISSIONARY: Ira Y. Rice, Jr.

HOW TO HELP THE CHURCH GROW
(PART 5)
Bob Berard

The basics for personal growth as a Christian are well summarized as: 1) start with and stay with the Bible and 2) avoid the additions of men. The former was the focus of our last article, the latter is here examined.

Complying with the basic guide of avoiding man’s additions, we will be healthily suspicious of that about which we are unsure rather than embracing every “new” suggestion regarding our religious practice. Paul tells us that “whatsoever is not of faith is sin” (Rom 14:23). In other words, we cannot rightly engage in that which we do not know to be authorized by God (Col. 3:17). It is therefore obvious that we not only err when we do that which we know is not authorized, but that we also err when we do that which we do not know is authorized (Rom 14). To do only that which we know is authorized implies that we must have a personal knowledge of the Scriptures and that we must correctly reason to the conclusion that a given activity is, in fact, an activity which God has authorized before we can rightly engage in it.

Thus, it is no necessary indication of stubbornness or disagreeability or rebelliousness for one to investigate before he consents to involve himself in a proposed activity. He is obligated by God to investigate any activity prior to his participation in it as to its authorization so as to permit his confident conclusion that such will be acceptable to God. If all had this determination to know “what saith the Scriptures?”
before acting there would be unity and peace among all brethren instead of the current division.

Godly men recognize that conscientious brethren want to be careful to do only that which is Heaven-approved and will therefore take the time and care necessary to show how the Bible authorizes an activity, program, method, etc., before asking others to participate. Rather than being offended by the questioning of their proposals, right-minded overseers will delight in the fact that there are men today doing as the Bereans in searching the Scriptures to insure that the matter is in harmony with the Word of God (Acts 17:11).

Box 38; Spring, TX 77838

PURE AND AUSTERE MORALS
Michael Hatcher

The fourth reason Mr. Gibbon listed as why the early church grew so fast is that the people had pure and austere morals. He wrote, “but the primitive Christian demonstrated his faith by his virtues; and it was very justly supposed that the Divine persuasion, which enlightened or subdued the understanding, must at the same time purify the heart and direct the actions of the believer.” He mentions two motives which made the Christian’s morals higher than others. The first of these was repentance from their past sins. While Christians “allured into their party the most atrocious criminals” they were “easily persuaded to wash away, in the water of baptism, the guilt of their past conduct.” The second concerned the reputation of the society. They were concerned with the nation, realizing that, “Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people” (Pro. 14:34).

Mr. Gibbon was correct when he discussed individuals who were worst of sinners becoming Christians. “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. 6:9-11). Notice that Paul says at one time they were these things. Obviously while they at one time lived according to these sinful ways, they no longer did. When one becomes a Christian, he must repent. Repentance means to change. There is a change of attitude (desire from living for self and selfish desires to do God’s Will) which leads to a change in action. “Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God” (Rom. 6:13).

The early church demanded that people reform their lives to mortify their members which are upon the earth (Col. 3:5). When someone sinned, swift immediate action was taken (see Acts 5:1-11). God commanded the church to withdraw fellowship from one who walked disorderly, not after the tradition of God (2 The. 3:6, 14). By marking and avoiding, withdrawing fellowship, they were able to keep the church pure (1 Cor. 5). While Mr. Gibbon says these morals were so strict that they are unreasonable for people today, just the opposite is true. We must live by and call others to such strict, pure, austere morals if we want the church to grow today.

4850 Saufley Road; Pensacola, FL 32526

WHY HAVE A GOSPEL MEETING?
Melvin Wise

Surely no one can question the fact that the apostle Paul was the most indomitable and useful Christian the world has ever known. He was as ambitious as Alexander the Great, who after con-
quer the world, wept because there were no more worlds to conquer. He was a dynamic as

Caesar, Napoleon, Mussolini or Hitler. Paul dreamed of conquering a world, too, and of a world-wide empire, not political, but spiritual.

In our gospel meeting what is our aim and purpose?

For God’s Sake.

Paul preached and labored so hard because he was zealous of God’s interest and glory. To the Corinthian Christians Paul said, “ whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31).

Paul was the kind of Christian that could not

bear to see God suffer loss of any kind. He was so devoted to promoting God’s glory that when he saw the Lord losing a soul to Satan, he was deeply moved (Acts 17:16).

For Man’s Sake

Paul labored so hard because the world of men in which he lived was separated from God by sin, and consequently doomed to eternal misery.

Paul knew nothing of the shallow doctrine that

sinners who never hear the gospel will not be held accountable, and hence will not be condemned. The man who dies in a lost state is lost not only because he fails to accept the gospel, but because he is in sin (Eze. 18:20).

For Our Sake

Paul preached and labored so zealously because he wanted to go to heaven himself. If it was not for the joy of serving and a personal hope of an eternal reward, a preacher might allow his own personal conformation to grow cold. Paul realized that every Christian owes a tremendous debt to all unsaved men and must as honorable men pay that debt (Rom. 1:14-15).

These three motives made Paul a big man, towering above the others. These motives we have studied to impress us and give us a sense of our duty as stewards of the gospel.

Let us stand ready at the post of duty to be used of the Lord during our gospel meeting to the end that we may glorify God and reap a harvest of souls.

Gospel Meeting with Tony Tarole
from Tequesta, Florida

November 5 - 10, 1995
Sunday morning at 9:00 and 10:00 A.M.
Sunday - Friday evenings at 7:30 P.M.

“Searching For The Truth”

Sunday Bible Study: “My Search For The Truth”
Sunday Worship: “Six Reasons Why You Should Be A Christian”
Sunday Evening: “What Think Ye Of Christ?”
Monday: “Preaching Jesus”
Tuesday: “Are You Sure Of Your Salvation?”
Wednesday: “Jewels Or Mud?”
Thursday: “Their Blood Is On Your Hands”
Friday: “That Coming Day”
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Rubin Malone, Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters. Inez Brantley, Diana Brazell, Ray Dodd, Marilyn Hall, and Sarah Ryan (Stanley and Patty Ryan’s daughter).

VISITATION GROUPS.
Group 1 meets November 1, 1995
Group 2 meets November 19, 1995
Group 3 meets November 26, 1995

READING/INVITATION
October 25, 1995
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Fred Stancliff
November 1, 1995
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Corey Bittner

MARK THESE DATES
November 5-10, 1995—Bellview Church of Christ gospel meeting. Tony Tarole, who works with the Jupiter-Tequesta Church of Christ in Tequesta, FL, will be speaking. The theme of the meeting is “Searching For The Truth.” Make plans to attend and invite your relatives, friends, and neighbors.

ENGAGEMENT ANNOUNCED
Mr. and Mrs. Bobby Liddell
and Mr. and Mrs. Louis Herrington
wish to announce the engagement of their children
Anthony Allen Liddell
and Vanessa Irene Herrington
YOU HAVE NEED OF PATIENCE

Al Brown

Throughout history, there have been times when God’s people have been discouraged. Sometimes the whole church in a locality has felt it; individual Christians confront it even more often. Regardless of the cause, discouragement can be a very debilitating experience, and Satan uses it on a regular basis to hamper and even defeat the Lord’s work and attack the faith of the saint.

It is not unusual for brethren to assist Satan by failing to have the fruit of the Spirit in their lives. Certainly, we all need faith, love, meekness, self-control, and all the other traits Paul names in Galatians 5:22-23. One of the most difficult of those qualities to develop and maintain in time of trial is patience; yet, it is one of the most important in living a successful Christian life.

We are instructed: “For ye have need of patience, that, having done the will of God, ye may receive the promise” (Heb. 10:36). James writes: “Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold temptations; Knowing that the proving of your faith wor-keth patience: And let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing” (Jam. 1:2-4).

It will not do for us to shrug off our lack of patience or excuse the deficiency. It is a vital, priceless trait which absolutely must be a part of every Christian’s life if he hopes to be faithful in all the trials of life and finally be taken to that home of the soul. Don’t let Satan deceive you
UNION AND DISCIPLINE
Michael Hatcher

The last item mentioned by Gibbon concerning the growth of the church is the “Union and Discipline of the church.” In discussing the leaders of the church and the function which they performed Gibbon says, “they were frequently called upon to detect the errors of heresy of the arts of faction, to oppose the designs of pernicious [treacherous or faithless] brethren, to stigmatize their characters with deserved infamy, and to expel them from the bosom of a society whose peace and happiness they had attempted to disturb.” A sad but true fact is, that not all who began this life of Christianity would continue in faithful obedience to it. This had to be dealt with in a very strict and, as some would say, harsh way. While it was strict, it was done out of love. It was love for the individual, for the truth of God’s Word, for the church and love for the souls of others that motivated the elders of a congregation to lead elders to “expel them.” They were marked and expelled from the fellowship of Christians. Paul puts it that they were “to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” (1 Cor. 5:5). This is disfellowshipping or withdrawal of fellowship from an individual.

Yet in the church of our Lord today, how many times have you heard of someone being disfellowshipped, or more, in the congregation where we go have we been involved in this? Many who do practice this do so only to those who quit coming to worship services. These should be withdrawn from as they are no longer walking orderly. However, the withdrawal of fellowship should not be limited to these. Because of our lack of attention to this commandment many have termed it the forgotten command. This is one of the reasons, according to Gibbon, that the church grew so fast. Could it be that the reason we do not grow as fast today is because we do not observe this command? We tolerate sin within our midst today instead of purging out the old leaven (1 Cor. 5:7). Let us get back to doing what the Lord requires of us. That includes this area of withdrawing our fellowship to those people whose morals do not meet God’s standard and those who cause discord among brethren. “Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us” (2 Th. 3:6).

A SUCCESSFUL GOSPEL MEETING

What can you and I do to help make this meeting a success? Read the following carefully and prayerfully:

1. It depends on our attitude. Are we looking forward to it? Do we realize its potential for good? Are we excited about the cause of Christ?

Day Light Saving Time Ends
Sunday, October 29
Be sure to set your clocks back one hour before going to bed on Saturday, October 28.
2. It depends on our **attendance**. Some meetings fail because 50% of the members do not attend any service except Sunday and Wednesday. Will you clear your schedule so you can be present every service?

3. It depends on our **invitations**. Regardless of all the advertising done through printed announcements, newspapers, etc., visitors will usually attend only if personally invited by a Christian friend.

4. It depends on our **friendliness**. Do your friends feel welcome and wanted in our services? How many of us make a special effort to greet visitors and invited them back?

5. It depends on our **participation**. Nothing "kills" a service so effectively as a combination of back seat sitting, inattention during the services and poor singing. How simple these problems are to solve!

6. It depends on our **prayers**. Are we praying for the preacher, the song leaders, those who need to respond?

7. It depends on our **encouragement**. A word of love and encouragement to one who needs to respond to heaven’s invitation means so much.

   Yes, a successful gospel meeting depends on us. Let us do our part!

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from Tequesta, Florida

**November 5 - 10, 1995**

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**Sunday - Friday evenings at 7:30 P.M.**

"Searching For The Truth"

**Sunday Bible Study:** "My Search For The Truth"

**Sunday Worship:** "Six Reasons Why You Should Be A Christian"

**Sunday Evening:** "What Think Ye Of Christ?"

**Monday:** "Preaching Jesus"

**Tuesday:** "Are You Sure Of Your Salvation?"

**Wednesday:** "Jewels Or Mud?"

**Thursday:** "Their Blood Is On Your Hands"

**Friday:** "That Coming Day"
RESTORED
Tim Lamb was restored on 10-23-95. Please keep him in your prayers.

SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Rubin Malone, Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Ray Dodd, Marilyn Hall, and Sarah Ryan (Stanley and Patty Ryan’s daughter).

VISITATION GROUPS
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Group 2 meets November 19, 1995
Group 3 meets November 26, 1995

READING/INVITATION
November 1, 1995
   Reading: Jim Loy
   Invitation: Corey Bittner
November 8, 1995
   Gospel Meeting

MARK THESE DATES
November 5-10, 1995—Bellview Church of Christ gospel meeting. Tony Tarole, who works with the Jupiter-Tequesta Church of Christ in Tequesta, FL, will be speaking. The theme of the meeting is “Searching For The Truth.” Make plans to attend and invite your relatives, friends, and neighbors.

HURRICANE OPAL
Hurricane Opal made landfall east of Pensacola on October 4. Thankfully, no one in the Bellview congregation suffered loss of life or property. The church buildings were spared as well. The worst hit sections of the area were located directly on the coast line approximately five miles from Pensacola. We wish to thank everyone who have called or written expressing concern.
MEETING TIMES

SUNDAY:
9:00 A.M. BIBLE CLASSES
10:00 A.M., 6:00 P.M. WORSHIP
5:00 P.M. LADIES’ BIBLE CLASS

WEDNESDAY: 7:00 P.M.

BISHOPS: Paul Brantley, Bill Gallaher, Fred Stancliff
MINISTER: Michael Hatcher
MISSIONARY: Ira Y. Rice, Jr.

EIGHT PRACTICAL POINTERS FOR OUR GOSPEL MEETING

Bubba Phillips

1. Be at every service. We should make plans to be present Sunday morning through Friday night. If we are going to set the proper example and benefit from this gospel meeting, we need to be present at each service.

2. We need to arrive early. If we arrive early, we (of course) will not be late. We need to greet our visitors, and that should be done before the service starts. If we arrive early, we can better prepare our minds for the worship service.

3. Let’s go out of our way to greet visitors. It is fine to talk to our brethren, but let’s not make the mistake of not being friendly with non-members. We are known as a friendly congregation, and let’s be sure and demonstrate this by greeting our visitors properly.

4. Sit close to the front. We must get away from the habit of spreading out all over the auditorium. It is encouraging to the speaker, and our singing is much better when we sit together at the front. Let’s all keep this in mind during our gospel meeting.

5. Bring your Bible. We need to “search the Scriptures to see if these things are so” (Acts 17:11). One of the most encouraging things to any gospel preacher is to see brethren turning the pages in the Bible. Be sure and bring your Bible with you.
6. Take notes. The notes you take from each lesson can be used later to jog your memory. Notes from an appropriate lesson can be used in a home Bible study. You will soon discover you have rich material at your finger tips because you took the time to take notes.

7. Invite people. We need to make a list (if we have not done so) of those we need to invite. We need to be consistent in our invitations. We need to invite people more than once. We need to tell people about the gospel meeting, even on Wednesday, as we have opportunity. Let's be diligent in inviting our friends.

8. Pray. We need to pray for brother Tarole. We need to pray for those we are inviting. And we need to pray for the lost and our erring brethren. Let's be sure and pray many times each day. After all, we are to “pray without ceasing” (1 Th. 5:17).

1155 Corinth Road; Jacksonville, TX 75766

OUR IMMUTABLE GOD

Mel Futrell

Immutable, adj. Not mutable; unchangeable; unalterable; changeless. (Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary, 1992, p. 713).

The last book of the Old Testament makes this incredible declaration, “For I am the Lord, I change not” (Mai. 3:6).

Brethren there is real comfort to be found in these Words of God. In an ever changing world where the cry for change seems to come from every direction, with liberal change agents lurking even at our own doors, you and I can view these Words of God and take deep comfort. Occasionally though, one encounters individuals who take the declaration of Malachi 3:6 and twist it (2 Pet. 3:16) to fit their own warped, fanciful, and preconceived beliefs. I’m speaking mainly of those who hold tightly to the notion that miracles are still available and being performed today. They reason that since God doesn’t change and since miracles were performed in the past therefore God is still performing them today. Now that’s another way to view Malachi 3:6, albeit an erroneous one.

Back in May of 1943, in Huntsville, Alabama, the late brother Gus Nichols, while in a public debate with a mister C. J. Weaver, commented on the belief that I mentioned in the first paragraph. The proposition Gus Nichols was affirming that May 4 evening was:

The Scriptures teach that the signs and miracles done by the apostles and other disciples, as recorded in the New Testament, were to cease, or to be done away, at the close of the apostolic age, or by the time the complete will of God was revealed and confirmed in the New Testament.

Now here is what he said concerning the abuse of Malachi 3:6:

It is often said that God changes not, and therefore, he is doing now all that he has ever done. He does say, “I change not” (Mai. 3:6). But this means in His moral nature He does not change. If it means He is now doing all that He ever did, then He is making men of the dust now as He did Adam, and raising the dead now, as He has done. Such a conclusion is ridiculous. The fact that Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever (Heb. 13:8), likewise does not mean He is now sending out apostles as He once did, nor raising the dead now as He did Lazarus. He is the same in His love and nature. But it has never been the divine purpose to just keep on making men of the dust and performing miracles” (Nichols-Weaver Debate, Gospel Advocate Co., 1944, p. 57).
Not only does brother Gus effectively put to rest this misuse and abuse of Malachi 3:6, but he also briefly offers us the correct way to view this lovely passage. The way God has dealt with man has at times changed through the ages (i.e., Heb. 1:1-2; 8:7, 10-11). But one of the traits of God is His immutability—He is unchanging in His nature. By inspiration, James wrote, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (Jam. 1:17). Did you catch that brethren?

With God there is no variableness (variation—ASV). Wayne Jackson hit the nail on the head when he said, “Nature changes, but Jehovah does not.”

Without a doubt men will continue to distort Scripture in an effort to get their desired meaning. But for those of us who do not handle the Word of God deceitfully (2 Cor. 4:2) these verses and many more will remain the strongholds of comfort that they are.

149 Bay View Drive Daphne, AL 36526

Gospel Meeting with Tony Tarole from Tequesta, Florida
November 5 - 10, 1995
Sunday morning at 9:00 and 10:00 A.M.
Sunday - Friday evenings at 7:30 P.M.
“Searching For The Truth”

Sunday Bible Study: “My Search For The Truth”
Sunday Worship: “Six Reasons Why You Should Be A Christian”
Sunday Evening: “What Think Ye Of Christ?”
Monday: “Preaching Jesus”
Tuesday: “Are You Sure Of Your Salvation?”
Wednesday: “Jewels Or Mud?”
Thursday: “Their Blood Is On Your Hands”
Friday: “That Coming Day”
**Champ Hollowell** was restored on 10-29-95. Please keep him in your prayers.

**SICK AND SHUT-IN**
Please remember in your prayers: Rubin Malone, Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Ray Dodd, and Marilyn Hall.

**VISITATION GROUPS**
Group 1 meets November 1, 1995  
Group 2 meets November 19, 1995  
Group 3 meets November 26, 1995

**READING/INVITATION**
November 1, 1995  
Reading: Jim Loy  
Invitation: Corey Bittner  
November 8, 1995  
Gospel Meeting

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November 5-10, 1995–Bellview Church of Christ gospel meeting. Tony Tarole, who works with the Jupiter-Tequesta Church of Christ in Tequesta, FL, will be speaking. The theme of the meeting is “Searching For The Truth.” Make plans to attend and invite your relatives, friends, and neighbors.  

**TEACH BEFORE...**
Before your child has come to seven  
Teach him well the way to heaven!  
Better still the truth will thrive  
If he knows it when he is five!  
Better yet, if at your knee  
He learns it when he is only three!  
Best of all is when you have begun  
To teach of Jesus before he is one.
VOL. XXIV NOVEMBER 6, 1995 NO. 45
A PUBLICATION OF BELLVIEW CHURCH OF CHRIST
4850 Saufley Road; Pensacola, FL 32526; (904) 455-7595

MEETING TIMES
SUNDAY:
9:00 A.M. BIBLE CLASSES
10:00 A.M., 6:00 P.M. WORSHIP
5:00 P.M. LADIES’ BIBLE CLASS
WEDNESDAY: 7:00 P.M.

BISHOPS: Paul Brantley, Bill Gallaher, Fred Stancliff
MINISTER: Michael Hatcher
MISSIONARY: Ira Y. Rice, Jr.

“JESUS DIED FOR OUR SINS”
Bobby Liddell

Suppose one were starving, in desperate need of nourishment lest he die. Sadly, there is no food, no, none to be found anywhere! What will happen? That one will surely die. Suppose one were sick, in pain, suffering, in dire need of medical help and facing death otherwise. Regrettably, there are no doctors, nurses, hospitals or medicines. None can help him. What will happen? He, likewise faces physical death.

Now, suppose one is in sin, burdened with guilt and condemned, desperately needing salvation, forgiveness, cleansing from his sin, but there is no Savior. What will happen? He, too, will surely die, for sin brings spiritual death, and ultimately, eternal death (Jam. 1:14-15; Ezr. 18:20). Yet, thanks be to God, there is a Savior. Jesus died for our sins. He left the glory of Heaven with steadfast determination to make possible man’s salvation and, knowing full well what faced Him, willingly and lovingly gave His life for us. He took upon Himself the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men that He might experience death for every man, and He humbled Himself in obedience unto the death of the cross (Heb. 2:9; Phi. 2:5-8). Why? Because man needed God’s love and the provision of God’s love—a remedy for sin (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8-9).

Sin is the one thing which will keep one out of Heaven and put him in Hell. The Bible says
sin is the transgression of God’s law (1 John 3:4). God has placed certain boundaries beyond which we are not to go. Inside those boundaries, God has placed all that is good, right, helpful to man and needed by man. Therefore, there is not one thing outside of God’s divine hounds which is good for us, right for us to do or be, helpful in our living as we should or needed by us to be happy now and eternally. One sins who goes beyond God’s boundaries. The Bible also says sin is unrighteousness (1 John 5:17). We are to live soberly, righteously and godly (Tit. 2:11-12); that is, we are to do right in order to be right. The Bible, again, says to act without faith is sin (Rom. 14:23). We are to do what we do “by faith” (Rom. 10:17; Heb. 11). Likewise, the Bible says a failure to do what one should do is sin (James 4:17). Many will boast of their not having committed certain sins, confident in their not doing those wrongs, but do not realize their need to be actively engaged in doing right!

The plain and simple truth is: “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23; 1 John 1:6-10). Just as plainly, the penalty of sin is death (Rom. 6:23).

God’s Word speaks of three deaths. First, physical death is separation of the spirit from the body (James 2:26; Luke 23:46). We all face physical death, an appointment which none can escape (Hebrews 9:27). We began our journey toward physical death the moment our lives began. Second, spiritual death comes when sin enters and robs us of spiritual life (Ephesians 2:1; 5; Colossians 2:13). Paul spoke of one who was dead while she lived (1 Timothy 5:6). She was alive physically, but dead spiritually. Third, eternal death is the punishment for one who continues in sin; thus, having his eternal destiny sealed by death or Christ’s coming. Such an one faces eternal punishment in the everlasting fire, torment and outer darkness of Hell (Matthew 25:46; John 5:28-29). Hence, there is eternal death awaiting all who enter into and continue in sin.

ON BEING JUDGMENTAL

Hershel Dyer

About the worst thing you can say about someone, in the midst of a controversy, is, “You are being judgmental!” What is so wrong about being “judgmental?”

When the court hears evidence in a legal dispute and renders its decision or judgment, it is being, literally, judgmental. It has passed judgment and, in doing so, it has become judgmental. “Judgmental” is simply the adjectival form of the noun, “judgment.”

There is judgment which is wrong. When the knowable facts in a matter have not been given due consideration and a judgment is formed without these, this becomes a judgment which is unfair. Such is the type of judgment which our Lord condemned in His sermon on the mount (Matthew 7:1ff).

In almost any discussion of religious beliefs or practices, wherein something is pronounced as wrong, the charge of being “judgmental” is heard. This generally makes the critic of the doctrine or practice feel demeaned and condemned, for being judgmental is considered evil or bad behavior.

All of us who deal in religious matters form judgments which we consider to be right. These judgments are in conflict with the opposite judgments of others. In the case of such conflicts both contentions cannot be correct. To contend for one is to condemn the other, or at least imply that the other is false. The only way to avoid being “judgmental” in religion, is to form no judgment at all, to have no conviction whatsoever.

To believe that Jesus is the Son of God and to obey Him for salvation is to place one in the position of implying a judgment toward those who refuse to do likewise. It implies that the one who refuses to believe and obey is in an unsaved condition. Hence, it is not possible for
anyone to be a disciple of Jesus Christ without appearing “judgmental” toward certain others.

Via Seibles Road Church of Chris
P.O. Box 1255; Taylor, TX76574

WHAT ARE WE TELLING THEM?

Words are an effective means of communication. Actions can be as effective as words. One major concern in connection with our words and actions that we should give special attention to is our influence upon our young people. What are we telling them?

What are we telling our young people, our children,
...when we use the same language the world uses (Jam. 3:2-12)?
...when we involve ourselves with gossip (Pro. 11:13)?
...when filthy jokes and lewd remarks come from our lips (Col. 3:8)?
...when we take off our clothes and wear bikinis, short shorts, halter type tops, no tops, low plunge tops, split skirts, skin tight clothes, see through clothes, etc. (1 Tim. 2:9-10; Gal. 5:19)?
...when we watch TV programs and movies that are filled with and promote any and all types of immoral conduct (1 Pet. 2:11)?
...when we demote the sanctity of the home by divorcing and remarrying for any flippant excuse (Mat. 19:9)?
...when we forsake the assembling of ourselves together (Heb. 10:25)?

The fact is, we are telling them that to be a Christian is to act no different than the world (1 John 2:15-17; Eph. 4:17-24). We are telling them that we can love the world and love God at the same time (Jam. 4:4). We are telling them that self comes first and that God will settle for second, third, or even last (Mat. 6:33). We are telling them that self-gratification physical

pleasure, and worldly gain is supreme (Col. 3:1-4).

Yet later on down the line we ask ourselves, “WHAT WENT WRONG WITH OUR YOUNG PEOPLE, OUR CHILDREN?” The answer is, THEY BELIEVED WHAT WE WERE TELLING THEM!

DOWN IN THE DUMPS

Are you feeling alone? Forgotten? Neglected? No one seems to come around anymore? Well, then quit wasting your time brooding and do something about it! Get up and call someone on the phone. Inquire about their health, offer a word of encouragement or just chat for awhile. If you can drive, get up and go to the hospital and visit your fellow Christians who are sick. Go to the nursing home and lift the spirits of those who are too often forgotten.

Don’t wait for others to think of you! Think of them first! They will show more interest in you as a result of this than you ever imagined. Don’t knock others for doing as you have done in the past—nothing. Don’t judge their motives. If you want a particular person to come see you, call and invite them.

A mistake we often make is to leave everything up to the other fellow. He has to speak first. He has to call first. He has to come by first. He has to invite me first. What ever is done in the way of showing mutual love, the other person has to take the lead. WHY? Why not Me? Many people expect others to do all the giving and doing and get hurt if they fail to measure up to our expectations. How childish!

We need to quit worrying over the actions of others, over which we have no control, and consider our own action that we do have control over.

Copied
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Rubin Malone, Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, and Marilyn Hall, Ray Dodd family.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 1 meets November 12, 1995
Group 2 meets November 19, 1995
Group 3 meets November 26, 1995

READING/INVITATION
November 8, 1995
Gospel Meeting
November 15, 1995
Reading: Harold Maxey
Invitation: Henry Born

MARK THESE DATES
November 18, 1995–Defender work party at 2:00 P.M., in the Zone Room.
November 29, 1995–Fifth Wednesday Singing.

DANGERS CONFRONTING THE CHURCH
Several years ago brother N. B. Hardeman, one of the great spiritual giants of his generation, was asked what dangers he saw confronting the church of his day. His reply was as follows:
1. Lack of Bible knowledge and a light regard for what it says.
2. A tendency to make the church a social club of entertainment.
3. A disposition to compromise the truth and to discourage sound preaching.
4. A love for the praise of men more than the praise of God, lest they should be put out of someone’s social circle.
MEETING TIMES

SUNDAY:
9:00 A.M. BIBLE CLASSES
10:00 A.M., 6:00 P.M. WORSHIP
5:00 P.M. LADIES’ BIBLE CLASS

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SALVATION, GRACE AND OBEDIENCE

Lennie Reagan

There can be no doubt that salvation is God’s gift to man. However, does man have any obligation toward God to receive this salvation? Does man contribute anything to his own salvation? The Bible teaches that he does.

If one considers the “source” of his salvation, one will recognize the gift that God and God alone makes available to man. In fact, I have never heard a Gospel preacher deny the fact that God alone is responsible for the source of salvation.

Consider this for a moment. From before the beginning of time God did not fail to see not only the possibility of sin, but also the certainty of it. So in God’s consideration of man’s sin and in the consideration of His own righteousness, God made a plan for man’s salvation. BEFORE HE MADE MAN!! That plan was based on God sending His Son to die in the place of man.

The fact that this plan was made prior to man’s creation cannot be over emphasized. Time after time we are told that God’s plan for redeeming man came before this world began.

“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” (Eph. 1:4).

The system of faith which makes salvation available to man is indeed the gift of God (Eph. 2:8). Man could not, can not do one thing,
or any type of works to bring about the system which provides man’s salvation (Eph. 2:9).

Now, is that to say that man does not contribute anything to his salvation? No! No! The source of man’s salvation and the affecting of man’s salvation are two different arenas. If not, then all people, regardless, are the benefactors of salvation; for we know God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34).

What part then, does man contribute to his salvation? Obedience. “Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock” (Mat. 7:24). “And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46). “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” (Jam. 1:22).

Is there any room for faith and works in the life experiences of Abraham? how about Rahab? (Jam. 2:14-26). Does faith and obedience, joined with God’s commandments affect anything? Just ask the inhabitants of Jericho.

The Messenger Coldwater, MS

EMOTIONALISM
Carl G. Hecker

The resurgence of Calvinism in recent years has brought about a need for a fresh look at emotion and its proper place in the religion of our Lord. When one begins with error, everything is perverted.

The doctrine is called Calvinism because John Calvin (1509-1564) gave it wide-spread acceptance in his day. Many modern denominations have built their theology upon his false assumptions. The first and basic error is that man is under a curse of God. Babies are born totally depraved, and incapable of doing anything good, until God acts directly upon them. This divine act is always an emotional experience which must be recited to, and then approved by, those who have themselves claimed a similar emotional experience. It is a kind of comparing oneself with oneself.

It is easy to see how following feelings rather than facts flows from the Calvinistic misconception of “original” sin. It is difficult to understand how such error could get into the church of our Lord, but it has happened! Emotionalism presents a threat to the doctrinal purity of the church.

Webster defines emotionalism as “the cultivation of the superficial emotions; the tendency to yield to the emotional or exalt the emotions; to view matters more from feeling than reason or morals.” An emotionalist is “one who practices the art of exciting emotions in others, a sensationalist.”

It would be terribly wrong to suggest that Christianity is unemotional. Deep feelings of joy, a solid sense of security, a firm feeling of duty, responsibility and purpose in life are all proper emotions. A Christian benefits by a real fear of sin, deep grief of his fellowman being in bondage to sin, and even jealousy, in a good sense, of the church and the gospel. Man emotes!

However, emotions are the result of information, of evidence presented to the mind. Man is first a rational being. He is an intelligent, thinking reasoning being. He can control, his emotions, and his actions by the exercise of his will. God holds the individual responsible for doing just that!

Sin, guilt, punishment, and their counterparts, obedience, forgiveness, heaven are all illogical, unreasonable and totally unacceptable ideas, if man is, in fact, born totally depraved. If man has no ability to respond to God, he cannot be responsible to God! If man must wait for an exclusive act of the Holy Spirit for some emotional, miraculous experience before he can become obedient, then God alone would be responsible
for his condition. Man would not be responsible, for he is helpless. The sacred Scriptures do not teach this preposterous view.

Let us look at what the Bible teaches. “If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man’s religion is vain” (Jam. 1:26). James tells us to control our tongue. We are responsible for what we say! We will be judged by our words (Mat. 12:37). We must also control our emotions. “For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God” (Jam. 1:20).

While giving the spiritual qualifications of men who serve as elders, Paul uses three words: “not soon angry...sober...temperate” (Tit. 1:7-8). These three words demonstrate the need of an elder, in the Lord’s church, to be able to control his emotions. Uncontrolled feelings interfere with one’s ability to reason, evaluate, and to make right decisions.

The Greek word “sophron,” which occurs thirteen times in the New Testament, is translated, discreet, sober, temperate, self-control, sound-minded, sound-minded. Another Greek word, “nepho,” found seven times, includes the idea of being watchful, awake, alert. The word “semmos,” also used seven times, adds the dimension of seriousness, gravity, levelheadedness, or an evenly controlled, emotional state.

The Word of God sets the standard. It describes what God wants us to be. We grow into maturity. We come to Christ by the process of learning. “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls” (Mat. 11:28-29). We gradually change into the image of Him who died for us (2 Cor. 3:18). Faith in the Word of God that produces compliance is a living faith (Jam. 2:24). That is, it produces the character our heavenly Father desires in us.

Beneficial emotions derive their strength from the Bible. Our feelings should be the result of our faith, not the source of it. The gospel is the only basis for saving faith (Rom. 1:16). Faith that is the result of hearing the Word of God, and that compels obedience to that Word, will produce joy, peace, and good feelings.

The tendency of the modern pulpit is to tickle ears and excite groundless emotions. Much of our preaching has no higher purpose than to make people feel good through the use of smooth speech. Smooth speech is generally the trademark of the false prophet. We multiply the blunder of ancient Israel, “Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us soft things, prophesy deceits” (Isa. 30:10). God’s answer remains the same: “Because ye despise this word, and trust in oppression and perverse-ness, and stay thereon: Therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall” (Isa. 30:12-13). Sermons ought to teach and apply truth. The hearers will react to the faithful preaching of sound doctrine with emotions appropriate to the message, and their own spiritual discernment. Some will be pleased. Some will be grieved. Some will reject the message, and turn away in disgust. Some will weep. Some will rejoice. All will emote!

Emotionalists in the pulpit often seek to please the audience by appealing to fleshly desires. The strong feelings he arouses always fall far short of spiritual maturity. Spirituality results from a rational response to revelation, rather than an emotional upheaval, and artificial, worked-up fervor. Tear jerking, and pulling at heartstrings will not produce full grown men in Christ. Jesus made no such cheap attempts to manipulate people, nor should we.

Unbridled feelings are not a proper source of religious conviction. All emotions are fleeting, flimsy and unreliable. To feel good is not enough.

We must be good.
RESTORED
Nancy Travis was restored on 11-8-95. Please keep her in your prayers.

SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Rubin Malone, Mary Ellen Muldoon, Leon Waters, and Marilyn Hall. Donald Little (Dot Dodds’ father) has terminal cancer.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 2 meets November 19, 1995
Group 3 meets November 26, 1995
Group 1 meets December 3, 1995

READING/INVITATION
November 22, 1995
Reading: Ray Williams
Invitation: Hairston Brantley
November 29, 1995
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Paul Brantley

MARK THESE DATES
November 18, 1995–Defender work party at 2:00 P.M., in the Zone Room.
November 29, 1995–Fifth Wednesday Singing.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS
Chad and Jessica Lightner’s new address and phone number is: 1332 Midway Drive; Cantonment, FL 32533; 477-2253. Please update your directory. Greg Lewis has commenced his studies at the Memphis School of Preaching in Memphis, TN. Write to Greg and Pam Lewis at 3608 Winchester Square West; Memphis, TN 38118.
MEETING TIMES

SUNDAY:
9:00 A.M. BIBLE CLASSES
10:00 A.M., 6:00 P.M. WORSHIP
5:00 P.M. LADIES’ BIBLE CLASS

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FENCE-STRADDLING
CHRISTIANITY

Tommy Moore

Throughout Matthew 12, Jesus was having an enormous conflict with the Pharisees. The Pharisees accused Jesus of transgressing the law of Moses when He picked corn to eat and later healed a man’s withered hand, all on the Sabbath. But each time Jesus proved to the Pharisees that His actions were righteous, all the Pharisees could do was to become angry and seek how they might destroy Him (Mat. 12:14). Jesus spoke out in defense of the truth!

Later in Matthew 12, we behold Jesus healing one possessed with a devil, and it was not long when the Pharisees came storming up accusing Jesus again of wrong doing. The Pharisees cried, “This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils” (Mat. 12:24). Jesus replied to their accusation and made them look very foolish, “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?” (Mat. 12:25-26). The Pharisees’ conclusion was totally unreasonable and illogical. Jesus points out that any kingdom, whether physical, spiritual, evil or good, cannot and “shall not” stand; it will fall, it will be brought to nothing if it fights against itself; Jesus verbally opposed that which was in error!

Jesus further instructs these Pharisees by
declaring, “He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad” (Mat. 12:30). In the great conflict between good and evil, righteousness and sin, the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan, there can be no fence-straddling. Jesus also proclaimed, “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Mat. 6:24).

One of the greatest problems facing the church today is the unwillingness of many of its members to take a stand for the truth! Too many are choosing to ride for fear of hurting someone’s feelings, or for fear of losing their popularity! Whenever we choose to straddle the fence in Christianity, we are aligning ourselves with Satan and therefore are forfeiting our place in heaven.

One way that many have become fence-straddling Christians is by their vow of silence. Many in the church know that certain things being done in the brotherhood in various congregations are without biblical authority, but instead of speaking out in protest, they bite their tongues and say nothing. The evil, yea even the sin, of silence is very clearly seen in the book of Obadiah. God, through the prophet Obadiah, was condemning Edom for the terrible things that they had done. “For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever” (Oba. 10). What terrible evil had they committed? “In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou wast as one of them” (Oba. 11).

Why was Edom as one of those who had destroyed Jerusalem? Because they simply stood back and did nothing nor said anything! Many in the day of judgment are going to be sorrowfully surprised when they have to suffer the eternal consequences of their silence.

O, that we all would be like Jeremiah when he cried, “Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay” (Jer. 20:9). Isaiah was no fence-straddler, for he declared, “For Zion’s sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth” (Isa. 62:1). May we all remember that silence is golden, but sometimes it is also yellow and sinful. Remember. “Evil prevails when good men are silent.”

Via West End News
9350 Natural Bridge Rd; St. Louis, MO 63134

THE DANGEROUS THREAT OF LIBERALISM

Alan E. Highers

For several years it has been recognized by faithful and able brethren that the church faces two dangerous extremes. These have been styled anti-ism and liberalism. Anti-ism divided many congregations and alienated many brethren, but its influence has declined in the brotherhood. The danger of liberalism grows greater, however, with every passing day, and it presents a far greater danger to the church than anti-ism ever did.

Liberalism is a great threat to the peace, unity, and purity of the church for a number of reasons. Consider the following:

1. The liberals frequently conceal their real views. The antis plainly stated what they believed. They wrote articles, published tracts, preached sermons, and debated. Brethren could learn exactly where they stood. The liberals, on
the other hand, have frequently resorted to theological doubletalk in order to obscure their positions. The liberal quickly affirms his belief in the inspiration of the Scriptures, but he does not mean the same thing by “inspiration” as we do. Therefore, he can continue in his position, whether preacher or teacher, because brethren have been lulled into believing he is sound.

2. There are more liberal thinkers in high places of influence. When the anti movement began, there were only a few of the influential men in the brotherhood who were caught up by it, and most of these later renounced it. The man tainted by liberalism, however, is likely to be the man who has been exposed to higher theological education and who has been affected by it. He may well be among the more talented men of the brotherhood. He may occupy a place of influence in a congregation or a Christian college. The fact that brethren who do fall prey to liberalism may be well educated and highly talented simply magnifies the danger and increases the potential harm they may do.

3. Liberalism appeals to the untaught, the unstable, and unconverted. Anti-ism was, and is, altogether negative in its outlook. It is radically concerned about what the church cannot do, but is little interested in what the church can do, as a look at the mission work of the average anti congregation will show. Liberalism, however, makes a “fair show in the flesh.” It poses as intellectualism. It places a few restrictions on man’s conduct. It is ideally suited to the indifferent, unconverted, or worldly-minded member of the church. Liberalism talks much of “liberty” and little of “law.” It seeks to make the church “intellectually respectable” to contemporary scholarship.

4. Liberalism has more defenders and apologists in the brotherhood than anti-ism. The Communists in this country use many people who are not Communists themselves. They are either “fellow-travelers” (sympathetic to Communism), or they are “fronts” (unsuspecting dupes of the Communists). I fear we have many in the church who will act as “fronts” or “fellow-travelers” for liberalism. Let us be on guard to keep the church pure in faith and doctrine.

1511 Getwell Road; Memphis, TN 38111

THE 28-MINUTE CHURCH

The 28-minute church. That reminds me of the 10-minute oil change and one hour dry cleaning. Can you imagine it? This “church” really exists. The preacher believes that people are too busy for an hour service, so he has come up with the 28-minute service. A little singing, a little praying, possibly a little communion, a little giving and definitely a little preaching. It’s had rave reviews and he is now up to five services on Sunday. Sounds convenient, doesn’t it? But there’s a few problems with his format: Where’s the fellowship? And how about the fact that members are exposed for hours to ungodliness at work, school and from the media—how does he think 28 minutes is going to prepare anyone for that onslaught each week?

Brethren, I say we need more time for prayers, singing, study, fellowship and all the rest of the things that people need to be strong Christians—NOT LESS! Our culture cries, “Give me less of what I need and more of what I crave.” The Lord said, “Don’t let the world squeeze you into its mold.” If I had my way, every member of this congregation would attend every Bible class and assembly PLUS have home study, home training and family devotions. We would also have quality time working and being together as a church family, not less. Is 28 minutes enough? I think not.
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Rubin Malone, Mary Ellen Muldoon, Leon Waters, Hairston Brantley, and Marilyn Hall. Louise Cline is in the hospital. Donald Little (Dot Dodds’ father) has cancer.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 3 meets November 26, 1995
Group 1 meets December 3, 1995
Group 2 meets December 10, 1995

READING/INVITATION
November 29, 1995
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Paul Brantley
December 6, 1995
Reading: Allen Brazell
Invitation: Jeremy Caine

MARK THIS DATE
November 29, 1995–Fifth Wednesday Singing.

DIRECTORY UPDATE
Within the next month the member’s directory for 1996 will be printed. In preparation for this, a directory information sheet will be handed out in the near future. Please provide the requested information and turn the sheets into the office as soon as possible.

THE WORDS OF JESUS
“Never man spake like this man” (John 7:46). The Words of Jesus are:
1. Gracious words (Luke 4:22)
3. Astonishing words (Mark 6:2)
4. Living words (John 6:63)
5. Judging words (John 12:48)
6. Cleansing words (John 15:3)

What do the Words of Jesus mean to you?
Have you obeyed them?
A good reminder of the virtues of love is First Corinthians 13. The last verse of chapter 12 speaks of “a most excellent way.” That way, of course is love. The title of this article is also taken from First Corinthians 13. These are the last seven words of that chapter. Please allow this present article to remind us all that LOVE IS A COMMAND. Jesus said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). His command was, “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you” (John 13:34).

We also must remember LOVE IS SERVICE. Paul wrote to remind the Christians in the region of Galatia that, “For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only [use] not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another” (Gal. 5:13). But also, LOVE IS THE MOTIVE for this service. Lee made this point as well when he told us that Paul wrote these words, “Let all that ye do be done in love” (1 Cor. 16:14).

We dare not give up in our service, for LOVE IS STEADFAST. Consider these words from inspiration, regarding those who had believed in Laodicea, “That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love” (Col. 2:2). The steadfast nature of this love is seen in that LOVE IS ENCOURAGING. Read Paul’s
instruction in his first epistle written, “Wherefore exhort one another, and build each other up, even as also ye do...And we exhort you, brethren, admonish the disorderly, encourage the fainthearted, support the weak, be longsuffering toward all” (1 Th. 5:11-14).

**LOVE IS INSTRUCTIVE and CONSIDERATE.** One of the greatest admonitions for us is: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God” (Col. 3:16). This is done as we “and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works” (Heb. 10:24) as we assemble, “not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another” (Heb. 10:25).

Brethren, let us love purely, deeply and devotedly. In this way we will obey the Master, demonstrate to the world and enjoy the blessings and benefits of such a wonderful fellowship.

912 East Teresa; Sapulpa, OK 74066

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**NEW BIBLE CLASSES BEGINNING**

New Bible Classes for all age groups (youth and adults) will begin December 3, 1995, for the Sunday morning classes and December 6, 1995, for the Wednesday evening classes.

**SUNDAY SCHEDULE**

**Adults I**—Christian Doctrine I, Louis Herrington, room 7.
**Adults II**—The Eternal Kingdom I, Paul Brantley, room 1.
**Adults III**—Video Library, Richard Parker, room 5.
**Christian Doctrine**—Studies In Christian Doctrine And Practical Christian Living, Bill Gallaher, room 17.

**WEDNESDAY SCHEDULE**

**Adults I**—II Samuel, Bill Crowe, room 7.
**Adults II**—The Doctrine Of Christ Versus The Doctrines Of Men, Ray Foshee, room 1.
**Adults III**—The Noahic Flood, Michael Hatcher, room 5.
**Christian Doctrine**—Studies In Christian Doctrine And Practical Christian Living, Bill Gallaher, room 17.

**BIBLE SCHOOL IS IMPORTANT!**

_Randy Mabe_

The importance of Bible school cannot be over emphasized. Attendance, edification, steadfastness, and faithfulness through knowledge is enhanced greatest through the Bible school. It is in the Bible school that I may stop the teacher and ask the question about the point I do not understand. If I need to ask the second and third questions, I may. This leads to greater understanding and therefore knowledge that will be retained and used in the time of temptation. But, the Bible school is only as efficient as the implementation of all of its parts. An automobile only performs as good as the sum of its parts perform.

Teachers are the engine of the Bible school. They must be tuned up and operating smoothly for the Bible school to be efficient. Preparation is the foundation of a good teacher. Teachers are assigned in our Bible school that they may be prepared specifically for that class meeting at a specific time. Our teachers honor God by being prepared and in the classrooms on time, smiling, ready to teach and answer questions for the students. Teachers love their students and sacrifice for them willingly. We love our teachers! The Bible is the fuel that runs the engine. This fuel is
pure and powerful. It is the super-premium fuel that has been made for the soul. As surely as cars beat a path to the service station, people should beat a path to Bible school! Bible class teachers teach from the Bible. We endeavor to teach all the Bible and encourage people to apply all they learn, in their lives, so they will be fit for heaven. Truth is harmonious with itself and the Bible is free from error and contradiction. We depend on it for our peace and salvation.

The student is the starter for our Bible school. Without students the engine does not begin to operate with the fuel, the Word of God. Our students are precious, possessing a soul made in the image of God, that is hungering and thirsting after righteousness. When these students enter the classroom, the teacher is delighted, the student is excited, and God is pleased. Learning can readily take place in this atmosphere. This thirty to forty-minute span now becomes one of the most important time periods of the student’s week! The human heart is being filled with the Word of God (Col. 3:16-17).

The Bible school is not designed to be the sum total of Bible education the student receives, but a complement to home study and private study. When these three are in place, growth is greatest. The home is responsible for the educating of its members with the knowledge of God. Fathers are the head of the home where that responsibility finally rests. Fathers, use the Bible school to enhance the Bible education that you and your family members receive.

This time should be cherished and if we arrive on time, the classes may be conducted without interruption and more efficiently. Remember that the Word of God is being taught to interested people. Show respect and honor by doing all that you can to facilitate this process most efficiently.

Via The Boulevard News

MISSIONARIES OVERSEAS

On November 26, 1995, brother and sister Fred and Rheba Stancliff departed for missionary work overseas. Fred, who is an elder with the Bellview congregation, will be conducting a gospel meeting in Tazmania in early December, and then will be speaking at a lectureship at the Four Seas College in Singapore later in the month. Rheba will be speaking to a ladies class at the gospel meeting and the lectureship. Beginning in January 1996, for the first quarter, they will be teaching at the Four Seas College. Fred will be teaching biblical studies and Rheba will be teaching English. In May they will depart for Tanzania, East Africa, to visit their daughter and son-in-law, Sandy and Dusty Wilkes. Dusty is a recent graduate of the Memphis School of Preaching and is now a missionary at the Chimala Mission and Hospital. Anyone wishing to help support the Wilkes in their missionary effort can contact the Seagoville Church of Christ in Seagoville, TX.

In January 1996, brother Ray Peters, a member of the Bellview congregation, will be leaving for Riga, Latvia, for a three-month missionary trip. Ray was among some of the first church of Christ preachers to take the gospel to Riga. Ray, his wife Judy, and their son, Michael, spent a year in Riga bringing the gospel of Christ to those who had never heard it before. There is now a well established congregation worshipping there.

We pray that much good will come from these missionary efforts and that they will have a safe trip there and back.
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Rubin Malone, Mary Ellen Muldoon, Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, and Louise Cline. Don Little (Dot Dodds’ father) has cancer, Fred Baker (Judy Peters’ father) has cancer, Clifton Richards (Linda Parker’s father) has congestive heart failure, and Neva Bryant (Lucille Staples’ sister).

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 1 meets December 3, 1995
Group 2 meets December 10, 1995
Group 3 meets December 17, 1995

READING/INVITATION
December 6, 1995
   Reading: Allen Brazell
   Invitation: Jeremy Caine

December 13, 1995
   Reading: Jerry Caine
   Invitation: Bill Crowe

DIRECTORY UPDATE
Within the next month the member’s directory for 1996 will be printed. In preparation for this, a directory information sheet will be handed out in the near future. Please provide the requested information and turn the sheets into the office as soon as possible.

BEFORE YOU SPEAK:
T-H-I-N-K
T - Is it TRUE?
H - Is it HELPFUL?
I - Is it IMPORTANT?
N - Is it NECESSARY?
K - Is it KIND?
HOW LONG WILL WE TOLERATE IT?

Al Brown

The church of Christ has always been troubled by those whose doctrine and conduct leaves something to be desired. The New Testament describes such people in the first century church. They say their religion is Christianity, but the only place a perfect description of Christianity can be found is in the New Testament, and they reject what it teaches. It seems their primary goal is to explain away or pervert, or deny every doctrine and the moral standard of the New Testament.

The only reliable pattern for what one believes and the standard by which he is to live is in the Scriptures, but they reject them. Still, they must use some pattern. They may call it by another name (paradigm, model), but it is still a pattern. Isn’t it odd. Every liberal ridicules the idea that God gave a pattern for every aspect of Christianity, yet every liberal and the church he attends follow a very predictable pattern which has been dictated by men. In worship, it is often patterned after the antics of the Pentecostal churches.

They remind me of the hippies of the 60s. They rejected the standards of the time, claiming there was no standard. At the same time, in order to be accepted into their subculture, one had to conform to the dress and behavioral pattern of the hippies. He had to be filthy and unshaven with long scraggly hair and the most outrageous, disheveled clothes he could find at the Salvation Army. He was required to speak and act according to the hippie pattern. Hippies
were just as strict as any conservative, but in a
different way. Liberals are the same.

It is common for them to reject the virgin birth
of Christ. Most liberals reject the miracles of the
Bible, and the virgin birth of Jesus was a miracle.
This was obviously the reason Andre Resner, a
professor of Bible at ACU, wrote his filthy attack
on Jesus and His mother in a liberal journal,
Wineskins, in November 1993. He was trying to
destroy the faith of gullible brethren in the virgin
birth.

Liberals reject any teaching of Christ and His
apostles with which they do not agree. Jesus
shows such people are cut off from God: “He that
heareth you [the apostles] heareth me; and he that
rejecteth you rejecteth me; and he that rejecteth
me rejecteth him that sent me” (Luke 10:16).
Again, Jesus taught: “He that rejecteth me, and
receiveveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth
him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge
him in the last day” (John 12:48).

Jesus declared: “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
who is in heaven” (Mat. 7:21). Is there any way
this can be harmonized with the liberal claim that
man can do nothing in reference to his salvation
—that he is saved by grace only and by faith
only. Who is right—Jesus or the liberals?

Jesus also said: “If a man love me, he will
keep my word: and my Father will love him, and
we will come unto him, and make our abode with
him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my
words: and the word which ye hear is not mine,
but the Father’s who sent me” (John 14:23-24).
You be the judge: was Jesus lying, or mistaken,
or do all those (including liberals) who refuse to
obey Christ really love him? We may never merit
salvation by our obedience, but we can never
please God and remain in His favor unless we do
obey Him.

They claim they are members of the Lord’s
church (I suppose). Many of them are removing

the name of Christ from the front of their build-
ings. I wish all of them would, for they are a
shame and disgrace to the Lord’s body. It seems
the only references they make to the church of
Christ are vicious, bitter, malevolent criticism.
No true lover of the church speaks in such a
derogatory way about that body for whom Christ
died.

There are things to criticize about the church.
After all, the church is people, and no person is
perfect. They not only criticize the imperfections
of brethren; they belittle the divine pattern of
the church. The tone of such criticism could arise
only from deep hatred. Similar to most religious
sects, they embrace the false doctrine of unity-in-
diversity, they deny there is but one body, and
they refuse to follow the pattern Christ and His
apostles gave for entrance into that body.

The organization of the church which is de-
scribed in the New Testament, including the
authority and God-given work of elders, is ri-
culed and rejected. The work the Lord gave the
church to do is neglected. They have replaced it
with a social gospel and turned the church into a
social club.

The only acceptable way God can be wor-
shipped, as is revealed in the New Testament, is
laughed to scorn. Ungodly men have substitut-
ed cheap, vaudeville-type entertainment in its place.
In keeping with the spiritual nature of worship in
the body of Christ (John 4:23-24), God ordered
that music in worship emanate from within the
heart (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). These infidels have
mingled, and often replaced, that divine desire with
unholy noise blaring from lifeless mecha-
nical instruments. What a travesty!

Like any sectarian, they find a way to explain
away every passage which contradicts or con-
demns what they do. The work of the Holy Spirit
is ignored and the fanciful exaggerations of mis-
guided sectarians are embraced. Space limits the
list, but the divine pattern for every aspect of
Christianity is replaced by the “theology” of men.
Please read Matthew 15:6-9,13; Galatians 1:6-9; 2 John 9-11.

I challenge you: name one—just one—areal or doctrine of pristine Christianity these liberalinfidels have not attacked and tried to replacewith Calvinistic voodoo and the most radicalforms of human theology. The sooner these schismsare disfellowshipped, the better it will befor the people of God.

It is amazing that brethren are so ignorant ofGod’s Word, so unbelieving, and so gullible thatthey are taken in by this trash. They not only willnot lift a finger to oppose it, they defend the heretics as if they came from God instead of Satan. It is heart-breaking, but Second Thessalonians2:9-12 is once more verified before our very eyes, and the victims are utterly unconcerned about it.

Box 39; Spring, TX 77383

WILL YOUR CHILDREN GO TO HEAVEN?

Elders all over the nation are concerned about the dropout rate of our young people. And, well, they ought to be. It is a tragic thing to see these boys and girls, who are so thrilled with Bible study as little people, grow cold and uninterested in the Lord’s work as they grow older.

Lately, several congregation’s have made in-depth studies of all the factors available concerning all their young people, with an eye to learning what might be done to help solve this problem. What do we need? More youth programs? More rallies? Special teachers?

From the material that has been published in these studies, it seems to me that one great central truth has begun to emerge. Faithfulness of the young person to Jesus does not have anything to do with special programs or teachers. It is not dependent on whether they are members of a large congregation or a small one. The single most important value is their own immediate family.

One congregation found that where both parents were faithful to the Lord, and that includes active interests in the local congregation’s programs, 93% of the kids remained faithful. On the other hand, if only one of the parents were only what we would call reasonably active in the Lord’s work, only 53% of the young people maintained their faith.

Now here comes the shocker: In those cases where both parents attend only infrequently, the percentage of their children who remained faithful to the Lord dropped to 6%.

Want your children to go to heaven? Then make certain you are leading them. That is the only way they are going to make it.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN WORSHIP

Benjamin Franklin

If any one had told us, forty years ago, that we would live to see the day when those professing to be Christians; who claim the Holy Scriptures as their only rule of faith and practice; those under the command, and who profess to appreciate the meaning of the command, to “observe all things whatever I have commanded you,” would bring any instrument of music into a worshipping assembly, and use it there in worship, we should have repelled the idea as an idle dream. But this only shows how little we saw of the power of the adversary to subvert the purest principles, to deceive the hearts of the simple, to undermine the very foundation of all piety, and turn the very worship of God itself into an attraction for the people of the world, an entertainment, or amusement.

The Gospel Preacher
Vol. 2, 1877, p. 411
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Rubin Malone, Mary Ellen Muldoon, Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, and Louise Cline. Don Little (Dot Dodds’ father), Fred Baker (Judy Peters’ father), Clifton Richards (Linda Parker’s father), and Neva Bryant (Lucille Staples’ sister).

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 2 meets December 10, 1995
Group 3 meets December 17, 1995
Group 1 meets January 7, 1996

READING/INVITATION
December 13, 1995
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Bill Crowe
December 20, 1995
Reading: Bill Cline
Invitation: Ray Dodd

MARK THIS DATE

John 14:1-7
“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 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. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.”
Have you attended a wedding lately? Awhile back we had the pleasure of performing the ceremony for some very close friends. The handsome groom, along with all of the attendants and the audience, were beautifully dressed. The building had been prepared inside and out with caring hands to make a most beautiful setting for this wedding. Nothing more, it appeared, could possibly be done than had been, by the hours of interest and meticulous preparation.

But of all the beauty that surrounded the hour, none was more breath-taking than the regal moment when the bride appeared! Not only was she a beautiful young lady in every way, but she was adorned in gorgeous attire for this special occasion! Every eye was on the bride! She was the focal point of the hour!

But if you inquired as to why the many hours had been spent in preparation, with no expense spared, what answer do you think would be forthcoming? She did not simply come to be seen. The family and host of friends did not attend because they wanted to be seen. But, we were all gathered, and the bride was beautifully attired, FOR HER HUSBAND!! He was made to know that he was of outstanding importance! Really, he was the one for which all the preparation and planning had been done!
As the gorgeous bride came down the aisle, I could not help but think of the church, the beautiful bride of Christ. She comes to her husband to submit herself in the fear of God (Eph. 5:21). She knows the husband is the head and has all authority (Eph. 5:23). She places herself under his provisional, protective, loving authority, knowing that like Christ, he is the “saviour of the body” (Eph. 5:23), and is willing to give Himself for this relationship to be kept in tact!

The church of Christ is a divine institution planned by God (Eph. 2:4-6), purchased by the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28), built and maintained by the teaching of Christ by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 2:22). With such credentials as these, who can doubt or sell short its importance in the world?

Christians are those who have the Gospel in their hearts, as they follow their Lord, and put Him first in their lives. They are spoken of as “salt” in the world for their interest in the salvation of others, “light” as they reflect the example and beauty of their head, and “the body” as they respect the authority of their Lord. Christ did all of His work of setting apart and cleansing by our coming to Him in obedience (Eph. 5:26) in order that the church might be built and “That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Eph. 5:27).

At the wedding something else impressed me greatly. Out of respect for the groom and vows to be spoken, I did not notice one person dressed in sport clothes, jeans, or shorts. Why? The respect for the groom and his bride! When she walked down the aisle and during the vows, would you believe no one acted in such an irreverent, disrespectful manner as to clap, whistle, or stamp their feet? Why? Respect for the bride, her husband, and the solemnity of the purpose for which we gathered! Had any done so, likely they would have been ushered out, and rightly so!

Should we not now think with more reverence and awe when coming together to worship? Shall we forget to even be present for our meeting with the groom? Jeremiah the weeping prophet said, “Can a virgin forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? yet my people have forgotten me days without number” (Jer. 2:32).

The CHALLENGE OF PREACHING

Eddie Whitten

Many preachers do not know, or have lost, the role they should assume when they commit themselves to this noble endeavor. There is no special dispensation placed upon preachers except that they are to “preach the word” (2 Tim. 4:2). Preaching is a Divine command (Mat. 28:19). The apostles, to whom this command was given by Jesus, are not the only ones who received the command. The apostles gave this same responsibility to those they taught (Rom. 10:8, 13-17; 2 Tim. 2:2). Preaching is one of the highest professions a man can undertake. But, there are dangers lurking in the shadows of the ego of men.

One of the challenges of preaching is to stay with the Word as God has given it. There is no room for man to extrapolate God’s Word to incorporate his own will into it. This is the making of denominationalism every time. If not designated by some man-made name, it still has a man-made message. God does not have a double standard which allows man to preach some thought of his own as if it were inspired Scripture. This is the result of a lack of study and application of Scripture in proper context. Just because a verse has a particular word in it does not necessarily mean that the verse is in context with the matter under discussion. A verse taken out of context still constitutes a pretext. Many
false doctrines have developed because preachers never understood the meaning of a passage(s) and assumed meanings which were not in harmony with the rest of the teaching on that subject. Remember, if two Scriptures are pitted against each other as being contradictory, the meaning of one or both is not properly understood.

**Another challenge of preaching is to realize the preacher is not an enforcer.** Paul teaches this principle in First Corinthians 3. He says, “I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase” (1 Cor. 3:6). Paul also wrote to Timothy, “If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ” (1 Tim. 4:6). Why do some, even many, preachers seem to think it is their responsibility to pastor the flock? Some find themselves looking for another place to preach because they sit on an opinion (or even a scriptural principle) and insist that the people conform to his position. It is a difficult lesson to learn that responsibility of preachers is to give to the people all of the evidence the Bible has to offer that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; that it is necessary for people to learn of Jesus and do what He says, then leave it to the people to receive that evidence. Conversion is a process that takes place in the mind of men and women; it is not the prerogative of the preacher to “make” a person believe the Bible and obey it.

**Another challenge of preaching is to keep from thinking of himself more highly than he ought.** Yes, you, preacher—are in the spotlight every time you enter the pulpit. You are really something, aren’t you? Wrong! You are the one who has the attention of the people, be there few or many. You have the honor of preaching “the unsearchable riches of Christ” (Eph. 3:8). You are nothing more than one who has dedicated himself to the service of the Master who made it possible for you to be a Christian in the first place. You have made a wise and noble decision to preach the love of God and of His Son. You are the one who has taken upon himself the responsibility to help all men to see the love Jesus has for them, even to the extreme of dying on the cruel Roman cross. You are the one who has chosen to hide yourself behind the cross of Christ and preach Him crucified. You are the one who has accepted the responsibility of occupying the time of every person to whom you speak multiplied by the number of minutes you expound the wondrous love of Jesus. You are the one who bears the awesome burden of truth to convey to your hearer. You cannot convert anyone! You cannot save anyone! You are not a master; you are a servant.

For one who occupies the pulpit and calls himself a preacher to brag about how good he is, or how he has turned the lives of people, or congregations around, is to spit in the face of the Master teacher He is a mighty little man in comparison. Jesus died a shameful death suffering the indignities of a howling mob. How dare mere man put himself up as something, when he is nothing.

Yes, preaching is a challenge. It takes more than a knowledge of the Word; it takes the attitude of service that goes with it. We need more preachers, but we need more preachers with the proper attitude. We need fewer prima donnas in the pulpit of congregations of the Lord’s church.

3616 Brown Trail; Bedford, TX 76021

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**SUPPORT NEEDED**

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SYMPATHY
We extend our deepest sympathy to Dot Dodd and her family in the death of her father, Don Little, who passed from this life on December 6, 1995. Please remember this family in your prayers.

SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Rubin Malone, Mary Ellen Muldoon, Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, and Louise Cline. Inez Brantley is in West Florida Hospital. Fred Baker (Judy Peters’ father), Clifton Richards (Linda Parker’s father), and Neva Bryant (Lucille Staples’ sister).

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 3 meets December 17, 1995
Group 1 meets January 7, 1996
Group 2 meets January 14, 1996

READING/INVITATION
December 20, 1995
Reading: Bill Cline
Invitation: Ray Dodd
December 27, 1995
Reading: Harold Cozad
Invitation: Ray Foshee

MARK THIS DATE

TEMPORARY ADDRESS
Fred and Rheba Stancliff’s temporary address is: c/o Four Seas College of Bible and Missions; 120 Boon Lay Drive; Singapore 2264; Republic of Singapore. They would appreciate hearing from you.
THE PURITY OF THE CHURCH
Chuck Northrop

Much of the New Testament was written with the intent to keep the church of our Lord doctrinally and morally pure. With the exception of the book of Philemon, every book in the New Testament contains warnings against apostasy or drifting away from the purity of the gospel. Since God is the author of the Bible, these warnings demonstrate that God is concerned for the purity of the church. Just as an earthly father is concerned for the welfare of his children, the heavenly Father is concerned for His children’s welfare. The concern of a good father goes beyond the physical welfare of his children. His concern extends to their mental and spiritual welfare. So it is with the heavenly Father. He is concerned that His children remain doctrinally and morally pure.

THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

To illustrate the relationship between Christ and His church, God chose the closest human relationship—that of a husband and wife. In Ephesians 5:25-27 Paul wrote, “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”

When the church is without “spot, wrinkle, or any such thing,” it is a “glorious church.”
However, when the church allows the influences of the world to enter into it, it becomes defiled and polluted (Rev. 3:1-6).

There were many in the church at Corinth who were drifting away and thus Paul wrote to deal with the problems that existed. One such problem was that the church was putting up with false teachers who “preacheth another Jesus” and “another gospel” (2 Cor. 11:4). Because of this problem, Paul wrote, “For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in” (2 Cor. 11:2-3).

By inspiration of the Spirit, James wrote, “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (Jam. 4:4). James was not speaking of physical adulterers and adulteresses (those who would defile themselves by engaging in sexual misconduct). He was speaking of those who were espoused to the Lord but had defiled themselves by being a friend of the world.

THE TEMPLE OF GOD

In First Corinthians 3:16-17, Paul pictures the church as the temple of God. He wrote, “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.” Notice that in this picture, the apostle warned about defiling the “temple of God.” The church must not be corrupted by “the commandments of men” (Mat. 15:7-9), by “another gospel” (Gal. 1:6-9), or by being “conformed to this world” (Rom. 12:2). Notice Paul’s exhortation in Second Corinthians 6:14-18: “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeveth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing: and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”

The reason the church is to be holy or set apart (separated) from the world is explained in First John 2:15 where the apostle John wrote, “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.”

PRESERVING PURITY

The first step to preserving the purity of the church is by a steadfast adherence to the apostles’ doctrine. Acts 2:42 says, “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” Also remember the words of John in Second John 9, which say, “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.”

The second step in preserving the purity of the church is to be as the Bereans who “were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11). We must test each one who would teach and/or preach to see if what they are teaching is in accordance with the Word of God.

The third step to preserving the purity of the church is by rejecting false teachers and not tolerating their evil. In Revelation 2:2, John quotes Jesus saying to the church in Ephesus, “I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and
how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars.”

If we will take these steps to preserve the purity of the church, we will be found faithful in the sight of God and will be blessed for our labors in the Lord. If, however, we do not take these steps, we will be guilty of allowing false teaching and immorality to creep into the church, and God will bring just punishment upon us. Therefore, we must maintain purity in doctrine, purity in worship and purity in service.

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I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT

Shan Jackson

I would have thought that Paul’s imprisonment would have filled his companions with fear. I would have thought his suffering for the cause of Christ would have stricken their souls with terror. I would have thought those chains would have been stronger than his courage, his bonds more secure than his faith, his anguish deeper than his affection. I would have thought that, but I would have been wrong.

You see, the prisoner was stronger than the prison. His courage more obtrusive than his chains. His fellowship with the Lord more intimate than his feelings for personal safety, national pride, physical substance. His light was shining in a darkened world and it could not be quenched. He proclaimed, “And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear” (Phi. 1:14).

Yes, I would have thought Paul would have slowed his pace once such tribulation besought him, but I would have been wrong. Paul’s life credo says it best, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16). May we all be strengthened and encouraged.

P. O. Box 904; Palacios, TX 77465

NEITHER TOO YOUNG NOR TOO OLD

Virgil Bentley

Not too many years ago one of the phrases being rounded out from the pulpit was: “Young people, you are the church of tomorrow.”

We finally figured it out that young Christians are important members of the church today. Every member of the Lord’s church is important.

No one has come so far as to say it, but it is sometimes implied in a subtle way that older people (65 or upward) are the church of yesterday.

Holding to either extreme “too young” or “too old” is tragic because the body of Christ needs the service of all its members.

Young Christians are not too young and older people are not too old to take their places of responsibility in the church.

As Jerry Fleishman has pointed out, McCormick was twenty-three when he invented the reaper. Westinghouse was twenty-three when he invented the air-brake. Thomas Jefferson was thirty-three when he wrote the Declaration of Independence. Verdi wrote an opera when he was 80. Goethe finished writing Faust at 80. Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes was still writing brilliant opinions at 90.

Accomplishments of men and women even younger or older than these could be listed, but the point is that every Christian can and should be useful insofar as ability permits. Let us thank God for what we can do, and be glad we can do it, and do it.

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SYMPATHY
We extend our deepest sympathy to Judy Peters in the death of her father, Fred Baker, on December 12, 1995. Please remember this family in your prayers.

SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Rubin Malone, Mary Ellen Muldoon, Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Louise Cline, and Inez Brantley. Clifton Richards (Linda Parker’s father) and Neva Bryant (Lucille Staples’ sister). Megan Thompson (the Parker’s grand-daughter) will be having the same surgery that her sister Tara had, sometime in the next year.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 1 meets January 7, 1996
Group 2 meets January 14, 1996
Group 3 meets January 21, 1996

READING/INVITATION
December 27, 1995
Reading: Harold Cozad
Invitation: Ray Foshee
January 3, 1996
Reading: Mike Dobbs
Invitation: Bill Gallaher

Psalm 27:13
“A Psalm of David. The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.”
MEETING TIMES

SUNDAY:
9:00 A.M. BIBLE CLASSES
10:00 A.M., 6:00 P.M. WORSHIP
5:00 P.M. LADIES’ BIBLE CLASS

WEDNESDAY: 7:00 P.M.

BISHOPS: Paul Brantley, Bill Gallaher, Fred Stancliff
MINISTER: Michael Hatcher
DEACONS: Henry Born, Elward Brantley, Jerry Caine,
Bill Crowe, Louis Herrington, James Loy, Harold Maxey, Richard Parker
MISSIONARY: Ira Y. Rice, Jr.

AFFECTION FOR GOD’S HOUSE
Dub McClish

“I have set my affection on the house of God” (1 Chr. 29:3). David spoke the foregoing words to express his consuming desire to see a great temple erected in Jerusalem by Solomon. These words simultaneously give an index to David’s love of God and point us to some attitudes needed in the kingdom today.

WHY HAD DAVID DETERMINED TO HAVE THIS TEMPLE BUILT? 1) Because he had a palace of cedar and the Ark of God was in a tent (1 Chr. 17:1). He could not tolerate such an unequal circumstance. What a lesson is here for those who lavish only the finest on themselves, but give mere tokens for God’s work. 2) Because he realized the work was great (1 Chr. 29:1). Until we understand how great the Lord’s work is we will never invest much in it. 3) Because the building was not for man, but for God (1 Chr. 29:1). Those who complain at every lesson or appeal that concerns money to support God’s house, need to listen. It is against God’s, not man’s, work that you are complaining! 4) Because he loved the house of God. When we love the Lord and His church we are never able to do or give too much. WHAT DID HIS AFFECTION FOR GOD’S HOUSE CAUSE HIM TO DO? 1) He determined to build the temple, as noted above. We must dream and plan and determine great things for God. 2) He began preparing with all of his might to fulfill his dream (1 Chr. 29:2). Determined dreams are essential, but we will live in a mere dream world unless we work with
all of our might to accomplish our dreams. 3) He gave his personal fortune (1 Chr. 29:3). Here we see the depth of David’s affection for God’s house. Talking and planning are cheap—big talkers abound in every church. When it is time to work, many of the talkers and planners vanish. Also, when it is time to sacrifice, the talkers and planners often vanish. The “acid test” is the money test! David “put his money where his mouth was.” 4) He challenged others to give to this great work (1 Chr. 29:5). Why should elders and preachers be less than bold in urging God’s people to “offer willingly” unto God?

WHAT WERE THE RESULTS? 1) The people “offered willingly,” as David had urged (1 Chr. 29:6-8). If the leaders of God’s people set the right example in service, sacrifice and giving, urging them to follow, most will! 2) There was a great joy (1 Chr. 29:9,17). There is truly great joy and happiness to be found in generosity, for “it is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). The stingy person is denying himself one of the greatest sources of joy in life. 3) The temple was built. When people who love God make plans and sacrifice to accomplish them, God will bless them with success.

908 Imperial Drive; Denton, TX 76201

THE BIBLE TELLS US SO

Monte L. Evans

The Bible, is the precious book divine that gives us all things that pertain to life and godliness. The Word of God is the truth (John 17:17), and makes it possible for us to be complete and thoroughly furnished unto every good work (2 Tim. 3:17). No doubt as children we remember singing the song “Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so.” From the inspired Word of God we learn that if one desires to abide in Christ’s love one must keep His commandments. As we study to show ourselves approved unto God (2 Tim. 2:15) we grow in Faith, Knowledge, and Love. This we know because the Bible tells us so. The Bible will teach those, who are willing to learn, how the world was created. The world did not come into existence by some accident or a supposed “big bang.” The origin of man was not the result of a one-celled creature crawling out from cosmic trash or some slimy goo millions of years in the past. God created the Heavens and the Earth (Gen. 1:1), as well as man and woman (Gen. 1:26-27). We know this for a fact, because the Bible tells us so. We learn that the fall of man came as a result of the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life (Gen. 3:1-6), because the Bible tells us so. We know that God loved the world so much that He sent His only begotten Son (John 3:16), because the Bible tells us so. We know the mission of Christ (Luke 19:10) and that His life would be given for the ransom for many (Mark 10:45), because the Bible tells us so. Because the Bible tells us so, we know that we are saved by grace through an obedient faith (Eph. 2:8) and that the precious blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all past sins (Eph. 1:7; Rev. 1:5). We know that the Lord Jesus Christ has all authority in Heaven and on Earth (Mat. 28:18), that He is the head of the Church which is His body (Eph. 1:22-23), and that He

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dwells in Heaven on the right hand of God (Acts 7:55-56), because the Bible tells us so. We know that there will be many who will follow the road that leads to destruction (Mat. 7:13), and only those who are willing to be obedient to the commands of God shall enter into His Kingdom (Mat. 7:21), because the Bible tells us so. Since the Bible teaches us that the wages of sin are death (Rom. 6:23), we should refuse the evil and choose the good.

2141 Kingston; Muskogee, OK 74403

ENDURANCE
Ken Tyler

One day a mule fell into a dry well. The farmer directed his boys to bury the mule. But the mule refused to be buried. As the boys threw the dirt down on him, he simply trampled on the dirt. Before long, so much dirt had come down into the well that the mule just walked out. That which was intended to bury him was the very means by which he arose.

All great men and women climb up through difficulties. If their lives had been easy, we would never have heard of them. Hebrews 11 is an excellent example. Listen to a few verses: "And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection" (Heb. 11:32-35).

In overcoming difficulties, a person develops courage, strength, determination, and ruggedness that is needed to successfully serve God. Brethren, don’t let the devil get you down. Keep climbing, growing and developing. Count it a privilege to take up your cross daily. Be determined that you will endure until the end. Jesus told the apostles, “And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved” (Mat. 10:22)

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UNDENIABLE DIFFERENCES
M. Floyd Bailey, Jr.

Refusing to recognize, discuss, dissect and debate religious differences does not make them go away. If we believe in the authority of Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16-17), and I believe we do, then it is imperative that we searched “the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11).

Notice:
Jesus confronted the Pharisees (Mat. 23).
Peter confronted the Jews who crucified Christ (Acts 2).
Paul confronted the Corinthians (1 Cor. 1).
Paul confronted the Galatians (Gal. 1).
John wrote, “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1).
Jude commanded, “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3).

In light of the biblical evidence, every Christian should stand ready to confront religious differences, because for differences to exist is undeniably wrong. May God help us to speak “the truth in love” (Eph. 4:15).

Via “The Southwesterner”
8900 Manchaca Road; Austin, TX 78748
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Rubin Malone, Mary Ellen Muldoon, Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Louise Cline, and Inez Brantley. Clifton Richards (Linda Parker’s father) and Neva Bryant (Lucille Staples’ sister). Megan Thompson (the Parker’s granddaughter) will be having the same surgery that her sister Tara had, sometime in the next year.

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Group 3 meets January 21, 1996

READING/INVITATION
January 7, 1996
Reading: Mike Dobbs
Invitation: Bill Gallaher
January 10, 1996
Reading: Howard Johnson
Invitation: Louis Herrington

MARK THESE DATES
January 14, 1996–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., here at the building.
January 21, 1996–Monthly Bible Bowl at 2:00 P.M., at Foley: Study Galatians 5-6 and Ephesians 1-2.
January 21, 1996–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., here at the building.

MARK 9:12-13
“And he answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought. But I say unto you, That Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him.”

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